NIU’s Teambuilding Program is focused on helping groups develop to become at their full potential. We have numerous activities for your group to choose from but there are many other adaptations and activities up our sleeve. The activities are divided into three main categories – ice breakers, high energy games, and initiatives. There are also several reflective activities to use at the end of a workshop.

**Ice Breakers**

Ice breaker activities are great for participants to get to know each other and for the facilitators to get to know the group. Whether or not it is the first time your group has worked together, these activities help to direct the focus, create energy and a strong foundation for participants.

**Assuming Identities**

Each participant starts off by introducing themselves to one other participant, stating a few simple things like name, major, favorite food, etc. They then trade identities and introduce “themselves” to another person. Participants continue trading identities until time is up, then they introduce their new selves to the group, then the actual person steps forward.

**Handshakes**

How many different handshakes do you know? In this creative ice breaker, participants will be introduced to some silly ways to greet their peers. Each time a new handshake is learned, you’ll be part of a new pair. Don’t forget which handshake goes with which partner!

**Hog Call**

This activity has pairs looking for each other blindfolded, relying on communication and cooperation to locate each other.

**Follow the Leader**

Standing in a circle, one participant closes their eyes or leaves the room. The group chooses a leader. The leader starts an action such as clapping, waving, etc. as the first participant opens their eyes or comes back into the room. The leader changes actions and the individual tries to guess who the leader is.

**Group Juggle**

The goal of this game is to get an object tossed around the circle. Using eye contact and names, the group works together to get the object around the circle as fast as possible!

**Human Bingo**

With a bingo sheet in hand, the object is to get as many different people as possible to sign your card. Each space contains a different category or experience, meet and greet each other along the way.

**Paper Airplanes**

Each participant writes their name and three interesting facts about themselves. Fold the paper into a plane and fly it into the air. Everyone picks up a plane and finds the owner.

**Peek-A-Who**

Divided up into two teams, participants sit on either side of a tarp. Members of each team face-off to see who is able to be the first one to say the name of the person on the other side.

**Rock Paper Scissors Championship**

Pair off and play one round of rock paper scissors. The loser of the first round will follow the winner and cheer them on as they face the next opponent, who already has their own cheering team. Repeat until a final round. Being loud and raucous is highly encouraged.
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**Roll Call**
The group must organize themselves in a given order without speaking, opening the door to alternative forms of communication. Categories can include birthdays, animals, names, shoe sizes, and more.

**Screaming Toes**
Standing in a circle, everyone looks down, and on command looks at one person. If the person being looked at is looking at someone else, then the looker is safe. If eye contact is made, then the two are zapped to take a moment to get to know each other before the game continues.

**Spot-It Cards & Ubuntu Cards**
Using a set of special cards, participants will be able to play numerous energizing games that challenge their memory and reaction time. The group will need to listen to directions carefully!

**Three in Common**
Participants are broken up randomly into small groups and have to find three things in common amongst all of the members. This helps recognize shared interests or similarities and initiates conversation.

**High Energy Games**
These activities are designed to get all participants up, moving, and actively involved! We play fair and we play for fun.

**Alaskan Baseball**
A highly active game that incorporates speed, tactics, and teamwork. Opposing teams compete to gain points by saying names and running, retrieving, and passing around an object.

**Everybody’s It!**
This game is just good fun, plain and simple. Everyone is it. Everyone chases each other. If you get tagged you sit down, but keep your eye on the person who tagged you because when they get tagged and sit down you get up. This activity gets the blood pumping and the endorphins flowing and puts everyone in a good mood.

**Making the Trade**
Participants start by standing on spots with one person in the middle. Participants on the spots must make eye contact with another person and quickly switch places. The person in the middle is trying to “steal” a spot while other players are switching places.

**Mergers**
Everyone gets a circle of rope to stand in. They must have their feet entirely inside the rope. When the facilitator says “move”, they must move to a different rope. As the activity progresses, ropes are taken away, until there is only one rope left, and the entire group must get their feet inside.

**Monarch Tag**
A fun dodgeball tag game starts with everyone is an anarchist except for one monarch. The monarch uses a ball to try to tag the anarchists. When tagged they become monarchs and work together until the last anarchist standing becomes the new monarch.

**Team Tag**
Teams of three try to pin clothespins on other teams without getting pinned themselves. Don’t leave your team hanging out to dry.
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Ships and Sailors
Active listening and quick reflexes required! The facilitator will call out pirate-inspired actions. Participants must complete the correct task in order to stay in the game.

Initiatives
Initiatives are similar to games, but focus on learning and growth for each individual and the group as a whole. Depending on group size, experience, background, and other such factors, facilitators may incorporate additional challenges.
Activity Focus: Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership

* Some of our favorite activities

Acid Pour (Toxic Waste)
Work together as a group to transport toxic items to the decontamination zone. Be careful not to touch the toxic items or step inside the contaminated area!
Communication, Leadership

All Aboard
The entire group is asked to stand on a tarp or platform. As they progress the tarp is folded or a smaller platform introduced increasing the challenge.
Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership

Perilous Polygon
Without the use of vision, the group must work together to create a variety of shapes using the entire length of that rope.
Communication, Leadership

Construction Towers
This competition promotes small group teamwork in building the largest, free-standing, tower possible using only newspapers, other objects, or plastic pieces similar to Legos.
Communication, Leadership

*Count Off / Blind Count Off
Each member of the group only gets one chance. Who will be the first to call out a number? This activity focuses on non-verbal cues, initiative and timing.
Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership

Everybody Up
Start with partners to help each other up first facing front to front and then back to back. After they have completed it in partners, have them do it with four, then eight, then try the whole group.
Communication, Leadership

*Gnar Gnars
Using small objects to connect partners, the object is to strategize and work together to stay connected through a variety of challenges.
Communication

*Group Jump Rope
No double-dutch skills required here! Work together with your group to get everyone to the other side of the rope. Challenges will be added throughout the activity to keep you on your toes.
Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership
**Group Waiter**
A board connected to strings is passed amongst the group with a pitcher of water balancing. Next challenge, holding the board suspended in the air to pour a glass of water. Customer service is the focus of this group initiative.
Cohesiveness, Communication

**Helium Stick**
This seemingly simple task is harder than it sounds. The group must lower a stick to the ground, only using their fingertips but the stick seems to magically float up as they try.
Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership

**Help Square**
Close your eyes and imagine that you are in a maze. One by one the participants must find their way out with the help of the group.
Communication

**Key Punch**
Your group must work together to debug the “computer”! Participants must touch the numbers in specific order as quickly as possible. The trick is only one person can be in the computer at a time.
Communication, Leadership

**Minefield**
A sight impaired person guided by a sighted person to navigate through obstacle course. Or try circle minefield in arm-linked circles the objective is to get from one point to the other.
Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership

**Moonball**
This activity is out of this world! As a group, try to keep a beach ball in the air for as many hits as possible. How many can you keep in the air at once?
Cohesiveness, Communication

**Pipeline**
Get the marble from point A to point B while keeping it on the track. Using a wooden pipeline, work together to transport the marble across the room and keep on rolling with a race against the clock or another team!
Communication, Leadership

**Puzzle Pieces**
The group is tasked to assemble a simple, giant-sized puzzle with few obstacles. The puzzle pieces are coated in chalkboard paint and are great for brainstorming or sharing ideas related to your group goals.
Communication, Leadership

**Rear View Mirror**
See no..? Speak no..? Hear no..? Imagine if your senses were divided up among three different people. In this activity, groups work together to complete a simple task with a challenging twist.
Cohesiveness, Communication
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*Spider Web*
If a spider were human size, he would build a human size web. An entire group must get through the web, from one side to the other without touching the string.
*Communication, Leadership*

**Tank**
One person will be blindfolded and is the “tank” in the game. The other partner is the “driver” in the game. The goal is for the two to work together to take down the other tanks.
*Communication*

*Traffic Jam*
A real, “brain buster” that requires much thinking and communication. Much like a game of chess, there are only so many places and directions in which each person may move.
*Communication, Leadership*

**Trust Fall**
Take the leap in this activity! The only thing between you and the ground is your group. Trust the group and they will trust you.
*Communication*

**Trust Wave**
Take turns running through your group as they raise their arms to clear a path. If the group is ready, this can be fun energizing trust activity.
*Cohesiveness, Communication*

*Turtles*
A classic puzzle of getting everyone from one side to the other without losing any platforms or “turtles”. This initiative challenges the group’s cooperation rather than their speed.
*Communication, Leadership*

**Wind in the Willows**
The group forms a circle of spotters with individuals standing shoulder to shoulder. Using the communication system, one person allows the group to pass him/her around the circle.
*Cohesiveness, Communication*

*Zoom/Re-Zoom*
Using a series of pictures, the group must work together to try and put a story together in order from start to finish. There is always more than what meets the eye!
*Cohesiveness, Communication, Leadership*
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Closing Activities
After each initiative the group will debrief, or process their experience. At the end of the workshop we think doing something special to reflect is also important, as this creates connection back to the “real world”. These are a few of our favorite closing activities.

**Body Part Debrief**
Using cards of different human anatomy, the group can share their experience through senses and creativity.

**Debriefing Wheelies**
Using a series of cards with reflection questions, group members reflect on their experiences. Each card has questions that connect with the three “big” questions of “what”, “so what”, and “now what”.

**Ubuntu Cards**
Using a set of Ubuntu cards, group members reflect through creative story-telling as well as using a series of images to share their thoughts, ideas, and strengths.

**Whether Weather**
A set of different weather cards are displayed to the group who then has to come to a decision on which symbolizes their experience best.

**Yarn Web**
Pass a spool of yarn around the circle as you and your group discuss activities, connections, and summarize experiences.

**Yurt Circle**
Hold on, and lean back. Trust your hands, trust the rope, and trust your team. If everybody risks falling, nobody will hit the ground.