**BEACH BALL STORIES**

**Supplies**: Beach ball for every 8-12 students, permanent markers, masking or electrical tape

**Setup Prior To Activity**: Inflate each beach ball to maximum size. Beginning at the top of the beach ball, spiral the tape down the beach ball until it reaches the other end. This should look similar to a “candy cane” style stripe.

**How To Play**: Divide preteens into groups of 8-12 (smaller groups are also fine). Instruct the groups to sit down in circles apart from other groups. Give each group a permanent marker and a pre-taped beach ball. Ask each group to create a name of a main character for their story and an activity for that character to be doing in the story. For example, a group’s story could be about Mr. Bieber going to get a haircut. You may also assign these to the groups. Explain that the group will create their story one word at a time. A group member must only write one word on the beach ball and then pass it to the next team member. The game continues until no space is left on the beach ball or until the group feels that their story is finished. Give groups 10 minutes to create their stories on the lines created on the beach ball. At the end of the activity, have a member from each group stand to read their stories. They are bound to be mixed up and rather funny.

**Tips:**

* Be careful not to make the spiral too tight. There must be enough room between rows for students to write.
* Keep the plots simple enough that kids can freely expand them. Don’t get too specific with the activities for main characters.
* Walk around the groups and guide them in creating their story if they are stuck
* If you want to make it more complicated, call out switch in the middle of the activity and make the groups switch beach balls with another group.

**SLIP ‘N’ SLIDE ‘N’ GRAB**

This is a great activity to bring some structure to a traditional water day or summer camp activity. This game can be played on any homemade or store bought slip ‘n’ slide

**Supplies**: Slip ‘n’ Slide, baby shampoo, water hose, assortment of objects varying in size (small, medium, large, x-large)

**How To Make A Slip ‘N’ Slide**: You can purchase plastic sheeting (heavy duty) at most home improvement stores. These rolls will make more slip ‘n’ slides than you can use in a summer, so it’s a worthwhile purchase. Roll out the sheeting on a grassy surface free from rocks or debris. Use flat head spikes to tack the sides of the plastic into the ground. Be sure to tape down these spots to prevent preteens from sliding over top of them. Neon orange duct tape works great to hold them down and also make them visible. (You can also line the sides with swim noodles to hold more of the water on the plastic) Coat the plastic with water and spread half a bottle of baby shampoo on the plastic. Continue to spray with water. The plastic will be extremely slippery, so encourage preteens to slide on their stomachs and DO NOT RUN ON THE SLIDE. Continue to add water and soap as necessary for your desired slipperiness.

**How To Play**: Once preteens are enjoying the slip ‘n’ slide, divide them into two teams in separate lines. If possible, use more than one slip ‘n’ slide. If only one is used, have the teams take turns. Spread the assortment of objects out on the plastic sheeting and be sure the mix up the sizes. Assign point values to each size of objects (Small=100 pts, Medium=50 pts, Large=25 pts). As preteens slide down the slip ‘n’ slide, they must grab as many objects as possible to acquire points. The objects that they are holding as they exit the slide are the only points that will count for their team. Touching objects or holding them for a moment and then dropping does not count for points.

**Tips:**

* Nerf balls are great to use for this activity. You can also use Koosh balls.
* To make the activity more difficult, assign adult leaders to spray the kids with water hoses as they slide down the slip ‘n’ slide.

**NOODLE JOUST**

**Supplies:** 4-6 swim noodles, 4-6 dowel rods, 2x4 wood stud, optional: protective gear (helmets, shoulder pads, shin guards, etc.)

**How To Make A Lance**: Swim noodles have a precut hole in the middle that is perfect size to insert a dowel rod. Cut the noodle to be about 10-12 inches shorter than the dowel rod. Insert the dowel rod and leave the 10-12 inches out of one end to be the handle. Be sure the dowel rod does not easily come out of the other end of the swim noodle. You may tape the noodle and dowel rod together if needed.

**How To Play**: Divide the group into two equal teams and number the team members. Create matches based on number, i.e. 1 vs. 10, 1 vs. 1, or other random selection. Place the 2x4 wood stud on the ground with the 4-inch side facing up. Have each jouster stand on the 2x4 with both feet. Give them each a noodle lance, count to 3, and have them try to “push” the other off the board. Explain that there is no swinging or jabbing. They must use the lances to nudge the other person off the board.

**Tips**:

* Put down plastic sheeting around the jousting area. Cover it with shaving cream, maple & chocolate syrup and any other messy substance that comes to mind. That way, when players are pushed off the wood stud, they land in the mess.
* For harder matches, mark lines on the board that prevent the jouster from stepping forward. This gives the opponent a chance to recover if knocked off balance. Disqualify either jouster if they cross the line.
* This is a great game to pitch boys against girls because of the size difference. Many of the larger boys will struggle with balance as the smaller framed girls nudge them with the lance.
* For more fun and safety (although it’s really not necessary), have each jouster wear protective gear. The more extreme the better. For example, have the jousters wear baseball chest protector, football helmet, soccer shin guards, hockey gloves, skate boarding elbow pads and kneepads. It will also increase the difficulty in maneuvering on the 2x4.

**CHILL** **OUT**

**Supplies**: Containers/buckets, water, objects to be frozen, freezer

**Preparing for the Activity**: If you are doing an object lesson, use the objects that will be used in the teaching time for this game. If not, simply choose some random items to be frozen in blocks of ice. Place the objects in a container/bucket relative to their size, and fill the container with water. Place the container in a freezer overnight and make sure it freezes solid. Freeze 1 item per 10-15 preteens. Smaller groups are ok, but it will take more time to thaw the ice.

**How to Play:** Divide the group into teams of 10-15 preteens. Explain that each group will be given a special object that they must return to you. The challenge is that the object is frozen in ice. The team must find a way to thaw the block of ice, remove the object, and bring it to you/the leader. The first group to do so is the winner. The key is that there are no instructions or rules on how to thaw the block of ice. That means groups can do whatever is required including pouring hot water over the block of ice. You may choose to allow or not allow the students to break the block of ice.

**SHAVE THE BEARD**

**Supplies**: shaving cream, small water pistols, water

**How to Play**: Divide preteens into pairs if group is small or into teams of 5-7 if group is large. Select one team member to be the beard wearer. Have them lather shaving cream on their face in the form of a beard. Their partner/teammates must use the water pistols to try to wash the shaving cream off of their face.

**Tips**:

* The smaller and cheaper the water pistol, the better.
* Have the bearded team member stand at a distance from team mates so that the challenge is more difficult
* You may choose to use ponchos or trash bags to cover/protect the clothing of the beard wearer.

**THE IMPOSSIBLE SHOT**

This game is usually just as the name implies…impossible. If set up correctly, you can play this game over several weeks and give every preteen a chance each week.

**Supplies:** Basketball backboard and rim, chain/rope, basketball

**Game Set Up**: This game requires some setup, but will last several weeks. You will need to find a way to rig the basketball backboard and rim to the highest ceiling or wall of your building. The higher the better for this activity. Chains and lock pins work great if you have an exposed beam or brace to hang the goal from. If this is not possible, try to rig up the goal on a light pole or extension ladder to be used outdoors. Do not use a net on the rim because a net makes it easier to judge the shot.

**How to Play**: Line preteens up in a single file line and give each preteen a single chance to make a shot. Make the line a good distance from the goal, somewhere between 15-20 feet. Have prizes ready for any preteen that makes the shot. You can play this game over multiple weeks, but continue to only give preteens one chance to make the shot.

**Variations:**

* + Use water balloons instead of basketballs and a hula hoop as the goal (have a leader hold it up high).

**NAME THAT SNOW CONE FLAVOR**

**Supplies**: Snow cone maker or chipped ice, cups, squirt bottles with snow cone flavors (grape, cherry, lime), squirt bottles with other flavors (coffee, pickle juice, lemon juice, tomato soup)

**How to Play**: Select several preteens to participate in this activity. Explain to them that they are going to take part in a taste-test project. They will each get to try a variety of snow cones and write down the flavor that they think it is. Begin with a few of the common snow cone flavors, and then move on to the more uncommon flavors. It will be humorous for the other preteens to watch the faces and reactions of the taste-testers.

**Tips**:

* Be sure that none of the participants have allergies or extreme gag-reflexes.
* This is a great activity to partner with a snow cone party for the entire group.
* Snow Cone machines can be rented from party rental companies or purchased in smaller forms from retail grocers. You can also purchase chipped ice from convenient stores that will work for this activity.
* After the game, make a snow cone for everyone to share together.

**NO-SNOW SLEDDING**

**Supplies**: Carpet remnants or blankets, cones or chairs

**How to Play**: Snow sledding is a great winter activity, but it can also be a fun summer activity with the help of a few friends. Divide preteens into teams of 6-8. Give each team a carpet remnant or blanket to use as their sled. Each team will have 1 or 2 team members sit on the “sled” and the remaining team members will pull them through the course. Set up chairs or cones in a pattern that requires the teams to weave in and out through the course with their sled.

**Tips**:

* Be sure that all riders hold onto the “sled” to make sure that no accidents occur while being pulled.
* Have team members switch who is pulling and who is riding throughout the race so that everyone fills each role.

**DUCKS IN A BARREL**

Supplies: Buckets of water, sponges

How to Play: Divide preteens into two equal groups. Have one group form a large circle with all team members facing inward. Have the other group scatter randomly inside that circle. Place the buckets of water and sponges around the outer circle. Players must stay outside the circle to throw sponges. On “GO”, the team members in the circle will play “dodge ball” with the players inside the circle by trying to hit them with the soaked sponges. If players are hit, they must exit the circle. Play until all team members have been eliminated. Allow the teams to switch positions and continue playing.

Tips:

* Car Wash Sponges are great for this game because they are larger than average sponges and hold more water.
* Make a rule for how the sponges that fall inside the circle can be retrieved. For example, the sponges can be retrieved but must be dunked before being thrown again. This makes it impossible for players to pick up sponges and immediately throw them back at players from a closer distance.

**FROZEN SCRABBLE**

**Supplies**: Gallon size Ziploc bags, 10 Adult Large white t-shirts, extra large permanent marker, freezer

**Preparing for the Activity**: Use the extra large permanent marker to write letters on the front of each shirt. Choose a 5-letter word from the Scripture that you will be teaching from for this activity. Make two sets of Scrabble pieces by writing a letter from the word on each shirt. Next, soak the shirts in water but do not ring them out. Fold each shirt and slide it into a Ziploc bag. Place the bags in the freezer overnight or for 4-5 hours before the activity.

**How to Play**: Divide preteens into two teams. Give each team a set of frozen t-shirts in Ziploc bags to be their Scrabble pieces. Read the Scripture verse but leave out the 5-letter word you’ve chosen. Instruct the groups to look up the passage and find out which word is missing. Next, the teams will need to find a way to thaw out the t-shirts, put them on team members, and line up spelling the word correctly. The first team to do so wins the race.

**Tips**:

* Be sure to check the shirts before your activity. Depending on the amount of water in the shirts before freezing, the shirts may need half an hour to thaw before asking the kids to try thawing. The shirts can freeze solid and be very difficult to thaw.
* Encourage kids to thaw the shirts fully before trying to unfold or the shirts will stretch and rip.

**NOODLE TUG ‘O’ WAR**

**Supplies**: Swim noodles, kiddie pool,

**How to Play**: Have preteens face off against one another in a good old-fashioned tug of war, only instead of a rope trying using a swim noodle. Each player will grab the end of the swim noodle firmly and begin to pull when you say, “GO”. Raise the stakes by placing them on either side of a kiddie pool filled with ice-cold water. The “losing” player will be pulled into the freezing cold water and sent back in line to try again. This game can be set up as a tournament or a game where the winner of the match stays to face the next opponent.

**Variation:** Instead of water, fill the kiddie pool with messy stuff like chocolate syrup, maples syrup, whipped cream, etc.

**GONE FISHIN’**

**Supplies**: Goldfish crackers, Jell-o, Bundt cake pan, 2 bowls

**Preparing for the Activity**: Follow instructions for making a Jell-o Mold cake. The directions can be found at <http://www.sheknows.com/food-and-recipes/articles/804545/make-a-jello-mold-a-retro-rainbow-dessert> . The only change to the instructions is to add several gold fish crackers to the “yogurt layer” of the mold. Make 2 Jell-o Molds and be sure to add the same number of goldfish cracker to each mold.

**How to Play**: Select two preteens from you group to go fishing. Being out the two Jell-o molds and set them on a table in front of each player. Explain that inside the mold are several goldfish crackers. Each player must fish for the goldfish in the jell-o mold only using their mouth. The crackers must be pulled out and spit into a bowl. Give the players 1 minute to fish for as many goldfish as they can. At the end of the minute, count their fish and declare a winner of the competition.

**Variations**: If you dare, you can also put two players to a mold. They will most likely ingest some of the jell-o that has also been in the other player’s mouth. This is pretty nasty, but it might work for you group of preteens.

**ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT**

**Supplies**: 2 swim sets (fins, snorkel, goggles), 2 float rings (kind with an animal head and an opening in the back), 2 kiddie pools

**How to Play**: Create two lines with tape or rope on the ground. Make the lines 10-12 feet apart. Divide preteens into two equal groups and have the groups stand behind the lines facing each other. Number the first group 1 through “—“. Do the same with the other team, but make sure that you count the opposite way. For example, if you had 10 players per side then player 1 would be standing across from player 10, 2 across from 9, 3 across from 8, etc. Place the two pools side by side in the middle between the two lines. Beside the pools, place the swim sets and float rings. Assign a pool and gear to each team and make sure that they only use that set. Explain that when you call out a number, that player from each team must run to the middle and put on their swim gear. Then they must sit down in the pool and spin around while singing a complete verse of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Once the verse is complete, they must exit the pool and remove their swim gear before returning to their place in line. The first to get back across the line wins a point for their team.

**Variations**:

* Depending on the size of your group, you can call out “ALL” and have every player go to their team’s pool to jump in and back out. The team with the last member to return to their spot loses a point.
* If you have a large group, then double up on supplies and have more than two preteens compete at one time.

**SHARKS IN THE WATER**

This is a variation of the game Row, Row, Row Your Boat that can be played at a preteen pool party.

**Supplies**: Swimming pool

**How to Play**: Divide preteens into two equal teams. Have the teams line up on opposite sides of the pool facing one another. Chose two members from each team to begin the game as “Sharks.” Number the first team 1 through “—“. Do the same with the other team, but make sure that you count the opposite way. For example, if you had 10 players per side then player 1 would be standing across from player 10, 2 across from 9, 3 across from 8, etc. The four “Sharks” begin the game in the water. Explain that when you call out a number, that player from each team must jump into the pool and swim to the other side without being caught by one of the “Sharks.” If a “Shark” catches them, then they take the place of the “Shark” and the “Shark” takes their place and number outside the pool. Players will be “switching” teams throughout the game, but there should always be players with same number on opposite sides of the pool.

**Variations:**

* This game can also be played in an open space by giving the “Sharks” super soakers or large water guns. The same rules would apply.

**RUBBER** **DUCK** **RACE**

**Supplies**: Swimming pool, 4 rubber ducks

**How to Play**: Divide preteens into 4 teams. Have each team line up single file at one end of the pool. Give each team a Rubber Duck. On “GO”, have each team enter the pool one at a time and race their duck to the other end and back. The catch is that they cannot use any part of their body except their head. They can only push the duck with a part of their face or head. Make sure that each team has equal number of players or ask teams with fewer players to go more than once.

**Variations**:

* For a more difficult race, have 2 teams at each end of the pool. This means that the ducks will be racing in opposite directions. This requires the preteens to maneuver their ducks around the other players.
* It is best to do this game in the shallow end of the pool, but it can also be done from shallow to deep end of the pool. Just be careful of exhausting the preteens by making them tread water in the deep end of the pool.