

THE PLAY'S THE THING

AUTHOR(S): Becca Sykes

SUMMARY: Spend an hour playing at least 6 new games. And by play, we mean inclusive, high (and low) energy, and ready to be played straight out of your back-pocket at camp.

GOALS: Learn games that bring energy up and into focus, are inclusive, and ready to be played with no materials. Participants will leave energized with new ways to play/learn together.

AUDIENCE: all ages

TIMING: 45 minutes

MATERIALS:

- Handout created during session: one piece of paper per participant, writing utensils. We will be making a 6-page book: [How to Make a Quick and Easy 8 Page Mini-Book From One Piece of Paper.](#)
- Optional: stickers for non-writers

SET-UP: Can be played anywhere

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00-00:08 – Introductions, make 6-page book
- 00:08-00:35 – Learn and play 6 games
- 00:35-00:45 – Deep breath, reflect, group YAY!

SESSION OUTLINE

00:00-00:08 – Introductions, make 6-page book

Facilitator introduces session topic and leads group in a round of handshakes. Facilitator can demo each handshake with participants before.

How to play handshakes:

1. Find your #1 partner (someone you would feel comfortable giving a high-five to. Introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and give a high-five. (Bonus tip: for the never-miss high-five, look at your partner's elbow).

PRACTICE A FEW TIMES: facilitator calls out #1! #1! #1!

2. Find your #2 partner (someone you would feel comfortable looking in the eye while doing something loud): introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and give a Bruce Lee style/double fist HUH!

PRACTICE A FEW TIMES. ex: facilitator calls out #2 a few times, #1, then #2 again

3. Find your #3 partner (someone you just KNOW would be the very best #3 partner EVER): introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and do a side by side "shimmy-shimmy"

PLAY A FEW TIMES, facilitator calls out 1-3 randomly

4. Find your #4 partner (someone who either is or isn't afraid of what's REALLY at the bottom of the lake): introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and do a "jellyfish" high-five. (Go in for the high-five, and don't touch, but just pull the hand away fast like a jellyfish swimming away and say "JELLYFISH!")

PLAY A FEW TIMES, facilitator calls out 1-4 randomly

TAKE A DEEP, COLLECTIVE BREATH, because things are about to get intense.

5. Find your #5 partner (someone who loves camp, even the scary campfire ghoststories): introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and yell "AHHHHHHHH!" and RUN AWAY.

PLAY A FEW TIMES, cycling through 1-5.

6. Find your #6 (someone who could be so encouraging, they'd put their hand on your shoulder, say you're doing great, and you would believe them). Introduce yourself, pronouns, camp, and put your hand on their shoulder and say, "you're doing GREAT!"

PLAY ONE LAST TIME.

Debrief: what are 6 reasons you might play this game?

00:08-00:35 – Learn and play 6 games

Session leader leads through 5 more games

Walk-Stop-Point:

Participants walk with awareness and purpose, along their own path and pace. Walking, until Coach says, "Stop! Close your eyes...point to something: x, y, or z." Ex: sharp, bright, thrilling, dangerous,

healthy, safe, awesome, responsible, faithful, patient, generous, enthusiastic. Coach uses this as an opportunity to point out the need for awareness noticing where you are in space and where others are as well. (This is a great game to play to prep a group for a very active indoor activity. Pointing to (whatever the coach decides), it offers the group immediate awareness of potential death and dismemberment while playing a rowdy game that can be played safely indoors.

Question Game:

Text: "A person who asks a question remains a fool for five minutes, but a person who doesn't ask questions remains a fool for a lifetime"- Talmud

To Play: Curiosity, and the willingness to play the fool, can increase your team! A player from each team faces off to have a conversation using ONLY questions that further the conversation. Two teams line up, one player at a time faces each opponent. The winner claims the other for their team (defeated opponent goes to the back of the winner's line). And continues the conversation. Lines revolve fairly quickly.

Questions like, "what did you say?" do not further the conversation and would be cause for the player on the other team to win. Once one player is eliminated because of using a sentence and not a question or stalling/not furthering the conversation, another player from the same team steps up to play.

Potential topics for conversation (staff can change the topic as needed): cabin clean up, the best part of the camp day, packing for camp, 10 grossest things in camp, people you learn from in camp. For staff: best ways to start the day, what happens at the lunch table, how do you plan a great evening program

Stuff, Stuff, Stuff

Instead of Rock, Paper, Scissors: "stuff, stuff, stuff" and on the shoot portion of the game, players can say whatever they want and then debate which one would beat the other. Can be played with the group watching, or tournament style. Focusing on quality *machloket* (appreciation of opposition), players can listen and practice learning from everyone.

Stuff, Stuff, Stuff TAG:

Using shared examples from the last game, play in two teams lined up against each other. Teams agree on a "stuff" to use in opposition to the other team, and face off the other team. At the line of *machloket*, play, argue, and whoever wins chases the other player to their home base. If you're tagged, you now play for the other team.

YOU'RE THE BEST Games:

Compliment Wah!

Wah, but with compliments!

IT'S YOU!

Participants in a circle, group can start chanting, "it's (name of our group!)" repeatedly. When one person is ready, they can go into the circle and the chant changes to "It's *their name*" until they've had enough. Players can go to the center whenever they're ready, helping another player exit gracefully, and players can also stay in the circle the whole time (playing the part of cheer/chanter).

00:35-00:45 – Deep breath, reflect, group YAY!

Session leader facilitates a group dialogue using the following prompts and reading the room:

- Take a few minutes to name your games on each page of your book. Use stickers as reminders if you don't want to write or draw!
- Why do you think it's the number six? (First 6 words of every typical Jewish blessing is made up of 6 words: *baruch ata adonai, eloheinu melech ha-olam*. This is a *peticha*:

liturgical grammar word for OPENING. We do six things together, we are a little more open, and whatever happens after that: IT'S A BLESSING.

- What's the title of your book?
- What's on the back page? (Recommendations from your campers/colleagues this summer who will play these games with you!)
- What's on the secret page that only you can see? (If you open the booklet, there's a place just for you. When we need to remember one thing about how it feels to play, even while we're working so hard this summer, you can open this... write down THAT reminder.)
- End together: GROUP YAY, gather your things, and after the last thing I say, we're done! FIND YOUR NUMBER #5!

BRINGING IT TO YOUR CAMP

This session could be used during staff training, and every game has individual goals and outcomes. They can all be played individually as lead ins to activities, down-time fun, or anytime games.