Lesson 5: Cooperative Play

**PREPARATION**
- 5 minutes

**SET UP**
- Set out tape or chalk
- Blindfolds

**SUPPLIES**
- 30-50 "mines"
- Tape or chalk
- Blindfolds

**Outcomes** (School Age)
The purpose of this lesson is to have the children:
- Develop listening skills
- Participate in a cooperative activity
- Develop team building skills

**Discussion**

**DO** (School Age) ☀️ 15-20 minutes

? Ask: Do you know what team building means? Answer: team building is when you participate in activities in a group to help you learn how to work together to solve problems.

? Ask: Do you know how to develop team building skills? Possible answers: through games, physical activities, group activities, conversation and listening.

You will encounter many different kinds of people throughout your life. It is important that you learn to work cooperatively with others. Part of working cooperatively is having good listening skills.

Have the children stand in a circle. Whisper a simple message into the ear of one child. Have that child then whisper the message to the next child in the circle. That child then whispers the message to the next child, and so on. Have the last child reveal the message. Discuss what happened if the original message was not the same as the message the last person received.

? Ask: How might a mistake in passing the messages affect teamwork?

**Activity 1 – Mine Field**

**DO** (School Age) ☀️ 20-25 minutes

The object of the Mine Field⁶ game is to have blindfolded children make their way through a "minefield" with only verbal directions from their partner.

Draw, or have the children draw, a large (20’ X 40’) outline of a rectangle with tape or chalk. This rectangle becomes the

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⁶ Memory Ball Toss and Mine Field activities were adapted from Rohnke, K. and Butler, S. (1995). Quicksilver. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.
"minefield."

Ask the children to set up "mines" inside the minefield. The mines are 30-50 small soft objects such as beanbags, food models, rolled up socks, etc. Make sure that "mines" are soft enough so there are no injuries. You may assign each child the task of bringing two soft items to the program or class.

Have the children divide into pairs and stand at opposite ends of the rectangle. One partner in each pair is blindfolded, while the other partner gives directions.

The child giving directions calls out simple verbal instructions to the blindfolded partner, guiding him or her through the minefield. If the blindfolded partner touches a mine, he or she is out of the game.

Repeat this activity allowing the other partner to be blindfolded and guided through the minefield.

**REFLECT (School Age)**

? Ask: How well did your partner follow directions? How well did your partner give directions?

? Ask: Did you feel more frustrated as the blindfolded partner or the partner giving directions?

**APPLY (School Age)**

Have the children brainstorm to generate a list of things they could do to become better listeners, communicators, and team players.

Allow the children to repeat the minefield activity with a new partner and apply some of these new ideas.
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**Preparation**

- 5 minutes

**Supplies**

- Stopwatch
- One soft item such as a Koosh ball, a small stuffed animal, or other soft item

**Outcomes** (Middle School • Teen)

The purpose of this lesson is to have youth:

- Participate in a cooperative activity
- Develop problem-solving skills

**Discussion**

**DO** (Middle School • Teen) ⊕ 15-20 minutes

? Ask: Can you name some ways to build physical skills? Some examples might include running, playing basketball, swimming, and dance, etc.

? Ask: Which of these activities depend on cooperation and which don’t? What is the difference between a cooperative and non-cooperative activity?

? Ask: Can you name sports or other activities in which cooperation is necessary for the success of the team? Examples: basketball, soccer, football or a group homework assignment.

? Ask: In which sports or activities is cooperation less important? Examples: swimming, singles tennis, running, etc.

Explain to youth that some people prefer to be part of a team where everyone’s efforts are equally important. Others prefer to participate in activities in which they are dependent only upon their own skills. Stress that youth should consider their preferences when choosing activities. Keep in mind that cooperation and teamwork are necessary skills for sports, school, work, and almost all facets of life.

**Activity 1 – Memory Ball Toss**

**DO** (Middle School • Teen) ⊕ 20-25 minutes

Ask youth to form a circle. Give one person the ball and identify them as the starting person. Explain that each person is going to catch the ball and then toss it to someone who hasn’t previously caught the ball.

Explain that the last person to catch the ball must return it to the starting person. Each person must remember who tossed the ball to them and the next person to whom they tossed the ball.
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The ball toss is then repeated, remembering the pattern and sequence of tosses (i.e., each person must receive and toss the ball to the same person as before). Practice the toss a few times so students can establish the pattern. The challenge is to see how fast the group can move the ball through the pattern from start to finish. The group should work as a team to help each other remember where the ball goes next. Time the group’s efforts to track improvement.

Activity 2 – Mine Field

[DO] (Middle School • Teen) 🕒 20-25 minutes
See Activity 1 for School Age youth – Mine Field on page 187.

[REFLECT] (Middle School • Teen)
? Ask: Why do you believe your group did or did not make improvements with the ball toss game?

? Ask: What did your group do differently as time progressed? Possible answer: better decision making as a group or team than individually.

[APPLY] (Middle School • Teen)
Ask youth to identify a situation at home or school where teamwork is necessary for completion of a task. Have them report back what they noticed after becoming more aware of the listening and cooperation skills necessary for people to work well together.