

Cooperative Activities for Share the Wealth

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Pairs Tag – Choose a partner and decide who will be ‘it’ first. You will play tag only with your partner. If a tag is made, the person tagged becomes ‘it’ and must spin in place for three revolutions (or bounce a balloon on their head three times), then proceed to find and tag their partner. Only fast walking is allowed (NO RUNNING), and restrict the field of play to a small area.

Pairs² Tag – Immediately following ‘pairs tag’, have partners link arms at the elbow and choose a nearby pair. Play is identical to pairs tag except that a linked ‘pair’ of players will now play against another connected pair.

Speedy Gonzales: This game is also referred to as “Hooper Relay”. Teams attempt to be the first to advance a ring and then a hoop through a designated course using only “ring tosses” to advance the ring or hoop. The only equipment needed is a deck tennis ring per team and a hula hoop per team. Each team must work cooperatively to compete against the other teams. Or, you could simply do one large group and make it a goal setting activity. Set up an out-and-back course or a circular course. We like to be able to see the whole activity, but sometimes we send them behind a building or to the next field and back. The deck ring is only advanced with a throw. If dropped, the ring must return to the spot from which it was thrown. A successful catch rings one wrist of the catcher who must hold his/her hand up as a sort of spear. When a ring is dropped, it must return to the tosser, who must stay at his/her original throwing spot until a catch is made. The catcher may change positions. Teams must attempt to utilize all players equally. For round one, we use the deck rings, and for round two we use the hula hoops and require that they go over the catcher’s head and all the way down to their feet, after which they can step out and advance the hoop. Long throws usually result in multiple misses, which leads to varying strategies.

Caterpillar race

Each person will need an inflated balloon. Place participants in 2-4 groups, and each group in a line with players one-behind-another. Have players place their balloon between themselves and the person in front of them. On a go signal players must remove their hands from the balloon and, then move as a group without dropping any balloons. Players cannot touch their teammates or balloons. If a balloon falls the team goes back to the start.

Balloon Frantic

Two to three inflated balloons per person are needed and a stopwatch. Each person has a balloon, with the rest in a nearby pile. Everyone begins bouncing their balloons in the air. Every five seconds, another balloon is added. See how long the group can keep the balloons bouncing before receiving six penalties. A penalty is announced loudly (to create stress!) by the leader when a balloon hits the floor, or once on the floor, if is not got back into play within five seconds. The leader keeps a cumulative score by shouting out "one", "two", etc. When the leader gets to "Six" the time is stopped. After some discussion time, the group tries to better its record with another attempt.

Tank Commander: This is a game of communication. Create a field of play with boundaries that allow enough space for players to move around. For 10 tanks we use a 25-30 foot square. Scatter a bunch of yarn balls over the area. Students must have a partner and one partner is blindfolded. That student is the “tank” and the sighted student is the “tank commander”. The unsighted tanks move into the battlefield, but the tank commanders must stay outside the boundaries. The commanders attempt to describe to the tanks where to get a yarn ball, which they will attempt to use to toss at another tank. When hit, a tank must leave the battlefield. When only one tank remains, everything resets and the game starts again. The partners must switch so that everyone is a tank and a tank commander.

Turnstile - Jump rope activities to stimulate thinking

This classic activity has it all – movement, thinking, leaders/followers, sharing, helping, cheating/rule-bending and more! You'll need a helper to turn the rope with you.

Progression:

1. Have the whole group on one side of the rope. Lay the rope on the ground and see how fast they can get the whole group from one side to the other, between the turners. (Boost their self-esteem by mentioning that they set a world record ☺)
2. With you and the second turner 'squiggling' the rope like a snake on the floor, ask the participants the return to the original side as fast as possible.
3. With the rope swinging side-to-side (to about waist height), have the group move from one side to the other as quickly as possible. From now on, if anyone touches the rope, ALL must start again.
4. Challenge the group to see how many people can make 2 jumps simultaneously.
5. How fast can the group get from one side to the other with the rope turning? (Turn the rope so that at the bottom of the turn it is moving away from the starting side).
6. Can whole group get through with at least one person in the rope at all times?
7. Can whole group get through making one jump each?
8. How many can make it through, one jump each, without missing a turn of the rope?

Equipment: 30+ feet of retired climbing rope, or other rope light enough to be kept turning comfortably.

Extend Challenge: Have 2 ropes turning side by side. Participants go through one, then come back thru the other

As a turner you will have a great opportunity to facilitate:

- a. When you notice people being hit by the rope who won't admit it, talk about cheating and rule-bending.
- b. When you see the same people beginning each attempt, talk about leaders/followers.
- c. Some people will always be the last to go (the less skilled)... talk about ways to help them through (sharing and caring).

The Knot

Similar to human knots, but with a length of rope. Tie rope into a loop, then coil it into 5-6 loops. Participants circle the coiled rope, then reach across with one hand and grasp ONE strand of the coiled rope. When they stand, there will be a great knot that needs untying ☺. Participants may only remove their hand from the rope to change the position of the hand for comfort and safety.

The clock

While you have people standing there holding an untied 'knot', try this next challenge. Have players move back until the rope is taut (it should make a nice circle), then set a cone at 12, 3, 6, and 9 o'clock just barely inside the circle their feet make. The objective is to maintain contact with the rope while moving the group CW and then CCW around the cones. Identify a person in the circle at one of the cones, then ask the group to make one full circle clockwise then change direction and do the same CCW. Talk about goal setting and try to meet new goals.

Blindfold Soccer – A fun communication game with no need for goalies.

Equipment: Blindfolds for half the students, SOFT 8-12” foam balls

Students pair off. One puts a blindfold on, the other is a ‘coach’ who stays with their partner at all times. You may want to remind everyone of the ‘bumpers-up” position. Split the class into two teams, and spread the players out. ONLY the blindfolded players may touch the soccer balls. Coaches guide their partners through voice commands ONLY. I consider any ball that hits the opposing team’s wall a goal.

Siamese Multi-Goal Soccer – A three legged race with soccer balls

Equipment: Several soft soccer balls, soft cloth to tie legs together, cones for goals.

Set up at least 4 goals around the gym/field. Partners are tied together below the knee – right leg to left leg. Divide partner groups into four even teams and send each team to defend one goal. Set out 3-4 soccer balls in the middle of the court. Players may score on any goal except their own, and score from the front OR back of any goal (set the cones away from a wall). I make teams come to me and give me a high-5 when they score (this keeps high-level players from continuous scoring and lets me keep track of goals). Teams may choose to have goalies or not, and may change a goalie pair at any time.

Toss-a-Name (around the room version)

The objective of this activity is to gradually learn the names of those in a circle of 7-10 people. Pass a ball in one direction around the circle and each person must say their name loudly when they receive the ball. After one time around, the first person tosses the ball across the circle and loudly calls that person’s name. The ball is then tossed to another person across the circle (with a name being called loudly) until all players have touched the ball only once. Remember this sequence and practice it. Now ask one person in each group to join another group around the room. The person who started the sequence in each original circle will now follow the same original sequence, but people will be dispersed all over the room.

Switch/Change/Rotate

Groups of 3-4 standing in a line in general space one behind the other. When you say “switch”, the front and back people change places. When you say “change”, each person in line turns 180 degree to face the other direction. When you say “rotate” the player in front peels off and moves to the back of the line. Practice these stationary, then add “Freeze” and “Move”. Use different locomotor activities to ‘move’ while you call ‘switch’, ‘change’, and ‘rotate’. Music creates more enthusiasm.