

**Youth Ministry Game Listing**  
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This is a game listing I compiled after many years in Youth Ministry. Please note, I have NOT done every game listed below and cannot guarantee each one will be a great success ☺. If you have questions, give us a call at the Youth Ministry office and I can help explain. There are some repeats in this list.

Remember, if something is not going well, modify it, or throw it out and move on. If something is going well, don't end it too early. Have fun and be willing to laugh with the kids. That's the idea ☺.

Here are some great web resources:

[http://thisishowyouplay.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://thisishowyouplay.org/wiki/Main_Page)

<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/ice-breakers.html>

<https://www.businesstrainingworks.com/training-resources/free-icebreakers>

[http://www.funattic.com/game\\_list.htm](http://www.funattic.com/game_list.htm)

### Relay Races:

**Balloon Pop Relays and Races** – For a relay you'll need a balloon for each player and two chairs. Divide the kids into lines of two teams and give each kid a balloon. Have a few extra balloons on hand in case any pop before the game begins. On "Go", one member of each team will race to the chair, try to pop their balloon by sitting on it, and when successful run back to the team. This is a relay and so the next person on the team would then be able to go. **Variation:** You can make this game into a race by giving each kid one or more balloons to try to pop, with everyone starting at the same time. First one to pop all their balloons wins!

- **Balloon Race** – You'll need one blown up balloon for every two players (blow up a few extra in case any pop before the game starts). Have the teams race from one point to another, while carrying a balloon between them. The catch? They can't use their hands to carry the balloon!

- **Egg and Spoon Relays and Races** – For a relay you'll need a hard-boiled egg and a spoon for each team. Divide the kids into two teams and have each team form a line. Have a member of each team race to a certain point, holding the egg in the spoon, and then return so that the next team member has a turn. **Variation:** Give each child a spoon and egg and have a race. If you don't want to use an egg, use ping pong balls, golf balls, etc.

- **Hopping Relays and Races** – You'll need a blown up balloon or ball for each kid. Have kids race from point to point while hopping with a ball or balloon between their legs.

- **Hula Hoop Race** – You'll need two hula hoops. Divide the kids into two teams and have each team form a line. Have team members join hands and give each team a hula hoop. On "Go", have team members pass the hula hoop down the line without letting go of each other's hands.

- **Teaspoon relay** -- bring something (like golfball or tennis ball) on a spoon from one end of the room to the next.

- **Obstacle Course** - Divide the players into two teams and set up an obstacle course. Have one player from each team run the course, return to the team, and the second player runs the course. The first team to have all their players complete the course wins the game.

- **Sack Race** – You'll need a pillow case for each player. Have the kids place both legs inside the pillow case and hop to a finish line.

- **Three Legged Race** – You'll need a scarf, bandana or piece of rope for every two players. Pair up the children and have them stand side by side, with an arm around their partner's waist. The partners' inside legs should be touching. Tie the inside legs together so each pair of children has three legs rather than four. On "Go", have the pairs race to a finish line.

- **Water Relay** - You'll need two buckets and a shallow bowl for each team, and water! Divide the kids into two teams. For each team, place a bucket full of water at the starting line, and an empty bucket a distance away. On "Go", have a person from each team fill their bowl with water, run to their other bucket to pour in the water, and then run back to their team for the next person to have their turn. Have the relay continue until the bucket is full (or until the water level reaches a certain pre-determined height.)

- **Toilet paper relay run.** Teams line up, paper is wrapped around one person's legs, then unwound to the other end, wound around another person's legs, and so on and so forth. I run ahead, tie it around someone's legs, unravel it back, but if it breaks, I return and start over. Then when I bring it to one end, it is wrapped around my legs, and the next person moves to the other end where his/her legs are wrapped.

### **Crazy Waiter**



You need a couple of sturdy paper plates and ping pong balls.

Divide into two teams, and stand in 2 lines. Demonstrate how to hold the plate- like a waiter. (Thumbs and fingers cannot be on top of the plate)

Now put a ping pong ball onto each plate and give one to the leader of each line. On the word go, their job is to run as fast as they can weaving in and out of each player down the line, while balancing the ball on the plate. Once he gets to the back of the line he then runs straight up to the front again (without weaving) and gives the plate to the next player, and runs down to the back position.

The next player repeats the process. If the ball falls off the plate the player must return to the front and restart. First team to run the course wins.



You may also map out an obstacle course to run through or for a more simple game have players run to a central marker, like a chair or an orange cone, run around it and then run home.

### **Human Tic Tac Toe**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hwDNL0pQ8o>

Set up 9 chairs in the middle of the room. Divide the kids into two teams (X team and O team) and number them off. Make sure each team is equal.  
The referee stands in the middle and calls out numbers. When the kids number is called they run to the chairs, sit down, and indicate if they are X or O.  
The first team to get a tic tac toe wins.

### **Do You Love Your Neighbor?**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83\\_viiTpWdQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83_viiTpWdQ)

"do you love your neighbor!" Everyone sits in a circle with one person in the middle, the person in the middle goes and introduced him/herself to a stranger and asks if they love their neighbor. If they say no, the people on either side have to switch with their person in the middle trying to steal one of their seats. If they say yes, they have to specify something they don't like such as "yes, but I don't like people wearing sneakers" or "i don't like people that go to xxxx school." They were always good about not singling anyone out and always got really into it.

**Fortunately, Unfortunately.** You start with something like, "Unfortunately there is a shark in the swimming pool." Someone responds, "Fortunately, he is a friendly shark." It then goes from there. Make sure they keep it clean.

### **Pipeline**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZcIquSYwbc>

**PVC Pipe tubes – each person on a team gets one and has to move a marble to a bucket 20 or 30 feet away. If it drops, the team has to start over!**



**Cream pie find the gum and blow a bubble. Find the bubble gum, chew it, and then blow a bubble. First team to have three people do this, wins! Use garbage bags to protect clothes.**

### Minute to win it games.

Note, there are many Minute to Win it Games that can be found on youtube. Look them up and choose the ones you like.



- 1) Line up plastic cups on a table – blow up balloon and see if you can blow them off. You need about 14 large plastic cups.
- 2) Stack Attack -- 36 large plastic cups – stack them, then unstack them in 1 minute. Pyramid.
- 3) Speed Eraser – bounce pencils into cup. Most in 1 minute.
- 4) Spoon frog – Bounce metal spoons (flip) spoon into three glasses in one minute.
- 5) MetalStacker – Stack 10 nuts on a cutting board. The nuts start on a long stick held with one hand; cutting board with the other hand. Stack them one by one.
- 6) Get forked – line up fork 10/15 feet away. Give contestant large stack of quarters to try and roll into the arms of the fork (bowling style). Good times!
- 7) Volcano – Drop mints into inch wide opening of soda bottle to create volcano. First one to do so wins!
- 8) Paddle Poppers – Line up four ping pong paddles, having them stand upright on a table (or chair or stool). Object: bounce ping pong balls off the ground and have them knock down the ping pong paddles. 😊
- 9) Field Goal – One large plastic cup set underneath a yard stick (balancing). Object: two players set up 6 plastic cups on each side simultaneously. One up, one down. One up, one down. One up, one down. Don't drop those cups!
- 10) Ready Spaghetti – Move soda cans from one table to another using a long string of spaghetti in mouth. Two people do it together.

### **Mellow Toss**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lge9ksf6JiM>

Required: Clean hands, bowls, sunglasses, old clothes, miniature marshmallows and chocolate syrup

Players: Small to large groups

Divide group up into teams. Have an adult or leader for each team sit in a chair with protective eye covering like sunglasses (with a garbage bag covering them). The teams line up about 15 feet away from the leader that's on the ground. Have a bowl of miniature marshmallows and a bowl of chocolate syrup for each team. On go, each player one at a time will pick up one marshmallow, dip it in syrup and try to throw it in the mouth of the "leader" with their mouth open. If the player misses the target he/she must leave it. The winning team is the one that has the least number of marshmallows on the face of the leader or floor. Great game and the kids LOVE IT!!!

### **DEFEND YOUR SOCKS**

Somehow, mark a circle on the floor of your meeting room. A brightly colored tape works great...even a ring of leaders holding hands will do the job. Students take off ONLY their shoes, keeping their socks on, and get on the floor inside the marked circle. When the leader says GO, every student attempts to take off the socks of every other student in the circle. The last person with at least one sock on, wins! Very simple.

Notes: I minister in Florida. Most kids don't even wear socks during the summer/warmer months. If you are in a similar situation, you might only want to try this game during the winter/colder months when students are more apt to be dressed to play this game. Regardless, whenever you play this game, bring a few pair of clean socks from home to give to students who want to play, but did not wear socks to youth group that night.

### **WHO'S ON MY BACK**

This is a great game that forces everyone to have to go around and meet others. Have everyone secretly write down the name of a person on a small piece of paper. It has to be a person that everyone in the room would know about (eg. Jesus, George Washington, Madonna, Brad Pitt, etc.) Then have them tape the name on the back of the person on their left. Everyone must now go around and ask people yes or no questions about who is on their back. They can only ask each person one question. The person who guesses their identity in the least number of asks wins.

#### **Supplies:**

pieces of paper for everyone

pens for everyone

piece of tape for everyone



### REAL IDENTITY

This is a great "get to know ya" and a memory game. I always play it at the beginning of the year when I have a bunch of new students. This game is where I end up learning their names.

Everybody is in a circle. Everyone takes a turn saying their name and something about him/herself (example, "Hi, I'm John and I play football."). The next person needs to say the previous person's name and item of interest before saying their own (example, "He's John, he plays football and I'm Mary and I love puppies"). As this game moves on, people need to remember more and more information. With bigger groups you can have them only repeat the names to save time.

### I Wanna Meet...

Simple game. A couple people stand in the middle and say, "I want to meet everyone who was born in Vermont." (as an example). Everyone who was born in Vermont has to stand up and switch chairs. The last two standing (or more) are in the middle and then have to come up with another, "We want to meet..." I think doing this with more than one person in the middle is a good idea as it can be a bit embarrassing if you are the only one in the middle.

### Human Knot



### Swamp Walk – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Mq5vQi3DWY>

Great team building game – working together to get across an area (maybe make it a competition).

### Human Pyramid





- **Hula-Hoop Pass** -- Passed between a line of kids as they hold hands on down the line. You might want to try a couple of hoops. Whichever team gets the hoops down the fastest wins.



- **Toxic waste** – look this one up



➤ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2pH7uMCdKGk>

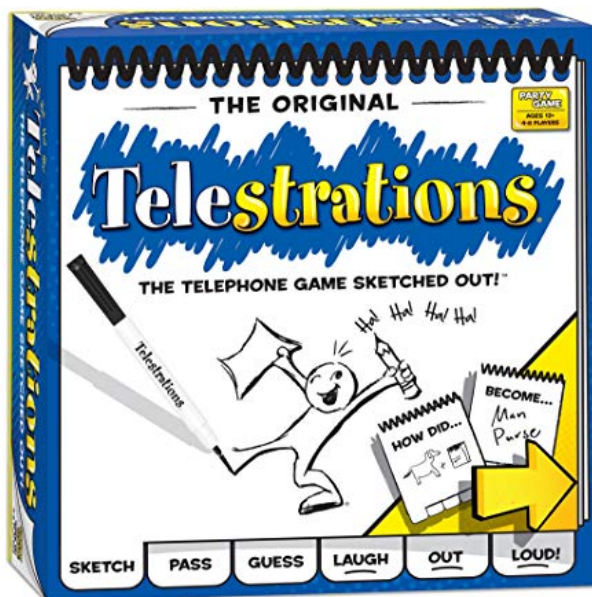


- **Blow out the candle and drink the water (with matches). Now, THIS is a funny game. Two people square off sitting across a table. You can ONLY drink your large cup a water when your candle is lit. You are allowed to blow out your opponents candle but must stay seated. The object is to finish your water. Each player gets a large pack of matches to start the game. Very funny to watch.**

- **Human Foosball – players must stay within their certain zone.**



- Charades – always fun!
- Telestrations – great board game (for groups of about 6-10 people). Very fun and funny (no need to keep score)



- Caterpillar tag-- Choose three or four people to be it. Whenever they tag someone, they link up holding each other's waists and try to tag others (not including the other lines being formed). When all the players have been joined to one of the IT lines, call out "Caterpillar Tag" and point to one of the lines. That line becomes the caterpillar. The caterpillar tries to tag anyone in the other lines. Whenever another line is tagged, those kids must link up with the caterpillar and begin chasing the lines that remain. The game is over when everyone has become part of the caterpillar. As a fun variation, at the end of this game, try to have the caterpillar catch its own tail--then a circle is formed.



- **Other Variations of Caterpillar Tag and Caterpillar Run**
  - Caterpillar Run: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAS1i3k79lM>
  - Caterpillar tag -- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V\\_Et4IRol1A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_Et4IRol1A)
- **Simon says.**
- **Thumb Wars**--have kids pair off and thumb war against each other. This is actually usually very fun.

**Indian Chief** – very funny game. Indian Chief is a game where one person (the indian chief) performs an action like clapping or snapping. The rest of the students in the circle have to copy the chief. One student has to guess who the real chief is.

1. Have the group sit or stand in a circle.
  2. One person (i.e., the guesser) goes out of hearing and sight range of the group.
  3. After the person has left the group, one person must be picked to be the "Indian chief." The "Indian chief" decides on some kind of motion and the whole group copies the movement.
  4. The guesser comes back into the group and tries to figure out which person is leading the motions (i.e., the Indian Chief).
  5. The guesser gets three tries to guess who is the Indian Chief.
  6. The person who was the Indian Chief now leaves the group to be the guesser and a new Indian Chief is chosen.
- **Water balloon toss**
  - **Paper football**
  - **Paper Airplane contest--whose can fly the furthest**
  - **Telephone -- give each group something to say**
  - **Continuous story** -- change when I say change or change when someone moves an object to the next person--> when they are done, have someone come up and tell the story (make sure it is clean).
  - **Most embarrassing moment in your life, your most heroic moment, your funniest moment, your most forgetful moment, etc.**
  - **Limbo**

- **Two truths and a lie** -- put 2 truths on a piece of paper along with a lie-- people have to guess which one is the lie--if you trick them, you get to have their initials placed on your name tag.
- **Fishbowl** -- each person on a blank slip of paper jots down 5 clues about themselves based upon the way they see... e.g. If I had to describe myself as a kind of dog...automobile...(year, model, etc) kind of music, animal in the zoo, TV or movie character, someone in the Bible (Heaven forbid!)
- **Mingo-Bingo (Human Bingo)--**

ICEBREAKER BINGO				
DRIVES A PRIUS	KNOWS SOMEONE THAT CLIMBED MT. EVEREST	DISLIKES TOMATOES	HAS A TWIN	IS WEARING RED
HAS GREEN EYES	KNOWS HOW TO SEW	DOESN'T DRINK COFFEE	HAS NEVER BEEN TO DISNEYLAND	HAS A TATTOO
LIKES SPICY FOOD	HAS A DOG	FREE SPACE	HAS FLOWN A PLANE	CAN SPEAK A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
KNOWS HOW TO SURF	CAN COUNTRY LINE DANCE	HAS NEVER BEEN ON A PLANE	SCUBA DIVES	HAS A BIRTHDAY THIS MONTH
HAS ON A SWIM TEAM	IS AN ONLY CHILD	HAS CHANGED A TIRE	CAN PLAY THE PIANO	IS A VEGETARIAN

- **Candle hats** -- Place candle on top of a firefighters hat -- each player is given a squirt gun--object of the game is to extinguish the other's fire. Can have two teams facing each other. Last team with someone standing wins.
- **Mummy wrap** -- team to have their mummy completely covered wins. Use toilet paper.
- **Present wrap (done best around Christmas time).** Team with best looking Christmas present wins. Wrap someone up. 😊
- **Gorilla, Karate Man, Army Man** -- Gorilla Man beats Karate Man, Karate Man beats Army Man and Army Man beats Gorilla -- pair up, then winners play each other (maybe you are out once you lose twice). (like rock, papers, scissors)
- **Psychiatrist** -- The idea is that everyone in the room has the same psychological problem and someone else in the room is the psychiatrist and they have to figure out and diagnose the illness. So, someone is chosen as the psychiatrist

and they leave the room while everyone else discusses what problem they all have. Then the psychiatrist comes back in the room and starts asking people questions and everyone responds to the question in the manner of the illness they have.

- **Scar Stories** -- People go around and share a part of their body which has a scar -- detail the story through which they received this scar.
- **Clapping contest** -- go to clap your hands: everyone claps if you cross your hands. If you stop your hands and they don't clap, then that person is out.
- **Farm Animals:** Everyone is given a farm animal (whispered in their ear), and then the whole group has to walk around making that noise with their eyes closed till they find all those who are in the same group. Cat, dog, sheep, cow, pig, etc.
- **Shipwreck** -- You build a 'ship' which is four boards hooked together at the ends to form a square (by a chain of some sort), and then two ropes threaded to each end for lifting. Then two sets of boards (unconnected) are threaded with ropes and left free standing outside of the 'ship.' Four hula hoops (islands) are set up at a good distance that have things to help the group. One has a magic ball that helps to heal the injured (if you touch the ground you lose use of that leg), and food. Another hoop has a magic duck (or whatever) that flies two people from the ship to the mainland (this has to be picked up and then brought back to the ship). You can have another hoop with something else in them. The object is to get everyone to the homeland. Also, you can have storms happen, diphtheria (where someone loses use of a hand due to illness, pirates who block the way (three teens joining hands, symbolizing the loaded cannons), etc.
- **Clothes pins** -- Person in middle is blindfolded and has clothes pin attached to him/her. People try to steal them one at a time without being touched (similar game: blindfolded person sits down with objects all around them that have to be stolen with an equal number of people around them--also, without being touched).
- **Drip, Drip, Drop (like Duck, Duck Goose, except with a bucket of water).**
- **Pass the ball between the legs of your entire team.** Person in front has ball and tries to bowl it through the open legs of his/her team mates. They keep trying till they succeed. The person in the back of the line catches the ball and then brings it to the front. The object is to move the team past a certain point (maybe 20/30 feet). The first team to the end wins.
- Have everyone form a big circle of chairs with the chairs facing outward. Remove one chair. Have music ready. When the music starts everyone must walk around the chairs

(again it's fun if you make them jog). When the music stops, a caller yells out a body part. Then everyone races to touch that body part to a chair, one person per chair only. If they touch a chair before the body part is called, they are out. The one person who doesn't get a chair is also out. To speed it up, you can remove more chairs. We usually start out simple - nose, hair, left elbow, etc. but towards the end we get more complicated - your bare feet, someone else's left hand (they must grab one of the people who are already out). The object is to be the last one left.

- A variation of 'SPOONS', except that you have cards with everyone's name on it in the circle and then you play the regular card game. When each group is finished, you have all those who were caught without a card standup, and then they have to do something silly--sing a song, act something out, etc.
- **Guess the Gargle** -- All it requires is a glass of water. Secretly show a volunteer the name of a well know song or tune, it can be anything, chart song, worship song, nursery rhyme etc. Get them to take a sip of water and they must gargle the tune and the others try to guess what it is.
- **Pile Up** -- Players sit in a tight circle on benches or chairs. Seats should be clearly distinguishable. "It" determines the actions of the group by stating a detail: Everybody wearing jeans, move two spaces left. Everybody with blonde hair, move three spaces right. Those with matching descriptions move as directed, and sit down, be it on an empty seat, or a person's lap. (To preserve people's health, limit the pile to about four people maximum.)
- **Steal The Treasure** -- Players sit in a circle. One blindfolded person sits in the middle, with their treasure (keys, rattle) in front of them and their stick (rolled up newspaper) in hand. A thief is chosen from the circle to attempt to snatch the treasure, without making any noise to alert the guard in the middle. If the thief is swatted by the newspaper stick, he must return to the circle. If the thief succeeds in stealing the treasure, they become the new guard.
- **Toe Fencing**--Cool game and if set to music, looks like a new kind of dance. All players pair off and lock hands and try to tap the top of one of their partner's feet with their own feet. Players hop around trying to avoid being stomped on. After being tapped 3 times, that player is out and the winning partner challenges another winner. The game continues till only one player is left. Sounds interesting!
- **Who am I?** --The youth sit in a circle. One person goes outside the room, while he is away the others decide what he should "be" when he comes back. He has to ask each youth member in turn what he has to buy for himself. One may say black boots, another a whistle, another a flashlight, etc. If the shopper goes right around the circle without guessing what he is (policeman), he must go out again, and the campers will choose something else.
- **2x4 Skis** --Prepare a four 2x4's, (or larger if possible), with ropes at each end by drilling through the wood and pushing the rope through and knotting it. Have each group stand on



a set of the "skis" (Pack as many teens together as possible). Then they have to race about 100'. This is another good problem solving puzzle. (They have to yell "RIGHT" - "LEFT" - "RIGHT" and so on).



- **Domino Race** -- Get a bunch of dominoes. In a small group, give each kid 20 dominoes and have a race challenging them to set them up in a line, on edge (you know, so they tumble and knock each other over...). Tell 'em it's a race to see who can set them up first.
- Applications:
  - 1) The domino effect as it relates to lying, drugs, sex ... any sin. It always has its effect on other aspects of life.
  - 2) Start them off on a carpet to make it more difficult. Tell the kids their dominoes have to be less than 3 inches from the floor at all times (no tables). Kids may figure out to use books, board-games or something else as a more stable foundation. Then the discussion focuses on putting Christ as the foundation to our lives.
- **Glow in the Dark Games** -- I get glow in the dark products from:
- Chemical Light, Inc 1-800-367-4569 -- I have used their products for youth retreats, dances, games (to identify teams at night), etc. They are super!
- **I Wanna Meet...** -- Put the group into a large circle of chairs. Pick one person to be in the middle and remove that person's chair. The person in the middle yells "I wanna meet...", finishing the sentence with whatever they want "... everyone with red hair...all the girls...everyone who's birthday is in June...everyone who hates spinach", etc. Then, everyone who meets that criteria must get up and run to an empty chair at least 5 chairs away from their previous position. The person left without a chair gets to yell "I wanna meet..." next. You have to be careful with this one. Occasionally, kids will want to know more about each other than you think. I'm always a little nervous that someone will say "I wanna meet all the virgins" and I'll not want to look at who isn't moving.
- **Pyramid** -- This requires 6 kids, the idea is they have to form a human pyramid. Three strong ones kneel side by side on their hands and knees, the middle person should be the strongest. Then two others climb on top of them and kneel with a hand and knee on each of the two kids below them (the middle person must support the weight of two set of

hands and knees). Finally the last person climbs to the very top of the pyramid. Its fun to see if they can stand up on top of everyone.

- **Button-button, who's got the button?** An old birthday game. Leader goes around and pretends to put the button in everyone's hands. People then try to guess whose hand it is in. Members raise their hands if they want to guess, and if they get it right then they are the winner -- duh! But they only get one guess.
- **The Dragon Game** -- Split the group into two parts. Get them into line and have them wrap their arms around the waist of the person in front of them forming a long chain. Stick a rag or handkerchief in the back pocket of the last person. The goal is for the front person of one group to get the "tail" of the other, while the tail of the group tries to avoid getting caught.
- [Caution: This is best done outdoors if you have over 20 kids.
- **Table Smack** -- (with alternating hands)  
  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H8qAe7E3lwM>
- **Swarm** -- 45 players per team (more or less). 300 small balloons needed. 100 each of 3 different colors. 3 teams. Each team assigns one Queen, a Healer and 3 guards. The rest are warriors. Tie one to each warrior's ankle. Tie 5 balloons to the Queen and 3 to each guard. Queen stays in a nest area, protected by the guards. The healer also stays in the nest area with balloons and string and can't be killed. The Queen must stand still. The object of the game is to KILL THE QUEEN! :) Warriors can pop anyone's balloons as long as their balloon is intact. Once it's popped, they must return to the nest and visit the healer, who will give them a new balloon. The Healer can't heal guards or heal the Queen. If a team's Queen is killed, the players must leave the playing area.
- **Green Eggs and Ham**. Circle of chairs with everyone sitting and one person in the middle with one empty chair. Everyone is given a name from the book Green Eggs and Ham (with some given the same name). Everyone switches to a different chair whenever "Green Eggs and Ham" is said or "Sam I am." Object is to not be the one standing in the middle. Probably good to pause in the reading of this now and then.
- **Hot Chocolate Scramble**. Get a delicious candy bar and break kids into groups. One person rolls a set of dice. If he/she rolls doubles he can start eating. But only after he puts on a glove, scarf, a hat and runs around the circle. Then he/she has to eat the candy with a knife and fork and cut them into one inch pieces. Meanwhile the rest of the players are passing around the dice and rolling and looking for doubles. Doubles means doing the same thing as the 1st player to roll doubles. Game ends when the candy is eaten.
- **Screenwriters** -- show a TV or movie clip that is dialogue based. Get into small groups and then have them come up with a written dialogue for the scene, different from what they saw. Select readers to read it along with the movie. Can give teams a theme for their dialogue (remember, keep it clean!).

- 500 with frisbee or football
- Ultimate frisbee
- Sponge relay -- move water from one end to the next by transferring the water in a sponge -- first to fill bucket wins. Variation on this is to move water from one end to the next with a spoon, filling up a small cup/wine glass.
- **Killer** -- the eye winking game using a deck of cards and the killer is the one who gets the Ace of spades. Another version of this is Killer where the killer goes around shaking people's hands, and when someone dies, they fall down. Accusations can be made with a supporter, but if they are wrong, they all die.
- Flashlight tag
- Biffers -- Object: find and obtain the signatures of 10 people scattered about the church. Once found, the person can ask them to perform some silly task first. Each player needs a piece of paper and a pencil. While the kids are trying to get the signatures, four 'biffers' are roaming the halls, waiting to tag players with flour-filled socks. Once a player is hit, he or she must stop in his/her tracks and yell for a medic. The medic comes and draws a cross on the back of her/his hand and then he can continue. The game continues until one player gets all the signatures he/she needs. Could be a lead in to a talk on life and how there are those out there waiting to get us. Sometimes we are stopped in our tracks by sin, Satan, bad choices, etc. But we can call on the medic who comes to help us and get us going again.
- Someone stands in the middle and a large group forms around them in a large square. Good with a large group. The 4 lines of the square are always supposed to stay the same around the person. Each group has to come up with a cheer (some quick sound -- like, UH!). The person in the middle moves and then faces a certain direction--the four lines race and then have to line up in the exact order in which they were -- counting down the line (1,2,3,4, ...) and then altogether saying their phrase: "UH!" Thus, each person should establish which number they are before the initial switch.
- Psycho Soccer -- Indoor soccer with very light beach balls -- goalies can't use their hands. When a goal is scored, that ball is brought to the leader who tallies it, and throws it back into play. Other 2 balls (3 total) are still in play.
- Winter Clothes relay -- changes the clothes on down the line -- whichever team does it the fastest wins. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wYniCJE4kI0>

- Human Checkers -- set up giant checkers board -- 12 black and 12 white. Each tape a square of red or square of white to their shoulder. To jump, a checker must leap frog the opposing player. If a player gets out, they stand in line waiting to be a crown.
- **Coin catch** -- on the elbow -- who can catch the most wins... :)
- **Pavlovian Charades** -- Form teams (who compete against each other) -- Each team will write down 5 actions that the other team has to do one at a time. The game is that one person has a bag of M&Ms and the other players have to try to figure out what the action is by actually doing it. When they get part of it right, the person with the M&Ms give them a candy. They are not allowed to say anything! Give one point to each team who gets one of the actions in under 5 minutes.
- **Blindfold chalice quest.** Each team has to guide one blindfolded person to the chalice -- the opposing team can try to make them change directions. The team that gets the chalice first wins. No touching of the blindfolded person is allowed.
- **To Tell The Truth** -- Have one person with an amazing story and then 2 or 3 others who will try to pretend like it is their story. Have a few contestants ask them questions (or anyone from the audience). Maybe everyone can vote at the end.
- Have the teens get into groups and plan a secret church meeting -- as though we live in a land where Christians are persecuted. What should we do? How should we get there? What time should it be at? etc. etc.
- Yawn contest -- two people come up to the front and yawn and stretch -- see how many others will yawn as well.
- Create something with marshmallows, tooth pics, graham crackers, etc. Good for exercise on Workcamp.
- Search and find -- Say, "Stand up and search the room and find an object that is small, flat, solid and round. Don't let anyone know when you've found it. When you do, come whisper in my ear and if you are right I'll nod. Then you need to shout, "I see the light!" Then stand by me. The object is a coin. Then read, Luke 15:8-10 about the woman who loses one coin and searches carefully till she finds it.
- Snake Shake -- kids form long line with hands on shoulders. Object is for the person in the front to catch the tail. Yell, "Ready, snake, go!" to start it off.
- Link-a-doodadoo (sp?) -- in this game, everyone gets into pairs and lock arms. Thus, everyone is standing akimbo (there's a good word for you!). One person is it (or two), and then a couple people are running away. To get away, they lock arms with one of the pairs. The person on the opposite side of the pair has to begin running. If you are tagged, guess what? You're it! (Whatever 'it' means).
- Pictionary! Teens vs. Adults!

- **Opening Game** — Get into small groups and then each group will be given an object that they pass around while music is playing. When the music stops, whoever is holding the object has to stand up and do something goofy:
- 1) Please pretend for the group that you are juggling imaginary chain saws.
  - 2) Go to someone in another group and say, “My you have beautiful eyes.”
  - 3) Run around your group
  - 4) Point to the sky and say, “It’s a bird, it’s a plane, no it’s Super Man.” (if that’s stupid, you can come up with something else).
  - 5) Jog in slow motion
  - 6) Break dance
- (\*\* Each time the object comes to that person in successive rounds, they have to do that action.)
- **Spoons** -- Key word -- ‘Spoon’ Everyone throws a spoon in the middle. When the word ‘spoon’ is said, they have to try and grab one. Take one out. If you don’t get one...

“I opened the drawer and pulled out a knife, a fork and a one of those things you use for the bowls.”

“I looked out at the moon, which by the way, looked like a loon. And thought to myself, isn’t it too soon for the moon to look like a loon.”

“Anyway, back to my story.”

“Wait a second. Hey, Cassandra, could you make sure we have spoons for the end of the program.”

=====

Ok, our next key word is “Coke.”

“Back to my meal. I pulled out a spoon.”

“Got a glass out of the cupboard, the one I got from old bloke.”

I found some Pepsi but not that darn Cola. Now, wait a second, I didn’t say “Coke.”

=====

Ok, our next word is fork.

“I got the spoon and the cola, and my spoon, after looking out at the moon, which looked like a loon -- in June of course.”

“So, I said, I think I am going to take this meal on the road. I got in my car and starting driving. I had my knife, my spoon and my dorky friend. His name was Mork. Now, wait a second, I didn’t say the ‘F’ word.” (ok, maybe drop this line).

O.k., so we were driving and looking for this diner. We were confused since there was a fork in the road...

- Top Secret Mission -- Give everyone a card when they come into Youth Group with hidden directions as to what they have to do. They aren’t supposed to share what their secret mission is. For example:

Meet someone new and find out where his/her shoes came from.

Compliment 5 different people on something.

Find someone who hasn’t finished his/her secret mission and help them finish it

Give five people high fives

Introduce two people who don’t know each other

Find something you have in common with 3 other people

Get someone to sing to you

Meet someone new and learn the names of their siblings.

- Over Under -- Ball under legs, then over head, under, over... Relay Race

- 3 Draw Musical Improv -- 3 bowls. Each team will pick a children’s song (e.g. “Mary Had a Little Lamb”), a musical genre (classical, rap, rock, hip hop, etc.), then 2 odd words (‘conundrum’, etc.). Have ‘celebrity’ judges who will judge which group wins (give them about 15 minutes to prepare). Video tape and show another time...

### **\$1000 Bill Exchange**

For this game you need to make your own money on your computer (be sure it's clearly phony or it might be a federal offense). Give each person 10 of the bills. They are to try to win as many as possible from their peers by challenging them one on one doing one of three things:

Thumb wrestling

Rock, paper, scissors

Flipping a coin

#### **Rules:**

You must accept any challenge

Sudden death, no two out of three

Challenger has to have a coin and is "heads" on the coin toss.

\*If you are unable or don't want to make play money, see Penny Challenge ([Click Here](#)); it's similar but uses a bunch of pennies.

Also see Top Dollar ([Click Here](#)).

#### **Examples:**

Jamal broke his **arm** in 6th grade.

Alana plays **basketball**.  
Nissa's favorite **candy** is Snickers.  
Evan's **dad** is a dentist.

Put the person's name and info on a line. Cannot use the same person for more than four times.  
Set a 5-7 minute time limit and see who has the most. Have several (small group, have all) people share interesting discoveries about each other.

**The Point:** Getting to Know You

Also see Alphabet Pockets ([Click Here](#)).

### **Ape, Man, Lady**

This is a variation of Rock-Paper-Scissors. Have people pair off. When the signal is given, each person strikes a pose like an ape, man, or lady. Be sure to demonstrate what each looks like ahead of time. The ape beats the lady (because King Kong took the lady), man beats the ape, the lady gets the man. Eliminate the losers and pair the winners until you get a champion.

*Idea from Youth For Christ*

Also see Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur ([Click Here](#)) or Ninja, Gun, Gorilla ([Click Here](#)).

### **Candy Hunt**

This game works as a crowd breaker for large groups. Gather a few distinctly different types of candy and tape them under the chairs of your audience before the meeting. Keep in mind when deciding how many types of candy you use that you will want the teams to be as evenly numbered as possible. Have your MC explain the activity as follows:

1. Groups must look underneath their seat, grab the candy bar (or individually wrapped small candy), and then find the other people in the room with that candy bar.
2. Once all team members have found their respective group, they must eat their candy and present their wrappers to one person on the team who will bring them all to the MC.

This gets the crowd up and interacting and provides a boost of energy to your meeting. It is also a good idea to have some high energy background music.

### **Clothespin Mixer**

Pass out about 4-5 clothespins per kid in the room and instruct them to pin them on their own sleeves. Explain that when the music begins, the object of the game is to get all clothes pins off themselves and on to someone else. Turn off lights and turn on strobes and music. (You may want to put girls on one side of room and guys on another; guys can get a little frisky sticking clothespins on girls).

Explain that when the lights come on, one or two people should have about 100 pins on them - pull them up and parade the winner.

At the end you won't want them playing with the pins all night during the talk, so dress a tough kid or leader up front in protective gear (motorcycle helmet with face shield, chest protector or thick jacket, turtleneck, scarf, gloves, shin guards, thick pants, etc.); and put a bulls-eye on their chest. Tell everybody to grab all their clothes pins and bring in your human target and play music



as they throw or pin their clothes pins at him. Kids can't believe they are doing this, and when you stop the music, all your pins are gathered up at the front.

*Added by Young Life*

### **Clumps and Clumps with a Twist**

Any size room. Easy game used to divide your group into teams. Simply yell, "Form a group according to . . . (see suggestions below)." If you're looking for a certain number of people per team, just say, "Form a group of 7!" If you end up with a remainder, then have staff go around and divide the leftovers on teams.

**Variation:** Once in their groups, the game leader reads a question from the list below (or write your own) and everyone in the group answers. When the majority in the crowd have answered, leader directs them to mingle again.

**Clumps:** height, hair color, # cavities, # siblings, shirt color, number of people in your immediate family, month of birth, favorite color, grade, middle initial, school you attend.

#### **Questions:**

- What is your favorite cartoon (or cartoon character)?
- Who do you most admire?
- What animal is most like your personality?
- What would you do with \$100,000?
- What do you hope to be doing in 10 years?

Also see Keys ([Click Here](#)) & Your Number is Up ([Click Here](#)).

### **Communication Challenge**

Give everyone a number. They have to arrange themselves in numerical order by communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it often is pretty amusing. For Round Two, have people arrange themselves in order of birth or in calendar months (like the game, Mute Organization).

*Added by Youth For Christ*

Also see Inversion ([Click Here](#)) & Mute Organization ([Click Here](#)).

### **Curly, Moe, and Larry**

Groups of 20-30 sit or stand in a circle. One person is in the middle and points to someone in the circle and says either "Curly," "Mo," or "Larry". The person pointed to must respond with a name before the person in the middle can count out loud to ten. The name the person shouts depends on the name the person in the middle says:

"Curly": say the name of the person on your right.

"Moe": say your own name.

"Larry": say the name of the person on your left.

If they succeed, the person in the middle stays and repeats the process with someone else in the circle. If they fail, they change places with the person in the middle.

After a while, you may want to add a second person to the middle. After five minutes, rotate half of each group to another group, or combine two groups and put a second person in the middle.

**The Point:** Remembering names of people in your group.

Also see *Newspaper Name Nail (aka Whomp'em)* ([Click Here](#)).

### **Dollar Surprise**

Mingling game. One or two people have a dollar. Everyone goes around shaking hands. Each student with a dollar passes his/her dollar off to the tenth person he/she shakes hands with. Keep going... if you get the dollar, pass off to tenth person. When music stops, person with dollar keeps it.

*Added by Young Life*

Also see *Hi, My Name Is* ([Click Here](#)) and *Mingle for Money* ([Click Here](#)).

### **Egg, Chicken, Dinosaur**

The goal of this game is to work your way up by beating other players at Rock-Scissors-Paper to the "position" of king or queen.

Everyone starts out as an egg. You find another egg and play Rock-Scissors-Paper. The winner "grows" into a chicken who finds another chicken to play against. Whoever wins "grows" into a dinosaur. The loser returns to being an egg.

Once a dinosaur you must find another dinosaur to play against. If you lose you step down to a chicken. The next step is becoming a prince or princess, which of course means playing against another prince or princess. If you win you become a King or Queen and stand off to the side. If you lose you return to a dinosaur. The game is played until there is one egg, chicken, dinosaur and prince. All other players will be kings or queens.

The fun in all this?: Eggs waddle on the ground in a little ball, chickens walk and squat while flapping their wings and "clicking", dinosaurs "roar" standing up. Princes/princesses "prance" around holding an imaginary scepter while kings and queens stand off to the side victoriously.

*Added by Brad Williams*

Also see Ape, Man, Girl & Ninja, Gun, Gorilla, on both the Mixer & Upfront pages.

### **Find Someone Who**

Great for large or small groups. Give out the "Find Someone Who" list to students and have them go from student to student looking for someone who meets the descriptions on their list.

**Example:** Find someone who is wearing blue pants. The student who fits this description signs their name. Students then go off to find someone else that meets another description on their list. The winner is the one who has their sheet filled out first and most accurately. You should read aloud the list with the person's name who signed it. Have the student who signed the list verify the information.

**Example:** Find someone who can belch the alphabet. If Joe signed that item, have Joe come up and demonstrate.

**Items needed:**

- Find Someone List (make one up and make enough copies for everyone.)
- Pencils or pens

**Four Corners**

Any size room. Choose an assistant, preferably a leader, to come up front. The assistant will turn his or her back from the group or put on a blind fold. Then explain that the entire group must choose to stand in one of the four corners of the room which are numbered from 1 to 4. The assistant will then yell out a number from 1 to 4 and everyone in that corner must have a seat. Once those people have a seat people in the remaining 3 corners are given time to switch corners to any of the 4 corners. Then another number is yelled out and those students sit down.

Keep calling out corners and having them switch around until there is only one or a few people who are the winners. It gets the whole group moving and having fun and takes no preparation to play.

*Added by Scott Williams*

**Four on a Couch**

Great Small Group Game: Create a circle with chairs and one couch - enough seats for everyone playing plus one extra seat. 2 girls and 2 guys start off by sitting on the couch; everyone else in the chairs. Give every person playing a paper to write their name on. They are to turn their names in to you.

Mix the names up and redistribute them back to the youth, making sure no one gets their own name. They are not to tell which name they have. The purpose of the game is for the guys to get all 4 guys on the couch and the girls to get all 4 girls on the couch. The person to the left of the empty seat calls out a name of someone in the circle. Whoever is HOLDING THAT NAME (not the one whose name it is, i.e John calls Amy's name, and Jeff is holding Amy's name.) gets up and sits on the empty chair. The person who called the name and the person who sat on the chair, then exchange papers with names on it (that way the same name does not stay with the same person, it makes it more challenging). The person to the left of the new empty seat calls a new name. (the same name cannot be repeated 2x in a row)

Again, the purpose is for the guys to get the 2 girls off the couch and vice versa. This is a really fun game but it can last a long time.

*Added by Leah*

**Gabbing Groups**

This is a good mixer for groups who may not know each other very well. It is also a good introduction to sharing personal information and feelings in small group situations.

Call out a characteristic and have kids form groups of different numbers based on the characteristic. Make sure kids are forming groups with people they don't know very well. Have groups indicate they are complete by joining hands in a circle and not talking. You should know

everyone is in a group by the silence. After they are in groups have them introduce themselves and share something. Make sure the sharing starts out as silly or easy to talk about subjects and advances to more difficult subjects as the rounds continue. Play three or four rounds. You can use the characteristics to get kids into comfortable or uncomfortable groups depending on what you want to work on. Or to break up cliques during small group discussions.

### **Example Rounds**

1. Everyone wearing shorts or skirts get into groups of three; everyone in jeans get in groups of four.

Introduce yourselves to everyone in your group then share the funniest thing that happened to you in the last week.

2. Everyone get into groups of four according to your eye color. (So, there may be more than one group of those with brown eyes, for example.)

Introduce yourselves to everyone in your group then share your oldest childhood memory.

3. Everyone get into groups of three by age.

Introduce yourselves to everyone in your group then share the dumbest thing you did or said in the last week.

**The Point:** You can use this game as a Getting-to-know-you activity or as a segue into your regular small group discussion. For more random questions, click [here](http://www.thesource4ym.com/outreach/topic.asp?ID=108)  
<http://www.thesource4ym.com/outreach/topic.asp?ID=108>.

*Added by Davis Watts*

### **Getting To Know It**

Split the group into girls and guys. (Leader's are excluded, as you will be the panel of judges.) Put teams on opposite sides of the room. Dedicate one person from each group to be "it". Give each group 5 minutes to find out as much about "it" as they can. After 5 minutes, have each person go around and say something about "it". (It may be something they like, something they don't like, something have done, etc.)

Once each group has had a chance to speak, the panel of judges (leaders) will ask some questions to each group. If the group can answer them, that is good and looked highly upon. After the judges are done asking questions, they will decide on who had better information about the person. It's up to you if you want to judge strictly by opinion, panel vote (holding up fingers or cards to indicate "Team 1" or "2"), or award points with the higher points winning.

Encourage each group to not make all the information physical, such as hair color or eye color.

### **Sample questions:**

1. What is your favorite pizza?
2. What is your favorite kind of weather and why?
3. If you could go anywhere on a vacation for a week, where would you go?
4. What would you do with \$1,000 dollars cash?
5. Share a moment in your life when you remember being the most happy.
6. Share a moment in your life when you were really mad.
7. Share an embarrassing moment?

*Added by Nicole*

**The Point:** Getting To Know You, Communication

Also see Getting To Know You Better on Anywhere page.

### **Getting To Know You Better**

Divide into 2 even teams. For larger groups, divide into 4 teams and have a play-off with the 2 winning teams and 2 losing teams. Give each person a blank 3x5 card (or piece of paper) and have them write 5 little known facts about themselves and sign their name. Examples: I have a pet snake; my middle name is Hortense; I was born in Mexico City; I hate pizza; the carpet in my bedroom is green.

Collect all the cards and keep separate stacks for each team. The game is now ready to play.

The object is for students to name the person on the card that the leader draws (from the other team's stack of cards) in as few clues as possible. Begin by opening up the bidding between the teams, for example: "We can name that person in five clues!" or, "We can name that person in four clues!" etc. The team that wins the bidding has five seconds to guess after the reading of the appropriate number of clues.

**The Point:** Great game for getting to know students after a summer break, an influx of new students, or if you just started leading a group.

*Added by Young Life*

Also see Getting To Know It on Anywhere page.

### **Give Yourself A Hand!**

**Items Needed:** Paper, Markers or Ink pens, Safety Pins

You can either pre-make paper hands or have each participant trace their own hand on paper and pin it on their back. Then the whole group walks around and writes a one word POSITIVE description of the person whose back they are writing on. (ex. Nice, Pretty, Fun, Exciting, Loving, Kindhearted, etc.)

Allow enough time, depending on group size, for everyone to circulate. Then have students come up front and read what everyone said about them.

**The Point:** Motivator for positive self esteem.

*Added by Sylvia Tucker*

### **Guess Again**

Each person chooses to be a famous character, actor, cartoon character, or otherwise famous person. They only tell one leader who makes a note of who everyone is. The leader reads out only the list of characters slowly - twice w/a bigger group. Warn everyone to pay attention as part of the challenge is that the leader doesn't read the list again (especially if they're playing).

Choose someone to start by saying to anyone, "I think you are...". If the guesser is right, that person joins their team. If they are wrong, that person becomes the guesser and guesses someone else.

Gradually teams form (teams are allowed to share with each other who they are). The winner is either the team with the most people in their team, or if anyone remains unguessed, they win.

**Variation:** Form teams of 3-4 at the beginning and say they *cannot* tell each other their "identities".

*Added by Joelle Throp*

Also see Guess My Name on Anywhere page.

### **Hi, My Name Is**

Plant several people in your crowd who have a one dollar bill, a certificate to something, or any prize of your liking. Tell everyone that they need to go and introduce themselves to and learn the names of as many people as they can meet. Have your "planted people" give the prize to the 15th person that introduces themselves to them. Once the prizes have been given, announce who received them and who had the prizes.

**The Point:** A great get to know you game!

Also see Dollar Surprise & Mingle For Money, both on Anywhere page.

### **Human Typewriters**

Pin a large card bearing a letter of the alphabet to each person's arm. Give each person a small card and a pencil. The goal is for letters to get together and spell words. Once they've spelled a word, they write it on their card.

Then separate everyone and look for new words. Award points for each real word and a prize to the longest list of words. Make sure no one tries to exclude vowels or certain consonants!

*Added by Young Life*

Also see Human Scrabble & Human Scrabble For Dummies, both on Anywhere page.

### **Jelly Bean Trade**

Everyone for themselves. Everyone is handed 10 jelly beans. They are to try to get 10 of one color by trading with other people one at a time. First person to get all ten of a color they want wins.

Also see M & M Scarf on Upfront page.

*Idea by Young Life*

### **Mute Organization**

Simply announce that you want everyone lined up across the room by birth date. Only catch: no talking. Once they are all lined up, ask certain people their birthdays just to be sure.

You can have them do the same thing, but by shoe size, height, etc.

**The Point:** Communication

Also see Communication Challenge, Inversion, & Numbers Race, all on Anywhere page.

### **Name Game 2**

Small group game. Provide pencils and index cards. As each person arrives have them write their name clearly on an index card. Tape card to their back.

Give everyone another index card. On "Go!" with hyped music in the background, everyone copies names off backs of other people, while trying to keep them from seeing the card on their own back.

Determine a time limit and give a prize to the person w/the most names on their card.

**The Point:** Getting to Know You

Also see Atlas on Anywhere page and Name Game & Name Tag Mixer, both on Mixers page.

### **Name Tag Mixer**

Before kids arrive, prepare name-tags by writing an easy-to-read number on each one. Also prepare slips of paper with instructions such as "Introduce #4 to #12, "Find out #7's favorite pizza topping," "Shake hands with #5 and #13," and so on. Don't use numbers higher than the number of kids expected. It's better to make instructions for #1 to #10 and have duplicate name- tags for #1, #2, #3, and so on. Give kids a name-tag and slip of paper, then send them out to complete their assignment.

Also see Alphabet Game, Atlas, Name Game, & Name Tag Mixer, all on Anywhere page.

### **Newspaper Name Nail (aka Whomp'em)**

Small Group mixer. Have everyone sit in a circle or something as close as you can get. Then, have each person give their name and make sure each name is clearly said so that all others can hear it. After going through the names once or even twice, have someone start in the middle by asking someone to call the name of someone in the room. The person in the middle proceeds to find the person and try to whomp'em with a rolled up newspaper (or pillow) on their knee before that person can say both their name and someone else's name in the room.

If they get whomped before they can say their name and someone else's name, they are now "it". Also, if the person whose name is called fails to say both their name and another person's name, they will have to be it. The person who is in the middle takes the place of the person they whoop. This helps people learn each others name and mixes kids around with each other.

**Items needed:** Rolled up newspaper or pillow (preferable)

**The Point:** Getting to know you, remembering each other's names.

Also see Getting To Know It, Getting To Know You, Identity Circle, Name Tag Mixer, Name Toss, & Who Hit Me?, all on Anywhere page.

### **Ninja, Gun, Gorilla**

Same as "Rock-Scissors-Paper", only you use your whole body. Play it up huge, having someone demonstrate each: ninja-guy in karate stance yelling "waaaaa!"; gun-hold finger gun and say



“BANG!”; gorilla-arms in air & beating chest, saying “ooo, ooo, ahh, ahh, ahh!”

Ninja beats gun.  
Gun beats gorilla  
Gorilla beats ninja.

Keep going until all are eliminated; fun to find a champ. It helps to have the students who are out to go to the outside and the people still playing in the middle.

### **Puzzle Mixer**

As students arrive, give them each the piece to a kid’s jigsaw puzzle (minimum 10 pcs, maximum 25). If you have extras left over, place them back into the correct puzzle frames. Put all frames in the center of the room. Have students locate the correct puzzles to which their pieces belong. The first group to completely put a puzzle together wins. (Great mixer which also serves as a tool for dividing teams)

### **Questionnaire Game**

For this game you'll need as many pens as students and a pre-typed/copied questionnaire.

Have all your students fill out an anonymous questionnaire when they come in, with questions/statements like, "My favorite band is.." "My dream car is...". Once finished, pass the questionnaires out randomly (to someone different than the person who filled it out) and yell "Go!" Students have to walk around asking each other questions, trying to find whose questionnaire they have.

**The Point:** Getting to know you

See Getting to Know It, Getting to Know You, & Getting to Know You Better, all on Anywhere page.

### **Real Identity**

Great "getting to know you" and memory game. Everyone is in a circle and each takes a turn saying their name and something about him/herself (example, "Hi, I'm John and I play football"). The next person needs to say the previous person's name and item of interest before saying their own (example, "He's John, he plays football and I'm Mary and I torture small animals"). As this game moves on, people need to remember more and more information. With bigger groups you can have them only repeat the names to save time.

### **Ro-Sham-Bo Train**

Everyone grab a partner. Rock paper scissors - if you lose you go follow behind the person that beat you and they will do it again with another pair. Keep this up. A large train will build behind the people that keep winning. Eventually someone will have everyone behind him. He or she wins a prize.

### **Secret Identity (aka, Who's On My Back?)**

Have everyone secretly write down the name of a person on a small piece of paper or a sticker. It

has to be a person that everyone in the room would know about - a famous historical figure, an actor or sports celebrity, or a popular politician. Then have them tape the name on the back of the person on their left.

Everyone goes around and asks people yes or no questions about who is on their back. They can only ask each person one question. The person who can do it in the least number of asks wins.

### **Shoe Pile**

Have everyone take off one of their shoes and throw it into a big pile. You might even designate someone as the Shoe Salad Tosser, instructing them to mess up the pile, so people can't remember where certain shoes landed in the pile. Then everyone needs to pick out a shoe from the pile and proceed to find the person who belongs to that shoe. This works well for a large group.

**Option II:** The other option is to put everyone's shoes in the pile and instruct them that they each need to get their own shoe, put it on, tie it, and stand back up. First one standing is the winner.

### **Shuffle The Deck Mixer**

Hand everyone a playing card as they come in. During the mixer call out different combinations that they have to form a group with. Example: four of a kind, a flush, two pairs, etc.

**Option:** Once they get in their group, have them answer a pre-planned ice-breaker question. It could be something fun and related or unrelated to the discussion that night.

### **Toe Fencing**

All the players pair off, lock hands, and try to tap the top of one of their partner's feet with their own feet. In other words, one player tries to step on the other player's foot while their hands are clasped. Of course, since players are also trying to avoid having their feet stepped on, they are all hopping around the floor in a frantic dance.

When a player has had his foot tapped three times, he is out of the game, and the winning partner challenges another winner. The game continues until only one person is left (or until the music runs out).

### **TP Tell All**

**Large Group:** Divide into groups of about 15. (Could do this by way of another mixer game that divides the kids into groups - ex. Barnyard). Hand each group a roll of toilet paper with the instruction that each person is to "tear off as much as he/she needs" with no clarification. Once everyone has their tp squares, in their groups, each person must tell one fact about themselves for every square of TP they tore off.

**Small Group:** Divide into groups of between 3 and 5. Hand each group a roll of toilet paper with the instruction that each person is to "tear off between 3 and 5 sheets" with no clarification. Once everyone has their tp squares, in their groups, each person must tell one fact about themselves for every square of TP they tore off.

### **Valentine Candy Mixer**

Pass out Valentine "conversational" heart candy to everyone, then split up into groups and have each group come up with a poem or funny story using what it says on their hearts.

### **Your Number is Up**

Great for dividing into teams. Instruct your whole group to walk randomly around the room. About every ten seconds or so, call out a number. Everyone in the game must immediately form a group hug, made up of the number of people that you called. This sometimes leaves some people unable to form a group because they don't have enough people — they are out of the game. Repeat until you only have two people left and declare them the winners.

### **ICE CHEST**

This is the one of the great up front games where you give a chance for men to be men . . . and for them to later wonder whether or not they should have volunteered!

Pre-arrange for three to five guys to come up front and prove how manly they are. Each guy will have three pre-arranged girls to be his assistants. Provide each guy with a XXX Extra large T-shirt which they put on over their bare torso and tuck in real well (again- smart to have done prior). Have a cooler of at least 20 pounds of ice (I use about 40 pounds) in front of each volunteer, with three large scoopers handy.

When you say "go," the girls begin shoveling the ice into their guy's T-shirt. This is hilarious to watch and painful to experience.

Give the 10 second warning after a minute or two, depending on the crowds interest.

You can simply declare the guy with the most ice in his shirt the winner, or you can have the crowd vote by applause.

Hint: Save yourself a lot of clean up by having the ice-stuffed guys escorted outside for emptying and changing of clothes.

#### **Supplies:**

20 pounds of ice PER contestant  
Cooler for each 20 pounds or so  
3-5 XXX Extra Large T-shirts

### **SURGICAL GLOVE BLOW UP**

Get some surgical gloves- rubber- the kind that blow up. (You'll want to find a medical supply place and buy some large ones.) Have several contestants come up and pull the gloves over their own heads, all the way down to just above their mouths. (CAUTION: ask for kids that DON'T have latex allergies!)

Have them blow with their noses, inflating the gloves on their head. After 90 seconds see who's glove is blown the biggest. (Take Caution that the balloons don't pop or snap students in the eye! Also, make sure none of your student participants don't have a latex allergy—obviously, they can't participate if they do!)

#### **Supplies:**

Surgical glove for every contestant

### **TO TELL THE TRUTH**

Like the old 70's TV game show. Pre-arrange four contestants for this game. Take them aside beforehand and have them share a funny/interesting story that happened to them when they were young that they can say in one sentence. (e.g. My name is Billy and when I was 5, I was walking with my mom and a big guy ran by and grabbed my mom's purse!) If that is the story that sounds the best, have all 4 contestants use their real name and say the same story. (e.g. My name is Teresa and when I was 5, I was walking with my mom and a big guy ran by and grabbed my mom's purse!) All contestants will tell the audience the exact same thing as if it is their story- but only one of them is telling the truth. Open up the audience to question individual contestants (like an Oprah show) and three of the contestants will have to lie through their teeth. Then have the audience vote who this really happened to. Then have the real person step forward. Great fun!

### **JOUST**

Why is it that we enjoy beating the snot out of one another?

Place buckets up-side down, about 3 feet apart.

- 2 players stand on buckets, each with a joust stick or pillow (pillow fight style)
- When judge says "go," each player tries to knock the other player off his bucket.
- Try to discourage "head shots" and other "cheap shots."

Remember to stop this game while they still want more!

**Supplies:** -2 five gallon buckets

- 2 jousting sticks (4 ft. sticks with foam rubber ends) or two pillows
- Soft area to play (grass area or padded floor)

### **CANDLE BLOW/GINGER ALE DRINK**

Two people sitting very close at a small table in chairs facing each other compete to drink a full glass of Ginger Ale. They have a candle (which they can never let go of) in their left hand resting on the left corner of the table, and a lighter and a Ginger Ale in front of them. They may only drink the Ginger Ale when the candle is lit. They may blow out the other person's candle but they cannot touch any of the other person's supplies. The winner is the person who can finish their Ginger Ale first when their candle is lit.

- if you move your candle off the left side of the table, you lose!
- if you touch the other person's candle, you lose!
- if you touch the other person's Ginger Ale, you lose!
- if you touch the other person's lighter, you lose!

You must find the balance between drinking and blowing out your opponent's candle.

**Supplies:**

- two candles in candle holders (so that wax doesn't drip on contestant's hand)
- two lighters
- two clear glasses
- bottle of Ginger Ale

small table and chairs

## **GRAB IT**

Divide into two teams. Put them into two lines parallel and next to one another (about 3 feet apart) sitting down and holding hands. At the back of the line put a bucket of water with a bar of soap in it (if this is on carpet, put a layer of towels down- the water tends to splash, then drip . . . let's face it, this is a messy game!) between the two lines. Stand at the head of the lines with a quarter in your hand. Instruct them that you are going to flip the quarter so only the first person in line can see the results. They are not to yell out how the quarter landed or even look back at their team. If the quarter lands on heads the persons in front are to squeeze their hands. The rest of the line is to squeeze their hands if their other hand is squeezed so that they can communicate to the last person in the line that the quarter is indeed heads not tails. If the last person in line has their hand squeezed then they are to try to grab the soap out of the bucket before the last person on the other team does. The person successful in retrieving the soap gets to go to the front of the line. The problem arrives however when the message is wrongly communicated to the person in back and they grab the soap only to find out that the quarter was actually tails. At that point the person in front must go to the back of the line. The first team to get their entire team forward in line (back person to front- not front to back), wins.

**Supplies:** two buckets full of water  
two bars of soap  
two (or more) towels  
a quarter

## **FOOT TO EAR**

This is kind of like musical chairs . . . but much, much better. It works best with an even # of guys and girls (you can make other divisions work- but we'll just talk about guy/girl now). Have the girls stand in a circle. Now have the guys stand outside of the circle of girls, each guy next to one girl, his partner for the game. Have the inner circle (girls) walk clockwise when the music begins and the outer circle (guys) walk counter-clockwise. When the music stops the leader will yell out two body parts (e.g. "foot to ear"). The girl's part is always first (ladies first) and the guy's is second. When the music stops and the leader yells the body parts, the partners need to run straight to each other and put those designated body parts together (e.g. the girl would run to the guy and put her foot on his ear). Great game . . . just think before you yell body parts (e.g. don't yell "chest to head").

**Supplies:**  
music

## **THE BIG SQUEEZE**

This game saved me a few times because I was always looking for games that would work for over 100 students. This game is a good one for a big group (at least 20, but up to hundreds). Quickly divide into 2 or more teams and announce that each team will be racing to squeeze into the shape of the item mentioned. For example: if the leader yells out the word "football" the teams must squeeze into the shape of a football as would be seen from above. Keep score- first team to 10 wins.

Good squeeze shapes ("Squeeze into the shape of ...")  
The State of California  
A dog  
A pair of sunglasses  
A baseball bat  
A shark  
A map of the U.S.A.  
Jonathan (your youth group leader)

### **LET'S MAKE A DEAL**

You can draw 5 names from the audience- or use the "Big Balloon Bop" to choose students. My assistant walked on stage with a big box labeled "BOX 1." I told the young man on stage with the #1 card that he could have the box or . . . \$10. He wanted the box. I dug in my pocket and offered him another \$10, a total of \$20. This went on until he finally took \$40 cash. We revealed box #1 contained a \$5 container of liquorices.

Contestant #2 learned that previously the money was the better option. However, when I offered him box #2 he wanted it. I offered him \$40, then \$60. Some of the crowd is yelling "take the money!" The other half of the crowd is yelling "The Box! The Box!" He still demanded the box. Finally I offered him \$80 cash . . . he took it. We opened box 2 to find a TV/VCR combo worth almost \$200. The crowd went crazy!

Contestant #3 was convinced that the box was pretty good! We went through the same thing and after he still demanded the box after offering him \$40 cash, I told him he could have the box! We opened the box . . . and he won a TROUT!!! Yes, a cold dead fish! The crowd went crazy! You should have seen the poor kid's face.

Prize 4 was a singing stuffed reindeer and prize 5 was a certificate to our next event.

Fun stuff- I've never done it without rehearsing the order with my assistant. The key is smooth transitions and knowing what's in the boxes!

### **Supplies:**

A pocket full of money  
an assistant or two who rehearsed with you  
5 pre-arranged prizes that fit in the same sized boxes  
5 labeled boxes (eg: BOX 1, BOX 2 . . .)

**GUESS WHO** Tell everyone to write a name on the provided piece of paper WITHOUT showing anyone else. Let them know that others will be trying to guess which name they wrote, so they should try to be discreet with the name they choose. Each player writes the name they choose and then passes it to the judge. After the judge receives all the slips, he mixes them up and writes the names on an easel, chalkboard, or piece of posterboard for all to see.

The judge picks a real person (Frank), not a name on the board, to start. Frank chooses someone and guesses what their name might be. "Bob", I think you wrote "Cinderella." If Frank is correct, Bob is now on Frank's team and Frank gets to guess again. If Bob is not "Cinderella" then it's Bob's turn to guess.

Now Bob can ask anyone he pleases. Bob might ask Julie, "Julie, are you "Abraham Lincoln?" If Julie is Abraham Lincoln, she goes on Bob's team and Bob guesses someone else. If not- it's now Julies turn.

Once people join teams, they work together to guess other people onto their team. Once the person who's name was still anonymous is guessed correctly, that entire team moves to the guesser's team. Play continues until all but one player has been guessed- he or she will end up being the player with everyone on his team.

**Supplies:**

pieces of paper for everyone

pens for everyone

an easel, chalkboard, or piece of poster board to write all the names on for all to see

**SILENT ANIMAL CIRCLE**

This game is really fun. It sounds goofy- but I've had gang kids playing this game and having a blast! It gets difficult with more than twenty people; it is better for groups of 15 or so. It's perfect for smaller groups, leadership retreats, etc.

Everyone gets in a circle and is given an animal in which they are assigned a hand motion that represents that animal.

*Hand Motions (a few examples)* Elephant- hang one arm down with your other arm wrapped around it, holding your nose (like a trunk)

Mosquito- with your left hand hold up a peace sign with the inside of your hand facing you, with your right hand poke your index finger pointing forward and place it in the middle of the peace sign in your left hand; now bring your hands to your face like you have a mosquito nose

Cow- put your hand at your stomach with your fingers sticking out like an udder

Deer- point a finger on each hand upward, placing your hands on top of your head (like single horns)

Moose- open your hands with fingers spread wide and place hands on your head with thumbs touching the top of your head (moose antlers)

*How To Play*

Let's say that 12 people are playing this game. They are all in a circle. The Elephant, in the 12 o'clock position of the circle is the leader. Then in the 11 o'clock position the mosquito then whatever order you like. The animal is always in the same position- as people move, they assume the animal in that particular seat or place in the circle. The object is to get to be the elephant. As people mess up in this game, they have to move back to the one o'clock position and work their way up again as others mess up.

The elephant starts the game by doing his own signal then another animal's signal, such as the cow. The cow must then do his own signal and another animal's signal immediately. A certain rhythm or speed is set by the elephant (by how fast he or she does the signals). Everyone must keep that rhythm- no hesitations. If an individual pauses, forgets to do their signal, or messes up the signal in any way, then he or she must go back to the one o'clock position. Lets say that the cow is always in the 10 o'clock position. If the person that was the cow messes up, then he or she



goes to the one o'clock position and is now a snake (for example). The person who was the deer (in the 9 o'clock position) is now the cow and so on down the line. Whenever someone messes up, it is only the people below them that are affected and have to move up to a new animal. If the elephant messes up, everyone moves because he is the highest position.

### **REAL IDENTITY**

This is a great "get to know ya" and a memory game. I always play it at the beginning of the year when I have a bunch of new students. This game is where I end up learning their names.

Everybody is in a circle. Everyone takes a turn saying their name and something about him/herself (example, "Hi, I'm John and I play football."). The next person needs to say the previous person's name and item of interest before saying their own (example, "He's John, he plays football and I'm Mary and I torture small animals"). As this game moves on, people need to remember more and more information. With bigger groups you can have them only repeat the names to save time.

### **NEWSPAPER NAME SMACK**

Sad but true. When in doubt, resort to beating each other with objects. Students love this!

I started by putting everyone in a circle. I had everyone say their name around the circle. Then I grabbed a rolled up newspaper and asked "who would like to hit their friends?" After choosing someone (a lot of raised hands, I'm sure you guessed), I explained the goal at hand. (Notice I still haven't called this a game.) Here's how it goes:

Items needed: Rolled up newspaper or pillow (pillow is actually preferable).

Group size: Usually for no more than about 30-35 people

Have everyone sit in a circle or something as close as you can get. Then, have each person give their name and make sure each name is clearly said so that all others can hear it. After going through the names once or even twice, have someone start in the middle by asking a person to call the name of someone in the room. The person in the middle proceeds to find the person and tries to 'whop'em' with a rolled up newspaper (or pillow) before that person can say both their name and someone else's name in the room. If they get 'whooped' before they can say their name and someone else's name, they are now "it." Also, if the person whose name is called fails to say both their name and another person's name, they will have to be it. The person who is in the middle takes the place of the person they 'whoop.' This helps people learn each others' name and mixes kids around with each other. Great fun— students love it!

#### **Supplies:**

two rolled up newspapers (one for back up when the first shreds)

### **ANKLE BALLOON POP**

Give everyone a balloon and a piece of string or yarn. Have them blow up the balloon and tie it to their ankle. Then announce that they are to try to stomp out other people's balloons while keeping their own safe. Last person with a blown up balloon wins.

#### **Supplies:**

enough balloons for everyone  
enough PRE-CUT 18 inch pieces of string for everyone

### **STEAL THE BACON HOCKEY STYLE**

This one's great! Again, remember NOT to say, "Now we're going to play a game!" (Rule #1 of "THE SEVEN") Just announce that you need everyone to stand in two lines and start numbering them off.

This is the traditional "Steal the Bacon" but with hockey sticks and a ball. The idea is this: Divide into two teams (four if you're brave- then run the game the same but in a big square). Line each team along the sidelines of the play area. Number them off- teams must be even so each number has an opponent across the play area. Place approximately 10 hockey sticks in the middle of the play area and a small ball. Specify one wall as the direction one team will go- and the opposite wall for the other.

Yell out a number (11, for example). Both "number 11's" run out, pick up a hockey stick and try to hit the ball toward their specified wall (or goal). First to hit their wall (or goal) with the ball, wins that match.

This game gets more interesting as you yell out multiple numbers (eg: "3,7,13 and 15!") You end up with a little hockey match.

Students always love this game!

#### **Supplies:**

approx. ten hockey sticks  
1 ball

### **TAPE HEAD**

This is one of the best games you can play with a crowd or an audience!

The up-front person (M.C.) divides teams (in big audiences you can make each section of chairs a group). Each team has a designated team captain or runner standing in front of their section and wearing a hat with tape all over it (sticky side up). The M.C. then yells out a demand for a somewhat common item that people might have on them. The team finds that item and sticks it on their team captain's/runner's head. The first captain/runner with the item stuck to their head who runs up to the M.C. wins that round.

Good Items to Call:

I need a shoelace  
I need a student body card  
I need a piece of chewed gum  
I need a picture of a baby  
I need 3 necklaces tied together  
I need a drivers license  
I need a \$20 bill  
I need a self-plucked red hair  
I need 3 belts hooked together  
I need a hand written note

Teams must leave the items stuck on the hat until the end of the game.  
Great fun! Take Pictures!

**Supplies:**

enough "sticky hats" for each captain (each hat pre-taped with sticky side up)

**WHO'S ON MY BACK**

This is a great game that forces everyone to have to go around and meet others. Have everyone secretly write down the name of a person on a small piece of paper. It has to be a person that everyone in the room would know about (eg. Jesus, George Washington, Madonna, Brad Pitt, etc.) Then have them tape the name on the back of the person on their left. Everyone must now go around and ask people yes or no questions about who is on their back. They can only ask each person one question. The person who guesses their identity in the least number of asks wins.

**Supplies:**

pieces of paper for everyone  
pens for everyone  
piece of tape for everyone

**NUMBER ONE: TORPEDO**

This game is a gym version of the pool game "Sharks & Minnows." Using a basketball court or marking your own, you need a large rectangle. Two kids are chosen as the "launchers" while the rest of the group (anywhere from 15 to 50 kids works fine) lines up outside one of the short sides of the rectangle. The launchers stand on either of the long sides of the rectangle, armed with dodgeballs or something similar. A leader or youth is the caller. The caller shouts "TORPEDO!" and the kids start to run as fast as they can to get past the line on the other side, where they are safe. While they are running, the launchers try to hit as many people as possible with their dodgeballs, while staying behind their own lines. They usually can only get one good throw in, since they can't cross the line. Any runner who gets hit must sit down exactly where they are. They are now land mines.

Now it gets interesting. Each time the kids torpedo across the room, there are more and more land mines to hit them. The youth on the floor can try to touch the runners—they just need to act like their butt is cemented on the floor (remove any people doing the butt slide). Anyone touched must sit down too. Eventually you get down to two lonely runners, and finally, one winner.

Notes: This game is great for two reasons. First, you get to throw balls at teenagers! Secondly, it is fast paced, requires little skill on the part of the contestants, and is extremely fun!

**NUMBER TWO: CRISS CROSS (CRASH!)**

Divide into 4, equal-numbered teams. Send each team into a corner of your room. The object of the game is to see which team can get to the opposite (diagonal) corner of the room the fastest using the designated method that the leader calls out. If the leader calls out "hopping," the teams must hop to the opposite corner. This will create quite a "bottleneck" or "traffic jam" in the middle each time. Keep score of which team wins each crossing. First team to 5 wins.

Good Crossing Methods:

Hopping  
Wheel barrel (one person holding a partner's legs while they walk on hands)  
Crab Walk  
Sprint  
Backwards Walk (but tell them to look backwards)  
Skipping  
Crawling  
Eyes closed  
Rolling

Notes: Please, please, please put your 285 pound offensive linemen on the SAME team as the freshmen girls. Trust me!

### **NUMBER THREE: DEFEND YOUR SOCKS**

Somehow, mark a circle on the floor of your meeting room. A brightly colored tape works great...even a ring of leaders holding hands will do the job. Students take off **ONLY** their shoes, keeping their socks on, and get on the floor inside the marked circle. When the leader says GO, every student attempts to take off the socks of every other student in the circle. The last person with at least one sock on, wins! Very simple.

Notes: I minister in Florida. Most kids don't even wear socks during the summer/warmer months. If you are in a similar situation, you might only want to try this game during the winter/colder months when students are more apt to be dressed to play this game. Regardless, whenever you play this game, bring a few pair of clean socks from home to give to students who want to play, but did not wear socks to youth group that night.

### **NUMBER FOUR: PROTECT THE PRESIDENT**

For this game you need a volleyball-sized Nerf ball. Have your students stand in a wide circle with two people in the middle.

One person in the middle is the President, the other is the Bodyguard. The people comprising the circle have the Nerf ball, and throw it at the President. The bodyguard may do anything to block the ball with his body: jump, squat, dive, etc. The ball may **NEVER** touch the President. If the ball touches the President at any time, the person who threw the ball (or the last person to touch it) then becomes the Bodyguard, the Bodyguard becomes the President, and the President goes back into the circle.

What makes this exciting is that from the moment the President is hit, the new President is vulnerable because the transition is instantaneous. The new bodyguard must be fast at getting into the circle to defend him or her. This sometimes makes presidential turnover pretty quick, but it's exciting.

This game is **EXHAUSTING**, especially if the people in the middle are good. Be ready to sweat if you play. One strategy for the "shooters" is to pass the ball around the circle and keep it moving to wear the people in the middle down. They'll eventually tire and the President will get hit. As the kids get more experience at the game, they will develop strategies and tactics, and will thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Notes: This game is great fun with one ball. After a few minutes of play, try two balls. In any

event, have a couple of balls on standby because the balls are thrown all over the room. Having a couple of balls helps the game keep its pace.

### **NUMBER FIVE: TRASHCAN BASKETBALL**

Divide into two teams. This game is basically basketball, with each team having one of its players as the "basket."

Use a trashcan about the same size as your ball. Have each team choose a trash can holder (rotate regularly, its a fun place to be). Have each one stand up on a chair at each end of the room (they can't move from the chair or grab a ball- just move the trash can). Make a boundary of about 10 feet around each holder with tape. Anyone caught inside the tape must sit there indefinitely (at your discretion).

For large groups, add an extra ball or two. Players can only take 3 steps when they have the ball, so more are involved.

This is a fun game because, with the help of the can holder, almost anyone can make a full court shot. We usually pit the boys against the girls and really hype up the fact that the girls historically have won the trashcan basketball games. At tip off, we spring the surprise on the boys that they must play from their knees, and girls are allowed to tackle the boys at their discretion.

Note: It is best to have a referee in the middle of the action, ensuring each of your personalized rules gets enforced.

### **NUMBER SIX: PULL APART**

This game can be played in almost any setting, but we have found the floor of a big room to be best. Simply tape off a square in the middle of the floor and have every guy get inside of it and lay on the floor. Then they interlock arms and legs as best they can.

The girls are standing outside the circle. When the leader says GO, the girls run into the circle and try and pull the guys apart. They can tickle, they can work in tag-team fashion, they can do almost anything to break the guys apart and then drag them out of the circle.

Depending on how many boys and girls you have, vary the number of minutes you give the girls to accomplish this feat. (Usually about 4 minutes is enough.)

Note: For obvious reasons DO NOT reverse the roles of boys and girls in this game. Only allow the girls to be doing the pulling!

### **NUMBER SEVEN: MUGGER HUGGER**

Warning! This could be a potentially dangerous game for your leaders. You better trust them... or have THEM sign a waiver form...

Before the event, take stupid, close-up pics of every leader who is able to participate. Have them make a silly face, a scared face, anything atypical. When it comes time for the game, one by one, the leaders' faces are posted on the screens. (Power Point Format works just fine for this.) That leader then tries to evade a group of students who are in pursuit of them. Basically, what you get is leaders running around the room being chased by mobs of kids. The leader is effectively caught

when he/she is totally surrounded by at least 10 kids. Then you continue to the next victim, I mean leader.

Here's the specifics: All of the students are sitting on the floor, or in chairs, it does not matter. Then, one by one, a picture of a staffer will pop up on the screen. That staffer will then run from wherever he/she is in the room...all over the room. He can run down the aisles, around the chairs, across the stage, it does not matter. He is simply trying to avoid being caught and "brutally" hugged. It's great fun watching a staff leader running around the room with a mob of students chasing him.

As soon as that leader is caught and hugged, the slide show people can advance the presentation to the next leader. It works best to have the next leader's face pop up on the screen as soon as the previous leader has been mugger hugged.

Note: Make sure there are as few trip hazards on the floor as possible.

### **NUMBER EIGHT: HUMAN TIC TAC TOE**

Quickly form two EQUAL-NUMBERED teams and put them into two, single-file lines. Have a leader assign each student a number (1 – however long the line is. Yes, just like "Steal the Bacon.")

In the middle of the room, arrange 9 chairs in the shape of a Tic Tac Toe board (3 X 3).

The game begins when the leader shouts out a number. The two students who have that number then race to whatever position they choose. The quickest listener usually has the upper hand.

A student cannot sit on a chair that already has another player in it.

The game ends when one team has three players in a row, just like the regular game.

### **NUMBER NINE: MARSHMALLOW BASEBALL**

You have a room full of students and everyone wants to play. What do you do? Try Marshmallow Baseball.

Simply choose 4-5 students from the crowd and get them up front. Arrange 3 bases around the room in the shape of a diamond. Explain to the crowd that it is THEM versus the 4-5 students on stage.

A leader hands the first student a plastic bat (the "fat bat" ones work best as they are easy to hit with). The leader then pitches a big marshmallow to him/her. Baseball rules apply (fouls, strikes, etc). If the student gets a hit, the crowd members are to chase down the marshmallow and throw it at the batter/runner. The second batter then attempts to drive home the runner or him/herself. All the "batting" students have to do is score one student in (home) before getting three outs.

If you have a back wall that is 40 feet from home plate, use that as a homerun. This game is GREAT in a balcony equipped sanctuary. Homers are in the upper decks! Have a simple prize for the "batting" team in case they win (hats of the local baseball team, Big League Chew, etc.)

### **NUMBER TEN: WAR**

This one is simple and so much fun. All you need is a large box of those McDonald's playground, plastic balls (at least 200 of them!)

Split the room in half and pre-arrange some "cover" positions (couches, chairs, pulpits, really brave leaders...)

Send one half of the students to one side of the room and the other half to the other side. When a leader/referee says go, students begin throwing balls at the opposing team. When a student is hit, from enemy OR friendly fire, he/she is out and must leave the "field." Two variations include: (1) last man (like dodgeball... whoever doesn't get hit is still standing) and (2) capture the flag (if you play several rounds of this game, it's fun to play "capture the flag" format for the last round. You play it just like the other rounds, but with the added challenge of trying to get a flag from the other person's side of the court without being hit by a ball. You can create a 10 foot safety area around the flag if you wish—or use a basketball court key.)

Note: This is a great game to video tape for your Youth Ministry promo video. Also, have some leaders walking around ensuring that "hit" students leave the field.

Water cup pass. Passing the water through a series of cups to see who has the most water in bucket #2 at the end of the line. Teens stand in a line and pass the water on down the line by pouring it into each other's cups.

Shoe Kick Off. Whoever can kick their shoe off the furthest wins. Have them all stand behind the same line and kick off their shoes.

### *Team Building Game #2: Ideas As Building Blocks*

Create a fictional problem that must be solved. It could be a theoretical product, a brain teaser, a riddle, a design challenge — anything that needs a solution. Assemble your team, and have them write down an idea on a large sheet of paper. They only need to write a sentence or two.

Have them pass the paper to the person on their left, and instruct them to use the new idea to build another solution upon. Continue for several rounds, and then see what the results are. You may want to choose a fictional problem that allows you to reveal one aspect of the challenge each round.

**Purpose:** This exercise shows the value of everyone's ideas. As you work as a team, brainstorming sessions often sway towards the vocal and dominant personalities even though other team members have valuable ideas, too. By forcing these ideas to have equal footing, each team member's ability to contribute is established.



### ***Team Building Game #5: Use What You Have***

Divide your team into equal groups. Create a specific project with clear restrictions and a goal. For example, you might have your team create a device that involves movement without electricity, and moves a golf ball from point A to point B. The challenge is completely up to you.

Then give each team the same supplies to work from, or create a pile of available supplies in the middle of the room. Give them a specific time to complete the project, making sure to mention that they can only use what is available, though how they use it is completely up to them. The final reveal is a fun event, and a great opportunity for your team to compete.

**Purpose:** Problem solving as a team, with a strong mix of creativity, is exactly what this exercise accomplishes. It also brings an element of fun and maker-ism into the mix, with the added twist of learning how to solve a problem with reduced options.

### ***Team Building Game #10: Show And Tell***

It's unfortunate that show and tell is something that ends when you're young. Whether your interest is in the code you're writing or ham radio, there are things each person would like to share with the group. Set aside a regular day for "show and tell" and give the next team member on the list the opportunity to bring something in and/or present on a topic. If you do this over lunch, be sure to cater food and make it a fun time. Require team members to be present. Have a question and answer session afterwards.

**Purpose:** Most people are eager to let others know interesting things about themselves, but not all team members are able to make that happen. Most teams are lopsided, with some members dominating discussion. Using regular "show and tell" sessions gives all

team members a chance at center stage while also becoming familiar with giving a presentation and fielding questions.

### ***Team Building Game #12: Mad Lib Mission Statement***

Take your company's mission statement(s) and turn them into the popular Mad Lib game. To do this, remove key nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Create a worksheet in which the removed words are shown as a blank line with instructions on what kind of word is needed.

In groups of two, have one team member ask for the correct type of word and the other team member supply the word. Or, if you do not want to break the team into groups, ask the team as a whole to supply one word at a time. Once there are enough words, read the mission statement back. It will sound silly. Now that the team knows what the goal is, ask them for the same word types. See what kinds of words they supply. Repeat the exercise until you get a mission statement that the team feels is correct.

A variation is to categorize the types of words before the first round. So, tell them you are looking for words that apply to the team without telling them you are working on a mission statement.

**Purpose:** Mission statements can sometimes sound great but miss the mark, particularly if your team doesn't feel it represents them, or that they even understand it. By stripping away the jargon and stiffness and allowing the mission statement to go through several rounds of nonsense, you allow your team to help you craft a statement that is more relaxed and honest.

### ***Team Building Game #13: Organizational Jenga***

Using wooden blocks or an actual Jenga game, mark blocks according to the hierarchies present in your company. For example, you might have some blocks denoted as the IT department, and others as HR. You might have particular shaped blocks marked as "manager" and block shapes as "support staff." The labeled blocks should reflect the composition of your office (e.g. if 10% of your staff is IT, so should 10% of the blocks). Divide your team into groups, giving them an equal number and kind of blocks. From here, either specify the type of structure each team must build, or provide guidelines and allow them to build any structure they want. When the time limit has been reached, each

team, taking turns, must begin to remove a block at a time without destroying their structure. Do not inform them ahead of time that you will be asking them to do this. If time allows, you may ask them to repeat the exercise. See if they find a way to build a structure that can withstand removal of blocks.

**Purpose:** This exercise is meant to show how each department and the various managers and staff positions are necessary to complete the task, and that without everyone in place, things fall apart. The second round reveals what “blocks” the team sees as unnecessary as they conceive of a way to deconstruct their structure without destroying it.

### ***Team Building Game #14: Blind Drawing***

Divide your team into groups of two each. Have each person sit with their back to the other. One person will have a picture. The other person will have a blank sheet of paper and a pen. The team member with the picture must not show the other person the image. Instead, they are to describe the image without using words that give it away, while the other team member is to draw what is being described.

For example, the picture might be of an elephant standing on a ball. The description cannot be “draw an elephant on the ball” but instead must use other adjectives and directions. After a set time limit, the drawing time ends and both team members view the original picture and the drawing.

**Purpose:** This is an exercise that focuses on communication and language. While the final drawing will seldom look like the picture, it is revealing to participants to see how different the interpretation of instructions can be even when they are supposedly talking about the same thing.

### ***Team Building Game #15: The Perfect Square***

Gather your team in a circle, and have them sit down. Each team member should then put on a provided blindfold. Taking a long rope with its ends tied together, place the rope in each person’s hands so that they all have a hold of it. Leave the circle. Instruct them to form a perfect square out of the rope without removing their blindfolds. Once the team believes they have formed a square, they can remove the blindfolds and see what they’ve accomplished.

You can introduce variations into this game. For example, you might, at random, instruct a team member to not speak. One by one, members of the group are muted, making communication more challenging. Or, let the team come up with a plan before putting on the blindfold, but once they cannot see, they also cannot talk.

**Purpose:** This exercise deals with both communication and leadership styles. There will inevitably be team members who want to take charge, and others who want to be given direction. The team will have to work together to create the square, and find a way to communicate without being able to see. By introducing the “muting” feature, you also inject the question of trust. Since instructions can’t be vocally verified, the team member calling out instructions has to trust those who cannot talk to do as they are told.

### ***Team Building Game #23: It’s Your Problem***

Bring the team into the room, and divide evenly into groups of at least two. Tell them they have thirty minutes to come up with a group problem-solving challenge that would make use of: teamwork, creativity, communication.

When the thirty minutes is complete, the team will choose from one of the problem-solving challenges and actually do the activity.

A variation is to use all of the challenges over a period of time so that your team-building activities come directly from your team itself.

**Purpose:** This exercise puts leadership responsibilities back on your team, showing them that they have the potential to come up with solutions, too. It also gives your team a chance to challenge other team members in ways they might not otherwise find the opportunity to do so in regular workday activity.

### ***Team Building Game #24: Active Listening***

Bring your team in for what they think is just another staff meeting. Have a long document filled with mind-numbing but coherent jargon-filled speech that talks vaguely

about sales and marketing goals. Sprinkled in the document are sentences which say something else entirely. These sentences should contain instructions or information that they will be quizzed on after you are finished.

Begin reading it to your team in monotone. The goal is to get them to tune you out. Do not over-emphasize the “real” sentences. When you are finished, hand out paper to each team member. Then, ask them to write down what they thought you talked about. If your real sentences contained random information, quiz them on that. Discuss who heard what, and see who was able to actively listen.

**Purpose:** This exercise touches on conflict resolution with the idea that many conflicts arise because team members don’t really listen. It shows the importance of listening to verbal communication, but also non-verbal communication. They can discuss why they tuned you out, and what you could have done to keep them tuned in.

### ***Team Building Game #25: Company Concentration***

Most of us played the game “concentration” as a child, where you’d have pairs of cards randomly mixed and turned over, and you’d take turns flipping over two at a time. The goal was to collect as many pairs as possible, remembering what you’d seen.

Create a card deck that has images or words related to your company or brand. It might be logos, products, photos of your team, and so on. Whatever route you go, keep the images related. For example, use all photos of your team, or all photos of your products. Divide up into teams and see which team can match the most pairs in the least amount of time. You might set additional rules, such as requiring the name of the person to be said aloud when the card is flipped over, or some other related bit of information connected to the image on the card.

**Purpose:** To learn the names, information, and visuals associated with your company. This is particularly effective if you have a lot of new team members and you want everyone to learn their name and something about them.

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### ***Team Building Game #26: Company Concentration: Debate Version***

The idea is the same as the “Company Concentration” format, where pairs of cards with visuals on one side are used. However, the goal here isn’t necessarily to match up cards

and remember where they were, and the images on the cards will not depict team members but will instead depict discussion-worthy concepts.

Teams can get a point for matching up cards, but they can get two points if they choose to successfully debate and argue why the two cards they turned over are associated. If the majority of the room agrees with their reasoning, they receive the points. If not, they lose a point.

You might use cards illustrating user personas, products you sell, procedures you use in development, customer support problems, known issues you're trying to solve, and so on.

**Purpose:** This game can help in brainstorming (associating two problems together, for example, that hadn't been) as well as getting team members to think on their feet and spot connections they hadn't before. It also forces them to decide what is worth debating or not, as well as whether or not someone has provided a good argument.

### ***Team Building Game #27: Hello My Name Is***

Create a list of adjectives that describe people's attitudes (e.g. grumpy, happy, negative, fearful, encourager, discourager, positive, joker, etc.). Have enough adjectives for every member of your team, and write each adjective on a self-adhesive "Hello My Name Is" sticker. Place the name stickers in a container, and have each team member draw a name sticker out without being able to see the adjective. Have them stick the name tag on their shirt and wear it for a specific period of time, instructing them that all of their responses and interaction for that time must reflect the adjective on their name tag.

You can use this in several ways. Your team could wear them during a typical meeting or brainstorming session to show how good and bad attitudes affect outcomes. They could wear them for a typical work day and then discuss how they felt. Or, you could have them wear a name tag half of the day, and switch with someone for the second half.

**Purpose:** To show that assigning an attitude or telling someone they are "acting grumpy" can actually affect how they view themselves and how they act during the day. If they switch name tags, they will see how behavior and action often defines feeling, and not the other way around.

### ***Team Building Game #28: Telephone, On Paper***

Give each team member a piece of paper. Have them draw a simple drawing on the paper, without talking to anyone else. Each person then passes the paper to their right. Each team member looks at the drawing they now have, fold the paper in half, and write at the top what they think the picture is of. The paper is passed to the right again. Each person reads the description, folds the paper over to hide the words, and draws a picture of that.

This continues, where each pass alternates between determining what the picture was and drawing what was described. It is important that each turn only reveals the words or picture from the previous round. Separate sheets or pads of paper may be used if that is easier than one sheet of paper, but they should be passed together.

When the paper is back to the original owner, each member reveals what was written and drawn.

**Purpose:** This activity tends to create a lot of laughter and is an excellent ice-breaker at parties or before long meetings where you want people to be comfortable with each other. The drawings and interpretations tend to bring out discussion and jokes.

### ***Team Building Game #29: Do The Math***

Create “tasks” that are assigned different values. For example, you might have “Climb Mt. Everest” and give it a value of 35, while “Give the dog a bath” has a value of 3.

Give each member of your team three cards with the same number on them so that every team member has a set of numbers different from every other player. One person will have all 1’s, while another might have all 10’s. The goal is to accomplish the tasks in a set amount of time so that whoever is left will get a prize based on the total value of the tasks completed.

However, in order to “do” the task, they must get people together whose numbered cards add up to the value on the task. Once a card is used, it can’t be used again. And once a team member has used up all their cards, they are taken out of the game and out of the running for the prize.

Ideally, there are more tasks and values than can be fulfilled by the cards your team possesses. They must determine which tasks to do, and which cards to use up.

Ultimately, not every task can be completed, and not everyone can be a winner. The



goal is to get the highest total task value (for the best prize), and work together to achieve it knowing that in order to do so, some will miss out.

**Purpose:** This rather painful game helps your team work together, understanding both strategy and self-sacrifice. Hopefully, once the game is over you'll see that everyone has some kind of prize or reward, but it's best to allow the team to not know that during game play.

### Grog

You take apart a flashlight and hide the parts throughout the play area. One kid is the Grog, which is a monster that can freeze you in place by tagging you. Everyone has to work together to find the parts, assemble the flashlight, and shine it on the Grog to defeat "it." Our group of students LOVED this game. It was a favorite by far.

### Sardines or Christians in the Catacombs

This is the game of sardines, but explain it with the story of how the early Christians met in the catacombs, but they still increased in number. One person hides in a dark place, and then as people find them, they join in hiding, until one person remains. It's hide and seek, backwards.

### Scatterball

Dodge ball with a twist. To start, everyone must have a hand on a nerf ball. Throw the ball up in the air and everyone scatters. Somebody grabs the ball in the air or off the ground. Whoever has the ball can only take two steps. After two steps, the player must throw the ball — dodge ball style — at another player. If the ball hits a player, that player sits down right where they are. BUT, they can still play, they just can't move from their seated spot. If a player is hit by the ball and catches it, then the throwing player sits down. At any time sitting players can snag the ball if it rolls by, and they can throw it at standing players trying to get them out. The game ends when only one player is standing. Hint: it's a good game for larger groups but its lacking in action if you have less than 10 people.

## Lifesize Clue

The youth group gathers in the evening when the church is dark. They congregate in one lit room and one person goes to hide a large doll (any stuffed animal will work). That person also hides a “murder” weapon (hint: use goofy items to keep it light such as a spatula or telephone), then comes back and releases people out of the room one at a time. One random person will be given a flashlight and they are the “killer.” Players walk around and have to find the weapon and victim (doll). Players also need to know who the “killer” is without getting caught. Players are caught when the “killer” flashes the light at you. If the “killer” catches a player, they are out and have to go sit in the main room.

## Fear Factor

Set up several stations that vary in grossness or scariness. Break kids in two teams and let them choose which stations they play. Assign points for each activity earned then add them up at the end to determine the winning team. Cuisine Station: Fill several large plates or bowls with your choice of sardines, pigs feet, frog legs, seaweed, etc. (look in the foreign food section at your local supermarkets). Place another empty container at the other side of the stage or the other end of the room. The student has a designated amount of time to grab one of the items in their mouth, run across the room and drop it into the empty container. They must transfer as many food items as possible in the amount of time given.

Here's a fun, sneaky trick: melt a snickers in the microwave for several seconds. It will look like something else entirely and it takes some time before students realize its candy.

Free Fall Station: Contestant stands on raised platform and falls backwards into arms of catchers. Use mats just in case. Proof is in the pudding Station: Contestants dig sardines out of chocolate pudding with their toes. Use time limit for elimination.

Digging For Gold: Fill a huge (clear) Rubbermaid storage container with water and enough potting soil to make it cloudy and dirty looking, along with a few worms, and a few other gross things (be creative). Put several coins in it and each team member has to grab two coins out.

Don't Crack station: Put garbage bags down for this one or go outside. Put eggs under both of the students' heels. They must stand on their toes to avoid crushing the eggs. The person who can last the longest without crushing their eggs wins for their entire team. Get creative with different station ideas and customize it to fit your students.

### Photo Scavenger Hunt

Assign points for odd items that students can find to take a picture with around the Church property or within a designated area. Get creative with your lists. Plan to do this at a time like VBS when much of the church staff is present so you can include silly ones like "do the air guitar with the worship pastor" or "do the disco with the children's pastor." Give them a time limit and deduct points for every minute they are late returning. The added bonus of this game is you automatically have some great photos of your students that you can put in the youth group room. If your at Ichthus this is a great way to capture photos of the week.

### Minute to Win It

This is a game show on NBC and its full of mini-challenges that must be completed within one minute. On the NBC website, you'll find a list of all the games including a video tutorial, official rules, and a list of supplies needed for each game. There are more than 50 games you can choose from! Pick a handful of the ones you want to use then make sure you have all the necessary supplies on hand. Watch an episode of the show on the website to play it like the pros do or create your own twist on the game.

### Draw It

There's two teams, each with a white board. Give them a word and the team has to guess the word they drew. This would be a good ice breaker activity before a lesson if you tie in themes from the lesson into the drawings.

#### Four on the Couch

The goal is to get 4 of your team onto the same couch. There must be one less seat than people in the room (must have a couch; you can play three on a couch if necessary). Divide into at least two teams and have everyone put their name in hat. Everyone draws a name and that becomes his/her new name for the game. But everyone should keep their names a secret. Now the person to the left of the empty seat in the room calls out a name. The person, who drew that name, now moves to the empty seat, and switches names with the person who called out the name. Now the person to the left of the new empty seat calls a name. You repeat the process. So you have to try to get to the empty the couch and call the right names to get folks on the couch. This takes some thinking but is fun and competitive in a non-athletic way.

#### Red-hot Poker

Everybody stands in a circle and hold hands. You have something in the middle of the circle (anything works, try a big 50 gallon trash can) and it is the red-hot poker. You then try to drag, push and pull one another into the red-hot poker. If you touch it or break hands then you are out. Play until you have the last one standing.

#### Slip 'N Slide Kickball

If you have a group of athletic, competitive students this one is for you. Basically it's kickball but you add a slip 'n slide between the bases. Keep some band aids on hand for this one just in case.

#### Capture the Flag

This one needs no explanation, but feel free to add twists. Include more than one flag, take turns having the teams play offense and defense, play with three or four teams going against each other, etc.

### Tug of War

This is another classic, but is always a hit with youth groups. Make it extra fun by doing it once a year and utilizing interesting competitions: students vs. leaders, boys vs. girls, senior high vs. junior high. The key to a good match-up is to put a small number of the strongest against a large number of the weakest. For example, take a handful senior high boys and place them against 30 middle schoolers.

### Ultimate Duck-Duck-Goose or Duck-Duck-Goose-Inception

When there are more than 50 students, this game is a lot of fun. Play duck-duck-goose as you normally would, however when a few people get tagged and they go to the middle, then they begin another game of duck-duck-goose. I've played this game with 100 students before and they began a game within a game within a game within a game. Two other twists you can initiate are using a sponge while the person is going around and ducking to hold over people's heads or having more than one person go around at a time.

### Tap It Out Telephone

This one's great because you don't need any supplies. It's like telephone but instead of whispering something, you use your finger and draw the word on the person's back. Everyone is in a straight line, with multiple teams doing this. First team that gets to the last person and has the correct word wins.

### Name That Tune!

Divide students into teams and have one student face off against another student from the other team. Play five seconds of a popular song from iTunes and have them guess. If both students don't know, let anyone call it out.

### Seated Basketball

This one is a favorite because it requires strategy and teamwork. The game is divided up between two teams. The goal is to get a ball into a basket. This can be a basketball hoop, but I have found it just as fun playing it with laundry baskets placed on a table. Each player has their own chair and is played in rounds. At the beginning of a round, the players have a short amount of time to place their chairs in a position. Once placed, they are not allowed to move from their spot. They then must pass the ball to each other, without it getting intercepted by the opposing team. After each round the players become more strategic and shift from focusing on offense and defense. Whereas one round may consist of one team placing all their chairs around the opposing goal, they'll quickly realize that they are unable to shoot from their location. Likewise, a team that has no one in the middle of the field is unable to make an adequate pass to their teammates. An interesting side effect of this game is the loner and unpopular student will often become the most passed to player. They are the ones that are open, because the opposing team neglects to place a chair next to them to guard.

### Real World Bible Drills

Bible drills can be fun but with a twist on an old classic game, students can translate it into real life skills. Instead of saying a specific Bible verse like John 3:16, have them find narrative stories like David and Goliath. After doing a few of these narrative type stories, branch out even further. Have them lookup a passage of the Bible that someone can use if they feel deep sadness, struggle with addiction, feel lonely, etc. This really challenges the students to use critical thinking and provides them with skills they can use later in life.

### Penny Chinny

Give everyone a penny. On 'go' they must balance the penny on their chin while trying to knock everyone else's penny off. This means the penny will lay flat on the chin and the students will be looking up into the air. Last one standing with the penny balanced wins. It is quick and easy and the perfect game if you are waiting for doors to open before a conference or for your favorite artist to perform at Ichthus.

### Jeopardy

Devise a number of questions and set up a board to play jeopardy. A fun twist to add is to create one or two categories that have nothing to do with the Bible. I always tried to add one about myself because the questions to think of were easy, and it helped new students get to know me.

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