
World Olympics

Preparing Students for a
Multicultural and Multireligious World

A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-6



Imagine: a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Games that Build Teamwork

Unit 5, Lesson 1

Objectives: Students explore the idea of a team and play games that build teamwork.

Skills: Teamwork; Critical Thinking

Grades: K-6

Materials:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Alphabet Placards
- Games that Build Teamwork (included)
- Materials for Each Game (see description of game)

Preparation:

Make alphabet placards for the team spelling activity ahead of time. Alternatively, you can have students create them in class.

The alphabet placards are simply large pieces of paper on which one letter of the alphabet is written. You will need two sets of alphabet placards for this activity.

PROCEDURE

Introduction: Begin the class with a team spelling bee. You will need eight student volunteers for this activity, and the rest of the class will be observers. Instruct the observers to take notes on what they notice during the activity.

Have the eight students form two groups of four people each. Place a stack of prepared alphabet placards near each team. Now call out a word having to do with teamwork or the Olympics for the teams to spell. You can invite the observers to suggest words as well. The teams have to spell out the word using the letters. Do not give the students any detailed instructions on how to do this.

Play four rounds of the game. After the fourth round, end the game with applause for both the teams and for the observers.

Now ask the observers and the participants to give their input on the following: *What was that activity like? How did you decide how to do the task? How did you all work together? Did you each have a different role or did you all work together on one role?*

For younger students, the game can use simple words or you can use other games as well for this activity. The aim is to help students reflect on their teamwork.

Step One: Ask students what skills are necessary for teamwork. A few examples include listening, asking questions, helping each other, participating. Ask students how they used these skills in the previous activity.

Step Two: Some games that build teamwork are included with this lesson for students to practice their teamwork skills!

Part I - Games that Build Teamwork

Paper Cup Pyramid

Materials: Dixie cups, small rubber bands, string, a stopwatch

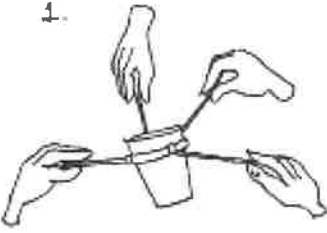
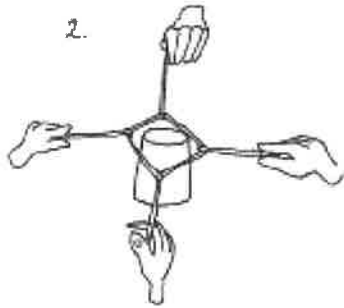

Objective: To create the biggest pyramid of paper cups in the quickest time possible!

Directions: First, the group breaks up into teams of four players each. Once this is done, each group should tie four short lengths of string to a rubber band; these pieces of string should be tied in “North-South-East-West” positions around the round rubber band.

Before the game begins, each team should take their rubber band, having each player hold one length of string in his/her hand. The rubber band is now a tool - the cups can be picked up by the four players pulling their strings enough to stretch the rubber band around the cup. Likewise, the cups can be placed on top of the growing pyramid by stretching the rubber band enough to “let them go” once they are in position.

Each team will then be given an equal number of paper cups, and the teacher will prepare the stopwatch (the time limit for this game may be decided by the group, but it should be short enough that the task is hurried!).

When the teacher says “Go!” each team must begin to construct their pyramid using their rubber bands to pick up and release each cup. This game will make sure that the children cooperate and communicate, as the task will be impossible to fulfill if even one player is not pulling or releasing his/her string in unison with the others.

Activity	Time	Material:	Aim: team building
Pyramid game	10 minutes	30 cups, 20 pieces of string, 4 rubber bands	
<p>After quick round of names for new people divide students into groups of 4. Explain pyramid game.</p> <p>Steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. give each person a string 2. give each group 6 cups and 1 rubber band 3. each person attaches their own string to the rubber band and then places the rubber band over the cup. <p>The goal is to build a pyramid out of the cups by pulling and releasing the strings and while staying silent - students must communicate using body language only.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1.</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>2.</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>3.</p>  </div> </div>			
<p>Debrief Game</p> <p><i>What did people think of this game?</i></p> <p><i>Thumbs up, Down, To the side. Ask for explanations. Use this game to start a discussion on team work. Emphasize importance of working together and paying attention to others and communication.</i></p> <p><i>What made it easier? Difficult? What did team work look like? Sound like? Feel like?</i></p> <p><i>Why did we play this game?</i></p> <p><i>What can we learn from this game?</i></p> <p><i>What does team work look like, sound like feel like? What if we had been allowed to talk?</i></p>			

The Circle of Laps

Materials: None

Objective: For each student in a standing circle to assume a sitting position at the same time.

Directions: The students must link arms with each other, tightening the circle. This action prevents anyone from assuming a sitting position before the people directly to his/her left or right, and thus ensures that all must sit at the same time! However, when everyone attempts to sit, it will become clear that if all attempt to lean back into a sitting position, the circle will break. Thus, the students will need to find a way around this.

Solution: For a seated circle to occur, each student will have to angle their bodies, front to back, around the circle. Then, the circle can sit, but only if everyone does it at the same time. This exercise is another which fosters group effort and communication skills, as the children will need to discuss and debate the best way in which to sit before arriving at the conclusion. Also, once everyone is seated, they will be stuck until they can all agree to stand up together - talk about incentive for teamwork!

Crossing the River

Materials: Construction paper, masking tape

Objective: For each team of students to “cross the river” with their friends, using only the stepping stones provided.

Directions: Using the masking tape or other material, the teacher should separate two parts of a room from each other, with a very wide gap in between the edge of each. This gap is the “river,” and the spaces on either side of it are the two “shores.”

Each team will assemble on the starting side of the river. The teacher will provide each team with four sheets of construction paper (“stepping stones”). The teams must cross the river, the catch being that no stepping stone can be empty. If a stepping stone is empty, then it will have to be picked up and moved to a different spot. Each player will have to arrange the “stones” so that the entire team can get across as well. The team members will also have to coordinate their efforts so that no stones are left empty. This exercise will involve problem-solving skills and teamwork, and should be a fun and easily organized use of an ordinary classroom atmosphere.

The Human Knot

Materials: None

Objective: To “untie” a human knot.

Directions: The students should form a circle. At the teacher's direction, each student should reach their left hand into the circle's center, and grab hands with someone who is not standing directly next to them. Then, the students should repeat this process with their right hands. Now, it is time to start the untangling process! The teacher should monitor the group's progress, and offer assistance when appropriate. If there is a really serious “tangle,” the students can decide to break it, but they can only do this a limited number of times. At the end of the exercise, all the students' hands should be linked in a large circle. This exercise allows children to get to know each other, as well as figure out how to cooperate and how to arrive at consensus-based decisions, all in the midst of a fun and challenging group exercise!

Part II - Assisting Teammates

Step One: Ask the class if it knows what “assist” means. The children may say assist means “to help someone or something.” Explain to the children that when playing team sports, assists are an important concept. If a teammate assists another teammate, s/he passes the ball/puck to her/his teammate and the team scores. Both the teammate who assisted and the teammate who scored are equally important.

Go over a few examples of assists that happen in real life - for instance, if someone's parents and caregivers helped them with their homework or if one student helped another carry a heavy backpack to school.

Step Two: Ask the children to take notice of all the examples they observe during the day when one person assists another. These assists can be things that happen to them or things that they assist other people in. They can even involve people other than the child. The important part is to recognize assists going on all around us, whether we or other people perform them.

Step Three: Distribute one blank assist award to each of the children. Allow them to decorate the awards. Encourage them to give their award to a classmate when they observe an “assist.” Every day, take note when you see a student make an “assist” in the classroom. Reward these examples of students helping one another with the attached “assist awards” on an ongoing basis throughout the year.

ASSIST AWARD

Thank you to

For assisting

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