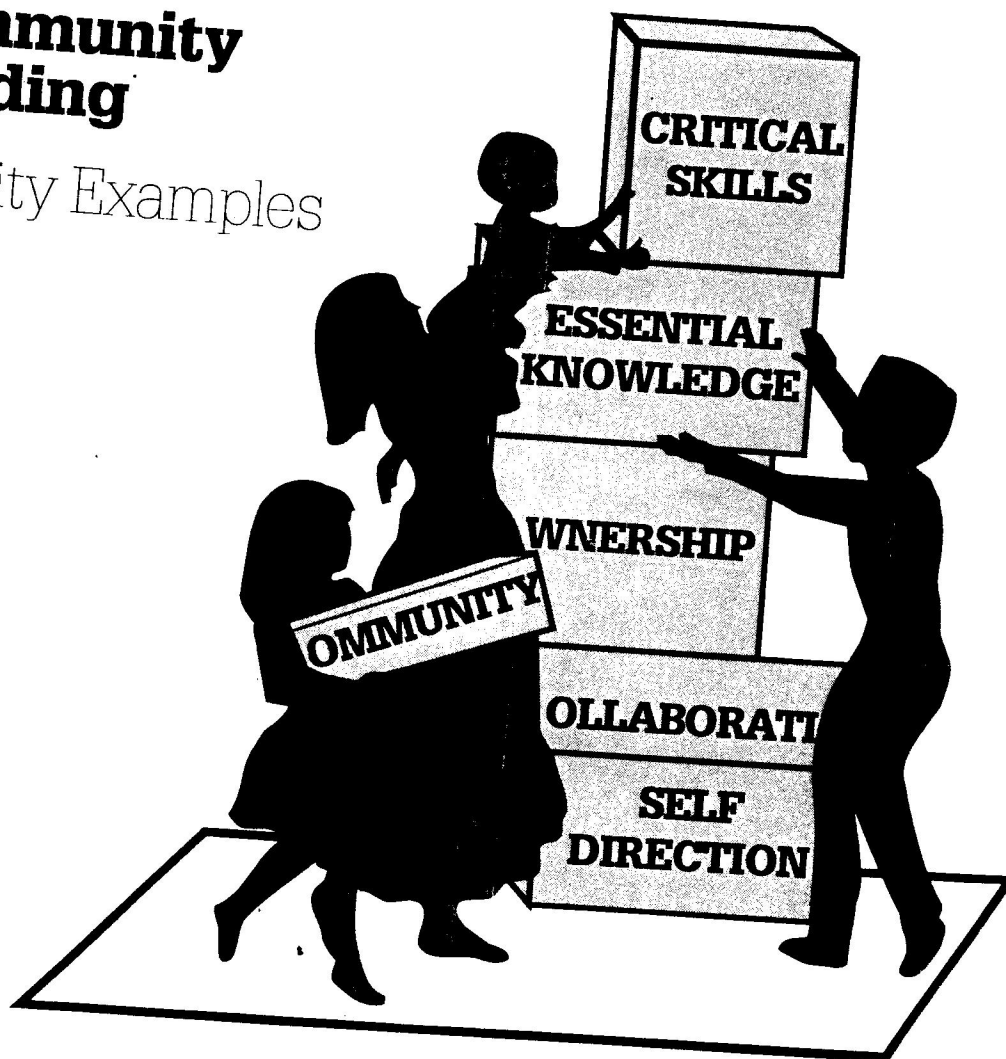


DRURY

A Guide Through
The Critical Skills Classroom
Third Edition

Supplement
Community Building
Activity Examples



A Publication of the Critical Skills Program
Antioch New England Graduate School 1991

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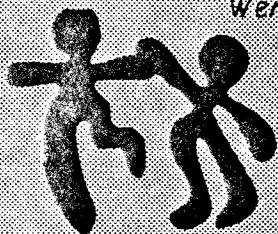
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NEW FRIENDS

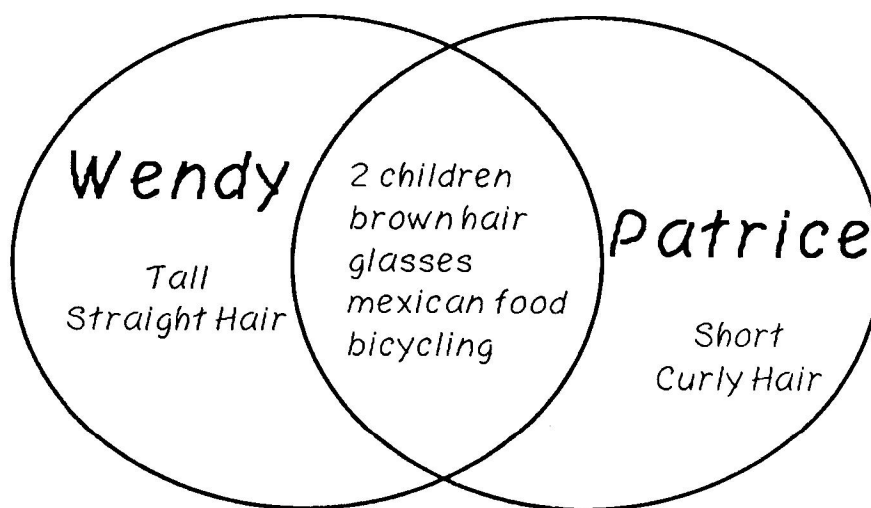
I don't know where
this activity originated,
but I found it in course
work submitted by Carolyn
Mehlhorn of
McKee Middle School in
Bedford, NH.

Wendy



Once a leader knows his/her group a bit, set up an activity that pairs students who have expressed similar interests — art, reading, baseball, etc., but who don't usually work with each other. The purpose is to practice working with someone who isn't yet a friend. The task is to discuss similarities and differences, then record them on a paper marked "Ways we are alike" and "Ways we are different." They ask about such things as siblings and favorite foods. In a group meeting, they share their lists with the class.

Making a diagram with this activity can be fun:



See if the partners can come up with 10 items that are the same. See if they can come up with ten different things. Which was easier to find, things that are the same or different? Can the class find one thing that they all have in common?

"Our strength is in
our diversity."

Patrice



TOILET PAPER INTRODUCTIONS

"There is something about toilet paper that is humanizing - putting us all on the same level.

We all need and use toilet paper! This twist on group introductions can be used comfortably in the classroom or even at the beginning of the school year when the staff gathers. Ask everyone sitting in a circle to take what they need and introduce themselves to new members to the staff. Perhaps share summer reflections or enthusiastic hopes for the new school year."

Patrice

When was the last time someone at a workshop handed you a roll of toilet paper and said to you, "Take what you think you'll need!" The thought of it is funny, but the act of it is even funnier... "How much should I take?", "What will I need it for?", "Should I risk and take a lot?" or "Should I risk and take a little?"

Following a few warm up activities, pass the toilet paper roll around. After everyone has toilet paper in hand the facilitator/coordinator gives the direction that for each square an item is to be shared....(Square 1) "My name is..." (Square 2) "I teach in..." (Square 3) "I have two children..." (Square 4) "and I took an awful lot of toilet paper...." etc.

It becomes very funny and creative. For the ones who took only a square or two, friends who took a lot will happily share etc. It is a different twist putting playfulness into what can often be a routine, boring and even anxiety producing beginning of a workshop.... "Who am I?", "What will I say when it's my turn?" Be sure to recycle or reuse your toilet paper.

MATERIALS: Toilet paper

REBUS

Upon entering the room, have group members draw a rebus of their names (first, last, both, whatever) on a label or a sheet of paper. Students try to guess each other's names from the drawings.

MATERIALS: Pieces of paper, name tags, colored pens.

REBUS:

a representation of words or syllables by pictures of objects or by symbols whose names resemble the intended words or syllables in sound.

Got that?

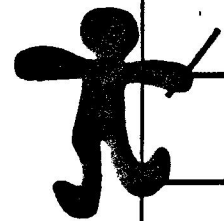


QUESTIONS/SIGNATURES

Distribute copies of questions like the ones below, geared to your particular group. Instruct group members to secure signatures from others in the room who meet the requirements listed on the handout. No more than two signatures should be obtained from any one participant. Students should make some intuitive guesses about what experiences they think their interviewee might have had and focus on those questions. No voluntary sign-offs! Aim for variety!! Try to get a signoff on as many as possible.

MATERIALS: Copies of Questionnaire

Are you an only child?
 Were you born in November?
 Have you ever milked a cow?
 Have you ever lived in another state?
 Do you have your driver's license?
 Did you get all A's last year?
 Are you a twin?
 Have you ever gone snorkeling?
 Have you ever been a Girl Scout?
 Have you ever traveled to Canada?
 Have you ever played on a Little League team?
 Is your favorite kind of ice cream pistachio?
 Have you gone hunting in the past year?
 Have you bicycled more than 25 miles in one day?
 Have you ever slalom water skied?
 Have you ever had MOXIE?
 Have you ever had a lemonade stand?
 Have you ever worked pumping gas?
 Have you ever been a cheerleader?
 Have you ever been to DisneyWorld?
 Have you ever had a job that paid over \$8 an hour?
 Do your parents own a red car?
 Have you eaten brussels sprouts in the last year?
 Have you ever sold cotton candy?
 Have you ever climbed a tree?
 Have you ever flown in a 4-seater plane?
 Do you have three older brothers?



Thanks for these questions to Diane
 Tardiff, Elm Street Junior High,
 Nashua NH.

Please refer to PlayFair by Joel
 Goodman for additional ideas for
 specific questions for particular
 populations and interests.



Make sure that the adjectives that are chosen are positive. No self-deprecation allowed!

Wendy



NOTEWORTHY NAMES

With the group sitting in a circle, each member is asked to think of a positive, alliterative adjective that he can attach to his name to say something about himself: SUPER SUE, MAGNIFICANT MIKE.

One group member begins by sharing her adjective and name pair. The next member repeats what he just heard, then shares his own. This progresses around the circle, with each member repeating all of the names and adjectives that preceded, and then giving his own, until everyone has had a turn. Group members may help if someone gets stuck!

The leader, just to show off, might choose to name everyone out of order (this shouldn't be difficult after you've heard the names a hundred times or so!!).

Caution group members that they should not write down anything that they do not want revealed!!!

Wendy

SHH!

SHH!

PSST!

I'VE GOT A SECRET

Each group member is asked to write something about herself on a piece of paper that she is sure that no one in the group knows about her. Examples: "I went to Disney World last year by bus." "My favorite rock group is the New York Philharmonic." etc.

The slips of paper are collected and redistributed to the group. If a member takes his own, he must reselect. All members should then get up and search the room for the owner of the secret and determine her name. When all have been located, the holders of the slips of paper introduce the owners of the secret and reveal the secret.

MATERIALS: Small pieces of paper, pencils.



GROUP JUGGLE

Each group member raises his hand. The leader begins by tossing a SOFT ball to one member of the group, asking that the catcher say his name. MIKE! Mike, puts his hand down and tosses the ball to someone with a raised hand. BRENDA! This continues until everyone has received the ball, with the last person in the pattern returning the ball to the leader.

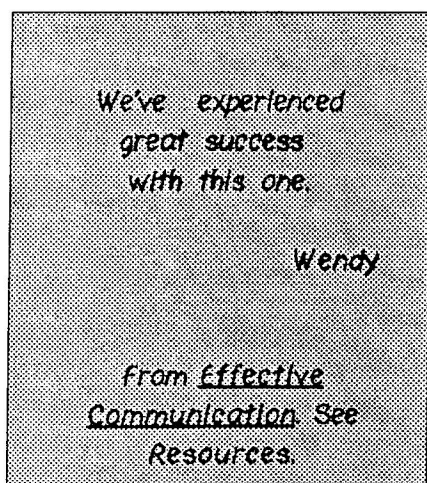
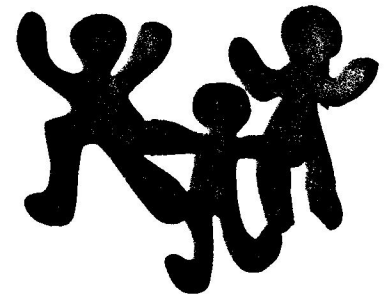
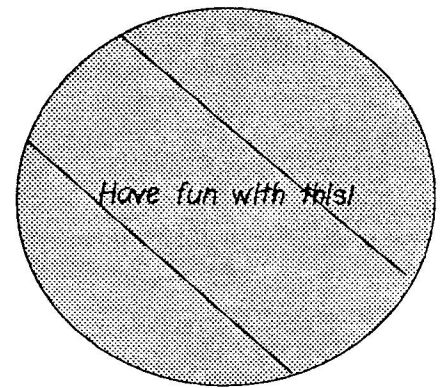
The leaders starts the pattern again and keeps it moving. After a few minutes, the leader introduces a second ball into the pattern — then a third.

After a great deal of laughing and dropping of the balls, stop the action and have the group members toss a ball through the pattern BACKWARDS! Start up the pattern backwards, adding balls. Get it going in both directions at once.

CAUTIONS: Use SOFT balls.

GROUP SIZE: 8 — 15

MATERIALS: Several soft balls — perhaps two different colors or sizes.

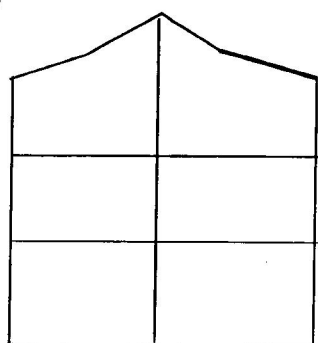


ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, CITY

In a circle, give each group member five minutes or so of reflection time — giving thought to the selection of an animal, a vegetable or fruit, and a city that is most like herself. Have members volunteer to share their reflections.

CAUTIONS: This can take on quite serious overtones for some individuals. You might want to suggest that the animals, vegetables and cities describe positive self-images.





This is not only a valuable tool for sharing knowledge with others, it clarifies, acknowledges and affirms one's own values for oneself.

Patrice

COAT OF ARMS

A leader asks each group member to draw a coat of arms, perhaps drawing a generic example as a guideline. The leader asks that the coat of arms depict, through drawings, such things as favorite possession, favorite book, favorite activity, favorite hobby, favorite place, a person they admire, etc.

When finished, each group member shares his coat of arms with the rest of the group.

CAUTIONS:

This activity might cause some discomfort for some individuals.

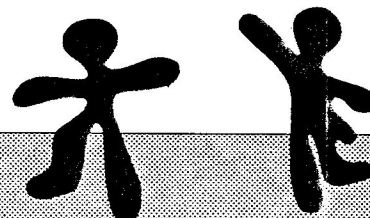
MATERIALS:

Paper, markers.

HAVE YOU EVER?

In a hip to hip circle with one person in the middle, the middle person says to the whole group, "Have you ever.....?" Everyone for whom the answer is YES attempts to change places with someone else who is moving for the same reason. The original person in the middle tries to take the place of someone for whom the answer is YES. The person in the middle (the same person, or someone on the move who could not find a slot) must then say, "Have you ever.....?" and the game continues. Some examples are: "Have you ever ridden a motorcycle?" or "Have you ever hitchhiked?" or "Have you ever been stopped for speeding?" etc.

GROUP SIZE: 15 — 20



In order to prevent any personally disclosing behaviors that could be embarrassing or of a bragging nature, set the tone by mentioning that the goal of the activity is to gain playful knowledge.

If you are asking the "Have you ever?" question, you must have done it yourself!!!

Patrice



WISHES

*"This activity was
collected from Carolyn
Mehlhorn's course work."*

Wendy

This activity lets members of a group show what they know about each other and begin to tune into their peers. Sit in a circle, with each person having a pencil and a small card with the sentence starter, "I wish..." on it. Group members are to complete the sentence with one wish. Then they hand their card to a leader who reads them aloud one at a time. The group has four chances to guess who wrote the card.

*A favorite of mine is abc order by grandmother's
first names. The roll call is music to one's ears:
Agatha, Bertha, Florence, Gladys, etc. Think what
they next generation of grandmothers will be:
Amber, Crystal, Jamie...*

Patrice

DATA PROCESSING

Group members are asked to stand and to get themselves in an ordered line by some specific criterion...

Examples: last name, first name, grandmother's maiden name, birthdates, shoe size, eye color, height, favorite food, age, etc.

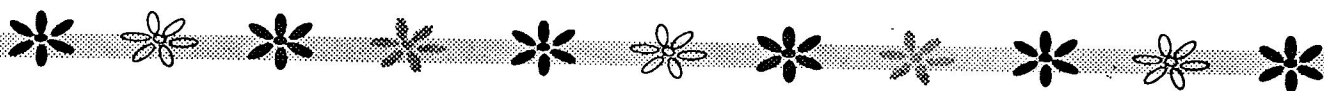
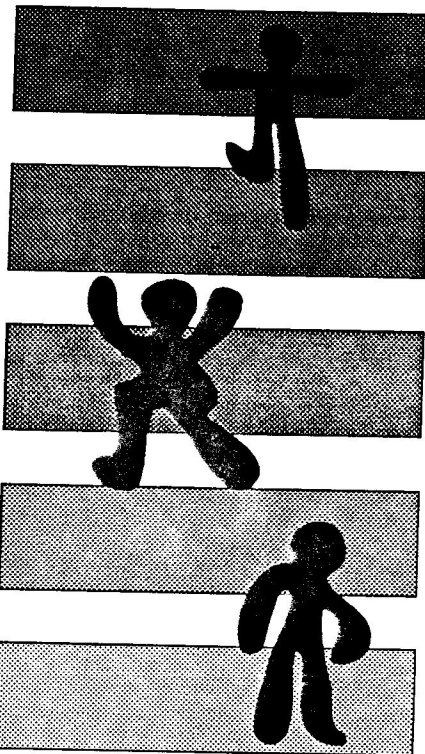
...whatever seems appropriate and fun.

This can be done several times, with increasing difficulty each time.

VARIATIONS: Blindfolded lineups, lineups without talking, lineups using "noises" only, such as lining up by the type of animal you have chosen by making the noise of that animal only.

CAUTIONS: Spotters may be necessary if blindfolds are used.

*The animal noise
lineup variation is particularly fun!*
Wendy



I Think You're Wonderful

by Red Grammer

Page 12 (Teaching Peace, Teacher's Guide)

CHORUS

I think you're wonderful
When somebody says that to me
I feel wonderful, as wonderful can be
It makes me want to say the same thing to somebody new
And by the way I've been meaning to say, I think you're wonderful, too!

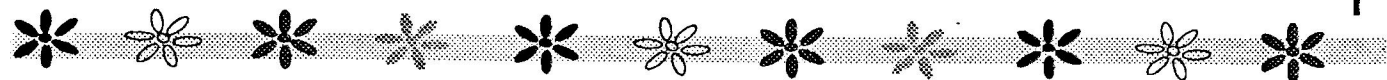
If we practice this phrase in the most honest way
And find something special in someone each day
We'll lift up the world one heart at a time
It all starts by saying this one simple line...

CHORUS

When each one of us feels important inside
Loving and giving and glad we're alive
Oh what a difference we'll make in each day
And all because someone decided to say ...

CHORUS

And by the way I've been meaning to say
I think you're wonderful, too!



TRUST FALL

Group members divide into pairs with one person designated initially as the FALLER and the other as the SPOTTER. The faller crosses his arms at the chest, locks his knees (and keeps them that way) and closes his eyes. The SPOTTER begins at a one foot distance behind the FALLER, keeping both hands out in front of her with her legs braced.

The FALLER calls out, "SPOTTER ready?"

The SPOTTER responds, "Ready."

The FALLER says, "Falling"

The SPOTTER responds, "Fall away."

The FALLER falls backward and is caught by the SPOTTER. After each fall, the distance can increase until one of the participants no longer feels comfortable.

CAUTION: The rules should be stated and modeled by the leader. A mat or grassy area is preferable in case of a fall.

A simple but effective way to establish trust and ensure a good start to group activities.

Cliff Lerner

Keep the size of the circle fairly small - six to eight spotters, to assure the safety of the person in the center.

WILLOW IN THE WIND

A circle of 6 — 8 spotters stands shoulder to shoulder with both hands out in front and legs braced, one slightly behind the other. A volunteer moves into the center, closing her eyes, crossing her arms at the chest and locking her knees.

The Center Person calls out, "SPOTTERS ready?"

The SPOTTERS respond, "Ready."

The Center Person says, "Falling"

The SPOTTERS respond, "Fall away."

The Center Person falls stiffly toward the outside of the circle and the spotters gently pass her around the circle.

CAUTION: The rules should be stated and modeled by the leader. A mat or grassy area is preferable in case of a fall.



BLIND RUN

Have group members form two lines facing each other. The lines should be about six feet apart and people in each line about three feet from each other. Members take turns running between the two lines from one end to the other with eyes closed. The leader can go first to demonstrate. The last person in each line gently puts out his hands to touch the runner's shoulder to let the runner know she is at the end of the line. It is important not to forcibly stop the runner. Subsequent runners may choose to spin around before running and during the whole run.

CAUTIONS: If indoors, be sure that there are no obstacles (including a wall) at the end of the run.

GROUP SIZE: 12 plus

Thanks to PlayFair for contributing this to our repertoire.

Patrice

CAR CAR

Players form pairs with partners of approximately the same height. The person in the front is the car, and the person in the back is the driver. The person in the front puts her hands out in front of herself as bumpers or headlights in a relaxed fashion. The person in back puts his hands on the driver's waist. The car closes its eyes and the driver guides the car carefully. After a few minutes, the cars and drivers switch places. Car noises can add a playful aspect to the activity.

CAUTIONS: Cautious, careful drivers do not allow "fender benders" to happen.



This is a playful idea from New Games for the Whole Family by Dale N. Lefevre



CAR WASH

Players form two lines facing each other on their knees about three feet apart. Together with the person across from them, partners decide what part of the car wash they will be, ie. scrubbers, rubbers, polishers, wipers etc. A person waving a "T" shirt (the car wash exit) is always at the end of the line. One at a time in a crawling position, participants announce what kind of car they are as they prepare to enter the car wash. The car wash machine in unison echoes the announced vehicle, ie. "a red convertible Porsche with white leather upholstery" or "a baby blue VW Bug with rusty fenders." These language-rich announcements of car makes and descriptions set the stage for a particular kind of wash — vigorous or gentle — depending on the kind of condition they are in.

GROUP SIZE: 15 — 20

CAUTIONS: general respect for individual's bodies

Beware, this is a real favorite of younger kids and they'll want to go through again and again. Mixed age groups, especially families, are fun.

Patrice

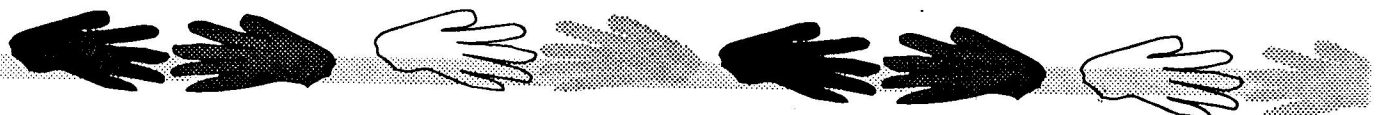
TRUST LEAP

This activity from Playfair can build on Willow in the Wind.

Two lines are formed, facing each other, about three feet apart. Everyone holds their arms out in front of them, alternating one of their arms with the arms of the persons across from them. Hands are palm up, not holding onto the those of the other person. Everyone in each of the two lines is hip to hip. The leader can be the first volunteer to demonstrate by taking a running dive into these arms. Others can follow, taking turns also. A variation can be to fall into the arms from a standing position.

GROUP SIZE: at least 8 to catch the falling participant

CAUTIONS: be sure and have knees bent to take the weight of the faller and to keep heads out of the line of the fall.



PRUI?

Thanks to the folks at
New Games for
Introducing this one.

One person is secretly chosen to be PRUI, the enlightened one. The rest of the players are seekers searching for enlightenment. Walking around with eyes closed saying, "Pru?" the seekers make contacts with others and ask the same, "Pru?" If there is a response of "Pru?", then the master has not been found because the enlightened one is silent. When the enlightened one is found by getting no response, the player joins her by finding a free hand and taking it in peace. As a line forms, newly enlightened ones must find their way along to the line's end and not where two hands are already joined. Once each person is attached to the enlightened one that person can open his eyes. The activity is over when everyone becomes enlightened.

GROUP SIZE: 10 — 30

CAUTIONS: Towards the end as one or two people are seeking Prui, the line can move in toward them so as they will not feel foolish by being the only one calling out "Pru?"

HUMAN LADDER

up members are paired and given one "rung" of the ladder (a 3' long by 1 1/4" diameter dowel). Several pairs stand to form a ladder. A climber starts at one end and moves from one rung to another. As the climber passes, the pairs can move to the other end to extend the ladder. Rung heights may vary and directions may change.

CAUTIONS: A grassy area is best.



TRUST LIFT

Make groups of at least nine, with one volunteer to be lifted. The first volunteer lies down, closes his eyes and the other members of the group gather around placing their hands on him. Following thirty seconds of "tuning in" to the person to be lifted, the person is lifted over the heads of the group members. The group then turns around full circle. Make sure one person is designated to hold the head. After being brought down to waist level, the lifted individual can be gently rocked and then gradually lowered to the ground. The group can then place their hands on the person's body for thirty seconds before moving away.

GROUP SIZE: 9 — 10 to a group

CAUTIONS: People with bad backs take caution.
Children should be supervised by adults.

Thanks to Playfair for reminding me of this age-old activity that I remember doing late at night at slumber parties. It always had a mystery component...

Patrice

PASS THE BODY

A favorite from my adolescence.

Patrice

For a greater risk, yet still fun and safe, try a body pass. Have 8 — 10 players sit with feet together in the center of a circle. Legs are bent with knees up. One person stands in the center of the group's feet and keeping her body stiff, falls into the arms of the group which gently passes the person around and across the circle.



The ABC's of You

Red Grammer

Down the Do Re Mi

If I wrote down all my feelings for you
I'd probably fill up an ocean or two
So in the end I decided to write
The ABC's of you.

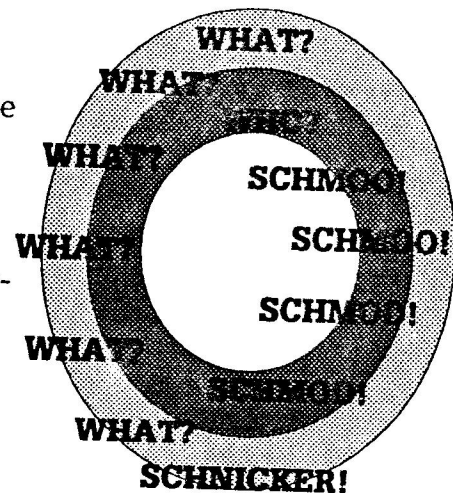
I think you're A1, Grade A,
Beloved and Beautiful,
Capable, Caring,
Delightful, Dependable,
Enjoyable, Excellent
Fascinating, Fabulous,
A Gift, a Gem, Genuinely Generous,
Honest, High Grade,
Impressive and Interesting,
Jewel, Jackpot, Kind-Hearted and a King,
Laudable, Likable, Marvelous, Magnificent,
Naturally Nice,
One of a Kind, Pleasing Priceless,
Queen-Like in Quality,
Rare and Radiant,
Scintillating, Splendid, Superb, Sensational,
Trustworthy, Talented, Tender and Tasteful,
Unique, Unprecedented,
Very, Very Valuable,
Worthy, Welcome,
Xtraordinary, Xceptional,
Yes Yes Yes You You You
You're one in a Zillion!



SCHNICKER/SCHMOO

Participants form a seated circle. A leader indicates that she is the only one who has a working memory in the group. She passes an object to the RIGHT saying, "This is a schnicker." Recipient #1 is reminded that he has no memory and is directed to respond, "A what?" The leader responds, "A schnicker." Recipient #1 passes it to the next in the circle saying, "This is a schicker." Recipient #2 responds, "A what?" Recipient #1 turns to the leader and asks, "A what?", who responds, "a schnicker." "It is a schnicker" is passed down the line by each member of the circle until recipient #3 is reached and so on, continuing around the circle with "What's" and "Schnickers" being passed each time all along the line to and from the leader.

When the object is part way around the circle, the devious leader starts another object to the LEFT saying, "This is a Schmoo." The response is, "A who?" This continues around the circle to the left in the same way as the schnicker moves to the right until both objects return to the leader.



*I laughed so hard I
fell out of my chair! This
is a great way to release
some tension!*

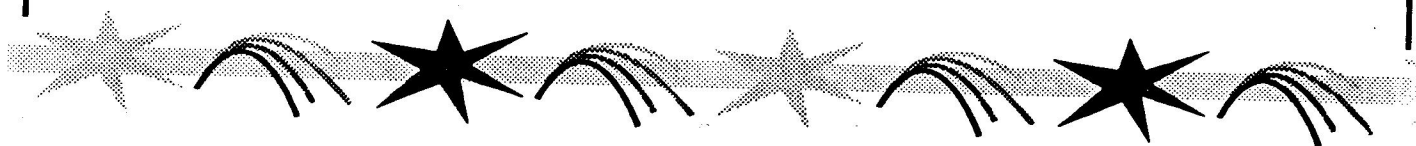
Cliff Lerner

CATCH THE DRAGON'S TAIL



Players line up one behind the other. Everyone puts their hands on the waist of the person in front of them. The last one in line tucks a handkerchief in the back of his belt. The dragon lets out a few roars to get up steam! At a signal, the dragon starts chasing its own tail, the head person trying to snatch the handkerchief. The head then becomes the new tail and the game resumes.

CAUTIONS: Requires a smooth, probably grassy environment.



APPLE TREE

The group sits on the floor in a circle. A leader (or the last person chosen) goes through the ritual below, pointing to members progressively around the circle with each word or syllable: (much like eeny, meeny, miiny, moe):

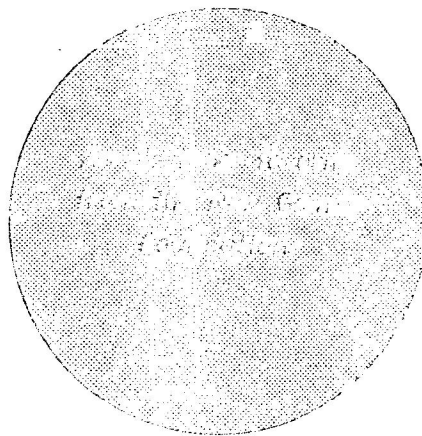
I stood under the apple tree. All the apples fell on me.
Apple Pudding. Apple Pie. Did you ever tell a lie?

The person who is selected by the word "lie" tells a story. The rest of the group (without talking) decides as individuals whether that person is telling the truth. On a group count of three, each group member puts one hand out with 1 finger for "straight-shooter" or 2 fingers for "forked tongue."

Thanks to Doug Lipman for introducing this one to me.

Patrice

The group sits on the floor in a circle. A leader begins the ritual by pointing his arm over the head as a pointer to a person, saying "ahh." The person pointed to then turns his chin to point to the right or left. The next person puts his hands in front in a prayer position and points across the circle to someone. The leader then starts the ritual again with "ahh" and its corresponding action. If someone goofs, he leaves the circle. But he may remain outside the circle if he is the last remaining player.



DEAD LIONS

A hunter from the zoo is looking for lions. All players are lions to begin with, except for one hunter. To keep from being captured the lions must not be SEEN MOVING by the hunter, except for breathing, blinking and swallowing. If the hunter sees a lion move, the lion is caught and must join the hunter searching for other lions. Hunters may not touch the lions or shout at them. Otherwise they can do what they will to get the lions to move. Once a lion moves and is caught, she takes hands with the hunter and can face either the same or opposite direction. The activity is finished when all lions are hunters.

GROUP SIZE: 10 — 30

*This one is from the
New Games Video by
Dale N. Lefevre.*

HUM DINGER



This activity begins by making a short brainstormed list of songs on the board that everyone in the group knows...Jingle Bells, Happy Birthday, Twinkle Twinkle, Bingo, Old MacDonald, etc.

Depending on the size of the group a certain number of songs will be selected from the list to be used. If the group is a manageable size the facilitator will whisper in the ear of each participant one of the songs selected, making sure that more than one person is assigned each song. If the group is larger than 25 have each participant choose one of the selected songs in their own mind. Once everyone has their song in mind, on the count of "zucchini" begin to find your humdinger partners by walking around and humming your song. Upon finding a partner link up elbows and continue looking for others humming the same song. Ready set... acorn, spaghetti, summer, butternut, zucchini!



FOUR UP

Four Up is a fun cooperative game of group connectedness, communicating and yielding.

This is a fun, quick and easy exercise where we have the opportunity to feel our connection without words.

Patrice

In a circle, everyone begins seated either in chairs or on the floor except for four people in the group who stand in place. A person can stand for no more than five seconds and then must sit down. As one person sits down another person must stand up as there must always be four people standing. This activity of communication has lots of potential for laughing and great choreography.

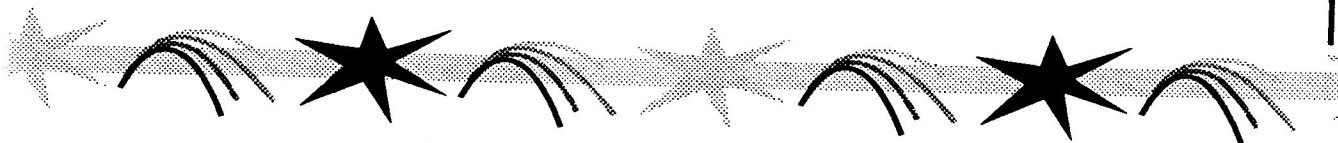
GROUP SIZE: 7 or more

**MASSAGE TRAIN**

Form a circle and have everyone turn to the left. Next take a few baby steps in so you can comfortably rest your hand on the shoulders of the person in front of you. Ready... massage. After about one minute of Ooooooh's and Aaaaaa's, about face and return the favor to the person who just massaged you. Thank you!

This can also be done comfortably sitting on the floor. It has been great at the mid-point of a few LBRP's

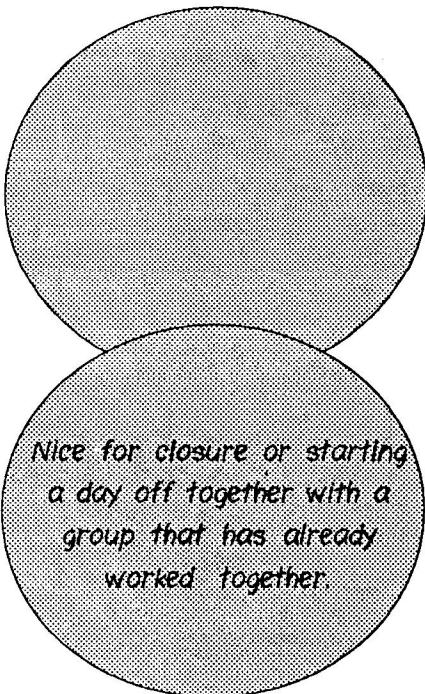
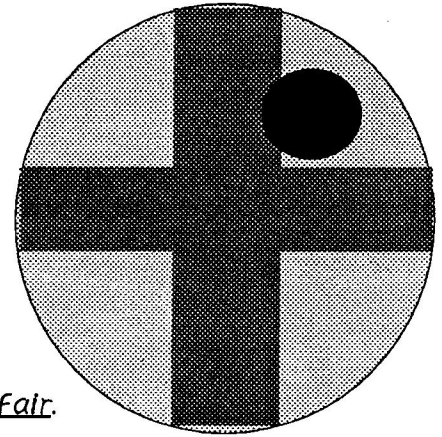
Patrice



ROLL PLAYING

This is a fun cooperative game where everyone sits in a circle, facing in, hip to hip, with legs stretched out like the spokes of a bicycle wheel and hands behind your back with palms to the floor. Initiator begins with a basketball in his lap and begins by passing the ball to the person either to the right or left using the legs only and then having it continue around the circle. If spilling the basketball into your partner's lap isn't funny enough, next try a soft ball and then a ping pong ball in the opposite direction.

From *PlayFair*.



Form a very tight circle hip to hip. Now every one turns to the left and takes a few sideways baby steps towards the center of the circle. Everyone put their hands on the waist of the person in front of them. On the count of zucchini, take a practice sit to see if everyone is connecting and has a lap to sit on. Again on the count of ZUCCHINI....acorn, summer, butternut, ZUCCHINI! Hold it for a few seconds and reach in with the inside arm and give a wave or cheer. You can try walking together.

GROUP SIZE: Unlimited. Record has it that at the Whole Earth Festival in California, there were 10,000 plus in a lap game!

CAUTIONS: Adjust for sizes of people, children and adults. Walking as a circle can end up in a heap!



TOUCH BLUE

Everyone crowds around the game leader who calls out, "Everyone reach out with your right hand and touch something blue and hold on. Now reach out with your left hand and touch something red. Don't let go! Now reach out with your right foot and touch something yellow. You may twist or hop if you need to. You may need to get the cooperation of others to move around." If the group is still standing, the leader gives the command to touch something yellow with your bum. If everyone is still standing, everyone wins!

Activity from CO-OP
GAMES MANUAL (1974)
Jim Deacove.

FUNNY HEADLINES

Divide the group into different newspaper departments. Each group is responsible for producing funny headlines of at least four words that relate to their assigned department: news, sports, entertainment, food, etc. Each department is given a few pages from any popular newspaper. Using scissors, glue and complete words from headlines or advertisements, funny headlines have to be made up against a deadline. Make the limit around five minutes. Only complete words, not individual letters, are allowed. All the headlines are presented together to form a paper and read out loud by the game leader (editor).

FROG ACCIDENTALLY
FALLS ON IRISH
AMBASSADOR

Activity from CO-OP
GAMES MANUAL (1974)
Jim Deacove.

STORY WORD GAMES

Have players sit in a circle, facing each other. One person starts off a story with a word — just one word. The person on the left quickly adds a word, no matter what it is, even "the." Go around the circle quickly, each person adding a word and building up the plot as you go. Each person has to prepare the way for the next one in line.

Activity from CO-OP
GAMES MANUAL (1974)
Jim Deacove.

1-2-3-4

This is a game that can be just fun or used specifically in math class.

In groups of three facing each other, each player, with one hand fisted, shakes his fist and counts, 1-2-3-4. On the count of 4 each of the three players displays a number of fingers that they decided on in their mind before the count of 1-2-3-4. The traditional goal is to have the sum of the three players' fingers total eleven. With older participants you can play two handed 1-2-3-4 with the goal of six displayed hands having digits adding up to twenty two.

*What fun and a moment
of achievement when
success is experienced.
And amazingly, it
often happens.*

Patrice



KISSES

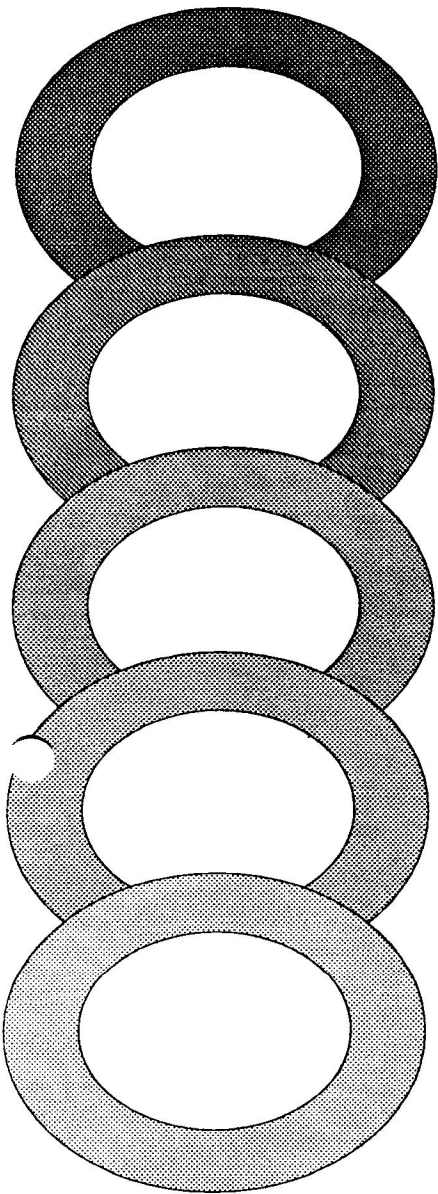
*The point of this small
activity is to demonstrate
that we often compete
even when it is not in our
best interest. This activity
comes from Bill Kreidler's
Creative Conflict Resolution*

Patrice

The facilitator has participants pair up and take right hand to right hand OR left to left and then place elbows of the clasped hands on the table top, desk top or ground. Participants may say, "Oh we're going to arm wrestle", but as facilitator, be careful only to acknowledge that it is the same position. Once everyone is in position explain the rules that there is to be no talking, and you are to keep track of how many times in thirty seconds you can get the back of your partners hand to touch the surface of where you are positioned. For each time you touch the back of your partners hand you will receive a candy kiss. Following thirty seconds, stop the activity and discuss the results. It is often that some in the group will cooperate, but also that many will wrestle and compete ending up with only a few or no kisses. It is an amazing realization that we have more to gain by working together than when we work against each other.



NAME CIRCLES



This is a free association thinking game. Sitting in a circle, a person begins by saying a name, for example...Rock Hudson. The person to the left may say, Oliver Stone, continuing around the circle, Oliver Twist... Chubby Checker...Fats Domino...Minnesota Fats...Bob Dylan...Dylan Thomas...Thomas Edison...Reddy Kilowatt...James Watt...Jessie James... it can continue or go full circle.

The Ten Comandments... Lawrence of Arabia...Great Epics...Peter Eppig... Peter Piper...Piper Cub...Lear Jet...Shirley Lear...shirley you jest...The Joker ...Batman & Robin... Batmobile...Wendy Mobilia...

Here is an example of full circle:

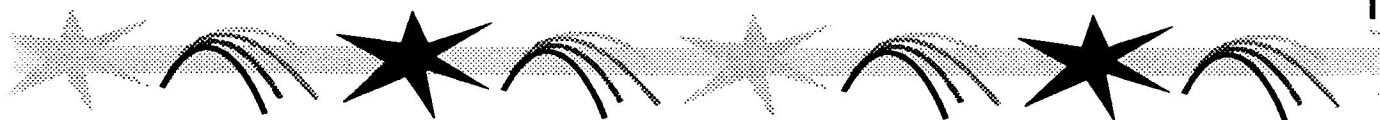
Mickey Mouse...Mickey Rooney...Looney Tunes...Bugs Bunny...Roger Rabbitt...Welsh Rarebit...Dylan Thomas...Danny Thomas...Thomas Edison...Ed Sullivan..Topo Gigio...Mickey Mouse!

CAUTIONS: The purpose and fun of this game is not to put people on the spot but to keep the associations going. Anyone can pass.

Those who are good at it will love it, those who aren't, although appreciative, may hate it!

A game for the witty!

Patrice



PARTNER TAG

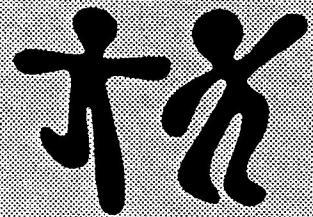
In pairs, this game starts as all tag games do, "1..2..3..NOT IT!" One of the pair is "it" and the other "not it." The "its" begins counting aloud "1 rutabaga, 2 rutabaga, 3 rutabaga." As the counting begins, the "not it" partner begins walking fast (no running) away from his or her partner who begins pursuit on the count of 3 rutabaga, also walking fast without running. Upon being tagged by their partner, the players switch roles and the new "it" immediately begins counting, "1 rutabaga, 2 rutabaga, 3 rutabaga" with the "not it" aerobically walking away. The scene is very funny — a room full of independent tag games, people walking fast trying to get away from their own partner and avoiding contact with all other games and players for about 5 — 8 minutes.

CAUTIONS: bumping into each other

GROUP SIZE: any even number

"This is a great physical activity that is more aerobic than one would think by the description. It is the funniest, most active and all inclusive TAG game that I know. I was first introduced to this at a Playworks workshop."

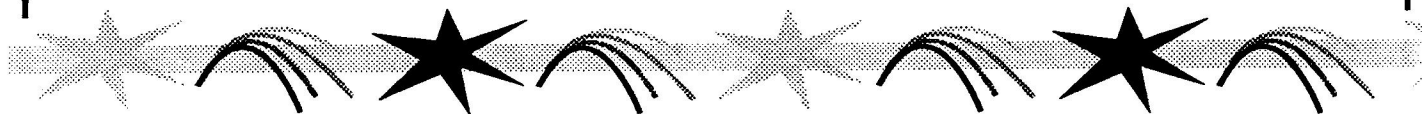
Patrice



SEE ME BEAUTIFUL**by Red Grammer**

See me beautiful
Look for the best in me
It's what I really am
And all I want to be
It may take some time
It may be hard to find
But see me beautiful

See me beautiful
Each and everyday
Could you take a chance
Could you find a way
To see me shining through
In everything I do
And see me beautiful



BOSS, I CAN'T COME TO WORK TODAY

This game is best played in a circle or as an activity that can be integrated into a classroom or staff room as a progressive ongoing brainstorm exercise.

Traditionally it would just be played as a person in the circle starting by saying, "Boss, I can't come to work today because I've got an Ache in my Ankle," the person next would say, "Boss, I can't come to work today because I've got an Ache in my Ankle and Bruises," the third person would then say, "Boss, I can't come to work today because I've got an Ache in my Ankle, Bruises, and Chronic Coughing," etc. To make the game more cooperative and thus not put anyone on the spot before you "circle up" for the game, "partner up." Have every pair pick two letters out of a hat and together collaborate and brainstorm for three minutes on the best alliteration they can come up with. Then do a quick line up in alphabetical order, "circle up" and play.

This can have many curricular adaptations in the classroom:
"I'm going to math class and I'm going to learn about...Addition, Borrowing, Communicative law, Division, Estimating...."
Patrice

FANNY DOOLEY

Great fun in
language classes.

Patrice

Fanny Dooly is a funny friend of mine. She likes noodles but she doesn't like spinach. She like books but she doesn't like reading. She likes silly and funny things but nothing humorous. Fanny likes to follow but not lead. Participants can ask questions of the "leader" to try and figure out the key to what Fanny Doodle likes and dislikes. In this case Fanny likes anything with a double letter in it and dislikes anything without a double letter. In pairs, it is fun to make up a rule for what Fanny Doodle likes and dislikes and see if others in the group can guess the key to the solution.



BLIND MICE

Choose a site without obstructions. The leader hands out blindfolds and whispers a number to each group member (1 to n number of people). When all in place, the leader says GO. The group must assemble itself in a line that is organized by their assigned numbers without talking.

GROUP SIZE: Groups of 5 to ...

CAUTIONS: The area should be safe. Use spotters.

How did you communicate?
How did you decide to communicate in that way?
What were some difficulties that you encountered?
How did you overcome them?
What are other ways you could have solved them?

LEMONADE

Two teams are formed. Boundaries are created. Teams each have some "home" areas at one end of the field. Starting position for teams is near their home ends. Team members hold hands facing the other team. One team thinks of a location and a job or occupation associated with that place, and a short charade that gives a clue to the trade. When the first team is ready, the teams enter into the following ritual.

First Team

"Here we come"

"chosen location"

"Lemonade"

Second Team

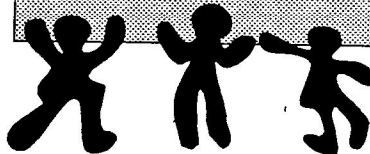
"Where ya from?"

"What's your trade?"

"Well show us some if you're not afraid!"

The first team then performs their charade and the second team tries to guess their occupation. When a correct guess is made, the first team sprints for their home area as the second team tries to tag members of the first team. Any person tagged switches teams.

A fun cooperative twist
on the old game of tag.
It's fun and silly. It
offers great opportunity
for creative
brainstorming and...



decision making.
It has a nice feel as
players are never out, but
always belong to one team
or the other.

Patrice

Did it matter what team you were on?
Did the size of the steps taken change as the game progressed? Why?
How did you come up with your occupations?



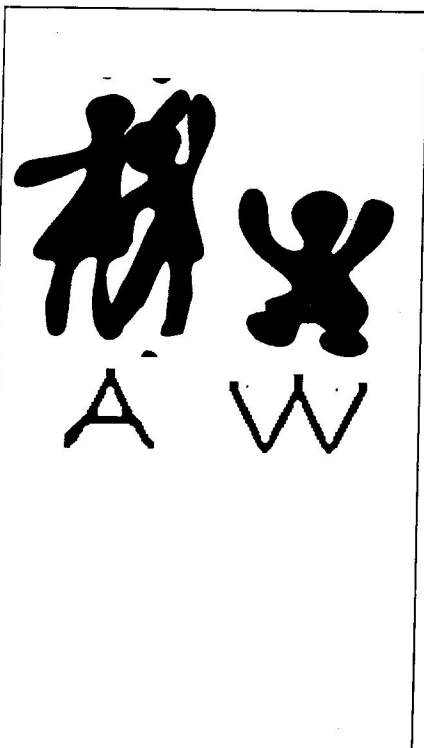
ALL ABOARD

Place a sturdy milk crate, pallet, square board or even a square piece of cloth on a level, unobstructed area. The leader sets an appropriate time limit to encourage a quick decision. Group members must find a way for everyone to stand on the crate or pallet with both feet, without touching any other object — including the floor or ground — for 30 seconds or longer.



CAUTIONS: Have at least one spotter per group. Crates should be sturdy enough to safely support the weight of the group.

How did you solve the problem?
Were there any other ways to attempt this?
How could you have done this better?
How did you handle decision making?



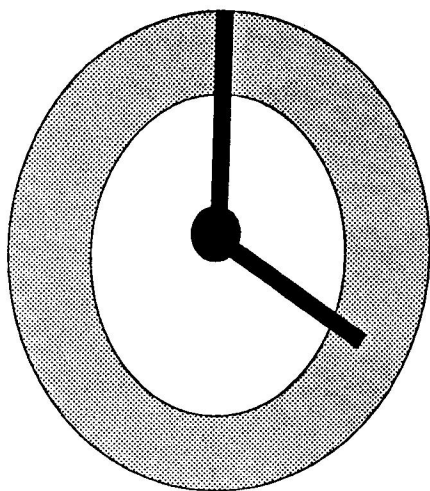
BODY ENGLISH

Players divide up into two groups. One group attempts to use their bodies as letters to spell out a word/phrase/concept. (Finger spelling is not allowed — too easy!!!) The second group tries to decipher what the first group is trying to say.

How did you decide how to communicate your idea?
How did you go about making decisions as a group?
Who led?
Who followed?



THE CLOCK



Group members form a circle — hand-in-hand. They begin by rotating the circle clockwise 360°, then returning 360° counter clockwise.

The goal is to see how quickly it can be done while still maintaining the shape of a circle. Time the event — stopping the timer if contact is broken. Have the group begin and end in a sitting position if you like.

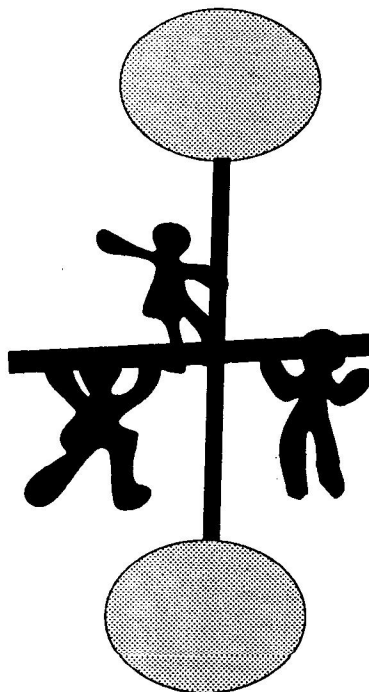
GROUP SIZE: 20 — 30

Did the group have trouble staying connected? Why?
What could you have done to keep the group together during the rotation?
Is it important to have fast people in the group?
Would it be more efficient to exclude slow runners? More satisfying?

ELECTRIC FENCE

Select a site that has no protruding roots or rocks. An “electric fence” is made from rope tied between two trees at chest height (but not higher than three feet). A sturdy 2” by 6” by 8’ wooden beam is the only tool that the group has to transport themselves over the fence. If a group member touches the fence, he is zapped. Anyone touching the victim is also zapped. The beam conducts electricity if it touches the wire. A “force field” extends from the rope to the ground. The trees conduct electricity and cannot be touched.

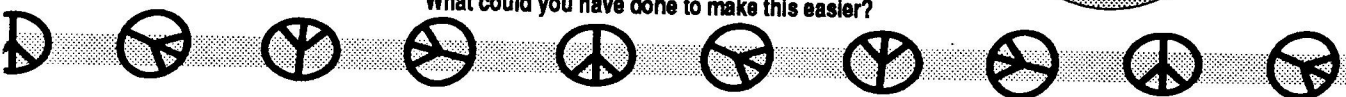
The height of the wire is related to the level of safety in this activity.



CAUTIONS: Group members must spot each other carefully. Group members who are crossing must be careful not to kick or thrash and possibly hurt the spotters.

MATERIALS: A rope tied between 2 trees at least 10 feet apart. A sturdy 2” by 6” by 8’ wooden beam.

How did you decide on a crossing method?
What was the affect of the order in which you crossed?
Did anyone take a leadership role?
What factors made this activity difficult?
What could you have done to make this easier?



KNOTS

Group members stand in a circle. Each puts one hand out and takes the hand of any person not immediately to the right or to the left. Each person reaches out with the other hand and takes the hand of a different person. Members of the group must unravel the knot that they have made. They may not let go of hands but they may change their grip.

To make it a little more difficult for experienced "knotters", have the group hold short pieces of tissue paper that they must keep intact rather than holding hands.

CAUTIONS: Group members need to be sensitive to other's uncomfortable positions.

Were all ideas heard?
Were all parts of the knot working on the same solution at the same time?
How were you able to help each other to work through the solution?

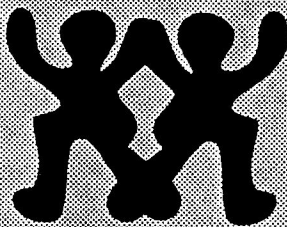
After all hands are clasped, you can do a friendship squeeze by having one person pass a squeeze of "energy" through her hand to another and pass it on until it returns to the originator. If it doesn't pass through everyone's hand, then you will not have one circle to unravel. Let go, clasp hands again and repeat the squeeze.

Patrice

EVERYBODY UP

This one is especially fun with a playful ritual of "on the count of peaches, up! Apples, oranges, peaches!"

Patrice



Two people of approximately the same size sit on the ground facing one another so that the bottoms of their feet are opposed, knees are bent, and each other's hands are tightly grasped. Ask them to pull themselves into an upright position. If/when they are successful, they should seek another person to join them to try again, adding people as they succeed. All hands must be grasped so that an electric current could pass through them — same for all feet — all bottoms off the ground at the same time. Beyond 8 participants, groups should find that they will need to seek configurations other than circles to succeed.

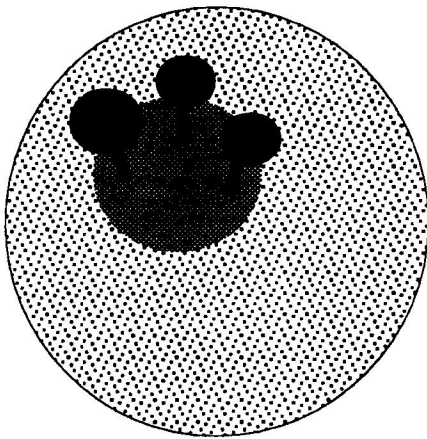
CAUTIONS: Spotters may be necessary.

Do you feel good about your efforts?
What did it take to succeed?

Are there other situations where the same level of cooperation is necessary?



MAROONED



Blindfolded students form a seated circle. The leader describes the situation: Your group is about to be cast away on an island with ample resources to take care of your bodily needs. You have fifteen minutes to decide which 6 of the following 10 items you will take: football, complete works of Shakespeare, deck of playing cards, chess set, mirror, oil paint set, harmonica, typewriter with paper, waterbed, badminton set. The leader asks the group to think about the list without talking for one minute, then discuss it, reaching consensus in fifteen minutes.

If you have more than one group working on this at one time, you might want them to be far enough away from one another to avoid distraction.

How did the loss of sight effect your communication?
 Why did you choose the items that you did?
 Were there any items the group all agreed to take or leave behind? Why?
 What roles did everyone play in the group?
 How did you feel when most people chose an item with which you didn't agree?

PAPER TOWER

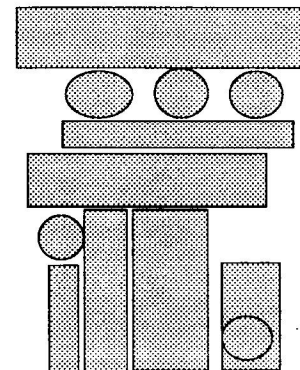
Equal stacks of newspaper and one roll of tape are given to each group. For the first ten minutes, groups verbally plan the construction of their towers. They may not make any drawings or manipulate materials in any way during the planning period. At the leader's signal, group members are given 20 minutes to construct the tower. No other materials may be used. Towers must be free standing. Towers are evaluated for height, stability and beauty.

This is a good activity for focusing on planning and for examining consequences. It might make a nice "hook" for an LBRP that involved the construction of something.

GROUP SIZE: Groups of 5 — 8

MATERIALS: Equal stacks of newspaper and a roll of masking tape for each group.

What role did you play in the planning period?
 Did your role change during the construction?
 Were everybody's ideas considered?
 What might you have done differently?
 What were some ideas you found especially helpful?



Wendy



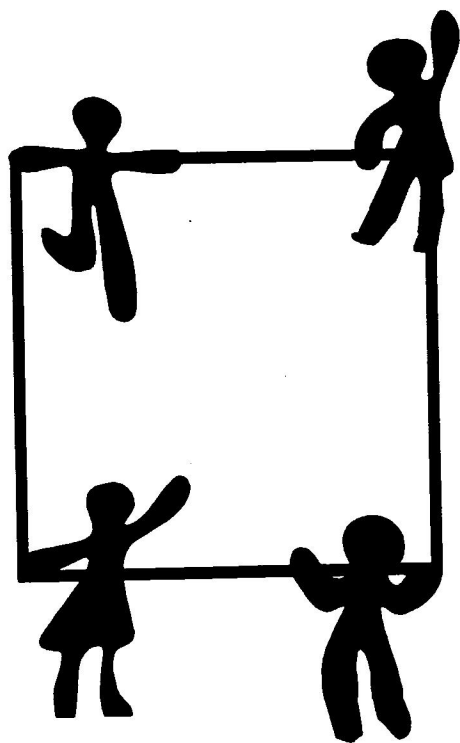
REACH FOR THE SKY

The object is for a group to make a mark on a wall as high up as possible using only their bodies. Use a blank wall with no windows or protrusions. (Brick is fine.) The ground should be flat and free from obstructions. Every member of the team must be involved. Some members must be designated as spotters.

GROUP SIZE: 8 — 15

CAUTIONS: Groups can get very high off the ground. Excellent spotting is vital.

Was everyone involved?
Did anyone feel they were asked to take more risk than they wanted?
What different strategies were tried?
How did the group decide what strategy to pursue?
How do you feel about the groups' accomplishment?



ROPE SQUARE

The object is for a blindfolded group to create a square shape using a rope. With each member blindfolded, the group picks up a length of rope with its ends tied together (50' or so long). The group then works together to get it into the configuration of a square. This is not as easy as it sounds.

CAUTIONS: It will require a couple of spotters.

MATERIALS: 50' — 75' rope with the ends tied together, blindfolds.

What strategies did you try?
How would you do it differently next time?
Did a leader or leaders emerge?
Did this feel like any other problem that you've tried to solve?

I had facilitated this many times before participating in a rope square. It was invaluable to have switched roles.

Patrice

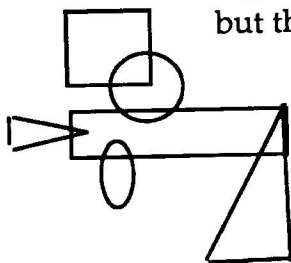
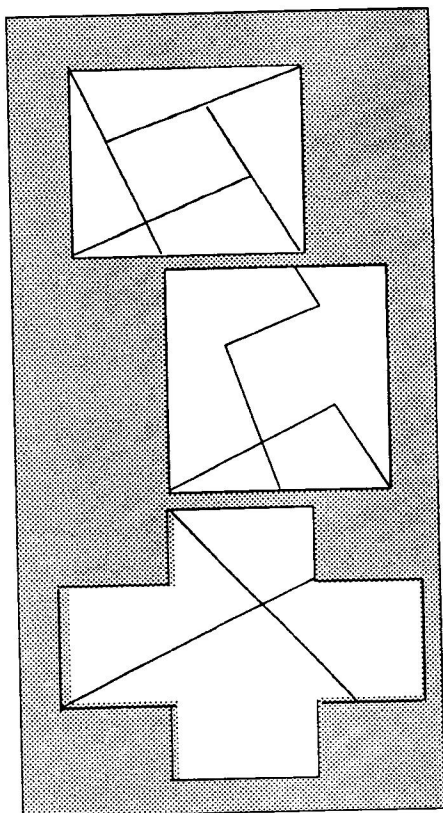


SAY WHAT?

Group members are paired and seated back to back — one with an assembled tangram, the other with the same tangram unassembled. The person with the completed puzzle attempts to verbally communicate the solution to her partner. Build new pairs and reattempt.

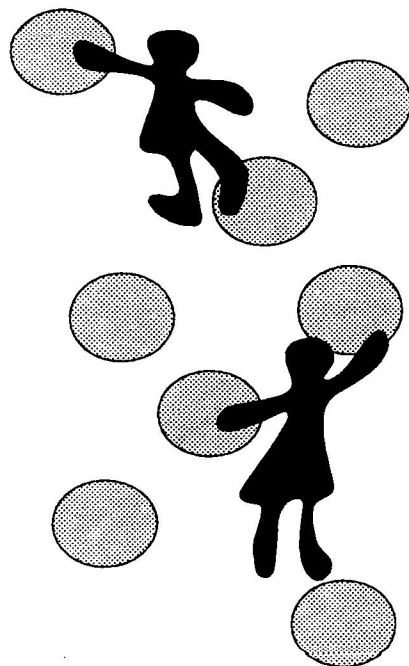
MATERIALS: Tangrams (examples at right)

VARIATION: One person has the drawing below, the other has a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. The drawer tries to reconstruct the figure from the verbal direction of his partner. Both can look at the attempted drawing, and the person giving directions can give additional feedback, but the drawer cannot ask questions.

**SHIPWRECK**

This activity requires an unobstructed area. The object is for one person to direct another through an obstacle course. The ROWER is blindfolded and led to one end of a room. the LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER stands at the opposite end of the room (or space). The rest of the group are BOULDERS and sit on the ground. BOULDERS do not talk and remain stationary. The ROWER does not talk. (The surf noise is deafening.) The ROWER follows the directions of the LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER. If the ROWER hits BOULDER, the BOULDER yells, "Crash!" and new participants are chosen.

CAUTIONS: BOULDERS must not move, trip, etc.



What types of directions were difficult to follow?

Which were easy?

Were there any key words used in the directions?

Do you see any connections here to roles in other group activities?



TO TELL THE TRUTH

A leader places the names of animals, famous persons or curricular facts on pieces of paper. After instructions have been given, one label is placed on the back of each member of the group. Each person must guess what is on her back by asking yes or no questions of the group. No hints should be given. This should be done as a group. When a student correctly guesses the person or animal, she should signal that she has done so and continue to answer others' questions.

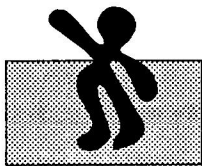
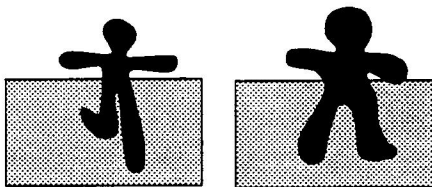
GROUP SIZE: Not less than 5

What type of questions were asked?
Who confused you?
What kinds of questions worked best?

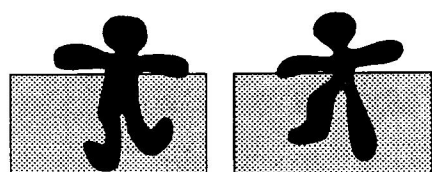
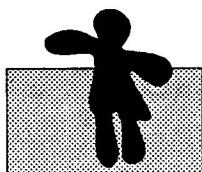
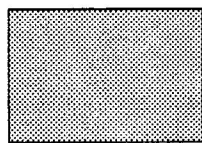
A fun variation is to not ask questions, but to have others try to pantomime the word or concept that is on your back.

Wendy

GIRAFFE



This can be a very frustrating activity for some groups. You may at some point in a lengthy struggle suggest that they try again at a later time.



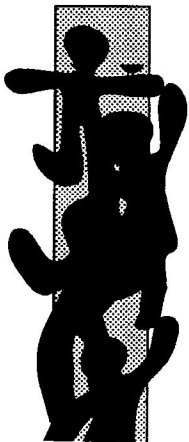
TRAFFIC JAM

This is an activity where two teams attempt to negotiate past each other on a course made up of a line of squares made of paper, sticks, etc. Squares are arranged in a row or a semi-circle. There should be one more square than there are players. Two teams of equal number are formed. Leaving the center square empty, each team lines up, one per square, on either side of the empty square. Teams then attempt to negotiate past each other using the empty square — each team ending up where the other began. Only forward movement is allowed. Only movement around one person, who is facing you, is allowed.

MATERIALS: Squares made of paper, sticks, etc.

How did the group make decisions?
Was competition possible, or was cooperation necessary?
Did a leader emerge?
What is the importance of the follower role?
How did you come up with your solution?
Was communication effective?





TELEPHONE POLE SHUFFLE

The object is for two groups to negotiate past each other on a 30 ft telephone pole lying horizontal on the ground. Two groups line up facing each other at the ends of the telephone pole. The groups should exchange ends without touching the ground. Time the enterprise. Establish 15 second penalties for every touch of the ground — the sillier the better! Have the group try again after a success.

GROUP SIZE: 20 or so total.

MATERIALS: 30 ft telephone pole

Do you feel good about your efforts?

What did it take to succeed?

Are there other situations where the same level of cooperation is necessary?

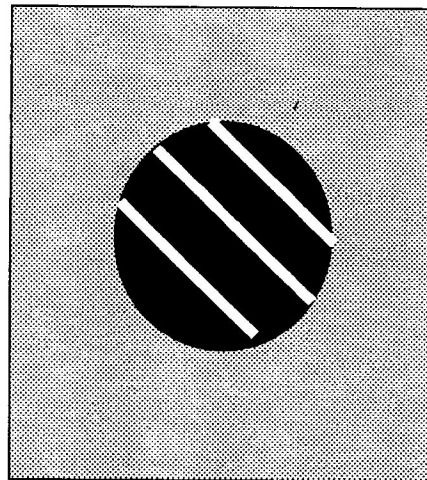
Did you need to trust one another?

BLANKET BALL

Each member of the group takes hold of the edge of a blanket. A ball is placed in the middle and players try to roll it clockwise ten times, counter clockwise ten times and then toss and catch the ball ten times without dropping the ball. If there are enough players, they can attempt to pass a ball to each other using the blankets. Try using a net and getting up a game of blanket volleyball!

GROUP SIZE: 4 — 24

Did everyone need to be involved?
How did you communicate?



Activity from Jim
Deacove's CO-OP GAMES
MANUAL (1974)



MONARCH

Monarch begins with one person as "IT" or "The Monarch". In a play area with agreed upon boundaries, the Monarch begins play by tagging others with a large foam ball by tossing or throwing it at them. When the foam ball touches another player that player becomes a Monarch too.

When a Monarch is holding the foam ball he must be stationary and not run or walk with the ball, but cooperatively pass the ball to other Monarchs who can then make an attempt at securing more Monarchs. Now just how does one identify who is and isn't a monarch? Monarchs always have one hand raised high and yell, "Monarch!, Monarch!" as a call to receive a pass. The game is over when all players are Monarchs and on the same team.

CAUTIONS: A foam ball is preferable to a playground ball. As the energy of the game increases, the challenge heightens and balls are thrown harder. Also a guideline of keeping the ball below the waist is fair.

GROUP SIZE: 15 — 50. A larger playing area for larger groups and two balls can be introduced.

MATERIALS: Two large foam balls and possibly hoops or cones for boundary identification.

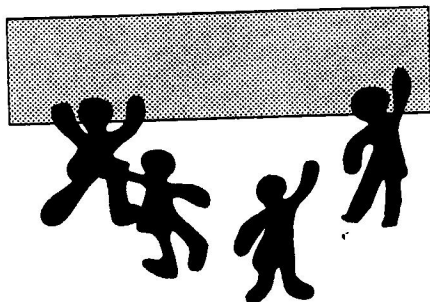


This game offers all the challenge and high energy of traditional dodge ball, but because no one is eliminated and you always belong to one side or the other the "feel" of the game is really positive. For a long time I thought the game was about caterpillars and butterflies, but recently realized the fantasy was a "Monarchy" being overturned! Its amazingly aerobic. It's the first "New Game" that I ever played.

Patrice



MOON BALL



Moon ball is a valuable and often magical cooperative game. This is a cooperative volley game without the net. The idea is to have a volley that includes everyone. In fact, no one gets a second hit at the ball until all others have had a first. The game continues through a second round in which no one can have a third hit until everyone has had a second hit. Well, it sounds easy, but actually is very challenging and requires strategy, communication and either a large relatively empty indoor room or little wind in an open outside space.

CAUTIONS: none

GROUP SIZE: 10 — 30

MATERIALS: inflated beach ball, especially nice if it is an earth beach ball

This is a fun alternative to traditional volley ball for those who are either too short to get a fair chance at the ball or less aggressive than others. This has fast become a favorite of mine since I was first introduced to it at a Playworks Playshop.*

**See Resources*

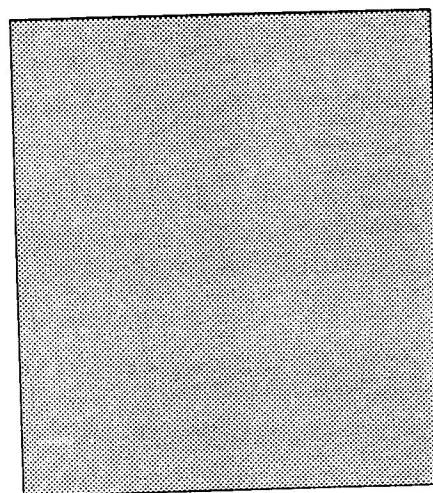
Patrice

A MIND-TEASER

On twelve cards, print these letters (one on each card):

I, E, E, E, E, E, P, C, N, N, N, D, D, R, T

Ask the group to unscramble them to form one word using all of the letters. Talk about the process they went through to explore the possibilities.



STANDING OVATION

We all deserve standing ovations from time to time. Standing ovations for performing artists only is an exclusive concept. Integrating the concept of a Standing Ovation into institutes, classrooms, staff rooms, faculty meetings and boardrooms is exciting. The wonderful feeling of receiving a standing ovation is equaled only by the experience of warm connectedness one feels when one is a part of a group that is delivering a standing ovation.

The directions are simple: Acknowledge the concept of standing ovations for either a job in process or well done and acknowledge the need for recognition, affirmation or support.

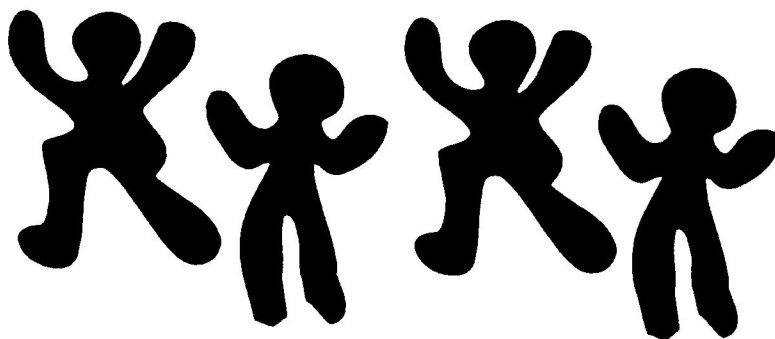
Anyone can ask for a standing ovation or ask others to join them in one for somebody whom they perceive to need or deserve one. Also a scheduled "open mike" for standing ovations could be scheduled for Wednesday afternoons in a classroom or as part of the agenda at the monthly faculty meeting.

Standing Ovations are an opportunity to get a bit of support and nourishment and celebration for yourself. They can be asked for at anytime and no one needs to explain what they feel they want one for, if they don't wish to. It is unconditional, and some one need only say "I WANT A STANDING OVATION."

The concept of a standing ovation allows for an ongoing integration of community maintenance. This has served as a wonderful thread in many Institutes. We have integrated it into our family ritual. We ask for and give standing ovations often in our nuclear and extended family gatherings.

Patrice

*(Whistling, cheering,
foot stomping
permitted!)*



WONDERFUL CIRCLE

A rule of thumb is after ten seconds of silence the process of WONDERFUL CIRCLE is over.

*This has been magical for me, especially as community maintenance becomes owned by the community - when they implement a wonderful circle as a closure ritual and a method of affirmation rather than as an isolated activity. Another great idea I picked up from Playfall.
Patrice*

Have the group get into a big circle with arms around each other's waists. The whole group starts by taking baby steps to the left and moving until someone says "STOP!" The person who says "stop" shares something that she feels good about that took place during the day, something new learned today, an affirming comment to someone in the group or a statement of grateful acknowledgement. When she is finished she says "GO!", and the whole circle begins taking baby steps in the other direction until someone says "STOP!" and shares something else. This continues until everyone has a turn who wants one. The facilitator can say, "Are we done yet?" If someone has more to say they can say "NO...GO!" and the circle continues moving around again and the question will be asked again later.

ADGIE THE ADJESARUS

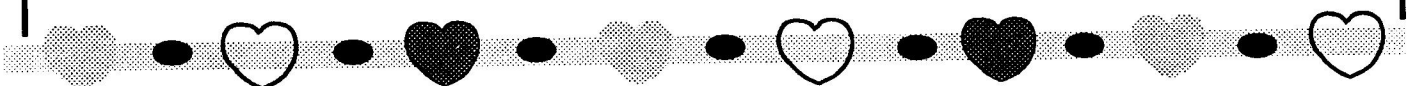
Group members can draw a large creature and call it **Adjie the Affirming Adjesarus** with twenty six sectioned-off blank spaces for A to Z. This will get filled in with affirming words as time passes. You can fill in a few examples or perhaps one for each letter as an invitation — adept, beautiful, clever! Let people know that they can add positive affirming words throughout the week or month. Have a pen available for guests and passers-by to participate. Perhaps have it up on an Open House evening so that parents can participate too. It will be an opportunity to say, "WOW, nice word!", "Who thought of laudable?" or "What does laudable mean?"

Use in the classroom or staff room as a participatory bulletin board.

This came from a collaboration with Rhee Carine.

Patrice

As a hook for this exercise play the song, "The ABC's of YOU" by Red Grammer on his tape Down the Do Re Mi (\$10.00) available from Smillin' Atcha Music P.O. Box Chester, NY. Also available from Smillin' Atcha Music is a whole Language Curriculum Guide edited by Kathy Grammer that accompanies the Down the Do Re Mi recording with additional ideas for integrating across the curriculum "The ABC's of YOU" and other songs on the recording (\$9.00).



HIGHLIGHTS WITH PUNCTUATION

This is a fun closure activity that begins with everyone sitting in a circle. Someone begins by sharing a highlight of the day or something in particular that was meaningful or enjoyable that took place during the day. If it is the first time the group has closed with this activity, the facilitator can lead.

The shared comments should be ended with a motion of either two hands fisted— one on top of the other with both under your chin — which means simply that, "I am done and the person to my right can now share," or some other motion that was created and announced before the activity to mean, "I'm finished and we all must change places with each other." Now the situation is that anyone who has not shared can begin to share their highlights and finish with one of the two punctuations. However because of the mixing up of sitting positions the person to their right may have already shared so a third punctuation must be spontaneously introduced to mean "I have already shared. Pass it on to the person on my right!" The game will eventually end when everyone makes this third punctuation sign.

"This playful way of putting closure to a days end was first introduced to me through Everybody's guide to noncompetitive play PLAYFAIR by Matt Weinstein & Joel Goodman. See resources for more information on this valuable resource."

Patrice

*We don't stop having fun
when we're old, we're old
when we stop having fun.*

Anonymous





UNITED WE STAND

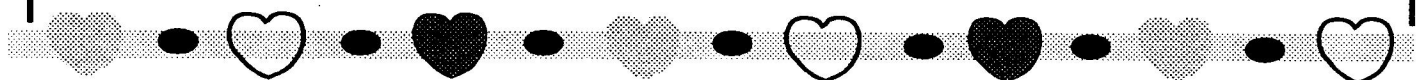
Construct the puzzle above from cardboard or other sturdy paper. Distribute the pieces at random, divided evenly, among group members. Have them put the puzzle together. Be careful that you don't lock them into a single solution!!!

*This can work as a
good closing activity to a
day of hard work.*


Wendy

*Activity created by Kyle and Bill Neldt,
Graduate Students, School of Education,
University of Kansas.*

From Effective Communication, See Resources



What follows are 25 simple and easy ways to improve your self-concept, your classroom's self-concept, your school's self-concept, or... 25 simple and easy ways to make a difference!

1. Hang an "opportunityisnowhere" poster in your room. Is opportunity nowhere? or is it now here?
2. Hang a mirror in your classroom with a  sticker on it.
3. Adopt a partnership for the school year with someone who doesn't have a "home room"... a custodian, secretary, administrator, cafeteria worker, substitute teacher, school board member, community business owner, etc. Make a list so there are no duplicates within the school. Have each class nurture that individual all year. Include them on field trips, invite them to events and celebrations, keep them updated on class activities, send them holiday cards... establish a relationship, connect with them and help them to feel connected.
4. Have a school -wide "quote of the day" poster. Have the shop make a frame with a removable top. Mount it in some spot that is frequented by everyone in the school community (lobby, cafeteria route, etc.). Each day, a new quote that is positive, uplifting or intriguing can be put in the frame. The quotes can be contributed by anyone. It's an opportunity to have all participate and contribute equally in a learning activity.

**The frog does not drink
from the pond in which he
lives. - Rachael Carson**

Submitted by Miss Carr's 7th
grade science class.

**I never thought less of a man
who wore patches. - Henry
David Thoreau**

Submitted by Mrs. McDonough

It is an opportunity to inspire, uplift and question. It allows for people to engage with the contributor, "Oh, nice quote," or "I didn't know Henry David Thoreau said that," "It's one of my favorites, too," or "What do you think that means?"

- 5.** Fortune cookies. Buy a box of fortune cookies and pull out the store-bought fortunes with tweezers. Add new ones ... for the staff ... for the school board ... for your class. Make them playful, inspiring and affirming.
- 6.** Photograph a directory of all of the school staff. In the lobby, in a specially made frame or case, hang the pictures/photographs of all of the staff members with their name and their job. The photos can be profiles or pictures of them actively engaged in their job.
- 7.** Classroom Door Celebration. Have each classroom display on their doors a creative display that depicts their classroom community and its members. This is not to be competitive, but celebratory.
- 8.** Community Communications. In addition to school news in the local papers and on the local radio station, have a public relations campaign that profiles the staff/faculty/administrators. Doing them in alphabetical order and 2 at a time takes away any edge of hierarchy. We are less likely to distance ourselves from those about whom we have knowledge and with whom we have something in common.
- 9.** Have students keep a journal of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Today I learned...
- 10.** Magic Box. Ask students who they think is the most special person in the world. After they have a chance to respond, let them each look in the magic box — one with a mirror in the bottom. Have them keep the secret until everyone has had a chance to look. Follow this up with a discussion on the importance of uniqueness and diversity.
- 11.** Bragging. In groups of 5 or 6, give students 5 minutes to boast about anything in their lives. How did they feel about bragging? About listening to others brag? We so seldom get the chance to express how we feel about ourselves in strong, positive terms. It can feel really good!

- 12.** Pride line. Have the students create a pride line — a hanging length of string or yarn — upon which they can hang cards that say "We're proud that we ..."
- 13.** Take some time at the end of the day to let group members talk about the successes that they experienced during the day. (See Wonderful Circle in the section on Positive Strokes and Closure.)
- 14.** Create a bulletin board titled "Getting to know..." Over time, post a photo of each member of the community, with a description of their best characteristics, contributed by other members of the community and compiled into a paragraph.
- 15.** Make a class mural that depicts things that the community members have in common and things that individuals have to contribute.
- 16.** Collect information from students on what they feel confident enough to teach and what they would like to learn. Collaborate on making an "expert" file, perhaps comprised of a file card with a polaroid picture of the person. Have students refer to the file when they are seeking help in different areas.
- 17.** In groups of 5 or 6, have group members take turns bombarding each other with their strengths. "You are nice to everyone," "You write so well," "You know great jokes..." No put downs are allowed. The group should come up with at least fifteen strengths for each group member. These can be written on outlined body shapes and hung in the classroom.
- 18.** Have groups brainstorm to create positive nicknames for each group member.
- 19.** Have students form a circle to discuss "Who are we?" If an alien from space landed and needed an answer to that question, what would we say?
- 20.** Compile a list of Who's Who in This Class and publish and/or post it.
- 21.** Take laughter breaks, silly breaks, smile breaks. Encourage group members to

look for a need for these breaks and to initiate them (ownership of community maintenance).

22.

Have a group of 5 or 6 create a drawing that is a composite of the members, representing their best features and the ways in which they work together.

23.

Before the school year begins, send letters home to students with a focus on the classroom community — perhaps, name the other class members, express excitement and anticipation for community sharing and growth. etc. Be playful with the envelopes. Make them from old magazines, color them, whatever.

24.

School Mural. Individual classes come and put a handprint on the mural with a signature. The sign could say, "Lancaster School Community." Be sure to include teachers, support staff, administrators, EVERYONE!

25.

Create a classroom flag, crest, T-Shirt, logo, banner, team name, etc.

26.

26? Okay, so we had one more idea at the last minute. Create a poster of the following sentence and display it in your classroom — at faculty meetings — at open houses: **Please remember, we are gathering to overcome challenges, not people.**

Many of these ideas were adapted from;

101 WAYS TO BUILD SELF-CONCEPT IN THE CLASSROOM

A handbook for teachers and parents

Jack Canfield, Harold Wells

1976 Allyn and Bacon

CHOOSING PARTNERS, TEAMS, SIDES OR GROUPS (Patrice McDonough)

You may share my experience of not being quickly chosen when it was time to choose softball teams during gym class. These were always anxious moments which felt too long as I stood in line waiting to be chosen last to a team. For me however, there was a flipside experience at spelling bee time because I was a good speller and was either captain or first chosen. Today as a teacher and parent, as I reflect on my own schooling experiences and attempt to make changes in education, I often think about the feelings of classmates who didn't excel at softball or spelling—classmates who excelled at music, art or a subject where we didn't "team up." Or perhaps the classmate excelled in an area that didn't show up in the school curriculum at all.

It is important to create a safe and supportive environment for learning and playing to take place. There are unlimited ways to get people into pairs and groups without anyone feeling left out or anxious. When choosing partners, teams, sides or groups you can create as playful and safe a space as when you play or engage in any game or activity. I've put together some ideas to get you started. Remember that not every idea is appropriate for every group or every circumstance.

Potential categories for choosing: **PREFERENCES, CHARACTERISTICS, TRAITS, TENDENCIES, COMMONALITIES and DIVERSITIES**

YOU CAN DIVIDE INTO TWO LARGE GROUPS BY:

- ☆ Tongue curlers and non tongue curlers
- * Raise your hand....those with their left hand in the air are in one group and those with their right in the other group
- ♣ Fold your hands...those with their right thumb on top will be in one group and those with their left in the other group
- ◇ Look at your nails and freeze ...those with their palms up will be in one group and those with palms down will be in the other group
- ★ Watch-wearers and non-watch-wearers
- ⊙ Heeled shoes and those with no heels
- ☆ Laced shoes and non-laced shoes
- ★ Herbivores and carnivores
- ☼ Those with more than four siblings, those with four or fewer
- ★ Vanilla lovers and chocolate lovers
- ✚ More like the mountains or more like the seashore
- * More like a sandal or more like a sneaker

- + Those who would prefer a Hawaiian vacation and those who prefer a Caribbean vacation
- ★ You have just won an all expense paid vacation! Would you rather go to Hawaii or to Bermuda? New York or San Francisco?
- ★ How many letters in your first name? If it is an even number join others with an even number of letters and odd number of letters with the same.
- ★ Close one eye. Those with the left eye closed join each other and right eye closed with the same.
- * Put either a pinky or thumb in the air, join with others who did the same.
- * Do you feel more like having an ice cream cone, root beer float or milk shake?
- * Do you feel more like a ping pong ball or a ping pong paddle?
- * Those born in a leap year, those not born in a leap year (Who knows? This one could take a little research and may not work for a spontaneous activity or for a classroom where all students are the same age.)

A word of caution about some of the following kinds of examples... although fun, interesting and the opportunity for gaining knowledge, the classroom teacher or group facilitator must be sensitive to the total milieu of the community and guide these kinds of groupings with a sensitive attitude once trust has been built, in order that they not become, "have and have nots", an elitist hierarchy, or better and worse. One way to help eliminate that energy is to say simply, "Those who saw whales last summer join together over here", rather than saying "Those who saw whales last summer join together over here and those who didn't join here".

- * Those who have been to the top of Mt. Washington, those who have not (And then add those who have climbed Mt. Washington)
- ☆ Those who know someone who went to Woodstock
- ♣ Those who play an instrument
- * Those who attended a wedding in the last year
- ◆ Those who saw whales last summer
- ◇ Those who participated in an Earth Day event
- ★ Those who play on a softball team
- ⊙ Those who are fluent in more than one language
- ☆ Those who are blood donors
- ★ Recently purchased computer
- ☼ Once was a waitress/waiter
- * Worked in a department store

Here are a few ideas for dividing into several groups of varied sizes...

- ★ Everyone sings the first vowel of his name. When the a's, e's, i's, o's, u's are all gathered there will be five groups that can be easily adjusted to equal numbers ready for a cooperative activity or game.
- ★ Have everyone hold up any number of fingers between one and five. Without talking have them gather with others who held up the same number of fingers.
- ★ Have everyone find others with the same birth state. All those born in foreign countries can gather as one group.
- ★ Think of the last digit of your phone number and find everyone else who is thinking of the same number.
- ★ Get into groups of five so that everyone has at least one item of clothing the same color.
- ★ Get into groups of four so that you all share two things in common.
- ★ Find three others who were born in the same season as you.
- ★ Get into a group of three and form the letter N.

Picking Partners

- * Find a partner who was born in a different state than you were.
- * Find a partner who has the same number of sisters as you.
- * Find a partner who has the same number of siblings than you.
- * Find a partner who has more siblings than you.
- * Find a partner who has less siblings than you.
- * Hold up any number of your fingers and find a partner who in combination with you makes an even number.
- * Find someone with the same size thumb as yourself.
- * Hold up any number of fingers zero to five and find a partner who has a different number held up.
- * Find a partner who is wearing an item of clothing the same color as you.
- * Raise your hand or stand on one foot and partner up with someone who chose the opposite from you.

A favorite way of choosing sides that I experienced at my first New Games Training in Berkley California in 1978 was **Cows and Ducks**. Everyone closed their eyes and the "leader" whispered in everyone's ear whether they were a duck or cow. As the last person received their identity, still with eyes closed, ducks started quacking and cows began mooing in order that they could locate their team members. The silliness of groping around mooing and quacking is ridiculously fun. The leader should serve as a spotter and make sure dangerous obstacles are removed from the area.