

## Steering with the Sails

### On the White Board:

- Draw a profile of the boat hull and sails. Explain that the keel serves as the pivot point for the boat, so that when the boat turns to port, the stern turns to starboard (and vice versa).
- Erase the jib (or main). Ask what pressure on only one sail forward (or aft) would do to the boat's steering. Using the model for this works quite well. Just hold the keel and push on the main or the jib. Make sure that everyone understands this concept, then move out on the water.

### On the Boat:

- Once out on the water and with the sails set, review how the boat pivots on the keel, which is just aft of the mast. The main, aft of the keel, pushes the bow toward the wind, and the jib does the opposite.
- On a close reach, bungee the tiller in the center. Then put one person in charge of the mainsheet, and one in charge of the jibsheet. Adjusting only one at a time, allow them to experiment with how this change in pressure affects the boat's course.
- Often people think trimming *in* is the only way to change pressure, so you will need to show them that easing the sheet works as well, if not better.
- Show them how to balance the sails to hold a course
- After everyone has had a chance to control the main and jib, try tacking. Sometimes this can be difficult, making it a perfect opportunity to introduce crew weight into the equation. Shifting everyone to leeward will help the boat point into the no go zone. Releasing the jib, and even backing it, also helps get past the eye of the wind and complete the tack as well.
- After tacking, jibing can follow, though this is even more challenging with our blade jibs. It will also not work in stronger wind, as the wind heeling the boat to leeward will counteract attempts to heel to windward with crew weight. (Unless you have a lot of crew weight)
- All in all, I love teaching this clinic. Talking about how singlehanded sailors balance the boat to go where they want without steering, finishing long distance races with no rudder, etc.