

Names in the Air

Impact:	Helps people learn names and gives a team the opportunity to work together to achieve a fun task; introduces the concept of teamwork
Risk:	Medium
Group Size:	Unlimited, but divide into groups of 8 to 10
Time Required:	15 to 20 minutes
Materials:	Tennis balls or beach balls

Directions:

- Everyone in each group stands in a circle. The facilitator calls out his or her name and tosses the ball to the person on the right. Continuing in the same direction, each person says his or her name and passes the ball on, until it reaches the leader again.
- The facilitator now calls out the name of someone across the circle and tosses her the ball. After catching the ball, the receiver thanks the thrower by name. The receiver then calls the name of someone else in the circle and tosses the ball to him. This continues until everyone has had his or her name called, has caught and tossed the ball, and remembers whom they received the ball from and whom they threw it to.
- Now the facilitator throws a second ball into the circle, calling out the name of a person. The person who catches it says, "Thank you, _____" and quickly throws the ball to someone else, using the same procedure. When the group has mastered having two balls being tossed throughout the circle, the facilitator adds a third and then a fourth. The group tries to keep throwing, receiving and thanking as quickly as possible without dropping a ball or forgetting a name.

Discussion:

- How many balls did your team manage to keep in the air?
- Which tactic or approach worked best for keeping balls in the air?
- How did you feel when your team was working well together? What about when team members weren't working well?
- What lessons can you draw from this activity about successfully working as a team?

Hint: If there are several groups playing this game, periodically stop and mix the groups so that people can learn more names.

Options:

- Challenge group members to toss the ball, and say names and "Thank you" in 15 seconds. If the group can do it in 15 seconds, try 10. Now see if one group can beat the other groups at this task.
- Make the circle larger by stepping back each time a ball is tossed. Name calling will have to get louder and louder. Then move back in toward the center. How close can group members get and still play the game?