Teen Geek Club

Tewksbury Public Library

Young Adult

Teen Geek Club

Nov 12, 2015

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Byline

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Teen Geek Club is a weekly program for teens (grades 6 through 12) that meets every other Saturday to discuss and showcase teen fandom of pop culture (television shows, movies, books, gaming and podcasts) and enjoy snacks and fun geek activities.

Advanced Planning

Discovering a strong interest and demand for a teen program that discusses popular, geek or fandom topics, I decided it was time to create a Teen Geek Club. This idea stemmed from our Teen Animanga Club, whose members share an interest in graphic novels and other media beyond anime. Teen Geek Club definitely deserved its own time slot, as attendance had proven. I've implemented Teen Geek

Club at a couple of libraries for over a year, and it has been met with resounding success.

Since this is a reccurring program that takes place on a regular schedule, much of the planning happened in the early stages. I suggest planning at least a month in advance for proper promotion, room bookings, activity planning and supply purchasing.

For activities, the possibilities are endless! The goal is to bring teens together based on their interest in various popular media and print mediums such as TV shows, movies, books, gaming, and podcasts. The Teen Advisory Group is a great resource for gaining interest and having teens help plan Teen Geek Club (and other teen programs). Pinterest is also very helpful in coming up with themes and ideas.

Marketing

Promotion with teens is often a two-fold process as we are reaching out to both teens and their parents. Parents tend to plan better with a lot of notice, while teens often attend programs at the last minute. This program has been promoted for many weeks via in-house fliers and calendars, library events listserv posts, local newspapers, the library Facebook page, outside billboards, and on a monitor located above the circulation desk.

In addition, promoting via school visits, word of mouth and calendar distribution in other areas of the library (reference, children’s) has been a big help. All our promotion has led to solid attendance.

Budgeting

This program is truly interest-based, so there is quite a lot of discussion and sharing (which is free!). I always provide snacks and bring a laptop for showing movie trailers and YouTube videos (which teens are most happy to find and share with the group). This is all at a nominal cost. Since snacks are a must at teen programs, I would plan on spending at least $10 to $15 per program.

Costs will increase should you choose to bring additional activities like Geek Art into the program, such as duct tape "Dr. Who" bowties, button-making, "Pokémon" or "Star Wars" creations from Perler beads, or creating a geek Christmas tree. A full-fledged Teen Geek Fest — which, at our library, is held each summer and involves a cosplay contest, crafts, games, prizes, more food, etc. — costs us in the $75-to-$125 range.

You may wish to tap into your library's Friends group for funding, as well as local businesses for donations. Promoting a need for supply donations on social media can be fruitful too. Gaming systems are a one-time cost. Crafts such as altered books, ornament creation and bookmarks from discarded books can cost you next to nothing.

Day-of-event Activity

I need 30 to 45 minutes for set-up on a Saturday. (I do a back-to-back program — Teen Animanga Club, then Teen Geek Club immediately following.) I arrange tables, chairs (in a group), snack table, craft/activity table and an audiovisual set-up with laptop, projector and a screen. I have also brought in video gaming equipment.

I enlist enthusiastic teens to help with set-up and clean-up so one staff member can easily run the program. I have found that bringing the latest teen books and other new library additions has helped circulation numbers. This requires a bit of advance prep.

As far as challenges go, introductions can take tons of time, so you'll want to facilitate that process so your group can move on to other activities.

Program Execution

Teens are very excited to share their fandom with others. Our Teen Geek Club meets every other Saturday for 90 mins. Attendance ranges from 10 to 38 teens at a regular Teen Geek Club meeting and 60 teens at Teen Geek Fest.

To start, teens grab snacks and introduce themselves; they are encouraged to share any new geeky discoveries and convention attendance. This generates a lot of discussion — and new friendships — among the group. After intros, teens will sometimes ask to see movie trailers or find various YouTube videos.

Teen Geek Club is run like a casual mini-con with different tables for discussion. (Teens can move around anytime.) Some helpful guidelines include:

- No spoilers!
- Respect each person’s opinions and preferences.
- Have fun!

Tables could include (with suggestions):

- Brit Track ("Dr. Who," "Sherlock")
- Cards or RPG gaming (Pokémon, Yu-Gi-Oh!, Magic: The Gathering)
- High & Urban Fantasy ("Lord of the Rings," "Harry Potter," "Supernatural," "Once Upon a Time")
- Sci Fi ("Star Wars," "Star Trek")
- Comic-verse (DC, Marvel)
- Video gaming ("Mario" is a big hit!)
- Nerds and activities (a table for book and podcast discussions and crafts/activities. The miscellaneous table!)

Advice

Ask the teens what THEY want! Their input, with guidance and expertise, will always help create a great teen program. Hand out Post-its and pens so they can list all the geeky things they love. Then have teens add these items to a wall or white board. A great discussion starter!

Share what makes YOU a geek — your own interests.

Encourage teens to bring — at their responsibility — their own gaming systems, games and cards, iPads/tablets, sketchbooks (fan art) and writings (fan fiction).

Ask for purchasing suggestions for books and AV materials, including videogames.

For spoiler caution: Always speak about a show in general terms. Warn fans about any spoiler alerts and encourage teens who are fine with spoilers to break out into a quiet group.

You may find this program encourages other new programs, such as gaming tournaments, writing groups and craft programs.

Be sure to offer the option for teens to cosplay.

Check out various professional journals and Pinterest for event or activity ideas.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
teen_geek_club_flier.pdf
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

Slideshow Images



Image







More Programs

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Summer Music Programs for Teens and Tweens

Audiences:

Audience
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Discover Your Inner Frankenstein

Audiences:

Audience
Children (9 and under)
Young Adult (17 - 20)