

YOUTH GROUP GAMES



**DODGEBALL**  
*GAMES*

J. ROGER DAVIS

YM360

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Youth Group Games: Dodgeball Games  
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# INTRODUCTION

In the decades that I've been involved in youth ministry, I have encountered people who think that recreation activities or playing games have little value. I believe this is because they haven't seen games used well as a part of a good ministry strategy. Over the years, I have seen games with a purpose help empower successful youth ministry events and be an incredible asset to weekly programming. However, this takes having a strategy. If you are not careful in your planning, games can quickly become just about competition or killing time.

While competition can be a useful tool, the time spent on fields, inside gyms, or on stages should never turn into discovering the best athlete or highlighting the most popular students. Use them wisely, and games will serve your students, leaders, and small groups well and help foster a spirit of community and connection within your group.

You have taken a significant step in your planning and preparing by putting this resource in your hands. Remember to embrace the many different aspects of games in your planning, from traditional tournaments and group building games to water days or large groups games and all-play games to good old-fashioned face-offs. This book is just one in our line of games resources that can serve you and your students.

Each game you will find within the pages of this resource has been curated from years of experience leading camps, weekly gatherings, and special events. Every game has been field-tested by our summer teams. Testing is essential with it comes to games. There is little worse than when something is beautiful in your mind, perfect on paper, but a huge flop when your students start playing it. Rest assured, the games in this resource have been designed and used for hours with students at camps and events with great success. I am grateful for the creative minds and energetic leaders that I have served with over the years. Great people help make great games, and these are some of our favorites.

Each of the games found within this resource is tagged with specific categories so you can decide what fits your needs. Each game entry features simple instructions, along with various supplies you may need. I believe this is true with all games: often, the secret to success is how you adapt it to fit your unique group of students. Changing a rule or varying the supplies might result in a home run with your group. Don't become so rigid in getting the game right that you forget the games must have a purpose. It is also important to remember that games should be fun, especially youth group games!

There are two final notes before we move on. First, be aware that you may need to make appropriate adjustments or accommodations to the games if you have anyone with physical limitations so all students can participate. This is true of any game or activity you facilitate with people. The more you can create an inclusive experience, the better return you will get. Second, prioritize safety in all your games. Once people get in motion, things can go wrong quickly. Think ahead and make sure the playing area is safe and the rules are clear. It is good to remember that rules are not designed to limit fun but to serve to protect those participating. When a game is safe, everyone participating can enjoy it.

Cheering you on!





## A WORD ABOUT DODGEBALL GAMES

Dodgeball games are some of the most classic games in student ministry. They can be a lot of fun and are great outreach events to attract other students, but they can also become a huge problem if you're not careful. Too often, players let their raw emotions get the best of them, and things can quickly get out of control. There's no win for you in creating a fun environment intended to bring your group together if the playing time ends with arguments, hurt feelings, name-calling, or injuries. Having a good perspective and clear guidelines will help mitigate problems such as these.

Within the pages of this book, I am sharing 25 of my favorite dodgeball games with you to help make your next event fun, build unity and community in your group, and make every student feel included and connected to the group. Here are some thoughts to keep in mind as you plan and prepare:

- Be aware of adults playing. Often, the players you'll have the hardest time with will be adults. First, don't let that be you as a leader. Secondly, share with your leaders ahead of time your expectations for their attitudes and emotions.
- Pick your dodgeballs carefully. There are two things to consider with dodgeballs, the size/diameter and the skin of the ball you choose. I would avoid the smaller dodgeballs that are much easier to palm and throw harder. A good 8.5 inch sized playground ball works great. I also like to have some larger sizes as they can be used for many different types of games. There's a multitude of brands available as well, but I have often found that just traditional dodgeballs work well.

- I would make it a standard rule across all dodgeball games not to allow any headshots. Make this rule a part of your dodgeball culture, and it will become less of a problem.
- An excellent, sturdy storage bag or a bin is a must. People tend to grab a dodgeball lying around and throw it at someone when the game is not active, so the key is to make sure dodgeballs stay in the bag until they are needed. As soon as the games are over, they go back into their storage bag. Again, create good guidelines, and you'll avoid any unnecessary problems.
- When we play dodgeball, we designate a King or Queen of the court. Whatever they say goes. No arguing or complaining. They run the court and the game.
- Remember that the environment is another asset to be used in your dodgeball experiences. I encourage you to think beyond the game or element. For example, add appropriate music once instructions have been clearly given and the game has started.
- If you're doing a week of recreation, consider adding dodgeball games as something beyond the normal recreation times. Students love late-night or free-time dodgeball tournaments, but these games can also serve well as part of your daily recreation time.

Here are 25 great dodgeball game ideas for you to select to make your next event the best ever!

# PAYBACK DODGEBALL

## CATEGORY

Elimination, high-energy, speed

## INSTRUCTIONS

This dodgeball variation will require players to have a good memory! Set up the game and play it like traditional dodgeball. That would be two teams facing off against each other in an equally sized playing area. If a player is hit below the shoulders, they are out, and if you catch a dodgeball thrown at you, the thrower is out. But here's where Payback Dodgeball is different from a traditional game. When a player gets knocked out, they should go off to the side and continue to watch the game. If the player that knocked them out gets knocked out, they get to go back into the game, and this is not limited to just one player. If a player is knocked out and had already knocked out five other players, all five players get payback and are back in the game. This will allow the game to continue longer than a traditional game, and, in some ways, no one is ever fully out. With one catch or hit of the person that got them, they are back in. It could take a while, but when one team has no players left, the other team wins!

## SUPPLIES

Dodgeballs, clearly marked playing area, a good memory

## TIPS

Games like Payback Dodgeball are a lot of fun, but they can go on for a long time if players keep getting back in. If you have a large group and want to control the length of the game, you can add a limit on how many times someone gets back in, or you can play the game with a countdown clock.

# DODGEBALL ASSAULT

## CATEGORY

Elimination, teamwork, timed

## INSTRUCTIONS

This is a simple dodgeball game that can be played both indoors and outdoors. Teams will be playing against each other but also against the clock. Mark off a large circle playing area with either spot markers, dome cones, or a rope. Team A will go into the middle circle zone while team B is outside the circle. When you start the round, the team on the outside will be throwing dodgeballs at the team inside the circle. You can begin with just one or two dodgeballs and add another every 30 seconds. Once the team in the middle has been eliminated, stop the clock, record the time, and have the teams switch. The team that lasted in the middle the longest wins. One thing that can significantly slow down any dodgeball game is when players hold on to their dodgeball rather than throwing them at their opponents. Dodgeball Assault creates a different element because your throwers will not want to hold on to the dodgeballs as they are also racing against time.

## SUPPLIES

Dodgeballs, spot markers/dome cones/rope, a clock or watch (See pages 38–43 for diagrams.)

## TIPS

If you can get a big clock or a gym scoreboard that everyone can see, it will add excitement to the game. If you want your throwers to stand further away, create a second ring and have them stand behind that zone. You can also easily make Dodgeball Assault a tournament-style game with multiple teams. Another option would be to have rounds where the times are added together to give each team a total time. This helps teams that had one bad round still stay in the game!

# TEAM BALL TAG

## CATEGORY

Teamwork, high-energy, speed

## INSTRUCTIONS

This game is part dodgeball and part tag. Unlike traditional dodgeball, which has sides, Team Ball Tag is played in one playing area with multiple teams playing at once. It's unique because no dodgeball should be thrown during the game. Each player is trying to tag the other players out by touching them with their dodgeball, but they must maintain possession of their dodgeball. If they throw or lose control of their dodgeball, the tag does not count. When a player is tagged out, they sit down and remain out until one of their teammates makes it to them and frees them by tagging their dodgeball to put them back in the game. This can continue throughout the game, causing the game to go on much longer than a true elimination dodgeball game. You can play with just two teams, but it's a twist if you have your group divided into multiple teams rather than just two. This would have all three or four teams playing simultaneously in the same area.

## SUPPLIES

One dodgeball per player, clearly marked playing area, pinnies/ some way to designate teams

## TIPS

You can also mix the game up by having teams only chase after specific colors if you are playing with multiple teams. For instance, if you had a red, blue, green, and orange team, you could have the red team only trying to get out the blue team, the blue team trying to get out green, green trying to get out orange, and then orange chasing red. This is a way to mix up the game and make it a bit harder to get other teams out.

## Youth Group Games: Dodgeball Games

Game Master and Youth Minister are two titles that often go hand in hand. Whether you have the experience or not, approaching games for your events and retreats can often become an overwhelming task. Creativity can become stifled as other tasks and to-dos overwhelm your plate. Youth Group Games was designed by J. Roger Davis, who has decades of games experience. These books are the perfect resource to provide you with easy and effective games for your next mid-week service, retreat, or big event.

Dodgeball Games is one of seven books within the Youth Group Games line, and it focuses on a variety of dodgeball-based games. Dodgeball is an instant classic in the game world, but sometimes our minds become closed to all we can do with it! Utilizing his decades of experience, J. Roger Davis shares his expertise on 25 must-play dodgeball games he has used over the years!

**“Dodgeball Games” is part of YM360’s youth group games line of resources and is ideal for:**

- *Any large group setting*
- *Camp or retreat settings*
- *Mid-week youth service*



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