

NJASPERD Student Workshop, November 5th, 2006
Have Fun – Be Safe – No Put Downs – Be Committed – Include Everyone

Ice Breakers, Games and Team Building Challenges With Minimal Equipment
Presented by Peter Rattigan

Icebreaker Warm Ups

7-11 (Project Adventure Curriculum)

Equipment: None

Procedure: A good icebreaker for any size group, and non verbal. Have participants move around a defined area and play “7” with each person they “meet”. “7” is played as silent rock - paper - scissors, except that players must show a certain number of fingers (no rude gestures please!) Keep trying until the partner’s combined scores equal 7. When 7 is achieved, they move on to another partner.

Variations: Advanced game: “11” - use both sets of hands. Target score is 11. Not easy...

Processing points: Non verbal communication, strategy and compromise – which player kept the same number, which player adjusted/compromised?

Evolution (Project Adventure Curriculum)

Equipment: None

Procedure: Large group, open space. Have players meet various others, just like in 7-11. However, this time they play regular rock-paper-scissors. Everyone starts out as an egg (good egg impressions, please!) The winner of rock-paper scissors EVOLVES into a cro-magnon, loser stays an egg. Cro-magnon winners evolve into humans (homo sapiens sapiens). Human winners evolve into super humans (homo sapiens superiorus). Each time players play, the loser devolves to the previous level. Eggs can go no lower. Superior humans can go no higher OR lower. Make up actions for each character and tell players that dramatic effect is important, including sounds.

Variations: See if the superhumans can evolve everyone into superhuman status.

Processing points: rule number 1 and rule no. 5 – including/helping others. This activity allows the drama kids to shine, and lets the teacher test the dramatic comfort level of the students...

Watch It (Affordable Portables)

Equipment: 1-2 yarn balls; 1-2 deck rings (one of each per 12 participants)

Procedure: Circle up the group. Have one person begin holding the tennis ball. They must turn to their right, say “Watch it!”. And hand off the ball to the person TWO to their right. The person on the immediate right must duck to allow the hand off. Stop when the ball completes the circle. Follow this with the same process but using the ring. This time, however, the first player passes the ring to the person immediately to their right, then THAT person hands off to the person TWO to their right, the person immediately to the right ducking again.

Advanced: Now do them both together! Start with the tennis ball, and about two hand offs later begin the deck ring. The challenge is to duck and to receive handoffs at the right time!

Variations: Use more than one of each object: very challenging!

Processing points: Sometimes it is hard to separate the mind and the body! What makes the activity harder? Easier? Good activity for helping/reminding others (rule no. 3). Good activity for talking about how children feel when learning a new skill.

Front/Back (PA curriculum/Adventure Innovations)

Equipment: None

Procedure: Circle up. The facilitator is in the circle also. The facilitator gives two very simple instructions: “Front” and “back”. On command, the group jumps in the direction of the command (“Front” – jump forwards, “back” – jump backwards). Now add the commands: “Left” (jump to left, still facing center of circle); “Right” (ditto to right). This is the undergraduate level. *Graduate level:* When

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the facilitator calls out a command, the group repeats the command BUT jumps in the opposite direction. *Doctoral level:* Facilitator calls out a command, then the group calls out the OPPOSITE command, but jumps IN THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMAND. Harder than you think!

Variations: Do the activity while holding hands. Do the activity using Japanese instructions (also the other name for this game: **Mae/Uchiro**)

Processing points: similar to “Watch It”.

Bumpety Bump Bump Bump (PA curriculum/classic)

Equipment: None

Procedure: In a large circle, 30 or more people. Start with one person in the middle. The middle player walks around the circle, then, quickly picking on an innocent victim, “Zips” that person (place both hands flat together and point clearly at one person), at the same time saying, loudly “LEFT - BUMPETY BUMP-BUMP-BUMP!” The victim must say correctly the name of the person on that side. If they say the wrong name or hesitate too long, they switch with the person in the middle.

Variation: say: “YOU!” or “MIDDLE!” - person must say their own name - harder than it sounds when under pressure! This builds a little frustration in the game and moves it from rule 1 to rule 3.

Processing Points: how do you deal with frustration? Life is not always fair, but have fun, move on and pass the new variations on to others! (Rule nos. 1, 3)

Zip Zap (PA curriculum/classic)

Equipment: None

Procedure: In a large circle, up to 30 people. Start with one person in the middle. The middle player walks around the circle, then, quickly picking on an innocent victim, “Zips” that person, at the same time saying, loudly and appropriately, “ZIP!” The victim must immediately duck, and the persons directly on either side of them must turn towards each other and say “ZAP!” using the same action as ZIP. Any one of the 3 zip-zapped players who does not do their action correctly or quickly enough is the new person in the middle.

Variations:

Graduate version of B-B-B-B and Z-Z: 2 or more people in the middle: think of the strategic possibilities!

Doctoral version of B-B-B-B and Z-Z: B-B-B-B-Z-Z! Play both games at the same time, with 2 or more players in the middle - middle players can B-B-B-B OR Z-Z - victims must respond correctly or go to the middle.

Processing Points: how do you deal with even more frustration? (Rule nos. 1, 3)

Secret Agent (PA curriculum/classic)

Equipment: None

Procedure: Start in large circle, up to 30 people. Have everyone secretly chose a secret agent, and remember their choice but do not let that person know. The secret agent is the enemy in a high stakes game of counter espionage. Next have everyone choose a guardian angel in the same manner. The object of the game is, on the command go or at the start of appropriately evocative music, each person must try to keep the guardian angel between themselves and the secret agent (walking only). Some very interesting, vortex - like patterns usually emerge!

Variations:

Processing Points: 1. Have participants shake hands with their secret agent and say “no hard feelings” – remember, people and conditions can prevent you reaching goals through no fault of their

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own – don't play the blame game! 2. Have participants thank their guardian angel - you never know who's helping you accomplish your goals!

Energizer Games

Hum Tag (Kagan/Silly Sports)

Equipment: None, other than markers (cones) for a safe play space. Also, could use three foam objects for tagging in one version (see below).

Procedure: Form groups of three. Break up one group of three to be taggers. This game is played like a cooperative version of regular tag. The "Its" try to tag other players. When tagged, players become It, and the It becomes a player. To be SAFE, three players must get in a triangle, hold hands and HUM. Players in this state may not be tagged or guarded. However, they must all be humming, and CANNOT take a breath – as soon as they run out of air they must break and run! The taggers, to be identified, must have one arm in the air, or be in possession of the foam object, which is used to tag players.

Variations: Higher or lower ratio of taggers to players. *Advanced*: Hum in three part harmony.

Processing points: Cooperation and rule no. 5 – did they include everyone? Was everyone prepared to help everyone be safe? Was anyone out of tune? As ever with high energy tag games - safety! Watch out for tired players who have literally run out of air and take breaks if necessary.

Rock-Paper-Scissors Hum Tag (Kagan/Silly Sports)

Equipment: None, other than markers (cones) for a safe play space, and a marked center line. Make sure there is room behind each team's baseline for them to cross over and be safe without running into a wall.

Procedure: Similar to Giants-Wizards-Elves. Make two even numbered teams. Teams huddle and decide on which to do: rock, paper or scissors. Everyone on the team must do the same thing. Teams break and meet in the middle, two large paces apart. On three, teams show their rock/paper/scissors. The winning team must hold one hand in the air and HUM. They chase the players on the losing team and try to tag them before they run out of humming breath. Players on the losing team must turn and run back over their safety line. The object is to get all the players in the group onto one's team. Therefore the game could last forever. Probably should make it shorter than that however... In the event of a tie, try, try again...

Variations: A humless version is an option, but remember to change the name... a nice option would be to call it "Chin Chan Chullah". This is what teams must call out, presenting their rock/paper/scissors on the "Chullah".

Processing points: Teamwork/rule no. 5 – did everyone agree? Were suggestions regarding which object to go for in order to achieve strategic advantage listened to? Did everyone do the right object? As ever with tag games: SAFETY FIRST!

Processing points: Rule number 1! Rule number 5 is also appropriate here, but with the right number of balloons, may not be an issue. SAFETY: use only the noodle to air dribble/pass/shoot; have both hands on the noodle and upper hand at half way.

Team Building Games

Tosser Touch (Affordable Portables)

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Equipment: Flying disc/Frisbee, beach balls/balloons, tennis balls, golf balls, lines or cones 60 ft apart.

Procedure: The objective is to carry the flying disc from one end of the course to the other, with everyone in the group touching the disc, but no one touching each other, and without dropping the disc.

Variations: Use larger or smaller discs. With large groups, split them up into teams and have some inter group competition. Start with inter group competition, then join everyone into a big group. Use beach balls or other balls. Super challenge: can the group go from a large beach ball all the way to a tennis ball? How about a golf ball???

Processing points: Was everyone comfortable? Was anyone left out (rule no. 5)? How many people/how small an object could you use (goal setting)? What was the reaction to dropping the object (was rule no. 3 obeyed)?

Knot My Problem or The Gordian Knot (PA curriculum)

Equipment: None, other than markers (cones) for a safe play space

Procedure: Place a loosely coiled rope (retired climbing rope, knotted together at the ends) in the middle of the group who are circled around it. Have each person in the group reach across the rope and grasp a section on the opposite side with one hand. After everyone has done this, the rope will be knotted or tangled up. The challenge is to untangle the knot **WITHOUT LETTING GO** of the rope. The rope is allowed to slide through the hand but contact with the rope must be maintained by everyone at all times. This is a variation of the classic Human Knot. I preface this activity with the story of Alexander and the Gordian Knot. If you don't know the story – Google it!

Variations: Higher or lower number in the group. Two groups in competition, but the first group to complete the task helps the second group.

Processing points: Good activity for listening/rule number 5. Also, good for a quick debrief: what did the group do well? What could be done better? How comfortable was everyone? Did everyone make a contribution/feel like their ideas were listened to? Why or why not? Did everyone play by the rules?

Closers/Cool Downs

Rhyme or Reason (PA curriculum/classic) (Good “line up” activity)

Equipment: None

Procedure: Another circle activity, or could be done while standing/sitting in line at the end of a class. Start off with a word, any word (within reason). Going round the circle or up the line, each person must say a word that rhymes with that word OR is connected to that word. Example: “House... Mouse... Rat... Hat... Head... Toe... etc”. If anyone messes up or hesitates too long, stop and have them start with a new word.

Variations: Easier: Allow players to “pass”; harder: have a 5 second rule for each rhyme or reason

Processing points: None in particular, other rule number 1. This activity sometimes brings out the best in those who shine the least often in physical or athletic activities.

We also played...

Figaro Figaro (Rohke/Back Pocket Adventure) (Good “meet and greet” advanced activity)

Equipment: None

Procedure: Large group, open space. Have players meet and greet as many different people as they

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can... BUT they must be “in character”. Choose interesting characters such as: opera singer, fanatical sports fan, parent meeting the much older boyfriend/girlfriend for the first time, military commander, very shy person, etc., etc.

Variations: Vary the difficulty level of the role with the ability level/looseness of the group

Processing points: None in particular, other than rule number 1. This activity allows the drama kids to shine, and lets the teacher test the dramatic comfort level of the students...

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Activities Presented by Michele DiCorcia

GAMES:

1. Look Up – Look Down – to learn names and about each other
 - a) High Five – YOUR NAME and an adjective “Mighty Michele”
 - b) Logger Friend – YOUR NAME, share a scar story (or injury story)
 - c) Thumb Wrestle Friend – YOUR NAME, best 2 out of 3 “1-2-3-4 I declare a thumb war” and yes, sneak attacks are allowed.
 - d) Farmer Friend – YOUR NAME, Pitch Fork or Yee Haw “1-2-3 go” until you match signs
 - e) Secret Handshake – YOUR NAME, take 20 seconds to come up with a secret handshake

WHY did we do this activity?

- a. To learn 5 new names and about others
 - b. Easy way to make 5 sets of partners for upcoming games
 - c. Begin to touch one another and be comfortable with being silly
 - d. The facilitator learns about the group as a whole (dynamics)
2. Find your “Farmer Friend” and greet them like we did during Look up – Look down. Now, I would like for you to take 20 seconds and agree on a compound word that only the two of you will know and decide who will say which part of that word. Example: CUP-CAKE or FOOT-BALL (and NOW you can NOT use these two compound words I just gave you) and I will be the CUP and my partner will be the CAKE.
 - Split partners up so that they are not directly across from one another
 - Bumpers up
 - Yell your part of the compound word and meet the hands of your partner
 - Once you have met, go to the end line that is closest to where you met and wait for further instructions.
 - Find your “THUMB-WRESTLE” friend, re-introduce yourself, of course, thumb wrestle once, and then discuss a different compound word. Split up and try to find your partner.
 3. Find your “LOGGER” friend and re-introduce yourself and do your logger handshake. Now, I would like for you to untie 2 of your 4 shoelaces. Obviously, you must have shoelaces to untie but just choose 2 of your 4 feet/shoes to untie. Now, by using one of your hands, and one of your logger friend’s hands, re-tie those shoes. I’ll wait....

DEBRIEF:

All activities that are planned for today include the RULE OF 5 which adventure activities should always incorporate.

Are you having FUN? Are we playing SAFE? There should be No PUT DOWNS (to yourself or towards others). You have COMMITTED to playing these activities and you have been HONEST. Has everyone participated in all activities for the entire time?

We have had all this fun and laughter and excitement and how much have we spent on equipment? NOTHING.....so you can have a great PE program with using little or no money. Our next activity calls for the use of YARN BALLS but I prefer to use newspaper and tape.

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4. Find your "SECRET HANDSHAKE" friend, re-introduce yourself, and do your secret handshake. Now we are going to play a game called TANK.
EQUIPMENT: Fleece/Yarn Balls OR Newspaper balls (soft item)
- In pairs, determine who will be in the weapons expert (also known as the front of the tank) versus the driver of the tank (also known as the back of the tank). You will need one newspaper ball per group.
 - The front of the tank holds their hands up (bumpers) with one hand holding onto their weapon and closes their eyes while the back of the tank directs the front of the tank using **VERBAL DIRECTIONS ONLY!** No touching!
 - When the driver of the tank wants to fire, they yell FIRE and the front of the tank releases their weapon (no winding up for the throw).
 - Retrieve your fired item and continue to play regardless of whether you hit your target or not.
 - If the front of the tank is hit at any time, the partners then switch places (the front of the tank hit becomes the back of the tank and the back of the tank becomes the front of the tank). In other words, partners remain "in same tank" but switch places and play continues.
5. Now we are going to play a game called UPCHUCK (which I thought was appropriate for this group of college aged students).
EQUIPMENT: Fleece/Yarn Balls OR Newspaper balls (soft item)
- Anybody can stand anywhere and **EVERYONE** needs a newspaper ball.
 - On a signal, all throwables are lofted into the air with a **MINIMUM** of 12 feet (there is no maximum). Each player tries to catch a ball they did **NOT** throw.
 - Multiple balls can be caught, catches on a bounce do not count.
 - After everyone has thrown a ball and attempted to catch, count the number of successful catches and record that number. Encourage the group to goal set for the next round. Continue until the group is satisfied.

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INITIATIVES:

1) Balloon Trolley

EQUIPMENT: balloons for everyone

- Set-up: XOXOXOXOX – where “X” is a person and “O” is a balloon
- Inflate balloon so that it is not too big and not too small.
- The object is for you to get from EAST BRUNSWICK, NJ to NEW YORK CITY by way of a human train.
- RULES:
 - i. Begin by placing a balloon on your belly and holding it against the back of the person in front of you – No hands!
 - ii. If a balloon touches the floor, the person who dropped the balloon must yell “WHOO WHOO” (and do a hand movement – make a fist and pump it up and down while yelling WHOO WHOO) and the train must STOP.
 - iii. The group must then figure out how to pick up that balloon and re-insert it back to its original spot without dropping any other balloons.
 - iv. To make this more of a challenge, have some obstacles in the way.
- END with FIRE IN THE HOLE – You and your partner are demolition experts and you have been hired to extinguish some dynamite. You and your partner must get from one side of the gym to the other with both of your sticks of dynamite (balloons); however, you may not use your hands. Once you cross the finish line, you must YELL “FIRE IN THE HOLE” and attempt to pop your balloons without using your hands or the gym floor.

FILLERS:

1. BRAIN TEASER:

There is a mute who wants to buy a toothbrush at a local pharmacy. By imitating the action of brushing his teeth, he successfully communicates to the pharmacist and the purchase is made. Now, if there is a blind man who wants to buy a pair of sunglasses, how should he express himself? Who would like to show me your answer?

ANSWER: He just asks for a pair of glasses.

2. Dear or Alive?

3. Gooney: Gooney likes:

- the MOON but he does not like the STARS
- the color YELLOW but he does not like BLUE or RED
- to receive a LETTER but not a POSTCARD
- to ADD but not SUBTRACT
- to eat EGGS and OMELETTES but not BACON or HAM
- to KISS but not HUG
- to VACUUM but not DUST
- SKIING and RUNNING but not HIKING
- to DAZZLE and FRAZZLE you but not SCARE you.

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REVIEW/DEBRIEF:

1. Games: You can email me and I'll send you the games.
2. Thumb-o-meter: close eyes and thumb up had fun, thumb sideways not so much, thumb down = this was awful.
3. F.U.N.N. – functional understanding not necessary

FOOD FOR THOUGHT:

"LIFE IS EITHER A GREAT ADVENTURE OR NOTHING!"
~Helen Keller

"WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR IS NOT OUT THERE, BUT IN ME"
~Helen Keller

"I see my path, but I don't know where it leads. Not knowing where I'm going is what inspires me to travel it"

~Rosalita de Castro (modern writer in the Galician language, 1837-1885)