



Group Initiatives

Name: My Name Is

Equipment: Comfortable area for sitting or standing

Objective: To learn names and qualities about members in the group.

Procedure: Have each person say their name and something about themselves

Variations: 1) Without saying anything, have participants collect as many leaves or sticks as they can. For each object collected they have to say one thing about themselves.

2) Everyone stands in a circle, one person enters the middle of the circle and says their name and something they like to do. (I'm Mary and I like to overhaul transmissions.) They then leave the center of the circle and all other members move in toward the center and repeat the previous person's name and the thing they like to do in a sing-song fashion. (She's Mary and she likes to overhaul transmissions.)

3) Have each person say their name and either an adjective or an animal that starts with the same letter as their first name to describe them (Lovely Laura... Laura Lion).

4) Challenge someone to say everyone's name in the circle.

5) Use an object to decide who says their name and a quality next. People can be tossed the object more than once and they must give a different object each time.

Safety Notes: None

Name: 1-1 Interviews

Equipment: None needed

Objective: To learn names and qualities about members in the group.

Procedure: Everyone gets a partner. Each person gets a total of 2 minutes to talk about him/herself with partner.

When group reconvenes, each person introduces their partner to the large group.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Group Juggle

Equipment: 5-6 Tennis Balls

Objective: To learn names and begin group cooperation.

Procedure: The group forms a circle. The facilitator says the name of someone and throws a ball to that person. The ball cannot be thrown to the person immediately next to them. Continue this process until each person has touched the ball only once. Repeat this same pattern throwing one ball a few times always tossing to the same person. Continue to repeat the pattern adding a ball each time. Continue until you one ball for every 3 people up in the air. Encourage participants to use the names and eye contact. When they have the pattern down, have them reverse the order so that they are now tossing to the person they used to receive the ball from.

Variations: 1) Use different sized objects for increased difficulty.

2) Toss in pattern – Start with the leader, "A", throwing to the person, "B", directly opposite in the circle. They in turn toss the ball to person "C" who is to the leader's right. That person tosses the ball to person "D" whom is to the left of person "B." This continues and the ball eventually returns to the leader. Use only one ball to begin. This hits on listening skills.

3) See how many balls they can juggle in 30 seconds instead of time a specific number of balls back to the leader.

4) Instead of saying only the name of the person you throw the ball to give the name of the person you received the ball from, the name given the ball, your own name, the name of who you are passing the ball to and a name for the ball. Example: I just received a cloud from Tom; my name is Jane; I'm passing a snail to Sarah.

5) Do not tell the group they can't move from their position in the circle. Just tell the group that the ball must touch everyone in the same order. Once they figure to move around some, then the time will drop dramatically. More problem solving in this case.

Safety Notes: Toss the ball underhand and do not use sharp objects.

Discussion Questions: How difficult is it to change directions? How easy or hard is it to juggle so many things at once? Simplify lifestyle?

Name: Zip-Zap

Equipment: Comfortable area for standing.

Objective: To learn names.

Procedure: All form a circle. The leader instructs all to learn the names of the persons to their right and left. When he points to a person and says “Zip”, that person must give the names of the neighbor on the left before the leader counts to ten. When the leader says “Zap”, the name of the neighbor to the right is given; “Zonk” is said to get the person to tell his name. If the person fails to give the proper name by the count of 10, he must go into the circle.

Variations: None, Safety Notes: None

Name: Inside Outside

Equipment: Tennis ball and comfortable area for standing.

Objective: Working together and becoming comfortable with each other.

Procedure: Standing in a circle, using both hands, pass the ball to the right completely around the outside of the circle. The ball should start and stop at the same place. Have them see how quickly they can do this. Time this and let them practice to improve their time. Then using the left hand only, have them pass the ball to the left around the inside of the circle.

Once the ball is at the start again it reverses directions (goes to the right), is handled only by the right hand and stops at the beginning. Again time this and let them practice. Finally, combine both parts above into one continuous activity and time it. Record the time and practice.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: “Have You Ever?”

Equipment: Chairs or tape in a circle. Enough for every member in the group except the facilitator.

Objective: Get to know one another. Ice Breaker.

Procedure: The facilitator starts in the middle by asking a question that is true for him/herself. Example: Have you ever had a broken arm? All those who have done this must change spots. They cannot take the spot next to them on either side. The last person to find a new spot is now in the middle.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Teamwork

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Beginning level on group working together and building energy level of the group.

Procedure: Explain that from now on whenever you say “teamwork”, the group will have to run to wherever you are standing, surround you, place their arms through one another’s arms and put their hands on top of their head by the time you finish spelling the word teamwork. Ask them how long it took them and challenge them to do it faster each time.

When the group least expects it, say the word; try to catch them off guard.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Careful of tripping over an object or other persons.

Name: People to People

Equipment: Space to move around

Objective: To expose group to close proximity activities.

Procedure: Everyone starts with a partner. The facilitator stays in the middle shouting out commands, such as hand to hand, foot to foot, hip to hip, ear to Achilles tendon, etc. The command Velcro means you must keep body parts together between commands. People to People means everyone needs to find a new partner.

Variations: If there’s an odd number, play so that the person with no partner must shout out commands.

Safety Notes: Leader needs to use discretion to avoid potential embarrassing situations.

Name: Shape game

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Low level working together and energy builder.

Procedure: Pick a shape and instruct the group to make this shape with you (the leader) in the center of the shape. Once they get the shape formed (or close to it), the leader should begin to move around so that the group must move and remake the shape. Continue moving around at a comfortable level to encourage their working together. Eventually they may not let the leader out of their boundaries 😊.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Take care in running.

Discussions: Sticking together

Name: Amoeba Race

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Low level working together, energy builder, educational – learning about an amoeba.

Procedure: Choose some of the players to be the protoplasm (they go to the center of the playing area). Now choose several players to be the cell wall (they circle the protoplasm, facing out, and link elbows to make a sturdy cell wall to contain the protoplasm). Now you need one person to be the nucleus (this person goes inside the amoeba and has to sit on the shoulder of some of the protoplasm). The amoeba must race to a designated site.

Variations: Have a relay race with multiple teams of “amoeba”

Safety Notes: Watch the carrying of the “nucleus.”

Name: Known and Unknown

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Work in close proximity.

Procedure: Start in a circle. The facilitator should instruct the members to each silently pick a person to be their Known and a different person to be their Unknown. Once everyone has their people picked, when the facilitator says to, the group members should attempt to protect their Known from their Unknown (stay physically between their Known and Unknown person). Continue at this for a few minutes until the facilitator instructs the members to put their right hand on their Known and their left hand on their Unknown and attempt to introduce them to each other.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Wa

Equipment: Space for a large circle.

Objective: To build energy as an icebreaker.

Procedure: A round lasts until there is a winner. To begin a round everyone bows to the leader saying “Wa.” The leader bows and returns the “Wa.” Then the leader picks one of 4 animals. He makes the motion quickly and yells “Wa.”

Everyone else must instantly give the motions of one of the 4 animals also saying “Wa.” People get out by being too slow or by making the same motion as the leader. You continue the game by moving left from the leader. Whoever is to the left of the leader makes a motion and everyone responds, and so on. The last person left wins that round. You can play as many rounds as you like.

The four animals and motions are:

- Bear (hands in fist, elbows bent, hands by waist)
- Fireball (hands making the shape of a ball with arms straight in front of you)
- Dragon (hands up by ears, palms pointing forward)
- Snake (right elbow sitting on left hand with right hand making a snake head)

Variations: Use the following animals.

- Bear (same as above)
- Snake (same as above)
- Dragon (same as fireball above)
- Pelican (similar to dragon, but stand on one foot)

Safety Notes: None

Name: Big Bootie (or other appropriate name)

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Listening Skills and Icebreaker.

Procedure: Start in a circle. Leader starts as big bootie. Number 1 - ? (how many you have starting with person to the left of Big bootie) leaving the last person as little bootie. As you play, the purpose is to become Big Bootie. To play, the leader gets the rhythm going with clapping and knee slapping:

Ah big bootie - Big Bootie, big bootie, big bootie - Big bootie, #?

You continue with whoever’s number was called, they say their own number and someone else’s number or big bootie.

Example: Ah big bootie – Big bootie, big bootie, big bootie - #4, #5. And in the #5 spot, big bootie could be substituted.

Whoever breaks the rhythm moves to the little bootie spot and everyone moves up a number. If you send it back to big bootie and big bootie messes up then you take the place of big bootie and big bootie becomes little bootie.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Whiz-Boink

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Listening skills, and Icebreaker.

Procedure: An “air ball” is being passed around the circle. A whiz moves the ball (right or left of the person) in the same direction that the palm is facing. A boink changes the direction of the ball. If you want to boink, you must use the hand and the palm that is opposite of the direction the ball *was* moving. A swoosh moves the ball to the other side of the circle. A person swooshes by making a motion of shooting a basketball and follows through by pointing to the person you are sending it to. That person must kerplunk (accept) the ball by making a basket shape with their arms and curtsy with their legs. Then the person can send the ball with a whiz, etc. A Sha-na-na-na-na also sends the ball across the circle by stepping in the direction of, wiggling and pointing your finger(s) to the person. A Fa-na-na-na-na must be done to accept a sha-na-na-na-na. This is done by stepping and wiggling your fingers before passing the ball on with a whiz, swoosh or sha-na. You get out by making incorrect noises, using the wrong hand, pausing too much, etc. Once you get out it is your duty to be obnoxious and try to distract the remaining players.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None, Don’t be too obnoxious on the outside ☺.

Name: Ships A-Coming

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Energizer, Icebreaker, and Listening Skills.

Procedure: This game is similar to Simon says but with specific motions. The Leader needs to explain and demonstrate the following motions:

- ships side (run that direction – or pick a direction to run)
- shore side (run opposite of ships side)
- captain on deck (stand stiff and salute)
- At ease (hands behind back, relaxed)
- Sea Sick (bend over and make a puking motion)
- Mop the deck (make a mopping motion)
- Hit the deck (lay stomach on ground)
- Sea Monster (lay back on ground and shake legs and arms in air)
- Row the boat (3 people in line, rowing and singing Row Your Boat)
- Meal time (4 people in circle making gobble, gobble noises)

Must follow what leader says. Can only come out of *Captain on deck* by saying *At Ease*. People get out if they do wrong motion, come out of captain on deck at wrong time or can’t get in correct group sizes quick enough.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Don’t throw up on anyone!

Name: Follow the Leader

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Listening and Observation Skills.

Procedure: Have the group follow the facilitator in a straight line. Players must do everything you do: hug a tree, smell a flower, examine a leaf, listen, jump, skip, etc.

Variations: Switch leaders and give members of the group a chance.

Safety Notes: None.

Name: Look Up, Look Down

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Deinhbitizer

Procedure: Stand in a circle. A caller must yell the commands look up, look down, look. Each member in the group must do the commands and on the “look”, people look at the eyes of one person in the circle. If eye contact is made, they leave the circle, the circle closes in and another round is played. Play continues until 1 or 2 persons are left.

Variations: Make the leaving dramatic. Scream loudly and pretend that you got zapped.

Safety Notes: None

Name: Chicken Hit

Equipment: A rubber chicken or other soft long object will work. (Just change the name of the game then)

Objective: To learn names.

Procedure: Everyone sits in a circle with their legs in the middle like the spokes on a wheel. One person stands in the middle with a chicken. Someone starts by calling the name of someone else in the circle. The chicken-hitter tries to hit the called person's name before they call someone else. If hit before calling a name, they are the new chicken-hitter. The old chicken hitter must then say a new name to start things rolling before their butt touches the ground, otherwise they are automatically back in. No flinching.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Bees in a Hive

Materials: 2 balls.

Objectives: Energy builder and deinhbitizer.

Procedure: A circle is marked off. Everyone except two goes inside. The people on the outside have softball, and are trying to get everyone else on their team. They do this by hitting the people on the inside with the ball on a bounce pass. They can run around the outside and pass to team members.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Don't allow balls thrown at the head.

Name: Bumpity, Bump, Bump, Bump

Materials: Space for a circle.

Objectives: To learn names, icebreaker.

Procedure: Everyone starts in a circle with one person in the middle. This person points to someone and says either 'left' or 'right'. The person they point to must say the person's name who is on their left or right before the person in the middle says 'bumpity bump bump bump'. Later add 'me' (the person in the middle) and 'you' (the person being pointed to).

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Paired Activities

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Begin working together, ice breaker.

Procedure: 1) Tie Your Shoe: Two people attempt to tie a shoe by each using one hand.

2) Hand slap: The classic game where one person tries to slap the hands of the other – a good time to talk about challenge by choice and full value contract.

3) Wallets: Show the contents of your wallet to your partner.

4) Finger Fencing: Hold opposite hands with partner. Stick out your index finger and try to poke your partner in the leg.

5) High Fives: Create 3 new high fives with your partner.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Get the Point

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Deinhbitizer.

Procedure: Everyone stands in a circle and holds out their left hand, palm up. Then they put the index finger of their right hand in the palm of the person to their right. On a signal, they try to catch that person's finger without getting their finger caught.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Evolution; Morph

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Deinhbitizer, energizer.

Procedure: Morph

Everyone must know how to play rock/paper/scissors for this game. Then everyone starts as an egg by squatting down. They find another egg and do rock/paper/scissors. Whoever wins morphs into a chicken, the other one stays as an egg and find another egg to continue the game. The new chicken finds a chicken and does rock/paper/scissors. The winner morphs into a dinosaur, while the other one demorphs back to an egg. The dinosaur finds another dinosaur and does rock/paper/scissors. The winner morphs into a superhero, while the other demorphs back to a chicken. The superhero finds

another superhero and does rock/paper/scissors. The winner morphs into an immortal, who then gets to look smug and watch the rest of the game. The other one demorphs into a dinosaur and keeps trying. During this game, the players must say what they are using the phrase repeatedly, 'I'm an egg, I'm an egg, etc.'

Variations: More or less stages of this game and different names for each stage can be used.

Safety Notes: None

Name: Blob

Equipment: Space to move around

Objective: Beginning Cooperation games, energizer.

Procedure: Set up playing boundaries and choose one player. Begin a normal game of tag. When a player is tagged, they are not "it," they become part of the "Blob," and join hands with the first player. Now the two of them must cooperate to chase down and tag other people, who become part of the Blob. Only the people at the ends are allowed to tag. The Blob must not break apart!

Variations: Add-On-Tag: Start with the group holding hands with a partner. One pair is 'it' and tries to tag another pair. If tagged, they join the first pair and the four of them run off to catch another pair until the whole group is joined.

Safety Notes: Watch fingers as the Blob joins hands.

Name: Catch the Dragon's Tail

Equipment: handkerchief or string

Objective: Beginning Cooperation games, energizer.

Procedure: Have everyone line up, one behind the other. Now have everyone put their arms around the waist of the person in front of them. The last person in line (the tail) tucks the handkerchief in their pocket or belt. On your signal, the dragon's head (the first person in line) must try to catch and capture the handkerchief. If you have 16 to 20 people, try making two dragons who are trying to catch each others tails.

Variations: To play multiple rounds, rotate the front person to the back and mover everyone up after each round.

Safety Notes: Usual running safety is required.

Name: Caterpillar

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Energizer, Beginning Cooperation games.

Procedure: Have all the players stand in a line, then have them wrap their arms around the waist of the person in front of them. This is the caterpillar; they must co-operate to perform tasks you assign them. Example: go up the hill, around the tree, then come back to me without breaking apart.

Variations: Be creative in the tasks!

Safety Notes: Quickness, although important, is less important than Safety. Take care of your teammates and watch for tripping, etc.

Name: Create a Camel

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Beginning Cooperation games.

Procedure: The leader gives them a unique animal. The first player assumes a position as the head or body of the animal. Other players then take other positions- arms, legs, humps, horns, etc. The head may even create the animal noise.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Tug of War

Equipment: Rope

Objective: Group Cooperation, Energizer.

Procedure: Divide the group into teams. Each team gets an end of the rope and, on your signal, starts pulling.

Variations: 1) Have each team start about ten feet away from the rope. On your signal, they make a mad dash to grab the rope and start tugging.

2) Have 3 groups. Two start the tug of war and, on your signal, the third team runs to join the fray (each member can decide which side to tug for and anyone can change sides at any time).

Safety Notes: Be careful or rope burn on hands and people falling over each other if it gets lopsided.

Name: Skin the Snake

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Group cooperation.

Procedure: Line up the players. Each person places one hand back through his legs. This hand is grabbed by the next person in line. The snake then can race to see how fast they can skin their snake. The last player in line lies down while the next to last player backs over her. This player then lies down while the next player backs over him and so on until the entire line of players is down. Then the players must reverse the process to put the skin back on the snake before the game is over.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Hug a Tree

Equipment: One Blindfold per Member and an area with enough trees for everyone to have their own.

Objective: Increase sensory observation skills.

Procedure: Guide each blindfolded person to a tree and leave them there for a few minutes. The players must not walk or move from the place they are put, but they can sit down if they want. The player is to become familiar with the tree, the texture of the bark, its shape, size, etc. When all the players have had enough time to investigate their tree, retrieve them, put them all in a central location and have them remove their blindfolds and try to find their tree again. Follow up activities may include Tree Imagery or bark rubbings.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Careful of tripping players while leading them blindfolded.

Name: Is That All?

Equipment: Some natural items.

Objective: Increase observation and descriptive skills.

Procedure: Have the players sit cross-legged in a circle. Choose one natural item and give it to one of the players. The player must say something about the item, then should pass it to the person next to them, who has to say something about the item, etc. The observations can be factual, subjective, poetic, sensory, etc.; the only rule is that you can't repeat someone else's observation.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Sounds

Equipment: Space for a circle, preferably outside.

Objective: Increase sound awareness, concentration and group discussion.

Procedure: Have the group sit quietly on the ground. Have all players close their eyes. Then, they listen. As the players hear sounds, they can keep count on their fingers of how many, different sounds they hear. After an appropriate time, the leader can end the activity. Possible follow up activities are to discuss and describe all the different sounds, to explore the origin of certain sounds, or a poetry session.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Tree Imagery

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: To increase the player's awareness and imagination.

Procedure: Have the group lie comfortably on their backs, eyes closed. Guide them on an imagery trip through a tree (must as in "Everybody Needs a Rock"). An example of Joseph Cornell's version is included (you may find there is must too much "science" in this version for your particular group; gear the trip to the group's age, knowledge, and skills – Refer to attached insert where I found this activity!!!).

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Grab Bag

Equipment: Paper bags, several natural items.

Objective: Increase the sense of touch and descriptive skills.

Procedure: Take several natural items (leaves, bones, teeth, fur) and place one each in a paper bag. Have the group sit in a circle and give each person a bag. They must feel, not look at the items, take turns describing the items, and the group can try to guess what it is.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Habitat

Equipment: Space for a circle and a bottle.

Objective: To increase knowledge of animal's surroundings.

Procedure: Have all of the group sit cross-legged in a circle. They softly chant, "Food, place, shelter... food, place shelter..." A bottle is placed in the center of the circle and spun. When the bottle stops spinning, the player it is pointing to must name the food, place (habitat), or shelter of an animal you designate (don't forget birds, insects, amphibians, and reptiles.) One person can't repeat what another person has said if the same animal comes up twice in the game.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Reimer Ball

Equipment: A kickball or some other soft ball.

Objective: Energizer and deinhbitizer.

Procedure: Everyone plays for himself or herself. Attempt to hit others (not in the head) with the ball. If you get hit, you must go down on knees. While on your knees, you can get up if you tag someone standing (then you switch places) or if you get the ball and hit someone. While on your knees, you may also move around. If you catch the ball, the thrower goes down on knees. If you hit someone in the head, you go down on knees. The last person standing wins.

Variations: Don't let people on their knees move around. This usually works better for a larger group in a small area.

Safety Notes: Throwing the ball and bad knees.

Name: Einstein Tag

Equipment: A kickball or some other soft ball.

Objective: Energizer and deinhbitizer.

Procedure: One person starts out on the "team". This person is trying to get everyone on the "team" by hitting other people with the ball. When they hit someone, that person becomes a part of the "team" and they assist in adding members to the "team". People on the "team" cannot run with the ball. To move, throw it on the group and pick it up again. If you are not on the "team" you can catch the ball to avoid getting it. In this case, just drop the ball where you are and avoid getting hit.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Throwing the ball at the head is not ahead.

Name: Everybody's It

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Ice Breaker and Energizer.

Procedure: Establish boundaries before beginning. In this game, everybody is it. On a signal, everyone runs and tries to tag someone. If tagged, one squats down until one person is left. This game usually ends pretty quickly.

Variations: 1) To allow for a longer game, after being tagged, cover the spot tagged with one hand. They can be tagged twice, using both hands to hold the areas tagged. When they are tagged a third time, they must kneel down.

Play until there is only one person left.

2) Allow only sideways or backwards running.

Safety Notes: Usual running safety is required.

Name: Elbow Tag

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Energizer and Ice breaker.

Procedure: Stand in pairs hooked at the elbows, and spread out randomly in an open space. Two people start out, one chasing the other. When either the chaser or chasee becomes tired he may hook onto one of the pairs of people. At this point, the person on the other end (the third person) must detach and assume the role of the person who just hooked on (whether chaser or chasee). When the person being chased is tagged the roles are reversed and chasee becomes chaser. A good adaptation to this game is to have the chasee mimic any movement (no matter how silly) the chaser makes!!

Variations: Play where the chaser cannot hook onto a pair to relieve him of his duties of trying to catching someone.

Safety Notes: Usual running safety is required.

Name: Octopus

Equipment: Open field safe for running.

Objective: Energizer and ice breaker.

Procedure: Line up on one side of the field and choose someone as the octopus to stand alone in the middle of the field. The person in the middle (octopus) will yell, “fishy, fishy come swim in my sea.” Everyone will try to run to the other side of the field without being tagged. If a person is tagged by the octopus, they must stop immediately where they are. They are now an octopus’s helper and will try to capture the other fish by tagging them as they pass by. However, they cannot move from their frozen spot. Play until every fish has been captured.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Usual running safety is required.

Name: Triangle Tag

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Energizer and ice breaker.

Procedure: Divide into groups of four. Three of the four join hands to make a triangle, and one is the chaser. The triangle needs to decide which one is the target. The chaser must try to figure out who the target is and tag the target on the body, not the hands or arms, and they cannot tag across the triangle. Play until each person has had a turn outside the triangle as the chaser.

Variations: When you don’t have an even number of 4 modify the number of triangles, the number of chasers or the shape of the triangle to a square or pentagon.

Safety Notes: Usual running safety is required.

Name: Toe Tag

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Ice breaker and Energizer.

Procedure: Have people pair up and hold their partner by the shoulders. The object is to touch the partner’s feet or foot 3 times while protecting their own feet from being touched . . . the game quickly becomes a fast paced, foot stomping activity!

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Careful of smashing toes and heads hitting.

Name: Stand Off

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Ice breaker, deinhbitizer.

Procedure: Partners stand face to face and match palms. The object is to cause your partner to lose her balance using only hand contact. If you move your feet or are thrown off balance, your partner gets a point. Play until someone gets to three.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Giants Wizards Elves

Equipment: Open field for running and chasing.

Objective: Energizer and Ice Breaker.

Procedure: Two teams line up and face each other. The two groups will then huddle up secretly and decide if they will be giants, wizards or elves. Giants beat the wizards, wizards beat the elves, and elves beat the giants. When a decision is made the teams return to face one another and they all yell out which creature they are and they must also display the sign for the character they choose. Giants are arms straight out above the head and standing on tip toes, wizards are arms straight out in front of the body in a swaying motion and one foot in front of the other leg stance, and elves are hands on the head making ears with two fingers and squatting down. The team displaying the dominant sign chases the members of the other team and tries to tag them before they reach their predetermined back line boundary and are safe. If a person is tagged, they become part of the other team.

Variations: Use different creatures – Gorilla, Man, Gun; etc.

Safety Notes: Use care when chasing each other.

Name: Speed Rabbit

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Ice-Breaker and beginning listening skills.

Procedure: The group forms a circle. The leader starts in the middle and points to someone and calls out an animal, such as an *elephant*. The person pointed to must make a trunk and the people on either side form ears. Meanwhile, the person in the middle is counting to 10 as fast as they can. If the people make the elephant before 10, the person stays in the middle. If they don’t, the slowest person goes in the middle and becomes the pointer. Other ‘beings’ can be:

Moose – middle makes a nose and sides make antlers;

Shark – middle makes jaws and sides show fear;

Flight attendant – middle puts on oxygen mask and sides point to exits;

Ostrich – sides hold hands to make sand and middle puts head in sand;

Cow – middle holds hands with thumbs pointing down and sides pull thumbs to ‘milk’ the cow;

Jello – sides hold hands around middle person and middle shakes saying Wobble, wobble, wobble;

Roller Coaster – middle holds face back with hands (as if in heavy G-forces) and sides make roller coaster motions with hands;

Rabbit – middle makes rabbit ears and sides stomps ground with foot.

Supermodel – middle poses like a model and sides ‘shoot’ pictures

Variations: Instead of counting to 10 use Bippity boppity bop to time how quickly they must form the motions. Using these words you can also point to someone and say this phrase Bippity Boppity Bop and the person you point to must say Bop before you finish. Or you can use any beginning, such as Clippity Cloppity Clop before they say Clop, etc.

Safety Notes: None

Name: Cinnamon Roll

Equipment: Rope and space to move around.

Objective: Deinhbitizer and cooperation.

Procedure: Have group line up next to each other holding hands. Using a spiral technique, roll the group up into a tight ball. Tie the rope loosely around the outside of the group and ask them to cover a specific distance over the ground.

Variations: 1) Have them race another cinnamon roll.

2) Have them maneuver around a set of obstacles.

3) Group must learn something about each individual before returning

4) Any combination of not speaking or seeing.

5) Have one or two individuals teach the group a new song.

Safety Notes: Remind them to not go too fast and to hold themselves together.

Name: Shooters Delight

Equipment: Many soft balls or other soft objects.

Objective: Deinhbitizer, coordination and strategy.

Procedure: 2 or 3 people stand back to back to each other while the rest of the group stands around them in a 20’-30’ diameter circle. Each person in the outer circle has 1-2 objects. On a signal from the director the outer group throws their objects toward the waiting targets. The object is to see how many objects the inner circle can catch. This is not as easy as it may sound. See who is able to catch the most objects. Because it is actually very hard and the fun is in the relative failure to catch many – down play success and competition.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None – just make sure the balls are soft.

Name: Progression

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Energizer, ice-breaker, and increase listening and memorization skills

Procedure: Stand in the middle of the group and have, or memorize, a list of activities for them to perform in sequence.

For example: Shake hands with someone on the other side of the circle; spin around twice; shake hands with someone on the other side of circle, spin around twice, whistle “Row, row, row, you boat”. Repeat those 3 then add another, and another, etc.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Lap Sit

Equipment: Space for a circle.

Objective: Cooperation, trust, deinhbitizer.

Procedure: Stand in a circle and turn so that everyone has either their left or right shoulder to the inside. Tighten the circle so that toes are almost touching the heels in front of them. Be sure to keep the circle a circle and not an oval. Have the group place their hands on the shoulders of the person directly in front of them. On a 3 count, everyone sit on the lap behind you. Keep legs together and guide the person in front of you down to your lap. Do this slowly so that no one falls and causes the entire circle to fall. On a 3 count, stand back up. Try walking in the sitting position and see if you can move the entire circle.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Move carefully and thoughtfully to prevent unnecessary falls.

Name: Hobo's Clothes or Manikin's Attire

Equipment: A set of clothing large enough for the largest person. A shirt or jacket and a pair of pants may be enough.

Objective: Cooperation, Communication, Energizer.

Procedure: The participants dress and undress each member of their team (over their own clothes), using the clothes which are provided. The member who is being dressed/undressed is supposed to be passive like a manikin. All group members should participate and contribute in some way. The object is for the students to plan and work together to dress and undress as many members of their team as possible.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Accessories

Equipment: Accessories – belt, scarf, hat, gloves, watch, bandana, suspenders, headband, purse, clip-on earrings, bracelet, etc.

Objective: Cooperation, communication, energizer.

Procedure: The members of the group take turns being a manikin. By planning and working together, participants will see how many manikins they can “accessorize” in the allotted time. The manikin cannot help, but must remain motionless while being dressed. The object is for students to plan and work together to accessorize as many team members as possible in the allotted time.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: House of Cards

Equipment: A deck or two or cards (playing cards or note cards)

Objective: Communication, cooperation.

Procedure: The participants construct a house of cards. One point is awarded for each room on the ground floor, two points for each room on the second floor, three points for each room on the third floor, etc. The object is for the students to plan and work together to build rooms and levels to get the highest number of points that they can for their furnished structure.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Alphabet Eco-Words

Equipment: Pencil or pen and paper.

Objective: Learning and cooperation.

Procedure: Working together, the participants list an eco-word for each letter of the alphabet. If they get one word for each, they may try to find a second word for each. If they get two words for each letter, they can go for three. The object is to plan and work together to get the highest possible number of words. They may not go for a second word on any letter until they have a first word for every letter. Facilitators should specify whether or not the eco-words must be local in nature or may be more global. (i.e. will Zebra be accepted as a “Z” eco-word?)

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: The Tower

Equipment: Cans, Blocks, Lincoln logs, Tinker Toys, Boxes, or any stackable items for building a tower.

Objective: Communication, Cooperation.

Procedure: As a whole, the group must attempt to create the tallest free-standing tower that they possibly can, using only the provided materials. The tower should be stable enough to remain standing as the group processes the building experience. The final product should not need any outside support.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Elbow, Chin, or Knee Pass

Equipment: A ball, orange, or other safe (not hard) item for passing.

Objective: Cooperation, Energizer.

Procedure: The group passes the designated item from chin to chin (elbows to elbows or knees to knees) around a circle. They may not use their hands. If the time drops or is touched by a hand, the counting must start over. The students should work for the highest possible number of consecutive passes in the time allowed.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Human Spelling

Equipment: Space and possibly blankets if ground is wet.

Objective: Cooperation and communication.

Procedure: As a group, the participants use their bodies to form each letter of a designated word or term. All participants should be involved. Once one letter is formed to the satisfaction of the facilitator, the group may form the second letter, etc. The participants should attempt to complete the highest number of letters in the allotted time.

Variations: One group spells out a word while another group guesses what they are spelling.

Safety Notes: None

Name: Blind Artists

Equipment: A blindfold, something to draw on, pencil, and simple picture cards.

Objective: Communication (giving directions).

Procedure: One student is chosen to be the artist. The facilitator shows everyone except the artist a simple picture. The group, then, gives directions to the artist who has the task of duplicating the unseen picture. The artist is blind in a sense that he/she does not see the picture. If the group gives clear and accurate direction, the artist begins to see as the picture takes shape. The group may not say what it is a picture of. Once this artist is done, rotate through giving others a chance. This will also allow for improvement of communication from the group to the artist.

Variations: Put a blindfold on the artist for additional difficulty.

Safety Notes: None

Name: The Can Pass

Equipment: Two cans or buckets and something to put in the cans.

Objective: Cooperation.

Procedure: Participants form a circle, sit on the ground or floor. Pass one can clockwise around the circle with their feet. They pass the other can counterclockwise around the circle in the same manner. When the group is able to pass the cans all around without dropping them, they may try it with water or marbles and the extra challenge of not spilling the cans. The difficulty will come when the two cans meet along the circle.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Bat and Moth

Equipment: Blindfolds

Objective: To increase sense of hearing.

Procedure: Have the group form a circle. Choose one player to be the bat and 3 to be moths. Have them come to the center of the circle and blindfold the bat. The bat has to catch one of the moths. To find a moth, the bat yells "Bat!".

When the bat yells, the moths respond with "Moth!". The people in the circle act as trees and must keep the bat and moth in the boundaries, without making any noise.

Variations: Have only one moth. Blindfold the moth and give both the bat and moth a canister with pebbles in it to act as sound waves. Instead of yelling, shake the canisters to catch the moth.

Safety Notes: Normal care and safety when someone is blindfolded.

Name: Killer

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Ice breaker, good for night time activity and senses.

Procedure: In the beginning of the game a killer must be selected by having everyone close their eyes, and the leader then walks around the group and taps one person on the head. Once everyone's eyes are opened again, each person greets one another by shaking hands. If your hand is tickled when you shake someone's hand, that means you have been killed. You must continue shaking hands, but after 10 seconds, you must scream as loud as you can and collapse to the ground. Players who are still alive may try to guess who the killer is (by raising their hand and waiting to be called on), but if they are incorrect, they must fall over dead. Players who are dead may not say who the killer is. Play a few rounds.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Find the Thing

Equipment: A small object

Objective: Deinhbitizer, ice breaker, good sensory night time activity.

Procedure: Everyone stands in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. One person stands in the middle with their eyes open. The leader walks around the outside of the circle and drops a small object (like a rock) into one persons hands. The players in the circle must pass the object around behind their backs, trying to concel from the middle person who has the object. The middle person has three tries to pick out who has the object.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Human Knot

Equipment: Space to move around.

Objective: Working close together, cooperation.

Procedure: Have your group stand facing one another in a tight cluster. Have them hold out their hands (right hands first and then left hands) and grab the hand of someone on the other side of the cluster, so that each person is holding two different hands. Now, without letting go of any hands, the group must untangle themselves to form a circle. If you start running out of time, or the frustration level seems to be increasing, break one grip and ask the group to form a single line instead.

Variations: Don't allow talking.

Safety Notes: Watch for stepped on fingers!

Debriefing: How are we connected to each other? How are we connected to the world around us? What happens when we are not connected to others or to the world around us? (If we do not care about others or the natural world around us then people and our environment get hurt.)

Name: Group Square Dancing

Equipment: Space to move around

Objective: Deinhbitizer, problem solve.

Procedure: Everyone has a partner, and they stand together in a large circle. The outside partner turns to their right, and the inside partner turns to their right so that they are facing each other. They then proceed to hook arms around the circle. The object is to get everyone back to their partner simultaneously.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Be careful of tripping.

Name: Copperhead

Equipment: Thin strip of paper or cloth.

Objective: Animal awareness, sensory awareness

Procedure: Start with a snake in the middle. The snake has a thin strip of paper or cloth. The leader chooses a hunter who attempts to try and touch the back of the "snakes" neck without the snake touching the hunter with the paper/cloth. If the hunter is successful, he takes the place of the snake. If not, the snake remains the snake. So, the goal is to remain the snake for as long as possible.

Variations: The Set-up story could be that the person in the middle is the Sleeping Miser and the rest of the group are thieves. The miser sits with eyes closed in the middle. A treasure sits in front of the miser. The thieves attempt to sneak up on him and steal the treasure. If the miser hears one of the thieves, he can point in the thief's direction. If the miser is right, the thief must return to the starting point.

Safety Notes: None

Debriefing: Discuss using your ears (if you are the miser) and being quiet if you are the thieves.

Name: Cheap Pass

Equipment: 2 medium to large plastic (soft) balls

Objective: Cooperation with fun.

Procedure: Have the participants partner up. Once in pairs have them face each other so that all pairs together form 2 lines (parallel). Next, have everyone sit down (still facing their partner) and lay on their back with the bottom of their feet touching the bottom of their partners feet. When laying down and touching feet, their feet and legs need to be in the air so partners can't be too far apart. Once everyone is set, the facilitator starts one ball on once end and the group must pass the ball to the other end and back with out the ball hitting the floor. If the ball touches the floor, the group starts over.

Variations: For added challenge, start one ball on each end. The goal here is for both balls to reach the opposite end. The tricky part is when the 2 balls meet in the middle.

Safety Notes: No major safety issues on this one.

Name: Ah-So-Koh

Equipment: Space for a circle

Objective: Energizer, Ice-breaker

Procedure: Each word has a motion. Ah is a stiff hand at chest level with either hand (right hand with fingers pointing left and left hand with fingers pointing right). So is a stiff hand at forehead level (almost like a salute). Koh is both hands together with arms extended straight in front of you. These words must always be said in order: Ah-So-Koh, Ah-So-Koh, etc. The purpose is to keep going quicker and quicker. If you make a mistake (wrong hand motion or wrong word), you are out and must be a distraction around the circle. You stay in if you do the following: One person starts with the “Ah.” The next person to go and say “So” is the person who is being pointed to by the fingers of the person who said “Ah.” The person saying “So” can use either hand with the correct motion. Then the person they are pointing to must make the motion and say “Koh” while pointing to someone across the circle. The person being pointed to can either accept the “Koh” by moving on with the “Ah” and motion or they can reject the “Koh” by saying “No” and putting both hands out front with palms towards the person who just sent the “Koh.” If they reject, the person who just said “Koh” must start of the “Ah” again.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: 2 Grunts

Equipment: Space to move around

Objective: Fun, Energizer

Procedure: In this activity, grunts are being passed around the circle. Any person can pass to anyone. The way a grunt is passed is by making 2 grunts while your hands make certain motions. One the first grunt, your hands are together are in a prayer-like position and they start out high above the head and come down closer to you. One the second grunt, the hands go from the chest towards someone (pointing to them so they know it is their turn next). Participants must make creative sounds. No one ever gets out – they should just laugh!!

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Name: Out-of-the-Box Teaching tool

Equipment: An area with wood chips.

Objective: To teach Out-of-the-box thinking.

Procedure: The facilitator should preface this with an encouragement for the group to begin thinking out of the box as they solve problems, work together. Then the facilitator will gradually move into this activity by drawing out a box of dirt and asking the participants what they see (as she draws the box). The group will come up with various answers (a pizza box, a television, an “L”, etc). Then move into the number game. Lay out sticks inside the box asking what number you just drew. The answer to what number you drew is actually in the facilitators hands. The number of fingers that the facilitator is giving is the number you just “created” inside the box. So the fingers must be outside the box to make the point to think “outside” the box to solve problems.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Debriefing: Out-of-the-box thinking!

Name: Ankle Shake

Equipment: Balloons with string for everyone

Objective: Energizer, de-inhibitizer

Procedure: Have each person tie a balloon to their ankle (must be dangling a little). Once everyone is ready, the goal is for each person to protect their balloon from being popped by other people. The last person with their balloon wins.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Because of the stomping and possibly pushing, be careful of ankles, shins, tripping, etc.

Name: Clothespin Tag

Equipment: 2 clothespins for each participant

Objective: Energizer, de-inhibitizer

Procedure: Have each person put a clothespin on each shoulder. When everyone is ready, have the participants attempt to take clothespins from each other. You can only take one at a time. When both of yours are gone, you are out.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: Be careful of fists as people attempt to grab your clothespins.

Name: Finger Perspective Point

Equipment: None

Objective: To teach perspective

Procedure: Have each person start with their finger pointing to the ceiling so their hand is above their head. Watching the point of their finger have each person begin moving their finger and hand in a clockwise position. Then talk them through gradually bringing their arm and hand down while continuing to turn their hand as they began. Lower your hand and finger until your hand is at waist level. With you hand still moving, ask them what direction their finger is moving – clockwise or counter-clockwise? The answer is counter-clockwise? Have them repeat this a few times and then discuss.

Variations: None

Safety Notes: None

Debriefing: Why does your hand “change” directions? What perspective were you using at the beginning and at the end of this exercise? So what changed in your perspective? How is my perspective different from yours in everyday life? Why does our perspective affect how we see things in life?