

*For you created my inmost being,
I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made
your works are wonderful*

When did we *See* you

GLORIFY GOD & ENJOY GOD FOREVER

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Introduction

TO RECREATION & COMMUNITY BUILDING

We are excited to share a variety of recreation plans that you can tailor to your gathering! Our team has put together a collection of games for opening recreation and community building time, decorating ideas for different spaces (whether indoor or outdoor), games to play around the table at mealtimes, and a theme party plan that is highly adaptable. This guide is designed to help you take a group from name games to mix and mingle activities, from small group play onto group building activities – all of which can be debriefed and discussed in light of the theology of recreation.

THEOLOGY OF RECREATION

What does the Bible say about play, building community, and being in relationship with one another? Is it possible that through the childlike act of play, we can experience living in community with our neighbors as God intended? In order to truly understand and acknowledge one another as Christians, we must first be willing to set aside our own agendas and simply experience the joy that comes from sharing trust and time together. Unless the church at large can grasp this and until we are able to do this, our true Christian selves will remain stifled and muted.

How, then, can being in community help us to build trust and acknowledge that we are all children of God? When we experience play together, we have the opportunity to forget about everything else and just be present in the moment with one another. We can be fully aware of God's grace and fulfilling scripture by living an abundant life.

Scripture tells us that God revels in us discovering the joyful, playful, and lighthearted side of the church. In Philippians, Paul tells us to “rejoice in the Lord always – and AGAIN I say rejoice.” In Ecclesiastes, the scripture tells us that there is a time to dance and a time to laugh. The scriptures are full of language that not only encourages but demands us to be in joyful community with one another.

In Rachel Henderlite's book, *A Call to Faith*, she writes that the chief end for humankind is to enjoy God. In the enjoyment of God, we worship, and in the enjoyment of humans and nature, we play. It is the church's responsibility to remind youth that play and enjoyment have a real and important part in the Kingdom of grace. Playing together opens doors for relational growth and the development of cohesive relationships that can strengthen our faith community.

So, how do we do this? What kinds of activities and games can we facilitate in order to bring about this sense of grace and faith? How do we lead people to a place where they can let their guard down and realize that, through recreation, we have the ability to share in laughter with one another?

RECREATION BASICS

With little more than pencils, paper, dice, balls, old magazines, popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners and play dough, this packet will help you to provide a variety of activities that can engage your group. Inherent to the theology of recreation are a few basic tenants that we should not assume everyone knows.

First and foremost, the word recreation comes from *re-creation*. Therefore, we are constantly striving to build groups and individuals up – not to tear them down, embarrass them, or put them on the spot. That type of play might be called “wreckreation,” not recreation. It is important to remember that in rejoicing in God’s playful nature we are in essence glorifying God.

When you play games that eliminate people or make one person the butt of the game, you are pulling down your group and engaging in behavior that is negative in nature. In this world, youth may already get more than their fair share of negativity on a daily basis. Recreation is a time for each of us to begin building one another up and creating community.

Another thing to consider is avoiding the use of food as a “prop” or “supply” in a game or activity. There are a number of issues that go along with using food in play, including safety. As a leader, you are responsible for the safety of your group at all times. It is important to be sensitive to youth who are dealing with eating disorders and youth with food allergies. Many of us are also familiar with the game of cramming as many saltines in your mouth as you can and then whistling a tune. The likelihood of choking during this “game” is high, putting both you and your youth at risk.

With issues of global hunger and scarce food resources, the wastefulness of using food products to play games is also difficult to justify. Using our food resources wisely is a way we can honor God’s creation. The same goes for other types of resources. Whenever possible use paper that has been placed in the recycle bins, collect old magazines, newspapers, etc.

Lastly, using games to explore scripture is a fantastic way of showing your youth how relevant the Word is! A game can be a tool to explore more about a passage or to creatively express the theme of the scripture, all while incorporating multiple intelligences and learning styles. What better way to experience scripture than to play a game and then go back to actively discuss what just happened?

Here is a short list of leadership techniques to keep in the back of your mind.

- Do it, then talk about it. Demonstrate, then explain. This helps those who are visual learners!
- Be prepared, but at the same time be flexible. If a game is not going over well, then move on.
- Remember that sometimes groups need you to provide parameters so that everyone can fully engage in the activity.

- If you mess something up, laugh, grin, and move on!
- Remember that you are ENABLING the group to build community and therefore the focus is NOT on you as a leader. The focus should be on the group and their ability to play together.

In God we live and move and have our being! Acts 17:28



Opening Recreation

AND COMMUNITY BUILDING TIME

The following are options that can be mixed and matched to create an hour to an hour and a half opening event. Activities are broken down into different categories to help you to design a program that flows easily from one activity to another. You can tailor these to best fit the needs of your group or gathering.

ARRIVAL ACTIVITIES

(CHOOSE 2)

"When Did We See You?" Version 1
Speed Uno
Create Your Avatar

"When Did We See You?" Version 2
Theme Bananagrams

LARGE GROUP MIXERS

(CHOOSE 2)

Famous for 2 Minutes – Bible Edition
Group Up
Common Threads

Rainbow Mixer
3 Question Mingle

MOVEMENT TO MAKE SMALL GROUPS

Gotcha

SMALL GROUP GAMES

(CHOOSE 4-6)

Name Ball Toss (Brain Fry)
King Lizard
Giant Tic Tac Toe

Digital Hot Potato
Panic
Trust Walk

Crazy Charades
Group Spelling
String Geometry

LARGE GROUP GAMES

(CHOOSE 1)

Zoom-Mooz

Speedway

CLOSING

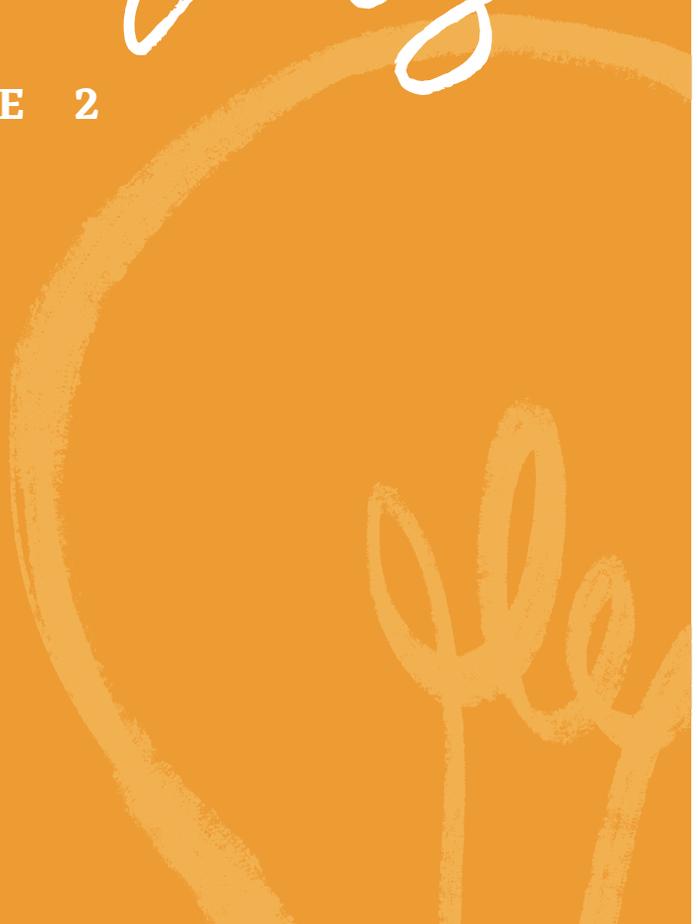
I Felt, I Learned, I Feel



Arrival Activities

CHOOSE 2

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When Did We See You #1

DESCRIPTION

This can be a leader-directed or self-directed activity. The idea is that people often see different images. In the first round, participants share about themselves and their preferences. In the second round, the theme is introduced, and participants share where they see God.

SUPPLIES

- Various pairs of images of opposite tastes (Examples: sun/moon, ice cream/cake, beach/mountain, etc.)
- Various pairs of images related to the theme, "When Did We See You?" (Examples: volunteers rebuilding houses / volunteers teaching classes, scenes of people meditating / scenes of people singing together, people laughing with friends / people standing alone, people reading to others inside / young people interacting with older adults outside, etc.)
- Sticky Notes (1x1 or 2x2)
- Pens or markers

When Did We See You #1

INSTRUCTIONS

Before the participants arrive, place the pairs of images in different parts of your space. For the first round participants will only need to see the images of opposite tastes. You can cover up the images related to the theme or set them up in a different area of your space until it is time for round two. If there are no walls in your space, images can be placed on chairs or tables.

When the participants arrive, they will be given a stack of sticky notes and a pen.

First round:

Invite participants to go to one of the photo areas, silently write their name on a sticky note, and add it to the image with which they most identify. In small groups at their image pair, instruct participants to introduce themselves and share which image they chose and why. Example: "Hello, my name is Omayra and I like ice cream because it is my favorite dessert." When you feel that participants are finished sharing, tell them to move to another image with other people. You can continue this a few more times or as works best for your group.

Round two:

Uncover or direct participants to the images related to the theme. Invite them silently to write their name on a sticky note and add it to the image in which they feel they "see God." After a few seconds, instruct them to share why they selected the image. Again, invite them to continue moving through the images around the room and meeting more people.



NOTE:

If you want the game to take place as people arrive, you can invite them to walk around the space with all of the photos in different areas. Write questions next to the images and let people answer these questions with their sticky notes as they walk around the space. This can be even more personal and self-directed.

When Did We See You #2

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this activity is to introduce the theme through art, allowing participants to express and explore the theme in different ways.

SUPPLIES

- Large paper/poster board
- Colored pencils
- Matthew 25: 31-46 (*printed*)
- Play Dough
- Blocks or Lego type blocks
- Markers

When Did We See You #2

INSTRUCTIONS

Before participants arrive, prepare these areas:

- Large paper with instructions: What comes to mind when you read the theme, “When Did We See You?” Write your answer.
- Play dough table with instructions: What image comes to mind when you think of God/Jesus? Use the play dough and create your answer.
- Large paper with instructions: Draw what you hope to take away from this time together.
- Table with blocks or Legos and instructions: Build what comes to mind when you read the Bible verse Matthew 25-31-46 (have it printed near the space).

Theme Bananagrams

DESCRIPTION

Let's play one of everyone's favorite games, but with a twist connected to the theme and a new level of complexity.

SUPPLIES

- Bananagrams set
OR Scrabble set tiles
- Cards with words

Theme Bananagrams

INSTRUCTIONS

On tables or on the floor, place a set of the Bananagrams game and a set of cards with theme-related words. For example: “pray” “God” “faith” “Jesus” “redemption” (even put the complete theme “When Did We See You?”).

Each game round, the words that the participant creates must be related to the word listed on the card.

Create Your Avatar

DESCRIPTION

This activity allows people to create their own mini-me and introduce themselves and their avatar to the group. There is a version for smaller groups and a version for larger groups.

SUPPLIES

- Newspaper
- Play Dough
- Legos
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Tape
- Stickers
- Scissors
- Cardboard
- Lively music

Create Your Avatar

INSTRUCTIONS

As the participants arrive, invite them to go to the table(s) and create their own avatar using the various materials provided. Each person must create a "mini-me." After giving everyone several minutes to create their avatar, tell them to glue or fit it onto a small piece of cardboard.

Option 1 (for groups of 10-20 people):

Once everyone has created their avatar, start the music. While the music plays, the participants carefully exchange avatars. They give theirs to someone else and receive someone else's. Tell them to continue trading until the music stops.

Stop the music, and pick someone to start. This person will stand up with the avatar and, looking at the figure, say something that they think the avatar represents or is unique about the avatar. For example, if the avatar is wearing all red, they might say "this person likes red," or if the avatar is tall, they might say "this person is tall." The creator of the avatar then gets up and says "Hello, that's me!" introducing themselves. This person then repeats the process by saying something about the avatar they got from trading. This will continue until each avatar has been introduced, each person has introduced themselves, and all avatars have been returned to their creators.

Option 2 (for groups larger than 20 people):

Create an avatar and keep it. When the music starts, walk around greeting each other with a hello or a high 5. When the music stops, get together into groups of 4 or 5. Each person takes a turn to introduce themselves using their avatar.

Speed Uno

DESCRIPTION

The idea of this game is that no matter how competitive the players are the focus of the game is to meet people, not to finish the game. Every 3 or 4 minutes everyone has to move, leave the game as it was, meet new people, and pick up playing the game in their new spot. This can be played with Uno or any board game.

SUPPLIES

- ☐ A set of Uno Cards or board game for every 4-6 participants (If you have a large group, you can ask folks to bring sets of cards with them).
- ☐ Long Table and chairs (optional)

Speed Uno

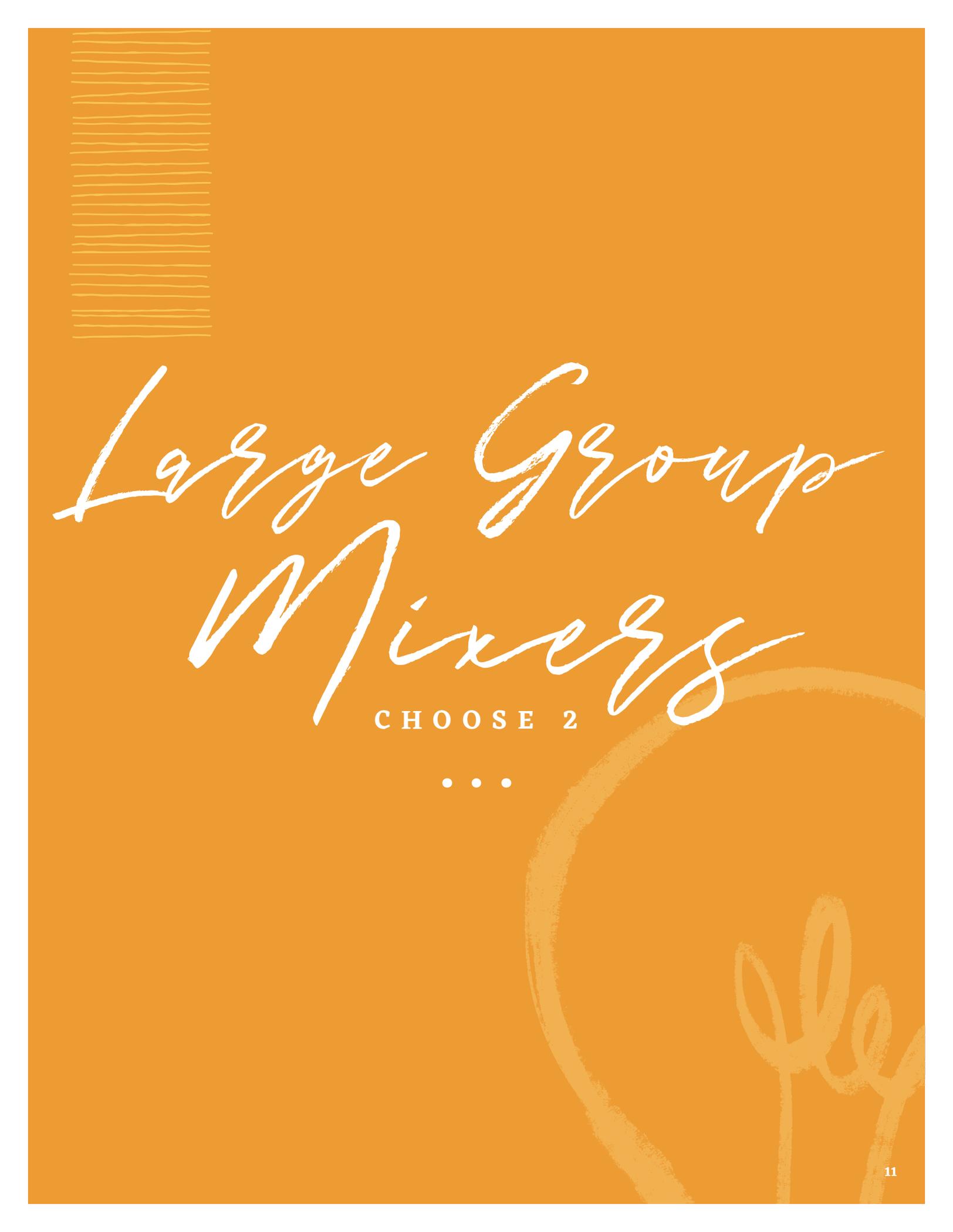
INSTRUCTIONS

This game can be played seated on the floor or at long tables. If on the floor, participants are invited to sit in two circles - one inside circle and one outside circle. The inside circle faces the outside circle, and the outside circle faces the inside circle. If you are playing at long tables, two to three participants should be on each side of the table for a total of 4-6 people per table. Give each group (every 4-6 people) a set of uno cards.

Each participant introduces themselves and the game begins. After 3-4 minutes of playing "SWITCH" is shouted. Each participant leaves their cards on the table at their spot. If you are playing in the circle formation everyone slides one space to their right. The youngest participant in each group starts the round of the game with the cards at their new seat. Continue to play for several rounds until you have mixed the group up.

Modification:

On each table you can put different games. On one table Uno, on another Connect 4, Trouble, Operation, etc. So that in each space, a new game is going to be played. Always give them a few minutes to introduce themselves before starting the game.



Large Group Mixers

CHOOSE 2

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Rainbow Mixer

DESCRIPTION

This game creatively helps participants to move around and meet more people.

SUPPLIES

- 1 Ribbon (8-10 inches long) per participant: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, or purple.

Rainbow Mixer

INSTRUCTIONS

As each participant arrives, they are given a piece of ribbon (or bracelet) that is one of the following colors:

1. Red
2. Orange
3. Yellow
4. Green
5. Blue
6. Purple

When everyone has their bracelets, they can play other games. At some point the leader asks everyone to look at their color and the Rainbow Mixer begins. Instruct them to:

- Create a rainbow (they must find 6 people with different colors).
- Create a color (red + blue makes purple, yellow + red makes orange, and so on).
- Create a primary (red, yellow, blue) or secondary (orange, green, purple) color scheme.

Continue giving instructions to move the group around the room. At each iteration, they should introduce themselves & answer questions:

- What is your favorite color? (If it is the one that they have, yay!)
- Where are you from?
- What do you expect from this time together?
- What is your favorite food?

Famous for 2 Minutes

DESCRIPTION

The participants can get to know each other by guessing which biblical character is on the other participants' cards by asking yes or no questions.

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Cards with biblical characters names
(Recommendation: Have the name on 1 side of the card & a related biblical verse on the other that way if the participant doesn't know who it is, they can learn.)

Famous for 2min-Bible Edition

INSTRUCTIONS

Set out the cards with biblical characters. Each participant will choose a card, not sharing it with anyone. In small groups, they should start by interviewing the person wearing the most colors in the group. Tell them they can only ask yes or no questions. (Examples: Are you from the New Testament? Did you know Jesus? Did you defeat Goliath?) After the group correctly guesses someone's biblical character, that person can introduce themselves and share how they are or are not similar to the biblical character on their card.

Variation:

If after 4 questions the group has not guessed the biblical character, the person can act out a scene with their biblical character.

3 Question Mingle

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this activity is to ask, answer, & share thoughtful questions in a large group.

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Index cards (3 per person)
- ☐ Writing utensils

3 Question Mingle

INSTRUCTIONS

In this group activity, every participant creates 3 thoughtful, open-ended questions that they want to ask other group members in order to get to know them better. Each person writes 1 question per index card, for a total of 3 question cards per person. Once they have written down all 3 of their questions, they begin to mingle.

Participants should ask and answer questions in pairs. After asking a question and listening to the answer, the participant will hand over that question card to the person who answered it. This way in each one-on-one meeting, participants will ask, answer, and swap one question each. This works with a group size of up to 50-60 people and can help to facilitate more meaningful conversations.

Group Up

DESCRIPTION

Encourages participants to mingle and to find common ground.

SUPPLIES

- Music
- Device and speakers to play music

Group Up

INSTRUCTIONS

Invite the group to mingle and move around the room while music plays. Explain that when the music stops you will yell a characteristic. Everyone will then quickly get into groups of people with the same characteristic. For example, if you say “birth month” then everyone will get in groups with other people born in the same month as them. Allow a few seconds for people to find their groups each time. Once people are in their groups, have them share their name and where they are from before resuming the music for another round.

Examples of Characteristics:

- First initial of first name
- Number of people in immediate family
- Favorite color
- Grade in school

Common Threads

DESCRIPTION

Large group mixing to find commonalities.

SUPPLIES

- Music
- Device and speakers to play music

Common Threads

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide participants into groups of three or four and have them make a circle. Give each group 5 minutes to talk and find something that they all have in common. It could be that they all play soccer, pizza is their favorite dinner, or they each have a kitten. Whatever the common thread is, the conversation will help them get to know one another better. Check in with the groups after five minutes to see if they need more time.

Once the groups have had time to chat, tell them that when the music comes on, they will need to move together as a group calling out their common thread. They are looking to find any other groups who have the same thread (or really close to it)!



*Movement
to make
Small Groups*

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Gotcha

DESCRIPTION

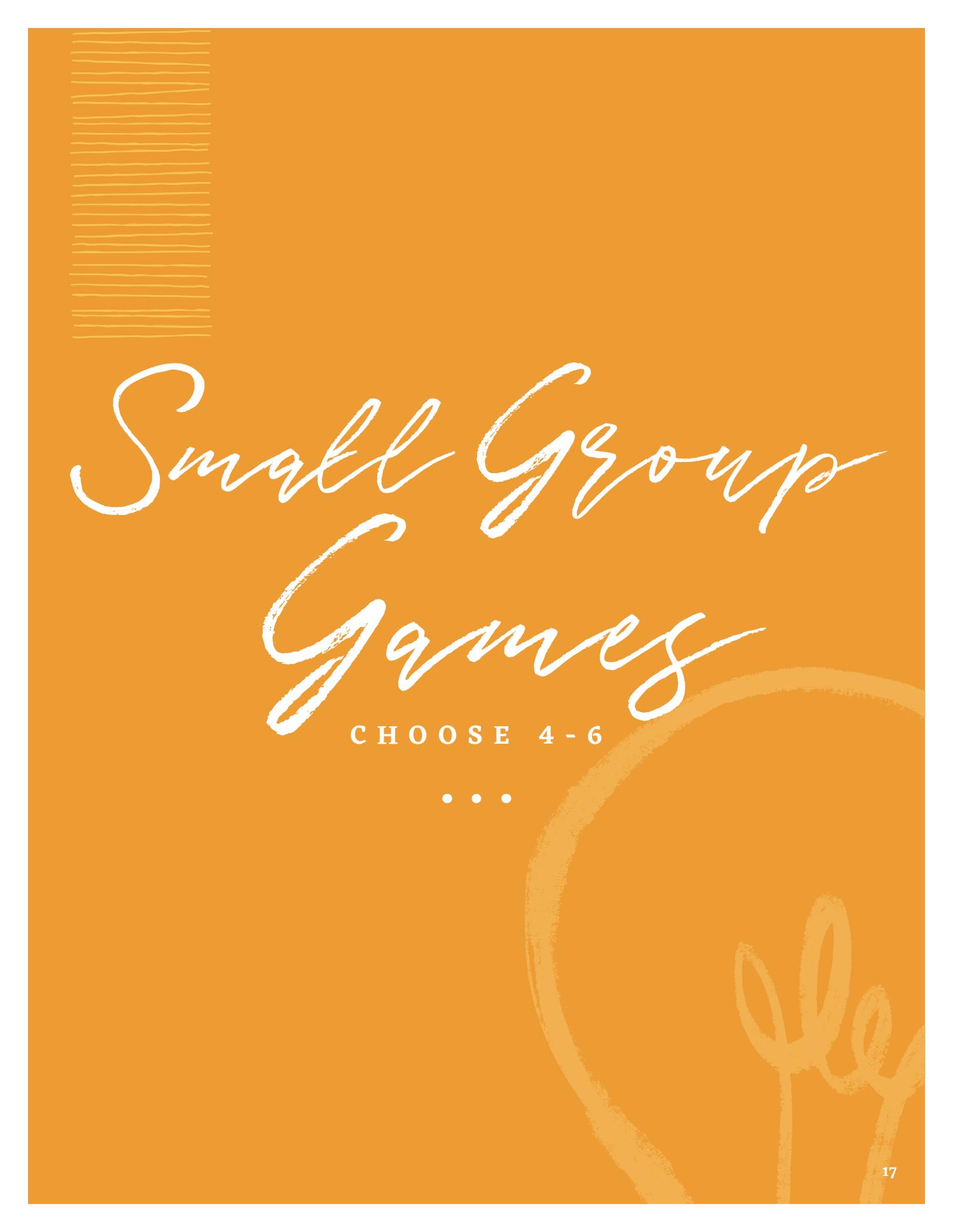
A game to continue to mix your group up AND to put them into small groups.

Gotcha

INSTRUCTIONS

Find a partner and face each other. Put your right hand in front, flat with your palm down. Stick your left index finger pointing up. You AND your partner now touch the index finger to the palm of each other's right hand. Count to three and then on GOTCHA try to remove your finger while catching your partner's finger with your left hand. Play best 2 out of 3. Trade partners and continue this for several rounds.

To create small groups, instruct two pairs to join together to play in a group of 4. Play a round, then two groups of 4 get together to create a group of 8. Continue this until you have the size groups you want for the next segment of small group games.



Small Group Games

CHOOSE 4 - 6

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String Geometry

DESCRIPTION

Game for teamwork and communication with reflective piece.

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Rope (8-12 feet), Pantyhose, or 2" elastic piece
- ☐ Eye coverings (optional)

String Geometry

INSTRUCTIONS

Tie a rope, pantyhose, or 2" wide elastic into a loop. Have everyone in the group take hold of the rope and spread out so that they form a circle. Now ask everyone to close their eyes and keep them closed for the duration of the activity (or provide eye coverings at this time). Give the group a shape to form. Begin with something fairly easy such as a square. Tell the group that they can talk to each other, but they may not open their eyes. Let the group work until they think they have formed the shape as best as they can. Now they can open their eyes to see how well they have worked together! Continue by giving them other shapes, getting progressively harder. Try a triangle, five pointed star, oval, hexagon, and more.

Leader's Hint: If you have group where one or two folks tend to give all the suggestions and directions, add extra directions in order to give others a chance to be active participants. For example:

- "Until I tell you otherwise, no one over the age of 18 may speak or give directions."
- "Everyone with tennis shoes, remain silent"

By picking up on different aspects of the dynamics of your group, you can help give the ones who are less likely to share a chance to participate.

Debrief by asking the group...

- How did it feel to try to listen to all the ideas coming at once?
- How did it feel to be one of the silent ones?
- Was communication effective?

Panic

DESCRIPTION

Small group game with movement where people get to know each other a little better.

SUPPLIES

- Chairs

Panic

INSTRUCTIONS

Place chairs in a circle. Make sure there is one less chair than the number of people playing the game. With everyone sitting in the circle, one person in the middle asks an appropriate question. For example, “do you have a dog?” Anyone who answers yes to the question has to jump up and switch chairs with another person who also answered yes. During this time the middle person will also try to grab a seat. The person left without a seat now goes to the middle and asks a new question. At any point, instead of asking a question, the person in the middle can say “PANIC” and everyone must get up and change seats.

A good rule to set is that you cannot slide into the seat right next to you. You have to move at least one seat over. If you can only move into the seat next to you then you become the center person.

Trust Walk

DESCRIPTION

Group game to build trust and practice communication.

SUPPLIES

- Eye coverings

Trust Walk

INSTRUCTIONS

Determine where in the room or space your group will begin and end this exercise. Designate one participant to be the guide or navigator and tell them the route you want the group to take. The rest of the group will form a single file line, and everyone will close their eyes (or use eye coverings if possible). The guide will direct the group around the space but may only speak to the first person in line. The first person in line can pass this information along to the rest of the group, and people in line may speak to one another to figure out where to go. This task requires everyone to listen to one another and work together.

Crazy Charades

DESCRIPTION

Group guessing game – 3 different ways.

SUPPLIES

- Small strips of paper
- Bucket/pail or something to hold slips of paper
- Pencils
- Timer

Crazy Charades

INSTRUCTIONS

Give each group pencils and a bunch of small strips of paper. Have group members write down one person or thing on each strip.

Ideas: other group members, celebrities, church members, comic strip/cartoon characters, movie characters, objects, colors, or seasons. Anything will work as long as it is relatively well known. Do not worry if something is written more than once. It could even make the game more fun. Put all of the strips into the bucket. Divide each small group into Group A and Group B.

Round 1 – One player from Group A will draw the slips of paper and act them out. They will have 60 seconds to give clues to get Group A members to guess as many slips as possible. Spoken clues are permitted as long as they do not include the actual name/thing written on the paper. Pointing is also allowed. If the group guesses correctly, they keep that strip of paper. If they are unable to guess what is on the slip of paper, they put that strip back into the pail. Group B then takes a turn. Continue to alternate between groups until all of slips have been guessed. At the end, tally up the slips to see how many each group guessed.

Round 2 – Put all of the slips back into the pail. This round is similar to Round 1, but the person must act out clues without using words (in typical charades style). Also, Group B gets to go first this time. At the end, tally up the slips to see how many each group guessed.

Round 3 – Put all of the slips back into the pail. In this round, the person drawing slips can only give 1 word clues. If no one in their group guesses correctly, they can choose to pass and move on to the next slip. Let Group A start this time. At the end, tally up the slips to see how many each group guessed.

Digital Hot Potato

DESCRIPTION

Group circle game with photos.

SUPPLIES

- Camera Phone/
Digital Camera

Digital Hot Potato

INSTRUCTIONS

Have the group sit in a circle. Preset a digital camera's timer. Let the camera take the first picture of the group and then begin passing the camera around the circle. When the camera signals it is about to take a picture, freeze and pose for the camera. Resume passing the camera and repeat.

Alternative:

After the 1st photo is taken, call out a category. When the camera signals it is about to take a picture, whoever is holding the camera must pose for the photo in that style. (Ex. funny, serious, joyful, sad, pirate, cheerleader, etc.)

Group Spelling

DESCRIPTION

Group guessing game with a round that involves bible stories.

SUPPLIES

- (Optional) Note cards with the word to be spelled or the bible story written out.

Group Spelling

INSTRUCTIONS

Form groups of 4-5. The leader will give each group a different word that they will literally spell out using their bodies - either standing, sitting, or lying down. After playing this game a few times with words, you can move on to Bible stories (VERY short, obvious ones). Give groups a chance to read the BRIEF story before deciding together how to depict this story using poses in 3-4 snap shots (like a picture freeze frame without sound or movement). Groups will then take turns presenting their snap shots and guessing the bible stories among the larger group. If a group is guessing and not presenting, they should close their eyes in between "snap shots."

King Lizard

DESCRIPTION

Small group game with a little bit of acting and improv.

King Lizard

INSTRUCTIONS

Have everyone sit in a circle. Instruct each person to pick an animal and think of a motion and noise that go along with their animal. Go around the circle and have everyone share their animal, motion, and noise. Tell participants to pay attention to other people's animals.

Once everyone has shared, choose one person to start. This person will make their own noise/motion then "send" it to anyone else in the circle by making that person's noise/motion. That new person makes their own noise/motion and then another person's noise/motion, and so on and so forth. As an example, if you had a cat, dog, and monkey in your circle, the action might go: Cat Dog - Dog Cat - Cat Monkey - Monkey Dog - Dog Cat... Continue playing until someone makes a mistake. (For example, mixes up a combination or hesitates for too long.)

After one round ends, start over with new animals/noises/motions. Whoever made the mistake that ended the previous round gets to start the new round. The game continues until participants get bored.

NOTE: Cat, monkey, and dog are commonly used, but creativity is encouraged - the sillier, the better. Animals will get crazier as the rounds go on!

Name Ball Toss

DESCRIPTION

Ice breaker for names with three variations!

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Soft types of balls (for example, a Nerf ball, rag ball, or flexible flying disc) or other objects that can be tossed around the circle.

Name Ball Toss (Brain Fry)

INSTRUCTIONS

Groups sit or stand in a circle. Give one person in each group a ball. That person then tosses the ball to someone across from them, calling their name. If your group does not know each other yet, have participants use the first round to introduce themselves. This is repeated in the circle until everyone has been thrown the ball. Repeat the same pattern/order again for a few rounds. After a few rounds, toss another ball into the circle and create a new pattern/order.

Variation 1:

Call out "Reverse" and see if the group can change the direction of the pattern by going backwards.

Variation 2: (*For a real challenge!*)

Stop tossing and have two groups join together. Instruct participants to intersperse themselves among the other players to create one large circle. Keeping their FORMER pattern have the two groups toss their balls at the same time while in one large circle. Add in all three balls – it can get a little crazy but is fun.

Variation 3:

Handshake Pass is played along the same lines as Name Ball Toss (Brain Fry) except that you greet the person with "Hi, Beth! My name is Sam," while shaking hands. As with Name Ball Toss, this is repeated in the circle until everyone has been greeted. Once the pattern is established you can just say "Beth" and the partner can reply "Sam." At any point, you can make the game more challenging by adding the ball toss in at the same time, so that the group is doing two different patterns at once – one with handshakes and one with the ball.

Giant Tic Tac Toe

DESCRIPTION

Large relay game version of tic tac toe.

SUPPLIES

- Bean bags (2 different colors so one set can be “X” and the other “O”)
- Chalk, painter’s tape, or other materials to make a large tic tac toe board.

Giant Tic Tac Toe

INSTRUCTIONS

Form two teams and give each team a set of bean bags. Create a tic tac toe board using chalk, painter’s tape, or another method. Use the same method to create a starting line 20 feet away from the board. Have each team form a single file line behind the starting line. When the group leader yells “GO” the first person in each line grabs one of their team’s bean bags and runs to the tic tac toe board. They drop the bean bag in their desired space, marking it for their team. They then run back to their team so that the next person in line can go. The first team to get 3 in a row wins that round.

If the board fills up without a team getting 3 in a row, there will not be a tie. Instead, the team members will have to pick up one of their bean bags and run back to the starting line. They will give it to the next person in line who will run and put the bean bag in a new spot. This will continue until one of the teams gets 3 in a row.



Large Group Games

CHOOSE 1

...

Speedway

DESCRIPTION

Group game for teamwork.

SUPPLIES

☐ Timer

Speedway

INSTRUCTIONS

Have everyone form a circle and pick a person to be the starter. The starter will look at the person on their right and clap their hands. The next person will look at the person to their right and clap their hands. This continues all the way around the circle until you are back to the starter. Now, get the timer ready and record how fast the group can clap their hands one at a time around the circle. Play several rounds with the group always trying to beat their own time.

Zoom-Mooz

DESCRIPTION

Group game for teamwork.

SUPPLIES

☐ Timer

Zoom-Mooz

INSTRUCTIONS

Have everyone form a circle and pick a person to be the starter. The starter looks at the person on their right and says “zoom.” The word “zoom” is passed all the way around the circle, until “zoom” gets back to the starter. Now, get the timer ready and record how fast the group can pass “zoom” around the circle. Each person must finish saying “zoom” before the next person starts. After your group has gotten good at passing “zoom,” have the starter look to their left and pass “mooz.” Practice with “mooz” a couple of times, and then start “zoom” and “mooz” at the same time. These words are going in two different directions! See which gets back first.



Closing

...





Felt, I Learned, I Feel

DESCRIPTION

Large group reflection.

I Felt, I Learned, I Feel

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask everyone in the group to find a partner OR gather in one large circle if your group is between 10-15 people. Either in pairs or by sharing in a circle have participants finish the following sentences:

- I felt...
- I learned...
- I feel...

For example:

- I felt nervous about coming to this retreat.
- I learned lots of names.
- I feel relieved and energized.



Decorating Ideas

...

Every event needs a little bit of fluff, and it does not take much to make a gathering feel fun and inviting. Below are several simple and inexpensive ideas that can be adapted to your setting to make your time together special. You can mix or match them to enhance your event, and use them as a stage backdrop or as a photo op. Have fun and be creative. Please share your creations...we want to “see” you!

Eyes

DESCRIPTION

Creates a great way to bring the theme to life!

SUPPLIES

- Pictures of participants' eyes
- Foam core board
- Double sided tape

Eyes

INSTRUCTIONS

Take pictures in advance of each participant's face. Use an app like Print to Size to crop out the eyes and make them a uniform size. Print these out and mount them to foam core board with double sided tape. You are creating a collage of eyes! (FYI, the Dollar Tree is the cheapest place that we have found foam core board for this sort of work.)

The foam core board can be glued together with a hot glue gun to create a large piece of art to use as a backdrop or photo op. It can be hung from the ceiling, a screen frame, or hung in the trees with fishing line at different heights. It will be fun for the group to spend time figuring out who they are seeing!

Stars and Circles

DESCRIPTION

Create a night sky to mimic the theme artwork from the [PYT website](#).

SUPPLIES

- Blue, Silver, Gold Cardstock (available on Amazon)
- Traceable templates of a star shape, a moon shape, and a circle shape.
- Fishing line
- Double sided tape

Stars and Circles

INSTRUCTIONS

Create templates by printing or drawing the desired shapes and cutting them out. Trace stars, moons, and circles on the cardstock using the templates. You will want an even number of each shape/color to create a front and back. Cut out your shapes. Attach like items (same color/shape) back to back with double sided tape to a heavy weight fishing line. Leave space (maybe 6" or so) between each item. Hang these garlands from trees, the ceiling, or wherever else you like. For greater impact, you can group garlands together by hanging several strands on a narrow board/dowel and then putting that up in your space. (1"x2" boards are usually available in 6' and 8' lengths at lumber yards.)

Pennants

DESCRIPTION

Pennants/triangular flags that can be used not only as decoration, but as an opening activity to explore the theme.

SUPPLIES

- Cardstock in blue, gold, silver, and/or theme related colors of your choosing
- Yarn or fishing line
- Markers
- Hole punch

Pennants

INSTRUCTIONS

This is a great activity for youth to create as they arrive. Before the gathering, cut out pennants/triangular flags. Punch two holes at the top (shortest side) of each one. Participants can write a saying, thought, prayer, or answer to a question of your choosing on their pennant. They can then string their pennant on the fishing line or yarn through the holes at the top. This will create a theme-colored garland that you can hang up to decorate your space.

Pool Noodle Garland

DESCRIPTION

Pool noodles to the rescue one more time!

SUPPLIES

- Pool noodles (theme colored)
- Fishing line
- Old Styrofoam Christmas garland
- Needle (A long doll sculpture needle works well.)
- Electric knife (If you have one.)

Pool Noodle Garland

INSTRUCTIONS

Using an electric knife, cut the pool noodles into 1" thick circles. Remove the Styrofoam balls from the old Christmas Garland. Using a long doll sculpture needle, thread fishing line through the 1" thick pool noodle circles and Styrofoam balls in an alternating pattern to create a new garland. Hang the garland from the ceiling or use as a stage backdrop!

Icons

DESCRIPTION

Easy backdrop featuring the Triennium icons that can blow in the breeze.

SUPPLIES

- Fishing line
- Blue plastic Solo plates
- Double sided tape
- Printed PYT Icons

Icons

INSTRUCTIONS

Download the [PYT Icons](#) available on the Triennium website. Print these out (probably one or two per page) and cut each into a circle. Use double sided tape to attach each icon to the center of a plate. When you are ready to hang the garland, put the fishing line BETWEEN the plates (with double sided tape) and then tape the plates back to back so you have a double sided garland. Simple, easy, and inexpensive!

Plastic Tape Streamers

DESCRIPTION

Plastic streamers and double sided tape make a cheap and easy decor idea.

SUPPLIES

- Plastic streamers or Mylar Streamers (Amazon)
- Double sided tape
- Christmas lights (Dollar Tree)

Plastic Tape Streamers

INSTRUCTIONS

Attach the streamers to the ceiling OR a 1"x2" Board with streamers side by side. Hang short Christmas tree lights vertically spaced between the streamers for a little bit of a glitzy look! (You can always stock up on short strings of Dollar Tree Christmas lights - especially after Christmas when the prices drop.)



Stars and Hoops

DESCRIPTION

This is a variation on the theme artwork from the [PYT website](#).

SUPPLIES

- Small hula hoops (Dollar Tree)
- OR Make your own hoops using Pex Pipe (from the hardware store) and short dowel rods (to hold the pipe together).
- Aluminum tape (available in the HVAC dept)
- OR Gold / Silver spray paint
- Fishing line
- Gold or Silver poster board to make cut out stars

Stars and Hoops

INSTRUCTIONS

You can use small hula hoops and wrap them in aluminum tape or spray paint them silver or gold. Hang large cut out stars in the center of the hoops using a fishing line. These are adaptable to your setting whether it be in trees or the ceiling or as the backdrop for the stage. This gives a big punch with minimal effort!



Table Games
for
Mealtimes
...

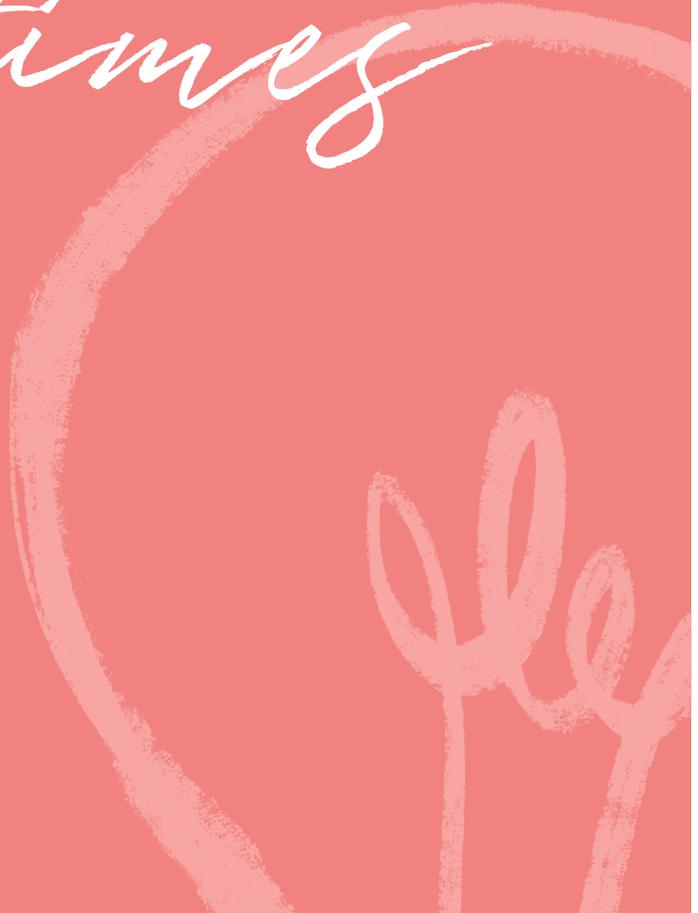


Table Games

FOR MEALTIMES

Mealtimes can be a great place for groups to get to know each other better. We have included instructions, supply lists, and templates for 6 table games that your group can play at mealtimes. With just a little setup ahead of time, tables should be able to play these games on their own. Supplies and instructions for the games can be placed in a basket or small bucket in the middle of the table along with a cube. We have provided a cube template in the Resources section with 6 game icons on it. Print & assemble 1 cube per table, or use dice. Everyone at the table will take turns rolling the cube and whichever icon it lands on, the table plays that game. (If you are playing with dice, just play the game that has the same number as you roll.) Our suggestion is to play 2 games per meal, but you can adjust this as needed. After a group has played a game once, encourage them to keep rolling until the cube lands on a new game.

Instructions & Supply List

Below is an overview of the 6 games included on the cube. Templates for the cube and table games can be found in the Resource section of this Recreation Guide. Print 1 cube per table.

1

TABLE MAD LIBS

Supplies: Pencils, print outs

Instructions: Have the table take one of the themed Mad Lib pages out. As a group have them fill in the blanks, perhaps taking turns so everyone has input. When finished, ask for a volunteer to stand up and read it to the whole group.

2

I SPY

Supplies: I Spy pictures with the lists of things to find

Instructions: Have one person at the table hand out the copies of the I Spy pictures. The table group can work in pairs to see if they can find all the items listed. You can also have the group come up with I Spy items of their own and play the game a second round with each person asking the table to find their item.

3

ONE OF A KIND CARD GAME

Supplies: Deck of Cards, One of a Kind sheet, instructions

Instructions: Use the cards as a way to get to know everyone at the table. Give each table one suit of cards, Ace through King. They will shuffle and these cards and put them in the middle of the table, face down. Next, have a copy of the One of the Kind sheet with 13 questions (or create your own).

Each member of the group takes a turn picking the top card on the pile and answering the question on the paper that corresponds with their card. Just that person answers that prompt. Then the next person goes. Keep going until all 13 cards have been used. Feel free to tweak the prompts to fit your group!

4 PRAYER PORTRAITS

Supplies: Paper, marker/crayons/pencils, instructions

Instructions: At their tables, have each person take a piece of blank paper and write their name at the bottom of the page. Now pass the paper one person to the right. Have each person draw the shape of the head of the person whose name is on the bottom of the page. Pass it again to the right and tell them to draw that person's mouth (always drawing the person whose name is on the bottom of the page). Then pass and draw the nose, pass and draw the eyes, pass and draw the ears, pass and draw the hair, pass and draw extras like glasses, jewelry, etc. Now pass the paper back to the original owner to admire the rendition of themselves. Next, have everyone pass their portrait across the circle. Each person takes the portrait of another member of the group to pray for that person for duration of the retreat (or whatever amount of time you choose).

5 POPSICLE STICK Pictionary

Supplies: Popsicle sticks, Set of 16 pictures printed & cut out for each table, instructions

Instructions: Each table should have a supply of popsicle sticks (about 15 or so is usually plenty) and a stack of picture cards, face down. Play Pictionary using popsicle sticks instead of a pen or pencil. The person at the table who traveled the farthest starts the game by drawing the top card. Without showing their card to anyone else, they begin to "draw" or recreate the picture using the popsicle sticks. When their group correctly guesses the object, the next person takes a turn. This continues until all of the pictures have been drawn (or you run out of time).

You can print out these pictures on cardstock (6 per page is a good size) and cut them into rectangles. You can also make your own a set of cards for each table by drawing them yourself on index cards ahead of time.

Leader's Hint: This game is easily adapted to themes! For example, things found at a campsite (campfire, tent, tree, spider, moon, etc.).

6 ROCK & ROLL DICE

Supplies: 1 dice per table, one list of activities per table

Instructions: Each table should have the dice and instructions. Have one person in the group roll the dice. This person then follows the directions on the instruction sheet for the number they rolled. After they have finished following the instructions, pass the dice on to the next person in the circle until everyone has had a chance to roll. Depending on the size of your table, you can choose to go around the group a second time.



Theme Party

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Theme Party

ULTIMATE BIRTHDAY PARTY

Think back to all of the birthday parties you attended from age 1-18. What were some of your favorite themes and activities? What magical staples made the birthday parties epic? From the McDonald's ball pits to pin the tail on the donkey, from skate or bowling parties all the way to awkward first dance parties, the Ultimate Birthday Party can be all of these things! There are ideas for decorations, activities, and food along with Pinterest boards to help inspire you as you throw your own Ultimate Birthday Party.

DECORATION IDEAS

Pinterest Board for decorations

- **Balloons** - multi-colored or theme colored
- **Lifesize Numbered Balloons** - can be of the varying ages of the participants
- **Balloon Arch**
- **Streamers** - can be placed in doorways to walk through & draped around the room
- **Streamer Chandelier** - made out of different size hula hoops
- **Party Hats** - ranging from princess/superhero themes and all of the above

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Pinterest board with Activity ideas

- **Piñata** - traditional or personal
- **Pin the Tail on the Donkey**
(Choose a different animal or make up your own like "pin the stole on the pastor.")
- **Simon Says**
- **Graffiti Wall / Life-size Coloring Sheet**
- **Ball Pit Treasure Hunt**
 - Setup a kiddie pool filled with balls or balloons of any kind.
 - Have a relay to find specific items in the kiddie pool.
 - Create a list for everyone to see the order in which they need to find things, with the rule that they must leave the items in the pool until they get to it on their list.
 - Item ideas: McDonald's toys, spoon, sock, marker, paper clip, clothespin, cotton ball, dice, hair tie, Jolly Rancher, Starburst, etc.
- **Birthday Trivia**
 - Questions could be about the birthdays of the participants or about birthday statistics around the world.
 - This activity could be done digitally using smart devices and an online quiz platform, such as Kahoot.

- **Team Balloon Race / Obstacle Course**
 - Team Over-Under Relay
 - Balloon must get to the other side, but only one touch per person. Repeat people until it gets to the other side. You could use pool noodles as an alternative option.
 - Balloon waddle between legs
 - At any point you could add baseball bat spinning before any relay.
- **Group dance / Barn Dance / Energizers / DJ**
- **Backyard games**
 - Cornhole
 - Ladder Golf
 - Twister - spray paint on grass or make a giant board on a tarp
 - 9 Square
 - Frisbee Pole
 - Sack Race
 - Three-legged Race
 - Water Balloon Toss (Remind participants to pick up after the game!)
- **What's On Your Phone Scavenger Hunt** - Get a point when you find:
 - A selfie as a screensaver
 - A pet as a screensaver
 - The most recent timestamp text from someone's mom
 - The oldest picture saved in someone's pictures folder
 - The person with the most fast food apps
 - Contact list with a name that starts with Y
 - Contact list with a name that starts with Q
 - An alarm set before 7:00 am
 - An embarrassing video of themselves
 - Has less than 10% battery life / more than 80% battery life
- **Hire entertainment**
 - Magician
 - Dress up characters (Examples: Princess, Superhero, Clown or balloon artist, Band)
- **Movie Showing (indoor or outdoor)**
- **Photo Ops (for small or large groups)**
 - Have a variety of items to put on to take a group picture.
 - Examples: Giant Sunglasses, Birthday Party Hats, Mardi Gras beads, etc.

FOOD IDEAS

Pinterest Board for Main Dish food ideas & Dessert ideas

- **Dessert Ideas**
 - Cupcakes (regular-sized or mini-sized in a variety of flavors)
 - Scoopable candy to make a candy version of "Chex Mix" in small clear punch cups
 - Ice cream sundae bar
- **Main Dish Idea**
 - Hot dogs / corn dogs
 - Hamburgers / sliders
 - Macaroni & cheese cups
 - Finger sandwiches
 - Chips & dips
 - Veggie trays or charcuterie boards
 - Slushies / Kool-Aid



Resources

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Cube



I SPY



MAD LIBS



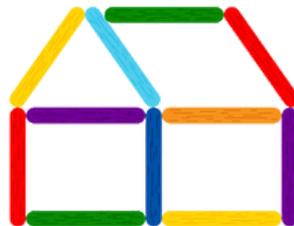
**ONE OF A
KIND**



**PRAYER
PORTRAITS**



**ROCK N' ROLL
DICE**



**POPSICLE STICK
PICTIONARY**

Mad Libs

Luke 24: 13-35

On that same day, _____ disciples were _____ to a
number verb ending in -ing
_____ called Emmaus, about seven miles from _____.
noun noun

While they were _____ these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined
verb ending in -ing
them on their journey. They did not _____ him.
verb

He said to them, "What are you talking about as you _____ along?
verb

The one named _____ replied, "Are you the _____ visitor to
noun adverb

Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few
days? He _____ to them, "What things?"
verb

Then the _____ told him all about Jesus' _____.
noun (plural) noun

Jesus said to them, "You are so _____!" Then he interpreted for them the
adjective

things written about himself in all the _____. When they came to
noun

Emmaus, the _____ asked him to _____. When Jesus took the bread
noun verb

and _____ it, their eyes were opened and they recognized him. The disciples were
verb

_____. When they returned to Jerusalem, they found _____ of
adjective number

their _____ and _____ together. They said to one another, "The Lord
noun verb

has _____ risen!"
adverb

Mad Libs

Psalm 23

The Lord is my _____ . I lack nothing. He lets me _____
noun verb

in _____ ; he _____ me to _____ waters;
adjective noun verb adjective

he keeps me _____. He guides me on proper paths for the sake of his
adjective

_____ name. Even when I _____ through the _____
adjective verb adjective

valley, I fear nothing because you are _____ me. Your _____ and staff –
verb noun

they _____ me. You set a table for my _____. You bathe my
verb noun

_____ in _____ ; my cup is so _____ it spills over!
noun noun adjective

Yes, _____ and faithful love will _____ me all the days of my life,
noun verb

And I will _____ in the Lord's _____ forever.
verb noun

1 Spy

4th of July



Can you find:

- 6 Uncle Sam figures
- 2 shoes
- 1 Pez candy
- 1 flag sparkler
- 4 Lady Liberty icons
- 3 Presidents of the USA
- 1 bell
- 10+ American Flags
- 1 Captain American
- 1 pinwheel

1 Spy

Nature



Can you find:

3 Spicebush seed pods • 4 Sycamore balls • 1 Pokeberry stalk • 2 Pyracantha clusters
1 stalk of Goldenrod • 4 bunches of wild grapes • 3 clusters of Dogwood seeds • 1 Marigold flower
4 apples • 11+ acorns

One of a Kind

Each person takes a turn turning over the top card and answering the question according to the card they turn over. Keep going until all of the cards are gone.

Ace - Tell your group the last time you laughed uncontrollably and why.

2 - If you could only have one type of pizza for the rest of the year, what would be on it?

3 - What's your favorite Netflix/Hulu/Disney+ series that you love watching?

4 - Which do you like better - going swimming on a hot day OR playing in the snow on a cold day?

5 - Best way to eat ice cream - in a cup or in a cone? What's your favorite flavor?

6 - If you could have any Superhero Power, what would you choose?

7 - On a rainy day where would we find you? What would you be doing?

8 - If you could go to any theme park which one would you choose to visit?

9 - What is the coolest thing (plant, animal, etc.) that you have ever seen in nature?

10 - You are on vacation - which would you visit first? A zoo, a museum, or a festival?

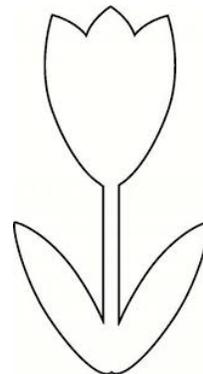
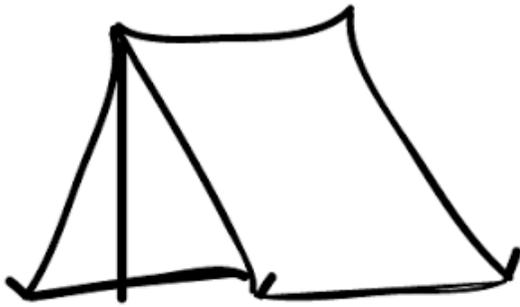
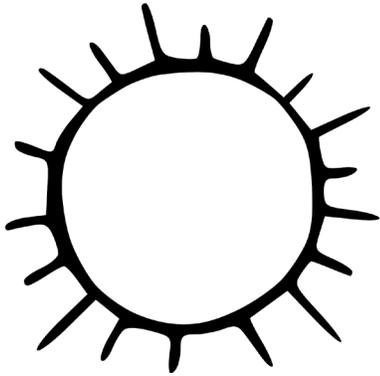
J - If you could time travel would you want to go back in time or visit the future?

Q - What is your favorite thing to do at church?

K - What is your favorite sport to play or to watch someone else play?

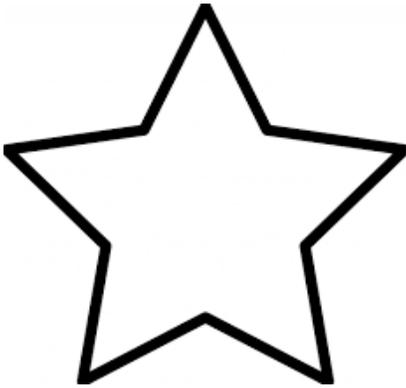
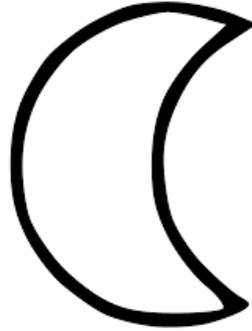
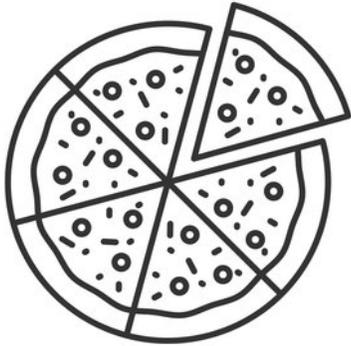
Pictionary

Game #1



Pictionary

Game #2



Rock & Roll

Dice Game

1. Pat your head and rub your tummy for 5 seconds and then switch for 5 seconds.
2. My favorite thing to dip a chip in is _____.
3. Play one round of “Duck, Duck, Goose” with your group.
4. Between acting like my parents and dressing like my parents I’d rather _____.
5. Lead your group in singing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”
6. Play 3 rounds of “Rock, Paper, Scissors” with someone at another table...then trade places!

Links

<https://www.pinterest.com/oneofthejoannas/ultimate-birthday-pyt-beyond/dessert-ideas/>
<https://www.pinterest.com/oneofthejoannas/ultimate-birthday-pyt-beyond/main-dish-ideas/>
<https://www.pinterest.com/oneofthejoannas/ultimate-birthday-pyt-beyond/activity-ideas/>
<https://www.pinterest.com/oneofthejoannas/ultimate-birthday-pyt-beyond/decoration-ideas/>