Activity (Methodology)
Ambassadorship and Adaptation (self-reflection, group discussion)

When to do the exercise
4th

Time Needed: 30-45 Min
Materials: flipchart paper, markers, post-it notes, pens/pencils, required handouts [AFS Contact Sheet & Local Orientations Schedule, First Days in the U.S., Keys for a Successful Year, Questions for your Guidance Counselor/School Advisor], W-Curve handout (optional), PowerPoint Slides #3-4 (optional)

Objectives
• To reflect on the mission of AFS and their roles as Ambassadors.
• To be comfortable seeking support and receiving constrictive criticism.
• To feel confident in their abilities, to have a strong sense of self-worth and to be self-reliant.
• To be comfortable and eager to pursue new learning situations.
• To learn how to manage their internal moods, emotions and impulses, and to use their inner resources to handle stress and ambiguity and to show patience with other people who are in learning situations.

Preparation
1. Write the AFS Mission on flipchart paper and label it “AFS Mission”.
2. Draw the W-Curve of Cultural Adjustment (on p. 19) on flipchart paper or copy of the W-Curve for each student.
3. Post flipchart paper(s) on the wall or in a visible place.

Introduction: Ambassadorship [SLIDE #3]
1. Introduce the AFS Mission.
   
   **AFS Mission:** AFS-USA works toward a more just and peaceful world by providing international and intercultural learning experiences to individuals, families, schools, and communities through a global volunteer partnership.

2. Give each student several post-it notes and a pen/pencil.
3. Tell students to write their responses to each question and then post them on the AFS Mission flipchart paper.
4. Ask students:
   • What does the AFS mission mean to you?
   • Why did you become an AFS student?
• How can you act as an Ambassador here in the U.S.?
5. After all students have written their answers and posted them, review them and read aloud.
6. Have a group leader/volunteer record the responses on flipchart paper for students to see/read.

**Discussion: Ambassadorship**
1. What would make your AFS experience a “success”?
2. How might you handle challenges and cultural adaptation?

**Introduction: Adaptation [SLIDE #4]**
1. Having to adjust and experiencing difficulties are a normal and important part of the intercultural exchange experience.
2. It is common to experience different emotions as you adapt to your host family, host school and host community.
3. The W-Curve shows common experiences of cultural adjustment.
4. The process of cultural adaptation and adjusting to a new culture is different for everyone.
5. So, if your experience doesn’t match the W-Curve, that’s okay.
6. Being challenged and making mistakes are a normal part of the process and not a personal failure.
7. Please use these opportunities to reflect and learn new things about yourselves, others and your host culture.
8. One effective way to cope with difficulties is to ask for help.

**Discussion: Adaptation**
1. What are some reasons that students might seek support or help?
2. Who would you contact if you feel homesick?
3. Who would you contact if you are experiencing challenges adapting to your host family?
4. Who would you contact if you need help with your schoolwork or with English language learning?
5. What reasons might students not seek support or help when needed?
6. What might happen if students do not seek support or help?

**Debrief**
1. It is very healthy and normal to ask for help and support.
2. You should never feel ashamed or weak about asking for help and support.
3. AFS has a strong support network to help you as you adapt and adjust.
4. Your host family, your liaison, local AFS volunteers, your host school, AFS staff and your natural parents all care about you and want to support you.
5. The three handouts (First Days in the U.S., Keys for a Successful Year, Questions for your Guidance Counselor/School Advisor) are also helpful resources you can use as you adapt in your first weeks.
The W-Curve Model of Cultural Adjustment [SLIDE #4]