



ALL CATCH

Will the challenge be too much?

OBJECTIVES

- Students will practice strategies to work through a group challenge
- Students will develop strategies to use when they encounter a challenge

MATERIALS

- Lots of soft throwable items (plan for 1.5 per person)

TIME

30 min



LESSON INTRO

This challenging activity will get students considering how they respond personally to a challenge, and also what group behaviors, skills, and strategies can help a group be successful. You may see the group grapple with frustration, collaboration, communication, sharing ideas, taking direction, and more!

LESSON STEP BY STEP

1. In advance, collect a large number of balls, or soft tossable items (possibly the hardest task for you will be to get your hands on a throwable items). Balloons won't work because they must have toss-ability. Ask your PE teacher for tennis balls or bean bags, or students can create "tossables" from bunched up plastic grocery bags wrapped in duct tape.
2. Explain that the activity students are about to do is a challenging one! Have them list strategies they can use if they are getting frustrated or feeling challenged.
3. Ask students to notice how they or the group respond to the challenges throughout the activity.
4. Have the group stand in an open space. Give one ball to the group.
5. Instruct your group that every time you say "GO," whoever is holding a ball must toss it in the air to another person.
6. If the group is successful, give them another ball. Same rules apply – when you say "GO", everyone holding a ball must toss it to another person.

The initial rounds are always very quick and simply performed. As soon as the group has to manage more than one ball for every two people, things start to get more interesting.



7. For every successful round (every ball tossed is caught), give your group one new ball.
8. Whenever one or more items are dropped during an attempt, the task will resume from one ball again. This is a tough penalty, but this parameter quickly galvanizes the group to focus carefully, and avoid 'risky' solutions. To be honest, however, it is very hard for a group that just failed at an attempt of 15 balls, to start over at one. So, in these circumstances, you may return them to an agreed challenging mid-point in the activity.
9. Challenge your group to perform the task with as many balls as possible.
10. Encourage your group to plan, collaborate and focus.
11. Remind them of the rules as needed:
 - Every ball (held by the group) must be tossed simultaneously when you say "GO".
 - Every ball must be caught by someone other than the person who tossed it.

VARIATIONS

1. Multiple Work Stations: If you have a large group, divide into smaller groups of 8 to 12 people. Challenge each small group (workstations) to develop a strategy that can successfully catch the greatest number of balls.
2. Long Distance All Catch: Increase the distance the balls must travel before caught.
3. Hands-On Challenge: For greater challenge, suggest that only hands (as distinct from any other part of their body) are allowed to touch the balls (this will prevent the creative use of clothing, legs, etc.)
4. Soft Tossables: Substitute balls with a variety of soft tossable items, eg. rubber chickens, koosh-balls, beach balls, beanie-babies, ping-pong balls, etc. The challenge will be equal to the level of diversity you introduce with these items.
5. Limited Time: Place a time limit on the group, but remove the need to return to the start (one ball) with each unsuccessful attempt.

FACILITATOR TIPS AND NOTES

1. For some people, catching a ball can be an intimidating task, especially in front of others. This task will involve a lot of catching in front of others, but this will not be your group's focus.
2. Be okay with the messy group process of learning. Allow students to struggle, self-correct, and reflect on their responses. Try not to manage the process- let students learn as they go. The goal is to provide moments of self-reflection and growth afterwards.



REFLECTION & WRAP UP

1. As students progress through the activity, pause occasionally to reflect on how students are responding personally and collectively to the challenge. Use the prompts below, and/or point out what you're noticing.

To scaffold this reflection, during the first number of rounds, ask students to begin by reflecting on their personal response. Use the later rounds to begin reflecting on group behaviors.

2. Spend time learning about the skills and behaviors that students used productively, or unproductively.
 - At what point did the task become challenging for you? The group?
 - What was the most challenging part of this activity for you (catching the ball, frustration that people weren't trying, the group not agreeing on a plan, etc...)?
 - What was your personal strategy to work through this frustration or challenge?
 - What did the group do to solve challenges? What *could* you have done?
 - Did your skills improve with practice, or by something else?
 - Did your group decide something that was critical to your success?
 - What else contributed to your success?
 - What strategies did you find helpful that we could apply elsewhere?
3. Keep a list of skills and behaviors that helped the group succeed. Pull this out for future challenges so students can be reminded to use these strategies again.

NOTES

- **Source:** <https://www.playmeo.com/activities/team-building-problem-solving-activities/all-catch/#signup>
- **Educational Standards:** CASEL: Self Awareness, CASEL: Self Management, CASEL: Social Awareness CASEL: Relationship Skills, P21: Creativity and Innovation, P21: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, P21: Communication and Collaboration, P21: Flexibility and Adaptability, P21: Leadership and Responsibility, CCRS: SL2: Integrate and Evaluate Information