

Teambuilding

Age Group: 6th grade

Time: 30-60 minutes

Materials:

- Rope or cones for boundary markers
- 2 flags
- a few random objects (spoon, leaf, pencil)
- many soft objects/balls to toss

Description:

Students practice teambuilding skills through playing fun games.

Objectives:

Students will be able to.....

- Demonstrate teambuilding.
- Successfully work in teams.

Environmental Education Guidelines:

- Questioning & Analysis
- Personal and civic responsibility

Benchmarks: None

Instructional Sequence:

Review Team Work (10 minutes)

- Ask the students:
 - What is team work?
 - working in a group to accomplish a task
 - Can you come up with any examples of teams? (sports teams, NASA uses team work, the government, school leaders/staff, workers at restaurants, Olympic swimmers/gymnasts, the people who work at LGL)
 - Team members can help one another to accomplish goals.
 - What is team building?
 - Building or working on being a GOOD team
 - Teams that do well are teams that practice
 - What do teams need to do in order to work together well?
 - Get to know each other
 - Put differences/arguments aside
 - Help each other
 - Let someone be the leader
 - Listen to each other
 - Remind the students of several words that are important in teambuilding
 - *Caring or Compassion* – treat people with care or how you would want to be treated.
 - *Cooperation* - give everyone a turn and try their ideas even if you disagree
 - *Communication* - listening and sharing ideas
 - *Courage* - to try new things and stand out
 - Explain to the students that we are going to be playing large group games and that they need to:

- Listen carefully to the instructions
- Ask team mates if you need help understanding
- Keep a safe atmosphere, these games are not meant to be competitive

Games (20-50 minutes)

- Following is a list of games that are meant to be played outside in a large area. Their descriptions are listed below.

Icebreaker Fun Games:

1. Attention Grabbers/Signals
2. Big Group Circle games:
 - “Catch”
 - “Light Saber tag”
3. Small Group Circle games:
 - “Look up. Look down.”
 - “Flinch”

More of a team challenge than just a fun game:

4. “Group Juggle”
5. “Salmon/Bear/Mosquito”

Closure (5-10 minutes)

- Ask the students to write:
 - One thing the team could work on next time
 - One thing the team did well
 - One thing that they could work on next time as an individual
 - One thing that they did well as an individual team member

Assessment/Evaluation:

Review the reflections the students completed at the end of the lesson to see how comfortable they are with teambuilding.

Game Descriptions:*Catch*

Students standing in a circle must assume the following pose: left hand held out open to the side, right hand held out to the side with pointer finger pointing down. Every student should have one finger touching the palm of the person to his/her right. The organizer begins the activity by calling "catch". The point is to avoid having your finger caught by your right neighbor, while trying to catch the finger of your left neighbor. A fun twist is to call out words like "ketchup" or "kookabura" to foil the students. There are no winners or losers, but students can keep track of their own catches.

Light Saber Tag

The class forms a large circle. Pretend you have a light saber that the others cannot see. If you swing it, make the sound (woouuw). Swing it in long swipes either at their feet or at their heads. If you pretend to go for their heads they must duck. If you go for their feet they must jump. After they practice, start eliminating people who do the opposite action.

Look up. Look down / Earth and Sky

Students circle up and when the facilitator says "Earth" students look down at the ground. When facilitator says "Sky" students look up quickly and *must* look at someone's eyes. If any circle participants look directly at each other, they scream and they are out. Either they then create a new circle or can heckle outside of the circle.

Flinch

Have students stand in a circle with their arms crossed. The object you use to toss must be a soft tossable thing, like a stuffed animal, since sometimes people get hit with it. The person in the center is trying to get everyone to spell FLINCH. Every time they flinch they get a letter. If they spell FLINCH they are out. A flinch is a movement like they are going to catch the object, but the object is not actually thrown. A blink of the eye is not enough to be considered a flinch, but if the whole body "blinks" that is a flinch. The person in the middle has to toss the object as well. The players also have to catch the object if it is tossed at them. The toss must be an easy underhand toss aimed at their crossed arms. If they don't catch it they also get a letter. Take turns being in the middle.

Group Juggle

Object: To pass several balls around and across the circle in a continuous repeating pattern.

Procedure: Students stand in a circle. Pass the ball, or another tossable object, across the circle until everyone has touched the ball once. Each person must remember from whom they received the ball, and to whom they passed the ball. Add saying the person's name if you don't know their names yet. The second time around the circle the ball must travel across the circle in exactly the same pattern as the first time. On the third round, introduce a second ball halfway through the round. See how long the group can keep the two balls traveling across the circle without dropping the balls. If the group can successfully handle two balls, have the group try three balls at once. Get them to practice using people's suggestions or trying the different ideas. *Safety:* Excited students often throw the balls with considerable force; make sure they are underhand tosses.

Salmon Bear Mosquito

Play this game after discussing **trophic levels** and the **food web**. This is an active, 3-dimensional version of "Rock-Paper-Scissors." Divide the group in half and have them form two lines, shoulder to shoulder, facing each other. Each side must *collectively* choose a critter to represent. Hawks put their arms up like wings and try making sounds like a hawk. Squirrels make munching noises with their paws holding a nut near their faces and bent knees. Mushrooms put their hands over their heads like a mushroom cap and squat near the ground. Hawks eat squirrels, squirrels eat mushrooms, and

mushrooms decompose the hawk. Give each side a safety zone about 50 feet from the middle. That is where the group decides what animal they will be for each round. All students on the team must be the *same critter!* When both sides are ready, line them up facing each other in the middle. Backpacks can form boundaries. Count to three, on three the students declare (make their sound and symbol). The predators chase the prey to the safety zone and tag as many as they can. All predators that “ate” take the prey back with them to their side. (*Optional:* Any predator that “starves” becomes a member of the prey side.) If both sides select the same critter, have them jump up and down and make silly whooping sounds, or smile, shake hands and say, “How do you do!?”(Just for fun) Make a graph of how many students are on each side for each round. The graph will illustrate **dynamic equilibrium** - how nature is in constant flux, trying to create a balance. After a few rounds, discuss the results.

.Additional/Optional Team Games (Eco-Games):

DUCK!

In a circle, the middle person points to someone in the circle. That person ducks down and whoever is standing on either side tries to say the other’s name first. Whoever loses goes to the center.

Evolution

Students progress in paper rock scissors type of game. You can modify the game to match whatever you are teaching. This is the **insect complete metamorphosis** version. (From egg to larvae to pupae to adult.) Everyone starts as an egg, waddling around in a squat. When you encounter another egg, you play rock paper scissors once. Whoever wins evolves to the larvae stage and the loser has to find another egg to compete again. Larvae wiggle around trying to find another larvae to play against. The winner becomes a pupae, standing stiff and tall in their cocoon looking for another pupae. If they beat another pupae, they can evolve to be an adult. Adult insects fly around beautifully trying to find another adult. The winner of the adult rock paper scissors game is either the winner or moves up to some random stage, becoming Elvis or something.

Special Powers of Observation

Sit in a circle and choose one volunteer to be “it.” The person who is “it” must leave the group for a moment while the rest of the team selects another volunteer to be the “choreographer.” The choreographer begins with very simple movements like tapping on the knees and the group mimics the movement. The choreographer then changes the movement and the group follows. The one who is “it” tries to determine who is changing the motion. Important: Motion must be changed every 5 seconds or so. And everyone must copy the “choreographer” when they begin a new movement without staring at the choreographer and making it obvious!

Lap Sit

Have the students stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle. Everyone turns one-quarter turn to their right so that each person is facing the back of the person in front of them. Everyone steps toward the middle of the circle until they are standing heel-to-toe with the

people on either side of them. The closer the group is to forming a perfectly round circle, the better this activity works. The students placed their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. When the leader counts to three, the group slowly sits down, checking to make sure they will be sitting on each other's knees and not the ground. If the group is able, have them hold this for three seconds, or sing a short song, or for a high functioning group, see if they can walk, rotating the circle, while sitting.

The Jumping Rope

Object: To get your group from one side of the turning rope to the other. To figure out that there is a pattern and then figure out the pattern.

Procedure: Have a chaperone help you to keep a long rope turning like a big jump rope. The less information you give the students, the more they have to think, work together and figure it out. All you really have to say is – “I’ll tell you when you are doing it correctly and when it is not correct. Then, I’ll tell you when you are finished.” This can take anywhere from 10 minutes to a half hour, but it really gets them to communicate the plan to each other, think of everyone’s strengths, honor other’s limits, and not get distracted by the play of jumping rope. Use as simple or difficult a pattern you think they can handle. Tell the chaperone the pattern before starting so you are on the same page. One example: 1st student runs through without jumping, and without the rope touching her. 2 different students jump once and exit without the rope touching. Then again with the one student, just running through, then two with a jump, and so on until all students have gone through only once.

Human Knot

Object: To tie the group into a knot, and then untie the knot without breaking the handholds.

Procedure: Standing in a circle, everyone puts his or her right hand in the center of the circle. Each person grabs a hold of one other person's hand. Repeat the procedure with left hands. No one should have more than one other hand in each hand. Two people may not hold both of each other's hands. Without breaking handholds, the group must now untangle to form a single circle. (*Optional:* This can be very tight, if you have enough cloth strips or bandanas, give each student one to hold in their left hand. When they reach across they grab someone’s strip with their left hand. This gives people a lot more space and might increase comfort level.)

Safety: As students step over each other's arms, there is the potential for someone to get kicked. Also, watch for twisting elbows and shoulders.

Order Up! Order Nose!

This is a game like Simon Says. If you say “Order Up” everyone puts their hand up like they have a server’s tray on it. If you say “Order Nose”, everyone touches his or her nose. If you do not say “Order” before you say something and a participant does it, s/he is out of the game. Go on to say things like “Order Ear” and “Order Chin”. Let kids take turns being the leader.

Hoop Pass – (need a hula hoop or two)

Have the students stand in a circle and hold hands. Place the hula-hoop between two people so that it rests on their clasped hands. See how quickly the students can cause the

hoop to travel around the circle and back to its original spot. In later rounds, add more hoops and send them in opposite directions. *Hint:* Even with clasped hands, students can still help the people next to them as they send the hoop around the circle.

Helium Hoop or Helium Pole or Blame Circle

Object: To set the hoop or pole on the ground with everyone touching it the entire time, in the designated way. To put it on the ground without placing blame on each other or raising voices.

Procedure: Students must have their index fingers pointed straight out from their chest level (like Cowboy Bob). Set the hoop resting on top of the fingers, holding it in place until you are sure everyone is touching it. All they need is the lightest little bit of contact. Tell the students that part of the activity tests their integrity, each person should make sure they have contact with the hoop at all times. They cannot put their fingers on the top or hook them at all.

When you let go, say, “begin to lower,” and step back. The hoop should begin to rise up because everyone is pushing up on it enough for the light hoop to be raised. The students will be amazed, and some ask, “Is there really helium in there?” Take the hoop away when it is teetering above the heads of the group, out of reach. Start again at their chest level, or, to make it easier, start at hip level. Blame and loud voices normally begin the second round, with folks saying, “NO! Lower it! Put it down, YOU are pushing it UP!” Tell them to take a Time Out, tell them to notice how they are talking to each other, and ask if they have decided on a plan. If they need help, suggest that they try everyone’s idea at least once. Somehow, the group figures out how to set it down, but it can take a long time. If you have a large group, start by having everyone touching with only one finger, and that can be enough. If they achieve that goal, time permitting, challenge them to set the hoop down with two fingers.

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