

# **Play-ology Theology**

## **Why Re-Create?**

### **R - Renew**

Recreation is not just about games - it is about getting in touch with that inner child that Jesus talked about in the Gospels...about discovering the kingdom of heaven in our midst as we let go of our adult baggage, schedules and commitments, and worries about how we look and act and appear to others. It is taking the time to simply play and sing and dance - it is living in the moment and enjoying the wonder of laughter, spontaneity, and joy.

### **E - Energize**

Laughter can be healing. It gets our hearts pumping, our blood flowing, and our minds engaged. It is also contagious, so playing as a group energizes the whole crowd. Laughter and play are not age specific, so you are never too old or too young to play. Play can happen around dinner tables or on big fields or in a committee meeting. A little well-timed recreation in the midst of long meetings or big projects can invigorate the group and give them the energy they need to get through their tasks.

### **C - Community**

Recreation at its best builds a group of strangers or acquaintances into a community. There is an intimacy that results from laughter, touch, cooperation, and trust. The community that results is a glimpse of what the church looks like at its best. The trust and intimacy of a community that plays together prepares it to then create, problem-solve, and minister together.

### **R - Re-vision**

Recreation and play help us see others and ourselves in new ways. It helps break down stereotypes and prejudices. Positive recreation always builds up - it never tears down or makes fun of anyone in order to build others up. (To quote a friend, this is "wreck-reation"). Re-creation is sensitive to a world with limited resources, so it does not use food and things that many of our world neighbors have to do without each day. It involves good stewardship and intentional awareness of consumption.

### **E - Engage**

Recreation at its best includes and engages the entire community - from the youngest to the oldest, from the most physically able to those who may be physically challenged. It is intentional about offering opportunities for everyone to engage and gives permission to those who choose to spectate rather than participate. An adept recreation leader tries to plan with the needs of the community in mind and adapts, changes, and anticipates to accommodate special needs. A strong recreation leader also knows when to stop - leaving the community wanting more and looking forward to future opportunities for play and interaction.

### **A - Affirm**

Recreation should build up and affirm the individuals and the community. It should not be focused on winners and losers, but on the experience of playing together and the resulting community. Well-planned recreational events allow everyone to share their gifts at some point in the process and do not focus on the most athletic or out-going or popular personalities.

## **T - Trust**

Recreation should gradually move a group of individuals into a community of friends. Creating safe opportunities for conversation, play, appropriate touch, problem-solving, and team building are all important parts of the flow of recreation.

## **E - Experience**

Recreation is more than any one favorite game or activity. It can encompass singing, dancing, chanting, creating, games, and worship all under the same umbrella. Broadening our thinking from "Recreation" to "Re-creation" truly helps us understand the theological challenge placed before us as recreation leaders. Everything we do should be done to glorify God and to help create a community of believers who are energized with a new vision of how to go out into the world and be the Church - one giggle at a time, one game at a time, one song at a time, one dance at a time.

## **Rejoice in the Lord Always**

*(circle dance - can be done in a round with one, two, or three circles)*

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice *(hands joined, walk 8 steps to the right)*

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say rejoice *(walk 8 steps to the left)*

Rejoice, rejoice, *(walk 4 steps into the center)*

And again I say rejoice *(drop hands, turn in place to the R, while clapping, in 4 steps)*

Rejoice, rejoice *(join hands on either side and back up 4 steps)*

And again I say rejoice. *(stand in place and clap 3 times.)*

Repeat.

***The outside circle starts. When they reach the second line, the inside circle begins. Small steps forward and back are important.***