



It's in the Cards

OVERVIEW

This strategy uses playing cards to form groups of any number of sizes.

Suggested Time

About 5 minutes, depending on the size of the group

Group Size

This grouper works best with groups of eight or more participants. If you have more than fifty-two participants, use a second deck of cards.

Materials Needed

- ☀ a deck of playing cards
- ☀ double-stick tape (optional)

PROCEDURE

Preparation. Count out enough playing cards so that each participant gets a card that fits into a grouping sequence. For example, if you have twenty participants and you want groups of four, you could use all the cards from ace through five.

1. As the young people arrive, give each of them a playing card and tell them to keep it in a safe place. You may want to have them attach the card to their clothing with double-stick tape.

2. Choose one of the following methods to direct the participants into small groups:

- ⊙ Tell everyone to gather with people holding cards of the same suit as their card. You can limit the number in a group by saying something like, "Form groups of five by gathering with four other people whose cards are in the same suit as yours."
- ⊙ Have everyone gather with people holding cards of the same number or figure (jack, queen, or king) as their card. If you are using only one deck of cards or a partial deck, this method will result in groups of four or fewer.
- ⊙ Before the session put together a deck of cards with one or more examples of a common poker hand. For example, if you have twenty participants and you would like them to form four groups of five, you might create a deck of cards with four straights (five-card sequences), straight flushes (five-card sequences in the same suit), or full houses (two of a kind and three of a kind). After distributing the cards, call out the hand you have chosen, and tell the young people to gather with others to create that combination.
- ⊙ Gather the participants according to odd numbered, even numbered, or face cards.
- ⊙ Form pairs by having the young people find a matching number or figure.
- ⊙ Create groups with numbers that add up to a designated number. If you are using face cards, count them as ten points. For example, you might tell the young people to form groups by finding people whose cards, along with their own, add up to twenty-five. A group might consist of five people holding a five, a two, a nine, a six, and a three. If you use this method, the number of participants in each group will vary.

**ALTERNATIVE
APPROACHES**

- ☉ Use the playing cards as name tags. Write each person's name in big, bold letters on a separate playing card so that it is easy to read. Attach a safety pin or double-stick tape to the back of the card.
- ☉ Once the groups are formed, use the playing card mixer "Number, Please" from part B of this manual, or "Suits Me!" from part C.

NOTES

Use the space below to jot notes and reminders for the next time you use this strategy.



(This strategy is adapted from *Attention Grabbers for Fourth–Sixth Graders*, by David Lynn, pp. 26–27.)