

GAMES

Game Facilitation

Encourage the challenge rather than the competition.

Encourage the element of trust and support.

Know your games, review the game mentally before starting.

Make sure the game suits the age group and the group's size.

Get into the game yourself.

There are many creative ways to make smaller groups, such as: birthdays, eye color, clothes, music style, etc.

NAME GAMES

Drop the Sheet 7+

Break the group in two. Put a sheet up between each group so they cannot see each other. Have one member of each group move up to the front and when the sheet is dropped they must say the other person's name. The person who says the other name last switches to the other team and the sheet is raised for a second go.

Magic Blanket 7+

This is a great game for getting to know each other's names. Facilitator asks players to be some sort of animal, and then after they all do the action they are asked to fall asleep on the ground and close their eyes. While non are looking the facilitator covers up one or two players with a blanket (the flashier the better) then asks the other players to open their eyes and identify who is under the blanket, who is missing.

Name and Motion 7+

Have everyone form a circle. The game starts with one person introducing themselves by saying their name and giving a motion. The next person must then say their name and give a motion, as well as say the first person's name and a motion. The game continues and goes on and on. There are many variations on this game. For instance, you always want to say your name, but your motion could be a like of yours. Example, my name is Spivey and I like to fish (motions the casting of a line). Get creative, this is a great ice breaker and excellent way to learn names. Oh yeah...and you get to be silly!

Name Toss 7+

Arrange the group in a circle. One person starts off by saying the name of someone else in the circle, and tossing the ball to them. That person then in turn says the name of a different person, and tosses the ball to someone else who has not yet received the ball. That continues until everyone in the circle has received the ball once. Generally, the objective is to pass the ball around the circle without dropping it. If the ball is dropped, the group restarts until completed without dropping. You can add a "thank-you, (name)" from the receiving person if you like...As always, feel free to change the rules, and make this activity work for you!

Silent Interviews 10+

Divide the group into pairs - try to make mix the group into pairs of folks who don't know each other well. Ask the participants to introduce themselves to their partner. Instruct the group that from this point forward, speaking is not allowed. This includes whispering, mouthing words, and making sounds, too! Inform the group that they must tell their partner 3 things about themselves without speaking, similar to a charades game. These things cannot be physical characteristics. Once all of the partners have finished miming to each other, call everyone back into a circle. Ask for each pair to verbally introduce their partner to the group, as well as the three things that they learned (or think they learned). If you are working with very young children, you can do this as a group activity, where one child acts out a hobby for the group to guess.

You, Me, Left, Right 10+

Have the group form a circle, with the facilitator in the middle serving as the first "caller." Ask the participants to introduce themselves to the people directly on their left and right sides. Explain to the group that the person in the middle will point to someone in the circle and say either "You" "Me" "Left" or "Right" and count to five at a reasonable pace. "You" is the person being pointed at. "Me" is the caller. "Left" is the person to the left of the one being pointed at. "Right" is the person to the right of the one being pointed at. The person being pointed at must correctly name that person before the caller counts to five. If they succeed, the caller moves onto a different person of their choice. If they do not succeed, they become the new caller. You can add multiple callers as the game moves on.

ICEBREAKERS & GROUP GAMES

Ah, Soe, Koe 7+

Form a circle. The word AH coincides with the hand motion of placing your left hand on top of your head, pointing to the person to your right (or just the opposite). The word SOE coincides with the hand motion of placing your left hand on your chest and pointing to the person on your right (or just the opposite). The word KOE coincides with the hand motion of placing your hands together and pointing to someone else across the circle. The words and coinciding hand motions must go in the order of AH-SOE-KOE. The game begins when by anyone in the circle saying AH with the proper hand motion. The person they are pointing to will then go by saying SOE with the coinciding hand motion. Then the person they are pointing at will complete the cycle by saying KOE and pointing to someone across the circle. It is repeated until someone makes a mistake (whether it be the wrong word or the wrong hand motion). When you make a mistake, you become a distracter. Yes, that's right my friends, even when you're out, you're not really out. A distracter leaves the circle and does their best to distract those who are still "in" the game. They do this through any means other than physically touching anyone (so yeah, they scream real loud).

Animal Bopity - BOP 8+

The person in the centre of the circle (person A) will look and point at a member in the circle (person B) and say "bobity bop bop bop" and before person A completes their sentence, person B must say "bop". If person B is too slow then they will trade spots with person A. Person A can also point to someone and say "Elephant 123". This person then has to make the elephant trunk with his arms while the players on either side of him make elephant ears with their arms. A variety of other animals can be used such as: rabbits, monkeys, leaping salmon, or lobsters. Having the kids make up their own actions is a great idea too!

Art Relay - Large sheet of paper, three coloured markers for each group (15) and tape 7+

Teams are in relay formation. In front of each team a large sheet of paper is hung on the wall with masking tape. Pens are placed on a chair beside each team's paper. Line up 5 teams about 3 meters away and are asked to illustrate a one of the holidays – Easter, Christmas, St. Paddy's Day, Chinese New Year and Valentines Day. On a signal the first player on each team dashes to the wall, picks up a pen, draws a specified part. Then puts down the pen and runs back to touch the next player. Each member adds one more part to the picture. First team to finish earns recognition for speed, but special recognition is given for a picture that is best team effort and depicts the specified holiday.

Clap Pass 7+

Form a circle! The facilitator explains that the goal of this game is to pass the clap around the circle as fast as they can. In the beginning, you start off slow. The facilitator claps, and looks at the person to their right, and then the person clapped at then turns to the person to their right, and does the same thing. This is done all around the circle till the clap reaches back to the facilitator. The facilitator repeats the clap pass, but to the left. As the group gets more comfortable, they can time themselves, and attempt beating their times...left or right.

Detective Clap 7+

One person leaves the room and is designated the “detective”. From within the group one person becomes the “clap leader”. They start a clap action and the group follows this leader. The aim is for the detective to work out who this leader is and the group must work to make this not obvious.

Dragon's Egg 7+

First, you need an object (anything). Form a circle. One person stands in the middle, over the object, protecting it. The people in the circle try to steal the object in the centre without being tagged by the person in the centre. If the centre person tags those reaching for the object, the object gets dropped and placed back under the person in the centre (the dragon, if you will). If the person reaching for the object is successful, he/she becomes the person in the middle (the dragon—watch out for those flames).

Evolution 10+

Good old rock, paper, scissors but everyone starts out acting (and sounding?!) like an egg. The winner of a set of 3 then acts and sounds like a chicken and finds another chicken to continue playing with, the winner then becomes a dinosaur and then a super hero. Each time a person loses a round, they go back one evolutionary level.

Eyes Up Eyes Down 7+

Stand in a circle. When the facilitator says “Eyes Down” all the participants look at the ground. When they say “Eyes Up” all the participants will look up at the same time directly at someone else in the circle. If 2 people are looking directly at each other, they both sit, or make a funny noise together and then sit.

Four Corners 7+

One person sits in the middle of the room and keeps their eyes closed for the whole game. Everyone else chooses one of the 4 corners in the room to stand in. The player in the middle then chooses a number from one to 4. Everyone in that designated corner is out and come sit with the caller. Everyone now switches corners again. The game continues until only one-person remains.

Giants, Wizards, Elves

The two teams stand in two lines facing each other. Each team decides whether they will be Giants, Wizards or Elves, and also a second choice of the three. On the count of three the two teams show their symbol. The team displaying the winning symbol chases the other group back to the designated end. Those who are tagged must join the winning side and the battle begins again. The 3 symbols are - Giants extend arms above head and roar. Wizards extend arms in front of body; knees slightly bent and zap magic spells. Elves crouch down low wiggling their fingers by their ears and make elf noises (mice). Also the giants beat the wizards, who beat the elves, who beat the giants.

Gotchya

Form a circle. Everyone puts their right finger, pointed down, on the left palm of the person standing next to them. There must be a facilitator (story teller) for this game. The facilitator tells a story and will randomly say the word "Gotchya." At this time, everyone tries to grab the pointer fingers of people standing next to them. The goal is to not get your finger caught every time the word "Gotchya" is spoken.

Group Movements

Have the entire group sit in a circle. Someone starts it by doing one movement, the person next to them then does that movement and adds on one of their own. This is then continued around the circle with each person doing all the previous movements and adding one of their own. At the end the group could do all the movements together, or keep going and subtract off one movement at a time till the group is back to just one.

Group Portrait

One player is selected as the photographer while the others in the group cluster around each other, as though posing for a picture. The photographer studies the group and then leaves the room. While s/he is gone, the group chooses 2 or 3 to duck down behind them and stay hidden. After returning, the photographer has to figure out who is missing. They have 3 guesses and then a new photographer is chosen.

Guess Who

It is like the board game guess who. You divide the group into two teams sitting in neatly set up rows of chairs. One person from each team is picked to guess who the judge has in mind from the other team. (The judges must write the name down as proof.) The pickers switch off asking yes or no questions (i.e. does he wear glasses). Anyone who doesn't fit in with the answer must sit down until the picker guesses who. That team gets a point and two new people are picked and you do it all over again

How long is a minute

Challenge everyone to a contest, the object of which is to determine how long it takes for one minute to elapse. Using the sweep second hand of a watch, ask everyone after the signal to sit down when they think a minute is up. Make a mental note of the person who sits down closest to the moment that one minute has elapsed and after everyone has sat down announce the winner, and two runners up. Use a 30 second period for younger children.

Monkey Football

Everyone is standing in a circle, legs spread enough for a ball to go through, feet touching the feet of people standing on each side. A ball is rolled around the circle, trying to roll it through someone else's legs. If this happens, they are allowed to use only one hand, if it happens again, they play facing out.

Pass The Imaginary Ball

Have the group sit in a circle and randomly toss an imaginary ball to each other. Each time the ball is tossed it gets bigger and heavier. Then once it is too big it begins to shrink again.

Pass The Pose

Everyone stands in a circle. The first person begins by doing a pose to the person on their right. That person must do the pose back then turn to the person on their right and do a new pose. This then continues around the entire circle. This could also be done with sound effects added.

Possum Ball

2 teams standing across from each other about 20 feet apart. One team has a tennis ball each. A big ball is then rolled up the middle of the 2 teams and one side has to try to hit it with the tennis balls. The other team then picks up the thrown balls and tries to hit the big ball when it is rolled back down the middle

Rock, Paper, Scissors, Posse

To play, first review the standard rules of rock, paper, scissors, described at the end of this activity.

Ask players to spread out and find a partner. Each pair plays a best of three round of Rock, Paper, Scissors. The losing player then stands behind the winning player and enthusiastically cheers for that player. This new team then finds another team to play a new round of Rock, Paper, Scissors. Each time a team wins, it collects the other team's players, and they line up behind the unbeaten leader. At the end, there will be two large teams, led by the unbeaten leader in front. After the final match, the celebration begins!

Sandman

All players sit in a circle with one player, the detective, out of sight and sound distance. The players in the circle then choose one player to be the sandman. The detective then returns and the game begins. If a person in the circle is winked at by the sandman then they must fall asleep and lay backwards. The detective must try to find out who the sandman is before all the players are asleep.

Secret Sender

This game is similar to Sandman. One person is chosen to be the detective and leaves the circle. The detective chooses someone to be the secret sender. The secret sender begins by doing a simple motion, and everyone else follows. The detective returns to the middle of the circle, and must find out who the secret sender is, while the sender keeps changing the motion. The detective gets three guesses. After the round, the secret sender becomes the detective, and the detective gets to choose the next secret sender.

Shields and Predators

Before the game begins each player silently chooses two other players. One is their predator; the other person is their shield. When the game begins each player must try to keep their shield between themselves and their predator. No one knows who has who for a predator and shield, but it ends up being a frantic running mess.

Squirt

Everyone stands in a circle with one person in the middle. They point at any person and say 'squirt'. That person must then duck; the people on either side will then try to squirt each other. The last to squirt replaces the person in the middle. If the first person does not duck in time and gets caught in the cross fire, they go into the middle. If a draw, have the 2 stand back to back and do a high noon draw on the call of the third person.

Adaptation- Instead of saying 'squirt' say the person's name and then the ones to either side would have to say each other's names rather than 'squirt'!

Statues

There must be at least four players though seven or more works better. First the statues need to get into place and stop moving before the tour guide and tourists come into the room, or area, if outside. The tour guide then walks the tourists around all the statues. The group's objective is to catch the statues moving or make them laugh. This can be done by making comments about the statues, saying jokes, or tricking them with the flashlight. The statues objective is not to be heard and to move without being caught. You can completely change position while the tour guide has his/her back turned. Game ends when all the statues are caught or the tour is over.

Streets And Alleys

Everyone except two players stand side-by-side with their arms out and just touching each other's hands to create a street. One of the other two players is then IT and begins to chase the second player down this street and around. On the command of switch the walls of the street all turn 90 degrees and now create alleys. Possibly cutting off IT from tagging the other player. The more people the more elaborate you can make the streets and alleys.

Switch If You Ever

People and an equal number of chairs or marked spaces MINUS 1.

Circle up with facilitator in middle. Facilitator explains that he will shout out some characteristic ("people with white socks") and when he does, all people with white socks will switch places. Facilitator must pick a characteristic that he has to start the game. The Person who ends up without a chair or space, calls out the next characteristic.

Tiny Teach

Split the group into partnerships. Explain that each person has about 2 minutes to teach the other person something, anything, that they could then teach to the rest of the group. It could be a secret handshake, a recipe, a dance move, but something that you can teach in such a way that the person being taught could then teach the rest of the group. After 2-3 minutes, then the other person does the teaching. Then bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to teach what they learned from their partner. It is amazing what people know

Zip, Zap, Boing

Stand in a circle. With the right hand one person starts a Zip going to the left around the circle, each person passes the word zip around, until someone changes it to Zap which takes it the other way. Boing directs it at someone across the circle.

TRANSITION GAMES

Orientation Square

Ask the campers to form a perfect square around you and to remember their position in relation to you and other campers. Tell each side to make up a sound and a movement. Explain, that the group that is facing your back will always face your back, the group on your right will be always on your right, etc. You will turn in a circle or move to another location and when you say 'square', the square must get in order. Once each side is in correct order, it must present its sound and movement.

Red Light, Green Light

In this game, one person plays the 'stop light' and the rest try to sneak up on them. At the start, all the children form a line about 15 feet away from the stoplight. The stoplight faces away from the line of kids and say 'green light'. At this point the kids are allowed to move toward the stoplight. At any point, the stoplight may say 'red light' and turn around. If any of the kids are caught moving after this has happened, they are out. Play resumes when the stoplight turns back around and says 'green light'. The stoplight wins if all the kids are out before anyone is able to touch him or her. Otherwise, the first player to touch the stoplight wins the game, and is stoplight for the next game

Shrinking Islands

Participants begin with a fully open tarp which everyone is standing on. The tarp must then be folded in half without the campers getting off. For transition, have the campers holding the tarp as they walk, continuing to fold it in half along the way with everyone still holding onto it. Alternatively, start with a fully open tarp, half way try to get everyone on half-folded tarp, etc.

QUIET ACTIVITIES

Aardvark And Ant

Have the children sit in a circle. A ball, the Aardvark, is held by a child within the circle, opposite them a child holds the ant, a beanbag. On the signal “go,” both objects are started around the circle in the same direction. The aardvark is trying to overtake the ant. The aardvark and ant change directions when “change” is yelled. This can either be played for fun or people are eliminated if they hold both the aardvark and the ant at the same time.

Variation-Aardvarks and Ant

Same circle, but instead of one Aardvark there are 3, and the Ant can now jump to any place in the circle. The Aardvarks can also move in both directions, but they can't jump.

Art Consequences

Give each player a pencil and paper and have him/her draw the head of a person. After s/he draws the head, fold the paper so that only the neck shows. Each paper is then passed on to the next person, who draws the shoulders, folds the paper, and passes it on. The others follow, adding the torso, waist, hips, legs and feet. All of which is, of course, preliminary to opening the completed drawing and passing them around.

This game also works very well with having each child write one line of a story and then have the next person read it and continue, and so one and so on.

Earth, Air, Fire, Water

Players stand in a circle while one player in the centre with a beanbag. This player then throws the beanbag to anyone in the circle – calling out one of the words (Earth, Air, Fire, Water) Depending on the word the thrower calls out, the player catching the bag must respond with the name of an animal, a bird, a fish or whistle like a fire engine, before the thrower counts to ten. If s/he fails s/he becomes the new thrower. No creature once named can be repeated.

Electricity

The group divides into two equal lines, facing back to back, sitting down. The lines hold hands. The facilitator stands at one end and puts a bandana at the other end of the two lines. The facilitator then flips a coin, if it is tails nothing happens and the coin is flipped again, if it is heads the first row people pass the squeeze down their respective lines. The person at the other end who receives the squeeze first reaches for the bandana. The two people at the end now move to the front to watch for the quarter.

Feather In Orbit

Teams are seated in small circles. On signal, each team blows their feather in the air and tries to keep it there. If the feather falls to the floor, the team is out. The team that has their feather in the air the longest, wins.

Feather Race

Give each camper a spoon or something narrow that they can balance a feather on. The idea is to see who can go across the cabin and back keeping the feather (or another light object) on the spoon.

Follow The Hand

Split the entire group into pairs of 2. One person must pretend that their nose is attached to the other person's hand, so they must follow the other person's hand wherever they move it.

Group Count

As a group you must count to 20 as fast as you can. You cannot organize who will call out which number and must try to do it without having 2 people call out the same number. If this happens the group begins at 1 again.

Look Sharp

Divide into two teams of players. If it is a larger group, consider dividing teams. Team A faces Team B and notes how each member is dressed. After 2 minutes Team A turns their backs while members of Team B make changes to dress. Team A turns around, faces Team B and tries to identify the changes Team B made. Reverse roles and try again.

Mirror Game

Split the entire group into pairs of 2. One person must do actions while the other must mirror everything they do. I.e. Lift leg, wave, smile, etc.

Paper-Cutting Race

Give each person a piece of construction paper and a pair of scissors. Instruct each person to cut the piece of construction paper to make it as long as possible while remaining in one piece. If scissors are not available, have each person tear the paper. (Hint: Zig-Zags!)

Zoom

The group is in a circle and someone starts by saying, "zoom" as fast or slow or loud or however they want. The "zoom" is then passed around the circle. After a couple of turns doing this the game gets more interesting because the zoom can be passed to the person directly to your left or right. That's it; the game is simply for fun

Variation – Hand Zoom

Here the group in the circle place their hands on the ground next to each other. Then they interlock arms. Instead of saying zoom they tap their hand on the ground and the next person then taps and

so on. Whenever someone double taps the "zoom" changes direction. People begin to tap out of turn and so on. When someone taps out of turn his or her hand is eliminated. You can let people stay in the game or get them to judge who taps out of turn.

TEAMBUILDING

Crack The Code

The task for the team is to find a secret path across the mine field. Prepare a copy of the grid on a paper with drawn out path across the mine field with safe squares, each square is connected to the previous one with a corner or an edge.

The campers - one at the time - need to try to find the way across, however if one of them steps on a box that isn't part of the path, another camper has to have a go. In the end, once they figure out the way, all have to cross the mine field.

Crossing The Mud

The group needs to cross the "dangerous mud" (an area approx.10m long), but can only step on the islands (carpet or cardboard pieces). According to the size of the group you can decide how many feet can be on one island.

Group Juggling

First, one ball/bean bags is passed around in the circle, everyone has to remember who they passed the ball to and everyone can get the ball just once. In the next round, the ball is passed in the same order, however gradually another balls (up to the number of people in the circle) are added.

Half Pipe Challenge

Everyone gets a half pipe and as a group you try to form a slide for the ball and get it into a bucket.

Helium Hula Hoop

Groups stand in a circle. Everyone puts one finger on the hoop. Object is to try to slowly lift hoop up and bring it back down to the ground while keeping it level the whole way.

Hula Hoop Pass

Everyone stands in a circle. One person slips a hula-hoop over his/her arm and then everyone joins hands. Now pass the hula-hoop all the way around the circle without ever letting go of anyone's hands. This is really fun when you have a mix of kids and adults in your circle.

Human Knot

Ask a group of 10- 16 individuals to face one another in a tight circle. Each person holds out their right hand and grasps the right hand of someone else, as if they were shaking hands. Then each person extends their left hand and grasps the hand of someone else, so that each person is holding two different hands. The task is to try to unwind the circle. The physical, hand-to-hand contact that you have with your partner may not be broken, although palms may pivot on one another.

Magic Carpet

Ask the group to stand on an 8'x8' "magic carpet" (tarp or blanket). The entire group must be on the tarp completely. Once everyone is settled, advise the group that they are going on a magic carpet ride. Tell them that they have risen 100 feet in the air and are ready to go. Unfortunately, the instructions on how to steer and land the carpet are on the other side of the carpet. So, they must flip the carpet over while standing on it. Very fun and challenging! A great variation is to explain the instructions to two groups at the same time and see if they try to work with the team on the other carpet or if they attempt to flip their carpet as separate teams.

Parachute Games

Mexican wave: Campers one after the other hold parachute above their head & try to get the ball rolling around the outside

Anyone who: Someone shouts out "Anyone who..." (example: loves Over the wall) and then all campers lift the parachute above their heads. Anyone who does love over their heads. Anyone who does (love OTW) walks underneath the parachute and swap places.

Lifeguards: Campers sit with their legs out in front underneath the parachute, making waves. One camper is the shark underneath the parachute and tags the other campers feet and the tagged camper shouts out help 3 times with their hands in the air. Two lifeguards are walking around the circle, high-5ing the campers asking for help. If lifeguards do not reach the camper before they have said help 3 times, the camper joins the sharks under the parachute. The game gets restarted when there are 10 sharks.

Mushroom: all campers hold parachute above their heads & step underneath it, then sit down, holding the parachute under bottom. Can have games of Chinese whispers, or hold a debrief.

Ultimate Spoons -few decks of cards, spoons – the same number as persons playing minus 1

Everybody is sitting in a circle at a table, spoons are hidden around the room, the cards are being passed around, everybody is trying to collect 4 of a kind cards, As soon as someone has 4 of a kind they get up and try to find a spoon, everybody else follows, leaving one person without a spoon. In the next round, the pile of cards starts at this person.

Webbing Shapes

Everyone holds a piece of the same rope. They need to make a shape together. Blindfold them for a big challenge.

BRAIN TEASERS

Black Magic

This takes two cars (or could be campers) collaborating. One of the two people is the magical wizard who can pick out what object the group has picked out and the other person is the caller. How this works is that the wizard will leave the room, they can't hear or see anything. The rest of the group will pick out any object in the room and everyone will know...except the wizard. The wizard will then return to the room and the caller will start calling out objects. The trick is that when the caller calls out an object that is black, the very next object, no matter what it is, will be the object that the group picked out, hence the name black magic. Of course only the caller and the wizard know the pattern. It takes campers and cars alike a long time to figure this one out.

Car

Two people are in on the trick. Beforehand, those two decide on the fate of three different looking things (can be anything: pens, shoes, hats, sunglasses, etc.) Each thing is assigned a letter. For example the first thing is "C", the second thing is "A", the third thing is "R". After the trick is introduced, person two leaves the room, and person one places the things on the floor and then has someone choose one of the things by pointing to it. After that person has chosen, person one calls person two back into the room, and the words used here are the key to knowing which thing was selected. If person one says, "Come back," then the "C" thing is the one. If person one says, "Are you ready?" then the "A" thing is the one. If person one says, "Ready?" then the "R" thing is the one. After hearing that call, person two returns...thinks for a while, perhaps making a show of mentally finding the answer...then picks up the appropriate thing! Wow!

Crossed Or Uncrossed?

Everyone sits in a circle. You take a couple sticks (or pens or whatever) and put them down in front of yourself and ask, "Cross or uncrossed?" You then pass them to the person next to you and ask the same question. The sticks get passed around to each person and each time the people have to answer the question, "Crossed or uncrossed?" The trick is that you are really asking whether the legs of the person are crossed or uncrossed. The positioning of sticks actually has no significance.

Who's Got The Ball

First of all, there really isn't a ball...it is invisible or imaginary. Second of all, the person who talked first after you asked, "Who's got the ball?" automatically has the ball cause that's the trick. It does not matter who you throw it to or where it ends up, the first person to speak after the question, "Who's got the ball?" will have it. Now sometimes someone will think they have figured it out and when you finish tossing the imaginary ball around and doing tricks with it...you ask "Who's got the ball?" they will say, "I do!" And they could actually be right (but probably wouldn't know why) as long as they were the first person to answer.