

GROUP ACTIVITIES & CHALLENGES FOR TEAM BUILDING

PEOPLE SEARCH: This is good for the first or second meeting of the group to help them to learn about each other. Make a list of things that people in the group might have in common such as: *Find someone who likes the NY Yankees; Find someone who likes skating; Find someone who hates vegetables; Find someone who loves chocolate; Find someone who was born in another state; Find someone who is good in math; Find someone who plays a musical instrument; etc.* Each group member has a piece of paper with the list on it (Make sure each member has his/her name at the top). The challenge is to see who can get their paper signed by the group members first. Members cannot sign their own paper and no person can sign someone else's list more than twice.

INTRODUCTIONS: Members of the group are divided into pairs and asked to talk to their partner and find out their name, hobbies or interests, where they were born, etc. Then each person introduces his/her partner to the group.

HUMAN CHAIN: This is good for warming up a group at the beginning of a session. Ask the members of the group to form a circle. Then reach out their right hand out and take hold of someone else's hand. Next, reach out their left hand and take hold of a different person's hand. The challenge is to untangle and end up with a circle with out letting go of each other. They may move their hands to a more comfortable position, but they must not lose contact with the other person.

ROPES: Cut a piece of clothesline into several eight foot lengths (tape the ends so they don't unravel. Ask the group to form two lines facing each other (between 3 and 6 on a line will work). Tie a different piece of rope to one arm of each person in one of the lines. Tangle the ropes up and then tie the remaining ends to one arm of the people on the other line. The challenge is to untangle the ropes. You may have the group do this without talking or with talking. *Important: Tell the students they may not pull hard on a rope because they might injure a group member.*

ROPE LINE: Use a 12 foot piece of clothesline for a group of 5 students. Tie 5 simple knots in two feet apart from each other on the rope. Ask the students to hold the rope with one hand. They must get all of the knots out, without letting go of the rope. They may slide their hand on the rope, but they may not slide it over a knot.

HUMDINGERS: This is a fun way to break a large group into smaller groups. List several song titles (as many titles as you want groups) that the group members will recognize on a piece of paper (Happy Birthday, Jingle Bells, etc.). Make as many copies of the paper as you want in your group. Cut up the paper so there is a song title on each piece, mix them all up together, and have people select one paper with a song title on it. Instruct everyone to hum the tune of the song on their paper and then get together with all of the people who are humming the same song.

STRAW TOWER: Break into groups of three to five people. Each group receives a roll of tape and 50 straws. Tell the groups that they have 15 minutes to plan and construct the tallest straw tower. The towers must be free standing (not leaning on a wall or person and not taped to the ceiling) The straws may be taped to the floor only.

HOUSE OF CARDS: This is the same as Straw Tower, but you use old playing cards. The group members may tear or bend them anyway they want.

PHONE BOOTH: This is a good team building activity for a group of 8 to 12 people depending on their size and age. Using masking tape, mark off a 3 foot square. The challenge is for the entire group to stand inside the “phone booth” at the same time.

COAT OF ARMS: Draw a large shield on a piece of poster paper. Supply each group with colored pens and markers. Explain how families used to have a coat of arms that symbolized what the family was all about (occupations, interests, hobbies, accomplishments, etc.) Ask the group to design a coat of arms that represents all of the members of the group. If you have a model, it will be very helpful to show it.

GROUP PICTURE: Ask the group to draw a picture that represents all of the members of the group in some way. Emphasize that only positive things should go into the picture and all members must participate. Then each group explains the picture.

TRUST FALLS: You may do this in pairs, or with one person falling back and the group catching him/her. Remind the group that someone can get hurt if they fool around and allow someone to fall. It can be successful even if they fall back a few inches.

SHOWCASE: The group or teams must create a skit, write a song, tell jokes or perform a dance based on a theme.

PAT ON THE BACK: This is real positive activity for the last session. Tape a piece of oak tag on the back of each member of the group. Everyone has to write positive things about the person on the oak tag. Members get to keep their own pat on the back.

SQUARE PUZZLE: This may be done with a group of 4 or 5 people. You need 5 stiff cardboard squares (not corrugated) about 5 inches square. Cut them up as shown below. Mix up all the pieces and deal them out to the group (as you would deal a deck of cards). Each person will have 3 pieces, but not the 3 pieces that will the square. The task is for the group is to work together so that each person ends up with a correctly assembled square in front of him/her.

