

## ACTIVITIES FOR A CROWD

### COMEDY CONTEST

Several years ago our staff put together youth rallies based loosely on “Comedy Sportz.” We changed several of the games and kept some things just the way they were. Since that time, these kinds of games have grown in popularity because of their spontaneous nature. Be warned, if you try to put together a comedy contest, you must be absolutely convinced that it will be funny and exciting. Any hesitation on the leader’s part will sabotage the event. As you read over the next few pages, you will not laugh a whole lot, but once you actually begin playing, you could be laughing harder than ever before in your life—no joke.

#### VARIOUS FORMATS

- **Two-Team Competition**—This usually lasts two hours with a 15-minute half time. Each team is made up of four people. Also needed is a referee and a scorekeeper. Part of the fun of this format is getting each team to try to woo the hearts of the audience. Each team must realize that if losing is what makes it funny, than lose.
- **Two-Team Event**—A referee and two teams of four playing against each other. In this event, the score does not matter; and the winner or loser does not matter. We are just having fun. This usually lasts about 1–1 1/2 hours.
- **Mixer**—Several of the events can stand alone. One may take 5-15 minutes to explain and do one event. Note: in the longer events, people (audience and team players) tend to loosen up and laugh more. My favorite mixer contests are “Um, Uh, Hesitate” and “Chain Charades.”

#### YOU’VE GOTTA HAVE THIS OR ELSE

1. You need a referee who will move the contest quickly and whose judgment you can trust. The referee decides what suggestions to use from the audience. There are plenty of suggestions that are not necessarily bad but that are not good either.
2. You will need two anchor players—one on each team. These two players should not be concerned with what others think of them. These are your class-clown types, good story tellers, people who are expressive!
3. You will also need sixty or more people in the audience. Without this size of group, the activity goes flat. We have done comedy contests with groups over 300. Whatever the size of your group, try to pack them into as small an area as possible. We usually use a stage area approximately 8-16 feet.
4. Finally, you will need a sound system. The referee needs to have something that can be heard over all the bedlam.

#### THESE THINGS WOULD BE NICE BUT NOT NECESSARY

1. It would be nice if you have seen this actually work. If you have never seen it, it will be hard to visualize what is going on.
2. Plenty of practice time for your team players would be helpful. Two or three practices that allow them to play the games will really help them when they are on stage for real.
3. Do the comedy contest at night. Things are always funnier when you are tired.
4. Keep a box of various props. Collect an assortment of hats, ties, large dresses, old suits, vests, and wigs. Also include a couple of playguns, plastic knives, old telephones, and a plastic whiffle bat. (You will see. It gets used more than any of the other props!)

#### PENALTIES

Referee Note—use these sparingly. I have used the brown bag several times, but you want to make sure you do not glorify what is bad.

1. **Groaner**—This occurs when one of the team players says something that causes the audience to give a collective groan in response. When this happens, the referee throws his red hanky and yells, “Groaner.” The offending party must step up and apologize for his deed. The audience may choose to reject or accept his apology. If rejected, his team loses a point.
2. **Waffling**—Throw this penalty when a team gets “Team Brain Block” or “Stand Around Syndrome.” When the referee yells, “Waffling,” that team has 10 seconds to make it funny or step off the stage.
3. **Brown Bag**—Get a couple of brown bags and cut out the eyes. When somebody says something rude, crude, off color, or socially unacceptable, yell, “Brown bag” and then give the brown bag to the offending party. They must wear it for the remainder of that particular event.

**UM UH HESITATE**

Suggestions from the audience.....	Two items normally used in everyday life (i.e. toothbrush, door, minivan, tic tacs)
Quick Explanation.....	Players are trying to continue a storyline as the microphone is placed in front of them.
Time.....	Until one player says “um,” “uh,” or hesitates
Points.....	Five points for last player standing, four points for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> to last player standing, three points for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> , two points for the 4 <sup>th</sup> , one point for the 5 <sup>th</sup>
Props.....	None
Volunteers .....	Two to four who like to talk

**How to Play:** Line up all the players and volunteers on the front of the stage. Each story begins with “Once upon a time.” A player is eliminated if he says “um” or “uh” or hesitates too long. A player can also be eliminated for stuttering or not sticking with the storyline. The referee places the microphone in front of the player for a few words or phrases, and then moves it over to someone else (rarely the person right next to the talker). Once a player is out, the line of people shortens. Each time someone gets out, the referee asks for two more items from the audience. The players must try to use both items in their story.

**Referee Tips:**

1. Always start with the same person. “Once upon a time . . .”
2. Have a few items in your head to begin with (submarine, elephant pen at the zoo). These will add a little spice to the story.
3. Move the microphone in the middle of the phrases as opposed to the end of phrases.

**WHAT ARE YOU DOING?**

Suggestion from the audience .....	Activities, sports, hobbies, things you do everyday
Four ways to get “out”.....	1—Pause too long, 2—Say what you are doing, 3—Say something that has already been acted out, 4—Say something unrelated to the topic
Points.....	One point for each win
Props.....	None
Volunteers .....	None unless you want to try it at the end

**How to Play:** Each team member goes head to head against one from the other team; there are only two people on stage at a time. Y begins acting and Z asks, “What are you doing?” Y must answer with something related to the topic that has been given by the audience, but NOT what he is actually doing. Z must then do what Y said he was doing and then Y asks “What are you doing?” It keeps going until someone is out. (I know it sounds like an algebra problem but . . .)

Referee Tips:

1. Encourage the players to act out what they are doing, not just say what they are doing.
2. Many times you will get the normal activities like basketball and soccer; but if you insert some less traditional activities, it will help eliminate players (i.e. babysitting, WWF, International fly swatting competition).

**CHAIN MURDER MYSTERY**

- Suggestions from the audience ..... 1. place (somewhere you would go on a date)  
 ..... 2. fictional occupation ( i.e. belly button lint recycler)  
 ..... 3. weapon not usually used in a murder (i.e. Q-tip)  
*For example: at McDonalds, as an alien hit man, using a golf ball*
- Time: ..... Four minutes (total for all acting)
- Points: ..... Five points if the 3<sup>rd</sup> person in the chain guesses correctly  
 ..... Three points if the 2<sup>nd</sup> person in the chain guesses correctly  
 ..... One point if the 1<sup>st</sup> person in the chain guesses correctly
- Props: ..... None
- Volunteers: ..... One member from the audience

How to play: Send two team members plus the audience volunteer to the sound-proof chamber (someplace he cannot see or hear). The remaining two players stay in the room while you gather the suggestions from the audience. Once you have all the suggestions, bring one player in from the sound-proof chamber. Begin the chain murder mystery. As soon as the two players have adequately acted out the place, occupation, and weapon, the person from the sound-proof chamber kills the actors with the weapon. As soon as the “murder” takes place, time stops. Bring in the volunteer and begin time again as the place, occupation, and weapon are acted out again. Each murder victim should remain sprawled out at the scene of the crime.

Referee Tips:

1. Help the players out by saying, “This is the place.” After the person acts that out say, “This is an occupation that does not exist.” Those little tips will help all the players.
2. Go four minutes, give or take 30 seconds.
3. Gibberish and sounds are crucial. Places can easily be figured out by just singing theme songs.

**ALPHABET CHALLENGE**

- Suggestions from the audience ..... Letter from the alphabet and a situation that would involve two people
- Time ..... As long as it takes to get through the alphabet
- Points ..... One point for the winner
- Props ..... None
- Volunteers ..... After this one has been played a few times, volunteers work really well

How to play: A one-on-one challenge in which the players’ first letter of each statement must go in alphabetical sequence. The players receive the situation from the referee and the letter they must start with (For instance, situation: a pizza delivery boy and a customer who ordered pizza with spinach topping; letter: D)

- Player 1: Domino’s delivery service!
- Player 2: Every time I hear that yelled out I just can’t wait for my spinach pizza.
- Player 1: Forget spinach pizza; brussel sprout pizza is the best.
- Player 2: Gross! All I want is spinach pizza.
- Player 1: How about pepperoni with extra cheese?
- Player 2: I said “SPINACH.”

Player 1: Just calm down  
*And so on and so forth . . .*

A player is out when he cannot continue the story using the right letter, when he uses the wrong letter in the alphabet sequence, or when cave man language begins to take over. The winner stays on stage for the next challenger.

Referee Tips:

1. Just warn the players about cave man language and let them try to get out of it.
2. Have a few situations ready in your mind. You do not always have to get them from a crowd.
3. This game gets better and better the more it is played.
4. The following are possible situations that you could use.
  - Houston and the astronaut
  - Pizza delivery and an upset customer
  - Jane breaking off a long-term relationship with John
  - Synchronized swimming coach and half of his swim team
  - Discussion between a dog owner and a cat owner
  - Policeman pulling over a motorist
  - Sea World security and a mischievous five-year-old boy
  - Your youth leader and his wife
  - Santa Claus and Johnny who has been bad
  - Teacher and student
  - Job trainer and thrift store applicant
  - Principal and student
  - Driving instructor and a great grandma who really cannot see
  - Twins separated at birth who just met in the mall
  - Einstein and Barney Fife