

12 THEMES, PLUS COUNTLESS TEAMBUILDING ACTIVITIES,
FOR PLAYING YOUR WAY TO A STRONGER TEAM

PLAY, TEAM, PLAY!



JULIE PIERCE | 4SIGHT COACH



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About the Author

Leadership Coach Julie Pierce has one big dream: to empower leaders to change the world.

She does this by developing leaders through one-on-one coaching, consulting with teams, and communicating with groups. She is excited to partner with The 4Sight Group to help make this dream a reality!

After receiving her communications degree from Texas A&M University, she led communications and marketing efforts for Insight for Living, Prestonwood Baptist Church, and Nokia Mobile Phones. For almost a decade, she served pastors and teams at Irving Bible Church as Directional Leader to Women, leader of the Communications team, and as an Executive Team member.

Later on, she was invited to serve as Director of Leadership Development for Valley Creek Church where she led, taught, and launched their Follow leadership conference, staff leadership development efforts, LeaderStep leadership classes, and Valley Creek Leadership Academy (a nine month gap year program for young adults).

After all this leadership fun, Julie's favorite roles continue to be wife and mom. She has been married to her college sweetheart, Brian, for over 23 years. She has two teenage boys and a labrador who keep her on her toes and expect her to pack plenty of snacks.

About The 4Sight Group

Here at the 4Sight Group, we are passionate about cultivating healthy leaders to lead thriving organizations. We provide you with the foresight that leads to success. Our unique approach is a powerful blend of leadership coaching, business mentoring, and empowerment for self leadership. Each leadership coach on our team has varied experience and understands the value of continually developing your leadership skills.

We are more than life coaches or business advisors; we teach you how to first lead yourself and then to catalyze your personal transformation to impact the culture of your company or organization. Through resources like The Jenni Catron Leadership Podcast and our Weekly Insights newsletter and services like coaching, courses and workshops, the 4Sight group will provide you with a proven framework to take your leadership to the next level.

Learn more at www.get4sight.com



Introduction

My earliest team memory is from third grade. I was a proud member of the 1983 Lakers basketball team. Unlike the infamous Los Angeles Lakers, we were a clumsy collection of first through third graders playing in my town's youth basketball league. We would shoot at the wrong goal, dribble the ball off our feet, and pass to members of the other team. We were not exactly "magical" high scorers like our team namesakes.

But oh, how we loved the game. And we were just getting started.

Coach Wilson made sure we learned the basics of basketball and kept our heads up, even when we were discouraged by scoring points for the other team. Whether we were at practice, games, or the season-ending pizza party, we had a blast together.

Back then, working hard and playing hard went hand in hand.

Over the years, I have led teams of all sizes, on the court and off. Whether a non-profit marketing staff, a board of busy volunteers, a collection of creative agencies or a group of pastors, I have found a common thread for all teams that still rings true:

Working hard and playing hard still go hand in hand.

Good teams work together toward a common purpose. Great teams play together along the way. Through play, teams experience three tremendous benefits that elevate their game:

1. **Connection:** Teammates learn to trust each other when they connect on a personal level beyond the deadlines and deliverables.
2. **Communication:** When a team really knows each other, a common language is developed along with an improved sensitivity to personalities and timing.
3. **Commitment:** A team shifts from a collection of individuals to an "us" with inside jokes when there are shared stories, from shared experiences.

Leader friend, your team needs you to lead them not only in purposeful work, but in purposeful play as well.

While my teams played a lot at work, some of our most memorable moments came from play away from work. These were the days that shaped our relationships, and ultimately our success, in a significant way.

Over time, other leaders would ask me to help them create a team retreat or half-day of play. The 12 themed play days featured in this book are the result of those conversations.

Have a blast as you play your way to a stronger team!

Julie Pierce

4 Sight Coach

Getting Started

Each Purposeful Play Chapter Includes:

Theme Explanation: The quote and description included can be used in your communication to your team leading up to the experience.

Activity Options: From places to visit to games to play, the connection activities included should serve as a launching pad for your planning.

Menu Recommendations: What's a play day without delicious food? Themed ideas for both dining in and dining out are included.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation: Tying in with the theme of the day, these questions can be the catalyst for deeper conversation over a meal or coffee break.

You'll also find links to examples and recommendations. (Many of the location examples included are local to Dallas and meant to give you an idea of what to look for in your area.) Be sure to follow the Play, Team, Play! Pinterest boards for more ideas and recipes for each theme.

Before You Begin

Define your purpose thoughtfully: What do you really want to accomplish through purposeful play? How will you know if the day was a success? Choose a theme and activities that best suit your goals and the needs of your team in this season.

Determine the date carefully: Be considerate of the workload of your team and the seasonal nature of your organization. While there is never a perfect time for everyone to pull away from the deadlines and demands, there are still better times than others. Before making plans, run the tentative dates by the appropriate people in your organization and test them out with at least a few team members. Don't be the leader who actually causes more work for their team by being insensitive to their pressures and projects.

Delegate to the experts regularly: I believe we do our best work in teams and preparing for a day of purposeful play is no different! Consider who you can partner with to help ensure your success. Is there an administrative assistant who deals with details like a pro? Is there a volunteer whose party planning skills surpass yours? Is there a team member whose creative mind could help you brainstorm ideas? If you are planning a day of play for a large organization, you may want to consider outsourcing some of the logistics to a professional event planner or facilitator.

4 Steps to Proper Preparation

Communicate: Reserve the date on your team's calendar as far in advance as possible to insure maximum participation. Send a save the date card or email invite to prepare them in advance for the purpose and importance of the day. Notify other teams you work with that your team will be unavailable during the scheduled time frame.

Create a Schedule: First, decide on your timeframe: will a half day or whole day work best for what you want to accomplish? Or will you be spreading out your fun over the course of an annual retreat? Second, determine which activities you would like to try with your team and how long each will take. (When choosing activities, be sensitive to any physical mobility limitations amongst your team members.) Be sure to include time for travel to and from locations as well as necessary breaks. Consider the half day and full day sample schedules at the end of this chapter for ideas.

Complete Reservations: Consider what budget, facilities, room set-up, tickets, transportation, forms and approvals, reservations and appointments are needed for the activities you have planned. Make all arrangements as far in advance as possible to ensure availability, openings and good pricing. Be sure to create an inclement weather plan just in case!

Coordinate Supplies: Make a list of all supplies needed for activities. Create another list for the food, beverages, and paper goods needed for snacks and meals. (When choosing menu items, be mindful of any dietary restrictions and food allergies on your team.) Plan for plenty of time to purchase, borrow, or make the items needed.

5 Tips for Facilitating Intentional Conversations

1. Clear away distractions like noise, technology, extreme temperature, or interruptions. Set expectations ahead of time for technology usage so all team members will be on the same page (Example: No checking email or texting except for emergencies).

Invite your group to have one combined conversation: avoid the sidebar discussions that can disrupt the flow. Encourage the quieter ones in the group to engage. Also, let everyone know it's OK to pass on a question. In those instances, you can encourage them to say, "I would like to hear what someone else has to say."

2. Give space for silence as people think of their responses. Don't feel obligated to push past the pause.
3. Make sure each person's answer is affirmed by someone. A simple nod of the head or "thanks for sharing" can be enough.
4. Listen intently and don't interrupt answers with your own stories, questions, or judgments. Do ask a follow-up question to hear more.

3 Questions to Debrief an Activity

Connection activities are valuable experiences. But even more valuable can be the discussion afterward; the debrief conversation. Following the "What?", "So What?" and "Now what?" model found in Deb McCormick's book, *Playing Like a Team*, use the following questions to help guide your discussion.

What happened during this activity? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about your teammates?

So what does this have to do with our team? Now what will we do differently based on this experience?

Sample Half Day Schedule

8:30-9 a.m. Team Members Arrive; Beverages and light continental breakfast served.
(Nobody works well or plays well on an empty stomach!)

9-9:10 a.m. Remind team members of the purpose of the day.
Give instructions for schedule as needed.

9:10-10 a.m. First Activity

10-10:15 a.m. Break

10:15-11:45 a.m. Second Activity

11:45-12:45 p.m. Lunch & Intentional Conversation

12:45-1 p.m. Debrief, Closing Comments and Dismiss

Sample Full Day Schedule

8:30-9 a.m. Team Members Arrive; Beverages and light continental breakfast served.

9-9:10 a.m. Remind team members of the purpose of the day.
Give instructions for schedule as needed.

9:10-10 a.m. First Activity

10-10:15 a.m. Break

10:15-11:45 a.m. Second Activity

11:45-12:00 p.m. Break & Lunch Instructions

12-1:30 p.m. Lunch & Intentional Conversation

1:30-1:45 p.m. Break

1:45-4 p.m. One longer activity or two shorter activities

4-4:15 p.m. Break

4:15-4:30 p.m. Debrief, Closing Comments and Dismiss

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #1

Athletic Ambitions

“Friendships born on the field of athletic strife are the real gold of competition. Awards become corroded, friends gather no dust.” -- Jesse Owens

No couch potatoes here! Get up and move to get to know your teammates through these athletic endeavors.

Activities:

- Play a round (or two) of miniature golf or visit a place like Top Golf to test your swing skills.
- Challenge another department or organization to a softball game or take a few pitches at the nearest batting cages.
- Look like your own league (matching shirts!) and bowl a few frames at your favorite bowling alley.
- Sign up to walk or run in a 5K race for charity.
- Bring back grade school memories by playing a game of kickball.
- Create your own Backyard Olympic Games. Have teams participate in opening ceremonies, create their own country names and flags, compete in unusual games, and win medals for accomplishments.
- Cheer on a high school, college, or minor league team in your area by attending one of their games.
- Take a Zumba, yoga, or kickboxing class at a local gym.

Menu:

Watch a game and enjoy appetizers at a sports grill.

Host your own tailgate party with game day favorites like sliders, chips and dips, or chili.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation about the Olympic Games:

1. Which Olympic athlete or sport (past or present) is your favorite and why?
2. Did you have any Olympic aspirations as a child? Did you ever dream of competing, visiting, or working at one of the Games?
3. If you could introduce a new Olympic sport that would insure you the gold medal, what would it be?
4. What do you think is the most challenging aspect of being an Olympic athlete?
5. What do you think is the most rewarding aspect of participating in the Olympic Games?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #2

Botanical Beauty

“The earth laughs in flowers.” -- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Fresh air and natural beauty inspire this day focused on growth.

Activities:

- Visit your nearest botanical gardens or arboretum.
- Invite a friendly florist to give your group a flower arranging lesson.
- Attend a home gardens tour in your area.
- Offer to change out the landscaping at a non-profit or senior community center.
- Sample home grown goodness at your local farmers market.
- Adopt a highway in your community and beautify the area by picking up litter. (<http://adoptahighway.net/>)
- Take a hike at a nature preserve.
- Visit a nursery and pick out your own flowering plant to pot (some locations even offer classes).
- Create personal pavestones to mark the day. Kits can be purchased at craft supply stores and building supply chains.

Personal Growth Markers

Purpose: help team members get to know each other through personal life stories.

Time needed: 10 minutes per participant

Supplies: none

Instructions:

- Invite each team member to bring with them photos from major growth milestones in their personal or professional life to share with the team. You can give them flexibility with choosing the milestones while offering parameters like: must include between five to eight photos, at least one photo must be from childhood, and at least one must include family members.
- Have each person pass the photo around the group as they share the story of growth behind it. You can choose to have all team members share one after the other or break up this activity having different team members share throughout the day.
- Leave the photos on display to look at throughout the day.

Menu:

- Pack up (or pick up) a picnic lunch to enjoy at a nearby park.
- Enjoy a garden party inspired lunch on the patio including finger sandwiches and tea.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
2. When did you first feel like a grown up?
3. What's the one thing you will never outgrow, no matter how old you are?
4. What do you grow most easily? Example: I have a green thumb in relationships, ideas, plants, etc.
5. When was the last time you experienced a growing pain of some kind?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #3

Creative Inspiration

“Creativity involves breaking out of established patterns in order to look at things in a different way.” -- Edward de Bono

Break out of the proverbial rut and allow your creative genius to have its way with these inspired events.

Activities:

- Visit an art museum, sculpture garden or artist’s gallery. Have everyone share their favorite and least favorite works of art on display.
- Bring your own beverages and enjoy a painting class at places like Painting with a Twist. (www.paintingwithatwist.com)
- Create a craft or paint a piece of pottery at a local art supply store.
- Design a one-of-a-kind work of wearable art by tie-dying t-shirts.
- Make your own play dough and invite everyone to create a display of “model teammates”. (www.playdoughrecipe.com)
- Let your childlike Picasso shine by creating sidewalk chalk art. Include inspirational quotes to encourage those who come across your art later.

Celebration Hats

Purpose: Encourage partners to collaborate in the face of limited resources, change and creative expectations.

Time needed: 30 minutes

Supplies: pipe cleaners, feathers, scraps of fabric, recycled materials like paper towel tubes, shoeboxes, oatmeal containers or egg cartons, balloons, markers, glue, tape, ribbon or string, prizes if desired.

Instructions:

- Divide the group into pairs.
- Instruct each pair to come up with an unusual celebration then create a hat for that celebration using only the materials provided.
- Give each team 15 minutes to create their hat.
- Halfway through the allotted time remove some of the resources or switch up the partners.
- Have one person from each pair model their hat while the other person explains their celebration and their creation.

Optional: award prizes like most creative, best use of feathers, etc.

Debrief the experience with your group by asking the following questions: What was the creative process like for you and your partner? What was it like to have the game change in the middle of it? What would you do differently now?

Menu

- Foods with multiple colorful layers create a visual feast. Think layered salads or dips and desserts in tall, clear trifle dishes. Or offer a build-your-own yogurt parfait with a variety of fruits and toppings.
- Keep your creative juices flowing by building gingerbread houses or decorating cookies.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What element in nature leaves you awestruck?
2. What activities help spark new ideas when you need them?
3. Do you consider yourself to be a creative person? Why or why not?
4. What act of creation brings you the most joy?
5. Who inspires you?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #4

Cultural Kaleidoscope

“Our cultural diversity has most certainly shaped our national character.”
-- Julie Bishop

Globe trotters and homebodies alike will celebrate the diversity of your team through these multi-cultural experiences.

Activities:

- Visit a different city and explore what makes it unique. Or visit a well-known international district in your area.
- Attend a cultural festival in your region like Oktoberfest. (Visit www.festivalnet.com to search your area.)
- Watch a celebrated foreign language film or a fun and fast-paced Bollywood feature.
- Visit an art museum/exhibit focused on works from a specific region or culture.
- Enjoy a performance by a cultural dance troupe.
- Have tea or coffee with a missionary or foreign exchange student to hear more about their homeland.
- Share stories and photos from your team’s personal travels abroad.
- Tour (virtually) a child’s life in another part of the world through the World Vision Experience.
- Invite your team to share photos, personal mementos and traditions from their own family’s cultural heritage.

Two In Common, One Unique

Purpose: to get to know other team members better by exploring the experiences we have in common and the ones that make us special.

Time Needed: 20 minutes plus 5 minutes per group for reporting back

Supplies: none

Instructions:

- Divide the participants into groups of 3-5 people.
- Have participants find two unusual experiences or qualities about themselves in common with all the other people in their group. These should be things we cannot easily notice like hair color, gender, or work department.
- Have each participant share one experience or quality that is unique to them alone. If they share it with the group and someone else shares this in common, they have to come up with another quality unique to them.
- At the conclusion of the time, have each group share with the larger group their two things in common and their most unusual unique experiences.

Menu

- Choose a food region and invite everyone to bring their favorite dish to share. For example, you might choose Italian cuisine and team members would bring items like lasagna, caprese salad or cannoli.
- Taste the “home cooking” of a culture unfamiliar to your team.
- Try a progressive meal at multiple ethnic restaurants.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversations:

1. What must-have travel item do you never leave home without?
2. What kind of accommodations do you prefer: luxury, budget, homey, or roughing it?
3. Who are the ideal travel companions for you and why?
4. When you travel do you prefer to live like the locals or visit all the tourist spots?
5. What is the most difficult trip you have ever taken? Why?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #5

Foodie Fun

“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.” -- James Beard

Your good taste will serve you well on this day full of delicious adventures.

Activities:

- Learn something new in a cooking class. Local cooking schools, bakeries, caterers and even grocery chains (like Central Market) offer classes for teams.
- Enjoy a progressive meal in your building, neighborhood, or city. Have appetizers at one restaurant/location, the main course at a second, and dessert at a third.
- Participate in a food tour. Many large cities have businesses offering walking or bus tours. (Examples for inspiration include DallasbyChocolate.com or gourmetwalks.com.)
- Explore behind the scenes of your local food economy while visiting a food factory, winery, pick-your-own farm/ orchard or farmers market.
- Attend a food festival and sample the area’s most famous eats.
- Host a chili cook-off. (Or pick another food appealing to your group.)
- Conduct a taste test in your area for one food category. Examples for inspiration include best local pizza place, best tamales, or best vanilla ice cream. Vote and declare a winner.
- Have a no-bake dessert challenge with required secret ingredients. Let TV shows like Iron Chef or Chopped serve as inspiration.

Menu:

- Since each activity includes food, you shouldn’t be left hungry!

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What is your go-to restaurant for a fun dinner out with friends?
2. What is your family’s food specialty? (My family is known for...)
3. What food would sit untouched on your plate as a kid?
4. What is the most exotic or unusual food you have ever eaten?
5. When was the last time you tried tasting something new?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #6

Game On!

“I have been up against tough competition my whole life. I wouldn’t know how to get along without it.” -- Walt Disney

Get your competitive juices flowing with games both silly and sincere.

Activities:

- Invite everyone to bring a favorite board game or card game they want to teach the team to play.
- Host a tournament at a place like Dave & Buster’s or Main Event with scores from multiple games like bowling, laser tag, darts, etc.
- Try a game that most people haven’t played before like whirlyball (bumper cars+basketball: www.whirlyball.info).
- Visit a local carnival or state/county fair to play the carnival games.
- Head outside for a series of backyard games like horseshoes, washers, bocce ball, badminton, beanbag toss, and croquet.
- Get out and about in your city by trying an interactive scavenger hunt like The Go Game.
- Try a tournament of fast paced Minute to Win It games. (See nbc.com/minute-to-win-it/how-to/)
- Set up several interactive video gaming units (like Nintendo Wii) and play team sports games.

Menu:

- Eat at a local sports grill and watch the game of the week.
- Choose finger foods like appetizers, snack mixes, and bite-size desserts. Pre-crafted party trays from your favorite grocer or restaurant are perfect for this day.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What game(s) did you play for hours as a kid?
2. What game makes you feel like a kid again?
3. What TV game show would you love to be on?
4. As an adult, what kind of games do you prefer to play? (Examples: video, board, athletic, mind puzzles, card)
5. Is there such a thing as losing well or winning badly?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #7

Movie Mania

“Every great film should seem new every time you see it.” -- Roger Ebert

Connect with your inner film critic (and your team members) through these cinematic endeavors.

Activities:

- Either rent or go to a theater to watch a thought-provoking movie. Independent features, documentaries, and Academy Award nominated films often provide excellent fuel for conversation.
- Host a themed movie marathon. Choose to watch two or more movies in a series, with the same actor, with the same location or theme, about a holiday, or based on books by the same author. Discuss the differences and similarities between the films.
- Watch the Academy Awards ceremony. Have each person fill out a ballot for the awards and offer prizes to those who get the most and least correct guesses.
- Tour a local film studio or university film school and see behind the scenes of movie production. Ask about movies being shot on location in your area and offer to be “extras” in a scene.
- Adapt the “Guess Who” game from Purposeful Play Theme #12, Trailblazing Women. Choose names of famous actors or characters from the movie you watched.

Silent Stars

Purpose: to encourage collaboration and creative expression amongst team members.

Time Needed: 30-60 minutes

Supplies: video cameras or phones/tablets with video recording capabilities, markers, large sheets of construction paper or poster board, costume props, prizes if desired.

Instructions:

- Divide the participants into teams of 2-4.
- Have each team create and film a silent movie. Offer requirements like: must be 5 minutes or less, must include at least 3 characters, must tell an unusual story about the team, must be completed in 30 minutes.
- “Premiere” the movies together as a group.
- Offer your own awards for Best Actor, Best Director, Best Screenplay, etc.

Menu:

- Choose foods to go along with your selected movie. For example, if you watched *The Secret Life of Bees*, you could offer dishes with honey as a key ingredient. Or if a movie was filmed in New York, then New York style pizza would be a great option.
- Create your own popcorn bar by purchasing a variety of flavored popcorns or offering plain popcorn with sweet, savory, salty and spicy topping options. Don’t forget movie candy standards to go along with it like M&M’s, Raisinets, or Milk Duds.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What movie can you watch over and over (and over)? What is it about this movie that draws you in?
2. Which movie genre do you love and which do you loathe?
3. Which movie (or type of movie) inspires you and why?
4. Who is your favorite movie star?
5. If you could live in any movie (think about setting, timeframe, characters), which would you choose and why?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #8

Musical Medley

“Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.” -- Victor Hugo

This day is filled with all kinds of music – live, recorded, professional and amateur. Be sure and invite everyone to bring their digital music with them to share with the group!

Activities:

- Attend a musical or watch a movie musical. (You could even attend a sing-along showing of a movie musical like Mama Mia!, Sound of Music, or Grease.)
- Enjoy a live concert with your community symphony orchestra or an up-and-coming artist at an outdoor amphitheater or a local venue.
- Try out opera by watching it on the big screen at a movie theater (with subtitles). (www.fathomevents.com)
- Borrow or rent a karaoke machine to belt out some tunes. Or visit a local karaoke bar to enjoy the amateur musical talents of others as well!

Name That Tune: Charade Style

Purpose: to connect as a team through music

Time Needed: 30-60 minutes

Supplies: slips of paper or index cards, pens

Instructions:

- Ask each person to write down the name of a well-known song on a slip of paper. Well-known songs might include folk songs, Christmas carols, patriotic tunes, etc. Place all the song titles in a bowl or hat to draw from.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Like charades, have one person from each team draw a song title from the bowl and act it out for their team without using sounds or words. For an added challenge, set a two minute timer for each actor.
- The team with the most correct guesses at the end of the game wins.

Christmas Carol Remix

Purpose: to connect as a team and express creativity.

Time Needed: 30 minutes, plus 5 minutes per group for performance.

Supplies: slips of paper with the names of familiar Christmas carols written on each; paper, pens, prizes for performances (if desired)

Instructions:

- Divide the participants into groups of 3-5 people.
- Have each group draw a Christmas carol from the slips of paper.
- Each team has 20 minutes to re-write the words of their selected Christmas carol. Can instruct groups to write about your team, your organization, or your upcoming events.
- After writing time has expired, invite each group to perform their Christmas Carol Remake.
- At the conclusion of the performances, the facilitator or pre-determined judges can award prizes like Most Likely to Never Be Recorded, Most Creative, and Best in Show. Prizes can be silly (like a plastic children’s microphone or an old cassette tape) or serious (like iTunes gift cards).

Menu:

- Select a dining location with live music like a gospel brunch, lunch at Potbelly Sandwiches, or dinner at a dueling piano bar. (These examples are just to get you thinking – what’s your favorite local restaurant with live music?)

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What was the first album you ever purchased?
2. Which musical genre or musician is like nails on chalkboard for you? Why?
3. Which musical artist(s) would be featured on the soundtrack of your life?
4. If you were stranded on a deserted island with only one radio or Pandora station, which one would you hope it would be?
5. What kind of music inspires you and why?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #9

Pampering Perfection

“Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax.” -- Mark Black

Unwind from the pressures and worries of work with this day filled with relaxing rewards for a job well done.

Activities:

- Visit a nail salon with a “pedicure pit”: a place with multiple pedicure chairs so a group of people can enjoy a pedicure all at the same time, in the same room.
- Reserve treatments for your team at a local spa. (Group discounts are often available.)
- Create your own spa experience at your location:
 - Play relaxing instrumental music.
 - Light an aromatherapy candle.
 - Bring in comfortable lounge chairs or cushions.
 - Invite a massage therapist or mobile massage service to come and offer chair massages.
 - Purchase products for use like facial masks, hand and foot lotions, nail polishes, and massage rollers. (Or have participants bring their favorite skin care treatments to share.) Be sure and have plenty of clean towels, sinks or basins of warm water for rinsing.
 - Make (and sample) your own spa products to take home. Recipes for scented bath salts, lip balm, facial masks and more can be found by doing a quick internet or library search. Visit your local grocery store for ingredients and arts and craft supply store for containers.

Menu:

- Enjoy a healthy meal at a local spa or peaceful café.
- Offer refreshing “spa water” in large clear pitchers/containers with slices of lemon and cucumber. Healthy snacks could include trail mix or sliced fruits and vegetables.
- Other delicious options would be light soups and fresh salads or yogurt parfaits.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What’s your favorite way to relax?
2. What environment helps you unwind?
3. Who has a calming effect on you?
4. Who is the most relaxed person you know?
5. What would you do if all the work were done?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #10

Photo Opp

“Every picture shows a spot with which the artist has fallen in love.” -- Alfred Sisley

This day is surrounded by pictures: personal snapshots, professional photography, and visual images that capture our imaginations.

Activities:

- Visit a photo booth (or create your own!) and take team pictures. Invite everyone to bring at least two wacky props from home. (Prop examples: hats, big necklaces, feather boas, costumes, stick-on mustaches, oversized sunglasses)
- Enjoy the view at a photography display in a local art gallery.
- Invite a professional/amateur photographer friend to offer a quick workshop with tips for taking good photos with your personal camera or phone.

Photo Scavenger Hunt

Purpose: build connections among team members through collaboration and creative expression.

Time needed: 60 minutes, plus travel time.

Supplies: one digital camera or camera phone for every two people; an out-of-the-ordinary location. (Location examples include a local downtown, a mall, or a college campus.)

Instructions:

- Go to a location that would be out of the everyday routine for your team. If you are a large group, be sure to ask permission first.
- Divide the group into pairs.
- Instruct the team that they have 30 minutes to take a digital picture of the items on the list provided. Encourage them to be creative in their approach. List ideas:
- List of 10: Something purple, a person wearing a hat, boots, the word “here”, a pet, a fashion statement, the number “7”, a class ring, an outrageous hairdo, an orange vegetable.
- List of 5 “bests”: Best use of the color red, best use of typography, best signage, best display, best people-watching
- Before they depart, tell teams the time and location they are to meet back.
- Prizes can be awarded for photos that are most unusual, best overall, and best story (of where they found it or how they took it).

PHOTO OPP CONTINUED

Picture Me

Purpose: facilitate a deeper conversation amongst participants.

Time needed: 30-60 minutes

Supplies: a variety of printed stock photos or images clipped from magazines. Have three times the number of images as you have participants. (So if you have 10 participants, select 30 images.) If choosing images clipped from magazines, consider gluing them to colored construction paper. When selecting images, consider the following recommendations: Do not choose pictures of celebrities, close-ups of models, or images with words on them.

Do choose:

- Illustrations (non-photos) that are interesting or communicate abstract ideas.
- Images that convey emotions or actions.
- Non-human objects or animals.

Instructions:

- Scatter the images across a table or around the border of the room.
- Instruct participants to take a few minutes and choose one picture that best reflects (select one of the following options that best fits your goals): the impact they want to have on the world, the state of their soul, their current season or stage of life, their work, the team, the state of the organization.
- Break into groups of three and have them share with each other why they selected their pictures. Each participant should have 3-5 minutes to share.
- After everyone is finished, ask each person to hold their image so that everyone in the group can see. Ask participants what they notice about the pictures on display. What do these images communicate about the team?
- If time permits, quickly go around the group and have everyone say why the image was meaningful to them. If not, you can recommend that people catch up about their pictures later in the day.
- At the conclusion, you can ask everyone to return their pictures or invite everyone to keep their picture as a reminder of the day or display it at their workspace.

Variation: Can have participants search through magazines and choose their image, cut it out, and glue to a sheet of construction paper. Can also choose to have team members first write down why the image connected with them before sharing with the group.

Menu:

Choose photo-worthy foods with bright colors:

Fresh fruits and vegetables either in salads for a meal or on trays for snacking,

Bowls of individual candies,

Rainbow sherbet or Neapolitan ice cream.

Set up a make-your-own pizza bar with personal size pizzas and a variety of toppings. You could also choose other build-your-own stations like sundaes, burgers, tacos, or salads. (Great photo opportunity!)

Order a photo cake from a local bakery with your team's picture on top.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. Which photo in your home is your favorite?
2. Which photo from your childhood would you love to wipe from your memory?
3. What kind of photo takes your breath away? (Ex: landscapes, people, space, etc.)
4. Which photo in your possession (in your wallet or on your phone) means the most?
5. What memory do you wish you had captured on film?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #11

Service with a Smile

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
-- Mahatma Gandhi

Combine your time, talents and treasures together to have a big impact on issues facing your community.

Activities:

- Volunteer together in your community. Organizations like Habitat for Humanity, Volunteers of America, and Susan G. Komen have large projects for teams.
- Walk, run, or volunteer for a 5K race benefitting your team’s favorite charity.
- Collect food for a local food pantry. Deliver the food together and help the organization sort their donations and stock the shelves.
- Brainstorm random acts of kindness to share with your community. Pull together your available talents and resources and put them into action.
- Pick up several dozen flowers (no thorns!) and deliver them to the residents at a nearby nursing home. (Ask permission from the Director first.)
- Collect winter items like coats, socks, gloves and blankets for a homeless shelter.
- Contact a nearby children’s hospital about ways you can serve. Opportunities could include hosting a holiday party or replenishing their play areas with toys and books.

Menu:

- Serve a meal at a local soup kitchen and dine with the residents.
- Invite your team to host a Dining for Women (diningforwomen.org) or Women of Vision dinner (womenofvision.org) to empower women around the world.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. What does the word “service” mean to you? Why?
2. Which of your resources is the easiest to share: time, talents, or treasures? Which is most difficult?
3. What motivates you to serve a person, organization, or cause?
4. When have you been the one being served? What were the circumstances and what impact did it have on you?
5. What issue or cause moves you most?

PURPOSEFUL PLAY THEME #12

Trailblazing Women

“There has to be this pioneer, the individual who has the courage, the ambition to overcome the obstacles that always develop when one tries to do something worthwhile, especially when it is new and different.” -- Alfred P. Sloan

Get to know the ones who paved the way for your life and leadership today.

Activities:

- Visit a women’s museum or local museums focused on women’s pioneering efforts in their field. For example, the Dallas-Fort Worth area offers the Mary Kay Museum and National Cowgirl Museum and Hall of Fame. The National Women’s History Museum has online exhibits, as well. (www.nwhm.org)
- Watch and discuss a film about pioneering women. Suggestions include television series like Makers or Half the Sky from PBS and the Title IX series from ESPN. Or consider movies like Elizabeth, Iron Lady, or Iron Jawed Angels.
- Invite a local pioneer to coffee or lunch for a Q&A session with your team. Ask each team member to come up with one question to ask the special guest. Honor the pioneer’s efforts with a thank you gift.
- Have each person write a note of appreciation to someone who paved the way for them. Invite each person to share who they selected and why. Provide notecards, pens and stamps for mailing.

Guess Who?

Purpose: to help participants connect in a lighthearted way.

Time Needed: 15-30 minutes

Supplies: pen, post-it notes

Instructions:

- Write out names of women pioneers on individual post-it notes.
- Stick one post-it note to each person’s back.
- Instruct participants to ask yes or no questions to figure out “who” is stuck to their back.

Read and discuss a pioneering woman’s memoir or autobiography. Suggestions include:

- I Am Malala by Malala Yousafzai
- Lean In by Sheryl Sandberg
- Mother Teresa by Kathryn Spink
- No Higher Honor by Condoleezza Rice
- Sum It Up by Pat Summit
- Tough Choices by Carly Fiorina

Menu:

- See pioneer lunch discussion mentioned in activities section.
- In honor of those who dared to try new things, enjoy a meal filled with brand new foods for your team. Maybe a groundbreaking new restaurant with edgy flavor combinations.

5 Questions for Intentional Conversation:

1. Who paved the way for you? Who made it possible for you to live or lead the way you do today?
2. Which historical trailblazer or pioneer do you most admire and why?
3. In what area of your life, past or present, have you accomplished a “first”?
4. Do you think there are any new frontiers left? Why or why not? If yes, what are they?
5. What legacy do you want to leave for those who come behind you?

References:

All quotes from www.brainyquotes.com.

The “Picture Me” activity was introduced to me by author and leader friends Sharon Swing and Sibyl Towner. I highly recommend their life-changing My Life Story maps found at www.onelifemaps.com.

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