Grade level: 6-8

Learning objectives:
Young people will learn:
- the importance and role of visioning
- how visioning supports the development of goals

Codes for TEKS:
Language Arts
Fine Arts

Codes for 40 Developmental Assets:
Interpersonal skills
Responsibility
Planning and decision making

National Education Standards:
Language Arts

Life Skills Model:
Problem solving
Decision making
Social skills
Planning/organizing

Time required:
60 minutes

Equipment/Materials:
Legos™
Paper
Pencils
15-inch x 15-inch pieces of cardboard
Small paper sacks

*The test of leadership: Turn around
and see if anyone is following you!*

Who can tell me what visioning is?

> Allow young people to respond.

Visioning is brainstorming to come up with the goals or plans for a project or group. Visioning means thinking about what the end result will look like, and then planning how to get there. How do you think visioning is used in a city or community?

> Allow young people to respond.

Visioning might be used when planning a new sub-division, working toward a balanced budget, or planning how to update a city park to meet the interests of kids and families. There are lots of things we can plan by visioning. Sometimes visioning might be a long process that takes several meetings. But visioning for a simple project can be done in a short time.

What are some things a group like ours could use visioning for?

> Allow young people to respond.

We might use visioning to decide on a project we could do to benefit the school or community. Or we might use visioning to establish the rules or policies for a new club.

Have you ever heard the phrase "thinking outside of the box"? What do you think it means?

> Allow participants to respond.

"Thinking outside the box" means trying to imagine new ways of doing things. It means being creative. It means thinking beyond the ordinary, every day answers or solutions to a problem and finding extraordinary solutions. It might mean using resources in ways others have never thought of.

Visionary leaders understand how important it can be to "think outside the box." Visionary leaders also look at trends, anticipate possibilities, and prepare their organization or group for the future.

Visioning generally involves several different groups of people who help evaluate a problem and suggest solutions. Here's an example: Suppose there is a problem at this school with people throwing trash on the playground. The wind is blowing the trash into the storm drains, which clogs them up. What groups could be formed to work on this problem by having visioning sessions to suggest solutions?

> Allow participants to respond.

Groups that might work on this problem include students, teachers and other school employees, parents, city storm drain engineers, etc.

Let's pretend we need to solve this problem and do some visioning to come up with solutions. I'll assign a role to each of you to play in this visioning activity. You'll be a student, teacher, city engineer or parent.

> Assign one of the roles to each participant. An easy way to do this is to have the participants number off from 1 to 4. Then assign each number to a role. Lead the visioning session by asking these questions.

- What are some of the root causes of the problem?
- What are some things we could do to solve the problem?

Now that we've identified the causes of the problem and ways we might solve it, we could decide what actions to take and make a plan. That's how visioning works.

When do you think it would be useful for a group to use visioning?

> Allow young people to respond.

Visioning is useful:
- to set the stage for short-range planning activities
- to set new directions in policies or rules
- to review existing policy or rules
- when a compromise is needed on two issues
- when two issues need to be combined or consolidated
- when a wide variety of ideas should be heard
- when a range of potential solutions is needed

Let's do a visioning activity to help us understand this concept a little better.

Activity 1: Lego City

Objective:

Working in small groups, the participants will develop a vision for a city or one component of a city (park, industrial district, main street, etc.) created out of Legos™.

Instructions:

1. Divide the larger group into teams of four to six members. Give each team a sack of Legos™, some paper, pencils and a piece of cardboard to build on.
2. Give the following instructions:

Your mission is to take the resources you have been given and create a vision for a city or one major part of a city such as a park, a main street project, a residential area, or some other area you choose. You will have about 45 minutes to conduct a visioning session with your group and then design and build your project using the Legos™. Build on the piece of cardboard so you can pick it up and move it later. You must use all the Legos™ you have.

Allow time for teams to complete their projects. Observe the groups and take note of positive comments that reflect leadership in a group. Also look for individuals within each group who play the various leadership roles that were reviewed in lesson 9. Those leadership roles include creative thinker, worker bee, problem solver, time keeper, marketer, organizer, social director and point person. When teams have finished their city designs, have each one make a presentation to the entire group, describing their project. Teams may need additional time. It may take more than one session to conduct this activity.

Discussion questions:

- Was it easy to come up with the vision for this project? Why or why not?
- How many different ideas did you come up with before you decided what your main focus would be?
- How did you go about determining the details for that project?
- Did any group ultimately have a leader?
- How did you know if your ideas were good ones?
- How did others provide you with feedback?
- What were some of the leadership roles different group members filled? (Point out examples you saw as you observed.)
- Do you think you achieved your vision in your completed project?