

GAMES AND CREATIVE ELEMENTS FOR ENGAGEMENT

Add something fun to your online small group experience to “Spice things up.” All of these games and engagement ideas are easily implemented to the online experience. Get students excited by telling them about what you plan on doing. Incentivize the game and offer prizes to the winner. This will create a “buzz” or an excitement that you may desperately need during this challenging time.

#1 BOX OF LIES

This game comes from Jimmy Fallon’s late-night show. (Here’s a clip so you’ve got an idea of how it works: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md4QnipNYqM>)

The Zoom modification is that each person who comes to your Zoom meeting would bring the “weirdest” thing they can find in their house and keep it out of sight of their camera. Then, each person will take a turn describing their object (either lying or telling the truth – they decide). Everyone else holds up either a “thumbs up” for telling the truth or a “thumbs down” for lying. Then the person who was it shows their object, and you can keep points on how many people were right or wrong about the person lying or telling the truth.

#2 MAFIA

This game has always been a blast, and has never required us to be together, but it does need a few changes to use with Zoom. (If you’ve NEVER played, here are the general rules: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=25&v=Wx7kz5LpAz4&feature=emb_log) You will always have civilians, a mafia, a doctor, and a sheriff. In the Zoom modification, you will (as the host) randomly select students’ roles either with an actual deck of cards, or with whatever method you choose. Then, you can privately message each student their role. Then, you play like normal. You can mute everyone so that there isn’t any sound except for your voice, and then each student can privately message their answers to you (who the mafia wants to kill, who the doctor wants to save, who the sheriff accuses, and so on...). Then, when everyone wakes up, you can unmute them and let the fun begin!

#3 TRUE FACTS

This is simple simple! Everyone privately messages the host a secret fact about themselves, and then the host shares them one by one. Everyone then has to vote who they think it belongs to. See if your students can fool the others! This is great to learn about your group, but also for your kids to feel connected to each other.

#4 ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Of course this is super simple, and you can vary it in a million ways. Also, “Gorilla, Man, Gun” is a great alternative to rock, paper, scissors. (“Gorilla beats the Man, Man beats the Gun, Gun beats Gorilla, if you tie, you die. 1, 2, 3, GO!”) You could have students find a piece of paper, a rock, and some scissors to make this a little more interactive. Usually, Rock, Paper, Scissors is an intro game to something bigger, so keep that in mind. How would you make this game better? Let us know in the comments!

#5 PARTNERS IN PEN

Have everyone grab a piece of paper, and also some random object from their house. (Nothing too familiar, but something that is mildly obscure.) Then, each person takes a turn describing their hidden item while everyone else tries to draw it from their description they give. The person who is closest wins, and gets to describe their hidden item next.

#6 REVERSE CHARADES

One person is “it” while everyone else acts out a word. You can get the word to the large group by privately messaging everyone individually, OR by writing it down and showing it on your screen while the person who is “it” closes their eyes. Then, once they have guessed, you move to the next person. The way to make this competitive would be to time how long it takes each person individually to guess OR, put people onto teams. If team A’s representative doesn’t guess within a minute, then the turn switches to team B. If team A does guess before a minute is up, then their team gets to go again.

#7 Pictionary

This requires you to use the drawing feature on Zoom, which also requires quite a bit of set up beforehand (or just whenever you have very few students in the Zoom meeting with you). Here’s how to set this up on a computer: Go into your “screen share” option at the bottom of Zoom, and select “whiteboard” and “share”. Then, when you’ve got your green bar with your ID, hover over it which will bring up a menu. Click on the three dots that say “more” underneath it. Then, “disable attendee annotation” so that no one else can draw. You can also “show names of annotators” instead to allow others to still draw, but that you’ll also know WHO is drawing WHAT. (Because #teenagers.) When I first played this, we played “Bible Pictionary” and it was hilarious because of how difficult it is to draw on the whiteboard feature.

#8 HOME SCAVENGER HUNT

This is currently the most common way to engage your students on Zoom, while getting them up and moving. Pick a random list of things, and then whenever they arrive at Zoom, ask them to go and get each item (one at a time) and see who gets back with it first. Easy peasy.

#9 NETFLIX PARTIES

You can watch Netflix with your whole group. You can watch the movie at the same time. If someone pauses on their end to go to the bathroom, it pauses for everyone. You can

communicate on the chat as well. This requires everyone to have a Netflix account. Directions found here. <https://www.netflixparty.com>

#10 TICKTOCK CHALLENGES

Have a contest for who can do the best Ticktock challenge. Offer a prize for the best/funniest/most creative ticktock. You must download the app on your iPhone or android and create an account.

#11 BINGO

Do you have bingo at your house? Then you have everything you need. All you need to do is google bingo cards and send it to your students. If you have bingo at your house, you can use your bingo wheel and bingo balls to play. You can even give out prizes. (Order them a pizza or deliver their prize to their doorstep).

#12 Ask Alexa

Totally stole this from Jimmy Fallon!

[Watch it here – starts about 22:30](#)

The way the game works is contestants “draw” a word from a jar (or a randomizer on the screen), the host can do this and show it to the camera. The contestant then has to ask Alexa, Siri, Google Assistant etc. a question that prompts the assistant to say the word, but they can’t use the word itself. For example, the word may be “Saxophone” and the question could be “What instrument does Bill Clinton play?” If the Assistant says the word, you get a point, you can also award extra points if it’s the *first* word to be said.

#13 Student Takeover

Allow a student to lead small group one week. Let them lead the discussion. Send them the group guide and let them lead a game. Students love to lead, and this gives them the incredible opportunity to be a leader and own their faith. Plus, students love seeing other students lead.

#14 Join them on their video game

Students love when leaders take an interest in what they like to do. One week, after service, invite them to join a game where you can all play online and talk at the same time. Ex. Fortnite, Call of duty, or ask them what they’re playing online.