

Red Planet-Blue Planet

Summary:

This is an interactive team building activity that allows students to work together while learning about the environment. The student's main challenge is to rescue a tennis ball which represents the world, but they must follow a few rules that will encourage them to work as a team to reach their goal. At the end of the activity the instructor has the opportunity to debrief of the importance of caring for our natural environment and what are some of the main qualities that we must possess in order to be better stewards of the Earth.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will understand the main principles of team work
- 2) Students will learn to listen and respect each other
- 3) Students will develop a sense of stewardship for our natural world.

Materials:

- Small tennis ball or world ball
- Dry-erase white board
- Markers
- Noise maker (if desired)

Time Frame:

10-15 min (depending on group's teamwork skills)

Procedure:

A) INTRO (1-2mins):

Gather group in a circle. Assess their prior knowledge regarding teamwork. "What do you think are the main characteristics of teamwork?" Allow them to discuss with their neighbors so that they get a better sense of who they will be working with. Bring everyone's attention back to the circle and ask students for their responses; discuss with everyone the main ingredients for teamwork. Explain to the students that they will be using all the different qualities of teamwork: listening to each other, supporting each other, working in solidarity, joining forces,

B) ACTIVITY (7-10mins):

Staying in the circle, show students the world (tennis ball) and tell them that you have taken over the world and that they have to rescue it as a team. On the top part of the white board draw a stick figure representing you and the world next to you on the ground; then, on the bottom part of the white board draw a shoulder to shoulder line of stick figures which represents them.

Remind students that their goal is to rescue the world from you, but they must follow these rules: (Explain rules using your white board (1min))

1. You will turn around (with your back towards them) and you will start counting out loud: **ONE PLANET, TWO PLANETS, RED PLANET, BLUE PLANET.** They are allowed to walk or run while you are counting; while you are explaining this, draw a small arrow from their shoulder-to-shoulder line towards you and the world to give them a visual of their journey.
2. As soon as you say **BLUE PLANET**, you will turn around to face them and they must remain frozen. If anyone moves everyone goes back to the starting line (this is team effort!). They will eventually figure out that they must all stop when you say **RED PLANET** 😊; and that it is better to walk and take their time, but let them figure it out on their own. They must come up with their own strategies!
3. IF every one stayed frozen, you will turn away from them and count once more: **ONE PLANET, TWO PLANETS, RED PLANET, BLUE PLANET**, and they can continue getting closer to you. Draw another arrow line showing them how they are getting closer to you and the world.
4. If they make it close to you, they may take the world while you are counting. As soon as you say **BLUE PLANET** and turn around, if you notice the world has been taken, you get one guess of who may have taken the world (On the white board erase the world to represent that it got taken) If your guess is correct they must return to the starting line and start all over from the beginning. If your guess is incorrect they may continue walking towards the starting line. (So now in the white board draw a line that goes back to the starting line to represent their journey). They must bring it all the way back to the starting line while you keep on counting. So part of the strategy is to hide the world from you and work together as a team so that you don't know who really has the world.
5. You continue counting: **ONE PLANET, TWO PLANETS, RED PLANET, BLUE PLANET**, while they continue walking back towards the starting line. And every time you say **BLUE PLANET** and turn around you get one guess of who may have it.

6. Every one must touch the world at one point or another, and they world can only be passed gently from hand to hand. Throwing the world to each other is not allowed, this is NOT like football! They will accomplish their goal once the world is back safe with them at the starting line.

Allow them 1 minute to talk among themselves to come up with strategies, and ask them to make the shoulder-to-shoulder line. Walk around 10 steps away from them and place the world on the ground (if you don't have much time just walk 4-6 steps away).

Closing (2-3mins):

Gather group back in a circle and discuss the different teamwork qualities that worked for them. Ask them to give you examples of great things that they could accomplish if they work together as a team. Tell them that now that they have rescued the world they must think of something that each of them can do in order to be better stewards of the Earth. You can give them some examples but they have to come up with their very own example, and may be share it at the end of the day.

You can read them some environmental quotes to inspire them:

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world." Mahatma Gandhi

"A person writing at night may put out the lamp, but the words he has written will remain. It is the same with the destiny we create for ourselves in this world." Shakyamuni

"A society is defined not only by what it creates, but by what it refuses to destroy." John Sawhill, former president/CEO of [The Nature Conservancy](#)

"Now I truly believe that we in this generation must come to terms with nature, and I think we're challenged, as mankind has never been challenged before, to prove our maturity and our mastery, not of nature but of ourselves." Rachel Carson, author, [Silent Spring](#)