



## Gift from the Heart

(from the Self-Esteem Chapter)

Giving and receiving gifts is often a very special and magical event. The giver expresses caring for the receiver by selecting something he or she feels would be appreciated. The receiver gets a token of affection and love. This activity is about giving your understanding of others to them and learning how others see you through the exchange of thoughtful gifts.

### Objective

To build relations among group members through positive interactions and to increase self-esteem by receiving thoughtful gifts from others.

### Who

People with low self-esteem who could benefit from being thoughtful and nice towards others.

### Group Size

2 or more

### Materials

- Paper
- Pens, Pencils
- Colored markers or crayons

### Description

Each member of the group chooses an imaginary gift to give to each person in the group. Each gift is drawn or described on a piece of paper to be given to the recipient. The gifts should be thought out so they represent the individuals who receive the gifts. The gifts may be deep and thoughtful such as “courage to face life’s difficulties”, for someone who has shared many deep problems with the group. Or the gifts may simply be something the receiver would enjoy, such as “a season ski pass to go skiing any time you want,” for someone who enjoys skiing. Once everyone has completed their gifts, let one person at a time give out his/her gifts to the others. When giving the gifts, the giver should explain what the gift is and why she or he chose to give that particular gift to the individual.

### Discussion Topics

1. How did you decide what gifts to give?
2. What did you think about the gifts you got?
3. Do you think there was a good match between the people and the gifts they received?

### Variation

If the group is large, assign each person a select number of group members to create a gift for, or break the large group into smaller group.

# Mega Mini Golf

(from the Teamwork chapter)

Playing golf is an individual sport, but creating a golf course takes many different people working together to reach a common goal. In this activity each person can contribute unique ideas and listen to the ideas of others to make a great golf course.

## Objective

For group members to use teamwork in a group situation, by participating in group decision making.

## Who

People who need to work on being a member of a team and getting along with teammates while working on a teamwork activity.

## Group Size

4 to 16 participants

## Materials

- **Large plastic cups**
- Hockey sticks or golf clubs
- Whiffle balls or tennis balls
- Any equipment that can be used to create mini golf obstacles (i.e. cones, basketballs, jump ropes, chairs, blocks, beanbags, tables, milk cartons, boxes, tumbling mats, etc.)

## Description

Use a large field or open room. Place all the equipment (except for the hockey sticks or golf clubs and balls) in a pile in the middle. Break the group into smaller groups of two to four members.

Each group may use a few items from the pile to create an original mini golf hole. Each group gets one of the large plastic cups to use for the hole itself. Use the cup by tipping it onto its side so that the open end is the target at the end of the mini golf hole.

Using the selected items, the group creates an obstacle in front of the cup, with a designated starting point for the ball. Once each group has completed their mini golf hole, tour the golf course as a group, allowing each group to give an explanation of their hole to the rest of the group.

Once the tour is completed, give each person a hockey stick and ball. Have the group play a round of mini golf with each small group starting the game at a different hole.

## Discussion Topics

1. Did everyone in your group contribute to the creation of the golf hole? If not, why not? If so, what contribution did you make?
2. Would it have been easier or more difficult to create a mini golf hole by yourself? Why?
3. Was there any confusion about the explanation of the course once play started?
4. How was teamwork used during this activity?

## Variations

- Depending on the size of the group and the amount of time allowed, each group may be allowed to create more than one golf hole.
- With younger children it is a good idea to supply each group with a small pile of items that they must use when creating their golf hole. Also, use hula hoops for the hole.

# Direction Direction

(from the Communication Chapter)

In our society there is a constant transfer of information from one person to another. You must be careful when you pass information on if you want it to stay accurate. One great example shows up in rules for a game. If you check with people in different parts of the country you will find out that many of the games have different rules. Someone, something changed the rules a little bit

In this activity someone gets a set of rules and the group gets to see how easy it can be to make mistakes in passing them on. This can be a fun way to see what can happen when information is not passed on correctly.

## Objective

For people to recognize the importance of using good communication skills when giving directions and when receiving directions. To recognize the difficulties encountered when interpreting what someone else said.

## Who

People who believe everything they hear.

People who could benefit from listening carefully to directions and passing them along correctly.

## Group Size

2 or more

## Materials

- Varies

## Description

Chose a game that has a few specific rules that must be followed in order to play the game (and enough rules to make it hard to remember them all). Prior to the activity select one person and give him/her the direction for the game without telling the rest of the group. Verbally explain the game can clearly state all of the rules.

At the time of the game, the person who has heard the rules will give the directions to the rest of the group without any help from you. Allow the group to play the game once through before having a group discussion or making any corrections or clarifications in the rules of the game.

## Discussion Topics

1. Was there any confusion about the rules of the game?
2. Why do you think the game was explained correctly (or incorrectly)?
3. What is important to remember when listening to others and when giving directions?

## Variations

- Select a game that requires two teams. Separate the two teams and select one member from each team to receive the directions for the game. Each person explains the rules to his/her team.
- Give each team a different set of directions, on purpose.

# The Board Game Challenge

(from the Anger Management chapter)

Not every competitive game is physically active. These games can be every bit as intense and frustrating as physical games. With these activities the group gets a chance to practice its anger management in another kind of realistic situation.

## Objective

For people to show good sportsmanship towards teammates and towards an opponent in a competitive situation. For people to practice using appropriate anger control skills when becoming frustrated, agitated or angry in a competitive activity.

## Who

People who have difficulty controlling their anger in competitive situations.

## Group Size

3 or more

## Materials

- Play money
- A variety of board games that played by taking turns
- Some suggestions are Operation, Stay Alive, Simon, Jenga

## Description

The idea of the game is to finish with the most money. Money is earned by accomplishing different tasks from different games. For example if you are using the game Operation, pass the game around. Give each person a turn to pick out a piece without getting buzzed to earn a set amount of money.

This type of competition may be done with many different games. Use your imagination and resources to give away money using different board games. Money creates a competitive environment that seems to bring out intense feelings. Also a prize may be offered for the one with the most money at the end to increase the incentive and make the games a bit more competitive.

## Discussion Topics

1. If you lost, how did you feel?
2. Why did you want to win?
3. Do you ever get angry or disappointed when playing a game? If so, how do you handle it?
4. Do you feel competition is good or bad? Why?
5. Would you have had the same desire to win if money had not been a factor? Why or why not?

## Variations

- Hold an auction at the end of the game so that the group members can spend the money they won.
- Give away money for acts of good sportsmanship. Take away money for acts of poor sportsmanship.

# To Make this Box Represent Me, I would...

(from the *Self-Discovery* chapter)

Being able to open up to others in a group is the first step in becoming an active member of the group. Some people have difficulty opening up to others and sharing their feelings. Something as simple as a cardboard box can be a helpful tool for getting people to feel comfortable about sharing their feelings with the group, for the first time or even for the fifteenth time.

## **Objective**

To learn the perception that each person in the group holds about him/herself.

To provide a chance for people to open up to others in the group.

## **Who**

People who have difficulty expressing their feelings directly.

## **Group Size**

2 or more

## **Materials**

- An empty box with a lid

## **Description**

Gather the group into a circle. The leader holds the empty box and says "to make this box represent me I would..." (i.e. "I would fill it with chocolate covered candy and then tape it shut because it is difficult to find out what is inside of me but once I open up there are many wonderful surprises to be discovered.").

Once the leader has completed the statement he/she passes the box to the next person who then completes the sentence and then passes it to the person beside him/her. The box continues around the circle until everyone has had a turn.

## **Discussion Topics**

1. Did the box make it easier to say something?
2. Did you feel that you could be in better control of how much you said?
3. What did you learn about others?

## **Variation**

- Change what the box represents: "To make this box represent \_\_\_\_\_ (my family, the way I deal with my anger, my relationship with God, my role in this group, etc.), I would..."

# Time Switch

(from the Coping Skills chapter)

Playing in the backyard with a bunch of other kids or hanging out in a friend's bedroom after school are examples of unstructured activities. Going to a church sponsored event, school dance or football practice fall into the category of structured activities.

Some people keep themselves out of trouble by becoming engaged in mainly structured activities while others enjoy the freedom found when engaging in unstructured activities. Helping the members of the group recognize the role that planned and unplanned activities have on their lives will help them make better choices in their leisure lifestyle.

## Objective

For people to recognize behavior that is related to the use or misuse of their leisure time and to explore the difference between structured and unstructured time.

## Who

People who could benefit from a more or less structured leisure lifestyle.

## Group Size

4 or more

## Materials

· Varies

## Description

Divide the group time into two parts. Spend half of the group time playing a game that is organized and led by the leader of the group. This organized game may be anything from a board game to a running game, as long as it has rules and includes everyone in the group.

Once the group time is half way over, stop the organized game and allow the group to have unstructured free time. Provide the opportunity for free play, by providing materials and equipment that are available in the facility.

At the end of the group time, gather the group together and make a group list of the good and bad aspects of structured time and the good and bad aspects of unstructured time.

## Discussion Topics

1. Do you ever find yourself getting into trouble when time is structured? Unstructured? If so why?
2. What are the benefits you receive when you are involved in structured activities?
3. Why is it important to be able to spend unstructured free time in a positive way?
4. If you feel you should be involved in more structured activities, how can you do that?