

Game: For the Common Good

This activity reinforces the concept that cooperation, rather than selfishness, brings more long-term benefits to society.

The **goal of the game is for every player to end with 10 tokens**. However, this will be determined by the generosity of the other players.

Materials

Ten tokens (e.g. coins, stones, etc.) for each player. Don't hand out these tokens to the players.

A prize (in a quantity enough for everyone).



Directions

Let the group form a circle. From the pile of tokens, place a quarter of all the tokens into the centre of the group on a sheet of paper. This will be your pool.



The game instructor needs to read the following rules to the participants - twice.

- The name of the game is **For the Common Good**.
- The tokens belong to all of the players in the group.
- I will hum a tune. While I am humming the players may take tokens out of the pool in the centre.
- When I stop humming, I will double the number of tokens remaining in the pool at that time, then continue the game.
- There will never be more tokens in the pool than there were at the beginning, this is the maximum number of tokens the pool can hold.
- You may not communicate with any of the players during the game. If you do, you forfeit your tokens.
- You need a total of ten tokens that can be traded in for a prize at the end of the game.

The players will likely empty the pool at the start of the game. Each time the pool is emptied, the game is over because you cannot double zero tokens. Collect all the tokens and start over. At the end of each round, double the number of remaining tokens then ask each player how many tokens they have. Continue playing without allowing players to communicate. After 4 rounds let the players talk for 30 seconds then resume the game. If all players collect ten tokens each, the game is over.

Explanation

At the end of the game, the game instructor needs to explain the following to the players:

The tokens represent renewable resources, such as fish or trees.

Ask the following questions:

- 1) Can the players draw any parallels between the way the group treated the tokens and the way individuals and society as a whole use or overuse renewable resources? (Examples include overfishing leading to collapse of fisheries and deforestation leading to loss of habitat, erosion and increased siltation of waterways.)
- 2) How did talking about the game influence how you played it?
- 3) How did you feel about players who took a lot of the tokens? Have you experienced a similar situation at home, with friends or in your community?
- 4) What sort of attitude(s) do we need to have individually and collectively to achieve the goal of the greatest common good?