

# WIDE GAMES

## Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games

By Brad Lavenne

Wide Games are activities or events that involve everyone at camp. They can be played indoors and outdoors and during the day or the night. A Wide Game can be a large outdoor activity like Ultimate Frisbee or an afternoon of group games. Whichever way the Wide Games are played, their purpose is to build and involve the whole camp community. Wide Games are not boosters. What are Boosters, you ask? Boosters are the gathering activities to build community at the beginning of a program/event and are often fillers, too.

This paper will focus on three types of Wide Games. There are examples of each type later on in this handout.

1. Large Group Games—These games involve 10 or more people.
2. Wide Games—The game requires a large playing area. For some Wide Games, this can involve the entire camp.
3. Theme-Based Games—This is where the Wide Game is integrated into the broader theme of the camp for the day or the event.

The following are a few questions to think about when planning Wide Games.

- **Game:** Why this game? Have you, the leader, played it before? Is it fun? Can you easily explain it to an outsider? If not, the purpose and rules to the game need to be clearer. How many people do you need to lead and support the game safely?
- **Audience:** Is the game appropriate for your campers and their stage in life? (i.e., ages, abilities, and disabilities?) How does the game include campers? Exclude? Can the game be modified to suit the age and/or ability of the campers? What are the options if a camper(s) choose(s) not to play the game while the Wide Game is on?
- **Beliefs and Values:** Does the game reflect the values and beliefs shared in your camp's purpose and/or summer curriculum? For example, full-tackle capture-the-flag does not reflect a weekly theme on Christian Friendship.
- **Setting:** Where will the game take place? What are the boundaries? If on a large playing area, how will the campers know when the game starts and stops? Have you walked the site? Are there any potential dangers in the playing area (i.e., stumps, holes, low branches, exposed piping, or tree roots)? Have you modified the game and/or playing area to avoid these potential dangers?
- **Risk:** How can you play the game with the least amount of risk? If the game leaders allow rough physical play like tackling, is the camp willing to assume the risks?

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).

associated with this type of game and/or play? Is the game played close to a location with a first aid kit or does the group need to travel with one? What is the safety plan?

- **Planning:** Who are the main leaders for the game? Support staff for the game? Safety people and their supplies? Do you have the appropriate supplies? (i.e., do you need to buy or order the supplies ahead of time?) What do you need to do to prepare for the game? For example, people need more time to plan and set up for theme-based games than they do for large group games.

**The following ideas for Wide Games are a compilation of resources from camp directors and youth ministers from across The United Church of Canada.** These are provided to you as idea starters and are not meant to be a complete list. Please feel free to change, modify, or use the following ideas at your camp. The games suggested on this page are designed for early adolescents and youth.

## **LARGE GROUP GAMES**

Ten or more people.

### **Link Game:**

*Game:* People pair off by linking arms and forming a large circle. There are two people in the middle, the person who is "it" and the runner. The person who is "it" runs after the runner and tries to tag him/her. If the person who is "it" tags the runner, then the runner is "it." If the runner joins at the end of a pair, then the person at the opposite end of the pair is the runner.

*Rules:* The runner cannot go outside the circle or else he/she is "it." The circle is on a clockwise basis. The runner must join the linked pair on the right-hand side. If the runner joins the wrong side, then she is "it." If you are a new runner, you cannot join the two pairs either on your left or right.

### **You're Special If...**

*Game:* Everyone has a seat and the person in the middle says "You're special if you have white socks." All the people with white socks must move to another seat while the person in the middle tries to take a seat that was vacated by someone with white socks. If the person in the middle finds a seat, then the person who was unable to find a seat is in the middle.

*Rules:* The "if" cannot be graphic or racially related.

### **North Wind Blows Game:**

This game is similar to "Your'e Special If..." except that the person in the middle says "The North Wind blows..." rather than "You're special if..."

### **What Do I Have?**

*Object:* To guess what the group has.

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).

*Game:* A person from the circle leaves the room. The rest of the group chooses something like an action or noise while that person is out of the room. The person who left the room then returns and tries to guess what the group has. He can ask questions but the group can only give "Yes" or "No" answers. The game ends when the person in the middle guesses what the group action or noise is. If your group likes, you can decide on a maximum number of questions the person in the middle can ask.

### **People to People**

*Game:* This is a good mixer game. A large group of people mingles in a designated area. The facilitator has people chant "People to People" while snapping their fingers (you choose the rhythm). The facilitator then calls out a specific number of people and then asks them to answer a question, build something with others, or do an action. For example, the facilitator will say "three people make a washing machine." All participants gather into groups the size of the number called out and complete the request. Depending on the time and the facilitator's creativity, the game can go from five minutes to a half an hour. After a few things have been called out, recall one of the previous requests so that people have to remember and find the same group they originally did that request with.

Some suggestions could be:

- Build something: build a shower (three people), car (five people), airplane (10 people), skateboard factory (15 people), working McDonald's (20 people), roller coaster (using the whole group).
- Actions: A group of four make a commercial for your church (one minute), a group of five make a song or chant about this retreat.
- Questions: "Favourite" type of question, i.e., movie, actress, food, "I am feeling...", "If I had a million dollars I would want..."

*Rules:* People must stay in the groups in which they first built something. For example, you go back to the same five people who created the car with you.

## **TRUST GAMES**

Trust Games help your campers build trust in one another and work as a group. The following games can be done as stand-alone activities for a small group, or you can set up each activity over your camp property and allow cabin/home groups a block of time to travel through each game during an afternoon or morning.

### **Stand**

*Object:* To have your group stand all together on the same item.

*Materials:* Large plastic milk crates and a variety of different sized boards. Make sure the boards are heavy duty.

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).

*Game:* The group begins with a large board covering the milk carrier. The group then stands together on the board. After the group has done the board, their next task is a smaller board. The game continues until the group has completed a minimum of three boards.

### **Trust Fall**

*Object:* Make the person falling feel comfortable enough to fall into the group's arms.

*Game:* One person stands on the edge of a table, chair, or high ledge. The rest of the group pair off, stand close to the other pairs, and link their arms to form a strong "cradle." The person on the table (or other object) falls backward and the group below catches the person with their arms. The group then places the person gently on the ground.

### **Electric Circle**

*Object:* For the entire group to get to the other side using only the hole in the wall.

*Scene:* Your group has come to an invisible wall that is "electrified." The only way around the wall is through the four-foot hole two feet above the ground.

*Materials:* Hula-hoop suspended two to three feet off the ground (hung, for example, from the ceiling or a tree branch by a rope).

### **Blind Walk**

*Object:* For your group to walk hand in hand for 15 minutes blindfolded.

*Game:* The group starts off blindfolded with one leader who can see in the front. The leader takes his/her group on a walk for 15 minutes. The only directions she can give the group are "Stop," "Go," "Up," "Down," "Left," "Right," "Forward," or "Backward." There can be no other verbal communication from the leader.

*Materials:* Blindfold for each person in the game.

### **Island to Island**

*Scenario:* Your group is stranded on a small sinking island. The only way your group can survive is by using rocks to cross the alligator-infested waters to another island. The problem is that some of the rocks are alligators.

*Game:* The groups begins at the sinking island with up to six milk carriers. The group crosses the water (usually 20 metres apart) by all gathering on the front milk crates and passing the last carrier to the front for another step. The game becomes interesting when the facilitator takes milk carriers away during the group's journey to the other island.

*Materials:* Large plastic milk crates.

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).

## **THEME-BASED GAMES**

This is where the Wide Game is integrated into the broader theme of the camp for the day or the event.

### **Christians and Romans**

The object is for the Christians to find their secret place of worship and to show the persecution faced by Early Christians. This game can be used when you're looking at the Early Church, New Testament Scripture, or what the Early Christians were living through in their time under persecution by the Romans. This is a good game just before sunset. This allows the campers to experience a worship service by candlelight in nature.

*Setting:* This game is best played in a large, well-defined area (for example, a whole camp space).

*Materials:* Togas for the Romans, Christian fish signs for the Christians, and items for worship like a Bible and a Christ candle for the worship area.

#### *Game*

*Christians:* The role of the Christians is to find their secret place of worship and to avoid the Romans. When they are approached by any of the Romans and are asked what they are doing, the Christians should try to make up the best possible excuse. If the Romans don't believe the response, the Romans will have the Christians follow them to the Roman jail at one end of camp. The Christian will be required to stay there for one minute that they count. After the count, the Christians can re-enter the game. They do this by following the Christian fish signs posted all over the camp property. The signs can be written in the dirt as well as on actual signs.

*Worship Leaders:* During the game, their role is to continue to help the Christians find the worship space. They do this by offering clues and posting more Christian fish to direct people to the worship space. At the beginning of the game there should be very few signs and when you want worship to begin, there should be clear ways of gathering everyone to the worship space. The game ends when the worship leaders light the Christ candle. They greet the Christians who find the worship space by washing the Christians' hands in water and drying them with a towel.

*Romans:* The role of the Romans is to track the Christians. The Romans will approach any Christians and ask what they are doing. The Romans are looking for the best improvised excuse. If the Romans don't believe the response, the Romans will have the Christians follow them to the Roman jail at one end of camp. Remember, jail is not forced confinement but a place where people count their one minute out loud. The Romans will be very active at the beginning of the game. However, as the game continues, their activity and numbers should decrease. There should be at least one Roman for every five Christians at the start of the game. When a Roman leaves their role, they should remove their costume and become a Christian. Divide the length of time the game is being played for by the number of Romans and that will tell you how often a Roman should become a Christian.

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).

*Worship:*

The worship will take place in an unused part of the camp. The worship leaders should be intentional about planning a meaningful service and creating a welcoming worship space. One idea in creating a welcoming space is to use candles to light up the centre table.

When Christians find the place of worship, they will be asked if they would like their hands washed. If they agree, invite them to dip their hands in water and have a volunteer dry them with a towel. The game ends when the Christ candle is lit, which signifies the beginning of worship. If everyone is not there at this time, the other Christians should be invited to find their friends, invite them to worship, and be back at worship by a designated time.

*Please credit the source. Thank you!*

"Wide Games: Large Group Games, Trust Games, and Theme-based Games" by Brad Lavenne.  
Downloaded from [www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping](http://www.united-church.ca/exploring/camping).