

Life Skill and Team Building Games

Washington State University Pierce County Extension
4-H Youth Development Program

<http://county.wsu.edu/pierce/youth>

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Circle Up:

Purpose: Group management, community building, safety
Life Skill: _____
Materials: None
Setting: Open space

Count until the group is circled up, shoulder to shoulder, and quiet. Variation - remember the names of the people on each person's right and left. Have them move around, the leader calls out "Circle up" and they form a circle with the same people on the left and right. Try it a few times while counting and see how quickly they can do it.

What: What happened with _____?
So What: So What did you learn about _____?
Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Memory Circle:

Purpose: Community building, safety, _____
Life Skill: _____
Materials: None
Setting: Open space

Provide a soft object, like a stuffed animal, to toss around the group. When you receive the tossed object you say your name and one piece of personal information – such as favorite food, number of siblings, and toss it to another person so he can introduce himself. Then you will toss it to someone by calling his/her name and making eye contact. The person who receives the object continues by calling someone else's name and throwing the item to him, and so on. After this has gone on for awhile, start throwing an additional object, then another.

What: What happened with _____?
So What: So What did you learn about _____?
Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Peek-a-Who

Purpose: Community building
Life Skill: _____
Materials: Tarp or blanket
Setting: Open space

The team describes to one person the identity of another person so they can name the person being described.

Instructions: Divide the group in half. Two people will hold a tarp or blanket up between the two teams. Both teams squat down and choose a person to be placed with his/her back to the tarp facing the rest of the team (we'll call this person a "who"). When ready, the tarp is dropped, and everyone stands up. The team goal will be to describe to their "who" & the "who" on the other team, without saying a name. The first "who" that correctly names the other "who" is the winner. The losing "who" must join the opposite team.

What: What happened with _____?
So What: So What did you learn about _____?
Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Unique Partners

Purpose: Group management, community building

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Anywhere

Get into groups of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, or half of the group.

- Each pair/group creates unique handshake/body shake
- A different pairing is creating a dance
- A third pairing creates its unique high-five
- A fourth pairing utilizes a unique noise or positive phrase

Call out partner groups and have a group mix-up. You can use this at any time to pair off and find the right partner for each category (handshake, dance, high-five, etc.)

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Stop, Fall, Go

Purpose: Group management, listening, safety

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

You stop when I say *Stop*; you walk slowly when I say *Go*; and you fall (safely, you don't have to go to the ground, watch others) when I say *Fall*. Progress the activity to more difficult, if appropriate.

I call out *Stop, Fall, Go*.

I turn it over to the group to call out commands.

I turn it over to the group to stop, fall, and go by watching each other and not using words.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Everybody's it / Freeze

Purpose: Group management, listening, safety

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

When I say *Go*, everybody's *It*. When tagged, you sit down. When I say *Freeze*, everyone freezes (stops moving) and looks at me. Give me your most serious looking face. When I ask the name of the game everyone says *Freeze*, then is unfrozen and begins tagging again. At times, say *Freeze* in a soft, quiet voice. After a few times of play, give a direction after saying *Freeze*, such as hop on one foot, skip, or do the crab walk.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Triangle Tag

Purpose: Supporting each other

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Optional - place an object for group to move around (paper plate, stuffed animal, etc.)

Setting: Open space

Three people hold hands and one person is protected by the other two. The triangle formed goes around a spot while someone on the outside is trying to get to the one being protected. The outside person can't go under or over, only around. After playing, have the members create their own thing to protect, or you give them a person or concept to protect. Example: outside person is "peer pressure", person being protected is "making a decision", people protecting are "good listening" and "think about what might happen because of decision".

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Brain Break

Purpose: Change energy

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Anywhere

When things are dragging, you can have all the participants, as quickly as possible, high-five each other and say “you’re the best” or “we’re the best” three times and move on to another partner and do the same. This tool is to help change energy, celebrate, and create an energy boost. Make sure if it’s used to diffuse an issue, that issue is still addressed.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Pass Me the Chicken

Purpose: Asking for help and giving support

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Rubber chicken or stuffed animal

Setting: Open space

One person is *It* and he/she chases others to tag them to get rid of being *It*. If tagged, the person jumps up and says, “I’m it, I’m it, I’m it”. You can’t be tagged if you have the chicken. However, if you have the chicken, you can’t move your feet. If you want the bird, yell, “Pass me the bird”. If you have the bird you can choose to keep it or pass it to the person asking for it.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Gossip, Name Calling, “Dissing”, Betrayal, Back-Stabbing

Purpose: Group management

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Clothespins

Setting: Open space

Each participant has three clothespins. Your goal is to get your clothespins on the back of someone else while attempting to keep clothespins from getting on you. If you have clothespins on you, take them off and try to pin them on someone else. Establish what is safe to pin on: clothing on arms, back, loose clothing, etc. Can use the dice for reflection questions.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Structures

Purpose: Working together, listening

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Materials to build a structure – straws, toothpicks, tape, post-it notes, if you’re outside – twigs, sticks, leaves, etc.

Setting: Anywhere, might be helpful to have a table to work on

Children agree and build a structure, picture or sculpture using objects provided. You can use straws, toothpicks, post-it notes, etc. First, have the entire group determine one of the following skills on which to work: listing options before making a decision; listening to others; clearly stating your thoughts; talking without interrupting; or fair decision-making. This activity can be done multiple times with other decision choices. The group can lay out objects or build something up: it is up to the group. But, tell them they should have a goal to work towards. Distribute the materials and tell children that they may have more, if needed. Let the groups begin working. Circulate among them to help with any problems. When the groups finish, have them share their creations.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Wizards and Gelflings

Purpose: Working together

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

A creative story of Gelflings (which are a type elf) is told. No description here, so you get to be creative. Either way, the Gelflings want to help each other stay away from wizards and be free. The Wizard(s) tag(s) an elf and he/she is then frozen. The Gelfling sets off a universal elf distress beacon, "Help me, help me, help me..." The Gelfling can only be set free when two free Gelflings join hands in a circle over them, do the dance and say, "Be free little elf, be free." Play until you're out of elves or losing the fun energy. Variation – Gelflings can only free other Gelflings that are wearing the same color shirt as they are. You can have more than one wizard.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Group Poems

Purpose: Team building, listening

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Note cards or small sheets of paper, pens/pencils

Setting: Anywhere with a surface to write on

Ask a question and have people write one to two lines on a note-card. Collect the cards, mix them up, and read as a poem.

Topics:

What does it mean to treat others with respect?

How do you feel when someone listens to you?

How do you feel when you are helped?

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Human-made Machines

Purpose: Working together, listening

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Anywhere

A group of 3-6 people act out an everyday machine and have others guess what it is. You have (X minutes) to choose a machine and plan on how the group will act it out. Today let's work on the skill of listening to everyone's idea before making a decision, coming to an agreement in a respectful way, or another skill that you want. Examples: lawnmower, egg beater, microwave, television, washing machine, etc.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Feelings Cards: Charades

Purpose: Team building, listening

Life Skill: _____

Materials: Feelings cards

Setting: Anywhere

Divide the class into groups of 4-6. Give each group a stack of feelings cards set face down. Take turns choosing a card and acting it out for the group members to guess. If the group is having a hard time guessing, you can show them the card and pick a new one or ask someone in the group for help. Variation: Give them a scene to act out and they can only use a certain emotion. For example, they find a broken bike and one person can only be silly and the other only angry.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Martian/Politician/Tiger/Salmon

Purpose: Community Building

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Anywhere

Teach the motions and sounds or make up your own: *Martian* – fingers on head like antennae and make a “doodle, doodle, do” sound; *Tiger* – hands out like claws and growl; *Politician* – reach out to shake hands and say “hello there”; *Salmon* – arms close to sides and jump from side to side and say “whoosh, whoosh”

The object is to try and do the same thing as others and join up with them. Find another person, count to three and have each do one of the four things. If the two do different things, then nothing happens, and they go on to find someone else to try again. If they do the same thing, they link elbows: they are now a team. The pairs decide to do one motion, find another person or pair, and do their thing. If it is the same, they join up. Small groups start to form. This continues until there are two large groups, with each group deciding what to do and trying to end up as one large group.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Laughing or Screaming Toes

Purpose: Community building

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

Form a circle shoulder to shoulder. Look down and pick someone's toes. When you hear “look up” - look at that person's eyes and stare. If you are both looking at each other, then scream, laugh, or yell a positive statement about the group.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Play Hard, Play Safe, Play Fair, Have Fun

Purpose: Community building, safety

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

Good activity to start at beginning of program. Break up into 4 small groups. Each group is secretly given a part of the phrase. The group generates examples of what it looks like at camp. Groups can do a skit showing one example. Other groups guess which part of the phrase they are demonstrating.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Speed Rabbit:

Purpose: Community building, safety

Life Skill: _____

Materials: None

Setting: Open space

Circle up and explain the gestures you are going to use. Model them. Rabbit ears and feet. Elephant trunk and ears, etc. Person in middle of circle points to another person, says the motion, and counts to 10. If someone doesn't do his part, he switches places with the person in the middle. For example, if you get pointed at and hear “elephant”, you will make a trunk and the people to your left and right will make ears.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Good Communication

What: What were examples of good communication during this game?

So What: So what did we learn about good communication?

Now What: Now, where can we use good communication during the rest of camp?

Accepting Differences

What: What were the good things that happened when we worked with new people during this game?

So What: So what did we learn about the benefits of working with new people?

Now What: Now, how can we include others at camp?

Making Decisions

What: What were examples of good decisions being made during this game?

So What: So what did we learn about making good decisions?

Now What: Now, how can we make good decisions at camp?

_____?
Purpose: _____
Life Skill: _____
Materials: _____
Setting: _____

What: What happened with _____?
So What: So What did you learn about _____?
Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

Categories

Purpose: Team building, listening

Life Skill: _____

Materials: none

Setting: any

The facilitator shouts out categories like favorite food, favorite form of transportation, favorite color, number of brothers and sisters. Players then get into like groups. Go around and have each group share their common category. You can also allow time for groups to share names and details about themselves before sharing their category commonality.

What: What happened with _____?

So What: So What did you learn about _____?

Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.

_____?
Purpose: _____
Life Skill: _____
Materials: _____
Setting: _____

What: What happened with _____?
So What: So What did you learn about _____?
Now What: Now what can you do with your learning?

Apply Notes _____.