

Paired Activities (and group activities, too)

Focus: Learning about others, Mixing with others in the group

Materials: None

Sequence: Ice Breaker

Sources: See *Journey Toward the Caring Classroom* (2004) by Frank, See also: "Last Detail" in *Quicksilver* (1995) by Rohnke & Butler, "Details Details", "Tie Your Show", and One-to-One Interview in *Adventure Education for the Classroom Community* (2007) by Frank & Panico, and "One-to-One Interview in *Games for Group 2* (1998) by Cavert.

Suggested Procedure:

1. Teach your students about "mixing" or "collegiality" – being able to work with everyone. Discuss how people can be disrespected when someone shows that they don't want to work with them, or that they over-celebrate when getting a partner with whom they are comfortable. Teach them to high five (or air high-five) and thank their partner for working with them. This is being polite and showing respect.
2. The rest of the time will be spent getting into pairs, and practicing the skill of mixing.
3. Clear the desks or tables away and stand in a circle. Ask people to get a partner (it doesn't matter who because people will be with different partners later).
4. Have the partners look at each other and, according to an attribute (whoever has shorter hair, darker eyes, the most blue on....) separate themselves. The person, then, with the shorter hair, stands on the inside of the circle, facing their longer-haired partner. There are now two circles, one inside the other, with the inside circle facing the outer one.
5. Give the pairs an activity to do (they are listed below).
6. After the activity, have them discuss something about themselves. Possible discussion topics are: Tell your partner about your family, about your favorite place in the world, about your favorite food, a hope or goal in your life, something you hope to learn someday, etc.
7. After the activity and discussion, have one of the circles move a couple people to the right or left. Each person then has a new partner, and a new activity and discussion topic can be done.

Activities:

Get the Point: Partners face each other and put their left hand out, palm up. With their other hand, place their pointer finger in the palm of their partner. When you say 'GO', they are to try and catch the finger of their partner, while trying to not let their finger get caught. Try this a few times and note the reaction (which usually includes lots of laughing)

Changing Places: With their partner they are to change places. Each time they change places, they are to do it in a different way

Finger Fencing: Partners shake hands, then switch grip so that the pointer finger is free. People attempt to poke their partner below the waist.

Me Switch: Teach the students three motions. It doesn't really matter what they are, but here is an example: Both hands above eyes, both arms crossed over the chest, and one hand touching the other elbow. Then have each pair designate a person who is 'it'. This person counts to three, at which point both people simultaneously go into one of the motions. The person who is 'it' wants the other person to do the same thing that he is doing. If she does, she is now 'it', and does the counting. If she doesn't do the same thing, then he remains 'it' and counts again.

Macro Rock/Paper/Scissors: Make sure everyone knows the rules to Rock/Paper/Scissors: Rock = closed fist, Paper = open hand, and scissors = fingers in a V like a peace sign. On a signal, the partners do one of the three signals to see who wins. The winning combinations are: Rock beats scissors because it crushes the scissors, scissors beats paper because it cuts the paper, and paper beats rock because it covers the rock. It is also possible to tie. For the macro version, substitute these motions: Rock =

crouching down with hands over head, Paper = standing with arms at sides, Scissors = standing with arms over head in a V. Have partners face back-to-back. Each person must take a step forward to avoid hitting the other. They count to three while jumping up and down, spin around and go into one of the motions. Same rules apply. (Thanks to Dick Jensen and others at Toki Middle School for this variation).

Celebration (pairs or groups): Partners create some way to celebrate -- high fives, a dance, a cheer, etc. Then, throughout the day, when someone yells 'celebrate' they must find their partner and celebrate with them. (From Jim Dunn)

Last Detail (pairs or groups): Everyone looks at their partner. On a signal, everyone turns around and changes three things on their clothing (turn collars, switch shoes, take out earrings, etc.) When each pair is ready, they turn around and try to guess the three things that were switched.

Tie Your Shoe: Each pair should have at least one person with tied shoes, or the ability to borrow a shoe from someone else. The shoes are untied, and the task is to retie the shoes. The problem is that each person in the pair can use only one hand.

Improv (pairs or groups): With a partner, show how you can create a sentence by having each person add every other word. The trick is to listen to what your partner is saying, rather than what you think they will say. For example: You: 'Once' Partner: 'there' You: 'was' Partner: 'a' You: 'yellow' Partner: 'jacket' You: 'that' Partner: 'flew' You: 'up' Partner: 'under' You: 'your' Partner: 'shirt' You: 'period'. Give them some time to do this together.

High Fives (Pairs or groups): With their partners, create three new high fives. Tell people to be creative, and that it's O.K. to 'cheat' by looking around at others for ideas. Once done, ask each pair to choose their favorite to share with the group.

1-1 Interview: Each person gets a minute or so to tell their life story to their partner. Afterward, each person introduces their partner to the group.

Acronyms (pairs or groups): In small groups of 3 - 4, they create an acronym using the first letter of each person's name. So a group with J, K, L and C might create: Lovely Jokes Crash Kites or Little Kittens Chew Jujubes.

Sample Processing Questions:

- How was it to work with so many different people?
- Why might it be important to be able to work with everyone in this group?
- Is it easy or hard for you to approach someone new?

Facilitation Notes:

As you can see, these activities have no deeper underlying meaning in and of themselves. They are just fun things to do with another person, and are rather non-threatening. Some groups need to hear that there is no point to the actual activity, but that there is a purpose to the exercise as a whole.

Depending upon the group, it may be necessary to help them get initial partners, especially if you are aware of triads or students who are regularly excluded. Try having them line up in alphabetical order and folding the group in half. Other strategies include: Find someone who was born in a different season than you, or find someone who has the same size thumb (or different) than you, color of eyes. It is also possible to get partners at random by using a deck of cards, with the number of cards equaling the number in the class, and each card having a partner (such as two kings, two aces, etc.). Once you have done 'Celebration', initial partners for other activities can be made by having each person find their Celebration partner.