

Why Play Works book club

Facilitation Guides

Each session would have some time for discussing the themes from the section read that month all together and some time for small group sharing/discussion. The general format for each session is:

1. Small talk/Arrival time (5 minutes)
 - a. We will take a few minutes to talk about the weather or do an icebreaker. Participants will be invited to volunteer to plan an icebreaker for the next session.
2. Today's theme (5 minutes)
 - a. The facilitator will share announcements and introduce the theme for the day. This leads naturally to the discussion.
3. Discussion (20 minutes)
 - a. Discuss the 3-5 questions that were sent in advance for each session. Use breakout rooms depending on the size of the group:
 - i. Up to 8 people stay in one room
 - ii. 9-15 people 2 breakout rooms
 - iii. 16-23 people in 3 breakout rooms
 - iv. 24-31 in 4 breakout rooms
 - v. 32-40 in 5 breakout rooms
 - b. *Will we ask for volunteers to facilitate the breakout rooms?*
 - c. At the end of 20 minute, bring the group back together and check-in on how the discussion went. Then transition into the time for playing together.
4. Let's Play (20 minutes)
 - a. Research tells us that play is important for keeping children, and adults healthy. So we are going to take time to play as part of the book club.

Book Club meeting 1: The Theory & Science of Play

Theme: Building relationships and building connections

Read pages 1-38 (38 pages)

- Introduction
- Play, Seriously: The Theory and Science Behind Play (key points highlighted on p 23)
- Relationships, Relationships, Relationships
- Testing, Testing, 1, 2, 3

Small talk/Arrival time (5 minutes)

We will take a few minutes to talk about the weather or do an icebreaker. Participants will be invited to volunteer to plan an icebreaker for the next session.

Today's theme (5 minutes)

Thanks for joining this first book club session. The full schedule is at (share link in chat).

Here is an overview of book club experience that we have planned.

We'll start each day with about 5 minutes for an ice breaker or open discussion.

Today we just talked about the weather, because that always seems to work in

Nebraska. Would someone else like to volunteer to do a brief ice breaker or discussion for our next session?

Then we'll get into our discussion of the section of the book that we read for that session. Each month there will be a few discussion questions that we'll use during this part, though sometimes I'll mix it up with some different activities.

I've also planned some opportunities to play into each of the sessions because as I've dived into this research on play, it is clear that play is important for people of all ages, not just children. We're going to take some time to play because it helps our physical and mental health – **and** – because I want you to leave each session with some ideas you can use with the kids in your program too.

If our group is not too big, I'll mostly keep everyone together, but if we have enough people, I will use breakout rooms for the discussion and some of the games.

Please don't leave if I say we're going into breakout rooms – it will be okay, I promise. And if you try it and feel like the activity in the breakout rooms didn't work – please let me know. My email is sfrerichs3@unl.edu and I really appreciate you letting me know if any of the activities don't work for you.

Do you have any questions about how the book club will work?

So, let's get started. Today's theme is how play can help with building relationships and building connections for both the youth and the staff in your program.

Small Group Discussion (20 minutes)

Set up just the number of breakout rooms needed: Up to 8 people stay in one room, 9-15 people 2 breakout rooms, etc. Send participants into breakout rooms if needed.

Discuss the questions shared in advance.

- How do you define play? (Facilitators see p 14)
- Thinking of your own experiences, how does play help build relationships? (Facilitators see p 28)
- What is your key take-away from this section of the book?
- How would you like to use play to build relationships or trust in your program?

Bring the group back together and check-in on how the discussion went. Then transition into the time for playing together.

Let's Play (20 minutes)

Research tells us that play is important for keeping children, and adults healthy. So we are going to take time to play as part of the book club. To learn more about play for adults <https://www.nifplay.org/play-for-you/make-play-part-of-an-adult-life/>

Your job in the next activity, is to play test one of the games from the PlayWorks Game Library. I've selected games that I think will work via Zoom or in-person so you can also use them with staff in your program. Each room has been assigned a different game – the list is in chat. Play test your assigned game and be prepared to report back to the group if you want to recommend the game and any advice you have on playing it. I'm going to give you 10 minutes to work in your small group – after you've done tested your assigned game, you're welcome to try out any of the other games.

Return to the same breakout rooms if needed. If possible, have the facilitator move between breakout rooms to observe and answer questions.

1. Group Count <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/group-count/>
2. This is my Nose <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/this-is-my-nose/>
3. Tomato <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/tomato/>

4. Going on a Picnic <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/going-on-a-picnic/>
5. Motion Freeze <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/emotion-freeze/>

Bring the Group back together in the main room.

I want to hear how it went in your small groups. (*If time is short, have groups share their report via chat.*). Your job was to play test one of the games from the PlayWorks Game Library. I'll call on each room and you can tell us about the game you played.

- Room 1: Group Count <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/group-count/>
- Room 2: This is my Nose <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/this-is-my-nose/>
- Room 3: Tomato <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/tomato/>
- Room 4: Going on a Picnic <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/going-on-a-picnic/>
- Room 5: Emotion Freeze <https://www.playworks.org/game-library/emotion-freeze/>

Wrap Up

Thanks for joining us today. Today's theme was how play can help with building positive relationships and connections for both the youth and the staff in your program. This helped direct the questions we discussed and how we set up the experience, hopefully giving you opportunities to start building relationships with each other.

Our next session will focus on Inclusion and Leadership. For this session on November 7 you will read pages 39-77. One of the things we'll ask you to do in the second session is share an interesting game from the Game Guide in the back of your book, so take some time to look through the Game Guide and pick out a game you want to share.

You may find a game you remember playing, or one that you think would challenge the kids in your program in a positive way. You just need to select one game and be ready to explain why it interests you. There is no wrong answer here because we have different interests.