



Group Juggle

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Supplies:

- ▶ 9 Balls (tennis balls or balls of various sizes, no larger than 6")
- ▶ 2 water balloons
- ▶ 3 or 4 paper plates with comments written on them, such as "give a compliment to your neighbor," "say 'I'm sorry,'" "say 'thank you.'"
- ▶ Music to play that has a great beat (see Academic Innovations' Motivational Songlist for ideas.

Object:

- ▶ To see how many balls the group can keep tossing within the group.
- ▶ To incorporate the roles students play as discussed in Chapter 3 of *Career Choices*.
- ▶ To implement the idea of keeping balance and perspective in life.

Directions:

1. Have participants form a circle.
2. Give the following explanation:
 - ▶ The object of this game is to see how many balls the group can keep in play. Begin with one ball, which is given to a student selected to be the "starter."
 - ▶ The starter begins by tossing the ball to someone in the circle. The ball should be tossed to someone across from the thrower rather than next to them. The only rule is that the two people on either the right or the left of the starter may NOT return the ball to the starter. The cycle is complete when each person has tossed the ball once. No person may touch the ball more than once in a cycle.
 - ▶ When the group is ready add another ball for tossing.
 - ▶ Add other objects to add fun to the game, such as
 - ▶ A waterballoon, which may be called "gossip," "negative attitude," or "drugs."
 - ▶ Paper plates with directions written on them—when a student receives a paper plate, they must do the action on the plate and pass it on.

Begin the Game:

- ▶ Give the ball to the starter, stand back, and watch.

Use the Game as an Ice Breaker:

- ▶ You will begin to see distinct behaviors (leadership, cooperation, machismo, etc.) evolving.
- ▶ Stop the game from time to time to debrief.
- ▶ Encourage students to discuss the effective strategies which made for success (e.g., talking to each other, praising, eye contact, cooperating, body language, etc.).
- ▶ Introduce the plates and water balloons whenever you like. Students may take the water balloon out of play if they remember that your directions said that the balls had to be tossed, not the balloon. Do not instruct them to do it; let them do it only if they think it up themselves.

Variations:

- ▶ After discussing the roles students play (e.g., student, worker, athlete, civic, companion, etc.) name the balls—the education ball, the athletic ball, the club member ball, the worker ball, the homemaker ball, etc. Possibly use different size balls, the largest corresponding to the biggest role students play, which should be their “student” role. Tennis balls are okay as well.
- ▶ Each time a new ball enters the game say, “Here’s your athlete role” or whatever ball/role is currently entering. Caution students not to drop the balls, because in life we need to keep these important aspects moving.
- ▶ Debrief to relate comments and questions to life.
 - ▶ What makes it hard to balance all the components of life?
 - ▶ What makes tossing the balls or balancing successful?
 - ▶ Commitment, concentration, attention to one thing at a time, being flexible when you have more than one thing to do, etc.
- ▶ Each new phase is an opportunity for stopping the game and discussing. Sometimes a student will have three balls at one time. This is perfect for discussing how we handle all the roles without dropping any.
- ▶ During this variation, use two water balloons, calling one “gossip” and the other “drugs” or something negative. At the next debriefing, ask about why the water balloon is handled so carefully. The students contribute that if the balloon breaks, the catcher and those around him/her may get wet. This leads to a simple concept: Gossip and drugs tend to taint not only the receiver, but those around. When students have been wise enough to take the balloon out of play, their response has been that not having these things simplifies the balancing act.
- ▶ Use this game in many different ways. The kids love it as they get to stand, move about, communicate, etc.

