

Helping Teens Make the Most of Reality Store Experience

There are several simple steps you can take to make teen's experience in Reality Store more meaningful and long-lasting.

- **“Reality Store Revisited” Reflection Session:** Make sure you do the “Reality Store Revisited” session (Standard Version Model on page 43 in Section 5-Preparing Teens; Stand-Alone Event Model on page 43 in Section 5-Preparing Teens). These reflection sessions help teens identify what they learned during their Reality Store experience and how they will use what they learned to meet their goals and the impact the event had on their attitudes and expectations. This activity serves as an important debriefing after the “reality shock” experienced by many teens. If possible, invite a high-school guidance counselor to attend the reflection session to explain to teens the educational options for meeting the requirements of their chosen careers.
- **Reference Reality Store During Money Matters:** If you are implementing the Standard Version, teens will start Unit 3 after completing Reality Store. Be sure to reference Reality Store during the rest of Money Matters in order to help teens use what they learned during the event. The following Unit 3 sessions also include specific references for teens to use this experience to continue to make their experience more meaningful and connect it to their Future Self:
 - Session 1: How does my credit score affect my financial future?
 - Session 2: Risk management: how can I protect financially to reach my future goals?
 - Session 4: What can I do to prepare for the long, long term (and stop working someday!)
 - Session 5: How can I make sure that I am able to handle the unexpected?
- **Integrating with Other BGCA Targeted Programs:** As part of the Money Matters Program, Reality Store is an ideal lead-in event for many BGCA targeted programs such as CareerLaunch, and diplomas to Degrees (d2D). Teens typically finish Reality Store experience with a better understanding of the importance of choosing a career that will provide for their financial well-being, making them more likely to see the benefits of and participate in a program like CareerLaunch. Similarly, teens who participate in Reality Store get exposed to the link between their education and career goals, which may make them more prepared and interested in a program like diplomas to Degrees (d2D). The few weeks following the event is a good time to encourage your teens at your Club and Youth Center to participate in other BGCA programs that are geared toward career preparation, goal-setting, and postsecondary readiness.
- **Continuing the Conversation:** Create structured and unstructured times in your Club and Youth Center to engage teens individually and in group settings about their visions for the future. This lets teens know that you are a positive and supportive adult who cares about their future. Some conversation starters that may help them identify career interests are: “What interests you the most right now?”, “What activities make you the most happy or that you are passionate about?” or “What dreams do you have for yourself?”

Planning for the Next Reality Store Event

Right after you finish one event is an excellent time to plan and begin laying a foundation for the next event. Here are some simple things to do right away.

- **Review Evaluation Forms:** As you review the Teens and Station Manager Evaluation Forms, it will become clear if any aspects of your Reality Store event need revising. Be sure to note any suggested changes you believe will enhance the experience for teens. Help BGCA continue to improve the program by going to [bgca.net](https://www.bgca.net/Programs/Pages/Money-Matters.aspx) to the Money Matters: Make it CountSM page at <https://www.bgca.net/Programs/Pages/Money-Matters.aspx> and contact the BGCA Youth Development Programs staff listed so that you can share your results!
- **Send Thank You Emails to Volunteers:** Immediately after the event, send thank-you notes to all volunteers to let them know how valuable their contribution has been to the success of the event. Invite them to return for an upcoming implementation of Reality Store, support teens in their reflection sessions or to support another Club and Youth Center program or event.
- **Survey the Planning Committee:** Talk to your planning committee members and Club and Youth Center professionals who assisted with Reality Store to gain their perspectives on the success of the event and the impact on teens. Ask for specific suggestions about how to improve the event the next time you host it. Use their feedback as well as the teen and Station Manager feedback to continue to improve your event. Be sure to also visit the Money Matters page <https://www.bgca.net/Programs/Pages/Money-Matters.aspx> on [bgca.net](https://www.bgca.net) to check for any new resources that may help you with another Reality Store event or implementing Money Matters with your teens.

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