

ICEBREAKERS AND LIFESAVERS

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One problem you will always have to deal with when planning an activity is the tendency for certain families to arrive 10, 30, or even 60 minutes late. You know who these folks are – they're the same ones who are 10, 30, or 60 minutes late for their Sunday meetings.

Rather than get frustrated over these well-meaning but disorganized folks, a better approach is to design your activity so that you can entertain those who arrive early, while holding off the main activity until everyone arrives. That is the purpose of Icebreaker activities. They get the crowd warmed up and in a jovial mood, so that when the tardy members finally arrive, everyone will be set to jump right into the main activity. Even if you live in that rare ward where everyone is punctual (if there is such a place) Icebreakers are still a good prelude to the main activity, as they give members a chance to have some fun and associate with one another. This is especially important for new members or non-members, as it gets them feeling at home before the activity begins.

It is quite common during an activity that you will have a lull in the program. For example, the cleaning crew might be clearing off the tables and the program crew is getting ready to present the entertainment. Rather than have your crowd wander off or leave because of boredom, you need to sponsor a short activity that keeps people moving and wakes them up before the next phase of the activity. We refer to these kinds of activities as Lifesavers.

This is simply a collection of these short little activities that may be used to give people a laugh and keep them entertained before or between portions of your primary activity. Most of these are suitable as either Icebreakers or Lifesavers, and the few that are not will be ready apparent when you read the descriptions. The activities are listed according to age group.

WARM UP ACTIVITIES FOR OLD FOGIES

These Icebreakers and Lifesavers are designed for adults, and for general ward activities where adults are present. Most of them can be used equally successfully in both large and small group activities. Human beings are inherently a little bit shy, especially when we get away from our comfort zone. These activities do just that – they force us into that scary realm of human interaction, but they do it without too much trauma. This section includes a variety of entertaining activities, including some tame ones and some that get right in your face, in a good sort of way. If some of the ideas seem lame to you, use others. It's the concept of warm up activities that we want to convey – the ones you use will depend on the needs of your ward members.

Now and Then

Materials: Computer or projector; old photos of people who are attending; pencil and paper

Effort Quotient: Passive

Timing: 2 hours

Planning: Moderate

This is an excellent warm up activity for an auxiliary get-together, but it requires some preparation. A couple of weeks before the activity, have each participant bring a picture of himself as a child. Have someone put the pictures together in a common format (slides, prints, or digital prints on a computer). The object of the game is to identify as many childhood pictures as you can. As the first picture is shown, everyone writes down a guess whose picture it is. This process continues until all the pictures have been shown and everyone has a name for every number. Run through the pictures a couple of times to allow everyone adequate time to guess. The person with the highest score should win a magnificent prize.

Confession

Materials: Paper and pencil for everyone.

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 20 minutes.

Set up tables and chairs in the cultural hall. Divide the group up by some preconceived method (birth month, numbering people as they enter cultural hall, or whatever way you want). Seat no more than 10-12 per table, but make sure it's an even number. Pair up. The first person in each pair takes three to four minutes to learn as much as possible about his partner and writes these items down on paper. Then the second person quizzes the first one, repeating the process. Finally each person takes one minute to repeat for everyone at the table (from memory – do not use paper) as many facts as they can about their partners. Valuable prizes such as stickers or pieces of candy can be awarded to the person who remembers most per table.

Did You Know?

Materials: Slip of paper and pencil for everyone.

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 10-15 minutes

Set up tables and chairs in cultural hall. Divide the group by some preconceived method and seat no more than 10-12 persons per table. Each person in the group writes down something he or she doesn't think the rest of the group will know about himself. The pieces of paper are folded, numbered and placed in a cup or hat. The slips of paper are pulled out of the container and read one by one. Each member of the group compiles a list of people they feel best matches the number of each clue. After the last slip is read, the person with the most correct matches wins and is justly and handsomely rewarded with a stick of gum, piece of candy, sticker, or some other treasure. This can also be used with "Most embarrassing moment," "My silliest habit," or some similar bit of personal trivia.

All the News that Fits

Materials: Plenty of newspapers or magazines (depending on the size of your group.)

Effort Quotient: Semi-passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Give everyone a section of newspaper or several pages of magazine. Everybody is to spend three to five minutes looking for words, phrases, pictures that describe them or something about them. Each person can pick as many things that describe them as they want; however, they will have to take turns telling the group why they picked out the things they did. This is a very enlightening activity.

Stick 'Em Up!

Materials: None.

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Have your group stand in a circle. The person who's it walks around inside the circle, chooses a member of the circle at random, points his finger at the person, and says, "Stick em up!" The victim must raise both hands straight up in the air and say his name and the names of the persons to his immediate right and left. The person to the victim's left must raise his right arm straight up, and the person to the right must raise his left arm straight up. If anybody makes a mistake, either by raising the wrong arms or saying the wrong names, that person becomes it. Repeat the game until everyone is too tired to raise their arms anymore.

Let's Get Introduced

Materials: Something that makes music.

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange people in two circles (facing each other), women on the inside, and men on the outside. (Note: There should be an equal number of males and females.) As the music starts, the women move clockwise and the men move counterclockwise. As the music stops, introduce yourself to the person facing you. Tell each other one thing you like and one thing you don't like. When the music continues, the process is repeated until the first person falls from exhaustion.

Juicy Facts

Material: None.

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Have everyone sit in a circle. Go around the circle and have everyone say their first and last names and tell one "juicy" fact about him or herself. After everyone has introduced themselves, it then starts the game by pointing to someone and says either right or left. The person pointed at then has five seconds to say the name and juicy fact about his right or left neighbor. If he flubs up, he becomes it, and the previous it person goes to the circle while the new it goes to the middle. The process is repeated. To make it more interesting and challenging, have the entire groups switch places every third or fourth introduction. This way you get to know more neighbors.

Mental Block

Materials: One soft rubber ball or aluminum foil ball.

Effort Quotient: Semi-passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Have everyone sit in a circle. Go around the circle and have everyone say his name. The first person starts by saying his name and picks a category (fruit, cars, insects, books, cities, countries, current ward Primary teachers, and so on). The person throws the ball to someone else. This person must say the name of the person who threw the ball and something that relates to the category chosen. That person then throws the ball to someone else. The game is repeated until someone makes a mistake or can't immediately think of an answer that fits the category. If someone makes a mistake, everyone in the circle points a finger at the offending person and says, "Mental block. Stop the clock!" Once the game is started again, a new category is chosen. Continue the game until everyone knows the names of everyone else.

What or Who Am I?

Material: Tape or safety pins and various advertisements cut out newspapers or magazine.

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity.

Attach an advertisement to the back of each person. Everybody mingles and ask yes or no questions about their respective advertisements. Responses can only be "yes" or "no." The first person that guesses who/what he is wins an appropriate prize, or at least a round of applause.

John Hancock

Materials: Paper bags and marking pens.

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity.

Each player receives a paper bag and a marking pen. The bag is placed over the person's writing hand. Everyone mingles and tries to get as many signatures on their bags as possible within the time period. The clincher is people can only sign their signatures with their opposite hand. The person with the most signatures (that they can identify) in the time limit wins. Some great prize (sticker, piece of candy, a million dollars) can be awarded.

Human Knot

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Form a tight circle. Have everyone reach into the circle and grab someone's hands. If done right, the group should be pretty well entangled. Now the object is to get untangled without anyone letting go of their hands. This can be quite entertaining and will certainly knock down any barriers. Can also be played by having someone be the "doctor" and responsible for untangling the mass of humanity.

Oink or Hee Haw Game

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

This is actually a popular children's game, but can be played by adults with hilarious results. Have the group form a circle, either sitting on the floor or in chairs. One person starts by snorting at the person to their right. The person receiving the snort turns to his right and passes the snort along. This process continues around the circle. **Note: The person snorting or the person receiving the snort cannot laugh. Anyone who laughs in the process of snorting is out.** (Laughing is quite permissible unless it's your turn to snort.) If someone is snorted at and can't make a snorting sound, an equally obnoxious hee haw can be substituted. This new sound is then passed on down the line. This is a sure fire way to lighten up any group.

Pass the TP, Please

Materials: A roll of toilet paper per group.

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Divide group into smaller groups (8-12 per group). Have each group sit in a circle or around a table. A roll of toilet paper is then passed around the group. Each person takes as many sheets off the roll as he wants. The minimum is one sheet. Once everyone has taken his share of toilet paper, return the roll to the leader. The clincher is that for every sheet of toilet paper, each person must tell one thing about himself. Start with one person and go around the circle. Skittles, M&Ms, or dried beans can be substituted for toilet paper if you're dealing with a group that might be easily embarrassed.

Bean There, Done That

Materials: Dried red beans (or some other thing that can be thrown without rolling.)

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Sit or stand in a circle. Pass out an equal number of beans to everyone in the circle. (A medium-sized group may start with five beans per person, depending on how long you want to play the game.) The person who is designated to start the game says the following: "My name is (say name) and I've (done so-and-so)." For example, "My name is Kent and I've lived in Athens." That person throws a bean on the floor in the middle of the circle, and only the others in the group who have done the thing in question can throw a bean in the middle as well. Repeat the process until the first person runs out of beans. This experienced person should win a valuable prize.

Magic Carpet

Materials: One blanket per team.

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Divide the group into smaller teams, approximately eight to 10 per team. Lay blankets out flat, ensuring there is sufficient space for maneuvering. Have team members remove their shoes. Each team member is to stand on the blanket. The object is to turn the blanket completely over without any of the team members touching the ground. Each team member must stay on the blanket at all times. This is a quick way to break ice, because you have to work together as a team to turn the blanket over.

Love Me/Love Me Not

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange the group into a circle. The group can be seated, standing, or sitting on the floor. It goes up to someone and says, "Hey, (say person's first name), do you love me?" The person can respond yes or no. If the person responds yes, he must add the phrase, "But I don't love people (name a characteristic of people in the group—people who wear glasses, have on white socks, have black hair, are taller than 5'2", and so on). The people with the characteristic mentioned must switch places. It tries to get one of the vacant spots. Whoever is left without a place is the new it. By the way, if the person who is asked the question responds, "No," then everyone switches places and it has an easier job of finding a seat.

Nephite/Lamanite

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange group into a circle. Everyone is to introduce themselves to the people on both sides of them. If it walks up to someone and says Nephite, the person must say the name of the person on his right. If the it person says Lamanite, the person is to say the name of the person to his left. If someone messes up, he becomes it. Repeat until it's time to move on to some other activity.

Top Dog

Materials: Chairs, 3x5 cards, marking pen, tape.

Effort Quotient: Semi-passive

Time: 5 minutes to infinity.

Arrange chairs in a circle. Give each person a 3x5 card and have him put his first name on it. Tape the card to the back part of the chair so the card is showing when the person gets up. One person is designated as the "top dog," or number one chair. The "top dog" starts the game by saying, "Hi, my name's (say his/her name). Where's (say the name of someone else in the circle)?" That person is to say "Hi, my name's (say his/her name). Where's (say the name of someone else)." Repeat process until somebody makes a mistake. If someone makes a mistake, he moves to the seat to the left of the "top dog" and everyone else moves up. Here's the trick. For those who have moved up, your name becomes the name on the card that is taped to your new chair. This sounds confusing, but it's not. It's plenty of fun, as long as you can get the game rolling by having that first person make a mistake. (You may have to plant someone in the audience to make that first mistake, but once people have changed chairs, mistakes will be frequent.) **Note: The top dog never moves, so this is a great position for someone who isn't mobile.**

Investigative Reporter

Materials: Quiz sheet and pencil for all players; tape and 3x5 cards for the organizer

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5-15 minutes

This activity takes a little time to prepare, but it's well worth the effort. As everyone enters the cultural hall, write a number on a 3x5 card and tape it to that person's back. Give each person a quiz sheet with information to find out about 8-10 other members. (For example, write down the shoe size of number 27; learn number 12's favorite flavor of ice cream; determine what color are number 3's socks.) Each paper can contain 8-10 things to find out about others. All papers will have to be slightly different. The first person to complete his or her paper wins some appropriate prize. This activity is a lot of fun and really forces people to mingle.

Rutabaga, Rutabaga, Rutabaga, YUCK!

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Have everyone form a large circle with some space between each person. Each person is to come up some simple motion (snap your fingers, tap your feet, thump your chest, clap your hands, and so on) that can be repeated with the Rutabaga phrase. Each person need only concentrate on the person to his or her right. At the completion of each "yuck" then each person is to take on the action of the person to his right. Continue doing this until someone messes up. That person leaves the circle, and can help point out other unfortunates who mess up and should be eliminated. Continue the game until everyone is tired or bored.

Dynamic Duos

Materials: Pencil/pen and sheet of paper for everyone

Effort Quotient: So passive even High Priests can do it

Time: 5-25 minutes (depending on size of your group)

Divide the group into smaller groups (8-12 per group), or play the game as one large group. The group is given two minutes to list as many pairs of words or symbols (can include opposites, etc.) as they can think of that go together. For example: hot/cold, dark/light, cat/dog, India/Pakistan, good/evil. After the two minutes are up, the group is told to quit writing. One person starts and begins reading his list of dynamic duos. As the duos are read, everyone who has a duplicate on his own list should scratch off the duplicate. Everyone reads his list aloud (eliminating the duplicates) until all the duplicates have been eliminated. The person with the most duos remaining is the winner, who should receive an appropriate and valuable prize.

Pat on the Back

Materials: Pencil/pen and sheet of paper for everyone; tape; Kleenex

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5-25 minutes (depending on size of your group)

This is a warm up activity that women are guaranteed to love. (Men probably won't have much use for it.) Every participant should have a blank sheet of paper taped to her back. Then everyone goes around the room and other people write one good thing about that person on her sheet of paper. Because the paper is on the person's back, nobody ever knows who wrote what comment. After the time limit is up and everyone's papers are full, sit down and have the people read aloud each paper. Get out the Kleenex and wait for the sniffles to start as people realize how many good things others have said about them. This activity is such an ego-boost that women often take home those sheets of paper and keep them forever.

Sneaky Secret

If you are in charge of an activity, large or small, come prepared with at least two Lifesavers. You may never have to use them, but if they are needed, you will thank yourself later. If they aren't needed, then you can store them for the next activity and no one will be the wiser.

Shake Your Booty!

Materials: Chairs

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange chairs into a tight circle, with one more chair than people. Have the group sit in the chairs, leaving one empty. The object is for it to try to occupy the vacant chair. The group sitting is to slide their bodies from chair to chair not allowing the person to sit down. Eventually, the group will not be fast enough and it will finally get his body into a chair. Pick another person to be it and repeat the process.

Cross the River Sidon

Material: Paper plates; a whistle, or a group leader with a piercing whistle

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes max!

Divide group into teams. Each team must have an equal number of members. Give each team one more paper plate than team members. Arrange each team in a straight line. Each team member is to stand on his or her paper plate. At the whistle, the lead member in each team is to place the extra paper plate on the floor in front of him, and each member then moves up one plate. The last in line picks up the last plate and passes it forward. Repeat the process until you have crossed over the river Sidon or have reached some other ending point. The team that has all its members cross the river or the finish line first, wins. Have a valuable prize on hand to give the winners.

Barnyard

Material: None

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes until infinity

Arrange the group in a circle. Count off by fours until everyone has a number. All the ones become chickens. All the twos become goats. All the threes become cows. And all the fours become horses. Call out one and four. All the

chickens and all the horses must change places. Call out three. All the cows must change places. Continue calling out numbers until the groups get bored, then call "barnyard," everyone must change places. The game is now over. Game can also be played as fruit, garage, etc.

Caterpillar

Material: Paper plates or pieces of cloth

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes until infinity

Arrange the group into teams of 10-12 players per team. Each team forms a straight line, with players placing their hands on the waist or the shoulder of the teammate in front of him. Near the opposite wall, arrange a chair for each team, with a paper plate or piece of cloth placed on each chair. At the go, each team is to walk rapidly (no running, and in a straight line) to its corresponding chair. Once a team reaches the chair, it is to hop around the chair on one foot. The last team member around the chair grabs the paper plate or cloth. The team then races back (no running!) to the starting point. The first team back, wins.

Bears, Berries, Bark

Materials: Nothing

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Divide your large group into teams of three. The first player in each group is the "bear;" the second is the "berries," and the third is the "bark." Each team of bear, berry, and bark links arms and forms a small circle. The person who is it calls, "Bears!" All the bears have to switch places. The leader tries to occupy one of the vacant places. Whoever is left becomes it. At the command of, "Berries!" or, "Bark!" the requisite players must switch. Whoever is left becomes it and so on and so on and so on. Play until everyone gets bored. Then yell out, "Bears, Berries, Bark," and everyone must switch places. At this point you can call an end to the madness.

Forbidden Actions

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange group into a large circle, ensuring that there's at least an arm's length between each person. The leader is in the center of the circle. He or she makes different movements or actions, such as twirling an arm over head, says a nonsense phrase such as, "Twiddle dee, twiddle dum." No matter what the leader does, everyone is to copy the leader exactly. However, there are two forbidden actions or phrases that mustn't be repeated. If the leader makes either of the forbidden actions the group is to do something else, agreed upon by group. For example, if a forbidden action is clapping hands, when the leader claps his hands, everyone else squats. If the forbidden phrase is "peanut butter," the group may say "jelly" instead. Anyone who makes a mistake is out of the circle. Play until only one person is left. Give that person a nice parting gift.

Losing Your Marbles

Materials: Marbles, music

Effort Quotient: Semi-active

Time: 5 minutes to infinity

Arrange group into a circle. Give a marble to each person. Select five different people and give them several marbles rather than one. When the music starts, players pass their marbles to the right, one at a time, as fast as possible. When the music stops, the person(s) with the most marbles is out. Continue the game with the same number of marbles, but fewer people. By the way, anyone who drops or throws a marble is also out. This is a simple but interesting activity.

On the Rameumptom, Off the Rameumptom

Material: Masking tape or string or yarn.

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5 minutes

Draw a line with masking tape, string or yarn down the middle of your cultural hall. Have everyone line up on the right of the tape. This is "on the Rameumptom." The left side of the tape is "off the Rameumptom." As the leader yells either, "On the Rameumptom," or "Off the Rameumptom," the players are to jump to the correct side. Anyone who doesn't jump or who jumps the wrong way has to step aside. The last person remaining is the winner.

WARMING UP THE YOUNGER SET

Warm up activities may be even more invaluable for youth activities than they are in ward activities for adults. The primary purpose these activities is to break down the unseen barriers that human beings tend to put up when faced with new situations, and youth are especially vulnerable to feelings of insecurity in the face of new situations and new groups.

Icebreakers and Lifesavers for youth serve as distractions that perform a threefold function. They get youth speaking to one another. They initiate physical contact, in a good sense of the word. And they provide a mental distraction so the youth don't have time to be self-conscious. Don't ever underestimate the power of a good warm up activity to get your youth activity off to a successful start.

Name That Hobby

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 10-20 minutes

Gather the youth into a circle. Have the first person say his name and hobby: "My name is Shannon, and my hobby is playing the piano." The next person repeats that information and adds his own: "Her name is Shannon and her hobby is playing the piano. My name is Kent and my hobby is running." Continue around the circle, each adding his own information to the list. The last person who can recite everyone's name and hobby wins.

Chinese Dragon

Materials: Two bandannas

Effort Quotient: Easy

Time: 5-15 minutes

Divide the youth into two teams. Have each team get into a line, with each youth putting his hands on the waist of the person in front of him to form a chain. You now have two chains of youth. Stick the bandannas in the back pockets of the end person in each chain. The goal will be for the front person in the line to try to get the bandanna out of the pocket of the back person in the other line, while the back person tries to avoid losing the bandanna.

Bat the Bunny Tails

Materials: Bag of cotton balls, gloves, table, blindfolds

Effort Quotient: Sweatless

Time: 5 minutes

Pick two volunteers who aren't afraid of looking silly. Have them put on gloves and stand at each end of a long table. Spread the bag of cotton balls on the table and blindfold the players. While instructing them to sweep all the cotton balls off their own side of the table, have someone quietly take the cotton balls off the table. Yell, "Go!" and watch them wildly sweep at an empty table. Have your group cheer and encourage them. Let them bat away for a few minutes before taking off their blindfolds and showing them what they've been doing.

All in Stitches

Materials: One spoon and long length of yarn for each team

Mess Quotient: Will need a few towels for drips

Time: 5-20 minutes

Cut one piece of yarn per team into 20- to 40-foot pieces that average about 4 feet per person (5-10 youth per team). Tie a spoon onto one end of each piece of yarn. Put the spoons/yarn in the freezer no less than one hour before the start of the game. For added torture (the youth love this!), dip the spoons in water to get ice buildup, or even better, find a small bowl (margarine container size) and freeze the spoon in it with water to create a small block of ice. Hand the first person on each team the spoon and have them thread it through their clothing from their shirt collar down through their pant legs and out. The next person threads the spoon from the bottom of a pant leg up through the shirt and out the collar. Continue this until the entire team is threaded together. Make sure your youth understand that the spoon should not go in undergarments, only inside shirt and pants. See which team can complete the task first. It's fun to watch them squirm.

Dr. Scholl's Game of Shoes

Materials: None

Effort Quotient:

Time: 15-20 minutes

This is best for larger groups. Have everyone take off a shoe and throw it into a pile in the center of the room and then move back to the wall of the room. When the leader says "Go," everyone grabs a shoe from the pile. The youth then need to find the shoe owner and learn the name of that shoe owner, as well as four things about the shoe owner that they didn't already know. When everyone has interviewed his shoe owner, have everyone form a circle and one at a time introduce the person they talked to, telling the group the four things they found out about the person.

Pink Spots

Materials: Pink lipstick

Mess Rating: Facial tissues for people to wipe the lipstick off their faces

Time: 15 minutes

This is a good game for learning names in a group. Have your youth sit in a circle. The leader begins by standing up and saying, "My name is _____, and I have no pink spots. How many pink spots does (someone else in the group) have?" The person named stands up and repeats exactly what the leader said, except for the obvious difference of using his own name in the first sentence and naming someone else in the group in the second sentence. Any mistakes or hesitation earns the speaker a pink spot of lipstick on the face, and he'll need to try again before sitting down. Now that person has one pink spot and will have to say, "My name is _____, and I have one pink spot. How many spots does _____ have?"

Sister Sassy

Materials: None

Effort Quotient: Hardest part is trying not to laugh

Time: 5-15 minutes

Have your youth sit in a circle. The object of this little game is to talk like you have no teeth, nor to be able to show any of your teeth throughout the duration of the game. Pull both your lips in and over your teeth. The game is started by someone asking if anyone has seen Sister Sassy as she is missing. Continue play around the circle, one at a time. Allow as much discussion and conversation as the youth can creatively come up with about where Sister Sassy is. Anyone who shows their teeth will need to leave the circle. Play till one person is left.

Mummy Run

Materials: 1 flat bed sheet for each team (white is the best because this is a game of mummies)

Effort Quotient: Won't break a sweat

Time: 10-20 minutes

Divide into teams, then split the teams so that half of each team is on the opposite side of the room or playing area. The first person on each team wraps himself in the sheet by lying down on it and rolling. The arms need to be inside the sheet, and the wrapping job should be a snug fit. After the person is wrapped, he should stand up (with the help of the rest of the team members on his side of the room, if needed). Then, still wrapped like a mummy, he should run to the other half of the team group across the room, and unroll. The first person on that side wraps up and runs back across the room. Continue the relay until everyone has wrapped and run. The first team finished is the winner.

Hoppin' Dress up

Materials: Two similar sets of clothes (i.e. large pants, shirt, hat, socks, gloves), two big balloons

Effort Quotient: Easy

Time: 5-15 minutes

Have two volunteers get dressed in the clothing while keeping the blown-up balloon in the air. The winner is the first person to get completely dressed without letting the balloon touch the ground.

Dizzy Stick

Materials: A broomstick

Effort Quotient: Get ready to fall down

Time: Play till you get sick

Hold the broom stick above your head, stare at the end and spin around as many times and as fast as you can. Throw the stick away from you onto the ground. Now try to run over to the stick and jump over it without falling down. If you can do it, you get a point for every time you twirled around. Make sure you're playing on an area that won't hurt to fall down on.

Gorilla, Man, Rifle

Materials: Lots of warm bodies

Effort Quotient: Average

Time: 10-20 minutes

This game is played the same way as “Rock, Scissors, Paper” except that you use your entire body to play. Everyone pairs up and stands back to back with his partner. If your group has an odd number, just have those who don’t get to play the first time join with a partner after the first round. When a leader says “Go,” everyone turns around to face his partner and make the gesture of his choice. GORILLA roars out loud while beating his chest with his hands. MAN stands in place with arms folded and his head held high, in a stance of pride. RIFLE shoots a pretend rifle while saying, “Bang! Bang!” GORILLA beats MAN because he is bigger and stronger. MAN beats RIFLE because he invented it. RIFLE beats GORILLA. The winners of each round finds another partner who won, and the loser is out. Continue to play till there is one person left.

News Fit to Print

Materials: Newspaper, Sunday is the best; pencils

Effort Quotient: Easy, easy, easy

Time: 15-30 minutes

Hand everyone a sheet of the newspaper and have them look for 5 minutes for words, phrases, or pictures that 1) describe themselves, 2) tell something about their family, or 3) remind them of something about themselves or something or someone close to them. They can pick as many words as they want, but they will be sharing them and why they chose them with the group.

Boundary Breaker

Materials: Nothing

Effort Quotient: So passive you’d better make sure to keep it moving

Time: 20-40- minutes

This works best in groups of seven to 12. If you have a big group, split up into smaller groups. The adult leader asks a series of questions ranging from shallow to deep. A shallow question might be, “What is your favorite snack?” And a deeper question might be, “What do you like most about your parents?” Ask each person in the group the same question. Start with shallow questions, move to deeper questions, then back toward shallow ones. Then ask questions about the answers the youth have given, such as, “Which answer surprised you most?” The purpose is to get the youth talking both with you, and with each other. You can find many times to use this activity, so plan ahead to have a mental or written list of questions.

Back Art

Materials: Paper and pencils

Effort Quotient: Passive

Time: 5-20 minutes

Divide the youth into several groups. Have each group sit or stand on the floor, single-file and facing forward, train-style. Have a simple object drawn on a piece of paper and give it to the last person in each line. They are to draw this object on the back of the person in front of them with their finger. That person draws the same object on the back of the person in front of him, and so does each person up the line. The first person in the line will draw the object on paper. The first team finished whose beginning and ending pictures resemble each other wins.

Eggs-act Directions

Materials: Hard-boiled eggs, blindfolds

Mess Rating: Garbage cans needed

Time: 10-15 minutes

Form groups of five and assign each team a number. Each team picks a person who doesn't mind eating a hard-boiled egg. Place all the eggs, which have been labeled with the corresponding team numbers, on a plate at one end of the room. Each team blindfolds its chosen person and then tries to direct him to the egg with the appropriate team number written on it. Only verbal directions are allowed. The trick to this is that the team members can't use the words left, right, up, down, east, west, forward, or back(ward). They will need to come up with different descriptive words to get the team "egg-eater" to the correct egg. The first team whose egg-eater has totally consumed the correct egg wins.

Blind Shapes

Materials: Blindfolds for everyone; a long piece of string

Effort Quotient: Easy

Time: 10-20 minutes

Tie both ends of a long piece of string together. Have the youth stand in a circle, with each youth holding a section of the string. Blindfold everybody and have them form a square or other shape.

Jaredite Battle

Materials: Balloons, each team needs its own color

Effort Quotient: Can get very active

Time: 15 minutes for one battle

Divide into teams two teams, one led by Coriantumr and one led by Shiz. Each team must defend its treasure (a pile of balloons) while attempting to steal or destroy the other team's treasure. Play for a predetermined amount of time, 5-10 minutes is good. When the game is over, each team's unpopped balloons count 100 points each. Stolen, unpopped balloons count 200 points each.

Up and Down

Materials: 25-30 regular-sized plastic or paper cups

Effort Quotient: Easy

Time: 10-20 minutes

Divide your youth into two teams. One team will be "Up" and the other, "Down." Place the cups in a good-sized area, half facing up and half facing down. At the signal the teams begin either standing the cups facing up or turning them over to face down. The "Up" team will try to get as many cups facing up in the allotted time as they can, and the "Down" team will try to get as many cups facing down as they can. At the end of the allotted time the team with the most cups turned their way wins.

Bucket and Shoes

Materials: A five-gallon bucket, a few towels

Effort Quotient: Semi-Active; wear clothes and shoes that can get wet

Time: 5 minutes

This activity has the potential for getting the participants quite wet. Make sure you schedule it for a warm summer night, and make sure everyone wears old clothes and brings extra clothes to change into after the activity. Three or four youth lie on their backs in a circle with their legs straight up in the air and their feet making a “table” in the center. A full bucket of water is placed on the “table” and the challenge is for the youth to remove their shoes one by one. You can make it easier or harder by increasing or decreasing the amount of people or water. Be mindful of any girls in white shirts, and make sure the bucket is never in a position where it could fall on someone’s head and cause an injury.

TRYING TO CONTROL THE PRIMARY POSSE

Here are some warm up activities that are appropriate for Primary children. Although children of this age seldom need to be warmed up for any activity, perhaps these activities will burn off extra energy so that the children will pay attention during the real activity.

David and Goliath

Materials: A bean bag for each child

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 15-20 minutes

Mark off a game area. The start line will also be the finish line. Place two separate piles of bean bags 15’-20’ away from the start/finish line. The bean bag piles should be several feet apart from one another. Select one child to be Goliath...Big, Scary Goliath. Divide the remaining children into two teams and line them up single file at the start/finish line. They will all take turns being David trying to get stones for his slingshot. The first player in each line runs to pick up a “stone” from the bean bag piles, and then runs back across the start/finish line where each will then go to the end of their team line, still holding their bean bag. The only obstacle stopping David from getting his stones is Goliath! Goliath waits anywhere between the start/finish line and the “stones” and tries to tag David as they (the David’s) run back and forth across the playing field. If Goliath tags a David, then that David has to start over. Two players will be running at all times, one from each team. The first team with all players standing in line, holding a “stone” wins the game. If time allows, trade off playing Goliath. Remember that winning/losing is not always a necessary thing for children’s games. To make this a no-win game, simply have the two teams continue running until all have gotten a “stone.” The children will remember most how much fun it was to try to stay away from Goliath, rather than who won anyway.

Blob Tag

Materials: None, except for energetic players!

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 10-20 minutes

The only rule is for everyone to stay within the playing area that you have marked off. Start with one person to be “it.” When “it” tags another person, they join hands and become a Blob. They then run together to try to tag someone else. When the third person has been tagged, he/she joins hands with the second person, and the three become the Blob. The three then run to tag another person. When the Blob catches its fourth player, the Blob has the ability to split into two Blobs. The game continues until all the players have been tagged and have become part of a Blob. If the children enjoy it, then let them play again if time allows. It’s a great energy tamer.

Backward Relays

Materials: Two 12-inch rubber balls for the Backward Ball Relay

Effort Quotient: Semi-Active to Active

Time: 5-15 minutes

As has been mentioned several times, young children enjoy the process of the activity more than competition, so to make these relays no-win, simply have one team and let each child just enjoy the activity.

Backward Relay Race

Mark a start/finish line and a turn-around point such as a tree or chair (this should be about 15-20 feet from the start/finish line). Divide the children into two teams. Have each person take a turn running BACKWARD as fast as they can to the turn-around point and back to the finish line. The first team finished wins.

Crawling Backward Relay

Divide the children into two teams. Have each team stand single-file, facing all one direction, and about arm's length apart from one another with legs spread. Make sure there is plenty of space behind the teams. At the signal, the first person in each line should get down on their hands and knees and crawl BACKWARD through the legs of their team. When they reach the end, have them stand up and become part of the line. The first team to have all the players finish the crawl is the winner.

Backward Ball Relay

Divide the children into two teams. Have each team stand single-file, facing all one direction, and about arms length apart from one another. Make sure there is plenty of space in front of the teams. Then have them all sit on the floor exactly where they are standing. Give a ball to the first person in each line and have them pass it BACKWARD and over their head to the player behind them. When the last player in the line gets the ball, he/she will run to the front of the line, sit down and continue passing the ball. The first team to have the leader return to the front of the line is the winner.

Static

Materials: Balloons; tissue paper, scissors.

Effort Quotient: Semi-Active

Time: 5-15 minutes

Here is a no-win game, and can be used for a variety of different holidays, activities, and even Primary music time. From the tissue paper, cut out many of whatever shape you've decided on. If it's near Valentine's Day, you might want to use red hearts. For Christmas time, green Christmas trees. For an Indoor Camping activity you could use various colored fish for an interesting fishing game, or for music time, black or white notes. Spread your shapes onto the floor. Either have the children blow up their own balloon (too difficult for many), or have the balloons blown up before the activity. Have them rub the balloon on their hair and then use them to pick up the tissue paper shapes.

Shadows

Materials: Flashlight

Effort Quotient: Semi-Passive

Time: 10-20 minutes

This is to be played in a dark room. Have one person sit facing a blank wall. A second person stands behind the first person and shines a flashlight at the wall. The rest of the children take turns walking between the sitting person and the flashlight so their shadows are cast onto the wall. They should try to disguise themselves while the sitting person tries to guess who the shadows are. When the guesser guesses the correct player, they switch places.

Races and Relays

Materials: Varies

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5-20 minutes

Lame Dog Race

Everyone races at the same time in this one. Each child lines up on the starting line on his hands and feet (not knees). Their faces will be pointing down. At the signal each one raises a foot off the ground. The entire race needs to be run that way. If a child touches the raised foot to the ground, he/she must immediately resume the "lame dog" position and turn completely around twice before continuing.

Swing Your Trunks

Materials: Four bowls, approximately 40 peanuts in their shells

Divide the children into two relay teams. Have the teams line up facing each other. Place a bowl of about 20 nuts next to the first person in each line, and place an empty bowl next to the last person in each line. Tell the children that they are elephants, and that they'll be using their trunks to pass peanuts from one team member to the next. Have all the children bend over and clasp their hands together with arms outstretched to mimic an elephant. The first "elephant" picks up a nut in his/her clasped hands, and swings his/her "trunk" to pass the nut to the next "elephant" in line. Continue passing from elephant to elephant till the last person drops the nut into the empty bowl. The first team to pass all of the nuts to the end of the line, wins.

Feather Relay

Materials: Feathers, fluffy ones

This is a challenging game. Divide the group into two teams, then divide each team into two groups. Place the groups from each team facing each other, single file, and about 10-15 steps away from each other. There should be several feet separating the two teams to allow for feathers accidentally blown off-course. At the signal, have the first person on each team keep the feather in the air by blowing it across the 10-15 steps to the team member opposite them, who then has to blow it back across to the next team member in line. If a feather falls to the ground have the "blower" pick it up and continue from where they are. The first team to finish wins.

Team Elephant Walk

Mark a start/finish line, and a turn-around point (like a tree or a chair) around 15-20 feet from starting line. Divide the children into two teams and have them line up single-file behind the start/finish line. Have the first children in each line extend one arm out in front of them to make a "trunk" and the other arm back between their legs as a "tail." The second child holds the first child's tail with his/her "trunk" and extends his/her arm back through his/her legs for the third person to hold. Continue arranging the line until each person is attached to the line "trunk" to "tail." At the signal the race begins, and the elephant lines then walk together, without breaking the line to the turn-around point and back to the finish line. First team to cross the finish line wins.

Sumo Wrestling

Materials: Chalk or rope

Effort Quotient: Active

Time: 5-30 minutes

Mark off a 3-foot radius circle. Have two children enter the circle. The idea is for one child to make the other lose balance or to force him/her out of the circle.

Bump Sumo Wrestling

The two children in the circle hold their ankles with their hands and try to bump each other out of the circle with their hips or bottoms. Anyone that lets go of their ankles, falls down, or gets any part of their body out of the circle loses.

Crab Walk Sumo Wrestling

The two children in the circle sit on the ground inside the circle, then raise their backsides off the ground, facing up. They try to wrestle or push each other off balance or out of the ring. If any part of the body except their hands and feet touch the ground, that person loses.

Cock Fight Sumo Wrestling

The two children in the circle hold the ankle of their left leg behind them with their right hand. They try to bump each other out of the circle with their left shoulders. The left hand needs to stay on the left hip throughout the wrestle. They can't let go of their leg or use their hands. If a child uses their hands, lets go of their leg, or is bumped out of the circle it is a loss.

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