

Team Building Games

Team "bonding" is a very important process that will help to ensure a close-knit team. A strong team becomes one in purpose and desire, Encouragement is very important in team bonding. If team members try to motivate one another, everyone will try harder to accomplish team objectives. Teambuilding games are a fun way to develop cohesiveness. They tear down walls in communications, provide avenues that encourage discussion, and increase productivity. Team building takes time but the end results are well worth the extra time. It is an ongoing process that boosts commitment. Here are some games and exercises to do with your squad to build a unified group.

New for 2009

Relay Lock Race- Each person selects a partner. They stand back to back and lock arms by the elbows while holding their own stomach with their hands. The coach gives the instruction to get from one side of the gym to the other. Don't give them specific instructions on how to get to the finish line other than they can't let go of their stomachs. This causes creativity and laughter.

Back to Back- Divide into partners with one person left over in the middle. You need one person to be the "caller". The call will yell directions telling the partners to line up "back to back", "foot to foot", "elbow to elbow", "shoulder to shoulder" and so on. When the caller yells "people to people", everyone must find a new partner. The one left over is now in the middle. This is a form of people musical chairs.

All Aboard -Take a large sheet and spread it on the floor. Have all the students stand on the sheet together. Once they have done this fold the sheet to make it smaller. Again, have all the students get on the sheet. Continue this process. Eventually, the sheet will be so small that the students will need to use a great deal of cooperation, teamwork, and ingenuity to get the whole team on the sheet without anyone falling out/off the sheet.

Human Dragon - Divide your team into 4 teams of 6-8 individuals. You can have odd numbers or vary the length of the "dragon" depending on the skill, size and ability of your students. Each team designates the "head" person and the "tail " section of the Human Dragon. All other team members fill in behind the head of the dragon by holding on to the person in front of them at the waist. The goal of

the activity is to have the head of each dragon attempt to tag the tail of any other dragon team. Only heads of the dragon can do the tagging because all other team members must remain connected (with two hands) to their teammates. Players attempt to avoid having their team's tail be tagged and skillfully attempt to shield their tail from other dragons on the prowl.

Create A Monster- Make a monster that walks with both hands and feet on the ground. The monster must have one less arm than the number on the squad and one more foot. Once the monster is created, it has to move five feet and make a sound.

Human Letters - Divide the team into groups of 4 to 5 people. The coach calls out a letter. Each group has to spell out the letter on the ground with their bodies. The group to get the letter the fastest, or the most accurate, wins. Keep score.

Classic Games

Sing Down - Teams are created of anywhere from three to ten in a group. The leader will give the groups a word (i.e. love, boy, dance, etc.), and give the teams one minute to think of as many songs as they can with that word in it. Once the minute has passed, one team begins by singing a part of a song with that word in it. All team members must sing it together. The other team then responds with their song. **NO SONGS MAY BE REPEATED.** The team that can name the most songs containing a particular word and can sing a few bars of each song together wins. The process then can be repeated with another word.

5-5-5 Game - (Great camp game or, with slight modifications great game for same team) Tell students they have 5 minutes to meet 5 new friends from 5 different schools. Tell them they must find out the new friend's name, school, and at least one interesting thing about him/her. (For the same team, think of something that could easily replace the "from 5 different schools" part. This might be find 5 new friends and name their #1 goal for the team and one other interesting thing about him/her.) Everyone should be prepared to introduce their new friends to the entire camp/team. Give the participants a "two minute warning" before stopping the activity at five minutes. After the activity, encourage students to talk to their new friends each day, cheer for each other, maybe eat lunch together, and introduce them to other members on the team, etc.

Ships & Sailors - Everyone begins spread out over the entire floor. A leader is selected who is in charge of calling out different commands such as bunk beds (everyone finds a partner, one lies on the floor face up, the other partner faces the opposite direction and is balanced above that person—they grab each others ankles so they look like bunk beds, another command is mermaids (each person forms a mermaid by lifting and folding one leg back and grabbing that leg's ankle. This makes the shape of a mermaid), another command is "man overboard" (each person finds a partner. One person lies on his/her stomach while the other partner places a foot on his/her back and pretends to look for someone who has been lost at sea), another command is 3 man rowing (get in groups of three and sit on the floor in a file while using your arms to pretend like you are rowing a boat), another command is 4 man eating (sit in groups of 4 on the floor and pretend to eat). There are a million different commands you can invent. Mix them up with commands each person performs individually and others that are performed in various group sizes. The object is to eliminate the slowest groups responding to the commands. It is much like a drill down. The value is learning to taking directions and working together in small groups. You will find groups making alliances with one another so that no one has to get eliminated when you command 4 men eating followed by 3 men rowing, for example. Who is going to be the odd man out? This is a very popular game with students.

Birdie on a Perch - Form two concentric circles (an outer and inner circle) and make sure each person in a circle is partnered with the person directly across from him/her in the other circle. Everyone is standing in their circles rather than sitting. One circle should be labeled the birdie while the other circle is labeled the perch. Play music and have the circles begin to move in opposite directions, i.e., one circle begins to rotate clockwise while the other circle moves counterclockwise. When the music stops, each person has 3 seconds to find his/her partner. Then, the person who is the perch needs to kneel down on one knee while the person labeled the birdie needs to sit on the perch's opposite knee. This is much like musical chairs and the slowest couples are eliminated. Several rounds of this should produce a winning pair.

A "Kiss" Of Appreciation"

Objective: To strengthen teams by having members show their appreciation for each other's contributions

Preparation: Fill large bowl with Hershey Kisses®

Directions: Have each student take 3 kisses. One will be for the individual to enjoy, and the other two are for them to give to people who have made a difference. Someone who they enjoy working with, would like to thank.

Discussion: How did it feel to give a Kiss? How did it feel to receive a kiss? Who got more? Who got less? What can we do as a team to ensure equal amounts? What can you do personally to recognize and show appreciation for each other?

Team Talk - While in team talk circles, use these questions as ice-breakers, conversation starters and discussion topics:

- * What are you most looking forward to this week at camp?
- * What are you unsure about or afraid of coming in to camp?
- * What do you personally want to achieve while at camp?
- * What has been the most fun part of camp for you personally?
- * What has been the most challenging?
- * What has been the most positive thing to happen to you at camp?
- * Think of two words to describe your team (before you came to camp and after you've been at camp).
- * What is the most important lesson you've learned so far at camp?
- * Say something positive about the person on your right, the person on your left, or about the person on your team who has most influenced you this week at camp.
- * What did you personally do to make camp a success for your team?
- * What did you learn from your director during camp?
- * What did you learn from your Big Sister/Brother during camp?
- * The things to change and improve are...
- * What will you commit to doing to make sure that what you learned and achieved here is not lost?

Personal Questions -

- * What is your favorite (movie, food, store, animal, book, song, etc?)
- * If you could have any theme park ride in your back yard, what would it be?
- * What was your childhood nickname?
- * What is your earliest memory?
- * What is the worst chore you've ever done?
- * What is your middle name-or what do you think it should have been?