

Ele:Vate Presents...

ECONOMIS

Economis is a project of the national Ele:Vate Initiative
(Economic Literacy Education: Vital Assets for Transformation & Empowerment)

www.elevateurbanyouth.org

Ele: Vate is promoting youth financial literacy and entrepreneurship through a variety of faith-based in-school and after-school projects across the nation.

Economis...What is it?

Economis is a free, web-based, online virtual “token economy” for use in urban youth ministries. It sets up an incentive-based system for program participation and achievements while helping youth learn financial literacy skills such as appropriate use of credit and on-line banking, investing, and shopping.

Economis...How Does it Benefit My Youth Organization?

- It helps youth gain financial literacy skills, in an experiential, hands-on, interactive way
- It can help youth avoid future problems caused by mismanaging credit cards
- It teaches youth about personal financial responsibility
- It gives youth a concrete understanding of saving and investing
- It teaches youth that actions have consequences...in an experiential way that “sticks!”
- It helps your organization do a better job monitoring and tracking program participation

Economis...How Does It Work?

1. Students EARN...

- By the *timeclock* (students earn tokens at an hourly “salary” rate for participating in your programs) or by an *accomplishment* (students earn one-time, pre-set amounts for pre-determined achievements such as good grades, attendance, completion of community service projects, etc.).
- Then they receive a weekly payroll direct deposit into their bank account—with “taxes” taken out!

2. Students SAVE...

- Each student has a Savings Account they can make deposits into
- Students can purchase Certificates of Deposit (CDs) with 30, 60, and 90-day maturation periods, at varying levels of interest...and with penalties for early withdrawal

3. Students INVEST...

- Students can build a stock portfolio with “real” stocks tied to their real-world, current-time prices on Wall Street

4. Students SPEND...

- Students spend tokens thru on-line shopping at a “store” your ministry creates
- Your store “inventory” should include inexpensive and expensive items, and items attractive to different age groups

5. Students GIVE...

- Students can choose to regularly contribute a portion of their weekly earnings into a charitable fund
- Students become philanthropists as you lead them in deciding how to invest their “giving portfolio”

***Economis*...Which Types of Ministries Does it Best Suit?**

For effective implementation of *Economis*, a youth organization should have available:

- At least one computer with a good (not dial-up) Internet connection
- At least one staff person who is “computer-comfortable”
- Enough youth participants and different programs that tracking participation has begun to be challenging for your organization. (If you only have one program or a small number of participants, you could easily run a token economy on a “paper basis” – i.e., the *Economis* system might be overkill.)
- Inventory... Youth need to be able to spend their earned tokens on things that are attractive/worthwhile to them...otherwise the incentive system doesn’t really work.
- Involved kids who are at least in 3rd grade or above (middle school-high school is best)
- Youth organizations with a fixed program location
- Youth organizations able to support *Economis*’ start-up costs: (if you use debit cards and card readers--\$75 for card reader machine, \$1 per debit card); money for Internet service; and manpower for initial data-entry and set-up

***Economis*...Where Can I Learn More?**

- Watch the *Economis* webinar at www.economis.net
- Visit the Ele:Vate Project site: www.elevateurbanyouth.org
- Contact us at the Center on Faith in Communities at 434-293-5656