



# Group Bonding Activities

Many of these activities are suggested to assist your group in getting better acquainted with each other throughout the week. The purpose of these activities is to spend some time devoted to learning one another's names and characteristics, appreciate similarities and differences, and practicing respect and inclusion of all group members. All of these activities are designed to be cooperative, not competitive. As a group leader, it is your responsibility to set the tone and protect the environment. Feel free to pick and choose to best suit the needs of your group.

## Name Games

### 1. Classic Name & Ice Breaker

Go around the circle, say your name and...

- Favorite pizza
- What kind of car you would be and why
- What kind of animal you would be and why
- Who is your favorite super hero and why
- If they made a movie of your life, who would you want to play you
- Favorite flavor of ice cream
- Favorite cartoon and why
- Favorite thing to do in the summer
- If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go and why
- What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten
- Share a quirky habit you have
- What's the worst thing you ever did as a kid

### 2. Toss-a-Name Game

\*Supplies: One soft throwable object

Group should stand in a circle, arm's length apart. One at a time, going around the circle in sequence, each person should call out his/her name, passing the throwable object to the next person.

After the throwable object has gone around the circle, the first person will call out the name of the person (who is not to his/her right or left) and throw the object to that person as quick as he/she can. That person will then call another person's name and throw the object to that person also as quick as he/she can. Remind students that it is important to get eye contact before throwing the object.

### 3. Name Impulse

\*Supplies: A watch to keep time, paper to keep times

Gather the group into a circle. Ask for a volunteer to start the activity. The volunteer decided which way the “impulse” will go, left or right. The volunteer begins the activity by saying his or her name out loud. As soon as the volunteer says his/her name, the next person says his/her name. This continues around the circle until everyone has said their name.

After one practice round, time the next couple rounds to see how quickly the group can say their names. Stop the group and ask them if they can think of any ways they might be able to do it faster. Give them a minute to figure out how they can improve the time. Allow the group to attempt and plan a few cycles.

### 4. Peek-a-who

\*Supplies: An opaque blanket or tarp (available in dining hall)

Divide the group in half. Have two group leaders hold up the blanket/tarp with one group on each side. Each group should sit 2-3 feet back from the blanket/tarp. (Make sure no one can see the other side.)

Each team should SILENTLY choose one person to go forward to the blanket. This person will sit near the blanket and face it. On the count of three, the blanket should be dropped to the ground and the two chosen players must correctly name the player sitting across from them. (No help from teammates!) The first person to correctly say the name of the person across from them “wins” that person to their team. The first team to have everyone on its side wins the game. (You may want to set a time limit if your group is large or keeps going back and forth.)

### 5. Whomp ‘em

\*Supplies: One foam swim noodle (available in dining hall)

Have the group form a circle seated on the ground with their feet extended to the middle. (If there are chairs available, the students can sit in chairs.) One person stands in the middle of the outstretched legs and feet with the swim noodle in hand. Explain that the object of the game is NOT be in the middle; you want to stay seated in the circle as long as you can.

To start the game, one person in the circle will say the name of someone else in the circle. That person then calls a second person's name and so on. The person in the middle will try to tap the feet (or knee, if sitting in chairs) of the person whose name was called before they can say someone else's name. The goal is for the person in the middle to tap someone in the circle before that person says another name, so the person in the middle can take his/her place in the circle. The person who was tapped is now in the middle and the game continues until the time allotted.

## 6. Concentration

The rhythm for this game is slap, slap (on the knees), snap, snap (one on each hand - right then left). The group sits in a circle. One person is designated as the leader, and he/she sets the pace. The object of the game is to get to the leader's spot. The leader begins the rhythm, and on one set of snaps, says his/her name on the first snap and someone else's name on the second snap (the names MUST always be said on the two snaps). The person whose name is said must respond on the next set of slaps and snaps by saying his/her own name and then someone else's name on the same beat. If the player does it correctly, the game continues. If the player does not do it quickly enough, that player must move to the seat to the right of the leader, and the rest of the group moves up a seat (toward the leader's spot) to fill in the seats. The game continues until the group has learned names well. The pace can be as fast as desired.

If the group already knows names, a variation of this game can be played using numbers instead of names. The group can number off and say their number and then another number on the snaps rather than their name and another name.

## 7. Gesture Names

Have the group stand or sit in a circle. Have each person think of an action that demonstrates how many syllables are in their name (Example: one syllable - jump, raise hand, or any other single action; two syllables – two actions). The first person starts the game by saying their name and doing their action. The second person says his/her name and demonstrates the action(s) associated with their name AND the first person's action. The game continues with each student adding his/her name and actions to the game. The last person will have to say and demonstrate all the names in the group.

## 8. Identity

\*Supplies: Nametags (available in dining hall), plastic container, pens to write names

Instruct each student to write his/her name on a nametag and place it in a basket or something to hold the nametags. Pass the basket around the group for everyone to take out a nametag that is not their own without letting anyone else see the name on the tag. Then ask everyone to turn and stick the nametag they chose onto the back of the person on their left. The object of the game now becomes for the students to discover the name printed on their back by asking only questions that can be answered "yes" or "no". (*Important note – be sure the group knows each others' names so they can know what questions to ask and guess the names correctly.*)

## Get Them Talking

### 1. Name Your Favorite...

- actor or actress
- animal
- answered prayer
- Bible verse
- holiday
- gift you've ever received
- candy
- day of the week
- Disney movie
- family tradition
- ice cream flavor
- item in your house
- smell
- sports team
- memory
- family vacation

### 2. Would You Rather...

- be male or female
- be hot or cold
- watch television or read a book
- be told you have booger hanging from your nose or told you have bad breath
- have the power to fly or the power to disappear
- be bald or have no toes
- to be gossiped about or lied to
- eat a bar of soap or drink a bottle of liquid soap
- know you only have one year to live or die unexpectedly
- be blind or be deaf
- marry a rich, beautiful person who is mean or a poor, ugly person who is nice
- give or receive
- laugh or make others laugh

### 3. Unfinished Sentences

- When I need to get away from everything, I go...
- I thank God because...
- People would describe my bedroom as...
- I look forward to...
- I enjoy being around people who...
- I feel happy when...
- The best thing about my family is...
- In one word, I would describe myself as...
- I can hardly wait to...
- I see God as...
- The thing I value most in a friendship is...
- What the world needs is...
- Something very few people know about me is...

#### 4. Top Ten Lists

Hold up any object in the room or on you, such as a coin, shoe, ring, and ask the group to think of ten things they could do with the object. For instance, a coin can be a place marker on a board game, worn on your nose in a relay, flipped to decide who goes first, and so on.

Encourage creativity. Continue holding objects for the group to come up with creative ideas.

#### 5. New Name Game

Give everyone a few minutes to come up with an original new name for themselves. This can be a one-word name, a multiple-word name or a famous person's name, but it must describe something about them. For example, "Sparkles-a-lot" for someone with a bubbly personality, "Climber" for someone who likes rock climbing, "Mozart" for someone who enjoys classical music, "Tiger Woods" for someone who plays golf.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves, explaining their new name.

#### 6. I Never

Have the group form a circle and instruct everyone that they will go around the circle and state one thing they have never done before (Example: been to Alaska, ate sardines, etc). Any person in the circle who has done that thing puts one finger down on their hand. Continue around the circle until only one person is left. Remind the group not to say things that will be embarrassing to others.

#### 7. Progressive Story

Everyone must be able to hear the other members in the group, but they don't have to see one another. The facilitator begins the story by setting the initial scene and mood. The story can start with the following examples (or others): "At home the other day..." or "A good friend called last week and..." or "I had the most amazing weekend! I..." In no special order, members of the group then take over the story. They add another element to the plot one sentence at a time. The main point is to make sure everyone adds something. The progression of the story can be fun and silly, but it can also indicate what may be group members' hearts, thoughts, priorities, concerns, etc. The facilitator plays a big role in interpreting what is said by each person.

#### 8. Master Storytellers

Have the group get in a circle. The leader picks an opening noun (for example: car, tree, friend). The person to the leader's left has to come up with a random sentence about his/herself related to the noun the leader picked. It has to be a true sentence. Once they say their sentence, he/she can pick the noun for the next person. Continue around the circle until everyone has gone.

#### 9. Go-Arounds

The group leader or one of the group members can be in charge of choosing or inventing the "go-around" for each group session. This is an opportunity for everyone to share.

### Description Ideas:

- Describe yourself as an animal, as a flower or plant, or as a song. Why?
- If you inherited a million dollars today, what would you do with it? How much of what you would do with a million dollars could you do *without* a million dollars?
- Who is the most important person in your life and what kind of relationship do you have with this person?
- Complete the sentence... “I used to be... but now I’m...”
- If you knew you were going to die in 24 hours, how would you spend the time?
- What is the worst thing one person can do to another?
- If you could go back and change one thing you have, what would it be?
- If you could wake up tomorrow with a new ability or talent, what would it be?

## Ice Breakers

### 1. Categories

Explain to the group that you will call out a category and, as quickly as possible, students need to get together with everyone else who belongs to that same category.

Call out a variety of categories:

- Everyone born in the same month
- Left-handed or right-handed
- Same color eyes
- Favorite fast food restaurant
- Color of t-shirt
- Favorite drink
- Shoes or flipflops
- Others that you think of...

### 2. Take a Hike

Make sure there is a chair for everyone, except for one person who is the middle. Arrange the chairs in a big circle with enough room to move around within the circle.

The person in the middle will complete the sentence “Take a hike if...” with something true about themselves (i.e. you are a girl/boy, you are wearing flip flops, you’ve traveled outside of Texas, if you like pepperoni pizza, etc.). As soon as the statement is made, everyone in the circle who is in agreement with the person in the middle must get up and find a new chair, not next to his/her original chair, as quickly as possible. The last person to find a chair is now in the middle and has to make a true statement about himself/herself. It’s possible that no one will get up, in which case, the person in the middle takes another turn.

### 3. The Shoe Pile

Have students walk around the room, talking to each other and finding out as much about everyone as possible. Suggest that they ask about each other's favorites – vacation spots, movies, food, etc.

After about five minutes, call everyone together and ask each person to put one shoe into a pile. Then have everyone sit in a circle and hide his or her other shoe so others can't use it as a clue to figure out who the shoe in the middle belongs to. Have one person at a time go to the shoe pile, select a shoe that belongs to someone else, try to match it to its owner and then tell what he or she learned about that person. You can ask other group members to contribute facts they learned about that person, as well.

#### 4. Quick Sort

Form two teams. Explain that you are going to call out categories and each team will need to sort itself as quickly as possible into a line in the order you have suggested. For example, if you say "sort by age, youngest to oldest", teams would form a line with the youngest person on one end and the oldest person at the other.

Before keeping score, it would be a good idea to have several practice rounds. Then award a point to each round to the team that gets in line most quickly.

Here are some sorting suggestions to get you started:

- Sort by height from shortest to tallest
- Sort by shoe size from largest to smallest
- Sort by number of states you've visited, most states to fewest
- Sort by number of times you've moved, most to least
- Sort by number of siblings you have, least to most
- Sort by number of sodas you drink in a day, most to least

#### 5. Two Truths & A Lie

Have each group member think of two true statements and one lie about themselves. Encourage them to be creative and think of things that other people in the group won't know about them. Then go around the group and have each person say the three statements". Once they've said all three statements, the rest of the group votes on which statement is a lie. The goal for each person is to convince the group that the lie is truth and one of the truths is the lie, and for the group to correctly guess the lie.

#### 6. Wandering Murderer

Have everyone stand in a circle and close their eyes. Explain that you're going to pick the "wandering murderer" by tapping them on the head. Walk around the circle a few times, pausing at different kids

before tapping the “wandering murderer” on the head, so the students don’t know who you tapped. Mention that the person who got tapped should avoid letting anyone know that he/she is the “wandering murderer” and his/her job is to kill people by discreetly touching them as everyone walks around the room.

If someone is touched, that person should let out a loud noise and fall to the ground. They are out of the game and can’t talk. Other players should try to figure out who the “wandering murderer” is. If they know who he or she is, they can raise their hand and ask to take a chance to guess. If the guess is correct, start the game over by redistributing the slips of paper. If the guess is wrong, the person who guessed is “dead” and can’t talk the rest of the game. Either the “wandering murderer” wins by “killing” everyone or the group wins by guessing the “murderer”.

#### 7. Killer (A variation of Wandering Murderer)

Have students sit in circle (chairs can be used), making sure that each person can see each other’s eyes. NO hats allowed. Tell everyone to put their heads down and close their eyes. The leader then walks around the circle (inside or out) a few times while discreetly selecting one killer by tapping them on the head. After walking around the circle one more time, so as to throw off anyone trying to guess who you picked, tell everyone to raise their heads.

The game begins as soon as all heads are raised. It is the killer’s job to kill each person in the circle before being accused correctly by 3 other students. The killer kills others by winking discreetly at his/her victim after making eye contact. Once a student has been winked at, they are dead, and they must lay down, or sit on the floor (if they are in chairs). Once killed, they are not allowed to make any kind of gesture, or say anything that will give away who the killer is.

The way students accuse the killer is by rocking back and forth silently. Once there are three rockers rocking at one time, the leader is to stop the game. Then, the leader goes up to each rocker and has them whisper to the leader who they think the killer is. If all three rockers guess correctly, then the killer is revealed by the leader and the game is over. If one or more of the three rockers is wrong, then all three rockers are dead, and the game continues. Everyone must keep their heads up, and eyes wondering at all times in order for this game to work.

#### 8. Secret Handshakes

Have participants get into pairs and then explain that they must create a “secret handshake”. It can contain as many different moves and actions as they like; for example, high fives, knocking elbows then heels, twirling in a circle and snapping their fingers. Encourage them to be as creative as possible.

After each pair has had some time to create, have them demonstrate their handshake to the rest of the group.

#### 9. Shuffle Your Buns

Have everyone sit their chairs in a circle, as close together as they can while still being side by side. Pick one person to stand, which leaves an empty seat. The standing person must try to sit in the chair,

however the person to the left of the chair is going to take it. That moves the empty chair, the new person to the left will sit in that chair, and so on around the circle.

If the leader calls "switch", the people sitting in the circle will switch directions and start taking the empty chair to the right. Remind the participants to only move if the chair next to them is empty. Remind them they CANNOT put their hands on the chair to move.

This game continues as long as time is allotted.

#### 10. Wink 'Ems

Divide the group evenly into two new groups.

Have one group form a circle and sit on the ground or in a chair with one spot/chair empty.

Have the other group sit or stand (if in a chair) behind the first group. They stand ready to tap the shoulders of the person in front of them. "Tappers" only move to tap shoulders, not to chase or run, and they can only look at the top of the head of the person sitting in front of them.

One person standing behind an empty spot/chair will start the game by winking at any other person sitting in the circle, not the "tappers". The person who is winked at must try to go to the new spot where the winker is without being touched by their "tapper."

If the person winked at successfully gets up without being tapped, the person behind them is the new "winker" and tries to get someone else to move in to their chair. If the person is touched by their "tapper", he/she switches places with their tapper and the person who was tapping now gets to be winked at and the person with the empty chair is still the "winker".

#### 11. Meet in the Middle

Form a circle. Explain that when you call out a phrase that describes anyone in the group, the people it describes should walk in the middle of the circle and introduce themselves to everyone else who comes into the middle.

Start by naming items of clothing, such as jeans or colored shirts, then move to hobbies, favorite items, such as baseball or candy. You can also use phrases such as "one sibling", "loves sports", "plays a musical instrument", "book lover", etc.

#### 12. Think Fast

\*Supplies: Any small object that can be passed around

Have the group stand and form a circle. When the group is in position, the leader explains that they will be playing a game that requires them to think quickly. A volunteer is asked to stand in the middle of the circle. The volunteer is to close his/her eyes and keep them closed throughout the entire time in the

center. A person standing in the circle is then given a small object. When the center person says, "Start!", the object is to be passed around the circle counterclockwise from one participant to the next. The center person can call out "Stop!" at any time. The center person then quickly says a letter of the alphabet and the person holding the object must QUICKLY say three nouns that begin with the specified letter. If the participant says three words within five seconds, the game continues with the same person in the middle. If the person cannot think of three nouns in that amount of time, he/she becomes the leader.

### 13. Buzz

Have the group sit in a circle. Begin by counting around the circle from 1 to 100. Whenever someone comes to a number containing 5 or a multiple of 5, he/she says "Buzz" instead of the number. (Example: 1,2,3,4,BUZZ,6,7,8,9,BUZZ, etc.) Anyone who makes a mistake or pauses longer than two seconds is out. To complicate this, you can use the number 7 or multiples of 7.

### 14. Mafia

Have everyone sit in a circle. The leader will be the narrator. Everyone should close their eyes while the leader taps those who are going to be the mafia, the detective and the doctor. Everyone else will be townspeople. Have the leader walk around the circle a few times, tap the mafia once, the detective twice and the doctor three times. Be sure to pause while walking around the circle, so no one knows who was tapped.

The goal of the game is for the townspeople to catch the mafia while the mafia is trying to become the last person alive.

A round will begin with the narrator instructing everyone to go to sleep. Once all eyes are closed, the mafia will be instructed to open his/her eyes and indicate a person to "kill." The narrator should remember this but not announce it yet.

Next, after the mafia member has gone to sleep, the detective is told to wake up. The detective should indicate a person who he/she believes is the mafia and the narrator will nod yes or no. Once the detective goes to sleep, the doctor will be instructed to awaken. The doctor will indicate a player to "save" from being killed that round. The player he/she points to cannot be killed in this round by the mafia.

After that is done, the narrator will tell everyone to wake up and inform everyone about who the mafia member "killed" overnight (it is more fun if you make up ridiculous stories to go along with the killings) and whether or not the doctor saved him/her. When killed, the player is out of the game and is to be completely silent through the rest of the game.

The townspeople now have the chance to remove the mafia from the town by nominating who they think the mafia is. At this time, if the detective guesses the mafia correctly, they have a chance to nominate the person who is the mafia and convince the townspeople to vote for him/her. There can be up to three people accused and each person who nominated the "mafia" must tell why they think

he/she did it. Next, the accused player has a chance to defend himself/herself. Then, the whole town remaining votes to banish a player out of the game. This person is also completely silent throughout the rest of the game.

The rounds continue until either the mafia is killed by the townspeople or the mafia kills all the townspeople.

## 15. Zoom

Have the group sit in a circle (chairs can be used). There are only three words that you say during this game:

Zoom - This word continues the flow of the game person by person

Erk - This word reverses the flow of the game person by person

Oink - This word continues the flow of the game but it skips the next person

The leader starts by deciding a direction of flow (clockwise or counterclockwise). The game begins by someone in the circle looking to the right or left and saying "zoom". Every round must begin with the word "zoom". The next person in the circle gets to choose which word they want to say (zoom, erk or oink). They don't have to look a certain direction but they must say the word within 1 or 2 seconds. If they choose to say zoom, then the flow keeps going in the same direction to the next person. If the person says erk, then the flow reverses and goes back to the person who started the game and continues in that direction. If the person says oink, then the next person in order is skipped and the person after that must respond with one of the three words in 1 or 2 seconds.

If a player speaks out of turn, takes longer than 2 seconds to respond or says something other than the three words, they are out and should either sit on the floor in front of their chair or lay down if already sitting on the floor. The person next in line to speak restarts the game with "zoom". The game continues until it gets down to two people left and those two people win the game. It is the leader's job to keep the game going, and to call out each person who is out.

## 16. Animals

\*Supplies: One foam swim noodle (available in dining hall)

Everyone sits in a circle and takes a name of an animal (bear, giraffe, squirrel, etc.) Animal names can't be duplicated around the circle. One person chosen to begin the game stands in the middle of the circle with the foam swim noodle. When the person in the middle calls out the name of an animal, the person who represents that animal must stand up and call out the name of another animal in the group before the person in the middle can hit them with the swim noodle (below the neck).

The round continues until the person in the middle is able to hit the person before they call another animal name. The person hit then becomes the person in the middle and the previous person in the middle takes their place in the circle with an animal name.

This game can also be played using state names or fruit/vegetables.

### 17. Slaps

The group begins by lying on their stomach in a circle with their heads facing the middle of the circle. Every participant's right arm goes underneath the left arm of person to their right. The left arm should be over the right arm of the person on the left. One person will be designated to start by slapping the ground once with one of their hands. The person whose hand is to the right will do the same and so on counterclockwise. If someone decides to slap the ground twice, the direction will reverse.

If a hand messes up by hesitating longer than two seconds, slaps prematurely or out of order, that hand is removed from the game. Once a player has removed both of his/her hands, they are out of the game until the next game. When there are only two people remaining, the game has ended.

### 18. Paper, Rock, Scissors Competition

Have the students partner up and play the game of paper, rock scissors. The person who wins 2 out of 3 times is the winner and goes to the next round. Winners partner up and play another 2 out of 3 times. The winner goes to the next round, partners up and plays again 2 out of 3 times. This continues until there is a final round with a winner.

### 19. 1-2-3 Look

The group sits in a circle and closes their eyes and lowers their heads. The leader calls out "1-2-3 Look". Once the leader calls "look," the students look at one specific person. Make sure you instruct them that they cannot change who they look at, because two people who make eye contact with each other are both out.

Continue bringing the circle closer and closer as people get out until there is only one person left and that person is the winner.

### 20. Noodle Ball

\*Supplies: One half noodle for each person in group (available in dining hall), one soft ball

Have the group stand in a large circle with a half noodle in their hand and the soft ball in the middle of the circle. The object of the game is to use the noodle halves to knock the ball into other people while using them to defend yourself from being hit. If touched, a person sits out on the side, and if a person on the sidelines manages to catch the ball, they can come back in. The last person standing wins.

## 21. Ball Tag

\*Supplies: One soft ball

Have the group stand in a circle around the leader who is “it”. The leader throws the ball in the air and the other players flee. When the leader catches the ball, he/she calls “halt” and the runners have to stay in their place but can move other parts of their body to dodge the ball as it is thrown by the leader. The person who is hit is out (or is in the middle). Continue playing until there is a winner or until time runs out.

## 22. Fingers Up

Each student should partner up with one other person in the group. Have them face each other with their hands behind their back. On the count of three, each person in the partners should hold up a number of fingers on their hands. Each person is supposed to add up how many fingers they are holding up and their partner is holding up. The first person to announce the correct number of fingers between the two of them wins. Continue this with a few practice rounds before the losing partner is out and the winning students partners and continue until there is a winner.

## 23. Groups

Start out by having the students get into groups by category (Examples: hair color, eye color, grade/age, flip flops/shoes, color of shirts, etc.) When they get into groups, have them go around their group and introduce themselves or say something about themselves. After a few rounds of this, the leader can start calling out numbers and the students have to get into groups of that number. The ones left out of the different groups are out. Continue calling numbers and having the students group up until there are two winners.

## 24. First Impressions

\*Supplies: Piece of paper and pen for each student

Ask the group members to write down five first impressions they believe others generally have of them. Then have the group write down one first impression they had about each person in the group. When group members volunteer to hear the first impressions other members of the group had of them, the group members read what they had written for that person. Then the volunteer reads their list of the five first impressions they believe others have of them. Continue around the circle until everyone has shared.

## 25. Question Game

Have everyone stand in a circle facing each other. The group leader will start by asking another group member a question. Rather than answering the question, that person turns to a different group member and asks them a different question. Continue asking questions with questions until someone messes up and that person is out. You can mess up by hesitating for more than 3 seconds before asking another question, by answering the question, by repeating a question that has already been asked and by asking a question to the same person who asked you.

## **Team-Building Games**

### **1. Back to Back & Front to Front**

Every group member must find a partner of approximately equal height and weight, if possible. The partners will connect arms with their backs to one another. With arms remaining connected at all times, the partners will sit down on the ground, kick their legs out straight and then try to stand back up again. After each team has done it once, have the entire group sit down together with arms touching and get back up all at the same time. This will take communication as a group to get the timing right. (If the group has mastered the back to back position, have them partner up again with the same partner sitting down and facing each other. Have them grab hands and bend their knees so their feet are touching. Without letting go of hands and with feet against each other, have the partners stand up. This is a little harder to do.

### **2. Line Up**

Tell the group from this point on there is no talking. Explain that their task is to complete a variety of lineups without talking or lip reading. Instruct the group to line up by month and day of birth.

Give the group as long as it takes to get everyone situated. Do not help them; allow them to figure it out on their own. Remind as needed that there is no talking, no writing, no lip reading, etc. When it looks like they are done, ask the group if they think everyone is in the right place. Starting at the "January" end, have each person call out their birthdate to see if they are in the correct order.

If you come across someone who is in the wrong place, allow them to move to the correct place. Remind the group that it was the group's responsibility to achieve the correct order together, not any one person's role.

### **3. Team Sit**

The group will start in a circle. Every group member will turn placing their left leg towards the inside of the circle. Everyone will take one giant step into the middle of the circle to be really close to each other. With hands on the person's shoulders in front of you, the group will sit on each other's laps. The group will need to work together to communicate in order for everyone in the group to be able to sit. This is a dynamic activity - and one that will make the group feel a great sense of accomplishment when successfully completed.

#### 4. The Human Knot

The group starts out in one circle. Everyone in the group reaches across the circle with their right hand to grab another group member's right hand. Then the group reaches in the circle with their left hand to grab a different group member's left hand. The object of this activity is to untangle the entire group without letting go of hands until a circle is formed. If the group is having extreme difficulty, you can administer "knot first-aid" and break one set of tangled hands (with group consensus), otherwise group members may not let go at any time. You may have to decide as a group that the knot is not solvable, and start the game over for another attempt.

#### 5. Count Off

Have the group spread out in a small area in no certain pattern. Ask everyone to face different directions. Once everyone is settled, have them close their eyes.

The group will count from 1 to 10 following these rules: The same player cannot say 2 consecutive numbers or say more than one number in the sequence. Any time two or more people say the same number at the same time, the group must begin again at 1. The group can't speak to one another except to say a number (no making a plan).

While this challenge can be frustrating, it is also fun. Allow your group to work to achieve the goal for a few minutes. Each sequence doesn't take very long but some groups may take a while to reach the goal.

#### 6. Moonball

\*Supplies: One beach ball, maybe two for more excitement (available in dining hall)

Explain to the group that the object of the game is to see how many times they can hit the beach ball into the air without letting it hit the ground, only using their hands. If the ball hits the ground or anywhere other than their hands, the count starts again at zero. Also, the ball cannot be hit by the same person twice in a row.

Encourage the group to spread out to allow for plenty of room. Let the group start counting the hits for a few minutes. Stop the group at least once and ask them to spend a minute talking about their strategy...what's working, what might work better, is there anything they could do to achieve higher number of hits. Have them set a goal of a number of hits they want to achieve.

Allow the group to start again with any new strategy. Depending on the difficulty of the game, possibly add a second beach ball and see how the group dynamic changes. Once again, ask the group to spend a minute to talk about their strategy and set a goal.

At the end of the activity, ask the group to describe their experience and how the “think breaks” affected their attempts to reach their goal.

## 7. Warp Speed

\*Supplies: One soft throwable object

Have the group form a circle. Have a group leader start the first round by throwing the object across the circle to someone. Each person will throw the object to one another until each person has caught and thrown the object. (Note: No one can throw the object to the person directly to their right or left).

Everyone needs to remember who they got the ball from and who they threw it to. Explain that the point of the game is to work together to improve the group time and establish a “World Record” time for passing the object around the group to each person without dropping it. The only rule: the object must be passed in the same order (sequence of people) every time.

After a few attempts, give the groups a minute to talk strategy to see if there is anything they would change to improve their time. Ask the group to set a goal for a time they think they can achieve and see if they can do it.

Take time to ask some questions:

- How did the time on your first attempt compare with the time on your last attempt?
- When/how did you make the biggest drop in your time? What did you do differently? How did you get the idea? What other ways did you try?
- How did you use the various ideas that were offered?
- How well did your group do with involving everyone? With listening to all ideas?

## 8. Famous People Game

\*Supplies: Two strips of paper, pen for each person, plastic container to collect the paper

Have each person in the group write famous people’s names on their two pieces of paper. The famous people can be anyone, dead or alive, considered to be famous (i.e. celebrities, sports figures, cartoon characters, historical figures, etc.) Don’t worry if some names are written more than once. Have each person put their names in the bowl without telling anyone the names they wrote down.

Now divide the group into two teams and decide which team goes first. A person from the starting team will reach in the bowl and pick a piece of paper without looking. He or she then has to give clues to describe this person to the team only using words, no actions or gestures. If the team guesses the person’s name within 30 seconds, the team gets a point and the name is removed from the bowl. If the team fails to guess the name, the paper is put back in the bowl and the team doesn’t get a point. The next team gets a turn. Make sure clue-givers are rotated each turn. At the end of the designated time, the team with the most points wins.

## 9. Crossing The Canyon

\*Supplies: Before the game, use masking tape to mark a starting line and a finish line about thirty feet apart – the space between the lines will represent the canyon

The object of the game is for the girls in the group to carry the boys across the canyon. The boys cannot offer any help; they must act completely helpless when being carried. Each girl can cross the canyon only once. The group (both girls and boys) will have to figure out the sequence in which they'll cross so everyone can be carried without too much difficulty.

## 10. Zip, Zoom, Zowie

Form two teams of equal number. Have the teams form two single-file lines on one side of the room and place a chair or some other object at the opposite side of the room.

This is a relay of creativity. Group members will each select their own way of getting to the chair and back, but each person must move in a way that hasn't been used before on their team. For example, they can hop on one foot, crawl, walk backward, somersault, walk heel to toe, or any other way they can think of that hasn't been done.

The team who completes the relay first wins. You can hold another race to see which team will win a second time.

## 12. Trust Walk

\*Supplies: Blindfold – use a bandana

Have the students pair up. Lay out a course to be completed by each set of partners. One partner will be blindfolded and the other must guide them through the course without touching them. They can only give directions verbally. See who can make it all the way through the course without running into anything.

## 13. Trust Fall

Have the group form two lines facing one another. Instruct students to stretch out their arms out in front of them, palms upward, in a position to catch a falling person. Do not have them lock arms with the people across from them. Instead, have them alternate arms with those standing opposite them. Encourage all students to participate in this activity, but do not force them. The first person climbs up on a table or platform that is 4-6 feet high and falls backward into the group's arms. Continue this until everyone has done the activity. This encourages team bonding.

## 14. Four Scenarios

Consider the following four scenarios:

- A man is found dead lying in the desert wearing a backpack.
- Two men are found dead in a room with 52 bicycles.
- A man is lying dead in the desert with a straw in his hand.
- A cabin in the woods contains 50 dead people.

The goal is to have the group work as a team to figure out how each of these people died by asking the leader yes or no questions only.

Causes of death (for leader):

- A man was skydiving and his parachute didn't open.
- Two guys were playing poker, they got mad and shot each other. Note: Bicycle is a brand of cards, hence 52 bicycles.
- Three guys were in a hot air balloon, but the load became too heavy, and in order for them not to crash someone had to jump out of the hot air balloon. The three men drew straws and the man on the ground drew the shortest straw.
- The cabin is in the cabin of an airplane. The plane crashed and everyone died.