

3. Tell them to rip off the lower right corner.
4. Open their eyes and unfold the paper.

PROCESSING:

Papers will look different. Discuss with participants how this illustrates how we are different and alike. Our perceptions and understanding of the same instructions might be different.

How does this affect our group? What did you learn from this activity?

**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME Deb Ivey, 4-H Youth Development Agent County Iowa

Name of Activity: Teamwork Olympics

Time Needed: 20-30 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit—at least five for one team

Materials Needed:

One or more Large metal washers with 5-7 strings tied to it. The strings should be 2-3 feet in length.

Tennis balls or other firm ball.

Cups, cans or bowls that will hold the balls.

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Tie strings to washers randomly around the washer.

Instructions:

1. Form the participants into teams of 5 –7 each.
2. Give a washer with strings to a team and instruct each team member to hang onto a string.
3. Place a ball on the washer. If the ball falls off the washer they must start again.
4. The team must work together to place the ball in the cup, can, etc. on the other side of the room.
5. One or more teams can do this at the same time as a timed event or one team at a

time with observers. Teams can try again if they want.

6. Observers should watch for communication, leadership, and team work skills.

PROCESSING:

How did communication change within the group? Did anyone assume leadership? How did the team work together? What does this say to our group? What did you learn from this activity? How can you apply this to other situations?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

County

Name of Activity: Laps

Time Needed: 10-20 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

One chair for each participant.
Ideas for statements

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Arrange the chairs in a circle

Instructions:

1. Each participant should sit in a chair.
2. One person will make a statement telling how many chairs to move if this statement is true of you.
3. Participants should move to the assigned chair. If someone is in the chair, the person should sit on their lap.
4. If the person with people on their lap has to move, everyone on the chair moves to the next chair.
5. This continues until the group loses its enthusiasm for it.
6. This activity is a good get-acquainted activity. It also is a 'recharger' for a group that has been sitting or working for a long time.

7. Example statements:

Move two chairs to the left if you are wearing blue jeans.

Move three chairs to the right if you have blonde hair.

Move seven chairs to the right if you have a drivers' license.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

County

Name of Activity: I like people who

Time Needed: 10-20 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

One chair for each participant minus one.

Ideas for statements

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Arrange the chairs in a circle

Instructions:

1. Each participant should sit in a chair.
2. One person stands in the center and makes a statement telling participants to move if this statement is true of you. "I like people who wear blue jeans." If the participant is wearing blue jeans, he/she should move.
3. Participants should move to the assigned chair. They cannot move to the chair next to them. The person without a chair stand in the center and makes the next statement.
4. This continues until the group loses its enthusiasm for it.
5. This activity is a good get-acquainted activity. It also is a 'recharger' for a group that has been sitting or working for a long time.

6. Example statements:

I like people who are wearing blue jeans.

I like people who have blonde hair.

I like people who have cats.

I like people who are in the sheep 4-H project.
SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Matt Bandyk

County Iowa

Name of Activity: Tennis Ball Get-acquainted

Time Needed: 10-20 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

Two or three of the same type of ball and one different ball. (Tennis balls and a smaller or larger rubber ball or a squish ball.)

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): None

Instructions:

1. Participants should get in circle and take turns introducing themselves.
2. After everyone is introduced, one person begins to throw one of the tennis balls to another in the circle. That person throws it to another, etc.
3. The leader then introduces another tennis ball into the circle. The ball should be thrown in the same pattern around the circle (same person it was thrown to in #2).
4. A third tennis ball can be added if the group is large. Instruct the group to try and go faster without dropping the ball.
5. When the group is throwing and catching without a problem, add the different textured or shaped ball to the circle. Participants will have a hard time catching and throwing this "different" ball.
6. Let the group continue until they tire of the activity or the balls are all dropped.

PROCESSING:

Discuss how the "different" ball caused problems. How did communication and cooperation change within the group? How did you accommodate the different ball? What does this say to our group? What did you learn from this activity? How can you apply this to other situations?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Deb Ivey, 4-H Youth Development Agent County

Iowa

Name of Activity: Grouping Ideas

Time Needed: 5 - 15 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed: None

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): None

Instructions:

1. Ask people to stand or raise their hand according the following categories. Or divide people into work groups using one or more of these categories.

Same color eyes

Tallest / shortest together

Single/Married

Oldest/middle/youngest/ only child

Where are you from?—Midwest, West,
Northeast, etc.

Which part of Wisconsin did you grow up in?

Born before 1960 (or ?) / After _____

Tennis shoes

Color of shoes

Color of shoe laces

Slacks or skirts or blue jeans

4-H member or leader or not

Swimmer/non-swimmer

Drivers' License or No Drivers' License

Discuss the activity. Did anyone learn anything interesting or surprising about someone? Other unusual discoveries? Did you find you had anything in common with others? What differences did you discover? What does this tell you about working with others in a group?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM

ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Deb Ivey, 4-H Youth Development Agent

County Iowa

Name of Activity: Ice breaker/Get-Acquainted pictures

Time Needed: 20-45 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

One piece of flip chart paper for each participant
Markers, pens, pencils, crayons

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): None

Instructions:

1. Give each participant a full sheet of flip chart paper. Have markers and writing utensils spread throughout the room.
2. Tell participants to imagine the paper divided in to four quadrants. They should write their name and county or 4-H Club in the middle of the page.
3. Instruct participants to write and draw their responses to the statements in the appropriate quadrant.
4. After five or ten minutes, ask the participants to tape their sheet to themselves –“wear the sheet.” Participants then mill about the room visiting with the other participants.
5. After ten to twenty minutes, ask participants to take their seats. Discuss the experience. Did you get to meet anyone new? What did you learn that is interesting or unusual about someone? What did you have in common with others? What was different about others?

Favorite Sport or Activity

4-H CLUB

Favorite 4-H Project

Best Place You Have Visited

NAME
COUNTY OR

Favorite Season

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Kim Stoeffler

County Grant

Name of Activity: Team Body Spelling

Time Needed: As much as needed

Number of Players: Minimum of 7 people – 2 teams of 3 each and 1 judge

Materials Needed:

None

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Decide on what you are spelling (examples: alphabet, 4-H Leadership Team)

Instructions:

1. Divide into two teams. Decide on 1 or 2 judges.
2. Three people at a time form the first letter with their bodies on the floor. (example: 4-H Leadership Team, first 3 people form a 4)
3. Once accepted by judge(s), the 3 must run back to team, and next 3 leave to form the next letter.
4. The winner is the team that finishes the word(s) first and sits down.

PROCESSING:

This game helps form cooperation and communication skills.

It can get loud, but is very fun.

How did the group worked together? Did anyone assume leadership? How did the group communicate?

The facilitator can expand the comments to discuss communication styles, leadership, group dynamics, and team building.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Kelli Kluge

County Sauk

Name of Activity: Duct Tape Coin Purses

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

Duct tape and scissors

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Buying the tape.

Instructions:

Other Information Needed:

**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME Jessica Karis

County Rock

Name of Activity: Blindfolded Leader Game

Time Needed: 5 minutes

Number of Players: Large Group

Materials Needed:

None

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): None

Instructions:

Everyone gets in a line and puts their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them.

Everyone except the first person in line closes their eyes. The first person who is the leader leads everyone around, and the group has to communicate and work as a team to avoid obstacles.

PROCESSING:

Did the group work together?

How did the group communicate?

What does this say about our group's teamwork or communication skills?

What did you learn from this activity?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

County

Name of Activity: Balloon Towers

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Number of Players: Groups of 6-8 each

Materials Needed:

100 balloons and 1 roll of masking tape per group

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Total group divides into smaller groups of 6-8 people.
2. Each group is given 100 balloons and a roll of masking tape.
3. The goal is to make a free standing tower (ie cannot attach off of ceiling, prop against wall, etc.)

PROCESSING:

Towers will look different. Discuss with participants how this illustrates how we are different and alike. Our perceptions and understanding of the same instructions might be different.

Did this become a competition? Was that part of the instructions? How did your group communicate? Did anyone assume leadership? Did your group work together or individually?

How does this affect our group? What did you learn from this activity?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

County

Name of Activity: The Puzzle

Time Needed: 30 minutes

Number of Players: Minimum 8-12

Materials Needed:

Sheet (large) of thin plastic wood, cut into puzzle pieces (8)

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Blindfold participants (as many as there are puzzle pieces).
2. Tell any additional participants that they are to observe.
3. Tell participants that the object of this exercise is to assemble a floor puzzle.
4. Give paper and pencil to observers so they can take notes.
5. Distribute puzzle pieces to blindfolded participants.
6. After puzzle is completed, have participants share their experiences. Ask observers to add their comments.

PROCESSING:

How did the group communicate? Did anyone assume leadership? Was anyone not involved? How did the blindfolds affect the group working together?

If desired, have the group put the puzzle together again after this discussion.

Did the group work differently this time? Was everyone involved? Did the puzzle get solved quicker?

How does this affect our group? What did you learn from this activity?

**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME

County

Name of Activity: See, Run, Do

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Number of Players: 4-30

Materials Needed:

A completed poster
Poster board
Scissors
Glue
Construction paper
Markers/crayons/pencils

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Decide on the concept you want to teach a group (example: 4-H fundraising, communication)

Make a poster that represents that concept.

Bring all supplies needed to reconstruct the poster and enough for teams of 4-5.

Instructions:

1. Post the poster outside the room where no one can see it.
2. Divide the group into teams of 4-5
3. One person is going to be "seer" – only this person can see the poster and s/he must tell the runner what he sees.
4. Another person is the "runner" – this person must run from the worktable to the seer. 5. The rest of the team are the "doers" – they must reconstruct the poster as the runner tells them, based on what the seer tells the runner.

The runner can run as many times as necessary to get the correct information.

Give a time limit for the project.

This activity can work for all age levels; how you structure your poster may depend on the age group involved.

At the end, see which group did the best job reconstructing the original poster.

PROCESSING:

Debrief with the group to explain/discuss the concept you are trying to teach and how each piece of the poster relates to the concept.

What communication skills were used in this activity? What team work skills were important? Did the group organize before they started? How did the seer, runner and doers work together and/or communicate?

What did you learn from this activity?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

County

Name of Activity: Webs for all Occasions

Time Needed: 10 minutes

Number of Players: 8-20

Materials Needed:

One large ball of yarn, wound into a ball from the skein

Inflated balloons or an 8-10 inch rubber ball

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Adapt the activity to fit your teaching objectives. Plan what questions to ask or the information you will request. Encourage each person to make their answer different from other answers.

Examples of information for participants to share:

For Introductions – ask participants to tell the group their name and one thing about themselves that others in the group will not know.

For Teambuilding – ask participants to tell the group one reason they value being part of this group.

For Networking – ask participants to share information about the group they represent and services/programs provided.

For Leadership Training – ask participants to identify one characteristic of a good leader.

For Camp Counselor Training – ask counselors to list important things campers need from counselors.

2. Ask participants to stand close together in a circle.

3. Give the ball of yarn to one participant and ask he/she to tell the group the information requested and then toss the ball of yarn to another participant across the circle while holding onto the end of the yarn.

4. The next participant catches the ball of yarn, responds with their information, holds the yarn while tossing the ball of yarn on to another person across the circle.

5. Depending on time and your teaching objective, another layer can be added to the “web” by asking for another piece of information from each participant.

6. Continue until all participants in the circle have responded. Discuss the purpose of the web (ie: the power of many people working together, communities/clubs can work effectively when everyone does their part).

PROCESSING:

Toss a balloon or ball onto the web and continue to illustrate your teaching point. The ball can represent a child, a 4-H leader, a project or a team. Ask the group to tighten the web to provide better support (everyone is needed to make it work). Ask the group to move the ball around the web in a circle, passing it to each person in the group (communication is important to get the job done). Use several balls or balloons and ask the group how a community can make the web of support stronger for young people.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Kayla Blackburn

County Grant

Name of Activity: T-shirt Switch

Time Needed: About 10 minutes

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

An extra T-shirt for everyone playing

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Give everyone one t-shirt to wear over top of their original.
2. Split into equal groups of more than 3 or 4.
3. Have one person from each group go about 20 ft. away. Then have the first person in the line run down to the player on the other end and both take off their t-shirt and switch shirts. The shirt must be on right side out and on fully before the other person runs back and takes off the shirt and switches with the next person in line.
4. This continues until everybody gets their original shirt back.

**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME Deb Ivey

County Iowa

Name of Activity: What's Your Value?

Time Needed:

Number of Players: About 15

Materials Needed:

A deck of playing cards

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Explain to participants that they will be given a card and they should not look at it. When instructed to do so, the card should be held to their forehead so others can see what card it is. With the cards on their foreheads, each participant should treat everyone else "according to the value of the card".
2. Let the group interact for about a minute and then ask them to line up according to how they feel.
3. The group will probably end up with the face cards and aces at one end and the lower numbered cards at the other end.

PROCESSING:

Discuss with the participants why they stood where they did? How were they treated? What gave you hints about your card value? Pick out individuals and ask why they stood where they did? Pick someone with a face card, someone in the middle and someone with a 1, 2, or 3.

Ask if they have ever experienced this activity before? Explain that this happens all the time – in school, at work, in communities, in groups, etc. How are “values” of people determined? What do we each need to do about this?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Deb Ivey

County Iowa

Name of Activity: Introducing Developmental Assets

Time Needed:

Number of Players:

Materials Needed:

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Print the name of an asset on balloons.

Instructions:

1. Blow up the balloon and hand one out to each participant. Instruct them to find others with the same asset.
2. Ask each participant to share with their group what they thought when they saw the words on their balloon. What does this mean for youth or adults in our community? How can we help youth build this asset? How can we support this asset?
3. Have the group make an ASSET BRIDGE with the balloons. Connect all the balloons together in the shape of a rainbow or bridge and display throughout the event.
4. Follow with activities or more discussion on asset building.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Rachael Herschleb

County Columbia

Name of Activity: Evolution

Time Needed:

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed:

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. This game is based around Rock/Paper/Scissors (R-P-S).
2. Everyone starts out as an egg. Meet up with another egg and play R-P-S, winner evolves to a chicken and the loser stays an egg. Game continues the same with R-P-S being played between two members of the same species, the winner evolving and the loser devolving one stage.
 3. Egg – squat around on the floor saying “egg”.
 - Chicken – stand upright and flap your “wings” like a chicken.
 - Dinosaur – use your arms to make a big dinosaur mouth, moving them up and down.
 - Superhero – put one arm up like you’re flying away
 - Supreme being – cross your arms like you’re all “high and mighty”.
4. One a “supreme being” beats another “supreme being”, they must play the leader of the game, you, and if they beat you they are out of the game, if they lose, they must beat another “supreme being” before challenging you again. If a “supreme being” loses to a staff member, they cannot evolve any lower, even if they lose to another “supreme being”.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Building Community Toolkit, page 207

Name of Activity: Name Tag/Pairs Games

Time Needed:

Number of Players: No Limit

Materials Needed: Names tags and names of participants

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Print names on nametags or prepare signs of famous pairs.

Instructions:

These games work when you have a large group of people who do not know each other well.

Possibilities:

- Put a symbol or color on each person. Participants have to find their match and introduce themselves.
- In small letters, put the name of someone else in the room at the bottom of each nametag. Everyone has to find the person whose name is written on their tag.
- Famous Pairs: As people walk in, put the name of one part of a famous pair (i.e. Kermit and Miss Piggy) on their back. Each participant has to ask yes or no questions to find out who they are, and then they have to find their pair. When they find their pair, they reveal who they really are to the other half of their pair.

PROCESSING:

Discuss how differently people tried to find their pair. Did they yell? Did they quietly move about? Did they stay in one place? What does this mean when we work with groups? How do we accommodate different communication styles?

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME

Name of Activity: Human Bingo

Time Needed:

Number of Players: The more the better. Works best with at least 24

Materials Needed: Bingo cards with various characteristics/sayings in squares.
Pencils/pens, prizes if desired

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): Prepare Bingo cards (see example on next page) with skills, names, birthdays, individual gifts or talents, etc.

Instructions:

Distribute bingo cards as participants arrive at a meeting. Instruct them to get signatures on each square from someone in the group who fits the description listed. Allow this to continue until the meeting starts.

Possibilities:

- Call out names as part of get-acquainted or at the end as a wrap up. Give prizes to the first bingo.
- Discuss the bingo cards using these questions:
 1. Which squares were easy and difficult to get?
 2. Did anything surprise you?
 3. What new talents/assets did you discover among our group?
 4. What does this say about our club? our group?

PROCESSING:

Discuss how differently people tried to find their pair. Did they yell? Did they quietly move about? Did they stay in one place? etc. Relate this to differences in communication styles.

FIND SOMEONE WHO

Thinks the voting age should be

lowered
Is in the Dairy project

Was born in March
Likes to

wear blue jeans
Likes math

organizer or calendar
Is the president of a team club
Has a website Has been a member of a successful team
Knows how to snow board

Uses an

Knows how to use "powerpoint"

Can sing a solo
Plays basketball

Has a driver's license
Likes to roller skate

Is in the photography project
Can speak a foreign language

Works at Lands' End
Likes taking care of children

Was born in this county

Has bowled more than 150

Is a 4-H member

Is secretary of a 4-H Club

Plays a musical instrument

people

Likes to talk to
**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME from Steve Wagoner
Name of Activity: Just How Do You Throw A Frisbee

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Number of Players: 5 - 25

Materials Needed: Frisbee, newsprint pad and easel or dry erase board, markers, paper and writing utensils for participants

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

Purpose: Groups of 5-25 use a provided frisbee to verbalize and demonstrate skills used when throwing it to fellow group members.

1. Members work individually for 5 minutes, writing down skills they think they use to throw a frisbee. They then form a circle with fellow group members and begin throwing the frisbee. Then they verbally list skills noted and discovered through the throwing action.
2. A facilitator prompts the group members to be creative in their identification of skills used. The facilitator writes the identified skills on newsprint or a board as they are listed.

PROCESSING:

Discuss the broad array of skills needed in even the simplest of group activities. This might be related to the need for many different types of people in groups.

**SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002**

NAME from Ian Meeker
Name of Activity: Blind Square

Time Needed: 15 minutes

Number of Players: 10-15

Materials Needed: Bandanas and a pliable rope, 40-50 feet long

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time):

Instructions:

1. Blindfold 8-12 of the group members. Ask them to hold onto a rope. (The loose ends of the rope are tied together so it is a continuous loop.) Ask the other members to observe the blindfolded group as they do the activity
2. Explain the concept of consensus to the group.
3. Instruct the group holding the rope to make the best possible square they can. The rope cannot be put down until the group has reached consensus. (This will take about 5 minutes.)

PROCESSING:

How did the group reach consensus? Did everyone express an opinion? What communication styles were used? (You might highlight good and bad approaches to communication.) Did anyone feel like they had a good idea, but did not feel like they were being heard? How did this affect your "group" feelings?

Ask the observers to share their thoughts on how the group worked together and how they reached consensus?

The facilitator can expand the comments to discuss communication styles, leadership, group dynamics, and team building.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM
ACTIVITY/TEAM BUILDING IDEA 2002

NAME Building Bridges CD

County

Name of Activity: Toothpaste Activity

Time Needed: 15 – 20 minutes

Number of Players: No limit—should have at least 8 for two teams of 4

Materials Needed:

- Tube of toothpaste for each team of 4-6 people
- 8" by 10" piece of cardboard or poster board (one per team)
- Felt tip marking pen

Preparation Needed (Ahead of Time): None

Instructions:

1. Break groups into teams of 4-6 people
2. Give each group a piece of cardboard and a marking pen. Tell them they will have two minutes to think of one word that describes something they all have in common and to write that word on their piece of cardboard.
3. When time is up, give each group a tube of toothpaste. Tell them they have two more minutes to outline the word they have just written as creatively and neatly as possible using the toothpaste.
4. When time is up, make a few quick comments about how well the groups have followed directions; how creative they are, etc. Explain that the best part of this activity is about to begin because now the groups will have two minutes to figure out how to get the toothpaste back into the toothpaste tube. The team that can do it neatly with the least amount of toothpaste left on the outside will be the winner.
5. After two minutes, interrupt the groups and ask them if they have completed the task. If they ask for more time, tell them you can give them one more minute. If they ask for still more time, allow yourself to be persuaded, but let them know that's absolutely the most you can give them.
6. When time is up, interrupt and ask participants for some feedback about what happened in their groups (see processing questions that follow).

PROCESSING:

Ask the groups if they know what this activity was all about (teamwork, creativity, communication, cooperation, etc. are all acceptable answers, but the real answer is something else.)

Tell everyone that the real reason for doing this activity was to demonstrate that toothpaste can't be forced back into the toothpaste tube. And the same thing is true of the words we use when speaking. Once something is said, we can't get those words back again. That's why it is so important to think about what we're about to say before we say it.

TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISES FOR TEENS

THE PARTY

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Recognizing individual strengths of group members, understanding others, and group warm-up.

DESCRIPTION:

Teens write their strengths on small slips of paper, put them into balloons, and blow up the balloons. One by one the balloons are popped to reveal what each person brings to the party. As the group learns about the unique talents each person has to offer, the information is transferred onto a large white banner so people can see all of their strengths together.

The Party is a fun, low-risk icebreaker that helps set the tone for positive team dynamics. It's also a good activity to use if a group has been working together for some time and needs a refresher on what people can contribute and how the group can work well together. The simplicity of this activity allows it to be used with a wide range of ages, from older to younger teens, and it's fun for teen mentors to use when working with younger groups.

GOALS:

1. To identify how a new or existing team can work together.
2. To learn how individual members view themselves as part of the group.
3. To learn how to recognize strengths in order to get the most from every member of the group.

MATERIALS:

1. Large banner paper.
2. Markers.
3. Masking tape.
4. Medium-sized balloons, several per person.
5. Pens for each person.
6. Several slips of paper.
7. toothpicks for popping balloons.

PREPARATION:

On the banner paper, draw several balloons. Hang the banner on the wall in a location where it can be seen by all. Clear an area in the room where the group can sit in a circle with a space in the middle for a pile of balloons.

ACTIVITY:

Have teens to sit in a circle. Pass out pens, paper, and balloons to each person. Set up a scenario, something like this:

"You've all been invited to a party. It's like pot-luck, but instead of bringing food to share, you're bringing yourself and the strengths you believe you contribute to this group. For example, you may be a creative thinker, or very organized, or able to keep others

motivated. On the slips of paper, write down the strengths or talents that you bring to the party. Once you've written these down, carefully put them into your balloons, blow them up, tie them off, and put them in the circle."

Allow 5-10 minutes for the teens to complete this activity. When everyone is done, designate one person to pick a balloon from the pile, pop it, and read the slip(s) inside. After a slip has been read, ask the author to step forward, share a little more, and then write his name and strength in a balloon on the banner paper. This person becomes the next to pop a balloon from the pile.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss how the group can use the information they've gained from hearing everyone share their strengths.

Consider discussion questions such as:

1. How can what you've learned from others be used in the future to improve the way this group works together?
2. Are there any people who you think overlooked one of their strengths? Who? What is the strength?
3. How can you make the most of the strengths and talents of group members and still allow everyone a chance to try new things or use new talents?
4. Imagine the group was going to assign official jobs for each member. Based on the strengths people shared, what roles do you think people should have?
5. Is the group missing any strengths? What are they and how can you build them? What if you can't? How can you overcome not having certain strengths or prevent the lack of them from becoming a group weakness?

WRAP-UP:

If possible, keep the banner hanging in the room for further meetings. It can remind members of everyone's strengths and guide them when trying to determine who is the best person for a team task. If space doesn't allow, have a teen volunteer to type a summary sheet of the strengths people bring to the party and give everybody copies to keep in their journals or notebooks.

TALENT CHAIRS

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Recognizing individual strengths of group members, understanding others, and group dynamics.

DESCRIPTION:

In a fashion similar to 'Musical Chairs,' teens discover talents and qualities of others. The leader, who doesn't have a chair, calls out a quality using a formatted statement. All participants who possess this quality must get up from their chairs and find a different chair to sit in. The leader will find a chair to sit in during this exchange. Instead of losing their place in the group, the person who doesn't get a chair becomes the next group leader and determines the next quality to be discovered.

This simple exercise is a fun way to discover each other without putting anybody on the spot. With an open time frame, it can be used as a short activity or it can be used as a lead-in to a more in-depth discovery exercise.

GOALS:

1. To discover each other's strengths and qualities.
2. To identify similarities and differences among group members.
3. To foster inclusiveness through discovery of individual strengths and those of the team as a whole.

MATERIALS:

1. Chairs for each participant.
2. A list of starter questions.

PREPARATION:

Clear the room and place enough chairs in a large circle for all the participants, less one chair. Determine who will be the first leader.

Explain the exercise and its goals to the participants. Read some sample statements (refer to the end of this exercise description) to give some seed for thought. Encourage creativity and finding qualities that are unknown as to whether they apply to anybody in the group.

BACKGROUND

At first, teens may choose qualities that they are aware of in those they are close to. As the exercise proceeds, if it becomes evident that certain members have not left their chairs, the leader may attempt to find a quality that a 'left out' member has so they can change chairs as well. They will see that the exercise is more fun when there is more

activity. As a coach, you can help foster this compassion for others if, after a period of time, it has not been discovered by the group.

Some of the qualities searched for can be open to interpretation, allowing the seated participants to determine whether they fit in that group or not. Do not discourage this.

ACTIVITY:

Have the first leader stand in the center of the circle while all the others are in the chairs. The leader begins a statement by saying "Stand up and find another chair if you...." and finishes the statement with an attribute that may apply to the other participants.

Everybody who possesses that attribute will stand and find another chair that is not immediately next to them, unless that is the only other chair available. The leader claims one of the empty chairs and one person will be left standing. This person is the new leader and repeats the process.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss the discovery process and how the group can use the information they've gained about themselves. Use questions such as:

1. What were some surprises you found out about others?
2. Were you surprised by the ways in which you were similar to some other people in the group? Explain.
3. How can you use what you've learned about each other in future group activities?
4. When you were the leader, did you find yourself trying to find attributes to include certain people in the circle? Did you try to find attributes to exclude certain people in the circle? Why was that?
5. When you were not the leader, were you looking for ways to be included in the group that had to find a new chair? Why? Did you try to find ways not to be included in that group? Why?

WRAP-UP:

Ask teens to reflect on the different ways they can learn about others and benefit from the strengths of others through teamwork. Encourage them to write in their journals about the discovery process and how they felt about other group members both before and after this exercise.

SAMPLE STATEMENTS:

1. Stand up and find another chair if you have red hair.
2. Stand up and find another chair if you are wearing white socks.
3. Stand up and find another chair if you've been to another country.
4. Stand up and find another chair if your grandparents live in this state.
5. Stand up and find another chair if you have more than three pets.
6. Stand up and find another chair if you like to wear shorts.

TREASURE HUNT

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Qualities of leadership, communication skills, teamwork and group dynamics, and getting to know others.

DESCRIPTION:

Different from a scavenger hunt, this activity has teens working with one another to uncover certain clues about their team. As you ask a series of questions, teens share information about themselves and find out more about others, earning points for their responses. The activity is a good icebreaker and also can be used later on to reconnect participants with members of their group.

GOALS:

1. To share one's abilities and skills with others.
2. To gain awareness of what others bring to the group.
3. To work together to achieve a goal through communication and low-risk self disclosure.

MATERIALS:

1. "Treasure Hunt Questions" handout.
2. "Treasure Hunt Score Sheet", one copy for each team.
3. Pen or pencil for each team.

PREPARATION:

Read the "Treasure Hunt Questions" and modify or add questions as needed, but use about 15 questions. Design a "Treasure Hunt Score Sheet" make a copy for each team. Determine how the teens will be broken up into groups. It is best to have all teams of the same size, and around four or five members each.

ACTIVITY:

Divide the group into teams of four or five and pass out a score sheet and pencil to each team. Ask teams to identify a scorekeeper who will be responsible for tallying the points throughout the activity.

Each team will go on a 'Treasure Hunt' for particular qualities in people on their team. Explain that the facilitator will read a series of questions and that for each question, the team earns one point for each member who fits what the question asks. Encourage them to be honest in answering each question. The scorekeeper needs to tally the score for each question and then tally the overall score for all of them.

Work through each question slowly. Give the teams time to talk about the question because they'll discover new things about the questions and new things about the others on their team. Move on only when you think all teams have tallied their scores for a given question. Plan to spend about 25-30 minutes asking the questions and allowing teams time to discuss them. When you've read all of your selected questions, ask the teams to calculate their overall score.

DISCUSSION:

Determine and acknowledge which team that had the highest overall score. Take 10- 15 minutes to discuss the activity and draw out participants' ideas about incorporating what they learned in their small teams into the cooperative workings of the large group. Allow the teams to sit together. Consider discussion questions such as: 1. What did you learn about others on your team? How diverse is your team? Were

there any individuals who responded to all the same questions? Were there any questions where everyone received a point? Where your team received no points? Explain.

2. What questions caused the greatest discussion within your team? Explain. 3. Which questions was the most challenging for your team? Which was the easiest to answer? What can this group do with the information you learned from this activity? 4. What was the most interesting response in your group? Explain. 5. What questions would you add to this treasure hunt?

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

1. Who is involved in a club, activity, or a sports team or works in addition to going to school?
2. Who has spent time volunteering in the community?
3. Who has spoken up for a cause or an issue even when others didn't support your opinion?
4. Who is from a different cultural background? (teams decide what 'different' means.)
5. Who currently mentors someone, has mentored others, or is being mentored by someone?
6. Who has confronted someone who has made an inappropriate comment?
7. Who can correctly name the capital of our state?
8. Who has chosen not to go along with friends even when they were pressuring you?
9. Who speaks more than one language?
10. Who has attended a teen workshop or leadership conference?
11. Who has ever been nominated or has run for a position to lead others, including for a sports team, a scout or youth group, a school club, or another organized group?
12. Who has written a letter to the editor or to a member of Congress, mayor, school principal, or another authority?
13. Who has stood up to a bully, either for yourself or on behalf of someone else?
14. Who has been involved in a leadership-specific group such as a student council, youth leader program, counselor-in-training program, political campaign team, youth mentoring team, or another group that means a lot to you?

TREASURE HUNT SCORE SHEET:

Suggestion: Use three columns: One for the question number and a brief description of the question, a second for the points gained in that question, and a third for the running total.

SNOWFLAKES

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Communication skills and listening skills.

DESCRIPTION:

This quick exercise highlights the importance of clear communication and active listening in order to accurately express ideas and instructions or to receive messages from others.

After hearing the same directions for creating a simple paper snowflake, teens discover that the individual results can vary considerably. Through discussion, they discover that people interpret things differently, and understanding others relies on this concept.

GOALS:

1. To identify ways that messages can be misinterpreted.
2. To strengthen communication skills.
3. To recognize use of different communication and listening techniques.

MATERIALS:

1. One 8.5 x 11 paper per person.

ACTIVITY:

Give one sheet of paper to each person. Explain that you want them to follow the directions you are about to give without asking questions of you or their neighbors. They will work individually. Give the following directions quickly, without clarifying exactly what you mean:

1. Fold the paper in half and tear off a top corner.
2. Fold it in half again and tear off the top corner.
3. Fold it in half again and tear off the left corner.
4. Rotate the paper to the right three times and tear off the bottom corner.
5. Fold it in half again and tear off the middle piece.

Instruct the group to unfold their papers and compare their snowflakes with those around them. They will find that their snowflakes may or may not match others.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss the importance of communicating clearly, as illustrated by the different ways participants interpreted the same instructions. Use questions such as: 1. Why is it that even though everyone received the same directions, not everyone had

the same outcome? What would have changed if you could have asked questions? 2. Have you ever told someone one thing only to have the person hear and do something different? What happened, and how did you deal with it?

3. If you are the leader of a group, what steps can you take to make sure that others clearly understand what you're trying to tell them?
4. How can you improve your communication skills when it becomes obvious that others are seeing things differently than you intended?

WRAP-UP:

If space allows, hang the snowflakes to remind teens of the importance of communicating clearly and of the different ways messages can be received. Also suggest that teens write in their journals about the importance of clear communication, perspective, and dialogue.

DIAGRAMS

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Communication skills, problem-solving, teamwork, and group dynamics.

DESCRIPTION:

This exercise emphasizes problem-solving via different methods of communication. Teens work in pairs, with one person guiding the other in an attempt to make a simple drawing. The pairs try to accomplish the goal in three different ways; twice with a limitation on how they communicate, and finally with as much back-and-forth conversation as necessary.

GOALS:

1. To learn to work as a team using limited resources and no verbal communication. 2. To clarify challenges that can arise even with an obvious group goal in mind. 3. To strengthen nonverbal communication skills.

MATERIALS:

1. Six pieces of letter-sized paper for each team.
2. Pens or pencils for each person.

PREPARATION:

Clear the floor of the room.

Divide the teens into pairs and have them choose who is A and who is B.

ACTIVITY:

Give each person three sheets of paper and have the pairs sit on the floor with their backs to each other. They should find a place with ample room so other teams won't interfere. The teams will work independently of each other and are to remain in this position throughout the process, each unable to see what the other is doing. Instruct partner A of each team to draw three simple line diagrams, one on each piece of paper. The drawings can be different. Give about three minutes for this activity.

In the first stage, partner B tries to correctly draw the same diagram by receiving instructions from partner A without being able to ask questions. Only partner A can speak. Partner B cannot speak or ask any questions. Allow five minutes for this stage.

In the second stage, partner B attempts to duplicate the second drawing, but this time is able to ask yes-or-no questions only. Again allow five minutes for this stage. In the third stage, the task is repeated with the final drawing, and the partners are able to talk freely. Allow five minutes again for this stage.

After all three stages, allow the partners to look together at each other's drawings. Bring the group together in a large group for a discussion on communication and what they learned.

DISCUSSION:

Take 10-15 minutes to discuss how the teams communicated and what they learned. Use questions such as:

1. Describe what it was like to be partner A or partner B. When you're part of a different team, which person do you most frequently feel like - A or B? How does this role work for you? What would you change?
2. Each time you attempted to accomplish the task, you needed to rely on different communication skills.

Explain what you dealt with as partners during each of the different attempts.

3. What happens to relationships in a group when one person has more information than others? How can members of a group deal with this type of situation?
4. Can you think of some real-life situations where you were trying to solve a problem but didn't have all the information you needed? What would have changed in that situation if you had received more information or if others had communicated more clearly with you while you tried to solve the problem?

5. What happens when one person in your group has a specific goal in mind but can't clearly communicate it to the group? How can your group improve the way information is communicated to everyone involved?

WRAP-UP:

Encourage teens to write in their journals about team communication and the obstacles, challenges, and insights they experienced or observed.

BUILDING MODELS

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Teamwork, group dynamics, communication skills, and achieving a stated goal.

DESCRIPTION:

While reinforcing the process of teamwork to reach a common goal, this exercise utilizes discussion of communication and teamwork to learn about the importance of each person's role.

Teens are divided into groups of three who work together in two phases. First, each team designs and creates a structure without knowing they are building it for another team to duplicate. In the second phase the teams attempt to duplicate the design of another team while each member plays an assigned role.

GOALS:

1. To learn to work as a team using specific resources and instructions.
2. To experience challenges that can arise even with an obvious group goal.
3. To strengthen communication and team-work skills.

MATERIALS:

1. Identical bags of simple building materials such as ball-and-sticks, toothpicks and marshmallows, or Legos. Assure that each bag has the same number of each color and size. Each bag should contain 60-80 pieces. Prepare two bags per team.
2. For each team, a non-transparent box large enough to contain an individual structure.
3. Ample room for the teams to work remotely from one another.

PREPARATION:

Divide the group into an even number of teams. A team size of three works best, however teams of four can be used. Attempt to divide them such that pairs of teams are of equal size. (For example, have six teams of three and two teams of four.) Do not make teams smaller than three.

Arrange the room so that teams can work remotely from each other. Place a row of chairs (one for each team) at a front table that is large enough to hold all of the boxes.

BACKGROUND:

When teams begin this project they tend to build with creativity and not malice. They don't know another team will need to duplicate their structure, and so they focus on creating a unique and interesting structure. While they usually start with an attitude of competition, teens soon discover that their success won't be measured by beating the others but will depend on their work as a group to achieve a goal. The activity is most effective when allowing these discoveries to play out naturally.

ACTIVITY:

Give each team one bag of materials and one box. Instruct them to build any kind of structure they wish without modifying the pieces. (For example, they cannot bend or break toothpicks.) Encourage creativity. Give them five minutes to complete their structures. Remind them to keep their structures away from the view of the other teams.

After five minutes, have each team put their structure into their box. Instruct the teams to assign roles to their members as Explainer, Messenger, or Builder. If there are four members to a team, two can be Messengers. The teams must make these assignments before proceeding.

The Explainer from each team will carry their team's box to the front table and place it at one of the chairs. The

Explainers are then to choose a different box to sit in front of. You can choose how to accomplish this, however they should not be able to choose based on the structure in the box. They may have to do this with their backs to the table if the boxes do not have covers.

Give each Builder another bag of materials. The Builder's job is to build a new structure identical to the model their Explainer has selected. They will do this with the information that the Messenger brings to them. The Explainer must tell the Messenger what the design looks like, including the color of the pieces. These are the rules:

1. Only the Explainer can view the model; not the Messenger or the Builder.
2. Only the Builder can touch the new structure or the raw materials.
3. Only the Messenger can speak to the Explainer or the Builder.
4. The Builder can ask the Messenger questions but cannot speak to the Explainer.
5. Messengers can keep going back and forth as much as necessary.

If there are two Messengers on a team, they must take turns going to the Explainer, and one cannot go to the Explainer until the other has completed communication with the Builder (no overlap of Messenger activities). The Messengers cannot speak to each other and once a Messenger has started communication with the Builder, the other can no longer communicate with the Builder until he/she visits the Explainer again. As an alternative, if you have two Messengers on every team, they should trade places between the Explainer and Builder simultaneously. This way, each cannot benefit from hearing the conversations of the other.

For an additional challenge, set a rule that the Messenger can't see what the Builder is building until the end. If you apply this rule, the Messenger must provide information from the Explainer without being able to point to or correct the Builder. If choosing to add this rule, state it now.

After an opportunity for questions, give the teams ten minutes to complete this phase, then have all three members from each team to get together with both structures to see how well they completed the task.

DISCUSSION:

While every team had the same goal, it's likely that each worked very differently together. Take 10-15 minutes to discuss how the teams worked together and what they experienced and learned about communication. Use questions such as:

1. After building your structures the first time, what was your reaction when you realized what you would do next?
2. Describe what it was like to be the Explainer, the Messenger, or the Builder. Which role do you think was the most challenging? Why?
3. If this had been an exceptionally important task involving communication, about how well would your team have done? What would need to change for your team to be more effective as communicators?
4. Was there any time during this activity when you wanted to cheat, maybe by peeking at the model? Why did or didn't you do this? (Relate this to real-life situations where people are given clear instructions on what is or isn't acceptable in the process of completing a task.)
5. In what ways does this activity relate to how rumors and gossip spread? Were there times when you found yourself doubting the information being communicated to you? If it were a rumor going around, how would you have responded?

WRAP-UP:

Ask teens to observe the specific roles they play in their circle of friends or in other groups to which they belong. Remind them to look at interconnectedness and communication among people in different roles and how groups have successfully established those roles. Encourage teens to write in their journals about accomplishing group goals, communicating, and working as a team while restricted to specific rules and roles.

TRAVELING TEAMS

TARGET CONCEPTS:

Teamwork and group dynamics, communication skills, and building trust.

DESCRIPTION:

Working as a team and building trust within that team go hand in hand. Best done in a large room or outside, this exercise requires teens to rely on others to guide them through an obstacle course. Working in teams of three, teens take turns being a blindfolded "Traveler" who is guided through the course by the other two teammates while building a story. Be aware that blindfolded participants generally find themselves outside their comfort zone.

GOALS:

1. To build teamwork skills that transfer from small groups to large groups.
2. To strengthen communication skills.
3. To establish a sense of trust and recognize how to continue building trust as a group.

MATERIALS:

1. Bandannas other material to be used as blindfolds, one for each team.
2. Objects for building an obstacle course such as chairs, desks, hula hoops, balls, collapsible tunnels, yarn or string, etc.

PREPARATION:

In an open area, set up a relatively easy obstacle course. Provide challenge while allowing small groups to get through the course without feeling overwhelmed or intimidated. Create areas that can be identified as the walking path, free of impediments. Allow space between obstacles. If outdoors, use a location where participation can be uninhibited and the teens won't be self-conscious that others might be watching.

BACKGROUND:

Trust-building activities are important to incorporate into group experiences, whether the group has met a few times or has been together for awhile. By their nature, such exercises call on group members to accept and face personal challenges. Because this exercise involves the use of blindfolds, an experience that some teens may be uncomfortable with, you should allow teens to participate in the blindfolded portion by choice. A concept that can help you facilitate this is "Challenge by Choice."

Challenge by Choice (CbC) is an approach to facilitated learning endorsed by Project Adventure, an education and training organization known for its innovative experiential education approach. CbC encourages individuals to set activity goals that offer the right degree of personal challenge to improve skills and contribute to the group, rather than setting goals that are too easy or difficult. The level of challenge depends on the individual. An example for this activity is that a teen who is anxious about wearing a blindfold. In this case, offer to allow him/her to wear the blindfold through only half of the course, with agreement from the team that it can be removed any time after that.

Some teens may be too uncomfortable taking personal risks to engage fully in the exercise. With this in mind, explain CbC to the group and gain acceptance of CbC from all group members. When you acknowledge their hesitancy ahead of time, teens are likely to appreciate your sensitivity to their perspectives and, in turn, may be more likely to participate to a greater extent than they otherwise would. By establishing expectations and choices in this way, you set the tone for peers to be sensitive to others as well.

ACTIVITY:

Allow the entire teen group to determine the path through the obstacle course. Divide the group into teams of three and give each a blindfold. At this point, describe CbC, and tell the teams that they will determine how their members will travel the obstacle course.

Also explain that while the course is the same for everyone, each team determines what it means to them. They might imagine it's another planet or that they're going across an ocean. Or it may be more realistic, such as doing a group project. Whatever the course represents, as the guides are leading the Traveler, create a metaphor for each

obstacle they must get through. (Example: A table represents an island in the ocean.)

Each team works together to get all members through the course, one at a time. The sighted members verbally guide the blindfolded Traveler safely through the obstacle course. Guides should describe the surroundings in as much detail as possible, including sounds, smells, colors, or movement.

Instruct each group to focus on their own team and not be distracted by the other groups. The course is done at walking speed, and guides are responsible for knowing where other groups are around their Traveler. Each member gets to be the Traveler, so once the team finishes guiding one person through, they switch roles and guide another member through. Each team will go through the course three times. After all members have played the Traveler, the group will discuss their learning experiences.

DISCUSSION:

Take 10-15 minutes to discuss how the small teams worked together and what they learned. Use questions such as:

1. What did the journey represent to your team? What did some of the obstacles represent?
2. Did you trust your team members before the exercise? Why or why not? Do you trust them more or less after the exercise? Explain.
3. How successful was your team in working together to get through the course? What would you change if you did it again?
4. When you were the Traveler, how well do you think your teammates communicated? When you were a guide, how well do you think you communicated? When there was a communication breakdown, what happened? How did your team deal with that?
5. What communication skills did you rely on when you were the Traveler? 6. If trust didn't exist in a team, how would you work to develop it?

WRAP-UP:

Encourage teens to write in their journals about working together as a team to move through a journey, allowing themselves to trust others, and the value and challenge of developing trust in a group.