



F.I.R.S.T. GAMES

(FUN, INITIATIVE, RISK, SAFETY, TRUST)

Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center

6282 Cranberry Rd, Finland, MN 55603 • 800-523-2733 (MN, WI) • 218-353-7414



Cooperation and a sense of fun are important skills during the caterpillar boards.

F.I.R.S.T GAMES

WOLF RIDGE CLASSES:

Animals:

Animal Signs
Beavers
Birds
Small Mammals
Snowshoe Hare
White-tailed Deer
Wildlife Management

Plants:

Forest Ecology
Plant Study
Trees and Keys
Wetlands Ecology

Aquatics:

Lake Study
Stream Study
Fisheries Management
Frozen Lake Study

Earth Science:

Acid Rain
Geology
Weather

Human Culture and History:

Living Lightly
Nature's Timing
Ojibwa Heritage
Ojibwa Snowshoe
Seeds of Change
Voyager Life

Personal Growth:

Adventure Ropes Course
Rock Climbing

Group Building:

Basic Survival
F.I.R.S.T. Games

Outdoor Recreation:

Beginning Orienteering
Competitive Orienteering
Canoeing
Cross Country Skiing
Superior Snowshoe
Superior View Hike

Evening Activities:

Astronomy
Block Printing
Creative Expressions
Creature from Wolf Lake
Dream Catchers
Lake Superior Game
Night Hike
Owl Pellets
Paper Making
Star Lab
Woodland Art
Volleyball

Naturalist Presentations:

Bats
Fur Trade
History of the North Shore
Logging Camp Life
Raptors
Wolves

Description: A Group Building Class

As members of a team, students learn about the life skills of trust, communication, cooperation and logical thinking while playing games, solving problems, and working through challenges. The team will be collectively analyzing how effective they were before, during, and after the games. Processing experiences will focus the students on discussing how to use these skills to solve problems and challenges they encounter at home, at school, and in the community.

Total Time: 3 hours (2.5 hrs outdoors)

Audience: 6-20 students, 4th grade through adult

Activity Level: Moderate

Site: Volleyball Court



About Wolf Ridge

Wolf Ridge is an accredited residential environmental education school for persons of all ages. We offers immersion programs which involve direct observation and participation in outdoor experiences. Wolf Ridge programs focus on environmental sciences, human culture and history, personal growth, team building and outdoor recreation.

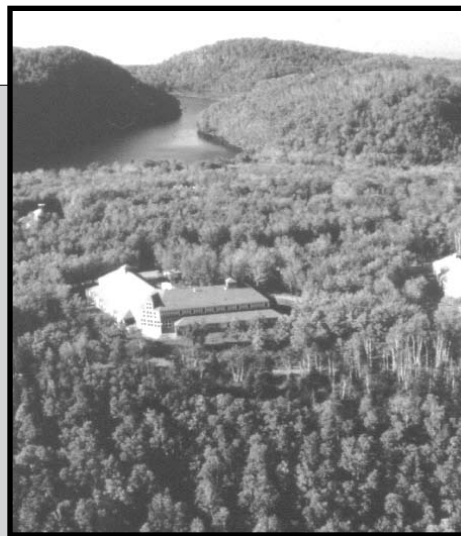
Our Mission

To develop a citizenry that has the knowledge, skills, motivation and commitment to act together for a quality environment.

What We Do

We meet our mission by:

- Fostering awareness, curiosity and sensitivity to the natural world.
- Providing lifelong learning experiences in nature.
- Developing social understanding, respect and cooperation.
- Modeling values, behaviors and technologies, which lead to a sustainable lifestyle.
- Promoting the concepts of conservation and stewardship.



Wolf Ridge Campus

Photo by Jim Brandenburg



Wolf Ridge

Environmental Learning Center

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Wolf Ridge is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

F.I.R.S.T. GAMES

CONTENTS:

I. Set-up (10 min.)

II. Introduction (20 min.)

- Greeting/Grabber
- Learn Names
- Assess Learner Level
- Class Overview
- Behavior Guidelines

III. Sequencing

IV. Themes

V. Processing

VI. Let the Games begin!! (2 hours)

- A. Warm Ups/ Introductions Ice Breakers
- B. Moving right along....
- C. Putting Skills together
- D. Off the Ground Challenges

VII. Conclusion (20 min.)

VIII. Foul Weather Options

IX. Fun, Quick, Change Pace Options

IX. Appendices

- Equipment
- References
- Safety Management



CONCEPTS:

- Working cooperatively to accomplish goals promotes mutual support and benefit.
- Developing group interaction skills will improve our responses to future life situations.
- Understanding and respecting others enables us to work together effectively as a community.
- Harmony comes from recognizing that similarities are greater than differences.
- Quality individuals make a quality group.
- Courage, trustworthiness and initiative are desirable personal qualities.
- Joy and fun are a vital component of a healthy happy life.
- How we play today is how we live tomorrow



OUTCOMES:

Upon Completion of the First Games Class, Students Will Be Able To:

1. Use logical thinking, trust, communication and cooperation with others to solve problems.
2. Understand that practicing life skills can empower us to reach our goals.
3. Realize the need to have effective citizens who can work together for a quality environment.
4. Practice self-evaluation of their performances.



MN GRADUATION STANDARDS:

Wolf Ridge has aligned the Center's entire curriculum to Minnesota Department of Education Academic Standards. The Center maintains a curriculum standards matrix for the following subject areas:

- Science
- History and Social Studies
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Arts

The Matrices are organized by grade level and subject area, listing Strand, Sub-Strand, Standards, and Benchmarks. Every class addressing a benchmark is also noted. As the primary student audience at Wolf Ridge is from 4th-12th grade, the matrices address these grade levels. Teachers may request that their students focus upon a specific benchmark while attending Wolf Ridge.

Copies of our matrices are available on the Wolf Ridge web site at www.wolf-ridge.org, found under the "Education" menu. If you cannot access the matrices via the website, request a printed copy by calling 218-353-7414 or e-mailing us at "mail@wolf-ridge.org".

Revised July 2008

I. Set-up (10 min)

While most of the props are outside at the volleyball courts or in the "grove of elements" near the west volleyball court, there is a tub of props and games in both kit rooms (Ed. Building and Science Ctr). Take some time to decorate your chalkboard to make it a teaching prop as well.

II. Introduction (10 min)

Greeting/Grabber

This is a fun-filled class...begin it with that tone. Welcome your students in and play a game to get them loosened up, laughing, talking with each other, touching each other. Work on breaking down some barriers (i.e. cliques, popular vs. not popular students, loud vs. quiet students, etc) and getting every one involved. Appropriate games for this stage of class are "safe games" (low physical and emotional risk), learning names, learning something about everyone, non-competitive, just plain silly games. (See "Let the Games Begin!" for examples)

Learn Students' Names

Take a few minutes to learn the names of your students and welcome them individually to the class. Better yet, play a game to introduce everyone to each other. Repeat their names and strive to use them in every communication. Knowing students by name will assist you in holding them accountable to the group.

Assess Individuals and the Group

This class is all about assessing your students constantly to see what is going on with individuals and the group. As an instructor you tailor the next activity or processing session to what the students "give you." Therefore it is imperative to pay attention to the communication (verbal and non-verbal) throughout class. Who's talking and who's not? What body language do you see within the group? Ideally, the group will learn to notice this too and act on it, but at the start and with some groups, that will be the instructor's job in order to guide the class.

Overview of the Class and Concepts

As an instructor, you know the goals of the class. It's not essential to tell your students directly: "We are going to make you into an effective group today." In fact with some groups that may be de-motivating. Let them know a bit of what you'll be doing, that it will be fun, that it will be fun and different. Everyone will be required to be involved, and that they'll talk about it throughout the class. The overview can foreshadow and focus their brains on the class at hand, not what they ate for breakfast.

Set Behavior Guidelines

Compliment students on their initial behavior if possible. Tell them that during class you expect respectful behavior. Ask the students to come up with a "code of conduct" for the class. Help them set their own behavior guidelines that they can then all follow. Let them know that the guidelines they create hold true

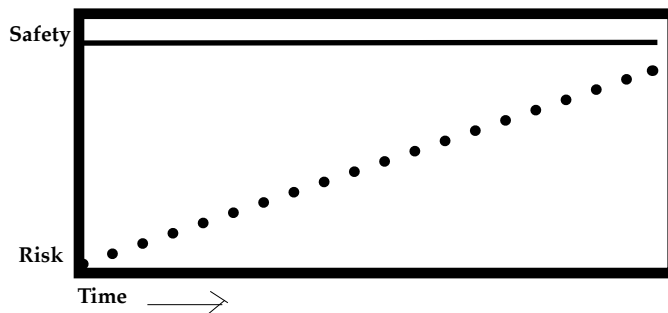
for everyone, even you; at any point some member can remind anyone else of these "rules." It might help to write them on a portable chalkboard or a piece of paper so the entire group can refer to it outside.

III. Sequencing: the appropriate flow of the experience

Sequencing means finding the right combination of activities for your particular group and putting them in the right order. The same activities you use with one group may flop with the next. So, know as many different games/activities as you can and know your group as well as you can before the class begins.

Regardless of the group, there is an important framework to follow when designing your class. For most everyone who comes to the class, it will be an entirely new experience. Students may not know each other, they may be afraid to be outside, they may be uncertain of their skills. So, you have a handful of social, personal and emotional fears racing around within the group and within individuals. That's the beauty of the class---you, the instructor, weave your knowledge of games, people, and facilitation to create a positive, fun, learning experience for your students.

One way to think of sequencing your class is like this:



Safety: Physical, emotional, mental, social. Real or perceived by the individual or the group.

Risk: Physical, emotional, mental, social. Real or perceived by the individual or the group.

The above chart illustrates a framework for sequencing activities. In the beginning, groups and individuals need to feel safe, and they are not willing to risk much (i.e. shout out an answer or idea, touch other people, step forward to be a leader). However, they most likely are willing to participate in activities that are "safe" emotionally and mentally. Ideally toward the end of class, the group has developed a sense of trust, has established effective communication patterns and is able to move on to more challenging and demanding activities. Simply put, begin with "low risk/high safety games", move toward "high risk/high safety games." (Some may think the safety line should inversely correlate to the risk line. As the group progresses, the games they accomplish may seem "less safe" in comparison to the games at the start. More physical contact, more self-disclosure, more reliance and necessity to trust others in the group: these situations can feel more unsafe to an individual. But if the group is able to reach this level, safety is not compromised and should remain high.)

DISCLAIMER:

All activities conducted during this class are safe. It is the responsibility of the instructor to be in control at all times and prevent potentially unsafe situations

IV. Themes

Another component to creating a successful F.I.R.S.T. Games class is setting the tone. This is the fun part where the instructor can go berserk with creativity. The sequence determines what types of games you do and at what time. The theme provides a string or connection between all the games. One of the major goals for this class (and one of the hardest things to do sometimes) is to help students see the connections between group dynamics and interactions while playing their games to the group dynamics and interactions in their own lives. For example, positive communication IS effective in Mine Field, or in math class, or with a sibling. A theme can 1) get more people involved and invested because it's silly or fun, 2) help the students feel as if they're building up to something big while creating a sense of accomplishment, 3) make connections between the activities, helping students to build from what they have already learned, and 4) transfer the lessons from these games to their own personal lives.

Themes can be metaphors, storylines, or anything you think will relate to your particular students at that time during their stay. Some examples might be:

- Athletes training for Wolf Ridge Olympics
- Explorers trying to reach the treasure chest of wisdom
- They were shrunk by an evil-doer and need to reach the "growing machine" to restore their size.
- The class is a metaphor for their year at school---getting to the end is like reaching graduation.
- Superheroes of people skills with superpowers for working in groups get together to form a super group.
- Applicants at interview for a job in a restaurant.
- Students are playing a life size board game. Instructors add interesting twists and students are ultimately trying to get to the finish.

Remember the first letter in F.I.R.S.T---Fun! Themes can keep the tone light throughout the more serious processing.

V. Processing

The goals of this class are group building followed by personal growth and outdoor recreation. Processing or debriefing the experiences of the group will be the reflective learning times of the class period. Although it is easy to skip the processing time and keep "playing", the processing is needed to focus the group on learning from the experiences so as to apply that to future experiences. Following games where the group practiced a certain skill or demonstrated an important lesson, gather the group at the benches beside the volley ball court. Students will know what to expect when they go there, and this provides a time and place to quiet down, regroup and focus. If necessary stop a game in the middle and "process" or ask what's going on, what the group is doing well, what they need to improve on, etc. Sometimes "freezing" the group can provide valuable information that will help the group continue in a positive direction or move into a positive direction.

A. Instructor's Role as Facilitator

The instructor must create a safe environment in which thoughts and feelings can be shared without fear of ridicule. You may choose to have students agree in advance to be positive and supportive during debriefing sessions. The instructor will be the "Reflective Storage Bank" of information. Practice guided reflection through questioning and have students discuss what happened before, during and after the games.

TEACHER NOTE:

The instructor's role should be to supervise, referee and interpret rules, not to give help. If nothing happens for thirty seconds or so, ask a question or give a suggestion.

Processing doesn't happen only after a game or challenge is over. If groups are struggling with a challenge for while, stop the activity and ask: What is working here? What part of your strategy needs to be refined or changed? What do you need to do next?

Give honest, specific feedback. To say "You did a great job today" gives a positive message but little more. A more specific response is, "You gave great support to each other for the cookie machine. You talked about what order to go in. You let the person who expressed concerns go first and made sure everyone was ready before the start." Giving honest feedback also involves holding people accountable for their actions. For example, "In the last three activities I observed a couple of people wandering away from the group." It is appropriate to give honest feedback on how the group performs, even if it differs from the students' perceptions.

All the processing should eventually apply what we learned here to our "real lives." Use of "real life" metaphors for the games may help a student visualize the application to future situations. The instructor should have some metaphors in mind, but metaphors from the students are best.

Encourage everyone to be a good listener. As the instructor, you need to be the role model by being open, honest and sharing your thoughts.

B. Possible techniques

Gathering perceptions and responses is sometimes difficult with a group that may not be used to divulging personal feelings in front of each other. Some possible techniques follow:

Note Taking. To prepare for the debriefing, take written notes regarding how the group performs, names of students and behaviors you observe, etc. It is very difficult to remember all the good stuff a group does as it happens so quickly.

Peer Observer. Appoint one (or two) students as the observers for the activity being conducted. Ask the observer to note what is happening in the group and how well the group is using their members and skills. The voice of a peer may mean more than an instructor they just met. There is obvious potential for disaster if the observer is not diplomatic with his/her observations; choose the person carefully.

The What, So What and Now What. To begin each debriefing, get the group to answer the questions: What happened? So What did we learn from that experience? Now What can we apply to future games or real life challenges?

Thumbs Up. Share your perception of what was happening during an activity and how well the group communicated. Ask students to give you a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" response to indicate if they agree with your perception or not. Ask individuals why they gave your perception a "thumbs up" or a "thumbs down."

Memory game. Ask one student to tell exactly what happened from the moment the activity began. Any other students can say "hold it" if they want to add something that happened. When a student says "hold it", he/she must then take over the description of what happened until another student says "hold it."

Definitions. Ask students for definitions of Spotting, Leadership, Involvement, etc.

*TEACHER NOTE:
Change techniques throughout class. A variety of processing strategies can increase student participation.*

TEACHER NOTE:

You are responsible for the safety of your students. Use discretion and good judgement in deciding whether to attempt each activity with a particular audience.

The Whip. The instructor begins a sentence that the members of the group must finish. "Jennifer was frustrated as leader because. . ." "During Tumble Home I was glad that . . ."

Go Around. The question "How did you feel?" is very intimidating and difficult to answer for many children. Instead of asking for a whole sentence as a response, you may have better luck asking for one word or a phrase. Ask each member of the group to state a one-word description of how they felt or possibly how they saw someone else feel during the last game. Students may often have difficulty stating how they felt but greater ease in stating an observation. At least then, you have them talking.

Talking Stick. Use of a "talking stick" is an effective reminder to students that they must listen to the person with the "talking stick". As facilitator, use the "talking stick" when giving instructions, asking questions, etc. Students can also pick up the "talking stick" when they have an idea, response, or comment. An excellent tool for use during the debriefing periods.

VI. Let the Games begin!!!

When you begin the games refer to the "Code of Conduct" you as a group have made. Make sure certain items are included to ensure safety, such as the ones below:

- Listen when I am speaking, and when others speak. (For safety and respect)
- Do not do anything until I say "go." (Think time) Use your mind first.
- Do not hurt anyone or do anything to anyone that you would not want done to yourself. Everyone deserves to have fun today and to be treated with respect.
- Everyone must be given the chance to participate.
- Speak positively, honestly, and openly with others (processing time) to help us learn from our experiences.
- Listen and receive constructive feedback from others.

Many of the games work best with groups of 8-14 students. Divide larger groups in half for some of the activities. When activities call for groups of 2-4, assign groups to prevent students from always working with the same partners.

Be creative. Call for people with glasses, wearing blue, eye color, first letter of name, birthdays, the number of letters in last name, physical location, etc. Once students are in groups, you can give each person a generic name such as "You are all potatoes; one of you is mashed, one baked, one french fried. All the french fries are in the middle." This can be done with pop flavors, fruit, seasons, colors, etc.

Feel free to modify game rules for varying situations. Handicap students in some way: blindfolds, limit talking, or paralyze one so they must be carried during an activity. To complete all the activities listed in the lesson plan would take much longer than two or three hours; choose one or possibly two from each category.

A. Warm-ups, Introductions, Ice Breakers

These are the safe, low -risk activities that introduce the group members to one another and help move beyond social or physical inhibitions. You can have:

- "mental" warm-ups - getting kids ready to open themselves up to other students, to laugh at themselves, and to share their thoughts and feelings.

CONCEPT:

Creative thinking is the first step in problem solving

- physical warm-ups - needed to keep kids warm in cold weather - jumping jacks, hopping, etc.

1. NAME JUGGLE

Get the group in a circle. Let each person state his name to the group. Then call someone's name and throw an object to that person (any object, a shoe, a ball, a Beanie Baby, etc) That person then calls someone else's name and throws the object to him. After this goes on for a bit, add another object. Keep adding objects until it gets too chaotic.

Variations: Do a speed round in which the object has to touch everyone's hands in the shortest amount of time possible. Add objects with this too.

2. KING/QUEEN FROG (a good "quiet down" game)

The group sits in a circle. Chairs are helpful but not necessary. You start by showing the signal for King/Queen Frog which is one hand striking off the other in the motion of a jumping frog. Have everyone practice it. Then each person must make up a signal for an animal (they may not make mouth noises). Everyone gets a turn to show their symbols and everyone gets a chance to practice them. Go around a couple of times to make sure everyone remembers the signals. The game starts with the Highest Frog (King or Queen) doing your signal, then someone else's signal. That signal passes to that person. If someone misses (forgets to do their signal first, does a signal wrong, or takes too long) then they take the spot of King/Queen frog. Then everyone moves over until that seat is filled.

3. TELL US MORE...

Pass around the bucket of blue glass beads. Instruct everyone to take some. Once everyone has a handful, let the group know that for every bead taken, that individual is responsible for telling something about him or herself to the group. This game can take a long time....

4. EVERYBODY'S IT! (world's shortest tag game ever)

When the game starts, everyone is IT and tries to tag everyone else. If you're tagged, you're out.

VARIATION: For a little longer game try SORE SPOT TAG. The same rules as above apply. However, if you were tagged, you must hold the spot where you were tagged, but you stay in the game. If you are tagged once, hold the first spot with one hand, if you are tagged again, hold the second spot with your other hand. Now you must tag with your hip. If you are tagged three times....you're out of the game.

5. SPEED RABBIT (or should that be Speed Hare up in Northern Minnesota?)

Ask the group to make a circle, with you in the center. When everyone is ready you point to a person and say "Moose, " "Beaver," or "Chickadee."

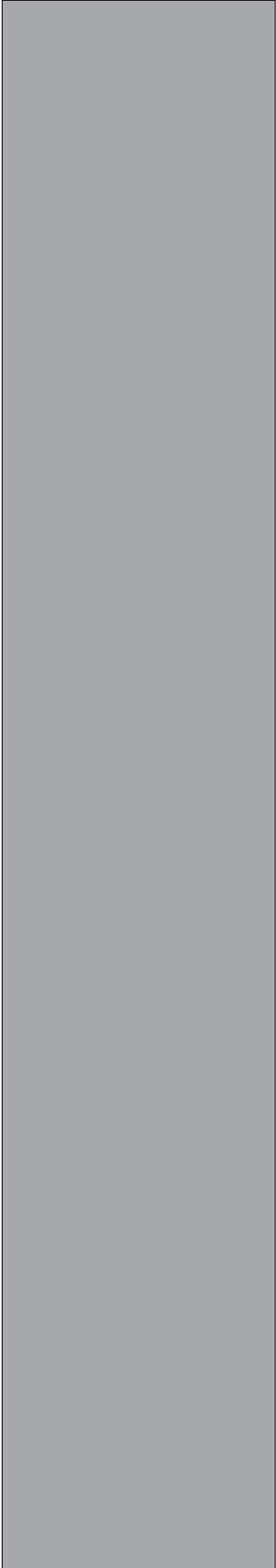
That individual, and the two people to that person's right and left must perform the proper pantomime before the center person counts to 10.

Change center people when the person who has been pointed to makes a mistake. The actions: *Moose*: Middle person sticks arms straight out in front like a long snout, people on either side make antlers with arms in air.

Beaver: Middle person stands tall like a tree with arms in air, and people on either side kneel down and "chew" on bark. *Chickadee*: Middle person stands with hands to mouth opening and closing like a beak, and people on either side flap outside arm like a wing.

TEACHER NOTE:

Beginning games set the tone for the class. Assess your group. Do they need to be energized or need a more mellow tone? Are they shy and quiet or are they all talkers? Choose the most appropriate games to start off class.



6. GUARD THE CHICKEN

Students stand in a circle. One student stands in the middle and guards the rubber chicken (or something else). The instructor calls out descriptive statements. If the statement is true about a student, then that student must try to steal the chicken in the middle. The chicken guard tries to tag the chicken stealers. If a student is tagged, he/she returns to the circle to wait for another statement. If a student gets the chicken, he/she becomes the chicken guard. Some sample statements include, "Students wearing a red shirt", "Students who have traveled to a different state", or "Students wearing glasses".

7. PLATYPUS/ AARDVARK

Students stand in a circle. One student is the start. He/she turns to the left, and says, "Here's an aardvark?" The receiving person says, "What?" The giver says, "An aardvark?" The receiver now turns to the left and says to the next person, "Here's an aardvark" and the receiver says, "What?", and the giver turns back to the first person and says, "What?" The first person says, "An aardvark". That statement gets passed back to the present receiver. This sequence continues all the way around the circle. At the same time, "platypus" gets passed to the right around the circle. Somewhere the two will cross.

B. Moving along the sequence---games that involve higher risk...

These games require participants to present ideas to the group, rely on other group members to accomplish the task, be silly, or physically close to one another. Constantly refer to the "Code of Conduct", making sure the guidelines you and the group created are being respected and followed.

1. SHOE TIE

Have everyone untie their shoes, then attempt to re-tie them cooperatively with each person using only one hand.

2. LINE UP BY HEIGHT BLINDFOLDED

Have the students divide into two groups, hold hands in a circle, and put on their blindfolds. Instruct the students that they must make a line from one point to another, from shortest to tallest without speaking. Give them a couple of minutes to discuss how they should best do it and then begin. For a greater challenge, line up by order of birth date, without speaking of course. (You may do some line ups with or without blindfolds.)

3. SILENT GEOMETRY

Using the old climbing rope tied into a circle, have all the students grab onto a part of it. Instruct them to make a given shape out of the circle (triangle, square, star, etc.) without talking.

4. DUO-SIT and GROUP-SIT

Have students in pairs stand back- to- back, link elbows, sit down, and stretch out their legs. From this position get up, keeping arms linked. A variation of this is the group sit, starting with two people, adding one each time, until the whole group links arms and tries to sit down then stand up. Also try a duo-race, where two people face each other, one stands on the other's feet, and they race to another point.

5. CIRCLE THE CIRCLE

The whole group will form a circle holding hands. The instructor will have two students break their handclasp and reach through a hula hoop and re-clasp hands. The group must now move the hula hoop around the circle without breaking the circle. Each person will have to get their head, body, and legs through the hoop and onto the next person. Assistance by other members is allowed if the hand clasps of the circle are not broken.

6. EVERYBODY UP

Two people of comparable size sit on the ground facing on another so that the bottoms of their feet are sole to sole, knees bent and hands tightly grasped. They must now pull themselves up to an upright standing position. If successful try it with three, then four people. If too difficult, students can place their feet toe to toe. This is similar to the Duo-sit but somewhat more difficult.

7. HOG CALL

Ask the group to form two equal lines facing each other. Each person should be facing another person....this is their partner. Have each partner come up with a combo-word (i.e. Peanut-Butter, Foot-Ball, Ham 'n Eggs, Ship-yard, Under-water); each person should choose one of the words or sounds. Each pair can then announce their word to the group to make sure there are no duplicates and to hear the creativity. Each line then walks to opposite ends of the VB court and put on blindfolds when they arrive. After the instructor shouts a beginning word: (HUZZAH or YIPPEE or UP AND AT EM....) the partners try to find each other by yelling their half of the word. You may have to demonstrate just what type of volume is needed. When partners find each other, have them take off blindfolds and tell one another what was hardest and what would have helped. Safety reminder: Tell students to put out "bumpers"- their arms in front of chest with palms out to prevent face to face slams.

8. MINE FIELD

Again, each person finds a partner and stands on opposite sides of the VB court. One of the partners will have a blindfold. In the middle of the court you have strategically placed "mines", objects of various shapes and sizes and locations (some could even be adults as moving or swinging mines). The object is for the sighted person to guide the blindfolded partner across the minefield safely using only verbal commands. If the traveller hit a mine, they must start over. Play it a couple of times and give time for each pair to develop a strategy. "Bumpers" are a good idea here too, though most likely it will come automatically.

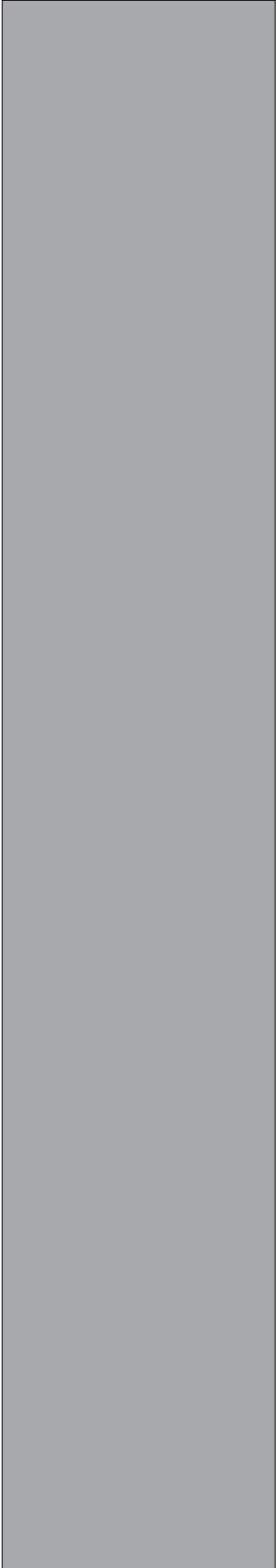
9. HELIUM STICK

Take the tent pole segments and put them together to make a segment long enough for students to line up in two lines facing each other with the segment stretching between them. The students will stretch out their pointer fingers straight out, knuckles up, alternating fingers every other student. Place the pole segment on top of student fingers, so that all the fingers are touching the segment. Without losing contact with the segment, the students must lower the segment to the ground.

10. THE MAZE

Lay out the blue tarp with the duct tape grid. On a scrap paper, the instructor should mark down a path through the grid from one side to the other. The students must get through the maze by figuring out that route. Students may not talk or gesture. Only one student may enter the maze at a time, one grid

*TEACHER NOTE:
After some activities,
discuss the activity: was
it successful, easy, hard?
What helped the group
succeed? What could be
better next time?*



box at a time. If the student chooses correctly, he/she may continue. If he/she chooses wrong, the instructor indicates as much and another student must start at the beginning.

11. DOWN THE CHUTE

Students must use the short sections of cut pvc piping to create a continuous chute that they then must use for rolling a ball down and into a designated container. Each student must hold a piece of pipe. Once the ball starts rolling it must continue to roll, and it must touch every piece of pipe. If the ball stops or drops on the ground, the students must start over.

SAFETY NOTE:

The following games include spotting, catching, and supporting another student's weight. Safety is a major concern as you move into these games. Make sure you teach spotting well and that students are taking their role as "catchers" seriously. If the group is unable to accomplish these activities safely, don't do them. Spend time instead working on skills necessary to participate in games such as these.

9. TWO WAY PASS

Divide into groups of three. Give each person a generic name. Call out the name to be in the middle. The other two people stand one in front, and one behind, the middle person. The middle person, stays stiff with eyes closed and arms crossed and falls forward. The two people gently push him/her back and forth, slowly moving farther apart, until they are as far apart as they can be and still successfully catch him/her. Trade places until all have tried being caught. This is a version of the classic Trust Fall. **Trust Falls off elevated objects are not allowed.**

10. HUMAN SPRING

Students divide in groups of three, stand side-by-side. The two outside people grab the middle person's elbows. The middle person has their hands on their hips. On the count of three the middle person jumps, and the other two assist lifting them as high into the air as possible. How high could one person alone jump? As a small group the one can achieve a much greater height with the assistance from the two.

11. LAP SIT

All members of the class stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Then turn to their right, and take two steps toward the middle. Each person holds the shoulders of the person in front of them, and on the count of three, everybody sits down on to the knees of the person behind them. Try to hold for ten seconds. If they are doing well, have them try to hold their arms out straight, or walk along while sitting.

12. WIND IN THE WILLOWS

The group forms a circle standing shoulder to shoulder with everyone in "spotting position." The instructor stands in the center of the circle with feet firmly together, arms folded over chest. The faller begins with: "Spotters ready?" Spotters: "Ready!" Faller: "Falling?" Spotters: "Fall away..." the center person begins to fall toward one side of the circle. The spotters catch her and gently stand her up to the center. She then falls a different direction. There must always be three pairs of hands on the faller when-

ever she falls and it is up to the faller which direction to fall. (I have never written the word "fall" so many times in one sentence!) Possible variations: faller closes eyes, spotters make a sound whenever they catch like a pinball machine, total silence when the faller falls, etc.

C. Putting the skills together...initiatives and off the ground challenges:

These are higher risk games which usually involve the entire group to accomplish successfully. Where other games may focus on a particular skill such as communication or cooperation, these games involve multiple skills. Choose the one one best fits your group bases on characteristics they have presented to you throughout the class.

1. CATERPILLAR WALK

All members of the group must take positions on the 10-person skis, holding onto the ropes available, and walk from one point to another (about 30') without anyone touching the ground.

2. YURT CIRCLE

This activity should have at least 8 people. Everyone makes a circle by linking hands, and stepping as far back as possible. First, have everyone lean slowly out, keeping their bodies stiff and their feet in place, and using their neighbors for support. Then count off by twos, and have all evens lean in and odds lean out as far as possible without falling.

3. HUMAN KNOT

A group of five to ten people face each other. Each person grabs the hands of any two different people. Then without letting go of hands, the group must unwind and untie until they form a circle. It is possible.

4. ALLIGATOR SWAMP

The group is given two tires and two boards to get everyone from one side of the swamp to the other, using only the boards and tires to stand on as they cross the swamp. Both the tires and boards will need to be moved as the team progresses across. If people fall in the swamp, they must return to the beginning and the team must go to get them.

5. ALL FOR ONE

Set up a line of tires or carpet squares that are spaced so that students can easily step from one to the next. Designate a starting and finishing line on either end of the line of tires. The students must get from one side to the other, stepping only on the tires or carpet. Once a student touches a tire or carpet square, the group must maintain contact with that tire or carpet square. If the group loses contact (i.e. a student takes a foot off), then the group loses that tire or carpet square. The group may not move squares or tires.

6. BUILDING BRIDGES

Place the two plain wooden boards on the ground, one on top of the other. Move the two wooden platforms so that they butt up against each end of the boards, and so that the boards cannot span the gap between platforms. Students then must take the boards use them to get from one platform to the other without touching the ground in between. Do not allow jumping between platforms.

TEACHER NOTE:

Some groups may not be ready for these final challenges, which require mandatory spotting. If your audience does not show sufficient responsibility and maturity, do not include these last two activities in your class.

In these activities, you must be constantly in a position to step in as the primary spotter if necessary.

7. ELECTRIC FENCE

Take a rope and tie it around three trees at waist height to form a triangle that is large enough to fit your group of students. The students are given a board and must stand inside the "electric fence". They must get everybody out of the triangle without touching the fence. Students must spot each other. Students may not jump. The board may not go over the fence, but it may be moved under the fence. Students may not go under the fence either.

C. Off the Ground Challenges

1. ALL ABOARD

Depending on the size of the group, use one or both of the movable wooden platforms. All members of the group stand on the platform, with no part of anyone touching the ground for a total of five seconds. For more of a challenge, put a stone under the stump, thus adding greater difficulty with balance.

2. SPIDER WEB

The group must get each member through the web (always passing feet first and keeping head above feet) without touching the strands. There are many variables on this activity: pass a rope through each opening without touching a web strands, and without any arms extending through an opening; use a hole only once, once you have been through you can't return to the other side, someone is blindfolded or unable to speak, the group is timed, etc. It doesn't always need to be a spider web either; it can be a stained glass window.

3. THE WALL

In this activity, all members of the group must get over the wall and down the back side. Spotting is essential. If your group has not displayed enough spotting responsibility, the instructor should not conduct this activity. No more than three students may be on the upper backside platform at one time, and they may not have their head lower than their feet (they may not lean their bodies over to help other people, only their hands and arms). Students already over the wall should come to the front and help spot others, but may not touch them or help them up the wall. If your students are having difficulties, at your discretion you may add one person to the top for assistance in starting the process. Instructors may also vary the activity in other ways, as long as they do not alter the safety and spotting standards.

VI. Conclusion

A. Review experiences...

What happened during the day? Use observations as well as the theme you created to spark a discussion of the students experience.

B. Discussion

Discuss feelings concerning their accomplishments, group interactions, and development of life skills. How do the students think they performed? Could all of them have performed better? How? Why didn't that happen here today?

C. Relate to Future

Have the students discuss how they will use these skills in the future, in normal life situations, as well as for unique challenges. As a class group how will you use these skills or how might you experience similar challenges back at school? How about on a sports team? In your family?

The following situations involve a problem, challenge, or conflict. Ask students which skills (logical thinking, trust, communication, cooperation) they would need to solve the problem or complete the task.

1. Your group has been chosen to plan a theme party for a first grade class at your school. You can't agree on what activities to do at the party.
2. All the members of your group play musical instruments in the school marching band. A new kid at school joins the marching band but doesn't speak English very well and has trouble understanding the marching band commands. Your group wants to help him/her out.
3. Your group is a sports team. At practice you are always arguing and fighting about everything. You want to stop fighting so your team can improve.

VII. Foul Weather Options (Indoors)

These options are provided as options for extremely cold/rainy conditions, when the outdoor portion must be broken up by an indoor session to warm up. The final portion of the class should always be culminating events like the Alligator Swamp, Caterpillar Walk, or possibly Tumble Home and The Wall; use the indoor options only as short warm-up periods.

1. SOMETHING IN MY POCKET

Students sit in a circle. As the instructor, you take an invisible ball of clay out of your pocket and mold it, without talking, into something important to them, such as a guitar. Other students try to guess what the object is, and when they do, you tell why it is meaningful, then roll the clay back up into a ball, and pass it on to the next person. This activity teaches people to trust others personally, to be willing to try things in front of them, and share a part of themselves.

2. HAPPY LANDINGS

One student is a person in a lifeboat and unable to see because of the fog. He needs to make it to the dock safely, missing all the rocks in the harbor. All students sit, stand, or lay on the ground and don't move for the rest of the activity. (They are the rocks). One person is blindfolded, and walks backwards, guided only by the voice of one other person, until he reaches the dock. Upon reaching the dock, he takes the place of one of the rocks, and all rocks can change positions, while a new lifeboat person is chosen. A variation of this is the "haunted forest", where people are trees. (*Another trust & communication activity.*)

3. HUMAN MIRROR

Two students face each other. One student moves hand and body positions, staying in the same place, while the other tries to mirror exactly what the first person does. The goal is not to go so fast to make your partner goof up, but to cooperate to create a perfect human mirror.

4. **STORIES**

Redondo Stories: Clipboards, pencils and paper should be handed out to each member of the group. Each person should start writing a story. When a person becomes stumped as to where the storyline will go next, he/she says "Redondo" out loud. Everyone hands their story to the person to the right. It progresses like this until everyone receives their own story again. Have the students finish their stories and read them aloud.

One Word Group Stories: The instructor starts this story by putting the beginning of a sentence on the board, i.e., "I thought my walk in the woods would be normal, but..." Ask the students to add one word at a time to the story as you go around the group. Hopefully you'll go around a few times and get five to eight sentences. Have fun!

VIII. Fun & Quick Activities

(THAT CHANGE THE PACE OR GIVE A LAUGH)

1. **Sylvia's Silly Sequence**

Balance a penny on someone's nose when she is lying down and watch her try to get it off without moving her head. Variation: Put a rubber band around someone's head below the ears and over the tip of the nose and watch her try to get it off without her hands. This is fun because more people can see the hilarity of the situation.

2. **Human Camera**

Each person gets a partner. One of the pair is blindfolded. The "seer" leads the blindfolded one to a place, and takes the blindfold off so they can see the "picture." Then the partners switch roles.

3. **Dog Shake**

Just as it sounds, imitate a dog shaking water off itself from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail. You as instructor may have to demonstrate first. It works better if the group has been together for a bit of time. It's really silly!!

4. **Mrs. O'Grady**

The group stands in a circle and the first person begins by asking a question: "Did you hear what happened to Mrs. O' Grady?" Reply: "No, what happened?" Asker: "She died." Reply: "How did she die?" Asker: "With one cocked eye."

Then the asker cocks his eye. The sequence continues around the circle until everyone has one cocked eye. The sequence begins again but this time Mrs. O' Grady died with "her mouth awry...", "her head to the sky...", "with her leg held high...", and so on.

5. **Balance Broom**

A student holds a broom or meter stick straight up in the air with his arm extended up too. Then, while looking at the very top of the broom he performs 15 complete 360 turns, puts the broom down and steps over it. There is a possibility for falls, so have spotters near by to cushion the fall. Do not immediately let go of a dizzy person, the world will still be turning to him even if his body is not. NOTE: Those prone to nausea shouldn't do this, the dizzy feeling could last for hours.

VIII. Appendices

Equipment

Hula hoop
70-foot old climbing rope
20 blindfolds

At Site

2 pairs caterpillar boards (10 people / pair)
4 tires
4 eight-foot 2x6 boards
2 stump stand platforms
1 initiative wheel
1 initiative 12' wall
1 spider web

References

- *Silver Bullets*, Karl Rohnke, Project Adventure, Hamilton, MA @ 1984
- *Cow's Tails and Cobras II*, Karl Rohnke. Project Adventure, Hamilton, MA @1989
- *Islands of Healing*, Schoel, Prouty and Radcliffe, Project Adventure, Hamilton, MA @ 1988
- *The New Games Book*, Andrew Fluegelman, Headlands Press, San Francisco, CA @1976
- *Outdoor Adventure Activities for School and Recreation Programs*, Paul Darst, Burgess Publishing Company, Minneapolis MN @1980
- *Bottomless Bag Again?*, Karl Rohnke, Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque, IA @ 1991

Safety Management

The instructor will adhere to and be familiar with all safety practices designated by this lesson plan or updated training from a Wolf Ridge permanent staff member. Students will be checked for proper clothing and the instructor prepared to react to weather changes. The program area and equipment will be evaluated by the instructor before use by students. Inspections of the equipment are conducted regularly by the Director of Adventure Education. All persons shall be informed of the activities the class will entail and agree to the responsibilities and rules for participation. Instructor will be made aware of any students' special needs (medical, etc.) and adjust the activity accordingly. A First Aid Kit and telephone is available in the Office Building. Any safety or risk concerns will be brought to the Wolf Ridge permanent staff.

- Instructor will maintain constant supervision of activities and immediately curtail inappropriate behavior or actions.
- Students will be trained in spotting techniques by the instructor during the trust building activities. Students must practice and demonstrate spotting techniques. The instructor will evaluate if the group shows appropriate regard for safety and spotting techniques. The instructor will restrict groups from doing the Wheel and the Wall, unless the group has proven their readiness for spotting and safety.