



John de Montmollin
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Kenosha County

Lanette Weiner
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Kenosha County



4-H Youth Development
University of Wisconsin-Extension



Table of Contents:

Introduction Page 3

Ice Breakers

Any-Size Group:

Across the Line..... Pages 4-5

Medium to Large Group:

Line Up! Page 6

Human Pinball Page 7

Name Game Page 8

Teamwork and Cooperation

Any-Size Group:

Knot Race..... Page 7

Electric Fence..... Page 10

Group Juggling..... Page 11

Moonball..... Page 12

River Game (Cross the Lava)..... Page 13

Mine Field..... Page 14

Human Knot Page 15

Group Rock/Paper/Scissors..... Page 16

Medium to Large Group:

Fox and Squirrel..... Page 17

Change Challenge..... Page 18

Magic Carpet..... Page 19

Hoop Pass Page 20

Brain Twisters

Any-Size Group:

Handcuffs Page 21

Medium to Large Group:

Traffic Jam..... Page 22

Puzzle Predicament Page 23

Materials List..... Page 24

Resources Page 25

Introduction

Groups are constantly forming and reforming. In some cases, how these groups function is just as important as why these groups function. IT'S IN THE BAG was created to develop positive group dynamics through a multitude of experiences. These experiences were specifically selected to provide a foundation for trust and communication - the cornerstone of any good group. With this pro-active approach to group dynamics, IT'S IN THE BAG will increase group productivity while providing a sense of community.

When choosing which specific experiences, please remember that not every activity is going to be suitable for every group. You should always consider the characteristics of the group you will be working with and how well they mesh with the games. Think of group size, age range, gender make-up, and overall personality when deciding if an activity is appropriate. Never force someone to participate!

The instructions for some of these experiences are somewhat unspecific; this is done on purpose. For participants part of the fun of the activities (especially the challenges) is to find the unique "loopholes" embedded in each. When facilitating, try to give the instructions as they are given in this packet. If you try to go too specific and over-instruct, you may inadvertently either close or give away a "loophole" or "trick." Similarly, if a group manages to follow all the rules and accomplish a task without finding a "trick" you know about, just leave it at that. Informing them of the trick they didn't find after they are finished may actually only take away from their victory.

Also, always remember safety first! While there is little chance of injury in these experiences, overly rough or enthusiastic players may prove hazardous in almost any situation. Be sure that the area you're using is clear of any dangerous obstacles or objects and always be on the watch for any potentially dangerous behavior. This is especially important anytime blindfolds are involved!

Many of these games have suggested variations. Feel free to use these at any time! Just always be sure to read your audience and make sure any variations or changes are safe and appropriate. In addition, please feel free to personalize your own bag by adding additional games and resources. The games and resources in IT'S IN THE BAG are only a starting point!

Finally, **ALWAYS** be sure to end each experience with a discussion or debriefing. This reflection time is critical so participants can process what happened and what was learned. You can use the discussion questions that have been included with each experience, or you can come up with your own. The participants may surprise you with answers you never even thought of! Go with the flow of the discussion, explore areas and ideas they uncover, and take advantage of teachable moments. Everyone will get something different out of each activity.

Enjoy!

Ice Breakers

Across the Line

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: Across the Line Questions; rope, tape, or anything to make a line

Directions:

1. With a long rope or masking tape, make a line on the floor long enough for the whole club to stand along in single file on one side (you can also use marks on the floor or patterns in the floor tile; anything that can be perceived as a line).
2. This is a get-to-know-you-better game. You, as game leader, will make statements, and whomever that statement applies to should step to the other side of the line. Use the questions on the other side of this page or make up your own. Keep it lighthearted and fun!
3. After each statement, have anyone that crossed the line come back before you make the next statement (it will be less confusing that way).
4. If something applies to you, cross the line yourself!
5. Keep going until you've asked all the questions or you feel people are tiring of the game.

Discussion:

- Did you learn anything about the other people in your group?
- How might it be helpful to know some of these things?
- Why is it important to get to know the other people in your group?

Across the Line Questions

Step across the line...

- If you like summer
- If you're wearing red
- If you are fifteen years old or older
- If you ate breakfast this morning
- If you've been to Disneyland
- If you are wearing white socks
- If you like chocolate ice cream
- If you are a girl
- If you play a sport
- If you have a garden at home
- If you have brothers
- If you've seen the ocean
- If you are wearing blue jeans
- If your favorite color is blue
- If you eat breakfast
- If you have green eyes
- If you are a cat person
- If you are a dog person
- If you are a boy
- If you have lived outside the state of Wisconsin
- If you were born outside the state of Wisconsin
- If you have shown a project or are planning to show a project at the fair
- If you like to read
- If you like camping
- If you know how to knit
- If you have been to a farm
- If you like to play in the snow
- If you've been to Washington DC
- If you've ever eaten anchovies
- If you like mushrooms on your pizza
- If you are an only child
- If you are having fun

Ice Breakers

Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies

Line Up!

Group Size: Medium to large (Ten people and up works well)

Materials Needed: Large rope (50')

Directions:

1. Place the rope on the ground in a circle shape.
2. Ask everyone in the group to stand with at least one foot on the rope.
3. Without talking, have everyone line up on the rope in birthday order--month and day only.
4. Players must keep at least one foot on the rope at all times.
5. Have the players look at you when they think they are done. Check the order and if there are any errors give the players a chance to correct them—without talking!

Variations: You can use a number of different line-ups such as height; age; alphabetical by first, last, or middle name; shoe size; years in 4-H; etc. If you want to get really tough, you could mix everyone up again if someone speaks or steps off the rope.

Discussion:

- How many of you believed you followed directions?
- What makes it hard to follow directions?
- What was difficult about this activity?
- What type of helping went on?
- How did you communicate with your group members?
- Did you learn anything from this new form of communication?
- What part did the rope play in the activity?
- What sort of problems did you have to solve?
- Did you learn anything about any of your group members?

Ice Breakers

The New Games Book

Human Pinball

Group Size: Medium to large (15 to 30 is best)

Materials Needed: Rubber playground kickball

Directions:

1. All players except one stand in a circle and face outward. Each person in the circle should spread his/her legs as wide as comfortable until his/her feet are touching those of his/her neighbor on either side.
2. Everyone in the circle should bend down and swing his/her arms between his/her legs. These people are the "flippers."
3. The one non-flipper enters the circle as the movable "target."
4. The flippers knock and toss the ball around the circle trying to hit the target while the target tries to avoid being hit (the target shouldn't touch or deflect the ball at all).
5. When someone manages to hit the target, he or she becomes the new target. The game continues until everyone has had enough.

Variations: For an interesting challenge for the flippers, try using a light-weight beach ball. To challenge the target, try requiring him or her to keep one foot planted.

Discussion:

- What made this game difficult?
- Is there anything that would have made it easier?
- What do we learn from challenges?
- What did the flippers have to do to succeed in hitting the target?
- What did the target have to do to avoid being hit?
- Why are these things important?

Ice Breakers

Name Game

Group Size: Medium to large (Ten or more is best)

Materials Needed: Two blankets approximately four feet by five feet, non-transparent

Directions:

1. Split up into two equal groups, and have the groups stand facing each other approximately ten to fifteen feet apart.
2. Have one volunteer from each group (preferably adults, though you could also use two taller youth) stand a few feet in front of his/her group so they are facing each other. Give each volunteer a blanket.
3. Each volunteer will hold up one end of his/her blanket and let the blanket hang down like a curtain. Each group will select one person to go up and stand directly behind their blanket so the other group can't see who's behind it.
4. Make sure each volunteer confirms that there is someone standing behind his or her blanket, then count to three. On the count of three each volunteer drops his/her blanket revealing the person standing behind it.
5. As quickly as they can, each person who was standing behind a blanket says the name of the other, newly revealed person. Whoever correctly says the other's name first wins and the other person has to come to the winning team.
6. Continue until everyone is on one team (this will eventually happen). Make sure each person gets a chance to stand behind a blanket at least once.

**NOTE: If a group is getting together for the first time and few people know each other, it is fine to use nametags. You will find that some will read them faster than others and some names will be easier to read. Also, the ones who begin matching faces and names will eventually be faster than those who depend on reading nametags will.*

Discussion:

- What were some of the challenges in this activity?
- Why were some names easier to remember than others?
- Why should you learn everyone's name when you're in a group?
- What could the blanket represent?

Teamwork and Cooperation

More Team Builders for Every Group

Knot Race

Group Size: Any size (though 8 or more is preferable)

Materials Needed: A large rope (or one suitable to the size of the group) tied in a circle, watch or clock to keep time on

Directions:

1. Have the group stand in a circle and have everyone hold onto the rope with both hands.
2. Pass the knot around the circle by having the group members slide their hands along the rope (this can double as an ice breaker by having each person tell something about him/herself as he/she gets the knot).
3. After the knot has gone all the way around the circle, ask the group how fast they think they can pass the knot completely around the circle. Have the group decide the time and announce it to you.
4. The group should then attempt to pass the knot around as fast as they can while you time it.
5. After the first round, announce their time and challenge them to beat it. Do several rounds until the group beats its own goal or is satisfied with the speed they have achieved.

Variations: For an extra challenge, have everyone hold onto the rope with just one hand, or have them reverse direction after they have gotten comfortable with their established direction.

Discussion:

- Was it easy or difficult to decide on a time estimate? How did the group finally decide? Did it take teamwork?
- How did you feel after the first round?
- Did you want to adjust your goal time at any point? Why or why not?
- How did your team work together to beat your own time?
- Are you often competitive against yourself? Why or why not? Is this good or bad?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Electric Fence

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: A rope

Directions:

1. Tie the rope between two trees, chairs, or any other sturdy and stable items (you can also have two people hold the rope, but they have to be able to keep it at a consistent height). The rope should be an inch or two higher than the top of the leg of the shortest person.
2. Everyone should connect together by linking arms, holding hands, or holding on to an "attacher" such as a piece of fabric or a sock.
3. The entire team must try to cross over the rope without touching it. If a team member touches the rope, everyone must start over again.

Variations: If you have a younger group, you might want to make it a bit easier by not having everyone link together. Another fun alternative is lowering the rope to the height of the tallest person's knee and having everyone go *under* the rope. In this variation, no one can touch the rope *or* the ground around the rope (usually the space of about one to two feet on either side. Be sure to mark the "off limits" area with masking tape or chalk).

This is a game where you could have two different teams competing against each other to see who can accomplish the task the fastest.

Discussion:

- What things made this activity difficult?
- How did you finally accomplish your task?
- Why are challenges important?
- What could the rope represent?
- What are some ways we can overcome obstacles?
- Is it OK to get help from other people? Why or why not?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies

Group Juggling

Group Size: Any, though the larger the number the better the effect

Materials Needed: A variety of balls, stuffed animals, and other small, soft objects (six to eight is sufficient, more for larger groups. For more of a challenge, have at least one object per group member).

Directions:

1. Have the group stand in a circle. Start things off by throwing a ball to someone across the group and say his/her name. That person then throws it to someone else, saying that person's name. Keep going until everyone has caught and thrown the ball. Everyone needs to remember the name of the person he/she threw it to.
2. Practice! Send the ball around at least once more, always throwing it to the same person and saying his/her name before throwing. Also remember who is throwing balls to you!
3. Add additional balls or objects to the game. The idea is to try to keep everything aloft and off the ground.
4. Time how long it takes for one object to make it around. Count the number of drops and try to improve as a whole group. For an extra bit of confusion, reverse direction.

Discussion:

- What did you notice as more balls or objects were added?
- Did it get easier the more you did it? Why or why not?
- Did anyone get two balls at once? What happened?
- What happened when you reversed direction? Why?
- What is the maximum number of balls you think you can handle? Why? (if possible, test their theory!)
- If you had been able to throw the ball to anyone at anytime (not the same person over and over), do you think it would have made it easier or harder? Why?
- Why did you need everyone to contribute to make this game successful?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Silver Bullets

Moonball

Group Size: Any, though with very large groups you may want to break them up or add more balls

Materials Needed: One large beach ball (or more as group size warrants)

Directions:

1. Scatter the group around a large area and throw the ball into the group.
2. The group should hit and volley the ball back and forth keeping it aloft as long as possible without dropping it.
3. No player can hit the ball twice in a row.
4. Each hit counts for one point. With each round the group should try to beat their highest score.

Variations: Though ideally everyone (like it or not) gets involved with the game, this isn't always the case. Occasionally you will have one person consistently find a way to avoid the ball or one overly enthusiastic person who will run halfway across the playing area and bowl several people over just to get to the ball every-other hit. One way to avoid this is require that every person touch the ball at least once before anyone hits it twice. Another option is to only allow each player a small area (like a three-foot radius) to "guard." You may also want to handicap some people by only letting them use one arm or one leg. Another fun variation is to try to move the ball down a field to a goal. If the ball hits the ground they have to start over. For some groups you could have two teams trying to score goals against each other. If the ball hits the ground it's a foul, much like the ball going out of bounds in soccer or basketball.

Discussion:

- What was your goal? How did you try to achieve it?
- Why is it important to have goals?
- How did everyone contribute to reaching your goal?
- Would this have been easier with a bigger group? A smaller group? Why?
- What were some difficulties or challenges in reaching your goal?

Teamwork and Cooperation

River Game (Cross the Lava)

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: 3 carpet squares about 1'X1' for each group or team, masking tape

Directions:

1. This can either be played as one large group or several smaller groups going simultaneously. With the masking tape, mark off two "shores" a distance of approximately 10'-15' apart (depending on size and age of the group). The area between the shores is a raging river or a river of molten lava.
2. Give each group their carpet squares. These are their safety "rafts." The entire group must attempt to get across the river with just these three rafts.
3. The players can only touch the rafts. If at any time any part of any player touches the river, the entire group must start over.

Variations: There are many twists that you can put into this one. If you have several smaller groups you can see who can get across the fastest. You could require that the group connect by linking arms or holding hands (or holding onto an "attacher" like a sock or blindfold or piece of fabric). You can also handicap some people by blindfolding them, making them mute, or taking away an arm or leg. Another option is to have half the group start on one side and half on the other and each must try to get to the opposite side. Or you could have just one person on the "safe" side with the rafts and they must bring the rest of the group over safely one at a time.

Discussion:

- What happened?
- Why did one group succeed (if there were several groups)?
- Why didn't the other succeed?
- What problems did you have?
- What do you need to make a good team?
- What is your role as a team member?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Silver Bullets

Mine Field

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: Blindfolds, carpet squares, balls, other small objects

Directions:

1. Scatter the carpet squares, balls, and other small objects around the playing area. They should be scattered randomly but evenly. This is your mine field and the objects are the mines.
2. Divide your group into pairs. Blindfold one of each pair and bring him/her to the edge of the mine field. You can have as many pairs go at a time as is safe.
3. The other half of the pair must verbally guide the blindfolded person across the mine field as quickly as possible. Each time the blindfolded person touches a mine add 15 seconds to the time.
4. All directions must be given verbally and on the sidelines; at no time should the sighted person enter the mine field to direct his/her partner.
5. After the field has been crossed, the pair should trade roles.

Discussion:

- Was it easy or difficult to get through the mine field blindfolded? Why?
- Was it easy or difficult to give directions? Why?
- In what ways do we routinely communicate with each other?
- Why is it important to communicate clearly?
- What is it like to depend on someone else to help you complete a task?
- What is it like to have someone else depend on you to help complete a task?
- What are some of the characteristics of a good partner or teammate?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Human Knot

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: None. Could use a cloth, blindfold, or sock as an "attacher" if desired.

Directions:

1. Everyone should stand close together in a circle. If you are using attachers, give each person one.
2. Simultaneously, everybody should reach up and grab the hands of two other people (if using attachers, each person should grab one with their free hand). Be sure you are holding on to two different people!
3. Attempt to unravel the knot so everyone is again standing in one big circle without breaking grips. If a grip is broken, the group must start over. **NOTE: you can shift grips slightly if necessary, but you can't let go!*

Variations: You can "handicap" some members by blindfolding or muting them. If the group is having a lot of trouble, they can perform a "surgery" by deciding on one set of hands to break and rejoin at any place. The group cannot move, however, until they are reconnected.

Discussion:

- What did you have to do to "unknot" yourselves?
- How can you compare this to being part of your club/project team/officer team?
- How did you feel at the beginning of the exercise?
- How do you feel now?
- What have you learned from this exercise?

Teamwork and Cooperation

The New Games Book

Group Rock/Paper/Scissors

Group Size: Any

Materials Needed: A rope or something that can be used as a center line

Directions:

1. Set up a center line and a "free zone" on each side. The free zones should be equally distant (preferably 30 to 50 feet) from the line.
2. Just like in the Rock/Paper/Scissors we are familiar with, there are three hand symbols in this game: closed fist for rock, open palm for paper, and two fingers pointing for scissors. Rock wins over (breaks) scissors, scissors wins over (cuts) paper, and paper wins over (covers) rock.
3. Divide the group into two teams. Each team should get on their side of the line and huddle to collectively decide which symbol they will throw.
4. The teams meet and each form a line (over the center line) facing each other and begin to chant "Rock/Paper/Scissors" then throw their symbols (it's a good idea to have a back-up in case each team throws the same symbol and they have to face off again).
5. Whichever team throws the winning symbol chases the other team, trying to tag as many players as possible before the losing team reaches their free zone. The tagged players then join the winning team.
6. The game continues until everyone is tired out or everyone is on one team.

Discussion:

- How did you decide which symbol you would throw?
- Did you ever have a hard time deciding on a symbol? Why or why not?
- How did you feel after you were tagged and had to go to the other team?
- Did you become loyal to the other team after being tagged?
- Why is it important to have loyalties?
- Did you ever get mixed up on whether you should run or chase? Why?
- Why might it be important to learn to think quickly?

Teamwork and Cooperation

The New Games Book

Fox and Squirrel

Group Size: Medium to large (one to two dozen is optimal)

Materials: Two large beach balls and one small beach ball (or at least two similar balls and one distinctly different one)

Directions:

1. Have the entire group stand together in a circle. Hand the three balls to three different people. The two large balls (or similar balls) are the foxes; the smaller (or different) ball is the squirrel.
2. On "Go" the play starts. Everyone starts passing the fox balls from player to player. The object is for the foxes to try to "catch" the squirrel and for the squirrel to avoid being caught. With a little practice, the foxes should be going around the circle at top speed.
3. Squirrels, as we all know, are able to leap. So, while the foxes can only be passed to someone standing next to you (it doesn't matter who; anyone can reverse the direction of either fox at any time), the squirrels can be tossed around the circle to anyone.
4. So everyone stays alert, call out "Fox" or "Squirrel" each time you pass one of the balls. The squirrel is caught when one person ends up with both a fox and the squirrel at the same time.

Variations: To make things really crazy and confusing, have multiple squirrels and more than two foxes (just be sure all the squirrels are similar and all the foxes are similar). If a squirrel is caught, the ball is taken out of the game but play continues until all squirrels have been caught.

Discussion:

- Which were you trying to help, the fox or the squirrel? Why?
- How did the squirrel finally get caught?
- How would the game have been different if there were two teams, one trying to catch the squirrel and one trying to protect the squirrel?
- Is it possible for one team to effectively try to accomplish two different, opposing goals at the same time? Why or why not?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Change Challenge

Group Size: Medium to large

Materials: One rope tied in a circle or loop for each person. Each rope should be four to six feet long.

Directions:

1. Lay the loops out on the ground and have each person stand in one loop. Each loop represents resources. Standing with both feet in the loop (or on one foot in the loop) represents using resources wisely. Having one foot in the loop and one out of the loop represents not using resources wisely.
2. When you call out, "change," each person should find a new loop. The activity doesn't continue until everyone is in a loop.
3. After one or two changes, start gradually removing loops so people have to double up inside the loops.
4. Eventually, you will end up with only one loop and everyone standing in it. The challenge is for everyone to be using resources wisely (e.g. no feet outside the loop).

Discussion:

- How did you work together to accomplish your goal?
- How did group members support one another?
- Why is change important in leadership?
- What advantages are there to being able to make good use of your resources?
- What resources in our club/project team do we have that we might not be using wisely? How can we change this?
- How can we help each other use resources wisely, in our group and in life?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies

Magic Carpet

Group Size: Medium to large

Materials: Two blankets or tarps, approximately 4'X5' in size

Directions:

1. Spread each blanket flat out on the ground. Divide everyone up into two groups and have each group stand on one blanket.
2. Their task is to flip each blanket completely over.
3. They must stay on the blankets.
4. If any part of any person touches the ground (even a heel or toe) they must start over.

Variations: For an older, more-experienced group you could blindfold a few people. If you have a smaller group, they could kneel or sit on their blankets.

Discussion:

- When you first started, did this task seem impossible? Why or why not?
- How do preconceptions affect how you do things?
- How can you change your point of view?
- Do you think it is good to have many people working on one task? Why or why not?
- Is it important for everyone in a group to agree? Why or why not?
- Can something still be accomplished if not everyone is on the same page? Why or why not?

Teamwork and Cooperation

Hoop Pass

Group Size: Medium to large

Materials Needed: two or three hula hoops of different sizes or tie lengths of rope so you have a hoop about 3 feet in diameter

Directions:

1. Have the group form a circle holding hands (or connected with "attachers" like a piece of fabric or a sock). Have two people break their grip and rejoin through the center of a hoop.
2. At "Go" the group must pass the hoop around the circle as fast as they can without breaking their grips until the hoop is back where it started. Time how long it takes and try to break your own record.
3. If anyone breaks their grip, you must start over again.

Variations: Add a second hoop on the opposite side of the circle. Have a hoop race with both hoops coming toward each other. The hoop that makes it back to its starting place first wins. You may also add a few blindfolded people to the group. You can also have the group set a goal of how long it will take to pass the hoop(s) around.

Discussion:

- What was easy about this activity?
- What was difficult about this activity?
- Was it hard for you to reach your time goal? Why or why not?
- How did the entire group help reach your goal?
- What happened when the two hoops converged? (if you had multiple hoops going)
- Was there ever a time where someone needed help getting through the hoop? If so, how did the group help without breaking grips?
- Why is it important to support and encourage your teammates?

Brain Twisters

Handcuffs

Group Size: Any **NOTE: this game is best left for older members*

Materials: One rope approximately two feet long for each person

Directions:

1. Pair people up. Each end of each person's rope should be comfortably knotted around his/her wrists. How tight the rope is has nothing to do with the solution. However pain should be avoided, so don't tie the ropes too tightly.
2. After both your partner's knots are tied and one of yours is tied, loop the remaining untied end of your rope behind your partner's rope. Tie the last end of rope around your remaining wrist. You should now be connected or intertwined with your partner.
3. Now the task is for each pair to separate without cutting the rope, untying the knots, or slipping the knotted portion over their hands.
4. Answer as many non-solution questions as you can and continually emphasize that there is a solution.
5. Give them as much time as they need to figure it out. Don't give out the solution until at least 30 minutes have passed (really, in all likelihood, someone will figure it out within the first 30 minutes). If someone has done this one before, mute them and let the "newbies" figure it out for themselves.

Solution:

1. Take a bight in the center of your partner's rope.
2. Pass this bight under either of your wrist loops so that the bight portion is closest to your fingers.
3. Pass the bight over your hand and pull it down and through the wrist loop.

Discussion:

- How did you feel as you were trying to separate yourselves?
- Did you ever get frustrated? Why or why not?
- Can stress and frustration ever be a good thing? Why or why not?
- Did you find one person did most of the work? Is this good or bad? Why?

Brain Twisters

Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies

Traffic Jam

Group Size: Medium (eight to twelve is ideal) **NOTE: This is a difficult mental problem not recommended for younger children.*

Materials: Anything that can mark a space such as carpet squares, paper plates, masking tape, or chalk. You will need one more "space" than you have people.

Directions:

1. In a straight line mark off one more "space" than you have people in the group. They should be placed an easy step from each other.
2. Divide your group into equal halves. Have each half occupy one end of the line of spaces facing the unoccupied center "space."
3. Each half of the group must change ends with the other half of the team without violating the 5 prime directives (rules).

-Legal Moves: 1. A person may only move into an empty space in front of them

2. A person may move around a person who is facing them into an empty space.

-Illegal Moves: 1. No person can move backwards

2. You may not move around anyone facing the same direction

3. You may not move two people at once



Variations: Repeat the challenge keeping time and attempting to break the record.

Discussion:

- What makes this initiative difficult? Why?
- What did your group decide to do that was a breakthrough?
- How important is it to have just one leader? Is this true in life situations? Why?
- How successful did you feel before you appointed a leader? After?

Brain Twisters

Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies

Puzzle Predicament

Group Size: Medium to large (6-15 is ideal)

Materials: Three 24-piece puzzles in which the pieces are interchangeable but have different pictures.

Directions:

1. Divide the group into three smaller groups and place each group in a location out of earshot of the other two.
2. Give each group 24 puzzle pieces, but the pieces are mixed in advance so each group has pieces from three different puzzles.
3. The goal is to complete all three puzzles. This is accomplished by holding "meetings" between the groups.
4. Meetings are held in a central location. This is the only place that communication can occur between the three groups. The meetings must occur in silence, however.
5. For each meeting, one representative from each group brings three pieces, no more, no less, there with them. They must leave each meeting with exactly three pieces.
6. Any player from any team can call out, "let's have a meeting," at any time, provided a meeting is not already in progress. A representative from each of the groups must attend the meeting immediately. Meetings must begin within 10 seconds of the call.
7. No representative of any group can attend two meetings in a row.
8. If any of the above meeting rules are not met, the meeting is immediately over and all representatives must return to their group with the same pieces they came with.

Discussion:

- What aspects of this game did you find difficult? Why?
- What ways did you find to communicate during meetings?
- How long did it take to complete the task? Do you feel you could do it quicker now?
- How did you work together in your small groups to complete a puzzle?
- How did you work with the other small groups?
- What did you find yourself more concerned with, your group getting one puzzle together, or the overall initiative of all three puzzles being completed?

Materials List

As mentioned in the introduction, these games were selected in part because of the relatively low number and excellent portability of supplies. You might also have noticed that many of the materials required appear repeatedly in several different games (this was also done on purpose; aren't we clever!). Here is a list of all of the materials required for the games. If you want you can substitute items as long as they are safe and appropriate.

Beach Balls—4 small, 2 large

Rubber Kickball/Playground Ball

Rope—1 large rope approximately 50' in length, 15-20 smaller ropes 6-7' long

Carpet Squares—13 squares, 1'X1' each

Blindfolds—30 (can double as "attachers" for games where hand holding is required)

Blankets—2 (approximately 4'X5')

Masking Tape

Puzzles—3 different 24-piece puzzles in which the pieces are interchangeable

Good luck! If you have questions about any of the games or would like to have a game demonstrated, please feel free to contact the Kenosha County UW-Extension office at any time.

Resources

Fluegelman, Andrew. *The New Games Book*, Dolphin/Doubleday. New York, New York. 1976.

Jones, Alanna. *More Team-Building Activities For Every Group*, Rec Room Publishing. Richland, Washington. 2002.

Nicholson, Don; LeAnn Million. *Havin' Fun Ain't For Sissies: Expanded Resource Packet*, 2003.

Rohnke, Karl. *Silver Bullets: A Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games, and Trust Activities*, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company. Dubuque, Iowa. 1984.

Originally developed in 2004 by de Montmollin, J., Weiner, L.

Revised by in 2005 by de Montmollin, J.



© 2004 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System, doing business as the Division of Cooperative Extension of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.