

So, You Wanna Be A Playa?

A guide to cooperative games for social change

**By Adam Fletcher
with Kari Kunst**

The Freechild Project
Resources for Social Change By and With Young People
PO Box 6185
Olympia, Washington 98507-6185
(360)259-0218
www.freechild.org

© 2003 The Freechild Project, PO Box 6185, Olympia, WA 98507, (360)259-0218, www.freechild.org. The Freechild Project holds copyright on the title and contents of this publication, unless otherwise stated, and hereby grants permission for not-for-profit educational use, and explicitly denies commercial use. Please contact us for more information.

Special thanks to Robb Wilcox, Nasue Nishida, Jimmy Livengood, and Beth Kelly for their thoughtful reviews and suggestions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
FACILITATOR’S NOTES.....	5
Follow the Facilitator	5
Creating Guidelines & Goals	5
Reflect, Reflect, Reflect.....	6
To Remember.....	6
ICEBREAKERS.....	7
Toss-A-Name Game	7
I’m Seeking Common Ground.....	7
The Name Game.....	8
Find Your Type	8
The Candle.....	9
People To People.....	9
Human Knot.....	9
The Clock.....	10
Black Knight, White Knight.....	10
Impulse	10
Touch The Can (Because You Can-Can-Can!).....	10
The Lava Pit	11
TRUSTBUILDERS.....	12
Line Up Game.....	12
Skin the Snake	12
Trust Circle	12
Blinded Partner Walk	13
Cookie Machine.....	13
Caterpillar.....	13
The Lap Sit.....	14
FUNNERS.....	15
Sardines	15
Please, Please Smile	15
Human Scissors/Paper/Rock.....	15
Crows and Cranes	16
Blob Tag	16
Everybody's It	16
CLOSERS	17
Rainmaker	17
Community Web	17
Pick a Metaphor.....	18
Like Leafs on a Tree	18
RESOURCES.....	19
BACKGROUND ON THE FREECHILD PROJECT.....	20

INTRODUCTION

"WHY PLAY GAMES WHEN THERE'S WORK TO DO?"

Adapted from the original article in the Freechild Newsletter by A Fletcher.

"There are at least two kinds of games. One would be called finite, the other infinite. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, and an infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing to play. The rules of a finite game may not change; the rules of an infinite game must... The finite game player aims to win eternal life; the infinite player aims for eternal birth."

*- James P. Carse, as quoted by Dale LeFevre**

There's so much to do! Our communities are falling apart, young people, old people, brown people, black people, poor people, and lots of other people aren't getting the respect or power they deserve. Why play games when there's so much work to do? There's a lot of reasons to look at, but first let's define what we're talking about.

What Are Cooperative Games?

Cooperative games emphasize participation, challenge and fun rather than defeating someone. Cooperative games are fun, cooperative, challenging games in which the group is confronted with a specific problem to solve. Initiative games can be used for several reasons. The games can be used to demonstrate and teach leadership skills to people, which helps to promote the growth of trust and problem-solving skills in groups. Games demonstrate a process of thinking about experiences that helps people learn and practice responsibility. Cooperative games are not new. Some of the classic games we participated in as children are classic because of the play emphasis. There may be competition involved, but the outcome of the competition is not sitting out or losing. Instead, it may involve switching teams so that everyone ends up on the winning team. Some people avoid calling them "games," choosing "activity," "challenge," or "problem" instead. Whatever a group chooses to call them, these games can boost our efforts to create powerful, lasting community change.

Why Play Games?

When a group of people are preparing to participate in social change, there needs to be some breaking down of inhibitions before they become group participants. "There is no 'I' in T-E-A-M" and all that. Before a group can build effective solutions to the problems facing their communities, they need to trust each other and communicate. Cooperative games also help set the tone of an action. Social change work is often hard-driven and energy-

consuming. Many groups find that cooperative games offer a brisk, friendly way to couple passionate task-oriented goals with driven, group-minded teambuilding. In other words, fun and games help propel social change. Another purpose of games is to get people to think together, as a team, so that everyone in the group has input and shares ideas. When we have input we have ownership, and when more people have ownership there is more success.

Aren't Games Distracting?

When used properly, games can actually accentuate the purpose of your day's work or your group's purpose. Through a technique called "framing," games become relevant and powerful tools to break down barriers, build up focus, and make your group's process more effective and inclusive of all involved. In all settings games should be used to build a sense of purpose, passion, and opportunity. Without those pieces as goals, games become pacifiers for the grown, as their potential to stave off the appetite of a group that hungers for power is immense. In classrooms where teachers use games as "fillers" the students mope lazily back to their desks, as they know the grueling pain of continuity is about to continue. In classrooms where teachers use the games in context of the lessons, students aim to learn with eagerness and a sense of purpose.

What Games Should We Play?

Many people use games as an introduction or a closing to their activities. It's a good idea to add them throughout your day, between or as a part of a larger event. Games are a great way to break up the monotony of a long day's learning, or a hard day's work. They are also a great way to keep small children busy, and big children happy. You may want to play a game to reinforce teamwork after a sucky day (because they happen) or play a game to relieve some group stress or build the scenario to work through a problem. Games are actually *tools* that a skilled facilitator has at their fingertips in a time of need.

Great! How do we get started?

The following booklet is full of easy-to-use games. Play them safe, play them purposefully, play fun and play hard! So then, PLAY ON PLAYAS! And print out this guide double-sided or on re-used paper, please... It's our world, and we CAN change it!

In service & solidarity,
Kari Kunst and Adam Fletcher
Olympia, Washington
March 2003

FACILITATOR'S NOTES

This guide can assist you in facilitating the activities you group needs and to share them with other people. This isn't an expert's guide that is set in stone; each activity should be altered to meet your group's needs and situation. When you use these games for social change work, the role of the facilitator is very important and must be intentional. Read on...

Follow the Facilitator

Presenting games as important and meaningful is challenging for the most experienced facilitators. A facilitator's job has three parts: lead the activities, guide the reflection, and be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm is contagious! Keep debriefing simple and straightforward. Also, share personal experiences and remember that as a young person, a student, a community member or an adult ally, you have a wealth of knowledge and experience to draw from. Often, the mood of the instructor will set the tone for the entire group. So above all be positive and have fun with the activity, with the session, and with the players.

Creating Guidelines & Goals

Have participants create ground rules or guidelines before you begin the games. Brainstorm potential rules and write them down – but avoid too many rules. There are three essential guidelines:

- Safety first. Never compromise the safety of yourself or others.
- Challenge by choice. If someone wants to sit out, that's cool.
- HAVE FUN!

Every group should have some specific goals that all players agree on. Some goals have included: Break down the barriers that may exist between students such as race, sex, background, and social status; Build a sense of teamwork and purpose; Show that everyone has different strengths and abilities to offer the group and that no one is better than anyone else.

Framing & Sequencing

The purpose of the games is often set during the introduction, or *framing*, of the activity. The activity may be introduced as a story, creating a magical place where dangerous things can happen without teamwork. For a more mature group, games can be introduced as metaphors, alerting the participants to look for deeper meaning. Another important consideration is the order in which you play games, or *sequencing*. If a group has never played together, it might be important to do icebreakers and to "soften" the personal space bubble. If they are more comfortable with each other, try "bursting" the bubble, and get deep in your activities. Try to put complex activities after less challenging ones, to build a sense of accomplishment.

Reflect, Reflect, Reflect

One way to highlight the role of games in social change is in the reflection after the activity. An easy way to see the relevance of reflection is to picture games as a circle: you start with an explanation of the activity, framing its purpose and goals to the group. The activity progresses, with the facilitator taking a more hands-on or less guiding approach as needed. Finally, the group reflection helps participants see how they met the goal, and to envision the broader social change implications. Then the group has come full-circle. Be as concrete or as "spacey" as you want – during the activities its important to "lose ourselves" in what we're doing, and to have a lot of fun. But remember to bring it all back to reality with the reflection. Reflecting on the activities is vital to bring the group back to the reason why they're playing games. The following types of questions are useful in reflecting:

- Open-ended questions – prevents yes and no answers. "What was the purpose of the game?" "What did you learn about yourself?"
- Feeling questions – requires participants to reflect on how they feel about what they did. "How did it feel when you started to pull it together?"
- Judgment questions – asks participants to make decisions about things. "what was the best part?" "Was it a good idea?"
- Guiding questions – steers the participants toward the purpose of the activity and keep the discussion focused. "What got you all going in the right direction?"
- Closing questions – helps participants draw conclusions and end the discussion. "What did you learn?" "What would you do differently?"

Connecting With Purpose

At best these activities can serve as bridges between social change work, learning, and community building, reinforcing the need for communication, co-learning, and collective decision-making. At worst, they can be tools of oppression and alienation, serving to support vertical education practices and isolate people from each other. In the words of educator Paulo Freire, "A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor without that trust."

To Remember

Let the games take their own life, *and they will!* If it feels like a group just wants to play all day, just do that! If they want to get deep, do that. Let the group tell you where they want to go, *and they will!* When the people lead, the facilitator should follow.

ICEBREAKERS

People have got to get to know each other in social change work. Sometimes we assume that just because we share a common interest we'll get to know each other, and that's just not true! Projects will go on for months before people really get comfortable with each other. These games are great for introductions and getting to know people in new environments, or to remind us who we're working with in established communities.

Toss-A-Name Game

Props: Balls and other soft throwing items (rubber chickens, hacky-sacks)

Purpose: Icebreaker, Teamwork

Procedure: With the group standing in a circle, have participants go around saying their names. Then show them a ball, and explain the activity this way: "First I will say my name, like 'I am Adam.' Then I will say, 'and this is Nadem.' Then I will throw the ball to Nadem. Nadem will say, 'That is Adam, I am Nadem, and this is Tannisha.' And so on, until all the names in the circle are strung onto the list." The game goes until everyone has been called, without anyone being repeated. If someone's name is forgot, have the group spot them. Variations include going around multiple times, attempting to beat the last speed (kept with a stopwatch). Another version is to have multiple balls flying at the same time, spaced apart by 2 or 3 people.

I'm Seeking Common Ground

Props: Enough chairs for all participants, minus one.

Purpose: Icebreaker

Procedure: Group sits in a circle of chairs with one person standing in the middle (no empty chairs). The person in the middle says "I seek common ground with... people who were born east of the Mississippi!" Anyone who was, including the person asking the question, must get up and run across the circle to find a new seat. You can't take the seat of the person next to you! There will be one person left in the middle who must ask the next question. Possibilities include: people who... wear glasses! Likes vanilla ice cream better than chocolate! You can also guide the questions a little deeper... "I seek common ground with people who've... worked with the homeless." The facilitator may choose to ask the first few questions to get the game going and set the tone.

The Name Game

Props: None

Purpose: Start communications and team building

Procedure: Get the group in a circle. Tell everyone to get an adjective starting with the first letter of their own first name and add it to the front of their first name [Adventurous Adam]. Then, introduce yourself, and tell the person next to you to introduce you then himself/herself. Each person farther down the circle will then introduce everybody in front of them then finally, himself/herself.

Find Your Type

Props: Sets of 3x5 cards with matching animals, enough for each person to have a card

Purpose: Icebreaker

Procedure: Get the group in a circle. Tell everyone they may not speak. Give each person a card with an animal on it. Tell them to find their mates by doing something that animal would do. Start them all at the same time.

Line Up By...

Props: Blindfolds

Purpose: Icebreaker

Procedure: There are many variations on the "Line Up By...." challenges. The basic idea is to have the group line up in a straight line according to some specific criteria and with some type of restriction on their actions. Here are some ideas that can be altered to meet your group's needs. Give specific guidelines before beginning.

LINE UP BY HEIGHT - GIVE EVERYONE BLINDFOLDS. MAKE SURE THEY AGREE TO SPECIFIC SAFETY RULES SUCH AS NO PUSHING, MOVING SLOWLY, STOPPING WHEN THE INSTRUCTOR SAYS STOP, ETC. ONCE THE STUDENTS ARE BLINDFOLDED TELL THEM THEY MUST LINE UP ACCORDING TO HEIGHT, WITH THE SHORTEST PERSON IN THE FRONT, THE TALLEST IN THE BACK.

Line up by birthday - Without talking or making any vocal sounds the students must line up according to birthday, January 1 at the front and December 31 at the back.

INITIATIVES

These activities challenge players to work together as a team, think critically, and get active in what's going on. In a society where there is so much competition and separation, this games can draw people into engaging conversations and interactions. In facilitating the reflection players can draw out the analogies with social change work.

The Candle

Props: None

Purpose: Physical activity

Procedure: Each participant balances on one foot, tucking the other up against the other thigh. Put palms together in front of the chest and, while keeping palms together, raise hands over the head. Close eyes and hands pass eye level. Maintain balance for ten to fifteen seconds. Switch legs and repeat.

People To People

Props: None

Purpose: Teamwork, Flexing Personal Space Bubbles

Procedure: Form pairs facing each other. A single player at the end of the line is designated the "caller." As the caller yells "toe to toe," "knee to knee," "elbow to foot," etc., the pairs perform the described connection. On the call "people to people" the players switch partners. The player without a new partner becomes the new caller. You can't have the same partner twice, unless it's a small group. And try to think of a new combination every time!

Human Knot

Props: None

Purpose: Teambuilding, bending the personal space bubble, Communication

Procedure: Get the group in a tight circle. Have the members of the group reach in with their tight hands and grasp one of the right hands available. Repeat with left hands. Then ask them to unravel the knot. People may not let go. The circle of hands is to remain unbroken. However, it may be necessary to change grips due to the angle of arms and bodies. One variation is for the group to stay silent during the entire activity. *Note: This activity may serve as a metaphor for community activism, illustrating an opportunity for broad perspectives to work together towards a common goal.*

The Clock

Props: None

Purpose: Planning, Communicating, and Teamwork

Procedure: Define a large circle by having the group join hands. Mark one spot inside the circle as "12 O'clock" and another as "6 O'clock." Have the group rotate in one direction, returning to the start position, in as little time as possible. After discussing strategies, the group can try to improve its previous record.

Black Knight, White Knight

Props: None

Purpose: Team building and Communication

Procedure: Define a playing field appropriate for the size group. Tell everyone they are a knight. Appoint one person to be "The Black Knight." Tell the knights that they can move like a knight in chess (define if necessary). Allow the white knights to move the black. If the black knight tags a white knight, the white knight becomes a black knight. Note: At the end of the game everyone will be a black knight.

Impulse

Props: None

Purpose: Touching, Communication and Team building

Procedure: Have the group form a circle. Have the group hold hands around the circle. Ask them to send a pulse signal through the group. Time it. Challenge the group to do it faster. Note: If you allow them several opportunities to try this, make sure you have a timer that will display hundredths of a second.

Touch The Can (Because You Can-Can-Can!)

Props: A tin can

Purpose: Teamwork, communication, planning and touching

Procedure: Get the group around the can. Tell the group they all must be touching the can at once, with their... (finger, toe, knee, elbow, shoulder...). Variations: Depending on the size of the group, use larger AND smaller items, and gradually get the group to come closer and closer together physically. Facilitator may have the group transport the object to a different area with a bizarre matching of body parts (imagine a group of 10 people carrying a plastic throwing disc across the room on their knees).

The Lava Pit

Props: 20 paper plates, scotch tape.

Purpose: Teambuilding, Communication

Procedure: Make up a story that the group is being chased and they need to get across a field of hot lava. Give each group paper plates explaining that when they step on these plates they will not sink into the lava. (Give each team about 1/3 the number of plates as people.) The group must figure out how to get the entire group from point A to point B (both marked by scotch tape on the floor), from one side of the Hot Lava Pit to the other. Only one person can be on a plate at a time, and the plates may be picked up and moved. The key to the game is that only part of the team will be able to cross the field at a time and one person will need to work their way back across the field to help the rest of the team across. A time limit can also be placed on this game.

Bloop

Props: Balloons (1 per group of 5)

Purpose: Teambuilding, Cooperation

Procedure: Break out large group into small groups of 4-6, and give each a balloon to inflate. In small group, join hands to and form circle. The objective is to keep the balloon off the floor by batting it, without letting go of hands. If the balloon touches the floor, the group loses its hands, meaning they can't let their hands touch the balloon; as balloon keeps hitting the floor, they lose elbows, shoulders, heads, thighs. Facilitator may have groups "carry" balloon across an area, or just have them work in place for [X] amount of time.

Pass The Toxic Waste Can

Props: A soda can

Purpose: Teambuilding, Cooperation

Procedure: The group must form a circle, with each person spread about a foot apart. Introduce "The Toxic Waste Can" The challenge is for the group to pass the can around the circle without using their hands or dropping the can. The group will be more excited and engaged if there is imaginary "toxic" content in the can that will spill out if it is dropped.

TRUSTBUILDERS

Many of our social institutions actively teach many people to not to trust each other – this person is too dangerous, those people are too cunning. These activities teach togetherness and interactivity, emphasizing success through cooperation. They are the pinnacle of cooperative games, and must be facilitated carefully and considerately, with ample thought and preparation for the reflections.

Line Up Game

Props: Blindfolds

Purpose: Touching and Trust

Procedure: Give everyone a blindfold and ask them to put them on. Next, tell the group that everyone is mute. Ask them to line up by age from youngest to oldest. Add that if two or more people are the same age they must be in ascending birthdays. Note: You can line up by mothers maiden name, birth month, birth year, first letter of middle name, height, weight...

Skin the Snake

Props: None

Purpose: Bursting Personal Space Bubbles, Communication, Trust, Team Building

Procedure: Have the group line up in a single file line facing forward. Tell the group to put their right hands between their legs. Next, tell them to take their left hands and grasp the right hand in front of them. Tell them that they have formed a snake and they must skin it without letting go of any hands. Tell them if they let go, they start over. Once the snake is skinned, tell them that they need to put the skin back on. Note: There may be large people who need some assistance getting up. Let the group work it out before you, as a facilitator, get involved.

Trust Circle

Props: None

Purpose: Trust and Team Building

Procedure: Have the group form a circle. Have each person stand in a spotting stance. Ask for one person to get in the middle and be a faller. Be sure to close in the circle once a faller has entered into the center. Use the spotting commands. Have the faller fall all directions so all spotters are utilized. Allow everyone an opportunity to be a faller.

Blinded Partner Walk

Props: Blindfolds (handkerchiefs or other non-see through fabric) for half of the group.

Purpose: Trust, Communication, Teamwork

Procedure: This can be done many different ways. Either the whole group can be blindfolded with a seeing leader or half the group or only a few can be blindfolded. The group must rely on each other to make it through the obstacle course or along the walk. Other situations can also be added. Members of the groups can be without the use of legs, arms, or speech.

Cookie Machine

Props: None

Purpose: Trust, Teamwork, Communication

Procedure: Have the group form two lines facing each other. Have the participants stand shoulder to shoulder in each line with their arms bent at the elbow and their palms up. The arms from each of the two lines should overlap. Place one person of the front of the cookie machine and have the group pass them back. Half way through the machine the cookie should be flipped.

Caterpillar

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, cooperation, bursting the personal space bubble

Procedure: The players lie on their stomachs, side to side, with their arms straight out in front. The person on the end begins to roll over the top of the row of bodies until he or she gets to the end. This can be done as a race, with two teams competing to get to a determined point.

Duo-Sit/Group Sit

Props: None

Purpose: Teambuilding, cooperation

Procedure: For this challenge participants will work in pairs. Each group must stand back to back and link arms. From this position, the pair will attempt to sit down and stand back up without unlocking arms. When a pair succeeds, they should join with another pair and attempt the challenge with four people. Eventually, the group should work towards being able to complete the challenge with the entire group.

Yurt Circle

Props: None

Purpose: Trust, teamwork, communication

Procedure: Choose a clear, open area for this activity, as participants are likely to fall forward and backwards. Participants should stand in a circle, facing inward and holding hands. Then, step backwards until everyone is stretched out but still able to have a firm grip on the two people whose hands they are holding. Everyone needs to keep their feet planted and lean back as far as they can. They must use the group to maintain their balance. Once they have done this, number off the group into 1s and 2s, alternating around the circle. Then, have the 1s lean in and the 2s lean out at the same time. Each person should be able to lean in or out while being held up by their neighbors.

The Lap Sit

Props: None

Purpose: Teamwork, Communication, Bursting the personal space bubble

Procedure: Have everyone stand in one circle, arranging themselves so that someone about the same size as them is on either side of them. Everyone turns to the right. Step in closer to the center and put your hands on the waist of the person in front of you. "Concentrate on the person in front of you sitting comfortably on your knees, and trust that the person behind you will guide you, too." First do a trial run. On the count of three the group is going to bend down, touch bottoms to the knees and come right back up to make sure they are all standing closely enough together. Ready? 1, 2, 3... Then ask them to readjust their positions if necessary. "Now we are going to sit down and then clap our hands... Again..." This activity usually amazes people by what they can do in solidarity.

FUNNERS

It's important to keep social change work vital and moving. These activities can do the same thing in a day of games. The Freechild Project calls these games "Funnners" because sometimes we find ourselves asking "Shouldn't it be funner than this?" For more fun, more play, and more laughs, try any of these out.

Sardines

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, teamwork

Procedure: This game can be played anywhere, indoors or out. The goal is similar to "Hide and Seek," except that "it" hides first. Everyone else then tries to find "it." When someone finds "it," they hide with "it" in the same spot. The game ends when everyone find the hiding spot of "it."

Please, Please Smile

Props: None

Purpose: Fun

Procedure: Everyone is seated in a circle with a volunteer standing in the middle. The volunteer leans down to the person of his or her choice, looks at them deep in the eye, and says "Honey, if you love me, would you please, please smile?" The recipient of this proposal simply replies "Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile." That easy - except that the recipient CAN NOT SMILE, smirk, turn up the corners of their mouth, or snicker. And the volunteer in the middle can't touch the recipient in any way- but can do anything else. The volunteer continues until someone smiles, and then trades places with the person who finally smiles.

Human Scissors/Paper/Rock

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, energy-building

Procedure: This is the human-size version of scissors/paper/rock. The end zones need to be clearly defined. To begin, each team huddles and decides on which play to run- either rock, paper or scissors. Then the two teams meet in the playing area. If your team's symbol wins, you chase the other team back into its end zone, trying to tag the team members before they get there. If your team's symbol loses, you must dash back to your own end zone before you're caught. Those people who get caught change to the other team. The game ends when everyone is on the same team.

Crows and Cranes

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, physical activity

Procedure: Define a playing area similar to a volleyball court. Divide the group into two teams, "crows" and "cranes," lining them up to face each other across the center line. When crows are called by the leader, they chase the cranes to the rear boundary area, and vice versa. When tagged, players must stand still (or join the other team)

Blob Tag

Props: None

Purpose: Fun, teamwork

Procedure: In this variation of "tag," the people who are caught join hands with the "it" person to form a blob. The more people are caught, the bigger the blob becomes. It's a good idea to limit the playing area so the blob doesn't have to chase people through the neighborhood.

Everybody's It

Props: None

Purpose: Fun

Procedure: Everybody is it. All participants can tag anyone. If you are tagged you must freeze in place. Anyone can free a tagged person by 'high-fiving' them. It is the participant's choice together tag people, free people, or try a combination of both.

Face-Off

Props: None

Purpose: Fun

Procedure: Group stands in a circle so everyone can see each other. Start by doing face stretches, creating an air of goofiness and safe space for play. The facilitator starts by making a strange, distorted, crazy face. When everybody sees it, the facilitator turns to their left. The second person carefully copies the expression, and then both people turn to the middle. The circle claps or cheers to indicate how successful the copy, or "Face-Off," is. Then, the second person turns to their left and shares a new crazy expression with the person next to them! Go all the way around the circle.

CLOSERS

Closure is important in social change games for two reasons: the first is that it can encourage players to see the bridge between fun and social change; the second is that it can support emphasis the solidarity among the players – and social change agents – engaged in work. These activities are great ways to end a long day's work or play. They focus on closure and symbolism, and offer participants a chance to reflect on their social change work.

Rainmaker

Props: None

Purpose: Nonverbal communication, Closing activity

Procedure: Have the entire group sit in chairs, or on the floor, with their hands free from stuff and the feet firmly planted on the floor. Say something to the effect of "Sometimes we might feel like we want to achieve the impossible, and that our collective work will never finish. Right now we have a chance to make a change; we're gonna make a rainstorm." Instruct the group to do the action you do, but only when you look at them to do it, and to keep doing that action until another comes. When its time, slowly look around the entire circle. The group should continue doing the movement until you look at them with a new one.

1. Start by going "Shhhh..." like a windy day.
2. Then rub your palms together, and slowly show that to the entire group. Do each motion for as long as it takes to get around the group.
3. Then snap your fingers sporadically.
4. Then clap your hands way out-of-rhythm.
5. Then slap the tops of your legs.
6. Then stomp your feet.
7. And then do everything in reverse!

I like to end with the statement "Now you know how to make a rainstorm. Let's go and make positive change in the world!" and send the group off.

Community Web

Props: A ball of string

Purpose: Reflection, closing activity

Procedure: Participants form a circle, with the facilitator in the circle holding a ball of string. Start by tossing the ball to a participant, holding onto the end of the string as you throw it. State something you appreciate about that person participating in your shared work. The appreciation can be about something that recently happened or about the other person in general. The ball then travels across the circle to each player with everyone holding onto

a piece of the string once the ball is tossed. Once everyone is holding onto the string and it is criss-crossed throughout the circle the facilitator, uses scissors to cut through the string, saying "As we cut the ties to the games we've played (or activity we've finished), we leave each person a piece of string in their hand to remind them of the renewed community and new connections they have made."

Pick a Metaphor

Props: Small toys, pictures, postcards, knick knacks (toys from a dollar store and buy various items like play money, magnetic letters, figurines of different backgrounds)

Purpose: Reflection, closing activity

Procedure: One of my favorite closing exercises is to set up the middle of the room with small stuff. Have everyone pick three items they think represent their experience with the group from the pile. Everybody then shares with the group about one or all of the items they picked. All participants then get to choose one object to keep, to remind them of what they said.

Like Leafs on a Tree

Props: One sheet of flipchart paper, markers, and construction paper

Purpose: Reflection, closing activity

Procedure: Draw a picture of a tree on a flip chart including roots, trunk, branches, leaves and fruit – or however you want. Give each participant a leaf cut from construction paper. Ask them to write on the leaf something they are taking with them from the training. Then have the group stand in a circle. Then, each person shares what their leaf says and attaches it with tape to the tree. People can put their leaf wherever they want on the picture of the tree depending on what they take with them, but I never state this in advance. The trainers go last and process the activity by noting the symbolism of what it means to be the roots, the trunk, the leaves and the fruit, or not on the tree at all.

RESOURCES

For more information on facilitation, reflection, and cooperative games check out these great books.

Karl Rohnke, *Silver Bullets: A Guide to Initiative Problems, Adventure Games, Stunts and Trust Activities*, Kendall/Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 1984.

Karl Rohnke, *Cowstails and Cobras II: A Guide to Games, Initiatives, Ropes Courses, & Adventure Curriculum.*, Kendall/Hunt Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 1989.

Dale LeFevre, *New Games for the Whole Family*. Perigree Books, New York, NY, 1988.

Andrew Fluegelman, editor, *More New Games!*, Doubleday, New York, 1981

Edward Scannell and John Newstrom, *Games Trainers Play: Experiential Learning Exercises*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1980.

Edward Scannell and John Newstrom, *More Games Trainers Play: Experiential Learning Exercises*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1983.

Edward Scannell and John Newstrom, *Still More Games Trainers Play: Experiential Learning Exercises*, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1991.

For more activities and other resources visit The Freechild Project's FireStarter Youth Power Curriculum at www.freechild.org/Firestarter/

BACKGROUND ON THE FREECHILD PROJECT

Mission Statement

The Freechild Project is a global resource organization devoted to promoting equitable, powerful, and sustainable relationships between young people and adults through action, learning, and empowerment.

What We Do

- Advocate the most progressive youth-oriented ideas in practice, in theory, and being talked about today through real time and virtual forums.
- Conduct skill-sharing with young people and adults to support the abilities they have to conduct powerful personal, societal, and systemic social change.
- Provide student-centered, youth-inclusive program consultation community groups, non-profits, schools, government agencies, and others.

The Freechild Project was founded in April 2000 as a grassroots, youth-driven training ground, think tank, resource agency, and advocacy group that promoted a larger role with young people in their schools and communities. In 2002 we registered as a small business in Olympia, Washington, allowing us to reach out to our local community as a supporter as well as a provider of much-needed community services.

Our popular website, www.freechild.org is visited by 15,000 people weekly. By working with a local group of friends and youth advocates and a highly active international Advisory Panel, www.freechild.org has filled a gaping hole in the online youth service community through its comprehensive directory of social change. We've also supported 1000s of youth organizations with our original materials located in the Freechild Library.

Longtime youth worker, teacher, trainer and writer, The Freechild Project's founder and director Adam Fletcher Sasse has forged powerful relationships through which The Freechild Project grows daily. Adam's workshops, speeches, and publications are renown around the world as effective, lasting tools to promote social change by and with young people and meaningful student involvement.

© 2003 The Freechild Project, PO Box 6185 Olympia, Washington, USA
98507-6185 (360)259-0218 info@freechild.org