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|  | **BACK POCKET GAMES** – Mike Burcher [revmikeburcher@gmail.com](mailto:revmikeburcher@gmail.com) |
| **Without Anyone Else Knowing** (MF 18) | As each person arrives, explain that they are now a “spy” with a  secret task to perform as they mingle with the crowd.  • For example, tell the person to do one of the following things  (without anyone else knowing):  ✓ Learn as many middle names as they can.  ✓ Learn as many home states as they can.  ✓ Find out who is a cat lover and who is a dog lover |
| **Imagination Toss** (MF 75) | Instruct the players to place their hands on their heads.  • Call out the name of someone across the circle and then toss  an imaginary tennis ball to that person.  • Explain that the recipient is to bring his hands down and pretend to catch the ball. Encourage that player to use as much drama as he wishes. Tell the recipient to call out the name of someone else across the circle and then toss the imaginary ball. Tell layers to remember the player who threw them the ball and to whom they threw the ball.  • Tell players to leave their hands down once they’ve “caught” the ball. Tell the last player to toss it back to you.  • Explain that in the second round that the group will be throwing a “watermelon.” Tell them to use the same pattern as the first round.  • In subsequent rounds, toss objects of different sizes, suchas a Ping-Pong® ball and/or an egg. |
| **Partner Mixer** (MF 8) | Tell the players to each find somebody born in a different  month from themselves.  • Have the pairs shake their partners’ hand. Explain that this is their “handshake partner.”  • Encourage partners to exchange names and to find out as much  about each other as possible. Suggest an opening question, such as “What is your favorite [food, movie, color, season, etc.]?”; “How many pets do you own?”; or “What is the most trouble you have ever been in?” This activity is very open-ended and can be tailored to fit your plan, group, setting, etc.  • You might want several different sets of partners for other activities you have planned. Give directions, such as “Now that you have found your partner, give that person a high five. This is your ‘high-five partner.’”  • Tell the players to find new partners who like the same  music they do.  Other “find a partner” cues include:  ✓ “Find somebody born in a state or country different from you.”  ✓ “Find someone who belongs to a different church” (or school, team, etc.).  ✓ “Find somebody with the same color eyes as yours.”  ✓ “Find a partner with a different shoe size from yours.”  ✓ “Find someone who likes the same kind of books you do. |

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| **Power of Observation**  Partners | Partners sit or stand, facing each other. One player is instructed to talk about a topic (such as tell them about your pets, or a favorite teacher, or what animal they would be and why), then after 30 secs, the other player talks about that topic, while the first player listens. After another 30 secs, ask the partners to go back-to-back.  Ask the players to change 3 things about their appearance such as moving jewelry, untying a shoe, untucking a shirt… (with younger groups you may need to remind them to be ladies and gentlemen.)  When all have completed this task, ask the players to face each other again and figure what has changed. After about a minute, suggest they give hints. |
| **Thumb Grab** (MF 28)  Partners | Demonstrate the hand positions. Make a loose cup with your left  hand, large enough to fit someone’s thumb. Make a fist with your right hand, with the thumb extended toward the floor.  • Ask everyone to face their partners. Tell them that everyone’s left hand should form the cup and that everyone’s right thumb should point toward the ground.  • Tell the players to place their right thumb into their partner’s left hand “cup.”  • Explain that on the count of three, each player is to try and  remove his thumb while at the same time holding onto his partner’s thumb.  • Count to three—and then let the laughter begin. |
| **Name Dropper** (MF 9)  Two Teams | Have each team make a huddle that’s far enough away from the  other team that they can’t hear what the other team is  whispering. If the group is wearing nametags, have them remove  them for this activity.  • Ask each team to choose a player from its circle who will  remain standing.  • Explain that when you yell “Drop!” both chosen players  should point to each other as all the other team members kneel  or squat.  • Tell the players that the first standing player who yells out  the name of the other standing player wins that round for his  team.  • Explain that the other standing player switches teams.  • The game continues until you’re ready to move on to the next  activity or all players have moved to the same team. |

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| **Family Photo** (MF 91)  Two Teams | Have the two groups face each other and then choose a group  to close its eyes. Encourage the group members to keep their eyes shut because it enhances the effect of this game.  • Ask the group with its eyes open to pose as an unusual family  (see the list below for suggestions) to have a family portrait taken.  • Once the group is in position, ask the other group to look at  the “photograph” and guesswho the family is.  • Once everyone has enjoyed this fake photograph, have the  groups switch roles so the otherteam has a turn to create a  photograph.  • Feel free to add any creative families to the following list of  examples:  ✓ The Hillbilly Family  ✓ The Cannibal Family  ✓ The Professional Wrestling Family  ✓ The Cheerleader Family  ✓ The Pirate Family  ✓ The Caveman Family  ✓ The Underwater Family |
| **Catch the Leader**  (MF 39)  Circle | Select a volunteer and then send that person away from the  group. Choose a leader who will lead the group through various  motions, such as hand clapping, finger snapping, whistling,  hopping on one foot, etc. Explain that the players in the circle imitate the leader.  • Tell the players that the leader will keep switching activities.  The task of the volunteer who left the circle is to figure out who the leader is.  • Once the group is engaged in the first motion, call the volunteer  back to the center of the circle He gets three guesses to figure  out the leader.  • Explain that the first leader becomes the next volunteer and  steps away from the group while a new leader is chosen. |
| **Countdown** (MF 39)  Circle | In this game, the players will count backward similar to the way people count down for a rocket blastoff. Tell players that the number you will start with equals the total number of players in the group.  • Begin the game by announcing “Commence countdown.” Tell  the players that they’re to try to count backward to zero, one player at a time without anyone being assigned a certain number  and without anyone gesturing or talking except for the numbers.  • Explain the two rules:   1. Players may not speak at the same time. 2. Players may not speak when sitting beside someone who has just spoken.   If either of these rules is broken, you will announce “Cancel countdown” and the group will need to begin again with the highest number. |

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| **Anatomy Lesson**  (MF 32)  Circle | Have the person in the middle select another player in the circle. He points to one of his own body parts while saying the name for another body part. For example, “This is my knee” while pointing to his elbow or “This is my chin” while pointing to an ear. The selected player has a count of 10 to point to the named body part while saying the part that was pointed to. For example, “This is my elbow” while pointing to his knee or “This is my ear” while pointing  to his chin.  • If the response is correct, the player in the center selects another person in the circle and the game continues. If the correct response isn’t given within the count of 10, the two players trade places.  • The new player in the center then tries to confuse someone  else. |
| **Spontaneous Zoo**  (MF 46)  Seated in a circle | Explain that players will work together to make pictures with their bodies. Tell them that a leader in the center will name a picture and three designated players will have until a count of 10 to assume the correct positions.  • Teach the following picture positions to the players:  ✓ *Elephant:* The middle person links his fingers together and makes the hanging-down trunk. Players on the left and the right of  the trunk make big Cs with their arms and lean toward the middle person to make ears.  ✓ *Seal:* The middle person looks up and makes a large circle with both arms to form an imaginary ball on the seal’s nose. The person on the right sticks out his right palm and the person on the  left sticks out his left palm. Together, these two players will clap their hands together like flippers.  ✓ *Giraffe:* The middle person makes a long neck with both arms. Players on either side put their palms on the floor to make four legs. Sound: “Munch, munch, munch.”  ✓ *Spirit of ’76:* Like the classic painting, the person in the middle plays the drum, the person on the right holds up the flag, and the person on the left plays the fife. |
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| **Eye Contact** (MF 41)  Standing in a Circle, shoulder to shoulder | Ask players to look at the floor and think about another person  in the circle.  • Explain that when you tell them to look up, they should stare at  the person they thought about.  • If two players are looking directly at each other, tell them to scream wildly, run from the circle, and embrace or join hands. When this happens, instruct the rest of the players to tighten up the circle.  • Keep the game moving by repeating only two instructions: “Look down!” and then “Look up!”  • Tell the players who leave the circle that they can begin their own game or remain with their partner in preparation for the next game. |
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| **I Like Apples** (MF 58) | Explain that in this mental teaser, players will take turns telling the  group one item they like and one item they dislike. Tell players that the statements don’t have to be true but do have to follow a pattern. Tell them it’s their job to figure out the pattern. (As the leader, you know that everyone likes things that contain double letters and dislikes items that don’t have double letters.)  • Give them the following examples and then invite them to make their own statements:  ✓ I like cheese, but I don’t like chairs.  ✓ I like puddles, but I don’t like rain.  ✓ I like Hawaii, but I don’t like Georgia.  • Remind the players not to tell the answer if they figure out the  key, but keep giving answers on their turns to help others recognize the pattern. |
| **How Many Bugs?**  (MF 53) | • Hold out your palm to the group and ask, “How many bugs are  in my hand?” Tell the players that the bugs are imaginary. Answers will vary.  • Let the players guess and either wait until someone guesses “7”  or tell them the answer.  • Rephrase the question, asking, “How many bugs?” (The answer this time is “3.”)  • Ask, “How many in there?” (The answer is “4.”) Or ask,  “How many bugs would you say are in my hand?” (The answer is “10.”)  • Encourage players to figure out why the answer changes. (The  answer depends on how many words are in the question.) |

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| **Rock Paper Scissors Cheerleader**  Partners | * Walk up to another player, and say “Prepare to be Conquered -my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ what is your name?”   The other player responds, “Hi my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Prepare to meet your doom!” * Count to three…do rock paper scissors…Shoot! * The winning player finds another winning player to challenge. The losing player follows the winning player becoming a cheerleader and shouting their conquerers name. This continues with all cheerleaders shouting the name of the most recent conquerer.   Continue until two teams are formed….and do the last challenge! |
| **I’m Late** (MF 86)  Standing Circle, holding hands | Explain that one player will roam around the outside of the circle  and step in between two players standing in the circle. The  player will gently separate their hands and say, “Run, bunnies.”  • The two players will leave the circle and run around the  outside in opposite directions. As they run around the circle,  the player who stepped into the circle will take the hand of the  person on either his right or left and join the circle, leaving only  one space in the circle for one of the runners/bunnies.  • When the two running bunnies meet on the opposite side of the circle, they should shake their hands three times and say, “I’m late, I’m late, I’m late.”  • When they finish this meeting, they should pass each other and continue running for the empty space in the circle. The first player back joins the circle and the second player becomes the roaming player. This player separates two new players to send them running, and then rejoins the circle. |
| **Considering Cap** (MF 38)  Seated in a circle | This game depends on the leader and the group memorizing the following lines:  Leader: The king has lost his considering cap and doesn’t know where to find it. Some say this, some say that, some say Number Six has it.  Number Six: Who, sir? Me, sir?  Leader: Yes, sir. You, sir.  Number Six: No, sir. Not I, sir.  Leader: Then, who, sir?  Number Six: Number One, Sir.  Leader: Number One, go to the foot.  • Teach these lines to the group, having them repeat after you  the “number” parts. Have the players count off and remember  their number. Ask the players to move to a new position in the  circle so the numbers are mixed up.  • Once players are seated in a new order, state that the person on  your right is the “head” and the person on your left is the “foot.” Explain that long ago, when kings would hold court, their most trusted advisers would be at the king’s head and the least trusted advisers would be at the king’s foot. Naturally, everyone would want to be in the king’s favor and be as close to the head as possible.  • Begin the play by reciting the chant and ending with a number  you select. For example: “… Number Two has it. Number Two, go to the foot.”  • Tell Number Two to jump up and say, “Who, sir? Me, sir?’  before the king can finish saying “Number Two, go to the foot.”  • If Number Two succeeds in getting up in time, he proceeds  with the chant and accuses some other number. If a king  beats Number Two by finishing the statement, Number Two  leaves his place in the circle and goes to sit at the king’s left.  Everyone sitting to the right of Number Two now advances  one place closer to the king’s head. |
| **Big Bunny** (MF 34)  Seated in circle | Explain that you are the Big Bunny. Tell the group that the  player to your immediate left is Little Bunny and the player to  your immediate right is Number One, the player to his right is  Number Two, and so forth, counterclockwise around the circle. Teach them the following chant and then let them practice a few times:  Big (hit your knees)  Bunny (clap your hands)  Big (hit your knees)  Bunny (clap your hands)  Big (hit your knees)  Bunny (clap—knees—clap)  Uh (knees)  Huh (clap—knees—clap)  Big (knees)  Bunny (clap—knees—clap)  • After the group has learned the rhythm (knees—clap—knees—  clap), explain that from here on, the players are to call out their number position and a different number or “Little Bunny” or “Big Bunny” (instead of repeating “Big Bunny” throughout the chant), trying not to miss a beat. As a demonstration round, have the players call the numbers in sequence so everyone gets the chance to try the chant and keep it going. Big Bunny would begin the opening chant and start the round with  “Big Bunny, Number One,”  “Number One, Number Two,”  “Number Two, Number Three…”  “Last Number, Little Bunny.”  • Tell the group that if a player breaks the chant, that person becomes the new Little Bunny and moves to the spot immediately to the left of the Big Bunny. The player to the right of the vacant space moves into it and gets the next lower number, thus moving one space closer to the coveted Big Bunny position. Remind them that their goal is to become Big Bunny.  • Give them the following example of how a player can mess up:  Big Bunny: “Big Bunny, Number Ten”  Number Ten: “Number Ten, Number Two”  Number Two: “Number Two, Number One”  Number One: “Number One, Big Bunny”  Big Bunny: “Big Bunny, Little Bunny”  Little Bunny: “Little Bunny, Number One”  Number One: “Huh, I missed. I wasn’t paying attention.”  • Explain that in this example, Number One would become the new Little Bunny and everyone else would move one spot closer to the Big Bunny. Tell everyone that once they’ve moved, Big Bunny begins again with the original chant. |