



Space in Media Communications

1. GENERAL

This class will familiarize the Mission Team with the various aspects of space advocacy and media communications. The Mission Team will develop an understanding of space advocacy, causes that may require advocacy, and an understanding of the importance of the media and communications in society. This class is presented to expand the terrestrial and space knowledge of all Galaxy Explorers in order to enhance their competence and confidence of all aspects of space.

2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

SUBJECT AREA: Space in Media Communications

TASK: A most important aspect of this lesson is to communicate the idea that an individual can change the future. Every person can make a difference. Space advocates can change the future and they don't have to be President. They can be people you see everyday. In fact just by being a Galaxy Explorer you are acting as a space advocate and helping to promote space education. The media is an important means of changing the society around us. Educating fellow citizens can be done through the media just as much as done through formal education. In fact, much more of our information comes from our friends, our family, and our community than from our elected officials or the press.

CONDITIONS. Need a blackboard or white board, chalk or markers, or pens and a big pad of paper on an easel.

3. PRESENTATION GUIDE

Good morning/afternoon, I am _____ and I will be your teacher for Space in Media Communications. In this lesson you will learn what it takes to shape society and our culture, and you will learn that you do not have to be famous or an elected official to make society what you want it to be.

I. Let's talk about space and the media. First, what do we mean when we say media? Can anyone guess? Media refers to all means to communicate information to people. Generally, we think of this in large-scale terms. In other words, communicating to a

large group of people such as done with newspapers, television, radio, books, and web sites. There are probably more forms of media. Can you think of any? (How about short stories, articles, movies, and plays?)

Can anyone tell me why the media is important to space? Well, in fact, the media is not only important for space advocates, it is important for society as a whole. The media is an important means of changing the society around us. Educating the citizenry can be done through the media just as much as done through formal education.

II. Now, let's talk about how this relates to space. Most of space exploration in the United States is funded by the Federal Government. American citizens when they turn 18 vote for candidates for elected office. These candidates become elected to represent their constituents – constituents are people who vote. Now, elected officials try and learn what their constituents want. One of the ways this happens is by talking to advocates.

Who knows what is an advocate? It's a person who picks one idea, one topic or one cause and tries to convince people that cause is right. For example, former president Jimmy Carter has become an advocate for building homes for low income families through his affiliation with the organization Habitat for Humanity. Likewise, former Senator Bob Dole is an advocate for the handicapped because he permanently lost the use of one of his arms fighting in World War II. Maybe a better example is MTV that, as an organization, has become an advocate for voter registration with its campaign to "rock the vote."

Now space has advocates. Who can tell me what a space advocate might want?

- More space shuttle launches.
- Support for the space station.
- Land a person on Mars, Venus.
- Send more probes to other planets.
- More funding for space exploration through bigger and more powerful observatories, on earth and in orbit.

III. How could an advocate make this happen? There are several ways this could happen. An individual could start a grassroots organization which could be a community group aimed at educating their neighbors with flyers, seminars, teaching sessions, or it could be a non-profit organization that teaches school children about a specific cause. In any case, it is all about people acting at a local level rather than at the center of major political activity, or using national news to get their point across. They use local advertising, letters to politicians and businesses, or they could appear on television or radio, write letters to the editor of newspapers or magazines, or write articles for newspapers and magazines.

IV. Now that we have a little idea of how people could use the media to affect change or get things done in society, let's look at the list of causes we posted earlier. Which ones would you like to advocate and why? Who can pick one and explain why it is important to them? Let me put up a few more.

More space education at school
Scholarships for astronomers
Build a moon base
Build a space plane
Send Robots to explore the moons of Jupiter and Saturn
Search for Aliens

Conclusion: The importance of space advocacy should be highlighted through a couple of illustrative examples. President Kennedy was a space advocate. Even though he was the President of the United States he had to advocate the goal of sending a man to the moon and back to all Americans and the congress and industry or it never would have happened the way it did. On a smaller note, many space advocates got NASA to change the name of the first space shuttle to Enterprise because they were big Star Trek fans.

Activity:

Mission Team members can work in groups or on their own. Galaxy Explorers should break up into small groups and identify a cause they would like to advocate and the methods they would use to advocate it. After 10 minutes Explorers should share the ideas they came up with to each other. The objective is to reflect their own vision of space in a form of media. The numbers of activities that can be done are limited only by imagination. Specific activities include the following:

Set up a web site
Prepare and deliver a briefing to schools or civic organizations on a space related issue
Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper
Write articles in school newspaper
Host a party or conference for kids to discuss space issues