

## Cup and String Game

Time: 20–30 min

**Purpose:** To practice effective communication and teamwork to complete the given task.

**Skills:** Communication, Cooperation, Coordination, Paying attention, Patience, Problem solving, Self-control

You will need...



- 4–30 players
- Upper elementary age players or older
- Six paper/plastic cups per team, rubber bands, scissors, string
- Enough table top or floor space for each team of four to have their own space

Before You Begin



- In this game players will be working in groups of four. Consider whether you will assign groups before playing or guide players to choose their own groups.
- Prepare rubber band tools by tying four pieces of string (each about two feet long) evenly spaced around one rubber band. Make one rubber band tool for each group.
- Prepare the reflection questions you will ask players in the debrief.

### Directions

**Introduce** the Cup and String Game. Use this time to reinforce any established expectations that are important for players to remember during the game.

**Explain** that the objective of the game is for players to work as a team to stack all the cups in a pyramid. The challenge is that players cannot touch the cups. They may only use the rubber band tool and their voices.



**Tip:** This game is easier to demonstrate than to explain. Use four players to demonstrate and invite the rest of the group to gather around and watch.

**Place** six cups and the rubber band tool you prepared for one group before the game on the table—or floor space—in the middle of the four players who will serve as your demonstrators.

**Give** each of the demonstrators a string and explain that they must pull on their string to stretch out the rubber band to fit around the cup. **Direct** the group to try to move one cup, and point out how each member of the group must use the tool together and adjust the tension they place on the string for it to work effectively.



## DIRECTIONS CONTINUED

After the group moves one cup, **tell** them to pause.

**Explain** to all players that each group will first try to stack the cups into a pyramid tower before being given additional challenges.

**Ask** players if they have any questions about the game.

**Separate** players into groups of four and spread them out around the space.



**Distribute** supplies and allow groups to begin.

**Circulate** around the room, observing groups' different strategies and giving new challenges when appropriate.



**Tip:** Each group will work at a different pace. Be prepared to have additional challenges ready. Some challenges include:

- Stacking cups in a unique structure
- Stacking cups without talking
- Stacking cups with one or more players in the group blindfolded



**The game ends once all groups have stacked their cups, completed their challenges, or time has run out. Explain that now they will reflect on how they experienced the game.**

## Debrief

**Debrief** the game with players. Remember, cooperative games are only as effective as your debrief. This is your opportunity to help players connect the game to personal experiences, actions, and beliefs. You will want to reinforce any skills or beliefs you are hoping players will carry beyond the game.

For more on facilitating debriefs, refer to the [Debriefing Tip Sheet](#) on our Digital Activity Center.

We've included some suggested questions below to get you started.

### Ask:

*What happened during the game?*

*What was easy or hard? How did your group work together?*

*Were there conflicts? How did conflicts impact your success? How did you resolve the conflicts that came up?*

*Did any specific roles emerge in the group? Was there one player leading or resolving conflict in your group?*

*What peacemaking skills did you use during this game? How can you use these skills outside of the game?*

**Thank** players for their participation.