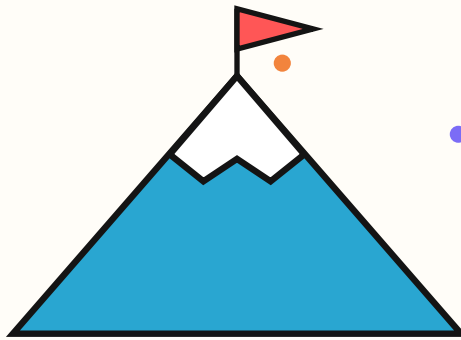




FREE RESOURCE

The Play Starter Pack

10 play activities you can run with any group,
tomorrow. Zero equipment. Zero prep.

BY DALE SIDEBOTTOM

Author · TEDx speaker · Founder of The School of Play
600+ schools · 25+ countries · 1M+ people reached

01

Rock Paper Scissors Rockstar

TIME 5 MIN

GROUP ANY SIZE

ENERGY HIGH

- Everyone pairs up and plays rock paper scissors.
- The loser becomes the winner's biggest fan — following them, chanting their name.
- Winners battle winners, entourages combine, until two finalists face off with the whole room cheering.

WHY IT WORKS

Losing becomes the fun part — nobody sits out, everybody belongs.

02

The Silent Line-Up

TIME 5 MIN

GROUP 8–40

ENERGY MEDIUM

- Challenge the group to line up in birthday order — without a single word.
- Gestures, fingers and miming only. Time them.
- Check the line out loud: every mistake gets a cheer, not a groan.

WHY IT WORKS

Non-verbal problem-solving flattens the room: quiet kids shine.

03

Boom Snap Clap

TIME 4 MIN

GROUP ANY SIZE

ENERGY MEDIUM

- Teach the rhythm: hit chest (boom), snap, clap. Slow, then faster.
- Add the trick round: on 'boom' silently mouth it instead.
- Mistakes = restart with a smile. Try it in pairs facing off.

WHY IT WORKS

Shared rhythm syncs a group faster than any icebreaker question.

04

Category Countdown

TIME 5 MIN

GROUP PAIRS / SMALLS

ENERGY MEDIUM

- In pairs: name 5 animals in 10 seconds. Go!
- New round, new category: 5 movies, 5 pizza toppings, 5 things in a backpack.
- Finish with a silly one: 5 excuses for being late.

WHY IT WORKS

Fast wins build momentum — perfect brain reset between tasks.

05

Mirror Mirror

TIME 4 MIN

GROUP PAIRS

ENERGY LOW

- Pairs face each other. One leads slow movements, the other mirrors exactly.
- Swap leader every 30 seconds.
- Final round: nobody leads — see if the pair can move as one.

WHY IT WORKS

Focused attention on another person builds instant connection.

06

The Number 21

TIME 5 MIN

GROUP 5–15 PER CIRCLE

ENERGY LOW

- Circle up. Count to 21, one person at a time, no order, no signals.
- Two people speak at once? Back to 1.
- Reach 21 and the last person invents a rule for the next round.

WHY IT WORKS

Teaches patience and reading the room, disguised as a game.

07

Would You Rather Corners

TIME 6 MIN

GROUP ANY SIZE

ENERGY MEDIUM

- Call a 'would you rather' — each option is a corner of the room.
- Everyone moves to their answer, then defends it to a neighbour in 20 seconds.
- Start silly (fly vs invisibility), sneak in one meaningful round at the end.

WHY IT WORKS

Moving bodies + low-stakes opinions = everyone's voice warmed up.

08

High-Five Hustle

TIME 3 MIN

GROUP ANY SIZE

ENERGY HIGH

- Sixty seconds: high-five as many people as possible — count them.
- Round two: beat your own number.
- Round three: every high-five comes with a compliment.

WHY IT WORKS

Physical, fast and impossible to do without smiling.

09

Catch My Name

TIME 5 MIN

GROUP 6-20 PER CIRCLE

ENERGY MEDIUM

- Circle up with one soft ball. Say a name, throw to that person.
- Keep the same pattern and speed it up. Add a second ball. Then a third.
- Chaos guaranteed — laughter too.

WHY IT WORKS

Names stick when they arrive attached to action and laughter.

10

The Gratitude Blast

TIME 4 MIN

GROUP ANY SIZE

ENERGY LOW

- Everyone writes or thinks of one good thing from this week.
- Pair up: 30 seconds each to share it, listener just listens.
- Swap partners and repeat once. Finish with a group round of applause for the week.

WHY IT WORKS

Ending on gratitude locks in the feeling the play created.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Loved these 10? There are 1,000 more.

ClassBreak has 1,000+ ready-to-run activities, and The School of Play brings whole-school wellbeing through play to 600+ schools worldwide.

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