Team Building Activities

Introduction
Team building exercises are a great way to develop trust and friendship within groups. Whether you are trying to help strangers get to know each other, entertain a group, or simply have a good time, these activities are sure to help everyone get to know each other a little better and have some fun. Remember to stay flexible with the games and feel free to change up the rules or switch games to follow the mood of the group. Be creative!

Ways to Split up Groups:
- People with birthdays January-June on one team and people with birthdays July-December on the other (or for three teams, divide by those with January-April birthdays, June-August birthdays, September-December birthdays, etc)
- Divide people based on whether their birthday falls on an odd or even day.
- Count off

Trust Walk
- Any number of people
- You will need blindfolds for half of the participants

Directions:
1. Choose a starting line and finish line. It is more interesting and challenging if the course is not in a straight line, but make sure there are no dangerous obstacles for the blindfolded team member. This game can operate as a race if desired, but the most important goal of the exercise is to develop trust between the participants.
2. Divide group into pairs.
3. Asks pairs to decide amongst themselves which one will be blindfolded. Blindfold them.
4. From the starting point, the seeing team member must guide the blindfolded team member to the finish line *using words only*. They are not allowed to touch the blindfolded team member but may use their voice for their partner to follow and to give directions.
5. Racing can be dangerous because of the attempts for speed, so rather than making it a competition it may be best to stagger out the start time of the teams to reduce crashing and competition.
6. Variations can include scattering obstacles in the path of the blindfolded team member that the speaker must guide them around, or the blindfolded member must find certain objects around the area.
7. At the end, have participants switch roles.

Stick Raiser
- Any number of people
- You will need a long thin stick

Directions:
1. Line up participants in two lines across from each other. It does not matter how they are divided.
2. Have the participants hold out their index fingers in front of them. The lines should be close enough that their fingers are lined up next to each other.
3. Tell the group that their goal is to lower the stick to the ground together but that everyone must always be touching the stick. Lay the stick across their fingers – and

watch it go up! It takes a lot of concentration and teamwork to be able to lower the stick to the ground, and it is harder than anyone expects.

Human Knot
- Any number can participate

Directions:
1. Have everyone stand in a circle
2. Have everyone put their hands out in the middle and take hold someone else's hands (making sure each hand is holding a different person!)
3. Instruct the group to untangle themselves without letting go of hands.
4. This exercise requires communication and collaboration. It helps groups learn to give directions and follow directions from each other on an equal footing.
5. When the group has untangled itself, it will be standing in a circle with hands held.

Limited Sensory Lines
- Any number can participate in this game that requires team members to use different means of communication.
- You will need a blindfold for every participant (or they can close their eyes if this is not a possibility)

Directions:
1. Direct the students to arrange themselves in a line in order of their birthdays
2. The catch is that they must do this without speaking. They may use hand motions, but cannot speak or mouth words.
3. Switch it up by telling each participant a different number that they may not share with anybody else.
4. Have everyone blindfold themselves, and then arrange themselves in sequential order of their given numbers without speaking OR seeing!
5. Have the group try these exercises a couple of times and see if they can improve how long it takes them to do it.

Animal Sounds
http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/AnimalSounds.html
- Works better the more participants there are
- Blindfolds (or closed eyes) are need for every participant

Directions:
1. Have everyone stand in a circle blindfolded or with their eyes closed
2. Move around to people one by one, whispering the name of an animal in their ear. Once they have heard an animal name, participants must seek out each other using only the noise their animal makes to find each other. Distribute animal names so that there are three or four of each animal.
3. The game is over when the first group has found all of their members or when all groups have been formed.

Trust Run
http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/SliceNDice.html
- Works better for large groups of 30-plus participants

Directions:
1. Have everyone line up in two lines across from each other with their arms out in front of them so that just their hands overlap.
2. Have the person from one end walk though the hands, everyone lifting their hands for only the moment that the person is passing through. When finished, that person joins with their hands out on the other end of the line.
3. Then have the next person go through, and then the next person. Following by how well the group is doing, have the person walking between the lines go faster and faster.

4. When the group is comfortable with that, then have them chop their arms up and down, holding their hands up only when the passer-by is coming through.

Hug a Tree
http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HugATree.html
- Any number of people (even)
- Blindfolds necessary, or participants may close their eyes
- Works for an area with lots of trees that can be walked around safely while blindfolded

Directions:
1. Divide people into pairs. Let them decide or pick who will be blindfolded.
2. With everyone starting from a central location, the non-blindfolded person may lead the sightless person around the area (holding their hand or touching their shoulder for safety) to a tree of their choice.
3. The blindfolded person then has a minute to touch the tree and familiarize themselves with the tree.
4. Then the seeing person leads their partner back to the center with everyone else. They may spin their team member around to disorient them.
5. When the participants remove their blindfolds, they must guess which tree was "their" tree. They may go around to the trees and touch them to try and guess.
6. Have the partners switch roles and play again.

Willow in the Wind
http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/WillowInTheWind.html
- For groups of about eight or groups that can be divided into groups this size
- For more mature groups who are capable of being calm and supportive
- For building trust in groups where people already know names

Directions:
1. The group stands in a circle with one person in the middle. Group members in the circle should take a stable "spotting" stance of one foot in front of the other, hands outstretched with elbows locked to the person in the middle, while being alert.
2. The person in the middle stands with their feet together and arms across their chest with their eyes closed.
3. To establish a contract with the members of the circle, the person in the middle says, "I am ready to fall. Are you ready to catch me?" The group responds, "We are ready to catch you." The center participant says, "Falling," and the group says "Okay."
4. It is important that the circle is tightly knit, shoulder to shoulder. Hands should be touching the person in the middle. The person in the middle, once the group gives the okay that lets them know they are ready, then leans into the circle's hands and lets themselves be passed around.
5. If safe, the group can eventually back up a little to allow the person in the middle to fall more freely. When the person in the middle has had enough, usually a two or three minutes, they simply stand up, open their eyes, and thank the group for supporting them.

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