

Inspire! Ice Breakers & Openers



Activity: Safety in Numbers

Overview

"Safety In Numbers" is a cooperative version of tag. Players "school together" in groups of three to avoid being tagged by the person who is "it." This is a great exercise to kick-off your day.

Props

- Cones (optional)

Instructions

- Start by clearly designating an area of play; refer to it as "the ocean."
- Ask for somebody to volunteer to be "it;" this individual will be called the "shark" in this game.
- The remaining group members will be "schooling jacks," fish that enjoy sticking together.
- As in nature, the shark will be trying to catch (tag) a jack for a meal. The only way for the jacks to be safe from the shark is to school together in groups of three, giving the illusion they are bigger than they really are.
- Schooling is a group of three players who hold hands or place their arms around each other's shoulders to form a small circle.
- After three or four seconds of schooling, the jacks must break apart and "swim" away.
- The shark can only tag a fish not attached to a school.
- The shark is not allowed to wait around for a school to break apart; the shark must keep moving at all times, always on the hunt.
- When the shark corners and tags a defenseless jack, the players switch roles and the game continues.

- The new shark must make his or her presence known to the rest of the group upon being tagged.
- If you are working with a large group, you may designate two or more people to be sharks. You may have "sharks" wave bright colored bandannas above their heads as they cruise through the jack looking for un-schooled fish. In this way, the sharks are more easily spotted prowling the waters, and when new players become sharks the jacks are alerted to the change.

Safety

Watch for players tagging roughly, pushing, shoving, running, tripping, or otherwise becoming too competitive. Also, make sure there are no hazards in the play area for people to trip on.

Variations

You may turn this game into a hands-on lesson about ocean life. Teach about schooling fish, predators, and prey by bringing in more information about this subject. You can also use the game as a metaphor for how we protect ourselves in many situations. Many of us are still protecting ourselves in this way all the time. You can change the setting from ocean to forest to create a new conversation. Be creative and modify this activity to fit your situation.