

INTRODUCTIONS

TEAM BUILDING

“The most important measure of how good a game I’d played was how much better I’d made my teammates play”

-Bill Russell, Boston Celtics

September

Introduction/Team Building Key Concepts

It's always a good idea for the group to get to know each other before you begin, especially when they will soon begin doing collaborative efforts through team building and the other modules of this program. Some might assume that since the students are all in the same class at the same school that they will already know one another and that perhaps the introduction activities can be skipped. However, we can't assume that. Perhaps some have just moved here and this is their first time in this class. Maybe the kids have been to different elementary buildings and are now coming together for the first time. Furthermore, these activities are as important to you as they are to the participants. It will allow you to get to know them more and learn more about each of the youth that you will be developing this year.

As for teamwork, a defining characteristic of an effective leader is the ability to bring people together for a common purpose. Effective leaders understand that not all of us are alike and that each person has something different to contribute to the good of the team. This first unit helps students understand the importance of working together as a team when striving to accomplish goals.

Though there are some roles in life that are very independent, most are very dependent in some way on other people. Whether it's the support of a family member, a classmate, a teacher, or a teammate, we all have others that we count on and that rely on us from time to time for assistance. Through group interaction and problem solving scenarios, you will help students learn the importance of being a contributing member of a team and that being on a team means much more than playing sports.

Introduction Activity 1

Introduction Cards

Materials Needed: Enough 3x5 index cards to give one to each student.

Total Time Required: 30 minutes

Group Size: Entire class will work together.

Instructions: Tell the students that they are to write their name on the front of the card. On the back of the card, have them number 1-5. Then tell them they are to take the card to 5 other students in the room and have them write a single adjective that describes the name of the student on the front of that card. The adjectives should always be positive and can describe the person's looks, personality, traits, talents etc. For example, a list might include: 1) nice smile 2) pretty hair, cute, funny, friendly, etc. Each student is to collect 5 adjectives from 5 different people. The people writing the adjectives don't have to write their name or tell who wrote the adjective.

After all the students have collected the five descriptors, have students trade cards and then come to the front of the room and introduce the person on the card by reading the five descriptors on the back and then announcing their name. That person comes up and reads another person's card. Continue doing so until all students have had a chance to be introduced and introduce someone else.

Debrief:

This simple activity allows the students get to know each other just a bit better. It forces some students to look at positive traits of others. Some students will hear descriptors about themselves they hadn't realized or never heard before. It can be great for building self-esteem and creating a positive climate.

NOTE: The descriptors must be positive. Negative remarks will greatly undermine the value of this activity. Encourage students to look for good traits and qualities in all students.

Teambuilding Activity 2 **Magic Carpet**

Materials Needed: Two plastic fleeced backed tablecloths and masking tape

Total Time Required: 20 minutes

Group Size: Two groups of 8-12 students

Instructions: Lay the two tablecloths close together, so there is space for students to step from one to the other. Next, have one group get on top of one tablecloth, and the other group on the opposite tablecloth. The story: a massive eruption happened, and there is lava everywhere. The magic carpet can fly over. If they step off, they cannot get back on. The only problem- the carpets are upside down and won't work unless they are flipped over. This is the task.

The solution: They may step to the other groups carpet, turn theirs over, and then repeat for the other group. This is teamwork, not a competition.

Debrief:

What was the problem?

What helped?

Did they think it was a contest?

How did communication play in?

Compare this to groups they are in-are you facing tasks that seem overwhelming?

Can you solve the problem alone?

How can others help you?

Teambuilding Activity 3 **Hula Hoops**

Materials Needed: One hula-hoop for every 8-10 students

Total Time Required: 15-20 minutes

Group Size: 8-10 students

Instructions: Each group of students should be instructed to stand in a circle and extend their index finger on each hand. Place the hula-hoop on the top of fingertips in the middle of the circle. Instruct them to work as a team to lower the hoop to the ground using only their index finger. Everyone needs to be touching the hoop at all times. It is a race to see which group can accomplish first. They will really need to work together to accomplish this task.

Debrief:

What happened when you first started this activity?
Was your group able to lower the hoop on the first try?
What happened that enabled you to complete the activity?
Were you frustrated?
How did conflict play a role?
Describe the communication within the group.