



Push Catch Instructions

Task: Participants interpret the instructions of the facilitator and act accordingly by catching or pushing a thrown ball.

Ideal Group Size: 10 to 12

Equipment: One ball, soft and soccer-ball size

Setup: None

Guidelines:

1. The group makes a circle with the facilitator in the middle who has the ball in hand.
2. When the ball is thrown to one of the participants they will be instructed to either catch the ball – Catch – or push it away – Push.
3. The aim, however, is to do the opposite of what is instructed (i.e., if Catch is called, then the participant should Push the ball away).
4. If a mistake is made, then that participant takes a seat or steps out of the circle.
5. The last person standing is declared the winner.

Variations

Choosing and reacting to challenge

A. L. Wagner on Push/Catch

It is always surprising who is successful in this game because it requires unique reactionary skills. However, this game creates a range of emotional experiences for everyone playing, ranging from anxiousness and fear of failure to sometimes, a fear of success!

If participants are feeling too nervous or need a break, allow them to sit down whenever needed (a similar position to when someone is out).



Push Catch Instructions Continued...

Creating this option allows people to have a choice over their participation, but they are still present to observe and be engaged by all that is going on around them.

Before starting a second round, invite participants to share some of the emotions they felt during the game, or what they are experiencing in anticipation of the upcoming round. In addition to nerves, participants may be feeling bashful because they failed during their first try or excited they were successful by chance.

Although this game is quick and competitive (making it engaging for a lot of groups), it also allows the facilitator to go deeper by highlighting the variety of people's reactions to the challenges of this game.

Play it again!

P. Brown on Push/Catch

For a long time in my early days as a facilitator, I would use this activity as a time-filler – We have 10 minutes before the end of the day ... let's play Push/Catch. Over time, it morphed into an activity that would appear multiple times during a program, playing only one round at a time, but with the knowledge that it would be played again later.

Each person who wins a round is either declared the champion of that round or given a point. At the end of the program, a final round is played between the top three or four competitors to declare one as the Push/Catch champion of their group (or school, etc.).

Often, the apparent harshness of defeat in this activity puts people off, but I have found that the repetition allows for the group to quickly improve, and the speed of the activity prevents people from spending huge spans of time sitting out of the game.