Paper Plate Collages

Description
This “craft-style” activity encourages youngsters to describe some of their interests, talents and personal characteristics.

Advance preparation
1. Make a paper plate collage of your own and use it to illustrate this activity.
2. Assemble the materials and arrange them so youngsters will have easy access to them.

Directions
1. Explain that this project will give everyone a chance to make a paper plate collage to illustrate interesting things about themselves.
2. Point out the materials available to make the collages. Describe how to look through the magazines for pictures, cartoons, words, and other images youngsters can use to describe things about themselves.
3. Tell youngsters to look for things that have to do with the following:
   - People who are important to you
   - Places you like to go
   - Things you like to do
   - Foods you like
   - Things you are good at doing
   - Things you would like to be able to do
   - Other things you like
4. Hold up your own paper plate collage and tell youngsters what it says about you.
5. Encourage youngsters to be creative and decorate their collages with their own words and drawings.
6. As youngsters are working on their collages, interrupt occasionally to remind them of the kinds of things to be looking for in the magazines and to ask for any questions.
7. Keep track of the time and let youngsters know when there are only five more minutes remaining to put the finishing touches on their collages.
8. Have youngsters take turns saying one or two things about what the collages illustrate about who they are.
Follow-up Discussion
Once everyone has had a chance to show their collage, ask them the following:

- How did they decide what pictures, images or words to include?
- Were there things they were looking for, but couldn’t find, that they would have liked to add to their collages?
- What was it like describing your collage to the rest of the group?

Hints
- Consider pairing youngsters with an older youth to work on this activity.
- Look for opportunities to display the completed collages, or encourage youngsters to keep them until county fair time.

Sum it up.
Comment on how interesting it has been to see what the paper plates say about everyone in the room. Explain that making the collages is a little bit like telling other people some of the things we want them to know about ourselves—and that’s the beginning of the communication process.