

Collaborative and Interactive Games

Stranded on a Island

We are completing a unit named *Interaction in Action*. The kids need to interact to complete each activity:

Stranded on a Island is a useful team building activity to help people get to know each other better. Form groups of about five to ten people and give the following instructions:

“Unfortunately, you will be relocated and stranded on a deserted island for an indefinite amount of time. You may only bring one item to the island, and you only have a few minutes notice. What will you bring? Share with your group your object, why you chose it, and what you plan to do with it.”

Have each person briefly share their item, why it is important to them, and what they plan to do with it. After everyone has shared, instruct the groups to figure out how they can improve their chances of survival by combining the items in creative ways. Allow ten to fifteen minutes of brainstorming time, and then have each group present their ideas. Give a prize to the winner (most creative group) if desired.

Commonalities and Uniquities

Form groups of five to eight people and give them two sheets of paper and a pencil or pen. The first part of the activity is Commonalities, where each subgroup compiles a list of the things they have in common. In order for it to make the list, it must apply to everyone in the subgroup. You want to avoid writing things that people can see (e.g. “everyone has hair,” or “we are all wearing clothes”). Try to get them to dig deeper. After about 5 minutes, have a spokesperson from each subgroup read their list.

Then, depending on your goals for the session, you can have half of each subgroup rotate to another group for Uniquities or you can leave everyone in the same group. On the second sheet of paper have them record unquities, meaning that each item applies to only one person in the group. The group tries to find at least 2 unquities for each person. After 5-7 minutes, you can have each person say one of their unquities or have a person read them one by one, having others try to guess who it was. (Again, you want to go beyond the superficial, avoiding those things that people can readily see). This is an excellent team-building activity because it promotes unity, gets people to realize that they have more in common than they first might realize. The awareness of their own unique characteristics is also beneficial in that people can feel empowered to offer the group something unique.

Reaction Game

Form groups of six to twelve people. If playing this game with a very large group as an icebreaker, you can also choose four or five volunteers and have them go to the front of the room. The first step is to ask players to create some events. Give each player small sheets of paper and pens. Ask each player write some events. Encourage creativity. Some examples of events:

- Being attacked by a shark while fishing
- Hitting a home run to win the World Series
- Watching the lottery and realizing that you have the winning number
- Being presented a large engagement ring and proposed for marriage
- Going on a first date with an attractive person

After people are done writing events, collect the sheets and place them in the container (a hat or small bag will do). Within groups, choose three or four people to act for each round. Ask the players to randomly draw an event from the container. Without giving away what the event is, give each player 30 seconds to 1 minute to act out a reaction to the event they received. They may act out using charades rules, and they can also make noises and talk to the other actors (while staying true to their character).

As players act, this should lead to funny results. When time expires, the other team members attempt to guess what event each person had. If you want to keep score (optional), award a point for each correct guess. Winning or losing tends to be less important for this icebreaker, however, as there is a lot of humor and entertainment value in watching people react to silly things.

Two Truths and a Lie

Two Truths and a Lie is the classic icebreaker game in which one attempts to identify which of three statements is bogus.

Instructions: Have groups of 5-6 sit in a circle. Each person prepares three statements, two of which are true and one of which is a lie. In any order, the person shares the three statements to the entire group. The object of the game is to figure out which statement a lie. The rest of the group votes on each statement, and the person reveals which one is the lie.

Variation: *Two Truths and a Dream Wish.* As an interesting variation to the classic Two Truths and a Lie icebreaker, people may also play a version called Two Truths and a Dream Wish. Instead of stating a lie, a person says something that is not true — yet something that they wish to be true. For example, someone that has never been to Hawaii might say: “I have visited Hawaii when I was young.” This interesting spin often leads to unexpected, fascinating results, as people often share touching wishes about their lives.

Follow the Leader (also known as the Copycat Game) is an action game that serves as a good energizer or warmup activity. It can be pretty hilarious watching people mimic the leader, especially if the leader does some wacky movements. There is no preparation needed for the Follow the Leader game. Find a large open space, either indoors or outdoors, and you’re ready to go!

Follow the Leader

Ask everyone to stand and arrange the group into a circle, facing inwards. Ask one person to leave the room for a minute. This person will be the guesser for the round. While he or she is gone, the group decides who should be the “leader.” The leader will be the one who sets the movements for that round. When this person is chosen, invite the guesser to come back. The guesser stands in the very center of the circle.

When the round begins, everyone starts swinging their arms up and down. The leader will eventually begin to do other movements, and everyone else mimics the leader’s actions, without being too obvious to reveal who the leader is. The leader can do just about anything he or she wants, such as:

- clapping
- making a kicking motion with his or her leg
- jumping up and down
- singing a line from a song
- patting his or her own head
- a dance move

Everyone in the circle should be careful to avoid prolonged eye contact with the leader, so the leader’s identity is not given away. The guesser must keep turning his or her head to try to figure out which person is the leader (the person who is starting of all the group’s movements). The guesser is allowed to make up to three guesses. If the guess is incorrect, the round continues. If the guess is correct, the leader becomes the new guesser for the next round. If all three guesses are exhausted and the leader is not correctly guessed, the round ends and you can either keep the same guesser or switch it up.

Capture the Flag

Divide the players into two teams. Agree upon the legal boundaries of play, determine the location of two “jails” (one for each team) and set up a middle boundary between the two teams. At the beginning of each

round, each team hides and defends their own “flag,” which is any object that is durable and safe to toss around and run with (e.g. a bright T-shirt or cone). The flag must not be obscured; it needs to be more than 50% visible. Optionally, you may have more than one flag if there are enough people. The object of the game is for one team to grab the flag of the other team and bring it over to their own side. When a member of the opposing team crosses over the middle boundary into the opposing team’s territory, the other team is allowed to tag the person and take them to a “jail” where they stay until they are released (tagged) by one of their own team members who has not yet been captured.

Be sure there is plenty of space outdoors, as there will be lots of running involved. Also remember: safety first. Clear the area of any dangerous obstacles or hazards.

How to Play Spud

To set up the Spud Game, have each player count off and remember their number. An optional variation is to have more than one person per number. After everyone is assigned a number, have each player group together in a bunch. One person starts with the ball in the center of the bunch.

At the beginning of each round, the person with the ball (who is in the center of the bunch) throws the ball upwards to the sky while yelling a number. Everyone disperses and runs in all different directions away from the bunch except for the person(s) whose number was called. The person whose number was called catches the ball and then yells “Spud!” When he or she yells this, everyone must freeze. The person with the ball then is allowed to take three giant steps toward any player. He or she throws the ball and tries to hit someone. To dodge, players are allowed to move all parts of their body except they may not move their feet at all. If a player is hit the first time, he or she earns the letter “S”, eventually spelling the word S-P-U-D. The person who was hit becomes the new thrower; otherwise, the thrower who missed earns a letter. The next round begins and play continues. Whoever spells the letter S-P-U-D is out of the game; alternatively, if you do not wish to eliminate players, you can set a time limit and whoever has the least amount of letters when time expires is the winner.

First Impressions Game

This is a fun game that involves writing your first impression of someone you meet. If some people already know each other, that’s fine too — people can simply write some nice, encouraging words or adjectives to describe each other. This works well as an icebreaker for meetings, when there are new people present, or when people don’t know each other well. It can be entertaining as a party game, too.

To set up First Impressions, pass out the large sheets of paper and writing utensils. Have each person write their name on the top of a sheet of paper. Tape each person’s sheet to their back so that they can’t see it. Instruct everyone to mingle with each other and to converse. Tell everyone to say hello and to introduce each other for a few moments. After a minute or so, ask each person to write an adjective (their “first impression” of the person they just spoke with) on each other’s papers. Then have each person continue mingling with new people, repeating the process. After 10-20 minutes (depending on how large your group is and how long you want this activity to run), each person should have several adjectives and descriptive words listed on their backs. Go around the room and introduce each other, reading the words written on your neighbour’s paper. This should be pretty humorous, and if people did this activity correctly, there should be lots of kind things said about each other.

Important note: instruct everyone to write nice (or encouraging) words ONLY! Do not allow any mean, rude, or critical words to be written. For example, one can write words such as “beautiful smile,” “great sense of humor,” “smart and witty personality,” “gifted listener,” etc

Telephone Charades

The Telephone Charades Game (also sometimes called “Charades Down the Line”) is an icebreaker/stationary game that is a hilarious blend of the classic “telephone down the line” and “charades”

game. This group game is fairly simple to play. Select five to six participants and ask them to leave the room. The audience chooses an action that is specific, silly, and obscure to act out (e.g. “a nerd’s romantic first date”, “washing an elephant”, “going skydiving”, etc.). Once the clue has been decided, bring in all the participants and instruct them to face the right side. The moderator reveals the clue to the first person, who taps the second person on the shoulder and acts out the topic using charades rules (no talking allowed, no noises). The second person then taps the third person and acts out his or her understanding of what was acted out. This continues until it reaches the last person in line, who must guess what the action is. This game is funny because the action mutates and changes based upon each person’s interpretation of what is going on, often leading to confusion and silly motions.

Playing the Team Story Game

Each team will construct a story. Each person is only allowed to say one sentence and must continue the story. The first player in line begins the story by saying “Once upon a time…” and completes the sentence. The next person in line must continue the story and have it make sense. This process continues until it reaches the last person in the team’s line. The last person in line must conclude the story in one sentence as well.

Have team create a story. If you wish, judges can decide which story is the best. This game is a silly game that usually leads to hilarious stories!

Zoo Game

How to Play: Zoo is a simple yet very fun rhythm game. A group of people chooses to stand or sit in a circle, with everyone facing the center. Now everyone must choose an animal to represent him or herself. Each player will have a specific animal that they represent by a hand gesture. For example, a player could put their arm up by their nose to represent an elephant or they can hold out one of their hands in a claw shape to form the paw of a lion. Players can use their imagination for how they want to represent their animal, just as long as it’s not too difficult to mimic quickly. No two players can have the same animal or have a similar hand gesture, so that no one gets confused. Memorize each player’s hand gesture and make sure everyone else knows all the animals in play.

Having formed a circle, select a person who will start the round. He or she begins a basic 1-2-3 rhythm beat among the group using your hands. On the first two beats, everyone slaps their thighs, and on the third beat, everyone claps. If this is anyone’s first time playing, make sure everyone has a feel for the beat. When all players are ready, begin the beat and everyone shout, “One, two, let’s play Zoo!”

Slap your hands on your thighs for the first two beats, then on the third beat, perform your animal hand gesture (if you are the first player.) On the next set of three beats, slap your thighs twice, then use another person’s animal gesture on the third beat. At this point, the player whose animal was just represented has to respond by performing their animal, still keeping with the 1-2-3 beat. After that, they throw it to another player by representing their animal on the next rhythm beat.

Continue playing the beat with your hands by slapping your thighs twice and then clapping on the third beat, if you don’t need to represent your animal. Everyone has to keep the beat going, regardless of whether or not you are representing yours or another person’s animal. Keep in mind that just because the beat is 1-2-3 that doesn’t mean it has to stay at the same speed. Players can, and probably will, speed up the beat, making it tougher on everyone to stay focused.

Failure to represent your animal or messing up a hand gesture means that the player is out of the group. The circle must remain close, so move chairs or positions when it is necessary. The last player remaining wins the game.

Signs Game

Have everyone sit in a large circle, facing inward towards each other. Every player seated now must choose a “sign,” some kind of movement or motion that is unique to them. A sign must be easily detectable by others, although not too obvious to attract a lot of attention. Good examples of possible signs could include:

- waving your right hand
- squeezing your nose
- patting the top of your head twice
- sticking your tongue out
- making two thumbs up

Once everyone has created a sign, he or she announces and demonstrates their sign to the rest of the group. You’re now ready to play the game.

Playing the Signs Game

The goal of *Signs* is to be stealthy and to try to keep passing signs to other players as long as possible, without getting caught by a guesser who must stand in the center of the circle. The guesser tries to figure out where the sign is within the group and catch the person who currently has the sign at that specific moment.

To play a round, choose one person to be the “guesser.” Have the guesser close his or her eyes. Have the group silently choose one person in the circle (randomly) to be the person who begins with the sign.

Player 1 (who starts with the sign) now “has” the sign, and his/her goal is to “pass” the sign on to any other player without being caught by the person in the middle. To pass the sign, Player 1 must perform his own sign and then any other player’s sign. For example, if Player 1’s sign is make two thumbs up, and if Player 3’s sign is to pat the top of his head, Player 1 must make two thumbs up and then pat the top of his head in order to “pass” the sign onto Player 3. Player 1 is now safe and Player 3 has the sign. Player 3 now must do his or her symbol and then someone else’s symbol in order to continue “passing” the sign. The process continues, while the guesser (the person in the center) attempts to catch a player who currently has the sign. The guesser constantly looks all around the circle, trying to detect any movements. The guesser is allowed 3 guesses. To guess, he or she points to one player and asks, “Do you have the sign?” If he or she is correct, then the guesser wins the round and the person caught with the sign becomes the new guesser. If he or she makes three wrong guesses, then the guesser loses the round.

Killer Wink

Have everyone stand in a circle. One person must be the moderator (who doesn’t play that round). All players close their eyes and the moderator selects one person by tapping his or her shoulder. This person is now the secret “killer,” or “mystery mingler.”

Now, have all of the group mingle around and through the general space, making sure to look at each other in the eyes. The mystery killer is in the mix and try to wink at other players without being detected by others. If a person is winked at, they must continue mingling for a few seconds and soon “die” a horrible death right there in the general space. Play continues. If a live mingler thinks they know who the killer is, they stop and proclaim “I accuse!” At that point everyone else stops and if one other person wants to accuse, they say the same thing, then both accusers point at their perceived killer. If both accusers point at the same person, and they are the killer; the game is over, if the point to different people, both accusers are dead; if they point to the same person who isn’t the killer, they are both dead as well. The game continues until the killer is identified or there is only one mingler left.

There is NO TALKING or communicating of any kind allowed! This game works with many age levels and can be lots of fun, especially if players act out funny deaths.

Human Knot Game:

This game is versatile in that multiple group sizes can play. Form groups of about 10 people each. Have each group standing, facing towards each other, in a circle. Each person should be standing shoulder to shoulder. First, instruct everyone to lift their left hand and reach across to take the hand of someone standing across the circle. Next, have everyone lift their right and reach across to take the hand of another person standing across the circle. Make sure that no one is holding hands with someone standing directly beside the person.

How to Play the Human Knot Game

To play, the groups must communicate and figure out how to untangle the knot (forming a circle of people) without ever letting go of any hands. If you wish, this icebreaker can be played competitively, in which the facilitator says “Ready.. Set.. Go!” and has all the groups race to become the first group to finish. If any group member lets go of a hand (breaks the chain), then the group must start from the beginning, or you could impose a penalty/punishment for that person (e.g. wear a blindfold).

This game typically takes 15-30 minutes to complete. You can impose a time limit if you wish to make the game more challenging. When you are done with the Human Knot activity, you can ask some debrief questions if you wish, such as “How well did you group work together? What strategies did your group adopt? How did it feel to solve the game?” etc.

Variations

To increase the difficulty level, you can either (1) blindfold some of the players or (2) require that the game be played silently (no talking).

<http://www.group-games.com/games-by-type/>