



**2014 Facilitator Institute
Icebreakers, Team Builders and Debrief
Activities Supplement**

Icebreakers, Team Builders and Debrief Activities



Designates activities that involve a "Raccoon Circle" (webbing or rope)

Icebreakers & Energizers:

SNOWBALL FIGHT

Group Size: 10-30

Props: Plain pieces of white paper or paper with winter graphics on it, writing utensils

Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to write their name and three fun things about themselves. Have them crumple the paper into a snowball. Divide the group into two teams on opposite sides of the room and let the snowball fight begin!

When you call stop, each student is to pick up the nearest snowball and identify the person whose name is inside. Once everyone has found their snowman or snowwoman, have them introduce him or her to the rest of the group.



HAVE YOU EVER...

Group Size: 12 and up

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Have everyone gather on one side of the room, divided by an unknotted Raccoon Circle on the ground, then read a series of statements. After you read each one allow time for people to move. If they agree, or if the statement applies to them, they are to go to one side of the line. If not, go to the other side. This activity can be done in silence, but be sure to debrief after each statement. Be cautious when using emotionally charged statements, especially with newly formed groups, and be sure to debrief in an emotionally safe way with the participants. A partial list of statements follows. Feel free to make up your own questions or statements specifically for your group. Vary the fact and opinion questions.

Variations:

- **CROSS THE LINE:** Have a line in front of the group. If someone agrees with a statement they cross the line, face the group for a moment or two, and then return to the group.
- **PILE UP:** With the group sitting in a circle of chairs, or just sitting on the floor in a circle, ask yes or no questions. You can have participants ask questions if you like. For each "yes" answer, move one place to the right. If the seat is occupied, sit or stand behind the participant. The first person to get back to their own seat wins.
- **HAVE YOU EVER:** you can ask the question or you can allow the group to ask its own questions. Please make sure that it is in a safe emotional environment if you do the latter.
- You may ask questions with more than one answer. Have people get into appropriate groups. (i.e. number of siblings, age, eye color, underwear color, etc.)
- You can use this to divide into two or more groups.

Sample Statements:

I have a pet

I have ridden a bicycle

I have a license

I have won a medal

I have divorced parents

I have ridden a horse

I have a library card

I am a vegetarian

I have ___ siblings

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

Group Size: 10+

Props: Circle of chairs, carpet squares, chalk circles, etc., enough for group size minus 1

Everyone has a space in the circle, with one person in the center (you for starters). Person introduces himself or herself, to which the group responds, "Hi (their name)!!" Person says, "I want to say hi to all my neighbors who (category)." Anyone fitting into that category must find a new seat, not the one immediately to his or her left or right. A new person will be in the center. Suggested Categories:

- Is wearing something particular (a color, a hat, a brand/type/color of shoe, a watch, etc.)
- Has an older/younger sister/brother
- Took a shower this morning
- Brushed their teeth today
- Likes to laugh
- Is over/under a certain age
- Has done _____ before
- Has not yet been in the center of the circle

Variations:

- Persons can say, "I love all my neighbors who _____"
- "This is going out to all my neighbors who _____"
- "I want to say 'hi' to all my friends who _____"
- Persons can only say a category that applies to them.

PEEK-A-WHO

Group Size: 10-30

Props: Tarp or blanket (It is important that it is not see-through!)

Divide the group in half to create two teams. Have two people hold up two corners of the tarp to create a curtain, with one team on each side. Each team huddles a little away from the curtain, out of sight of the other team, and designates one person to approach the curtain. Once someone from each team has approached the curtain, count to three then drop the curtain. The players at the curtain each try to be the first person to say the name of the other team's player. The first person to name the other wins the other player for their team. If there is a tie, both people switch teams. If neither person knows the other, they introduce themselves and switch sides. Only the designated person can say a name. If a team is caught cheating, they lose two people to the other team. The "object" is for your team to win as many people as possible, for everyone to learn each other's names, and to have fun. The game ends when everyone is on one side or when you decide it is time to move on.

Suggestions: If sides are even you can segue into something requiring two teams. If there is only one person on a side, or you have decided it is the last round, motion for *everyone* to approach the curtain.



WRAPPED AROUND MY FINGER

Group Size: No limit

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Using an unknotted segment of webbing, ask each participant one at a time to begin wrapping the webbing around their index finger. The participant should provide the group with some information about themselves as they do so (favorite food, where they were born, family members, etc.) and should continue talking and sharing until the webbing is completely wrapped around their finger. For large groups or when time may be a factor, participants can wrap the webbing around their fist or forearm.

I Sit (In the Grass)

Group Size: 10+

Props: circle of chairs, carpet squares, chalk circles, or place markers, enough for everyone in the group + one (it can also be done sitting in a circle w/o specific markers as long as it is clear where the extra space is).

One person next to an empty chair/space quickly moves to fill it, saying I SIT. The person who was next to them moves into the just-vacated chair, saying IN THE GRASS (or IN THE CHAIR). The person who was next to person #2 moves into the empty chair, saying WITH MY FRIEND _____, and names someone in the circle. That person calmly walks over to the empty chair, creating a new vacancy. The race is on to fill the new vacancy by the people on either side of it. The first person in the chair “wins,” and says I SIT. The game continues in the same manner.



IN THE RIVER, IN THE GRASS

Group Size: 8-20+

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Take an untied piece of webbing and stretch it across the ground in an open area free from any chairs/desks or other potential tripping hazards. Have all group members stand, facing the leader, on one side of the webbing. Explain that they are now in the grass, and that the other side of the webbing is the river. The activity works as simply as “Simon Says,” so participants must stand wherever the group leader calls out—either “in the river” or “in the grass.” Start slowly, so that participants get the rhythm of moving back and forth, then speed up and try to catch participants off-guard by calling the same location multiple times in a row, or forcing them off balance with directions. If participants make contact with the side that was not called, they must step out of the game. Remaining participants then reset and continue until one remains and is crowned champion. When playing multiple rounds, allow the winner of round A to be the caller in Round B, and so on.



Believe it or Knot

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Start in a circle. Tell the group that we are going to start passing the webbing through the circle (you can decide if you want to do clockwise or counter-clockwise) and when you (the facilitator) stop the webbing from moving, everyone should do the same and stop passing the webbing. Whoever is holding onto the knot when the group stops passing has to tell a story about themselves. This story can either be true, or made up. After the person holding the knot is done with their story, the group must decide whether the story is true or not. After the decision has been made, the storyteller must reveal if they were telling the truth or not. Then the knot passing starts again and stops on another person. Stop when you sense people are getting tired of the activity. This can spawn great discussions on communication and non-verbal messages.

INSTANT REPLAY

Group Size: 6-15

Props: None

Arrange group in a standing circle. Each person in turn says their name and makes a motion, signifying something special about themselves or something that they enjoy. You may have them choose an activity or thing that begins with the same letter or sound as their name. After each person introduces themselves the group then greets that person and repeats the motion, and then repeats the name/motion of all the previous people. When everyone has gone, challenge the group by asking if anyone can name everyone and repeat their motions.

SWITCH, CHANGE & ROTATE

Group Size: 8-50

Props: None

Directions: Ask your players to get into groups of 3 or 4 and stand in a line together, facing in the same direction, one behind the other. Explain the following commands, having participants practice each one:
Switch- the first and last person in the line should change places
Change- the line of players should turn 180 degrees to face the opposite direction
Rotate- the player at the front of the line peels off and goes to the back of the line

Spend a little time practicing while the groups are stationary. Next, ask the groups to start walking around the room in their line formation (the head of the line being the leader). Call Switch, Change & Rotate as the groups are walking around. (If you have some music to play during the activity it gives the groups some beat to walk to.)

Entourage

Group Size: 10+ (though it may cause confusion in the early rounds, bigger groups can really work the energy into a frenzy for the championship rounds.)

Props: None

Everyone remembers Rock/Paper/Scissors, right? Entourage is a group-wide tournament. First, remind participants that Paper covers Rock, Rock smashes scissors, and scissors cut paper. Have the group pair off, and play one game. Whomever wins should challenge another successful competitor. Those who did not win the initial round become the cheering section (Entourage) of those still competing. Each round continues the same, so that entourages consolidate and grow as one winner defeats another and absorbs more cheering section until only two competitors remain. Those two competitors square off in a Best-of-Three-Championship-Bout with everyone else in the group cheering wildly until a winner is crowned.

Quick segue & process questions include:

- Who cheered each other on?
- How did it feel to cheer someone else on?
- How can you continue to cheer each other on today?
- In what activities can you support each other today?

Patchwork Quilt/Quilted Northern

Group Size: no limit

Props: one roll of toilet paper

Have the group gather in a circle, pass around a roll of toilet paper, and ask each participant to tear off as many squares as “they think they may need.” Each participant must take at least one square, and no one can take half or partial pieces. When everyone has taken some, explain to participants that they will be making a patchwork quilt, and each square of toilet paper that they have will be an addition. For each addition they make, they must share something about themselves with the group. For example: If I took five squares, I might tell the group my name (1) where I’m from (2) if I have any pets (3) a brief job/title description (4) and what I am looking forward to that day (5.) Go around the circle until everyone has introduced themselves.

BOPPITY-BOP-BOP-BOP

Group Size: 8-15

Props: None

Arrange group in a standing circle with one person in the center. The center person can point to anyone in the circle and say either “BOPPITY-BOP-BOP-BOP” (B⁴) or BOP. If the person in the center says BOP, the person being pointed to says nothing. If the person in the middle says B⁴, the person pointed to must say BOP before the pointer finishes saying B⁴. If the person being pointed at responds incorrectly (speaks on BOP, or doesn’t say BOP in time on B⁴), they replace the person in the center. If they respond correctly, the pointer points to someone else and tries again. This game should be played at a fast pace. As the groups catches on to the basics, add some variations.

Variations:

- JELLO: person pointed to puts hands together above their head and does the Jell-O dance while singing the Jell-O song (j-e-l-l-o). Meanwhile, the people on both sides put their arms around the Jell-O to form a bowl.
- ELEPHANT: person pointed to puts hands together with outstretched arms to make a trunk, while side people become large floppy ears. Noises are appropriate.
- PALM TREE: center = tall trunk, sides = arching branches.
- MONKEY: classic “hear no evil/see no evil/speak no evil” crouching pose. (Note: this is asymmetric.)
- BUTTERFLY: center = antennae, sides = wings

COMMONALITIES

Group Size: 8-15

Props: None

Pair up members of the group and have them find three unique things that they have in common. Have them report the three things they find to you, and if they are truly unique, quad them up with another pair and have them find two things they have in common, but not any of the items identified when they were pairs. Have each quad report to you and if they have two truly unique things, match them with another quad and have the eight of them come up with one thing they have in common (but not anything they’ve already used). Each group of eight reports their “find” to the whole group.



Change Change Change

Group Size: 8+ (even number needed, facilitators should participate as necessary)

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Stretch out a piece of webbing on the ground and have the group partner off, one partner facing the other on each side of the line. Give them 30-45 seconds to “memorize” the appearance of their partner. Have both sides turn away from the line, and change one thing about their physical appearance. Have the partners turn to again face the line, and see if they can identify what has changed about their partner. Next, have them face away from the line and change three things, then five things.

Process questions: Was it difficult or easy to figure out what had changed? Why? Were there changes you wouldn’t have noticed had you not been looking for them?



FACE TO FACE

Group Size: 8-15

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Place an untied Raccoon Circle in a straight line on the floor. Have each person find a partner and then ask the group to create two lines on either side of the webbing, with partners facing each other. Identify lines as line one and line two. Explain to the group that you will give line one a topic to discuss with the person across from them and they are to continue to talk about the topic until you call stop. Choose a topic such as last movie seen, best meal ever, favorite book, etc and give line one about a minute to talk about the topic. Call stop and let line two discuss the same topic with their partner. After you call stop, have line two move two people to their right (individuals on the end will need to move to the opposite end of the line to find a partner). Now give line two a new topic to discuss with their new partner. Continue rounds with new topics. Continue having the lines move after each topic so partners are constantly changing. Choose one round and where only one line gets to discuss the topic. When you choose topics, be careful to use non-threatening topics!

Process Questions: How did it feel when you didn't get to respond? What is the impact on your listening if you are thinking about your "turn"? Are you thinking about what the person is saying or what you want to say in your turn?



Circle Walk/Bridge

Group Size: 10-20

Props: music, Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Tie a piece of webbing into a loop and spread it on the ground. Tie another and place it approximately 4' or 5' away. Connect the two circles with one more flat piece of webbing or rope. Split the group into two, and have each small group circle a looped piece of webbing.

Tell participants that you will play music, and that they should walk around their own circle until the music stops. Instruct those around circle "A" to walk clockwise, and those around circle "B" to move counterclockwise. Explain that they must stay out of their circle, except when they go to cross the "bridge." At that time, they MUST put one foot in the circle as they step over the webbing on the ground.

When you stop the music, the two individuals with a foot in the circles should look at each other and shout out the name of the other participant. The group member who "claims" the other first wins that person for their circle. Funny and appropriate dancing across the bridge from the old circle to the new circle is highly encouraged.

Play the music again and repeat the game until all group members are in one circle or until you assess that the group is ready for the next activity.

THE BIG QUESTION

Group Size: 8-15

Props: index cards and pen for each participant

Have each person take a card and pen and write a question they would ask someone that might reveal something about the person (last movie you saw; which animal you would want to be, etc.). Remind participants to not ask anything that might make someone uncomfortable. Have participants form pairs and ask each other their questions. After each answers, they will trade question cards, find a new partners, and ask the new question. Continue trading and asking questions until time is called.

King Frog

Group Size: 8-15

Props: chairs for each of the participants, or other way to mark positions (carpet squares, etc.) around a circle

Establish position #1 in the circle. Person in position #1 is the King Frog, and person to the King Frog's immediate left is Little Mouse. Indicate and demonstrate a hand motion for both of these characters. All other members of the group must think of an animal, and a hand motion to accompany it. Share them and let the group practice each once or twice.

Have the group establish a repeating rhythm by clapping, patting, and/or stomping. With the beat of the rhythm, King Frog announces his name, while simultaneously displaying his hand motion. King Frog then calls on another animal, and shows that motion. The animal called on must state his or her own name and motion, before calling out another creature, and do so without messing up the name/motion or speaking off-beat.

Should a person make a mistake (speaking off-beat, out of turn, messing up a motion, forgetting to announce their own name before calling another, etc.) that person moves into the spot of the Little Mouse, and all participants in between that position and the Little Mouse shift clockwise to fill a new seat.

The goal for all participants is to become, and hold onto the position of, King Frog. To do this, they must catch those participants between their current place and the King Frog spot (including the King Frog) in a mistake so that they can proceed towards the King Frog position as the other person moves back down to the spot of Little Mouse.

NOW FOR THE TRICKY PART! Animals belong to locations, not people. This means that as participants shift positions around the circle, they must change animal name and hand motion. This can get quite confusing and a bit crazy!

Celebration

Group Size: no limit, even numbers are best

Props: none

Ask each participant to find a partner. When everyone has one, ask each pair of partners to come up with, and practice, a secret handshake. After they master the handshake, have each pair add a "little something extra" beyond the original handshake that involves some sort of movement.

Allow them to practice, and then put the two moves together. Next, ask each pair to add a dance move to finish the routine. Explain that each time you call out "Celebration" for the rest of the program/event/etc. all participants must immediately locate their partner and quickly execute all three moves they've practiced as an elaborate sequence.

Call out "Celebration" to check their understanding. Be sure to use the word liberally throughout the rest of the program!

Teambuilding:

IMPUSLE

Group Size: 12-30

Props: one object (ball, bandanna, etc for “food”)

Arrange the group in two even teams. Have the teams form lines, facing each other, standing or sitting. The two lines should be about three feet apart. Players on each team should hold hands. Tell the group that each team is a creature, such as a bird of prey, with a head at one end and claws at the other. Have each team decide on a creature name. For each creature, the person at one end of the line is the “head,” and the person at the other end of the line is the “claw.” Tell the group that when the creature gets hungry, it must send a silent signal from the head to the claw, signaling that the claw should grab the food. Place your “food” object equi-distant between the two claw people. Everyone must look at the food, except for the “head” people- they look at the facilitator. Explain that you will “signal” (ex. give a thumbs up or peace sign) when the creatures are hungry, and that as soon as they see the signal, they should squeeze the hand of the person next in line, who will pass along the pulse until the “claw” receives the signal and tries to grab the “food” with his/her other hand. The first creature to grab the “food” with its claw wins the round. Rotate creature positions between each round, so that the person who was the claw becomes the head and everyone scoots down one position.

If a pulse is sent accidentally when there is no food, the head person goes to the end of the line to become the claw (reverse rotation). The first team to rotate back to the original position wins.

Variations:

- For a large group with little time, keep score instead of rotating.
- If the group has a problem holding hands, have people hold the wrist or arm of the person they will squeeze/tap.

RIVER CROSSING

Group Size: 8-15

Props: 4-6 “turtles” (flat items, such as carpet squares, fabric squares, etc) and cones or rope for boundaries

Set up a “river” within a rope or cone boundary. The distance across the “river” should be short enough to reach by using the “turtles” as steps but long enough to be challenging. Give participants their “turtles.” Tell them that these are magic turtles. The “river” is full of imaginary water, hot water, lava, boiling snot, poison peanut butter, etc, and the only way to cross is to stand on the turtles’ backs- - but be careful, because the turtles will swim away if they are in the river without anyone from the group holding them in place! The group’s objective is to safely move everyone across the river using only the turtles.

As the group moves across, if you see a turtle in the river without a person on it, make it “swim away,” “get eaten by a swamp creature,” etc. If you see that the group needs help, another turtle can “appear” to help them.

Variations: One or more participants can be blindfolded.

You can place objects in the river that the participants need to retrieve (i.e. treasure, insulin, etc.) Start with one group on each side and have them cross. Give each side half the turtles to require cooperation



BLIND POLYGON

Group Size: 10-40

Props: 1 blindfold per person, Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Arrange the group in a circle and blindfold everyone. Have them hold onto the rope loop. The goal is to make a perfect square with the rope. Note: this activity can lead to high frustration levels. Follow with something fun to break the mood.

Variations:

- Have some people without blindfolds who cannot talk
- Have them make a rectangle, circle, triangle, pentagon, or hexagon.



CIRCLE THE CIRCLE

Group Size: 6-20

Props: Hula-Hoop(s) and/or Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Arrange the group in a standing circle, holding hands. Place a hoop, or loop, between two people by temporarily breaking contact. The object is for the group to move the hoop around the circle without using any fingers or separating hands.

Variations:

- Buddy ropes can be used if the group cannot handle holding hands
- Two hoops can be sent around in opposite directions
- Some people can have disabilities (blindness, paralysis of the legs), which require group assistance.
- Have all the people in the circle face out, or face opposite directions.
- Present variety of sizes of hoops and ask the group for the level of challenge they want to start with. Then, move to smaller hoops.



Inside Out

Group Size: 8-15

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Place either a piece of webbing or a rope tied in a circle on the ground. Tell group that everyone must get out from under the circle without using their hands. Give group time to form a strategy.



COMMUNICATION LINE UP

Group Size: 6-12

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Have the group line up on the untied Raccoon Circle on the floor, either at random or in an order. They are to re-arrange themselves in an order you designate. They must keep one foot on the webbing at all times. Orders can be: birthday (month and day); first letter of your middle name (if everyone has one); height, first letter of state they were born in, favorite ice cream flavor, first letter of brand of shoe, etc. For an extra challenge, do not allow the group to talk. Talking or stepping off will cause something bad to happen, like you moving people back a few places. A discussion of communication methods may follow. Feel free to change the order goal mid-stream.



TIE THE KNOT

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Have the group place both hands on an untied Raccoon Circle. Without removing their hands from the webbing, the group must tie an overhand knot in the webbing. For an extra challenge, blindfold participants or specify that certain participants cannot speak.



Object Retrieval

Group Size: 6-15

Props: 1 item per participant, Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Make a loop with the rope large enough to contain the entire group with a little working room. Once the group is inside the loop, no one may touch the ground outside the loop. Place one small object per person outside the circle. Place objects about a body length from the loop, considering that body length vary from person to person. (They should be far enough that people cannot retrieve the object without help). The challenge is for *each member* of the group to retrieve one of the “jewels” without touching the ground outside the circle, using only themselves and their teammates. Clothing cannot be used to help retrieve objects. If someone touches, all the jewels are replaced outside the circle. The circle cannot be moved.

Variations:

- Each person brings something special and unique to the group, which could be considered his/her “jewel.” Have each person think of their quality and share during processing.
- You are a group of frogs with a strange allergy to water, stranded on a lily pad. There are flies floating in the water around you to eat. If you touch the water, you get sick and throw up your fly. Seeing this makes everyone else throw up. Since you are still hungry, you must try again.
- You can ask everyone to donate his or her own object (watch, ring, etc.)



Amoeba

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Arrange group in two standing circles, holding hands, one inside the other. Have up to half the people in the inside circle. Explain that this is an amoeba, with a nucleus and cell membrane/wall. Amoebas cannot live with a broken cell wall, a broken nucleus, or if the nucleus comes out of the cell wall. They also move (ooze) slowly. The task is for the entire amoeba to “jump” (pass) through a hoop you are holding.

Variations:

- Start the hoop resting on the arms of two people in the outer circle. Once the group passes through, the hoop will still be in the circle.
- Small inner tubes are interesting because they must be stretched.
- Have the outer ring face out.
- Works well when followed by Circle to Circle.

KEYPUNCH

Group Size: 8-30

Props: 30 items numbered 1-30 (paper, carpet squares, etc.), rope, stopwatch

Setup: Make a rectangle of rope, and inside the rope, place the numbered items, in a grid. Mix up the numbers so they are not in any order.

Play: The goal is for the group to touch the numbered items in order in as little time as possible. Time starts when any part of a person crosses the rope boundary into the grid and ends when the final number has been touched and no part of the last person is in the grid. Only one person can have any part of themselves in the grid at a time. The numbered items may be touched with any body part. They may not be moved or rearranged.

Have the group try once, then discuss what went well and what did not. After they have identified strategies to improve their time, let them try again to improve.

If you would like, add a “scenario” -

The group has to debug a computer virus; if rules are broken the computer will crash

The group was miniaturized and needs to enter the code to reverse the process

The group is captured by aliens or a giant and must enter the code to activate the transporter/elevator/etc.

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

Group Size: 8-15

Props: 16 carpet/fabric squares

The game usually consists of a 4x4 grid of squares, although larger grids are possible. The idea is for the group to find the “secret passageway” through the grid. The secret passageway is a path of squares that only you know (which you have made up beforehand and written down). Only one person may be in the grid at a time. If they step on a correct square you say nothing, allowing them to make another move. If they step on an incorrect square you buzz or somehow let them know that they have chosen incorrectly and reached a dead end. Then they must exit the grid through the passageway (i.e. retrace their steps), and someone else tries. The path can only connect adjacent squares; forward, back, left, right, or diagonally. A square cannot be used more than once, but it does not have to be used at all. To add to the challenge you may want to eliminate talking and/or pointing. Adjust to your group accordingly.



Circle Lean/Circle Sit

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Teams stand outside the RC holding it in their hands about waist level. The trusting challenge here is for each player on the team to lean back away from the center of the circle so that they have extended their arms straight out and their body is straight – if they were to let go (but they don't) they would fall over type of lean. The group coordinates their efforts to find a place where everyone can balance together. After safely standing back up for a break, try the lean again and then ask each team to sit down to the ground and stand back up together. This takes communication and coordination. Make sure they move slowly and controlled – you would prefer that they didn't tip over at any point! The final challenge could be for each group to sit-and-stand three times in a row adding a fun noise to their motion – have each team present their actions and sounds to the rest of the group.



AIN'T NO BUGS ON ME

Group Size: 10-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Place an untied Raccoon Circle in a straight line on the floor. Divide the group into two lines, facing each other on either side of the webbing. Tell participants that the person across from them in the other line is their partner. Explain to the group that each line will take turns chanting a statement. When it is their group's turn to chant, the facilitator will tell them when to start, and they are to chant together as a group, following your instructions.

Have one line calmly say the following to the other line:

"There ain't no bugs on me-
there ain't no bugs on me-
there might be bugs on some of you mugs,
but there ain't no bugs on me."

Next, ask the other line to repeat the chant, but with a little attitude. Once the second group has gone, turn to the first group and say "Okay, so this group is serious. What do you all think? You want to try it again? Do you think you have more of an attitude than that? Let's try and say it like you mean it."

Give each group a couple of chances at the chant, with various instructions as to how to say the chant- "with attitude," "like you mean it," "louder, you can do better than that," etc.

Next, say "Okay, now that we have had a nice group warm up, let's have each pair get their partner over to the other side."

Facilitator's note: The objective is simple. Each pair needs to switch sides. They can do that by simply agreeing to switch sides with one another. However, because the group has gotten excited during the chanting, they will usually attempt to "force" their pair or partner over to their side. Some participants may grab others or try to intimidate them. It is important to remind the group of your established safety and ground rules before you begin the session.

Once the group has struggled for about 30 seconds to get their partner over to their side, have them stop. Ask them what just happened. Was anyone successful in getting their partner over to their side? If so how? If not, why not?

Help participants to realize that the easiest, safest way would have been to simply ask their partners to switch sides with them- a win-win.

Ask the group how they approached the task of getting their partner over to their side. Process with the group the reasons behind their strategies. Ask participants whether the chanting contributed to their mindset.

Help participants see how external influences can change group dynamics. Help participants understand the necessity of compromise and problem solving.



STICKY SNAKE

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Tie a tight knot approximately 6-8" from one end of a raccoon circle. Explain that the tight knot is the head of a snake, and that the 6-8" piece is the tongue. Loosely tie four overhead knots along the body of the snake. The goal of the activity is for the group to untie the four knots on the snake. A few rules: All participants must have both hands on the snake, and the snake is extremely sticky, so once they place their hands on the snake, they can't move them. Also, if they are touched by the snake's tongue, the "poisonous venom" will render them speechless for the rest of the activity. Variations include: one hand on the snake, one hand in your back pocket; "anti-venom" given at the discretion of the facilitator to give back the power of speech; "stickum remover" given by the facilitator to allow participants to rearrange their hands.



FORD THE RIVER/LIVE WIRE

Group Size: 8-20

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

In the middle of an open area (free from desks, chairs, walls, etc.), stretch a piece of webbing on the ground in a straight line. Have all group members line up on one side of the line, shoulder to shoulder so that their toes are along the length edge of the webbing. Explain that the webbing is actually a downed electrical wire, and that touching it with any part of their body or clothing will deliver a "shock." (Alternatively, it can be a fast moving river that will rush them downstream should they come into contact with it.) Ask the group members to safely step across the electrical line. After they do so, have them again face the downed wire shoulder to shoulder, and place their right arm over the person next to them. Explain that the group must now cross without letting go of anyone in the line, and that if anyone should touch the webbing, they will all receive the "shock." After the group successfully crosses, they should add a point of contact before each sequential cross: try both arms on shoulders and then touching foot to foot without breaking contact with one another, and without stepping on the wire. Challenge the group to complete the task in a certain number of attempts, or to do so within a certain window of time.

Debrief Activities:



SPOTLIGHT'S ON YOU

Group Size: 6-16

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Arrange the webbing on the ground in a circle large enough for someone to stand in that represents a "spotlight." Have participants stand in a circle around the webbing. One at a time, have participants stand in the spotlight while the group gives feedback and praise. Depending on the group, this may need to be structured with specific questions: "Who in the group provided positive support for their teammates?" or "How did Jenny give back to our group today?"

Variation:

Have group members choose another group member to put in the spotlight and provide a compliment about something that the person in the spotlight helped with, did well, etc.

Virtual Slide Show

Group Size: no limit

Props: Blank wall & any handheld "click" noisemaker

Gather group so that all participants are facing a blank wall. Explain that you will be showing a "virtual slideshow" to review what group members did in the previous activity/program. Start the slideshow, and clearly and vividly describe a scene from earlier, inviting group members to paint the picture in their minds. You should explain why you chose that scene to capture: what was the group doing, how was their interaction, did something memorable happen? Click through to another slide and provide the same type of frame. Invite group members to take the controller and describe the actions and importance of their own slide(s). Continue until everyone has had the opportunity to share.

Variation:

Group Facilitator may frame the first slide as the first thing that occurred during the program, and then invite participants to debrief slides in sequential order, ending with the facilitator framing a slide of the virtual slide show debrief.



BUILDING A CHAIN

Group Size: no limit

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Pass around an untied Raccoon Circle from participant to participant standing in a circle. With each participant, they will tie a knot in the webbing to represent something they will take away from the day's experience (or something that challenged them, something they liked, etc.). The eventual chain of knots on the webbing can be used to represent the group's strengths.



Continuum

Group Size: no limit

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Designate a line, either drawn in the dirt or a rope or imagined between two trees. Ask people to place themselves on that line according to some criteria. Ideas: leaders toward one side, followers toward the other; level of fun; level of frustration; foreman/workers; put forth ideas or stayed quiet; made decisions or followed; level of challenge; inclusion/exclusion in activity or decision making process; etc.

This is good for non-verbal debriefing that requires some physical movement. It can become verbal if you ask why people placed themselves where they did, if they felt comfortable where they were or if they would prefer to be someplace else on the continuum.

Variations:

- Cloud Continuum: instead of a line designate three areas; one is a bright sunny day, another is a black cloud and storm, the third is somewhat overcast. Ask the group to place themselves in one of these areas according to how they felt about being there, or how the process was, or whatever. (Using this I heard about issues people had about being present that day that would not come up if I processed only on the activity.)
- Ask people how they are feeling about being there; this can bring up some issues from the rest of someone's life. Remember, people do not check their personal baggage at the door.



Where I'm Coming From

Group Size: no limit

Props: Raccoon Circle (webbing or rope)

Depending on the size of the group and the time allotted, the facilitator may elect to have participants work independently, in pairs, or in small groups. After an activity gather the group together, and subdivide them as necessary. Each participant, pair or small group will have the opportunity to manipulate a piece of webbing into a shape or design, and then to explain to the large group what their design is, and then reflect on why the design was chosen to represent what they experienced, how they feel, or what they may take away from the activity. While sharing, group members may choose to change the shape into more than one representation as they speak, identifying specific points to match shapes created.

Variation:

This activity can also be used as an icebreaker, where each participant creates a design from the webbing to explain to the group who they may be and what has brought them to the activity or program. For example, a Wyman staff member may use the webbing to make a "W," and after talking about Wyman, shift the webbing into a large arch to demonstrate that Wyman is based in St. Louis.

Some activities taken from the "Internet Edition of Raccoon Circle Activities" by Jim Cain, Ph.D. For more activities and information on Raccoon Circles, go to http://www.teamworkandteamplay.com/raccooncircles2007_final.pdf