



There is No “I” in Team

Team Building Activities for Adult Groups

by Joel Winchip, PCCCA Executive Director

Up Jenkins (played with long tables and one nickel per group)

You need teams of 4 or 5 seated across from each other at long tables. You will also need a nickel for each table. One team is passing the coin under the table while the other team is trying to figure out who has the coin. After the coin has been passed for a while, the guessing team has a leader who will say, "Up Jenkins." At this command, the passers will put their elbows up on the table with their fists up. Then on the command, "Down Jenkins," the passers will slam their hands down (palms out) on to the table. The guessers will try to figure which hand has the coin under it. Only the leader can make the passers turn their hands over and he/she chooses by touching that hand. Wrong guesses are a point for the other team.

Team Memory (played with a stopwatch and one deck of cards for every two groups)

Divide your card decks into suits. You will need two suits for each group. Shuffle the two suits together and lay them face down on the floor (or on a table) about 10-15 feet away from the group. This activity is very much like the age-old game of Memory. Divide your group into teams of 6-8 people. Establish a starting line and ask groups to stand behind it. Inform the group that they will be timed on their performance. When it is time to begin, participants will go out to the cards one at a time and flip over two cards. If they are a match, they bring the cards back to the group. If they do not match, they are to turn the cards back over. They are not allowed to move the cards around. Stop the watch when the last participant brings the last card pair back to the group. Ask the group to strategize and to set a time goal for their second (and perhaps third) attempt. *This game is from "Playing with a Full Deck" by Michelle Cummings*

Octopus Draw (played with an “octopus,” marker and sheet of easel paper for each group)

You need at least two teams of 6-8 people to play this game (but you can have more than two teams playing at the same time). After splitting the participants into teams, give each group an “octopus.” This is a four-inch piece of pool noodle that has eight pieces of string tied around the middle of the length. An easel marker will fit perfectly into the hollow core of this pool noodle. The group members are to each take hold of a string and work together to draw a picture of their team mascot (or perhaps something that relates to your theme) on a sheet of easel paper located on the floor or on a table. They are not allowed to grasp the string any closer than two feet from the pool noodle. When each team is finished with their creation, have them walk over to the easel paper from another group. Now the team is to work together with their “octopus” to trace over the lines that create this figure. It would help if each team was using an easel marker that is a different color.

Tower of Babble (played with the same collection of building materials for each group)

Divide the group into teams of 4-5 people. Give each of the groups the identical amount of supplies (this can include sheets of newspaper, paper clips, tape, cans, bottles, string, etc.). Using only the items provided, the teams are to build the tallest, free-standing and self-supporting tower. Give the teams about 30 minutes to create their structure. It might be interesting to put the materials in a pile in the middle of the group and tell them that during the first five minutes they are to discuss the construction of their tower without anyone on the team touching the materials. When a team has completed their tower, use a pole or measuring tape to calculate the height of the structure. After the time limit has passed, bring the teams together and discuss the group dynamics that take place when a team of people are assigned a project.

Cup Stack (played with six cups, a strong rubber band, and then two-foot lengths of string for each participant)

This activity can be useful for helping a group become accustomed to the darkness. This game

begins with a well lit room with tables. Divide your group into teams of 6-8 people to play this game. Give each group six cups that each have a small piece of tape on the bottom with the number 1-6. Give each group a strong rubber band that has 6-8 strings tied to it (like a spider or octopus). Ask the group members to each grasp one of the strings and work together to stretch the rubber band so that it can pick up and put down a cup. Their task is to pick up the cups one at a time and place them in a stack (lip side down) with three cups on the bottom, two cups on top of the first layer, and then one cup on the top. Once all of the groups have accomplished that feat, ask them to do it again - but this time use the cups numbered 1, 2, and 3 on the bottom, 4 and 5 on the second level, and 6 on the top.

Lego Re-Creation (played with a blindfold, cup, box, paper, pen, and two identical sets of lego pieces for each group)

Break your group up into teams of three people (any extras can help you facilitate the activity). Take four pieces of legos (each is a different kind of piece), put them together in the configuration of your choice and place this creation under a cup on a table surface. The object of this exercise is for the team to communicate this lego configuration and have their last team member recreate it from another set of identical pieces. The first member sits at the table with the original creation, lifts up the cup, draws some or all of the configuration and puts the cup back over the creation. A facilitator takes this drawing to the second team member. This individual has been sitting in a chair with their back to the first team member. They look at the drawing and walk over to the third team member, who is wearing a blindfold and is seated at a table. The second team member whispers into the ear of the third team member and communicates some or all of the lego configuration. The third person can't ask questions or communicate anything to the second person. The facilitator now gives the blindfolded person a cardboard box that contains the identical lego pieces. This box is open on one end and is turned on its side, so the blindfolded person can work without the other team members seeing the progress. The team gets three opportunities to convey the three different drawings of the original configuration using this one-way method of communication. After the third attempt, take off the blindfolds and compare the new creation with the original configuration.

Reverse Pyramid Build (played with 36 Solo-type cups for each group)

For small groups of 5-7 people, their objective is to build the tallest pyramid using the cups provided. A pyramid consists of stacked rows of cups (not a nested stack) in which each row will have one less cup than the row below it. For this build however, the group is required to start from the top row of the pyramid – one cup. To begin, they set this one cup down on the building surface (like a table). Then, anyone in the group can lift this first cup so that two cups can be placed under it, forming the second row of the pyramid. From this point forward they are only allowed to lift the bottom row of the pyramid structure (the row touching the table) to add the next row underneath. All other cups in the pyramid can be touched or supported by any player's index fingers (only) before, during and after a lift, but they may not be grabbed and/or lifted in any way. Again, only the bottom row of the pyramid can be lifted. If any part of the pyramid structure falls apart, the group must start their building process over from one cup. If they manage to use all the cups provided at the start of the build, you can give them more. The groups have 15 minutes of building time to see how high they can get their pyramid. *This game is from "Cup It Up: Team Building with Cups" by Chris Cavert and Barry Thompson.*

**Joel Winchip, Executive Director
Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association
9935 Tealridge Lane, Charlotte, NC 28277
803.322.0232 • joel@pccca.net**