

# TEACHING MOCK TRIALS

The following materials may provide some ideas that advisors can use in teaching students and youth group members about short mock courtroom trials. They may be adapted to best suit your local educational goals.

These materials were written for use with brief classroom mock trials involving all students in the classroom, which is different than the mock trial described in the latter pages of this kit. The case presented in this kit includes a longer, more involved mock trial with up to three attorneys per side, four witnesses, and no jury.

However, these materials can be used with an entire class, from which the competition team can then be formed. When the in-class activities are completed, the competition team can practice outside of class. This mock trial program can also be used with extra-curricular groups such as school debate teams or youth groups including scout troops, YMCA Youth & Government groups, teen church groups, homeschoolers etc. Students on each team must be from the same high school or a pre-existing member of the same youth group.

Much of the material in these lesson plans was developed by what was formerly the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law.

## EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF THE MOCK TRIAL PROGRAM

**Participation in this educational opportunity demands quite a bit of time from teachers and attorneys, but the benefits will make it worthwhile.**

**Some of the educational benefits for students are:**

- Knowledge of practical law and trial procedure and education about the legal profession.
- Increase in student motivation to excel and participate fully.
- Development of research, organization, planning and preparation skills.
- Development of oral advocacy skills.
- Enhancement of communication skills -- speaking, listening, writing.
- Enhancement of reasoning, critical thinking and analytical skills.
- Development of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Knowledge of strategies for conflict resolution.
- Experience in team effort.
- Substantive knowledge about the issues presented in the case.