

Discovery Games

20 Values Games

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1. Tallest Tower

Value: Courage

Players: 10+ players | teams of 4-6 people | Ages 10+

Equipment: newspapers, tape

How to play

Divide group into teams of 3-5 people. The teams are given a newspaper and a roll of tape to build a freestanding tower.

The team with the highest freestanding tower wins the challenge. Set a time limit of 10 minutes.

Variations

- Add creativity to decide the winner.
- If the paper is stronger than a newspaper, you can say that the tower should handle a book on the top (e.g. a cookbook).
- Make a tower with people.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players showed courage. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

- What did it take to build the largest one?
- Tell of a time where you have had courage in your life? (Or when you saw it in someone else.)
- Where do you need to have courage in your life now?

2. Bing, Bang, Bomb

Value: Responsibility

Players: 9+ players | teams of 3 people | Ages 8+

Equipment: none

How to play

Players stand in teams of three. Each group is given a number.

The first player in each team is given the name “Bing”, the second is “Bang”, and the third is “Bomb”.

The leader calls out a command; for example “Bomb 3”. The first player in team 3 has to quickly say “Bing”, the second player “Bang” and the Third says “Bomb + Group Number” for example “Bomb 2”. Team 2 then have to Bing, Bang, and Bomb in sequence and pass on to another team in this way. Your team is out if:

- You say it in the wrong sequence
- You substitute any other words instead of bing, bang and bomb
- You bomb your own group e.g. Group 3 saying “Bomb 3”
- You bomb a group who is out of the game already

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players concentrated on their responsibilities. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- What happened when players did not know their part?
- What are you responsible for in your life?
- Where do you need to be more disciplined in responsibility?

3. Ball Round

Value: Self Confidence

Players: 15+ players | teams of up to 15 people | Ages 6+

Equipment: balls

How to play

Players stand in a circle and pass a ball around. They are challenged to pass the ball around faster and faster. Measure the time it takes to pass it around the whole circle so the ball touches everyone's hands.

Allow them to be creative and let them do it less time.

Variation

- A player is chosen to run around the outside of the circle to race the ball being passed around.



Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players developed competence and confidence.

Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

Example questions:

- Did you notice all of you were able to increase your time?
- Why did we improve our time?
Where in life does this strategy work?
- What is an area in your life now that you want to grow more in confidence?

4. Frantic

Value: Helping others as an encourager

Players: 15+ players | teams of up to 10 people | Ages 8+

Equipment: hoops and objects (shoes or balls)

How to play

Divide players into 4 even teams (e.g. 8 in each team). Each team lines up at a corner of a square 8 x 8 meters. Each team has a hoop in front of them and there is a hoop in the center. The hoop in the center will have 10 objects in it (eg balls or shoes.)

On 'GO' the first person from each team must run to the center to bring an object back to their team's hoop, then tag the next person in the line. The next person can either run to the center to bring back an object or go to another team's hoop to 'rob' an object and bring it back.

The game continues in this way. Only one object can be moved at a time. You cannot stop someone robbing an object.

The first team with **all** objects in their hoop wins.

NOTE: This is impossible unless all the teams strategize to help one team win. Don't tell them that this is the idea of the game!

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO9tlwW00Jo>

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players started competing until they were too tired and needed a new plan. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Why was it impossible to win and what needed to happen to make the game succeed?
- Does this type of competition happen in your life or at home with your siblings?
- Name a time when you have seen this.
- What can you do to help encourage friends or a family member when everybody wants the same thing?

5. Blind Square

Value: Listening to others

Players: 15+ players | teams of up to 15 people | Ages 10+

Equipment: 10 meter ropes and blindfolds

How to play

Team of up to 15 players are blindfolded. They stand in a line and are given a length of 10 meter rope to hold on to. The challenge is for them to form a square - without opening their eyes or anyone letting go of the rope. Once they are sure they have made a square they lower their rope to the ground and take off their blindfolds.

NOTE: One player (choose a quiet and shy player) is secretly given sight by removing the blindfold without anyone knowing but is not allowed to tell anyone that they can see. Will the group be willing to listen to this player?

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players listen to each other. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Who had the most ideas in the group during the activity? Why did they?
- Are there times in life where you do not feel heard?
- Why is it important to listen to what others have to say? How does that make them feel when they are heard?

6. Indian Rope Trick

Value: Perseverance

Players: 20+ players | teams of up to 10 people | Ages 8+

Equipment: 5-6 meter rope

How to Play

Two leaders stand facing each other about 5 meters apart. Each is holding one end of the rope. They turn the rope as a giant skipping rope. The group stands on one side of the rope.

There are a series of challenges for them to overcome starting easy and getting more complicated.

Challenges for the team

- Pass over to the other side, without anyone touching the rope, one by one without missing a turn.
- Pass over to the other side in pairs.
- Pass over to the other side in groups of 1,2,3,4 (for 10 participants).
- The final challenge is for them to pass over to the other side in groups of 1,2,3,4 and 5!

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players persist in the challenge. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Did you notice the game got harder with each challenge?
- Are there times at school, home or work where it is challenging?
- What is needed to succeed during those times?
- Where do you need to persevere now? What do you need in order to do that?

7. Ancient Numbers

Value: Focus

Players: Any number | play in one group | Ages 10+

Equipment: some sticks

How to play

The group sits in circle along with the leader. The leader says they will show the group how to understand ancient numbers.

The leader then arranges the sticks on the floor and says a number between 1 and 5. Ask the group what the number is. No one will guess at first and players will get frustrated. Keep repeating the game and some players will finally realize the secret.

The secret: the leader makes the 'number' and then puts their hand on the floor showing between 1 and 5 fingers. This will determine the number.

Variation

- Write on the ground in the dirt to make an ancient number.
- The leader uses two hands to show numbers up to 10.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players focus and try to solve the problem. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Did you notice that it was easy to guess what the numbers were when you knew what to focus on?
- Why was it so hard at first?
- Why is it hard to focus on important things in life sometimes?
- How can you find a better way to focus? List as many ways you can think of as a team.

8. Robot race

Value: Integrity to resist pressure

Players: Any number | teams of 3 players | Ages 10+

Equipment: blindfolds

How to Play

Players are divided into teams of 3. Player 1 in each team is blindfolded.

A ball or object is placed anywhere in the games area. Player 1 must get the ball. Player 2, facing the play area, can see the object but cannot speak. They can only direct player 3 by using their hands. Player 3, sitting and facing player 2, cannot see the play area. Player 3 sees the directions of player 2 and then guides player 1 by shouting directions to reach the object.

All teams play at the same time, and the first team to find the object wins. Play again and change the roles in each team.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players want to break the rules when they get frustrated. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Who was tempted to look?
- Who did look when you shouldn't have?
- What rules are you tempted to break in life?

9. Rag and Bottle

Value: Overcome failure

Players: 10 + players | teams of up to 15 players | Ages 10+

Equipment: 2 wet towels and a half filled plastic water bottle

How to play

Equal teams line up facing each other 5 meters apart. Number the players on both teams (1,2,3 ...).

Place a half-filled plastic bottle in the middle. Then place 2 wet towels on the floor at equal distances from the bottle.

When the leader calls a number, that player from each team runs to their team's towel and throws it at the bottle, trying to topple it. If it does not fall, the player must go pick up the towel, go back to the shooting spot, and then try again.

The player that knocks over the bottle first wins a point for their team. Continue playing by calling new numbers.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players are determined to try again when they fail. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

Example questions:

- Did you notice it was easy to fail at this game? Why?
- Are there tasks at school, sports or at home that are harder than you thought they would be?
- How do you overcome failure?
- What is an area in your life that you can apply what you have learned in this lesson, to help overcome failure?

10. Shoe Reach

Value: Do Your Best

Players: teams of 6 - 10 players | Ages 12+

Equipment: an object to pick up

The Challenge

Each team must retrieve an object 2 or 3 meters from where they can stand.

How to play

Mark a line where the team cannot cross. Place a football or water bottle 2 meters from that line. The team must work out a way to help a team member pick up the object without touching the ground beyond the line with any part of their body.

Variations

To make it more challenging:

- Make the distance to the object further.
- Give equipment to each team to use.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how team members developed ideas and communicated to do their best. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

- How do we best coordinate or communicate with others?
- What helped the team succeed?

- Where do you need to do your best now? Give a specific area that you commit to apply this to.

Video Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haGxjd5ckXA>



11. Blind Relay

Value: Trust

Players: teams of 6 - 12 players | Ages 12+

Equipment: blindfolds

How to play

Divide the group into teams of 8-12 people. Each team will then divide in to pairs. One in each pair is blindfolded while the other will be their coach. Set a marker 20 meters from the start line.

On GO, the first pair from each team need to go to the marker and back. The blindfolded player is helped by their coach. They will then tag the next pair so they can set off on the relay. It continues until the all the pairs in each team have completed the course.

The winning team will have completed the course successfully first.

Variations

- Swap roles for the second relay.
- Put obstacles on the course.
- Players must 1) hop twice on one foot; 2) turn around once; 3) run backwards for three steps; 4) touch the turn-around marker; and 5) grab their ankles and walk four steps.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how team members reacted in trust as the coach or the blind player. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- Why did you need trust in this game?
- Where is trust needed in your relationships at home, school or sport?
- How do you become a trustworthy person?
- Where can you become a more trustworthy person?



12. Beachcombers

Value: Alertness

Players: teams of 6 - 12 players | Ages 12+

Equipment: variety of objects like shoes, balls, plastic bottles

How to play

Use a play area the size of a basketball court.

Divide the group into teams of up to 12 players. Two teams are chosen to play the game first. They stand on the line on opposite sides of the court. One team is called the “Beachcombers” and the other the “Waves.”

A variety of simple objects are spread around on the beachcomber’s half of the court.

On the command ‘GO’, the Beachcombers and the Waves rush out together. The Beachcombers try to collect the treasure, while the Waves try to tag the beachcombers before they take the object back to their end line. If tagged, a Beachcomber is out. The game is played until all the Beachcombers are caught.

The teams then reverse roles.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players need to be alert to dangers. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- What did you need to do to succeed in this game?
- Why is it important to be alert in your life?
- Tell of a time where you have been alert and what did you learn?
- Where in your life do you need to be alert and what can you do to be better at it?

13. Musical Islands

Value: Sharing

Players: teams of 16 players | Ages 10+

Equipment: cardboard of different sizes, music

How to play

Scatter small pieces of cardboard over the floor to form islands. When the music starts, players walk around in a circle. When the music stops, each player must find an island to stand on. More than one player may stand on an island if there is room. Anyone unable to fit onto an island, is out. Remove islands from the game to make it more challenging. The music starts again and the game continues. The last player left wins.

Variations

- Pairs must share the same island if they are same age, same birth month, same letter in the beginning of the name, etc).

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players helped each other. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- How did you feel when someone helped you onto their island?
- Why is it difficult for us to share or sacrifice?

14. The Raft

Value: Asking Help

Players: 10 + | Teams of 10 | Ages 8+

Equipment: 2 sheets of cardboard per team

How to play

Divide players into teams of 10. Each team is given 2 sheets of cardboard big enough for them to stand on. Mark an area 15 meters wide. This is the 'river'.

Each team starts on one side of the river and must cross 10-15 meters to the other side. By using two pieces of cardboard, each team must travel on their 'rafts' to cross the river.

If any player on a team steps off the cardboard raft, the whole team must start again.

Variations

- Add other challenges to the game such as balls being thrown.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players used their size and skill for the team. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- How did teams help each other?
- Why do some people find it hard to ask for help?

15. One Way Gate

Value: Never give up

Players: 30+ | Play as one group | Ages 6+

Equipment: 2 sheets of cardboard per team

How to play

The whole group forms a circle with each player facing outwards with their hands connected.

4 volunteers move outside the room so that they cannot hear what is spoken in the circle.

One pair in the circle will be the “gate”. It is only through this gate that a player can enter the circle. 4 volunteers are brought back and asked to find the gate and enter the circle. The members in the circle cannot speak. The volunteers have to push their connected hands to find whether they are the gate. If it doesn’t open, then the volunteer moves to the next.

The first player to enter the circle wins. The game is repeated using another 4 volunteers and selecting a different gate.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players never give up. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- What was the feeling of the people who found the right gate?
- Was it difficult to keep searching for the gate for a long time?
- What are the things we have given up on?
- What are the things we will keep doing it with perseverance?

16. Frisbee

Value: Encouragement

Players: 15 + | teams of 10-15 | Families

Equipment: Frisbee or ball per team

How to play

Work in teams of about 10 or 20 people in an outside area. Give each team a Frisbee (or object) to throw and catch. Each team counts the number of times they are able to throw and catch and keep the Frisbee from hitting the ground.

After some practice modify the game. The team must notice and criticize every mistake the team makes. Continue to count successful passes.

After 2 minutes ask the team to only say encouraging comments and throw the Frisbee again. Count how many times you are able to pass it continuously.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice the contrast between a team who encourages and a team who discourages. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- What did you notice in the game with each round?
- Where did the team score the best result?
- Why is encouragement important?



17. Sightless Soccer

Value: Following the guidelines for better life

Players: 10+ | play in pairs | All ages

Equipment: Blindfolds, markers and balls

How to play

Divide into pairs. One is blindfolded and the other will be their coach. The blindfolded player must dribble the soccer ball down the field about 10 meters and through a goal.

The blindfolded player has to score the goal following the guidelines given by their partner. If there are enough balls everybody could play at once.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players listened and obeyed. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion. Example questions:

- How did the blindfolded player feel?
- What was the experience of the partner?
- Would the blind person reached the goal without the guideline given by the person who could see?
- Who is guiding you in your life - are they guiding you in a right way or not?

18. Crossing the River

Value: Serve others

Players: 10+ | play in pairs | Ages 8 +

Equipment: paper sheets or paper plates

How to play

Play on an area the width of a basketball court. This is the river. Players stand in pairs on one side of the river. One player in each pair will be the walker and the other the servant.

The servant is given 2 sheets of paper. To cross to the river the servant must lay down the paper sheets for the walker to step on. The walker can only stand on the paper sheets. If they stand in the river they must start again.

By working together, they cross the river to the other side. Once there they swap roles and come back in the same way.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players worked together and served the other.

Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

Example questions:

- How was it hard to serve?
- How did it feel when the one you served reached the line?
- Where can we do it in our life?

19. Caterpillar

Value: Staying connected during crises and working towards goal

Players: 15+ | Teams of 6-10 | Ages 10 +

Equipment: none

How to play

Work in teams of about 8 people. Each team stands in a line and each person puts their hands on the shoulders of the person in front. The person at the back of the line is given a 'tail', a short length of rope or material. It can be tucked into their belt so it hangs down like a tail.

On 'Go' the teams have to move around. The front person has to try and grab the tail of the back person on another team. Each team must work together so that they do not break the link and also protect the tail. If they break their link or lose their tail they lose the game.

The last team with their tail wins. Play two or three rounds of the game.



Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players work together and took care of the tail.

Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

Example questions:

- What was the difficult part of the game?
- Why do we need others in our lives?
- What times in our lives do we realize we need others most?

20. Water Balloon Volley

Value: Working along with the team

Players: 8+ players | pairs or teams of 4-6 people | Ages 8+

Equipment: water balloons; beach towels

How to play

Divide players into two teams and pair them up. Each pair gets a beach towel and each player holds two corners of the towel. One side begins by placing a water balloon in the center of one of their towels. The object of the game is to toss the balloon from one pair's towel to another, with the opposing side catching the balloon in their towel. This can be played with a net or simply pace off a distance of about 3 meters between opposing teams.

Variations

- Move further apart to make the task more challenging.
- Give teams of 4-6 a big bed sheet and play in the same way.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players responded to the challenge. Then ask 5 questions to facilitate discussion.

- What was difficult in this game?
- How would you describe good communication in this game?
- Working together brought the best results.
- Where do we need to apply this in our life?

How to lead games well

Think about whether the game is suitable for the age, group size, location and weather.

Be prepared to explain the game and rules. Know them well. Organize all the equipment beforehand.

Explain the rules to the participants and demonstrate the key parts of the game. Bring everyone close to you so they can hear you.

After explaining the rules of the game, ask if anyone has any questions.

To add energy, play music during the game.

If music is already part of a game, adjust it to be suitable for your culture and age group.



How to debrief games

Bring the group close together to discuss the game after you have played. Ask the players to sit. Lower your voice.

The most important aspect of debriefing is to observe carefully while the game is being played. Always be curious. This will help you be prepared to ask powerful questions.

As you notice what is happening in the game, use these 5 questions to ask the group in a debriefing time to help them discover powerful lessons for life.

1

Did you notice _____ in the game?
(e.g. disharmony, anger, confusion, isolation, pride, selfishness)

2

Why did these things happen?

3

Where does this happen in other areas of life?
Your life?

4

What needs to change in your life as a result of what you learned in the game?

Then explore the message you want to teach and help the group make a connection with what they did in the game and what they need to think differently about and change.

5

What will you do differently in your life from today?



The powerful questions unpacked

Here is a model of 5 powerful questions by Micah Jacobson and Mari Ruddy.

These 5 questions will be a starting point for you to debrief the game. The questions lead players through a process of reflection so that they can connect the game to real life application.

Think about powerful ways to debrief.

Here are the 5 questions explained for facilitators:

1

Did you notice _____ in the game?
(e.g. disharmony, anger, confusion, isolation, pride, selfishness)

This involves being observant and curious. Watch behavior and emotion in this stage. Curiosity will help you see the game from different perspectives.

- How much time passed?
- Was the objective reached?
- How many strategies were tried?

Make sure the group is able to notice the things you have observed too. Did they notice something you didn't?

2

Why did these things happen?

With a nod of the head from the first question, you have gained some ground with your group. The second question will now start the reflective process; it is associated with the *interpretation stage* of learning. Here is where you listen for the right answer; an answer that is accurate and meaningful.

3

Where does this happen in other areas of life?
Your life?

The first two questions focus on the experience. This question invites participants to see if there is any connection from this game into any areas of their lives.

4

What needs to change in your life as a result of what you learned in the game?

‘Who? What? When? Where? Why?’

The anchor stage. This question asks for real life examples. This connects the participant to the game and actual events that will help process the learning.

- Where do you see that in life?
- Who do you know that feels that way?
- When have you experienced that? And so on.

5

What will you do differently in your life from today?

The responsibility comes with using the newly found information in their life. The experience should be used to create new ways to change attitudes, perspectives and behavior.

- Where, specifically, will that be useful?
- What will you do now? Now that you know ...?

If there is silence:

Allow for silence - give them time - wait- repeat- rephrase – be specific.



How to adapt games

Games can be adjusted to the number of players, gender or age range. Be strategic. Be careful!

If you do not have the equipment that is required, replace it with other objects. Be creative! For

example, if you do not have a Frisbee, replace it with a large plastic lid or something else they can throw around.

Shorten the game if it becomes boring, and stop the game to reset players and rules if it becomes dangerous.

Any game can be a discovery opportunity. As you lead games you will realize there are many opportunities to connect games with learning. Only some are listed in this guide. You may need to make only a small change to a game to make it connect better with a principle. Try it; it's fun!



How to adapt games for people of all abilities

A crucial outcome of experiential learning is transferring game discoveries to real life. Realizing and adapting to differing abilities is a normal part of that life. Therefore, helping to include all ability people in experiential games makes practical sense.

With some thoughtfulness and understanding, almost any game can be adapted to include people of differing abilities.

Disabilities fall into four general categories:

1. Learning Disabilities	Developmental speech and language disorders Dyslexia Attention deficit disorder
2. Sensory Impairments	Partial or total blindness Partial or total deafness
3. Physical Disabilities	Cerebral palsy Muscular dystrophy Multiple sclerosis Amputations Paralysis
4. Developmental Disabilities	Mental/intellectual disability Autism Down syndrome Epilepsy Fetal alcohol syndrome

Sometimes adaptations are made to level the playing field for all players or simply team inclusion.

Examples of adapting games for all abilities:

- If someone is blind, use noisemakers to guide players.
- If one team has one blind player, blindfold one player on every team.
- If one player only has one arm make everyone play with only one arm.
- With deaf players, demonstrate the action, and give time for clarifying questions from players.
- If you are playing balloon volleyball and some kids are in wheelchairs, make everyone sit down.

Tips for extra inclusion:

- Think of ways, based on ability, to make all ability players an asset to have on the team.
- Be aware of giving equal attention to players and teams.
- With some players with developmental disabilities, have a leader play one on one.

How to create new games

To find a game to fit your lesson, combine ideas from different games and make a new game.

1. Brainstorm new ideas with a team.
2. Gather ideas and practice playing the game.
3. Develop the concept for the lesson theme and the value you want to teach.
4. Write the explanation, rules, materials needed, and name of the game so everyone is clear.
5. Ask someone who has not played the game to review what you have written to make sure the game can be understood.
6. Try the game with participants and evaluate it afterwards to make it better.

