

Inspire! Ice Breakers & Openers



Activity: Mixed-Up Directions

Overview

It's time to confuse and utterly bamboozle your group with fun yet troublesome directions. In the beginning things seem easy. Participants simply point in the direction you point and call out that direction. As you move in to second and third rounds, expressions quickly become that of confusion, and the laughter begins. Mixed-Up Directions has you playfully get the better of your group while producing infectious laughter.

Props

- None.

Instructions

- Position yourself at "the head of the class" with participants facing you.
- **Explain that in stage one, as you point into the air, the group must follow your lead and shout-out the direction you are pointing. When you point up, group members point up and shout "up!"**
- For ease of play, left and right should be in relation to your group's position not yours, similar to stage right and stage left. If you point to the left, they will point to the right. One way to set this game up is to point to the "right" and say "this is your left and you will shout 'left.'" Then point to the left and say "this is your right and you will shout 'right.'"
- Start slow to let them get the hang of it. Gradually speed up, pointing randomly in any of four directions trying like crazy to trip them up. When they have mastered this stage, move on to stage two.
- **In stage two, the group is to point in the same direction as you, but they will shout the opposite direction. For example, if you point to the left, the group points "left" and shouts "right!"**
- Again, start slowly and gain momentum. The faster you go the more difficult it becomes for participants to follow as their motions do one thing, and their brain is telling them to say the opposite.

- When stage two has been more-or-less conquered, it's time to move on to the final and most difficult stage.
- **In stage three the group calls out the direction you are pointing and then points in the opposite direction. For example, when you point to the "right," the group shouts "right," but points left.**
- This is much more difficult than stage two, so start slowly and give your group funny looks to spark laughter. If you are feeling mischievous, vary the speed and enjoy the fun of confusion.

Safety

Keep the pace and tone playful, so that participants are understand that it is okay to be confused or wrong. This will help everyone feel safe as people are laughing with each other rather than at each other. Afterwards, ask how they dealt with looking foolish or feeling wrong . Are they more apt to avoid situations in which they might look foolish or appear vulnerable? Or, to what extent are people comfortable taking chances even if it means looking foolish or being wrong?

Variations

Instead of using directions like up, down, right, or left, you may use compass points (north, south, east and west), parts of a baseball diamond (first, second, and third base and home plate), or sides to a boat (port, starboard, fore, and aft or bow and stern) .