

Activity: **Pass It**

Overview

Pass It stimulates group rhythm by asking participants to pass a sound around the circle quickly, but more importantly, on beat. This simple activity explores rhythm as a metaphor for life and how well groups work together.

Set Up

Props

No props required.

Set Up

Arrange your group in a circle.

Instructions

Participants work to pass a clapping sound around the circle quickly and accurately. One person “gives” a clap to the next person. That person “receives” the sound by clapping at the same time, then turns to pass the clap to the next person in the circle. Start slowly; if participants are off beat, start again.

Let the sound move continuously around the circle numerous times to get the group into it, gaining speed as they get the hang of it.

Once participants establish a good rhythm, stop play and restart again with two claps. Do this by introducing a second clap right after the first. Now participants must be very alert to make it work.

Ask your group to set a goal as to how many claps they can get around the circle and back to where they started. Allow many opportunities for practice.

Sample Story Line

“Before the invention of the written word, culture was passed from generation to generation through stories, song, dance, and rhythmic performances. Rhythm is still deeply rooted in our heritage and widely used to convey feelings and emotions. It is also an effective method to align or bond a group of people together, like a cadence in a marching band. On a smaller scale we are going to produce a simple rhythm to see how well we connect as a group.”

“I will start by passing the person to my left a sound, a simple clap of my hands. This sound must be passed all the way around the circle. To pass and receive the sound, we simply clap at the same time.”

Show an example

“First, lets just keep the sound going around the circle until we find our pace and get in sync with one another. Now that we are in rhythm, let’s see what happens when we add another clap in the circle. How will this affect our rhythm? Be attentive because I will start the second clap as soon as the first is off and going. This time, the sounds won’t keep going around the circle, they’ll stop when they get back to me.”

“Now, how many claps at once do you think we can get around the circle and back to me successfully?”

Have the group set a goal and try to meet it.

“Now everybody celebrate with high-fives and lots of clapping ... or maybe not.”

Safety

Since some people are rhythmically challenged, be aware of emotional safety. Also, watch for “sore hand” syndrome. Too much clapping can be rough on the hands!

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Variations

Introduce new sounds and new rhythms. For example, add a snap or a foot stomp. Or, pass a high five around the circle. You could also try passing motions and sounds. The variations are limitless.

Reflection

Pass It is designed for the group to have fun. We advise augmenting the learning process throughout the exercise with questions like:

Discover: "What's working? How can we get in sync? How can we establish a rhythm that everyone can master?"

Connect: "Where can we be in better rhythm in other areas of our lives? At school? At work?"

Create: "If there is one lesson you could take from Pass It, what would it be? Why? How could you implement that lesson in your life?"