

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE CHALLENGE



Section:

GROUP ACTIVITIES



GROUP ACTIVITIES SECTION CONTENTS

- Stretch & Warm Up Activities
- Drama Games
- Diminishing Resources
- Warp Speed
- Human Pinball
- Blind Fetch
- Hoops and Circles
- Wind in the Willows

STRETCH & WARM UP ACTIVITIES

These are a few activities which involve a series of deliberate movements to develop limberness and flexibility prior to doing more active type games and initiatives.

1. **Comfortable Position**
Participant lies down on the ground with hands under chin.
2. **Return to the Soil**
While on the ground, put arms at side and nose down on the ground.
3. **Cobra**
Lay prone with hands under chin and raise head and torso as high as possible.
4. **Reverse Cobra**
Lay prone with hands under chin and raise legs and torso.
5. **Double Cobra**
Raise head and legs and rock back and forth on torso.
6. **Cradle**
Sit and grasp lower leg with both arms, pull leg slowly to chest.
7. **Angel**
Stand and touch palms to ground or as far as possible. Then raise slowly until your arms are extended over your head. Stand on toes.
8. **Row Boat Stretch**
Pair up with partners about the same height. Sit facing each other with feet spread and touching your partners. Grab hands and pull back and forth.
9. **Duo Sit**
Face partner and hold hands, pretending you are sitting down in a chair.
10. **Candle**
Stand separately, feet together, hands (palms) together over your head. Raise one leg, place foot on thigh of other leg. Close your eyes and stand on tip toe. (Balance exercise)
11. **Dorsal Finger Touch**
Reach one hand over your back, and the other behind your back. Touch fingers.
12. **Fun Run**
Run a short crazy distance around, over, under, or through various obstacles. It gets the heart pumping and your blood flowing through your muscles.
13. **Dog Shake**
Pretend you are a wet dog and shake your nose, ears, head, shoulders, arms, back, legs, feet, and toes.

DRAMA GAMES

Warm up the group with a variety of fun and creative drama experiences. Drama games also provide a comfort zone for a group to talk about lots of different topics from teamwork to dealing with conflict issues.

Recommended Age:

Age 7 and up.

Materials:

All drama games require assorted items which can serve as props:

Awesome Ad-libbers Additional Supplies:

Newsprint or large paper
Assorted markers or crayons
Masking tape

Charades Additional Supplies:

Small pieces of paper or index cards
Several pencils or pens
2 baseball caps or baskets

Settings:

Open space which allows for movement

Time:

Varies with the drama game
Allow 10-30 minutes per game

Procedure:

Prop Pass Pizzaz:

1. Ask the group to form circle. Select a prop and begin passing it around the circle. The focus of the game is to be as creative as possible with each prop.
2. As the prop is being passed around challenge each person to pretend that it is something other than what it actually is and act out what it might be used for instead. For example: You could pass around a frisbee. One group member might think it is a fancy hat, while the next person might act out that it is the steering wheel of her racing car.
3. Continue passing the prop until each group member has a chance to be creatively challenged. To add some spark to the game, challenge the group not to repeat any of the suggested possibilities.

Charades

1. Separate the group into two teams and pass out index card and pen or pencil to each member.
2. Write down a title of a movie, song, or book on the small piece of paper or index card. Give each group a baseball cap or basket as they are jotting down their ideas. Instruct them to place their slips of paper in the cap or basket.

3. To begin the charades, ask a team member from team one to draw a paper from team two's cap or basket. Their task is now to act out without props and without talking, the name of the song, book or movie for their own team. They must identify the title correctly (or to the other team's standards) within an assigned amount of time, such as three minutes.
4. Alternate the teams and actor so that only one team is *charading* at a time. Play until each team has completed the other team's cap.

Leader's Hint: Encourage all group members to participate but respect and support an individual's preference not to take center stage if they are uncomfortable with being in front of a group.

Activity Variation: Instead of acting out the song, book title or movie, have them draw the item.

Talking it Over:

Adjust the questions for each of the above games:

1. What was the most fun about the game you just played? Was there anything scary or uncertain about the game? Relate that to an issue of life the group might be dealing with.
2. During each of the games you communicated a little bit differently; How did it feel to communicate something without words? Or to draw something? Or to sell something you might not be sold on yourself?
3. What parts of the dramatic expression were the easiest? The hardest?
4. Were there some members of your group very skilled at this activity? Were there some members of your group who were uncomfortable with getting up in front of others? This might be a great location to talk about temperament and personalities?

Connections:

These games have lots of opportunity for expansion and for further development as ways to deal with sensitive topics or ways to increase an individual's comfort in front of groups. The activities could be cross-generational activity at a senior center or at a child care center.

DIMINISHING RESOURCES

A group works together to problem-solve through a simulation of islands and volcanoes. The group facilitator reduces the island size and numbers until there is only one island remaining. As the activity concludes, the group all needs to be on one island.

Materials:

Rope of various length to create circles/islands

Caribbean or reggae music to create atmosphere if doing the activity indoors

Setting:

Open space which allows for movement

Recommended Age:

12 and up

Procedures:

1. Prior to the group's arrival, lay out rope circles on the floor or ground. (Need to fill in rope length and approximately number of participants per circle)
2. Ask the group to form a circle. With the participants in a circle, set the stage by explaining that the rope circles they see scattered on the ground are actually islands. Unfortunately, though, there have been volcanoes bubbling on some of the islands. When they hear the word *volcano*, they need to locate another island to be safe.
3. Say the word "*volcano*" again. At that point, participants should head from the beginning circle to one of the rope islands.
4. Repeat the word "*volcano*" again. At the point you yell volcano quickly, remove one of two of the rope islands. This will require the groups to cluster into fewer circles.
5. Remind the group to keep their feet on the islands to stay clear of sharks swimming between the islands.
6. Continue the activity until there is one island remaining. At the activities completion, all participants should be in the one remaining island circle.

Facilitator's Note: Keep safety in mind. Spot the group so that participants don't lift each other and to prevent injuries.

Talking it Over:

Bring the group back into a full circle and process the experience.

1. What does it mean to have *diminishing resources*? Ask someone in the group to provide an example, such as limited food or water for a region or habitat for birds or animals.
2. How did you relate to the problem of volcanoes erupting on islands and losing one island after another? How did it make you feel?
3. Were you able to save everyone? Or were some of the group consumed by the sharks?
4. What did you learn from this experience? Guide the group to create parallel examples to other situations.

How to Extend:

Engage the group to talk about how they have approached problem solving in other situations. Are there differences in how they approach problem-solving at home, school, or work?

WARP SPEED

Group tosses balls around in a random pattern.

Recommended Age:

7 and up

Materials:

6 to 8 balls

Watch with a second hand

Setting:

Open space which allows for movement.

Time:

15 to 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Instruct the group to create a circle. Tell them that they will be creating a ball pattern of who tossed them the ball and who they tossed the ball to in the circle. Participants are to call out the person's name before they toss the ball underhanded.
2. Have each group member raise one arm and keep the arm raised until they have received the ball. Remind participants to remember who they received the ball from and who they tossed the ball to during the game.
3. After a practice round with everyone handling the ball once, the ball is returned to the group leader. Ask the group to point with their right arm who they were tossed the ball by and with their left arm who they tossed the ball to. Now repeat the pattern with the ball.
4. After a repeat of the ball toss, share that you will be timing the pattern. Emphasize that the task is to move the ball through the same hands in the same order. Complete the pattern and announce how long it took the group to complete the pattern.
5. Add additional balls to the warp speed activity, keeping the pattern the same.
6. Tell the group that they now need to pick up the speed and cut the time in half. Provide them with a motivational example, such as there is a storm coming in and they need to get their tents up in half the time they had allocated. Use an example that the group can relate to based on their experiences.
7. Observe how the group solves the problem. Do they meet their new goal? Continue to set the goal until the group reaches their goal in 1 to 3 seconds.
8. Prompt the group to think creatively and to have fun. Remind them that they need to keep the task clear and that the balls need to follow the same pattern.
9. Wrap up *Warp Speed* when the group has met the goal or has chosen to stop.

Facilitator's Note: Remind the group that during the first couple of rounds to keep their hands up until they have received the ball. Once the group has established the pattern, add other dynamics such as additional balls or having them hold one arm behind their back.

Talking it Over:

After completing *Warp Speed*, discuss how the group functioned.

1. Ask the group if they felt accomplishment for keeping the ball or balls moving in a pattern. How did they feel about the rules and the task?

2. How did the group decide on solving the task to increase their speed?
3. Were decisions made by one or several individuals in a group? Relate this to the example which was given during the activity, such as setting up tents in a hurry to beat an incoming storm.
4. How did this activity relate to when you had an experience in which you had to make tight deadlines?
5. What was learned about team work and team responsibility from *Warp Speed*?

How to Simplify:

Simply do the first part as a group mixer.

How to Extend:

Initiate more than one ball pattern with a different size or color ball. Instead of names being shouted during the pattern around, have participants share an idea or an activity for their club or group. This may be in response to an current problem or issue or just a great way to brainstorm new ideas.

HUMAN PINBALL

One person stands in the middle of the group which faces outward, shoulder to shoulder in a circle. The outside group forms the *pinball clappers*. The pinball clappers' goal is to softly tag the person in the middle with the large ball. The pinball clapper group can only throw the ball through their legs while they are bending over.

Recommended Age:

12 and up

Materials:

1 large ball per group of 8

Setting:

Open space which allows for movement

Time:

10 to 20 minutes

Procedure:

1. Direct the group to face outward shoulder to shoulder, while making a circle. Remind them that the outer circle is the *pinball clappers*.
2. Choose or have the group pick the first to be in the middle. Be creative such as the person whose school mascot is a bird; or the person whose horoscope sign is Libra (the scales).
3. Instruct the outer circle or the *pinball clappers* that their task is to tag the person in the middle out. The pinball clapper group can only toss the ball through their legs which they are bending over to look through. They must aim the ball low.
4. Once the pinball clapper circle tags the person in the middle twice, he or she joins the pinball clapper group and another person heads to the middle.

5. For added energy, have two people in the middle of the circle or toss in an additional ball.
6. Keep the game going while it is fun and energy is high.

Facilitator's Note: Keep an eye out for people who may have balance problems. If people appear *wobbly*, ask them to step aside or to take a few minute break. Remind the group to keep the ball low and to gently toss the ball towards the person in the center. Make certain that the group gets break between rounds.

Talking it Over:

After completing the activity, it is a chance to talk about perspectives.

1. Ask the pinball clapper group how it felt to be tossing the ball from an upside-down perspective and looking through their legs to toss the ball.
2. Ask the individual in the center how it felt to be the target, knowing that they were going to be struck with the ball
3. Focus the discussion on how we will have different perspectives based on where we are standing or our previous experiences. Relate that to how by learning and respecting other's viewpoints, opinions, etc., we gain a greater understanding of an issue and a broader perspective of how others may feel.
4. Talk about how perspective can change and the range of what those perspectives might be.

BLIND FETCH

A team building activity which requires listening and establishing clear communication.

Recommended Age:

10 and up

Materials:

1 stuffed animal or ball for every 4 or 5 people
 1 handkerchief per person to be used as blindfolds
 Rope or base for each group

Setting:

Open space which allows for movement

Time:

20 minutes

Procedure:

Before the Meeting:

Prior to the group's arrival, place bases or small circles of rope around the room, one for each group. If possible, the leader may want to include other people in the activity to spot the blindfolded participants as they move around the room.

During the Meeting:

Divide the large group into smaller groups of 4-5 people. Be creative in dividing groups such as by toothpaste varieties (paste or gel) or by favorite activity (reading, exercising, playing with pets). Share with the groups that they need to select one person to be blindfolded. Distribute handkerchief or blindfolds to an individual in each group. The blindfolded individual's task will be to find and return a designated stuffed animal or other object for each group.

Ask the individual with blindfolds to place them on, after the blindfolds are in place, but before the activity begins, the leader should place one item for each team around the room or area for the blindfolded individuals to retrieve.

Share the following instructions with the groups:

The non-blindfolded team members must touch a stationary base or the roped in area. The group directs their blindfolded member, by voice only, to find and return the designated object.

The blindfolded group member can walk only. For the individual's safety, running isn't allowed.

The first group to successfully direct their member to the object and return to the group is the winner. If time allows, each team member should get a chance to be blindfolded.

Talking it Over:

Ask the individual teams to rejoin the entire group to discuss *Blind Fetch*.

1. Ask each group how they selected the individual to be blindfolded first. Was there a sequence of events that lead to the individual's selection? How is that like other times in life when you feel that you are being *volunteered* for something that you might not want to do?
2. How did it feel to be blindfolded even before the activity got into full gear?
3. Ask the participants who were blindfolded how it felt to be receiving directions from a group of people? Were they able to distinguish their group's instructions from another group's instructions?
4. How did the groups work to support their blindfolded member?
5. As a blindfolded person, what was the best way to get directions? What was the hardest or most frustrating about the task?
6. As a group, talk about what it might feel to be without sight or to have limited vision.

How to Expand: A variation is to have all blindfolded members attempt to retrieve the same object. If they are tagged by another blindfolded member when they have the object, they throw the object into the air and begin again.

HOOPS AND CIRCLES

An activity where a group holds hands in a large circle and moves hoops around the circle without breaking the circle or letting go of hands.

Recommended Age:

14 and up

Materials:

3 hula hoops or 3 bicycle tubes

Vacuum cleaner belts or rope circles can be substituted for hula hoops or bicycle tubes

Setting:

Open space which allows for movement

Time:

10 minutes

Procedure:

1. Direct the group to form a circle and to hold hands
2. Ask one pair of hands to let go and re-clasp hands inside of one hula hoop/bicycle tube.

3. Direct the group to pass the hula hoop/bicycle tube around the circle without the hula hoop/bicycle tube touching the ground.
4. After the group successfully passes the first hula hoop/bicycle tube around the circle, add the additional hula hoops/bicycle tube one at a time.
5. Challenge the group that when you count down from 10 to end the hoop pass, that they don't want to be left holding the hoop. Begin counting down from 10, keeping the group energized with the countdown.

Facilitator's Notes:

Keep safety in mind as the group moves the hula hoops or bicycle tubes around the group. Be aware of group members who may have limited mobility.

Talking it Over:

After the activity is completed, ask the group members to sit down in a circle.

1. Ask the group how it felt to be a part of a team effort? How did they feel as additional hoops were added to the circle?
2. What are other examples where they might have to work as a team to accomplish a goal (such as planning and conducting a park pick-up and paint-up)?
3. Did the group feel hindered as it became involved with the activity?
4. Does the imagery of the Olympic Rings come to anyone's mind? Expand the discussion of teamwork and unity.

How to Simplify:

Limit the number of hoops going around the circle.

How to Extend:

To make the activity more challenging, use very large belts from vacuum cleaners or by using different colored hula hoops which could be moved around the circle in different directions.

WIND IN THE WILLOWS

Build your group's sense of team trust through *Wind in the Willows*. This activity is a basic in the physical trust building sequence.

Recommended Age:

12 and up

Optimum Group Size:

Small groups of 8-12 participants

Materials:

No materials are required.

Setting:

Space which allows for safe falling and movement.

Time:

10 - 15 minutes

Procedure:

*Important Safety Hints: Review **before** leading Wind in the Willows:*

1. As you move into leading this activity it is important to completely review the activity and group safety. Ask the group if they know what a *spotter* is and what is the role of the *spotter*? A spotter specifically is watching an individual or group for safety, especially when there are falls or tricky movements involved.
2. Demonstrate the *spotting stance* of one foot forward, one foot back with hands in the ready position.
3. Teach the commands for safety. These are based on climbing and repelling commands:
Person falling: *Trust*
Group: *Trust-On*
Person falling: *Fall*
Group: *Fall-On*
4. Practice the commands and spotting stance.
5. When the group is prepared, move into actually doing the activity.
6. Review safe-touch as appropriate with the group.
7. How did the group work together and focus on the person falling? Ask the group if they can share other examples of how the group may have worked together previously or how they will be in the future?
8. What made people feel uncomfortable or secure? Did they feel that they were prepared if something happened or an individual was hurt?

How to Expand:

A variation of this activity would be to have the person blindfolded in the center.