Teambuilding activities are loads of fun, but they can also be tools for strengthening your group. They can be good icebreakers for the beginning of a meeting or a way to build stronger ties with members you already know. Some involve a lot of teamwork and can result in tighter friendships among the people with whom you work.

There are many gradations of teambuilding activities. We’ve broken them down into three rough categories. Many were hard to choose a specific category for, so use your own judgment and understanding of your group when you do these activities.

* Beginning
  + focus on remembering names and getting acquainted
* Middle
  + focus on having fun and getting along
* End
  + focus on strengthening the team, understanding others strengths and weaknesses

**Beginning**

These games and activities would regularly be used at a first meeting, at the beginning of a gathering, or at the start of a student conference or workshop.

With little physical contact, these games help loosen people up, remember names, and get more comfortable with people they’ve just met.

Pass the Clap

Focus: Having fun, Visual communication

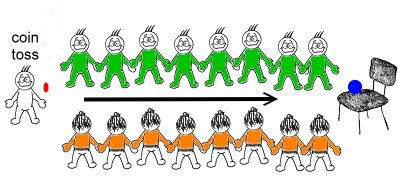
Stand in a circle. One person has the “clap” in their hands and turns to face a person next to them. About when they make eye contact or just when they are facing each other, they clap simultaneously. Then, that next person has the clap and turns to pass it on. After it has been passed around once and everyone has the hang of it, begin to time him or her. Encourage people to move around, jump into a different part of the circle, and reverse it.

Find Someone Who

Complete a handout (attached) by finding others who fit the questions.

Pass the Pulse

To set up the Pulse Game, you need to form two teams of equal size.    The easiest way to do this is probably to have each player pair off with another person.  When you’ve divided the group evenly, have each team member face the same direction, and have each team facing each other.  Instruct each team to hold hands to form two long human chains.  At the end of the two lines, place a chair with a small object (e.g. a tennis ball) on it.

 To play the pulse game, have the two players at the front of the line watch the referee.  Have everyone else close their eyes and face downward.  Instruct everyone to be silent.  For each round, the referee does the following:  Flip a coin and quietly show it only to the first two players at the front of each team.  Whenever the coin shows ”Heads,” the two people at the front of the line must squeeze the hand of the next person in line as quickly as possible.  Whenever that player’s hand gets squeezed, he or she quickly continues to “pass the electric current” by squeezing the next person’s hand, and so on.  As the “electric current” transfers along the line, the goal of the game is to be the first team to grab the object (the ball) on the chair.  If heads was flipped and a team successfully grabs the ball, that team wins a point.  On the other hand, if the team grabs the ball but heads was not flipped, then the point goes to the other team.   After each coin flip, wait several seconds and then flip again.  Keep flipping until the coin shows “Heads.”  For a short game, the winner is the first team to score 10 points.  For a longer game, you can increase the number of points.

Blindfolded Animals

Focus: Separating into groups

This activity can be used to separate people into pairs or a large number of students into different groups. With a small group, write the name of however many animals on two different pieces of paper and have the participants draw one out. With a large group, have students count off to a certain number and assign a certain animal for each number. When you say “go”, participants will close their eyes and are only allowed to make the noise of their animal in order to find their other group members. Animals such as cows, pigs, dogs, chickens, elephants, cats, and horses all make for a fun, and noisy, activity.

Concentric Circles

Focus: Get to Know One Another

Divide everyone into two groups. Have one group make a circle facing outward. The second group then makes a circle around the first group and faces inward. Everyone should be facing someone from the other circle. Each person can talk to the person across from them for a minute or two before you yell, “SWITCH”, and have one circle move to the left or right a few steps. If participants seem shy, give them a topic to talk about each rotation, such as movies, DECA, college, food, etc.

Move It Buddy

Focus: Memorizing Names

Stand in a circle, with one person in the middle. When the person in the middle says so, participants will be given 30 seconds to one minute to memorize the first, middle, and last name of the person to their left and right. After the minute is over, the person in the middle will point to somebody and say “left” or “right”. If he or she pauses or stumbles saying the full name, he or she is then in the middle. If everyone seems to know each other’s names right away, the person in the middle can call out, “Move It Buddy!” and everyone must rush to a new space and begin memorizing names again.

Never Have I Ever

Instruct everyone to sit in a circle.  If you have an extremely large group, tell people to form smaller circles of about ten to fifteen people.  To start each round, each player holds out all ten fingers and places them on the floor.  Go around the circle and one at a time, each person announces something that they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase “Never have I ever…”  For example, a person could say, “Never have I ever been to Europe.”  For each statement that is said, all the other players drop a finger if they have done that statement.  So, if three other people have been to Europe before, those three people must put down a finger, leaving them with nine fingers.  The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to be the last person with fingers remaining).  To win, it’s a good strategy to say statements that most people have done, but you haven’t.

Playing this game, along with the benefit of getting to know each other’s experiences better, can be very humorous (e.g. saying silly statements such as, “Never have I ever skipped a class in school” or “Never have I ever soiled my pants.”)  Have fun!

**Middle**

These activities and games are for people that have become more comfortable with each other. People aren’t as concerned about looking silly as long as other people are doing it too. More contact-oriented games are sometimes okay, but this must be gauged by watching the participants and their reactions.

Two Truths and a Lie

Focus: Getting to Know One Another

Go around the group and have everyone say two true statements about themselves and one false. The rest of the group has to guess which one is false. If participants find it hard to think on the spot, give them index cards and let them write it down. Then, toss the cards into the middle of the circle so you have to guess who the person is and what is false. You may be surprised. You can learn some crazy things about each other!

Question Ball/Dice

Toss a ball with questions written on it. The student that catches it reads and answers the question closest to their thumb. To use dice, have pre-written questions for whatever number they could roll with the dice.

Count Off

Focus: Non Verbal Communication

Begin by having the group stand in a bunch or sit on the ground in no order. The goal of this activity is to count to a number twice the number of people in your group.

Participants can only say two numbers during the entire game. Also, only one person can say a number at a time. If two people say the same number, the group must begin counting again. Begin by giving them no prep time, but allow the group a minute to plan if they are having trouble.

I’m Making a Triangle

Focus: Brainteaser

This game may confuse and frustrate those who don’t understand at first. Choose three people in the group by saying their names, for example “Amanda, Collin, and Karie”. Then ask the question, “Whose triangle is it?” Participants will spend lots of energy and time trying to find a specific pattern, but there’s an easy solution. The first person to speak after you ask the question is who the triangle belongs to. It may take the group a long time to understand, so if needed, be very, very obvious. No matter how obvious you are, there will still be people who won’t get the pattern!

Floor Designs

Focus: Having Fun, Communication

This activity requires one package of paper or toothpicks and a large, open floor space. Have one participant in the group draw a picture on a piece of paper of anything they’d like. Then, give the group the stack of paper and tell them to mimic the drawing on the floor. To make it more interesting, silence certain people in the group. For instance, only allow one person to do the talking and instructing or, perhaps, only the guys. If there is a large number of participants, divide the group in half and have the groups compete to see who can lay out a more accurate picture. This activity is especially fun if timed and allows for a fun photo opportunity at the end.

**END**

Near the end (or sometimes middle) for people that have spent a lot of time together, these activities are a great wrap up. Some are very physical and require lots of trust among the group. Make sure all participants are responsive to the activity before proceeding.

Human Knot

Focus: Teamwork

Everyone stands in a circle and puts their right hand into the middle. They clasp hands with someone across the circle. Then, everyone puts their left hand into the middle of the circle and clasps the hand of a \*different\* person. The group is now in a “knot”. The object is for the group to untangle itself without releasing anyone’s hand.

Replication

Focus: Working Together

This game usually takes about half an hour. The organizers of the game begin by finding multiples of objects. If you plan to have 3 groups, then find 4 objects (i.e. 4 binders, 4 pens, 4 pinecones, etc.). Then, where none of the participants can see, arrange one set of the objects. Maybe place the pen horizontally in the middle of the binder open to page 4 and put the pinecone centered above the binder. Then gather the participants, split them up into three groups, and explain the game. Each group has 2 builders, 1 or 2 runners, and 1 looker. The looker of each group gets to see the original model. Each group’s builders get a pile of the objects in a space away from the other teams’ builders. The interaction works like this: The lookers look at the original display and go halfway to the builders’ location, where the runner will be positioned. The looker tells the runner all of the details he can remember about the model. Then, the runner goes to builders. When the runner(s) get(s) to the builders, the builders can only ask the runner yes or no questions. “Does the pen go here? Is the binder open? Is it open to this page?” When the runner can’t remember any more details or wants to confirm a detail, he goes back to the point where he can meet the looker. He can converse freely about the details. This goes on until all of the groups feel they are done or are pretty much done. Then, everyone gets together and looks at each groups finished model. Replication builds communication skills and is a good teambuilding effort. It’s fun, too, to look at the different results.

Find Someone Who…

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Wears Glasses | Has blonde hair | Has two siblings | Plays an instrument | Has two pets |
| Has never been out of the USA | Listens to reggae music | Does not like fast food | Is the oldest in their family | Speaks a language other than English |
| Saw the same movie as you recently | Shares the same birthday month as you | Has lived in Manhattan, KS their whole life | Has the most letters in their last name | Has never been on an airplane |
| Is new to MHS this year | Likes to go camping | Has lived in another country | Likes math a lot | Had Mr. Hoyt as a principal in middle school |
| Plays a sport | Is a K-state superfan | Is the tallest | Has never tried sushi | Is reading an interesting book |