

YOUTH GROUP GAMES



RELAY
GAMES

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YM360



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BY J. ROGER DAVIS

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Youth Group Games: Relay 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 RELAY GAMES

Relay games are designed to be fast-paced and full of action. The more hype you have as a part of them, from you and your students, the better the results. Clear directions from the start are needed, or your carefully laid out plans will become chaos and confusion.

Within the pages of this book, I am sharing 25 of my favorite relay games with you to help make your next event even more action-packed. Here are some thoughts to keep in mind as you plan prepare:

- There are a few different ways to do relay games. With relays, how you tie them all together can often be as important as the games themselves.
- I suggest you first pick the various elements you want to be a part of your relay. Then you lay them out as each group will have to do them in order. Finally, provide extra supplies, as each group likely needs its own set of supplies.
- A second option is creating stations with supplies, and groups are going to any open station, and there is a master running clock or just a race to see who finishes all stations first.
- A third option is to have timed elements. This option requires having group leaders to stop the timer between the various relay elements. In the end, you will have a total recorded time upon completion of ALL elements.
- If doing a week of recreation, I like doing relay games toward the end of the week. Because of relay games' speed, you often don't have as much interaction time between leaders and students. The speed of relay

games also calls for better communication. After there has been a good connection throughout the week, this will be easier to achieve.

- On relays, you want to set a number of how many people have to do each relay to keep the numbers equitable. For instance, if one group has 13 people in it and another has 10, it would be much easier for the group of 10 to perform better in each relay. I have found if you set a number like, "Eight people have to perform this relay," or "Twelve people have to perform this relay," then it creates equity for all groups. If a group is under the number, that group will have someone do the relay twice. And you can also say that people cannot "sit out" on back-to-back relays to ensure that all participants stay involved.
- If you have the opportunity to add music, lights, or other experience elements, go for it!

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



TIRE RACING

CATEGORY

Traditional, running

INSTRUCTIONS

This relay is a traditional down and back race. You will need one tire and two sticks for this challenge. Don't try to use a large car tire, but something like a motorcycle tire, thick bike tire, or a large wheelbarrow tire. You want them to be thick enough not to break and no more than two feet for sticks. A thick dowel rod can work well for this. The goal is for the participant to roll their tire without using their hands and only use the two sticks. Line players up at a starting line, and upon the start signal, rollers need to get it down and back one at a time. Once they return to the starting line, they need to hand off their sticks to the next player. Once everyone in the group, or whatever participant number is set, has completed the task, move on to the next challenge.

SUPPLIES

Two tires, four sticks

TIPS

Your playing area will influence the relay. If your playing area is thicker, grass tires can sometimes be harder to rotate. If on a gym floor or concrete, they can quickly get out of control.



MATCHED

CATEGORY

Running, teamwork

INSTRUCTIONS

"Matched" is a traditional relay where participants run-up and flip-over two cards at a time. Once someone finds a match, they collect them and return to the line. If they don't get a match, they turn them back over and run back and pass the information on to their group's next person. The next person then runs to the match area and takes a turn. This process repeats until they have all the matches. Once completed, move on to the next challenge. Matched is also a fun game that you can use all sorts of things to create matches. You can have a common theme like state flags or names, pictures of various objects or people like your pastor, celebrities, cartoon characters, or a combination of your choosing. You can also decide how many matching cards you desire, but I prefer it to be around 50 total cards (25 matches).

SUPPLIES

50 cards (you can purchase pre-done cards or make your own)

TIPS

Make sure you have your cards laminated to avoid water damage. I would make them the size of a half sheet of paper on some card stock or something. If you have the creative ability, put something on the side that faces up like your ministry logo, camp name, or simply "Matched."



CHUNKING CHICKENS

CATEGORY

Silly, throwing

INSTRUCTIONS

“Chunking Chickens” is a simple challenge where you get rubber chickens and have to make them fly by chunking them into a basket. Create various chunking spots that provide various levels of difficulty. At each of those spots, you should have a chicken laid out. Have each group at a starting point. The first person runs to one of the chunking spots, picks up the chicken, and chunks it toward the basket. If it goes in, they run back to the group and tag the next chunker to run to a chunking spot and repeat. If they fail to get the bird in the basket, they have to retrieve their bird and return it to the chunking spot before running back to tag the next person. Chunkers should only take one chunk per turn.

There are a few ways you can play “Chunking Chickens.” The first, most basic option is to decide how many spots you want and create the chunking areas with some type of marker. I suggest no less than three to five spots, but you can scale up from there with whatever number you want. Once the team completes this challenge, they are done. A second option is to create a set number of spots and have multiple chickens at that chunking area. So, for instance, if you had three chunking spots and three chickens at each spot, a team would have to get a total of nine chickens in the basket to complete the challenge.

A third option to play this game is head-to-head with other teams all chunking at the same time. If you play it as a head-to-head game, just be clear on each team’s designated chickens (you can put a color collar on them or have different color markers). Create as many chunking spots as you want, and each team must complete their total chicken allotment to finish the challenge. For any option you go with, remember that group members should take turns chunking.

SUPPLIES

Rubber chickens, baskets, spot markers

TIPS

You can find rubber chickens online, and 12” to 22” inches are preferable. Laundry baskets can be used for your baskets, but you can also use various buckets or even a 55-gallon trash can.

Youth Group Games: Relay 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 designed to help you have easy and effective games ready for the next time you put on a big event.

Relay Games is one of five books within the Youth Group Games line, and it focuses on a variety of relay-based games. The relay is a staple in the game world, but sometimes our minds become closed to the possibilities of what relays could exist! Utilizing his decades of experience, J. Roger Davis shares his expertise on 25 must-play relays he has used over the years! In experience become a highlight of your retreat or event!

“Relay 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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