

**Enhancing
Friendships
through
Games***

***games to put a
smile on your face**

**Herb Goodhoofd
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ENHANCING FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH GAMES

Welcome to the world of games!

Games at our Friendship clubs can be used to enhance the range of feelings and emotions experienced by all the participants, friends and volunteers and mentors alike. A game can be played as a break on a regular club night, or a special games night can be organized.

Games helps promote increased attentiveness, involvement and participation by our friends. With some creativity, some of the games can also be used to introduce, summarize and review Bible stories and the basic concepts of the Christian life.

The choice of a particular game or activity depends on the individual's age, skill level, inquisitiveness and interest and attitude towards the activity. Some of our friends handle games and physical activities very well, while others need considerable support and assistance to achieve success. Some individuals may simply enjoy watching some of the activities, rather than participating. Everyone participates at their comfort level.

Regardless of ability, our goal is to assist all participants to join in, at whatever level they feel comfortable. Our friends are encouraged to try their best at all times. When the game or activity requires it, we can encourage our friends to be "competitive" and compete to the best of their ability.

Safety and co-operation are key concepts. The activities are always presented in a safe, non-threatening environment, where the participant can trust that his or her efforts will be acknowledged and affirmed.

The shared laughter, energy, communication and co-operation inherent in game activities fosters an atmosphere where people connect in meaningful ways. Participants are encouraged to enjoy their own participation as well as the participation of others.

Games can be seen as a journey of joy in Christian living. Friends and volunteers are fellow travelers on a journey, learning to smile and laugh, learning to enjoy our God-given humanity and the love of Jesus. Along the way we get to know each other better, and together we learn more about our shared life in Christ.

All of are blessed by our participation in Friendship Clubs. We are blessed because we recognize that the Holy Spirit allows us and our friends opportunities to experience moments of true delight and shared community.

Enjoy the games, as well as the introductory and farewell activities. Take the ideas and concepts presented and give them personal expression in your local program. And don't forget... let the games put a smile on your face!

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Introduction to Games

1. Safety is always important. Always teach and demonstrate safety.
2. Introduce the rules of the game slowly. Demonstrate with one or two volunteers and friends at the start of a game. For some games, you need to start and the rules become better understood as you go on.
3. If you try a game, and it isn't working out, wrap up the activity and move on to something else.
4. A circle format allows everyone to see and participate the best. Put chairs in a large circle.
5. It is good practice to spread out your club mentors and volunteers around the circle, in order to give assistance as needed and keep the game moving.
6. Working with our friends in wheelchairs is an interesting challenge. With some creativity, almost all activities can be adapted for individuals in wheelchairs.
7. If you wish to purchase some game equipment, consider some balls and hoops, a parachute (12 foot) and some rubber chickens. You can purchase these items from Flaghouse at www.flaghouse.ca. Your local Dollar Store is always good for some items.
8. If you have any questions about any of the games, feel free to contact me at 905-469-9295 or at herbgood@gmail.com. Or invite me to your club for a games evening!

Blessings on you, your friends and your club!

Herb Goodhoofd
Oakville, Ontario

A. Games

1. GAME: The Old Gym Bag

Equipment: Gym bag with gym bag items.....socks, tennis balls, goggles, towels, deodorant, water bottles, etc. etc. Or... Bible pictures related to a Bible story....or animals on the ark, for example.

Instructions:

1. Sitting in a circle, standing or sitting on chairs, each person picks an object out of the gym bag.
2. One person standing in middle, calls out the name of one of the items.
3. Everyone that has that item must change positions, and person in the middle takes a vacant spot.
4. Person who does not get a spot stands in the middle and calls the next item and so on.
5. If a person calls "Gym Bag", all players switch places.

2. GAME: I Like My Neighbors

Instructions:

1. Have all members seated on chairs in a circle, with one person standing in the middle as "it".
2. The person in the middle makes a statement. "I like my neighbors, especially those who are wearing running shoes" (wearing glasses, have a birthday in October, are over 12 etc).
3. All those people who are wearing running shoes must jump up from their seats and scramble to find another chair. The person in the middle also scrambles for an empty chair. The one person left without a chair now becomes the new "it" and makes his/her own new statement.
4. Variation: Give everyone an animal from Noah's Ark. The person in the middle states, "I like my neighbors who are elephants". All those with elephants scramble to find another chair and "it" scrambles to find a chair as well. Do not let your neighbors know what animal you have.

3. GAME: Recycle that bag!

Equipment: Two, three or four grocery store recycling bags. Bags require handles.

Instructions:

1. You can make the relay race in straight lines, or in a circle.
2. Put friends in two, three or four groups, depending on class size.
3. The game is basically a relay race. Make two, three or four teams, lining people up in a single file.
4. The first person in each line puts his or her feet in two bags, holding the bags by the straps.
On a "go" signal, the people race ("shuffle") around a chair and back.
5. The next person takes the bags and takes his or her turn. Other team members can help the person into the bags.
6. First team to finish wins!
7. **Note: Be aware of not going too fast and tripping!**

4. GAME: Spin me a web!

Equipment: A ball of string or yarn. The length of string depends on the size of your group.

Instructions:

1. The group forms a complete circle. Hold hands, then drop hands as the circle is formed. It is important to maintain as complete and round a circle as possible. The group can be as few as five or six people, right up to a hundred or more. Staff can be interspersed between the students.
 2. One person starts the web. They hold the end of the string or yarn tightly and pass the string or yarn to another person on the circle, generally across the circle.
 3. The new person then holds the string and passes it on to another person...and so on.
 4. The web is complete when all participants are holding on to the string. However, the string can be passed a second time, and even a third, for example.
 5. When a person passes the string, they can give their name, or suggest their favourite food or TV show, or whatever. This activity could wrap up a unit, for example, and students answer questions as the web is formed.
 6. When the web is complete, it can be lifted high, or low, or tilted from side to side. Make sure no one lets go of the string during this. One or two people could go under the web, and feel its "protection". The idea of sharing and inclusion can be discussed. "Everyone is an important part of the web."
 7. The size of the web depends on time, and the number in your group. A web of fifty people or more is possible. Use "runners" who take the string across the circle, from person to person. This needs a bit of planning, but the final effect is very unique.
- Q. "Who wants to roll up the string when we're finished???" :) :)

5. GAME: String me along!

Equipment:

A ball of string or yarn, as long as you want the course to be. This activity works well outside, but it also works inside. Be careful not to bump heads on desk corners! One blindfold for each participant, if the person is OK with a blindfold.

Objectives:

To heighten sense of touch, feel and hearing, using a blindfold

To develop a sense of safety and trust, with a blindfold on

To develop a sense of trust in one's partner, if participant uses a sighted partner, either another friend or volunteer

To enjoy a quiet and calming activity

Instructions:

1. This works best outside, in an area of trees, but inside will work as well. Using rope or heavy string or yarn, lay out a course. Start with a table leg, and take the string to another leg, and then on to another object.
Outside, start with a tree and wrap the string around another tree nearby, and then on to a third tree, and so on... Other objects are OK, but there should be no points or jagged edges, since participants will touch these objects as they move around the course. The rope should be no more than waist high.
2. The object of this activity is go blindfolded around the course, using one's hands to move along the string. The safest way for participants is to move around standing up. When they feel a tree, for example, people move around the tree and continue in the direction of the string.
3. Participants can go on their own, or with a sighted partner. The partner walks beside the participant, talking them through the course and pointing out trees and other objects as they proceed. Less able or reluctant individuals may wish to move through the course without a blindfold.
4. Consider traveling through the course in the opposite direction.
5. If you're outside, point out things for participants to notice as they move through the course. "Feel the wind." "Feel the bark on the trees." Notice the difference between the sunlight and the shade". "Listen for different sounds." And so on....
6. Find an opportunity to debrief and discuss people's senses and observations. "What was it like?" "Did you feel safe with a blindfold?" "What did you feel as you moved through the course?" "What did you hear?" And so on...
7. An interesting variation is to have a friend lead a blindfolded mentor.
8. Also, this can work with folks in a wheelchair. Inside works better for this, but outside, you can use sideways and parking lots, so that the ground is smooth.

6. GAME: This is a What????

Equipment:

A range of about ten different objects, ranging in size. Use objects that are close at hand. For example, you might use a shoe, an umbrella, a cup, a book, a hat, a ball, etc. etc. The more unique or unusual the items, the more the fun.

Instructions:

1. The group forms a circle, and sits down. The minimum size would be about six people. Intersperse mentors between the friends, to help keep the game going.
2. The leader takes an item and passes it to a person in the group, saying "This is a ball. " This person responds with "This is a what?" The leader says "This is a ball."
3. The person with the ball then turns to the next person on the circle and goes through the same sequence. "This is a ball. This is a what? This is a ball." The next person in the circle continues in similar fashion, and so on around the circle.
4. After three or four passes, the leader then hands out another object and the same routine continues. "This is a pencil. This is a what? This is a pencil."
5. When a third object is introduced, pass it the other direction around the circle. As new objects are introduced, alternate the direction of introducing new items into the circle.
6. At some point, two objects need to be passed through the same person. This requires concentration and patience. Ensure that all the questions are asked.
7. Bring the game to an end at an appropriate time.

7. Game: Post in the Ground

Equipment: none

Objectives:

To develop gross motor skills.

To weave in and out of the “posts”.

To move quickly around the circle, maintaining body control.

To avoid bumping into other players.

To remain still when the player is a “post”.

To laugh, smile and have fun!

Instructions:

1. Go outdoors, or use a good-sized room or gym indoors. The group – friends and mentors - form a complete circle. It is important to maintain as complete and round a circle as possible during the game. Volunteers are interspersed among the friends.
2. Players stand arm-width apart, touching fingers.
3. Players drop arms and stand completely still. They are the “posts”.
4. One player is chosen to run. This player weaves in and out of the “posts”, goes around the circle and comes back to his or her “home” spot.
5. Two players are chosen to run. Players should be across the circle from each other. On the instruction “go”, they weave in and around the posts, in opposite directions, careful not to bump into the posts or into each other as they pass.
First player home wins.
6. A variation. Have four players run at the same time, in opposite directions.
7. Another variation. Send people off in alternate directions. “You go this way, you go this way.” With more people running, there are fewer posts, but players simply weave in and out of the posts until they are home.

8. Game: Oven Mitt Frozen Tag

Equipment:

Large open space – indoors or outdoors
Matching sets of oven mitts

Objectives:

To increase heart rate and warm the muscles.
To recognize and match oven mitts by colours and/or patterns.
To avoid being tagged.
To tag as many people as possible if you are IT.
To laugh, smile and have fun!

Instructions:

1. Choose one to three people to be IT. They will be wearing no oven mitts.
2. Everyone else puts on one oven mitt.
3. Spread out in open area.
4. Game starts when teacher or student says SNOWSTORM.
5. If IT tags you, freeze (by standing still with arms out to sides).
6. You may be unfrozen and free to run again when another player with the same colour in their oven mitt (green) or same pattern (flowers) gives you an oven mitt high five.
7. Change the people who are IT frequently.

Variations: There are variations with this game. People who are IT can wear oven mitts and chase and catch others.

10. Game: Concentration (Use plastic wash basins, 12 inch diameters)

Equipment:

24 plastic wash basins, or pie plates. This allows for 12 words or concepts to be hidden under the plates or basins.

Objectives:

To reinforce words, ideas or concepts

To develop memory/recall skills

To use problem solving strategies as a group to complete the task

To laugh, smile and have fun!

Instructions:

1. This game can be played by one person, in pairs or co-operatively as a group.
2. Game can be played in terms of “time to complete”, for example.
3. Each concept or idea, when the pair has been uncovered, can be discussed by the group, as the leader decides.

B. Introductory Activities

1. Activity: Hello

Instructions:

1. Form a circle
2. The starting person says, gestures or signs “hello” in any way to the person on their right.
3. The person on the right repeats it exactly the same way and then says hello in a new way to the next person on their right in the circle.
4. Continue around the circle until everyone has said hello.

2. Activity: Name Wave

Instructions:

1. Everyone stands in a circle.
2. One person says his/her name and at the same time makes a motion or gesture. (eg. “Herb” as he waves his hand).
3. The person to the right says “Herb” and waves his/her hand as Herb did.
4. The name and motion spread around the circle in a “wave”.
5. When the circle is complete, the next person says his/her name and a different motion and that waves around the circle.
6. Continue until the group has gone through all the games.

3. Activity: Name Game

Equipment: 5 soft objects that can be tossed. (eg. bean bags, balls, wet sponges, rubber chickens)

Instructions:

1. Form a circle.
2. The leader clearly calls out someone's name and tosses one object to this person. This person calls out another name and tosses the object to this new person. Continue until everyone has caught the object and it gets tossed back to the leader. You must toss to someone at least two people away from you and the object can only be passed to each person once.
3. The leader begins tossing the first object again. The order of tossing remains the same every time. The leader introduces a 2nd object, a 3rd object etc. until all objects make it around the circle in the same order.
4. With many objects being tossed, it is important to remember to call out the person's name that you are tossing to, to make sure they are paying attention and ready to receive the object.

4. Activity: "What can you do, Punchinello?"

Instructions:

1. Form a circle.
2. Each person will take a turn demonstrating a silly action or welcoming gesture, and everyone else in the circle will repeat it.
3. Start singing...."What can you do Punchinello, Punchinello? What can you do, Punchinello, from the zoo?"
4. After singing this once, the first person will enter the center of the circle and choose an action to perform. (eg. Shake hands with your neighbor or do a dance step.)
5. Everyone else now sings and performs that action. "We can do it too, Punchinello, Punchinello! We can do it too, Punchinello, from the zoo!"
6. Continue around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

5. Activity: I Like My Neighbors

Instructions:

1. Have all members seated on chairs in a circle, with one person standing in the middle as 'it'.
2. The person in the middle makes a statement "I like my neighbors, especially those who are wearing running shoes" (wearing glasses, have a birthday in October, are over 12 etc).
3. All those people who are wearing running shoes must jump up from their seats and scramble to find another chair. The person in the middle also scrambles for an empty chair. The one person left without a chair now becomes the new "it" and makes his/her own new statement.

Variation: Give everyone an animal from Noah's Ark. The person in the middle states, "I like my neighbors who are elephants". All those with elephants scramble to find another chair and "it" scrambles to find a chair as well. Do not let your neighbors know what animal you are.

C. Farewell Activities

1. Activity: Send a Prayer

Instructions:

1. Form a circle sitting or standing, holding hands.
2. One person starts a squeeze on one side. With every squeeze send a private prayer for the person whose hand you are squeezing.
3. Continue around the circle until the starting person receives his or her squeeze.

2. Activity: Rain

Instructions:

1. Everyone sit in a circle.
2. This activity can be done with eyes closed, but probably works better with eyes open. Everyone quiets down and gets ready to hear the sound the leader will be making.
3. We begin with the leader rubbing his/her palms together, back and forth.
4. The person to the left joins him/her, and then the person to his/her left joins in and so on.
5. When the leader hears the drizzle sound being made by the person to the right she starts snapping her fingers.
6. When the snapping action has been picked up by everyone the leader switches to hand clapping, then thigh slapping and finally foot stomping.
7. After stomping, the leader reverses the order of sounds; thigh slapping, hand clapping, finger snapping and finally palm rubbing.
8. For the last round the leader stops rubbing his/her palms and takes the hand of the person on her left. Each person follow suit around the circle until there is silence once again.
9. At this point the leader can lead a prayer or use this quiet time to make any announcements.

3. Activity: Snowballs

Instructions:

1. Each person writes his/her name on a piece of paper. Newsprint works very well.
2. Members line up, half on either side of the room.
3. At the signal, wad up your piece of paper and begin a snowball fight. Continue tossing snowballs towards the other team, until the leader signals to stop.
4. At this point everyone must find the closest snowball and pick it up.
5. Each person will take a turn reading out loud the person's name.

4. Activity: My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean

Instructions:

1. Form a circle.
2. Everyone sings, "My Laura lies over the ocean, my Laura lies over the sea, my Laura lies over the ocean, say goodbye to Laura for me, goodbye, goodbye, goodbye Laura goodbye."
3. Each time Laura is said change from standing to sitting and wave goodbye when singing goodbye.
4. Go around the circle until everyone's name has been filled into the song.
5. You can end by filling in the last verse with "My friends" and when it finishes everyone waves goodbye and goes home. If the group is very large or time does not permit, just sing "My friends lie over the ocean" verse.