



GREAT GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



Ice-breakers

These activities provide an opportunity for the participants of your group to “get-to-know-each-other”, and to begin feeling comfortable with one another. Even if the participants know each other pretty well, ice-breakers will always start your program off with a few laughs.

Categories

This activity is great for large groups. It is ideal for mixing people in a fun non-threatening manner, and help people find things in common with others

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to as many as you have.

What to do:

Ask your group to separate quickly into smaller groups that you are to announce. For mixing purposes, you should alternate two-group splits with multi-group splits. As soon as the groups have formed, give the participants to say hello to one another. Once they have had a chance to say a quick hello, move to announce the next split.

Here are a few sample group categories. Don't hesitate to make up your own.

Everyone fold your arms. If your right arm is on top, get together with the right-armers. Left armers do the same

What month were you born in?

How many children in your family, including yourself?

Which leg do you put into your pants first?

Which side of the bed do you get out of in the morning?

What colour are your eyes?

Gotcha

Never fails. Excellent for filling in a few minutes of spare time, or simply producing raptures of laughter.

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 4, and up to as many as you have.

What to do:

Ask your group to form a circle, facing inwards and standing side by side. Hold your right hand out to your right side (about shoulder height) with the palm facing upwards. Next, extend the index finger of your left hand and place the tip of it on the palm of the person's hand on your left. You are now ready to start. On the command "Go", everyone tries to catch the finger of the person on his or her right side. Of course, they are also trying to avoid being caught by the person on their left.

Fill Me In

A name reminder game with lots of people calling out names, with a chaotic combination of crossings.

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

What to do:

The action begins when one person steps into the circle at the same time announcing the name of someone who is directly opposite them and walks towards that person. The first person “fills the space” of the newly announced person as they move into the centre of the circle who immediately calls out someone else’s name and the process starts all over again. In and out, in and out. Eye contact and careful movement are important here.

Knots

A great way to get to know people very quickly and provides for cooperation to get out of the knot.

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 6 and up to 20

What to do:

Participants form a circle. All reach into the centre and grasp someone-else’s hand making sure they are not holding hands with the same person. Without breaking grip, let the group untangle themselves.

(Source: Project Adventure Australia, 1996)

Tag Games

Although primarily fun, tag activities are useful as warm-up exercises as well as to provide a setting wherein participants are able to take some risks.



Elbow Tag

A name reminder game with lots of people calling out names, with a chaotic combination of crossings.

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

What to do:

Ask each person to find a partner, and link arms/elbows with him or her. Their outside arms should be positioned like a tea cup handle (with hand on hip). If you have an uneven number of people, create one trio. Each pair is then encouraged to find their own space (within specified boundaries) so that they are not close to other pairs.

Next two people volunteer to become a cat-or the chaser- and a mouse-the chase. The chase occurs in and around the other pairs, who are fixed in their positions, until either the mouse or the cat chooses to link (outside) arms with any one of the linked pairs. Two's company, but three a crowd. So the person opposite the mouse must link elbows with one of the members of a pair to be safe. The other members of the pair must immediately take off to prevent being caught and look for an available elbow to link with. The cat can also link with a pair and so releases a new cat, where the mouse (or cat) just linked becomes the new mouse (cat). And so the chase continues, but with a new mouse (cat). When a tag is made, the roles reverse, i.e. The cat becomes the mouse and vice versa. As your group appears to grasp this tagging concept, introduce a second (and third!!) "cat" and "mouse" for increased action and fun.

Head-Butt Tag

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 40

What to do:

Instruct your group to spread themselves randomly about the playing field/space. Explain that there are two "teams"-heads and tails or (butts)-and everyone gets to choose to which team they (initially) want to belong. To be on the "heads" team, participants must place both of their hands on top of their head, while everyone belonging to the "butts" team will place their hands on their bottom.

From the centre of the field, you announce that you will count to three quickly, at which point everyone must have demonstrated an affiliation with either the heads or butts team. On three, the chase begins. Heads chase butts, and butts chase heads. When a tag is made of a member on an opposing team-by removing one hand from a head or butt to touch another-the person who is tagged automatically becomes a member of the team that just "caught" them. It continues until everyone belongs to the same team, or it seems that most people are pooped!

Variation: Toss a coin in the middle of the field, and shout the heads or tails outcome. The team that is announced chases the other team. Game continues until everyone is caught. Play several quick rounds.

Walk Tag

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 40

What to do:

Instruct everyone in your group to find someone to be their partner. As in all classic tag games, one of them has to be “it”, i.e. the person doing the chasing. The object of the game is for this person to tag only their chosen partner, who of course, attempts to keep from being tagged. If a tag is made, they switch roles and the chase now becomes the chaser. Two rules apply though. Only walking is allowed (no running) and every person must avoid touching anyone else in the pursuit of, or escape from, his or her partner.

Variation: If appropriate, restrict the playing area to achieve a heightened awareness of people’s personal space, as well as individual safety.

Amoeba Tag

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 40.

What to do:

Two people are it. They hold hands and chase the other participants around until they catch someone. When they catch another participant they join the chain by linking hands. When another person is caught they can stay together or split even numbers (2 by 2 or 4 by 4 etc.) and can link together at will. This game is played until nobody is left.

(Source: Project Adventure Australia, 1996)



Trust Exercises

Trust is a fragile thing, and should be developed slowly and purposefully. While trust is involved in every activity of a program, a series of dedicated “trust” exercises can provide an opportunity for participants to trust their physical and emotional well-being at a higher level.

Compass Walk

Area Required

An open space (but not necessarily flat space)

Number of participants

As many as you have

What to do:

Ask your group to divide into pairs. To start, one person identifies a distant object from across the playing field—a tree, a rock, a light pole; etc—and announces the object to their partner. With their eyes completely closed (no peeking) they begin to move directly towards it. Their aim is to walk “straight” to the object, pursuing accurate distance and direction. To ensure a safe arrival, their partner, but rather prevent them from encountering any “unplanned” obstacles’ by stopping them just short of a collision. Note the tendency for people to veer either left or right. The looks on people’s faces when they discover how far off they were is worth bottling.

Circle Squashers

See how many people you can fit into the circle!

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

You will need: A circle marked on the ground (use chalk) around 60cm in diameter

What to do:

The participants need to climb on top of each other and help to fit as many people as possible in the circle, circle but do not let any part of the participants bodies touch the ground or hang outside the circle.

(Source: Project Adventure Australia, 1996)

Hog Call

A grand excuse to make a lot of noise, and have lots of fun.

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 40

What to do:

Ask your group to form a line. Now fold the line in the middle so that each faces the other. Everyone should be facing one other person, to form a pair. Explain that you would like each pair to share a matching set of words or sounds, to form a pair. Explain that you would like each pair to share a matching set of words or sounds, such as peanut butter, coca-cola, salt-pepper, etc. In addition, each person should choose one of the words or sounds as their own. After a moment, ask each pair to announce their word. This will allow everyone to enjoy the melee of the more inventive selections, as well as ensure that there are no duplications. Move each line away from each other (maybe the ends of each room). When they get there, each person will turn away from their partners and close their eyes. The object is to have each person find their partner by shouting their partners "word". For example, if I am "peanut", I would yell "butter" over and over until my partner and I found each other. When the pairs finally find each other, invite them to open their eyes and enjoy watching the melee of name shouting around them.

Variation: Use animal sounds instead of words.



Initiatives

Group problem solving activities, or initiatives provide an opportunity for participants to effectively communicate, co-operate and interact with each other to solve a problem, which often has more than one "answer".

Mute Line-Up

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

What to do:

Instruct your group that from this moment on they are all mute. That is, they cannot talk. Then explain that you would like them to form into a straight line according to some criteria. Examples include height, age, date of birth (not including the year), shoe size etc. Make it specifically challenging for the group. When it is obvious that the sequenced solution has been achieved, ask the group to announce the “order” of their line.

Everybody Up

Area Required

A flat open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

What to do:

Ask your group to split into pairs, preferably seeking partners of approximately the same size. Each pair sit facing one another with the balls of their feet touching, knees bent and hands tightly grasped. From the sitting position ask each duo to try and pull themselves into an upright sitting position. If successful, ask them to add another due and embark on four person exercise, and then another, and then another and so on.

Variation: Ask participants to sit back to back with their partner, and try to stand as a pair. With each success, add a further due, etc. Beware, interlocked arms from this position may dislocate shoulders and should be avoided.

The Clock

Area Required

A dry flat space

Number of participants

At least 12, and up to 30

What to do:

Invite your group to form a circle, sitting on the floor with their butts on the ground. Each person should be close enough to hold onto their neighbours hands. With their hands held and butts on the ground, this is the starting position. Explain to the group that on the call of an appropriate sounding signal they are to stand up, rotate a full 360 degrees in a circle back to their original positions, then change direction and rotate back to their spots, where they will stop and sit down together. Their goal is to complete this routine in the fastest possible time. Provide your group at least 2 attempts to set a nominal world record, and a third attempt if they choose. Ensure that participants start and finish with their butts on the ground, maintain their grip at all times, and are sensitive to whipping their slower participants around the circle at “break-neck” speed.

Variation: For a different challenge, ask the group to beat a specific time. On average, it takes about one second per person (plus a couple for safe measure) to complete the required rotations.

Magic Shoes

Area Required

A flat open space

Number of participants

Recommended between 10-15

What to do:

Make out two parallel lines on the ground of whatever length, and about ten meters apart-distance is not a critical factor though. Your group starts behind one of the lines, and their object is to get from this position, across the “poison quick sand” to the other line. At their disposal, your group is given an imaginary pair of “magic shoes”.

Explain to the group that it is not possible for anyone to enter safely into the “poison quick sand” pit. However, the magic shoes will permit whoever is wearing them at the time to walk through the pit unscathed. But, and here’s the catch, these shoes are so special; they can only be worn once by the individual, and then only in one direction. The shoes can only be worn by one person at a time, and they can’t be thrown across the pit. Typically the solution will require at least one or more people to piggy back another person.

Variation: Although very difficult to achieve, you may instruct the group to complete the crossing in as few trips as possible or give the group a time to complete the crossing of all participants.

Circle the Circle

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and up to 30

What you need

Two hula hoops

What to do:

Ask your participants to form a hand-in-hand circle. Place two hula-hoops together between 2 people (resting on their grasped hands). See how quickly the participants in the circle can cause the hoops to travel around the circle in opposite directions, through each other (i.e. hoop through hoop), and back to their originating position.

(Source: Project Adventure Australia, 1996)

Environmental Activities

These activities have the added attraction of being explorative and educational held in the outdoors. The activities encourage participants to explore, examine and appreciate the natural world we live in and discover interesting and exciting things along the way.



Stations

Area Required

An open space with trees, rocks, logs and as many natural items as possible.

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What to do:

A course is marked out along a pre-determined route, with set stations along the way. Participants work their way along the course in pairs. At stations they may have the following set up:

List all objects within a designated area that are foreign to the environment (i.e. Plastic, cloth)

Identify the different types of trees or flowers

Look and identify different animal or insect habitats

The game continues with the leader setting the course according to the nature of the environment. When all participants have returned "home" their findings are discussed with each other.

Blindfolded Sense Trail

Area Required

An open space with trees, rocks, logs and as many natural items as possible.

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What you will need:

Blindfolds (old male ties work well)

What to do:

In pairs, participants lead each other by the hand or arm. The leader is sighted, the other person blindfolded. The leader walks slowly, introducing the partner to the environment through touch, smell and taste. Neither party speak during this time. After a period of 10 minutes, players swap roles.

When all participants have tried both roles, the group leader initiates an open discussion about what they experienced. Participants can be encouraged to discuss their experiences through questions such as:

How does it feel to walk with your eyes closed?

Was the earth warm or cold?

What does moss feel like?

What did you smell during your walk?

How many types of leaves did you touch?

Spot the Red Rag

Area Required

An open space with trees, rocks, logs and as many natural items as possible.

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What you will need:

A red cloth or flag (tea towel works great)

What to do:

The leader marks out a designated area where there are ample trees and shrubs to play the game. Participants are divided into two teams. One team takes the “red rag” and finds a tree, branch or clumps of bushes. They place the “red rag” in this setting so that it is cleverly camouflaged but still within view and able to be spotted by the teams during the game. They return to base. The other team then goes out and is timed on how long it takes them to find the “red rag”. Teams then change over, and the winning team is the one who finds the “red rag” the quickest.

Prey and Predator

Area Required

An open space with trees, rocks, logs and as many natural items as possible.

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What to do:

One person is selected as prey and the other players become predators (for example, lamb and foxes). The prey stands with its back to the predators who are spread out about 40 meters away lying low to the ground. Once the game starts, the predators sneak slowly towards the stationary prey. The prey is only allowed to turn around and point to an advancing predator if it has heard them move. If the prey has heard correctly, then the predator is out of the game. The surviving predators keep sneaking up as the prey tries to survive through careful listening. The predator’s objective is to grab the prey; the prey’s objective is to hear and then catch out all the predators before they get caught!!

(Source: Life Be in It, 1999)

Night Animals

What to do:

In the natural environment, it is often possible at night to observe nocturnal animals. Have your group walk slowly in pairs along a trail, with each pair having a strong torch. Encourage them to search for creatures of the night by listening for animal sounds. Do not pursue animals, just observe them. After experiencing this, try sitting quietly, with torches turned off, listening to the night sounds.

International Games

Here we present games from around the world. All have been tried and tested and proven to be lots of fun. In presenting these international games to your participants, try combining them with dance, music, crafts, food and the language of the country. Present them with colour and flair and enjoy the culture of other countries.



Stoop Tag (Philippines)

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What to do:

Participants avoid being tagged by bopping or squatting. A player can only bop or squat three times and then has to run to avoid capture. Ensure you have a defined area for playing this game.

The Lion and the Goat (Africa)

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 15, and up to 30

What to do:

A large circle is formed with participants at arms distance from each other. The “goat” grazes inside and the “lion” roams outside. Every now and then the “goat” runs out of the circle to challenge the “lion” to catch it, before running back inside the circle (which is safe ground). When the “goat” is caught, that player becomes the “lion”, the previous “lion” becomes part of the circle and a new “goat” enters the circle.

Tail Tigggy (Greece)

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What to do:

Players are informally scattered in a designated area. They each have a tail (handkerchief) tucked into their clothes at the waist. Each tries to guard the tail without touching it, and at the same time tries to capture someone else's tail. The winner is the player with the most tails after three minutes.

Keep the Bird Alive (Denmark)

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What you will need:

A blown up balloon untied at the mouthpiece

What to do:

Players sit in a circle. The blown-up balloon is passed from one player to the next, each player attempting to stop the air from escaping. The aim of the game is not to be the player who is left with the balloon when all the air is gone.

(Source: Life Be in It, 1999)

Old Time Favourites

Old time favourites are games and activities that have been played for many years in school grounds or playing them for hours in your neighbourhood. Most of these activities have simple rules and use basic equipment.



Three-Legged Race

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have in even pairs

What you will need:

Blindfolds (old male ties work well)

What to do:

Participants pair up with inside legs joined together at the ankles. The ankles are tied together loosely with a tie. They then race against other pairs, or join up in teams and enjoy relays.

Poison Ball

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have.

What you will need:

Soft ball, larger than a tennis ball

What to do:

Two players stand 2 meters apart. One of them has the ball that is thrown towards the other player in an attempt to hit them. The opponent tries to avoid the ball by dodging the ball. If the player is hit they are out and wait for the next game until all centre players have been hit.

Egg and Spoon Race

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have in even pairs

What you will need:

(hard boiled or mock eggs) and dessert spoons

What to do:

Players form into relay teams, with each team having one spoon and one egg. The aim of the game is for the players to run as fast as they can carrying the egg sitting in the spoon in front of them. If the egg drops, it must be collected with the spoon and they continue on. The race finishes when all team member have had a turn bringing up the egg in the spoon.

Tunnel Ball

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 12, and as many as you have

What you will need:

A netball, volleyball or small soft ball

What to do:

Players in each team stand in line with their legs, about 1 meter between each other. The player at the head of the line holds the ball. On a command, the head players pass the ball under the legs to the next person in their team, who must touch the ball before passing it to the next player. The ball is then passed down the line, through the legs of all players. The last player grabs the ball and runs to the top of the line. As this is happening, all players step back one pace, so that the last players come to stand where the first player originally was. The game continues until all players have had a turn of running to the head of the line, and the leaders have come back to their original position at the heads of the teams.

Variation: Try “Under and Over” relay, which alternates the tunnel ball action with bending backwards to pass the ball.

Sack Races

Area Required

An open space

Number of participants

At least 10, and as many as you have

What you will need:

Hessian Sacks

What to do:

Have participants jumping, 2 legs together in a sack towards a finishing line. This race can be quite exhausting, so the distance raced should be appropriate to the age of the participants.

(Source: Life Be in It, 1999)



Craft

These activities may require some preparation and planning but generally you can do most of these with minimal products and things you can often find in the recycle bin or on your program. Lots of creative fun and enable participants to make something to take home with them after the program.

Pet Rocks

What you will need:

Smooth creek or river bed rocks, paints and collage material for decorations (googly eyes, pompoms, glitter)

What to do:

Help participants collect rocks from a river bed or beach (otherwise you can buy bags of rocks from hardware stores) then decorate the rocks to make them look great. You can even make boxes for them to live in.

Sand Paintings

What you will need:

finesand, powder paints, large salt shakers, glue, paper or card

What to do:

Put some fine sand into each of the plastic containers and mix a little of the powder paint with the sand so you have a variety of colours. Participants use glue to draw a picture and then sprinkle sand over the glue to form a picture. Leave to dry completely and then display.

Bath Fizz

What you will need:

Bicarbonate of soda, glass bottles with lids, measuring cup, cornflour, cream of tartar, Essential oils such as lavender

What to do:

Measure three-quarters of a cup of bicarbonate of soda, two tablespoons of cornflour and half a cup of cream of tartar. Stir well and break up any lumps. Add a few drops of essential oil and mix well again. Put into jars and put lid on them. Ready to be used, add to few teaspoons to a bath and watch them fizz.

T-Shirt Art

What you will need:

Plain T-shirt, Fabric crayons (available from art and craft stores) white paper, Iron and ironing board, Tea Towel

What to do:

Suggest to participants that they work out their design before drawing it with fabric crayons. When they have done that, they draw the design on the white paper, colouring as heavily as they can. Remember if they are writing words it will come out reversed!

Put a tea towel on the ironing board and pull the front of the t-shirt through the board (This will stop the design going through to the other side of the t-shirt). Place the drawing face down on the fabric and do the iron over the top. Press down the warm iron all over the design (don't move the iron back and forth or the design will blur). The picture will transfer to the T-shirt. Remove the piece of paper and the T-shirt is ready to wear.

(Source: TV Free activities, 2002)

Balloon Heads

What you will need:

Balloons, Plain Flour, Water, Funnel, Teaspoon, Permanent marking pens

What to do:

Together, blow up the balloons and then deflate them. Put the funnel into the balloon's mouth and carefully spoon in as much flour as you can. Don't over fill the balloon. Add a little water to make the flour pliable and tie up the balloon. Participants will love making faces on their balloon heads with the markers and then moulding them to make funny facial features-big ears, squashed noses and fat cheeks!



Cooking

Cooking is a great activity to get everyone involved in and provides an opportunity to do an activity that is less physical and great to do indoors or over a campfire. We have provided some yummy recipes to make and enjoy.

Banana Pancakes (Makes 12)

What you will need:

2 ripe bananas, 1 egg, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk, 1 tbs butter, 1 cup self-raising flour

What to do:

Mash bananas well. Next break egg and whisk well into the bananas until smooth and creamy. Add the flour and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the milk and beat for 1 minute with a large spoon. Stir in the rest of the milk. Cover the mixture with a clean tea-towel and allow to stand for about 30 minutes. In a frypan add a teaspoon of butter and pour or ladle in some of the mixture to form small pancakes. When bubbles appear on the side turn carefully with an egg flipper and cook until golden brown on the other side. Serve with ice cream and maple syrup.

Chocolate Crackles (Makes 12 large)

What you will need:

4 cups Rice Bubbles, 1 cup desiccated coconut, 3 tbs of cocoa, 250g Copha, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of icing sugar

What to do:

Sift icing sugar into a large bowl. Next add all the dry ingredients to the icing sugar. Meanwhile, melt the copha gently in a saucepan and cool a little. Carefully pour the copha into the bowl of the dry ingredients. Mix well and then spoon filling in to patty cases. Cool on a tray in the refrigerator and enjoy!

Coconut Macaroons (Makes 24)

What you will need:

What you need: 2 cups of desiccated coconut, 1 cup of castor sugar, 2 eggs, 2 tbs cornflour, pinch of salt

What to do:

Measure all dry ingredients into a mixing bowl. Next beat the eggs well and add to the dry ingredients. Mix them together well. Grease your biscuit trays and cover with baking paper, as macaroons tend to stick to the tray. Place teaspoons onto the trays, leaving macaroons room to spread. Bake in a slow oven of 150°C for about 15-20 minutes. Leave to cool on tray for 5 minutes before removing.

Vegetable Soup with pasta (Makes enough for 6)

What you will need:

2 medium carrots (diced), 2 celery stalks (diced), 1 potato (diced), ½ cup peas, 1 large tomato (diced), 1 parsnip (diced), 1 zucchini (diced) 1 small onion (diced), 100g bacon pieces, olive oil, 1 stock cube, ½ cup dried small pasta

What to do:

Prepare vegetables. Cook bacon and onion with a little oil in a large saucepan. Add the remaining vegetables cook for 2 minutes. Add some water, the stock cube and the pasta. Bring to the boil and let it simmer for at least 30 minutes. Delicious served with crusty damper/bread.

Damper

What you will need:

What you need: 3 cups self-rising flour, 1½ teaspoons salt, 90g butter, ½ cup milk, ½ cup water, extra flour

What to do:

Sift flour and salt into a bowl, rub in butter until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Make a well in the centre of dry ingredients, add combined water and milk all at once; mix gently with a sharp knife in cutting motion. Turn out on to a lightly floured surface, knead lightly. Knead dough into a round, place in camp Dutch oven and with a sharp knife cut two slits across the dough like a cross. Brush top with milk, sift a little extra flour over the dough. Bake in coals or hot oven for 20 minutes until golden brown. Remove and enjoy with warm butter.

(Source: TV Free activities, 2002)