

# Proven ideas from Jostens Renaissance



*One of the most powerful aspects of Jostens Renaissance is the collection of great ideas that are shared by schools like yours. Here are a few of the best ideas Jostens Renaissance schools have recently shared. For more ideas like this and a wealth of other Jostens Renaissance resources, contact your Jostens representative or visit [Jostens.com/edserv](http://Jostens.com/edserv).*

## Shifting of the Classes

Submitted by: Ann Schmidt  
Conrad Weiser High School  
Robesonia, PA

The Friday before Memorial Day we begin the day honoring the outgoing senior class with a senior breakfast to start the day. After breakfast, we have an assembly in the morning that begins with a speaker or presenter that communicates a positive and motivating message to our students. Then we begin the Shifting of the Classes. It starts with the staffulty (all in the same t-shirt provided by CW Renaissance) forming a long chute across the gym. We play the senior class song and ask all other students to stand and allow the seniors to progress out of the gym for the last time to a standing ovation from the staffulty and student body. They leave and go to a Renaissance function outside where they receive their yearbooks, sign notes to thank their teachers and receive any giveaways we might have for them.

Back in the gym we change the music and allow the juniors to shift into the senior spot assuming their new rank of seniors. Then they rip off the outgoing senior class year and reveal their graduation class. Again changing the music, it is the sophomores' turn to walk across the gym through the staffulty chute and assume their new rank as juniors. We change the music again as the freshmen shift into the sophomore spot. Finally, with much pomp and circumstance, the 8th graders will have arrived from the Middle School and fill in the freshmen spot in the gym. Once the new classes for the next school year are in their appropriate places we introduce our new club presidents and set expectations for the new school year.

We've found this to be an incredible way to honor our outgoing seniors and make them feel extremely honored on this day. The second positive result from this day is that we set the expectations for the following school year. Our high school administration is very supportive of this idea!

## Most Inspirational Teacher

Submitted by: Mike Goyne  
Ashley High School  
Wilmington, NC

At Ashley High School, we're in the early stages of our Jostens Renaissance journey. We knew that it was important to say thank you and recognize our teachers, so one of the first programs that we implemented was our "Most Inspirational Teacher" program. Initially, two teachers were selected by students in our Renaissance team as their "Most Inspirational Teachers" and were given a framed poster to hang in their classroom. The back of the poster is autographed by the teacher and the presenting student. Every two weeks the process is repeated as the teachers that were selected choose two students to present the posters to their "Most Inspirational Teacher!" After the posters are presented, the in-school announcements the following day provide details on why these teachers were chosen and which students selected them!



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## Girls Only!

Submitted by: Chris Brown  
Belhaven Middle School  
Linwood, NJ

Our school emphasizes the power of all students to realize their potential as leaders through Jostens Renaissance. We noticed that many girls, upon reaching 7th grade, began to step back from their roles as leaders. Many middle school girls experience a drop in self-esteem, greater difficulty with schoolwork and problems with relationships. We wanted to find a way to connect the girls back to Renaissance and, more importantly, back to themselves.

The “Girls Only!” series addresses these issues, and many more. The three components of Girls Only! are weekly meetings, bimonthly workshops and a final sleepover at the end of the year. Weekly meetings take place in the guidance office with a small group of identified girls. Issues of relational aggression (bullying) and self-esteem are addressed over lunch while girls work on group projects like planning a school dance or creating scrapbooks.

Bimonthly workshops combine serious topics with fun, “girly” activities that allow girls to connect with their classmates. Topics include, “How to Survive 7th Grade,” “Friendship and a Manicure” and “Miss Manners.” All seventh grade girls are invited. These workshops are a great opportunity for girls to interact on a level playing field. They are often surprised by how much they have in common with girls they hadn’t really spoken with before.

The culminating activity is a sleepover in June in the school library. The weekend is filled with workshops, team-building activities and lots of fun. A local makeup artist visits to give the girls tips on “natural beauty,” emphasizing the importance of positive self-esteem. A martial arts expert teaches the girls self-defense moves and allows them to break boards with their hands. Written on the boards are “barriers” they need to break through to be healthy and happy: poor body image, family alcoholism, low self-esteem, etc.

The girls also enjoy being served dinner by the staff chaperones – the cafeteria is candlelit and tables are set with real china and linens. Every moment of the weekend is packed with activities all designed to foster positive self-esteem and to reinforce the principles of Renaissance. We even had a “Role Models Reception” the week after the sleepover to share a slide show and conversation with the girls’ mothers or guardians.

Since last year’s sleepover, the girls are achieving more A’s and fewer C’s, hold leadership positions in school clubs, and enthusiastically participate in Renaissance activities. More noticeable are the intangibles: girls that hold their heads high walking down the hallway, or say hello to kids they never would have spoken to. One of the girls said it best: “Even though we may be in different cliques we are a lot alike on the inside.” We’re proud of our girls for believing in themselves enough to break down walls and lead through positive example. Girls Only! has strengthened our school community as well as our Renaissance process.

