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HOW TO LEAD GAMES

A game is a TOOL that can be used to create fun and enjoyment in an atmosphere of relaxed togetherness.

1. Atmosphere
 - ◆ Build an atmosphere for play
 - ◆ Be enthusiastic – your attitude can make or break an activity
2. Be prepared
 - ◆ Know all of the rules before you introduce the game
 - ◆ Have all of your equipment ready
 - ◆ Make sure there is room to play the game
3. Appropriateness
 - ◆ Make sure the game is not too difficult or too simple for your group
 - ◆ Play the game without stereotyping
 - ◆ Play active games outside and passive games inside
4. Introduction of the game
 - ◆ Group the children into a listening formation
 - ◆ Review the name of the game, the object of the game, and a few quick rules
 - ◆ Have some practice runs to demonstrate rather than explain
5. Participation
 - ◆ Be sure that you are an impartial participant
 - ◆ When possible, let the children win
6. Timing
 - ◆ End the game while the kids are still having fun

- ◆ Stop the game before your group gets bored

7. Be ready to move on

- ◆ Have another activity planned if you need to change or stop the game

Leading a game is fun and rewarding. Share your enjoyment with your children and have a good time.

Icebreakers

When people come together for the first time, there is usually a period of uneasiness or apprehension. It is therefore vitally important that activities be planned from the first moment they meet as a group, and that the initial activities be planned to help them get acquainted. Mixer materials, name games, and other “icebreakers,” such as the following can be adapted to group of any sizes.

Group Recall

Participants are asked to consider whom they would choose to be if they had to be another person who has lived or is living (a real person). After they have chosen someone, the participants are next asked to reflect upon why they selected this person. When all are ready to share, the facilitator explains the process:

The volunteer goes first, sharing the person he/she would like to be and why and his/her name; the next person sitting to the left goes by first recalling what the volunteer shared and then shares his/her selection, etc. going around the circle.

Trust Walk

Divide the group in half. Half the group is to be blindfolded; the other half becomes the leaders. One leader then leads one of the blindfolded people in a walk around the area. After a few minutes reverse the roles. Process afterwards by asking questions such as:

How do you feel as the leader?

How did you feel being blindfolded?

Did you trust your partner to take care of you?

Did you feel responsible to take care of your partner?

The Public Interview

Sit in a circle and ask the volunteer any questions that interest you. Each of the group members may participate in this. Anyone asking the question must be willing to answer the question. The volunteer always has the option to pass any question.

The M&M Game

Need a bag of M&M's. Give a handful of M&M's to each member. Each color stands for something. For example, red is love, green is family, orange is future, yellow is friends, dark brown is hobbies and light brown is school. Sitting in a circle you go around the circle and each person picks an M&M out of their pile. Before they can eat the M&M they must say something about themselves. Proceed until M&M's are gone.

NATIVE AMERICAN GAMES

The Native Americans loved games. They played many games. Some were very strenuous. These were the games of archery, horse racing, football, and lacrosse. But they also had other games, usually games of chance, that were not so strenuous but still a great deal of fun to play. Following is a list of these games and how they were played.

- ◆ The “Guessing Game,” can be played between two people or among as many as twelve people. A boy or a girl will hold a small object in his or her hand so as to conceal it. The other students attempt to name the object by asking questions about the color of the object, its size, its use, its price, etc. The first student to guess what the object is becomes the new player to hold an object in his hand.

- ◆ In the “Stick Game,” a student puts twelve pencils behind his back and divides them – so many in the right hand and so many in the left. The other students must guess how many sticks are in each hand. If six students fail to guess the number of sticks in each hand, the student holding the sticks wins the game. But if a student guesses the number of sticks before six turns are completed, that student takes the pencils (sticks), divides them behind his back, and attempts to win the game. The game continues until someone wins.

- ◆ To play the next “Stick Game,” divide the students into two groups. You, the teacher, provide four piles of colored paper that has been shredded. The first group takes a pencil and passes it from player to player. At any time, a player may step out of the group and attempt to hide the pencil under one of the four piles. The student with the stick must attempt to hide the pencil with his hands and with quick hand movements attempt to fool the other team into guessing which pile he hides the pencil under. The leader of the other team must pick the correct pile he thinks the pencil is under. If he chooses correctly, his team wins a point and they get the pencil. If he is not correct, the team with the pencil gets a point and starts over again. Five points wins the game.

- ◆ Another favorite game was the “Ball Race.” Divide the class into teams of six. The path the balls must be pushed with the feet can be between two rows of students’ desks. Make the path wide enough for two students pushing balls forward with their feet. To start, take a member from each team. Both of them have a ball. At the signal of “Go” each student starts attempting to guide his ball up the path. If the ball goes off the path and between the desks, the student must start over. The object is for each team to have all six of its members push their balls up the path to the end. As soon as one member of the team reaches the end of the path, another member of that team starts his ball up the path. The team getting all six of its balls up the path to the end first, wins the game. Remember, there can be no kicking of the ball. It must be pushed by the feet. A student may push the ball with either foot at any time.

- ◆ The Native Americans played many “Dice Games.” The dice we use today are cubical but their’s were two sided. These stick dice were usually about four inches long. You, the teacher, can easily make similar dice. Take three dominoes. Paint one side of each domino white. Paint the other side red. Or you can paint three small similarly shaped pieces of wood. Students can use beans or corn kernels as chips which are also needed to play this game. Two people play this game. Each person picks up the three dice and casts them on the floor. After one student casts the dice, his opponent then casts the dice. One student is red, the other white. Each time the dice are cast the students count the number of red and white sides. One point is awarded for each color shown.

- ◆ The boys loved “Tops.” They made them, or their fathers made them, out of wood, bone, clay or horn. Usually they spun their tops on ice. They competed to see who could keep his top going the longest time. In one top game, a boy starts his top spinning and then runs around a large object or around a path. The object is to run back to the top before it stops spinning. Several boys or girls can play this game. The student who keeps his or her top spinning the longest time wins the game.

Your children will have many hours of creative learning as well as fun inventing a variety of top games. A craft project could be for each child to carve or create his own top to use when the games are actually played.