# **Chapter 10: Activities**

## **Teaching Team Building Activities**

### **Carol Scaini and Catherine Casey**

# 1. Alphabet Order

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Gather students in the playing area.

***How to Play***

Have students organize themselves in order, without talking, by the following criteria:

* first name,
* last name,
* height, or
* birth month and day.

***Variation***

Come up with your own criteria for students to use in organizing themselves.

***Look-For***

Using nonverbal communication to work with others

# 2. Rain

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Have students form a large circle in the playing area while facing into the circle.

***How to Play***

1. Select one student to be the leader.
2. The leader begins to make a sound and motion characteristic of a rainstorm.
3. The player to the right of the leader then does likewise, followed by the next player to the right, and so on, until all players are making the sound and motion.
4. Once the sound and motion have made their way around the entire circle, the leader begins a new sound and motion characteristic of a rainstorm.
5. The sequence continues in this fashion. Possible sounds include the following:

* Briskly rubbing palms together to represent trees rustling in the wind
* Snapping fingers to represent raindrops
* Patting thighs to represent rain
* Beating the ground with hands and feet to represent thunder
* Clapping hands loudly to represent pouring rain

1. Once the sequence is completed, the leader reverses the procedure as the rainstorm passes over.

***Look-For***

Exploring various ways to use one’s hands to produce sounds, both individually and with the group

# 3. Connecting Eyes

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Have students form a large circle in the playing area while facing into the circle.

***How to Play***

Students begin looking around the circle at the other students. Once they connect eyes with another student, both students walk toward each other, exchange a high five, and switch spots in the circle. The activity continues in this fashion.

***Look-For***

Exploring the use of eye contact when interacting with others

# 4. Wink

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Have all students form a large circle in the playing area while facing into the circle.

***How to Play***

1. Select one student to act as a movie star; the others act as fans.
2. Students begin looking around the circle at the other students.
3. The movie star discreetly winks at the individual fans.
4. Once the movie star winks at a fan, he or she must wait three to five seconds and then suddenly pretend to faint.
5. If a fan who has not fainted suspects who the movie star is, he or she may say so.
6. If the guess is incorrect, the fan must faint.
7. If the guess is correct, the movie star faints and the game begins again with a new student playing the star.

***Look-For***

Recognizing how facial expression can affect game strategy

# 5. Reeeuse! Reeecycle!

***Equipment***

Pylons

***Setup***

* Divide the class into two groups: *reeeuse* and *reeecycle*.
* Establish a safety zone for one group on one end of the gym and a safety zone for the other team on the other end of the gym.
* If the class is outside, use pylons to create a centre line.

***How to Play***

1. Students line up three giant steps away from the centre line while facing each other.
2. You call out either “Reeeuse!” or “Reeecycle!”
3. If you call out *reeeuse*, the students in that group turn and run back to their safety line while the *reeecycle* students chase them.
4. If you call out *reeecycle*, the students in that group turn and run back to their safety line while the *reeeuse* students chase them.
5. The chasing team tries to tag (on the back or shoulder) as many students as possible.
6. If tagged, a student becomes a member of the other group and play resumes.

***Note***

Ensure that the safety line is approximately three giant steps away from the end walls so that students have room to slow down.

***Look-For***

Active participation

Adapted by permission from C. Scaini and C. Evans, *50 Games for Going Green* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2012), 70.

# 6. Creative Tableau

***Equipment***

Tableau cards

***Setup***

Divide the class into groups of four students each.

***How to Play***

1. Provide each group with a tableau card. Topic ideas for the cards include circus, wedding, campfire, surprise party, winner’s podium, baseball game, footrace, birthday party, gift presentation, overeating, first day of school, winning the lottery, rollercoaster, eating spaghetti, dance party, and riding a bus or subway.
2. Working together, each group creates a live tableau—that is, a frozen image of the tableau idea presented on its card.
3. Once the groups have had a chance to practice, they present their tableau to the class.
4. Groups may also create their own tableau ideas.

***Look-Fors***

Exploring various ways to position one’s body in order to create an image while working together

# 7. Imaginary Toss

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Have students form a large circle in the playing area while facing into the circle.

***How to Play***

1. To begin, one player takes an imaginary ball in hand and sends it to another student in the circle by dramatizing a means of sending an object in a sport. For example, to represent throwing a baseball, the student could wind up an arm, lift one leg, lean back on the other leg, and throw as hard as possible across the circle. For bowling, the student could hold the ball with the fingers, raise it toward the chin, step forward, swing the arm back, and then swing the arm forward while bending low and releasing the ball.
2. The receiving player acts as if catching the ball, then sends it to another student using a different method.
3. Play continues in this fashion until all students have sent and received the imaginary ball.

***Notes***

To avoid confusion, the student sending the ball can designate the intended recipient.

***Look-For***

Exploring various ways to move in order to illustrate a sporting activity

# 8. Untangle

***Equipment***

None

***Setup***

Divide the class into groups of six students each.

***How to Play***

1. Have group members face each other in a tight circle.
2. Each person holds out both hands and grasps the hands of two different people on the other side of the group (not the closest people).
3. Once everyone has joined hands, the task is to untangle themselves to form one big circle without releasing their hands. Group members must not let go of hands! They may end up facing either outward or inward in the final circle.

***Look-For***

Working together to solve a problem

# 9. Rotisserie Chicken

***Equipment***

Two rubber chickens

***Setup***

* Divide the class into two groups.
* Each group stands in a straight line parallel to the other group.

***How to Play***

1. On your signal (e.g., “go”), the first player on each teampasses the rubber chicken over his head to player two.
2. Player two receives the rubber chicken and passes it under her legs to player three.
3. Player three receives the rubber chicken and passes it over his head, and so on, until the last player receives the rubber chicken.
4. The last person shouts “rotisserie chicken!” to signal that the task has been completed.

***Variation***

* Keep the game going by having the last person who receives the chicken run to the front of the line and start passing the chicken again.
* Use another piece of equipment (e.g., pool noodle) and other methods of moving it down the team line (e.g., using only elbows, knees, or feet).

***Look-Fors***

* Working together
* Following game instructions

# 10. Hoop the Loop

***Equipment***

Hoops

***Setup***

Divide the class into two groups.

***How to Play***

1. Have the students in each group form a circle while holding hands.
2. Place a hoop between two students so that it rests on their grasped hands.
3. On your signal, students figure out how to move the hoop around the circle as quickly as possible without breaking the circle (the first person may step into the hoop while the next student helps move it over the first student’s head).
4. Continue until the hoop returns to the original starting point.

***Variation***

Give each group a second hoop and have students pass the hoops around in opposite directions.

***Look-For***

Working together to achieve the task

# 11. Keep-Up

***Equipment***

Beach balls

***Setup***

Divide the class into groups of four. The members of each group stand in a circle while facing each other.

***How to Play***

1. Designate an area for each group.
2. One player in each group tosses a beach ball in the air.
3. Players try to keep the beach ball in the air by using any part of the body.
4. Once the group is successful at keeping the beach ball in the air, toss in a second ball.
5. Challenge the group members to see how long they can keep the balls in the air without dropping them.

***Variation***

Continue adding beach balls to see how many each group can keep up.

***Look-For***

Working together to achieve the task

# 12. Marble Run

***Equipment***

* Paper towel rolls or pipes
* Marble (one for each team)
* Bucket

***Setup***

* Divide the class into groups of six.
* Provide each student with a paper towel roll cut in half (so that the inner tube is exposed).
* Set up a starting point and an end point.
* Place a bucket at the end point.

***How to Play***

* Each team rolls the marble from point A to point B using the paper towel rolls.
* Team members need to work together to join the pipes together without the marble falling to the ground; if it falls to the ground, the team must return to the starting point.

***Variation***

To increase the challenge, use plastic pipes that do not allow students to see the marble as it moves through.

***Look-For***

Working cooperatively to meet the challenge

# 13. Math Bingo

***Equipment***

* Variety of bingo cards
* Variety of number pieces

***Setup***

Each team stands in single-file formation behind a starting line while facing the pile of numbers on the other side of the gym.

***How to Play***

1. The first player runs to the number pile, picks up a number piece, runs back to place it on the matching number on the team’s bingo card, and tags the next player in line.
2. The second player does likewise, and play continues in this fashion until the bingo card is filled.
3. If a player picks up a number that is not on the team’s bingo card, the player must bring it back to the number pile and get another one.
4. When a team finishes, its members yell “bingo!”

***Variations***

* On the other side of the number piece, indicate a physical activity for the group to do. In this version, when a student returns with a number piece, the whole team performs the physical activity a certain number of times (determined either by you or by a roll of a die).
* Before play begins, state how the game can be won—for example, by filling one row, two rows, or the entire card**.**
* Encourage students to create their own bingo cards and physical activities**.**

***Look-For***

Active participation

# 14. Litter Not!

***Equipment***

* Recycling bin
* 50 to 100 balls (or beanbags or a combination thereof)

***Setup***

* Scatter the balls (or beanbags) around the playing area.
* Place a large recycling bin in the centre of the playing area.

***How to Play***

1. Students scatter around the playing area and wait for the starting signal.
2. On the signal, players pick up “litter” by retrieving the balls; they must pick up only one ball at a time.
3. Players put retrieved ball into the recycling bin.
4. Once all of the balls are in the bin, the game begins again.

***Variation***

For continuous play, balls put into the bin are continuously tossed back into the playing area.

***Look-For***

Continuous activity

Adapted by permission from C. Scaini and C. Evans, *50 Games for Going Green* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics 2012), 90.

# 15. Move the Box

***Equipment***

* Cardboard box or other target item
* Bucket
* Several soft balls

***Setup***

* Divide the class into two groups.
* Provide each group with half of the soft balls.
* Place the cardboard box (or other target) on the centre line of the gymnasium.
* On each side of the gymnasium, establish a throwing line about three meters away from the centre line (you can alter this distance based on your students’ skill level).

***How to Play***

1. Players throw, roll, or kick balls from their side of the playing area (behind the throwing line) in order to hit the target and move it onto the opponent’s side.
2. Students may retrieve balls on their side and use them again.
3. Players are not allowed to touch the target.

***Variation***

Add more targets.

***Look-Fors***

* Accuracy
* Throwing skills (fundamental movement skills)
* Rolling
* Kicking

Adapted by permission from CIRA Ontario, *Great Gator Games* (Ancaster, Ontario: CIRA Ontario), 51.

# 16. Puzzles

***Equipment***

Variety of oversized puzzles

***Setup***

Each team stands in single-file formation behind a starting line while facing the pile of puzzle pieces on the other side of the gym.

***How to Play***

1. The first player runs to the puzzle pile, picks up one puzzle piece, runs back to drop it next to his or her team, and tags the next player in line. Each team has a designated pile to retrieve from.
2. The second player does likewise, and play continues in this fashion until all puzzle pieces have been retrieved.
3. Teams must work together to put their puzzle pieces together.
4. Teams who finish may help the other teams.

***Variations***

* On the other side of the puzzle piece, indicate a physical activity for the group to do. When a student returns with a puzzle piece, groupmembersperform the indicated physical activity a certain number of times (determined either by you or by a roll of a die).
* Before play begins, state how the game can be won—for example, by completing the puzzle first or by best encouraging each other**.**
* For a challenge, place all puzzle pieces together in one pile in the middle of the playing area. Students must figure out which puzzle pieces belong to their puzzle, in addition to putting their puzzle together.
* Encourage students to create their own puzzles.

***Look-Fors***

* Working collaboratively as a team to complete the task
* Active participation

# 17. Stack the Cups

***Equipment***

* Plastic cups
* Elastic bands, each with four, 1-meter strings attached

***Setup***

* Divide the class into groups of four.
* Provide each group with six plastic cups and one elastic band.

***How to Play***

1. Players each hold on to one piece of string as they work together to pull the elastic band open, pick up plastic cups, and build a pyramid formation.
2. Players are not allowed to touch the plastic cups with their hands.

***Variation***

* Players perform a physical challenge to earn the right to add one cup to their pyramid formation.
* Add more cups to the game and have students build a larger pyramid.
* Use longer strings or various sizes of string for an added challenge.

***Look-For***

Teamwork

# 18. Sinking Island

***Equipment***

Blankets or foldable material

***Setup***

* Divide the class into two groups.
* Provide each group with a blanket (or other foldable material).

***How to Play***

1. Each group tries to stand on the blanket for 10 seconds without any part of anyone’s body touching the ground beyond the blanket.
2. Next, fold the blanket in half and challenge each group to stand on the blanket for 10 seconds.
3. After each successful attempt, fold the blanket in half and repeat the activity.

***Look-For***

Working together to meet the challenge

# 19. Bridge Over Raging Water

***Equipment***

One nonslip rubber mat (or piece of carpet) per student

One additional mat

***Setup***

Students stand at the start line holding their rubber mats.

***How to Play***

1. The first student steps on his or her mat placed over the start line.
2. The second student passes his or her mat to the first student who places it in front of the first mat and steps on it, thus beginning to build a bridge for crossing the river.
3. As the first student moves forward onto the second mat, the second student steps onto the first mat.
4. One by one, team members pass their mats to the front of the line, and the team continues to move forward along the mat bridge.
5. If any group member touches the river (i.e., the floor) with any body part, the bridge must be moved back to the starting position.
6. One foot must always remain on each piece; otherwise, it “floats” away (the mat is taken away).

***Look-For***

Teamwork

Adapted by permission from D. Glover and D. Midura, *Team Building Through Physical Challenges* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1992), 43.

# 20. Towel Toss

***Equipment***

* Four towels (or blankets or small parachutes)
* One foam ball

***Setup***

* Divide the class into four groups of four to six members each.
* Provide each group with a towel (or blanket or small parachute).

***How to Play***

* Each player holds part of the group’s towel.
* Working together, each group uses the towel to toss and catch a foam ball with another group.
* Players try to keep the ball going between the two groups.

***Look-Fors***

* Tossing and catching
* Teamwork

# 21. Blindfold Trust

***Equipment***

* Blindfolds for half of the group
* Foam cones or beanbags

***Setup***

* Place the foam cones or beanbags throughout the playing area.
* Put students into pairs.
* One member of each pair is blindfolded.

***How to Play***

* One player must safely lead the partner around the obstacles as the pair moves from one end of the playing area to the other.
* The partners then switch roles.

***Look-Fors***

Working together

# 22. Scavenger Hunt

***Equipment***

* Paper
* Pen
* Scavenger hunt form

***Setup***

Prepare items for the scavenger hunt based on your community.

***How to Play***

* Using an outside area on your school grounds or in the community, students partner up to find items listed for the scavenger hunt.
* Each pair records its answers on a scavenger hunt form or takes photos to show that they have found the items.

***Scavenger Hunt Ideas***

* What is the address number on the wall of the school?
* What is the address number on the house across the street from the school’s front door?
* What is the name of the nearest park?
* How many parking spaces are in the school parking lot?
* Make a rubbing of the bark on a tree on the school playground.
* How many light posts are on the school property?
* How many windows are on the back side of the school?
* How many basketball hoops are on the school property?
* If you walk into the school using the front door, what direction are you going?
* Collect four leaves of different colours.
* What activities are not allowed on school grounds? (According to signs or per school rules.)
* How many “no parking” signs are in the school’s parking lot?
* How many trees are on the school property?
* How many outside doors does the school building have?
* Collect five spruce needles.
* How many windows are in the staff room?
* Bring back a small rock.
* How many outside walls make up the school building?

***Variation***

If students have electronic devices to capture images of items, you may add the following elements to the hunt:

* Take a photo with the principal.
* Snap a photo of a teacher who coaches a school sport.
* Make a tower at least 30 items (such as coins) high, then take a photo of it.
* Find the definition of “scavenger hunt” in a dictionary and snap a photo of the page.
* Take a photo of your scavenger hunt pair.
* Take a selfie of you and your partner playing a leisurely game of leapfrog on the school playground.
* Take a photo of at least five types of sport balls.
* Take a photo with your favourite library book.

***Look-Fors***

Working collaboratively