**TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

**Activity Mindset:**

The Respite Ministry is not about the activities themselves but the fellowship while doing the activity! The give-and-take of building relationships with other people is the most important part of the day. Volunteers participate in every activity so there is no sense of us versus them. I have one volunteer say, "I feel like I get to come to camp when I come to respite!" Take that image and remember all the fun new relationships you built in camp, and apply it to Respite.

Whiteboard activities set the tone for the day. It is a warm-up of the mind and spirit and builds camaraderie and humor that will last throughout the day.

Whiteboard exercises can be as simple as appropriate trivia questions from trivia books or often times more fun are "Name 20 Things Related to…”

**For example:** 20 things you think of when you hear the word high school, camp, your job, your mother, the safety procedures you go through when a storm is coming, things that make up a good country song, 20 items found in the frozen section at the grocery store, 20 things found in a Sunday morning church service, 20 things associated with the roller coaster park, 20 animals found in the sea, you get the picture!

 The key to a dynamic group discussion is number one, letting the participants answer! This sounds funny but volunteers get so involved they take all the easy answers right away! You must let the participants answer first. Then as you see that the group gets stuck, volunteers can slowly enter in the conversation with hints such as, "Oh my goodness, I have forgotten, what is that big blue mammal with the bottle nose that is so friendly? It loves to jump out of the water, wasn't there one on TV named Flipper?"

You are giving a hint but also letting them help you remember. This builds confidence in our participants that they have helped someone else. We are constantly trying to find ways to set them up for success and for them to be able to help us. It is not tricking them; it is helping them engage in group activity and being successful.

Another group favorite is to put three names in three columns at the top of the whiteboard. You ask with whom they would like to do to dinner?

We write their names under the chosen person. We ask volunteers and participants for their answers.

Some examples of dinner guest: Babe Ruth, Carol Burnett, or mother Theresa. The discussion grows deeper if you choose three equally important people yet from completely separate walks of life.

**Example:** "Moses, Mozart or Bob Hope."

"George Washington, Margaret Thatcher, or Ghandi?"

There are tons of trivia books that will give topics for whiteboard exercise, but I urge you to put some thought behind different exercises for meaningful discussion.

**ACTIVITY LIST:**

1. **Coke Can Derby** - put 4, 6 foot white tables in rectangle, cover with green felt, put rails up on sides- place red cups or cans at one end and have participant throw balls down table to knock them off.
2. **Nerf Gun Shooting-** Keep 4 tables in rectangle with green felt and place white board at one end flush to tables. Place red cups or coke cans in pyramid and have one shooter at a time or 2 shooters if there is a large crowd. Helps if you cover white board with blue felt to make it more visual.
3. **Bean Bag Toss-** You can use the corn hole boards or tape down a yellow, red and green felt circles…in a row so they can aim for the smallest circle. You can make points for each circle. Circles help them to be more successful than corn hole.
4. **Cards-** Slap Jack. Deal one whole deck out to 3-4 players. They can lay down on table so they can see what they have. Then dealer has another deck where the dealer turns one card over at a time and shows the group. Whomever has the card throws to a pile in the middle, whoever goes out first, wins. They have to slap the table and scream “slap jack” when over.
5. **Wet- T-Shirt Contest**- Get a bucket of water, 5 old t-shirts and place laminated points on the ground in an arc. Tape them down or you can use different big blue buckets for targets. Volunteers will wring the shirts out of water and hand to participant to toss on to the points. Whomever gets them most, wins. Keep score on board. Each person throws 5 shirts like shot-put or toss underhand.
6. **Bowling**- Order a life-size, life like, bowling set from any of the senior activity catalogs. We use a 2 pound rubber ball that is very realistic. The key to making this successful is having four 2 x 2's for rails to make the lane. So many participants would not be successful in getting the ball to the pins if we did not have substantial rails!

 We also set a sturdy chair at the top of the lane for them to balance on as they are holding the ball. Be very careful that they do not step on the rails and that they have good balance. We let them both know until they get a strike. Often times we move the rail with our feet to angle inward toward the pen so they are always successful. Use your judgment.

1. **BINGO**- if you have new topic I can type in the software, I will be more than glad to do it. I bet if you go to [www.bingocardcreator.com](http://www.bingocardcreator.com) my sign in is dapjohnston@yahoo.com and password is kathleen7. You can develop your own call list and search the ones they have that are interesting.
2. **Volleyball**- Purchase a volleyball net from Wal-Mart.
* 12 inch lay text balloons work best.
* Pool noodles are needed and best work if cut in half.
* Hang between two whiteboards or use commander hooks. For best results divide players into teams with volunteers in mixed in the group.
* Often it is best to place men on the back row. Have a upbeat music playing in the background. Warm up with one balloon for five minutes.
* Pass out noodles as rackets after warm-up time. You may add another balloon for a total of two balloons going at the same time. If you do more than this it is hard for people to see in the rhythm is too fast-paced. This is a good activity to do after lunch when people tend to be lethargic. This is the only activity we do every single day because it is good focus, aerobics, and participation effort.
1. **Exercise-** Ask community volunteers to come in and lead or develop your own program. It needs to last 20 minutes or more.
2. **Wheel of Fortune**- This is a great group exercise that can involve every person.

You need 3 yards of blue felt and two commander hooks. Place holes in top corners to hang as the Wheel of Fortune Board

Plastic 8 x 11 sleeves you can buy at Office Depot, accordion file in alphabetical order, and letters printed from your computer. Start off with five letters of each consonant in the alphabet and 10 of each vowel. Store them in alphabetical order in the accordion file.

1. **Ping pong bounce**- Place 4-5 participants and volunteers at a table. You can bounce the ping pong balls in the cups that are taped together in a circle in the last
2. **Umbrella Tennis Balls**- Place three or one, doesn’t matter, opened umbrellas at about 15 feet away from group. Give them a bucket of tennis ball to try to bounce across the floor to land inside the umbrellas. It is tricky and they really seem to like it…just make up a simple way to keep score.
3. **Flower Arranging-** Purchase silk flowers and store in a large bin. Have participants arrange flowers and give them a purpose. They can be place around the church or on lunch tables. This is a good activity for later stage participants because can see the colors well and go at their own pace.
4. **Hockey**- Buy a net from Wal-Mart. Use either tennis balls or small kick balls. Use chair for participants to balance while standing up waiting to hit. Place net half way across the room and give each participant 3-5 tries.
5. **Puzzles-** Only use 12-36 piece puzzles.
6. **Singing-** Patriotic, show tunes and camp songs are the best! Try to end the day on music.