

## **Virtue Workshop**

### **Children, Youth and Adults Learning Together**

**Printable resources are included**

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## **A Balance Between Giving and Receiving**

### **General Introduction**

This Material is designed for workshops/conferences, children's classes, families, and individual learning.

Unless we can make deep spiritual concepts understandable, we risk losing future generations to the distorted thinking of a deteriorating materialistic world..

Each spiritual concept explored includes activities specifically designed for groups of youth and adults and activities designed for children.

It is a method of group learning, based on the model of the oneness of humanity.

Everyone is a student, and everyone is a teacher. Our mission is not to provide exhaustive research and explanation of concepts for scholars. Our goal is to enable everyone to gain a basic knowledge of concepts indispensable for spiritual survival.

It is our hope that parents and teachers gathered in living rooms, backyards; in cities and villages, will use these spiritual concepts to improve the lives of children, youth and adults.

The writers, as members of the Bahá'í Faith, are guided by its teachings and principles. We have used language that allows the concepts to be accessible to the wider community. Reference is made to the sources of authority of the Bahá'í Faith. We are referring to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice.

This material reflects the personal interpretations of the authors and should not be taken as authoritative.

### **Instructions**

Materials listed in the Resource section of each activity, including images, should be carefully prepared. Images can be enlarged and are essential for presentation. If some of the materials listed are not available, facilitators may modify and adapt material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.

Activities for youth/adults may be completed in approximately one hour.

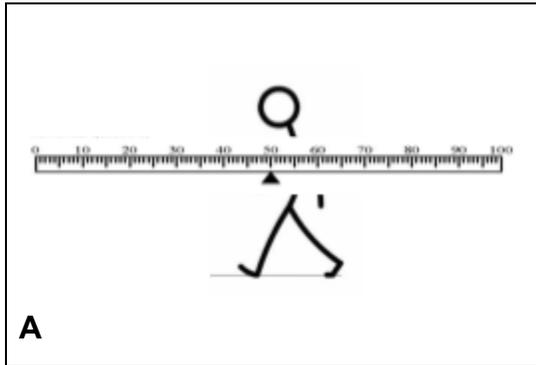
Activities for children are approximately twenty minutes to an hour in length.

## **Adult Activity 1**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator: shares Image A** with participants:



**Facilitator asks:** for one participant to volunteer.

**Facilitator says:** We will use one person to demonstrate how to create an inner state of balance.

Balance the meter stick using an index finger on each end.

Let's call one end "giving" and the other end "receiving"

Very slowly move each index finger toward the balance point (50 cm.).

Arrive at the midpoint without letting the stick fall.

### **Participant responds**

**Facilitator says:** You will notice moving toward the center of the meter stick that progress was uneven at the beginning. There were starts and stops. Our volunteer first feels anxiety that comes from not wanting the meter stick to fall.

As our volunteer progressed toward the center, motion became smoother and the anxiety lessened. Our volunteer realized that his/her right hand and left hand had to work together to create a balance. In order to recognize and be a part of a balanced relationship with another person, we must first experience inner balance for ourselves so we know what it feels like.

Arriving at the middle of the meter stick without dropping it, means that symbolically we have achieved a state of balance between our ability to give and our ability to receive.

We need two volunteers for the next demonstration.

**Note to Facilitator:** depending on group size and number of meter sticks available, more or all participants may complete this activity.

**Facilitator says:** to two volunteer participants:

Stand on opposite sides of the meter stick facing each other.

Each person place your index finger under the opposite ends of the meter stick.

Slowly move your fingers towards the center without letting the meter stick fall to the ground.

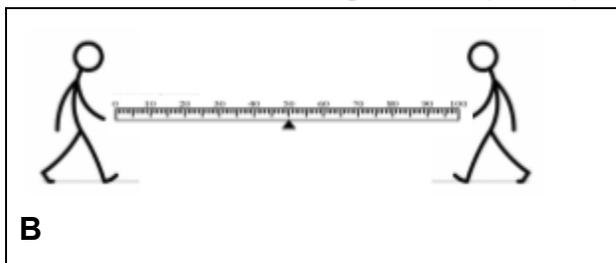
### **Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** Notice immediately how our two volunteers try to achieve the goal of balancing the meter stick in partnership with each other.

Notice that any anxiety experienced serves as a guide to being sensitive to the other person's needs. In a real life relationship one partner may be trying to give more than their partner is capable of receiving or vice versa. When we deaf and blind to another person's needs, the result will be an increase in tension and anxiety in a relationship. When we know the purpose of the tension and anxiety, we will see it as a friend, not as an enemy. Our feelings are meant to be a guide to help us progress in life and not something to be feared.

The ultimate goal is to achieve balance in our relationships.

**Facilitator: shares Image B** with participants



**Facilitator asks:** a participant to read in a loud voice:

**The “point” of well-being in all relationships is when we achieve a balance between our ability to give and receive. Without giving there is no receiving. And without receiving there is no giving. A healthy balance results in a healthy relationship.**

**Facilitator says:** When we know the purpose of our anxiety, we will see it as a friend, not as an enemy. Our feelings are meant to be a guide to help us progress in life. In order to recognize and be a part of a balanced relationship with another person, we must first experience inner balance for ourselves so we know what it feels like.

Would anyone like to share reflections of what they have learned through this activity?

**Participants respond -- allow 3-5 minutes**

**To the Facilitator and all participants:**

**The physical world has been created by God to teach us deep spiritual concepts. It is the hope of the creators of this activity that we all make the transition as quickly as possible, from being student participants, to being teachers, sharing these ideas with others. Spiritual concepts are the building blocks for an ever-progressing world civilization.**

**Please feel free to adapt this material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.**

## **Adult Activity 2**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator shares:** Image C with participants:



**Facilitator says:** Imagine that you and another person are like two puzzle pieces. We can see where our reflection of love can connect with another person's reflection of love. This is how we are able to give and receive love and all of the other attributes of God.

**Facilitator asks:** participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**TRUE and LASTING relationships are formed when we discover the value of all the diverse spiritual qualities found in all people. In contrast to our animal nature, our spiritual nature longs to see how others give or receive kindness, forgiveness... We crave meeting new people instead of being afraid of someone who is different from us. Each new person we meet represents another path to God.**

**Facilitator says:** We all connect on the level of giving (reflecting) and receiving virtues to achieve oneness. Connecting on this level is the only way to get to oneness. Our endless common spiritual qualities transcend differences in language, race, culture and religion. Through giving and receiving spiritual qualities, we can experience oneness.

**Facilitator asks:** a participant to read in a loud voice:

**To reach our full potential we need to interact with people. The brightest reflection of God is seen in our family, friends, neighbors and everyone we meet.**

**Each person we meet is indispensable.**

**We can never say that we have enough people in our lives. Each new person we meet represents another path to God. No one gives or receives love, or any other attribute of God, in exactly the same way as anyone else.**

**Facilitator shares Image D** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** If I can only give love but can not receive love, I will be left with a broken heart. The same is true if I can only receive love, but not give love. Again, I will be left with a broken heart. A sign that we have an imbalance between our ability to give and receive is that we will feel quite distant from and uncomfortable with another person.

We are now going to do an activity:

First, let's count how many people we have.

For each two people, we will put a pair of matching heart halves into our basket (from Resource section)

Everyone will pick half of a heart from the basket. On each half is written the giving or receiving of a special virtue. For example: I have a half of a heart that says "I can give love". Someone else chooses the half of a heart that says "I can receive love". This other person will become my partner. I will have to find my partner.

**Facilitator: pass around the basket of half hearts** and direct each participant to take one half of a heart.

**Facilitator Note:** If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator becomes a partner.

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** Now find the person in the room with the same virtue written on his or her half of a heart. If your heart has “I can give love” written on it, you find another person in the room whose heart has “I can receive love” written on it. Then stand with your partner.

### **Participants find their partners**

**Note to Facilitator:** If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator becomes a participant.

**Facilitator says:** First: each person who has the “I can give” heart half will now say to your partner:

**“Today, you are the person I need to give \_\_\_\_\_ to.  
Insert the virtue that is written on your hearts.**

### **Participants respond by repeating statement to their partner**

**Facilitator says:** Now each person who has the “I can receive” heart half say now say to your partner:

**“Today, you are the person I need to receive \_\_\_\_\_ from.  
Insert the virtue that is written on your hearts.**

### **Participants respond by repeating statement to their partner**

**Facilitator says:** Now exchange your heart halves with your partner and repeat the process.

### **Participants respond**

**Facilitator: If time allows, repeat the process one or more times.**

**Facilitator says:** Would anyone like to share reflections of what they have learned through this activity?

### **Participants respond -- allow 3-5 minutes**

**Facilitator’s closing remarks:** Let’s imagine that it is now tomorrow. Each of us is not the same person we were yesterday. We are physically, mentally, and spiritually

different today than we were yesterday. The virtue we needed to give or receive yesterday may or may not be the one we need for today.

It is God's will that we interact with the rest of humanity. We should be constantly engaged with other people in giving and receiving virtues. All of our interactions with people are unique. The virtues needed in one interaction with one person may be different from those needed with another. A spiritual quality that generated an act of service yesterday, may be different from the quality needed today. We should not blindly imitate yesterday's decisions. The decisions we made yesterday may not be appropriate today or tomorrow. We shouldn't imitate the spiritual quality that generated yesterday's act of service. There are an infinite number of ways of giving and receiving these qualities in our interactions with people.

**To the Facilitator and all participants:**

**The physical world has been created by God to teach us deep spiritual concepts. It is the hope of the creators of this activity that we all make the transition as quickly as possible, from being student participants, to being teachers, sharing these ideas with others. Spiritual concepts are the building blocks for an ever-progressing world civilization.**

**Please feel free to adapt this material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.**

## **Children's Activity 1**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator says:** We are going to talk about “giving” and “receiving”

**Facilitator asks:** What is giving?

Participants respond

**Facilitator asks:** What is receiving?

Participants respond

**Facilitator asks:** Can we think of some things that we can only do when we have one person who gives and one person who receives -- when there is both a giver and a receiver?

Participants respond

**Facilitator says:** Those are great ideas. Let's think about it some more.  
Can you give a present to someone if there is no one to receive it?

**Participants respond - no**

**Facilitator says:** Can you hold the door for someone if no one is coming?

**Participants respond - no**

**Facilitator says:** Can you play catch with someone by yourself?

**Participants respond - no**

**Facilitator says:** No of course not!

If we are giving something or doing something for someone, we need someone to receive what we are giving.

Sometimes we can be the giver and sometimes another person is the giver. Everyone needs to be able to be both a giver and a receiver. We need to be able to take turns being the giver and being the receiver.

**Facilitator shares Image E** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** Look at these two kids in the picture. What do you see?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** That's right. One kid can't use his giving arm because it is broken. And one kid can't use his receiving arm because it is broken. Let's try this with real slings.

**Facilitator selects:** participant to stand in front of the group and places his/her left arm in the sling labeled "Giving Arm Broken".

**Facilitator says:** This arm is called the "Giving" arm. This person can't use this arm because it is broken. This friend can't give to anyone.

**Facilitator selects** a second participant to stand in front of the group and places their right arm in the sling labeled "Receiving Arm Broken".

**Facilitator says:** This arm is called the "Receiving" arm. This person can't use this arm because it is broken. This friend can't receive from anyone.

Now let's see what happens when we are only able to receive or only when we are only able to give, but we are not able to do both.

**Facilitator says:** to participant with sling labeled "Receiving Arm Broken":

You have a birthday present to give to the friend standing next to you. Can you give it to her/him?

**Participant responds - Yes**

**Facilitator says:** Sure you can give it to your friend. Your giving arm still works. It is not broken. Your friend's receiving arm still works. It is not broken. He or she can receive the gift you give them.

**Facilitator says:** to participant with sling labeled "Giving Arm Broken": Now you want to give a birthday present to your friend who is next to you. Can you give it to them?

**Participant responds - No**

**Facilitator says:** No, you can't because your giving arm is broken. You can only receive but you can't give.

So we see that giving and Receiving are out of balance.

Let's try another example:

**Facilitator says:** to participant with sling labeled "Giving Arm Broken": You want to play ball with this friend. Your friend's "receiving" arm is broken. So can your friend catch the ball?

**Participant responds - No**

**Facilitator says:** No, your friend can't catch the ball. Your friend can't catch it because your "giving" arm is broken and your friend's "receiving arm is broken. It can't work!

**Facilitator:** direct the two model participants to sit in chairs in front of the group.

**Facilitator: set out three labeled boxes** in front of group

**Facilitator says:** Let's look at some situations. We will sort them into three boxes. One box is the "Giving Only" box. We will place this on the floor in front of our friend who is only able to give. One is the "Receiving Only" box. We will place this on the floor in front of our friend who is only able to receive. The third box is the "Giving and Receiving Balance" box. We will place this on the floor in between our two friends.

We will read each situation and then we can consult and choose which box we should put it into.

**Facilitator reads scenario cards** (in Resource Section) one at a time.

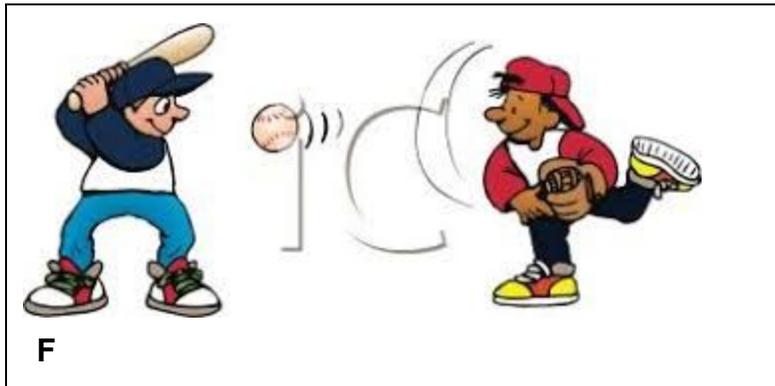
\*Do not read aloud the reference of placement written at the bottom of the cards.

**Participants consult and decide placement of cards.**

**Facilitator or participant:** places cards in correct boxes.

**Facilitator's closing remarks:** If we look at the situations we just decided were either giving or receiving, we probably realize by now that giving makes no sense without someone to receive what you are giving them. And receiving makes no sense without someone to give to you.

**Facilitator shares Image F** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** In this picture the pitcher is throwing the ball and his friend is hitting it. Throwing the ball is the giving part and hitting the ball is the receiving part. After playing for a while, the pitcher, who is throwing the ball, will also want a turn at hitting the ball. They will hurt their friendship and they will argue if both of them don't get turns at giving and receiving.

Friendships between kids and between adults will fall apart when there is no balance between giving and receiving.

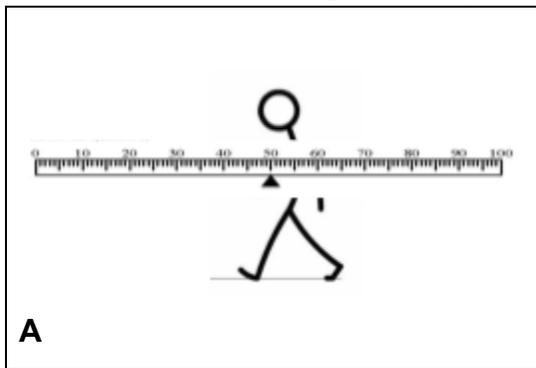
## **Children's Activity 2**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator says:** We will do an activity that will show us how important it is to have a balance between our giving and our receiving.

**Facilitator: shares Image A** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** Look at this picture. What do you see?

Participants respond

**Facilitator says:** That's right. A person is holding a meter stick and trying to balance it. Now let's try to do this. Let's call this end the "giving" end.

**Facilitator:** attaches "giving" label to one end of a meter stick.

**Facilitator says:** Let's call this the "receiving" end.

**Facilitator:** attaches "receiving" label to the other end of the meter stick.

**Facilitator selects:** participant to stand in front of the group to demonstrate activity.

**Facilitator says:** Hold out your two "pointer" (index) fingers. We will call this one your "giving" finger and this one your "receiving" finger. Now put your "giving" finger under the "giving" end of the meter stick and your "receiving" finger under the "receiving" end of the meter stick.

Now very slowly move each finger toward the balance point (50 cm) in the middle. Try to get to the middle without letting the meter stick fall.

## **Participant follows facilitator directions**

**Facilitator asks the group:** Did you notice at the beginning our friend's "giving" finger and the "receiving" finger didn't move at exactly the same speed? There were starts and stops. It wasn't all smooth and even. Maybe our friend was a bit worried about the meter stick falling.

Then did you notice that as our friend got closer to the middle, the movement became smoother? Our friend became calmer.

**Facilitator:** repeat demonstration with a second participant.

**Facilitator says:** Getting to the middle of the meter stick without dropping it, is like balancing what we can give and what we can receive!

**Facilitator says:** We will now practice balancing giving and receiving with a partner.

**Facilitator selects two participants** to come in front of the group for demonstration.

**Note to Facilitator:** depending on group size and meter sticks available, more or all participants may complete this activity.

**Facilitator says:** Stand on opposite sides of the meter stick facing each other. Each person place your index finger under the opposite ends of the meter stick.. Slowly move your fingers towards the center without letting the meter stick fall to the ground.

## **Participants respond**

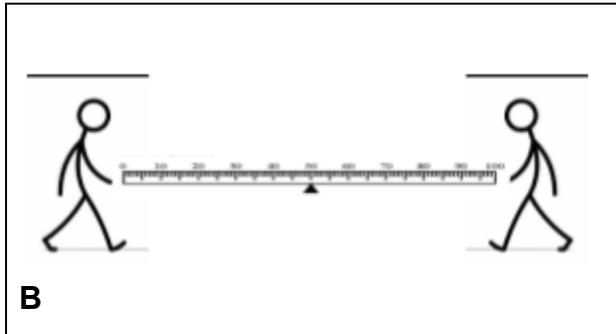
**Facilitator says:** Notice immediately how our two friends are working as partners to balance the meter stick.

Notice that the partners did not move at exactly the same speed. There were starts and stops. It wasn't all smooth and even. Maybe they were a bit worried about the meter stick falling.

Then did you notice that as our friends got closer to the middle, their movement became smoother? They became calmer.

It may be that you may want to “give” more than your partner is able to “receive” at this moment. Or it may be that your partner may want to “give” more than you are able to receive at this moment.

**Facilitator: shares Image B with participants.**



**Closing remarks:**

The “point” of a happy balance in all our friendships is when we can both give and receive equally

Just like balancing the meter stick, in a friendship we have to be patient.

We have to wait until the other person is ready to give or receive. Then our friendship is balanced.

### **Children's Activity 3**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator says:** We will practice giving and receiving.

**Facilitator shares Image D** with participants



**Facilitator says:** Let's look at what is written on each half of this heart.

**Facilitator or participant reads:** text on each half of the heart.

**Facilitator says:** Let's count how many people we have.

For each two people, we will put a pair of matching heart halves into our basket.

Now let's read what is written on the heart halves that we will be putting in our basket.

**Facilitator or participants read** text on each heart pair and then put the pair of heart halves into the basket.

**Facilitator says:** We have a basket of hearts that have been cut in half. Let's mix up the heart halves.

**Facilitator or participant:** mixes up the heart halves in the basket and turns each face down

**Facilitator says:** Now, everyone will pick one half of a heart from the basket. We will remain seated until everyone has taken a half of a heart from the basket.

**Facilitator:** pass around bag/basket of half hearts.

**Facilitator says:** Each heart we picked will only match one other half of a heart that is also in the basket. We will now stand up and walk around and find the person with the other matching half of our heart.

When we find our partner we will sit down next to our partner. All partner pairs will sit together in a big circle. Partners will put the completed heart on the floor in front of both of them.

**Facilitator Note:** If there is an odd number of participants, the facilitator becomes a partner.

**Participants walk around and find their connections. They then sit down with their partners.**

**Facilitator asks:** the pair of participants who have the quality of “love” on their hearts to stand in front of the group.

**Facilitator says:** These partners are going to demonstrate how to balance giving and receiving spiritual qualities. They are going to show a balance of giving and receiving love.

Both partners stand facing each other. Now, look at each other.

Partner One’s half a heart says: “I can give love”.

Partner One look at Partner Two and say “I can give love”.

**Participant Partner One responds.**

**Facilitator says:** Partner Two’s half a heart says: “I can receive love”.

Partner Two look at Partner One and say: “I can receive love”.

**Participant Partner Two responds**

**Facilitator says:** Now we are going to add more to what we will say to our partner.

Partner One please look at your partner and first say his or her name. Then say:

**“I can give \_\_\_\_\_ to you today”**

**Participant Partner One responds**

**Facilitator says:** Partner Two please look at your partner and first say his or her name.

Then say: **“I can receive \_\_\_\_\_ from you today”**

## **Participant Partner Two responds**

**Facilitator says:** Of course, we don't all have the spiritual quality of "love" written on our hearts. Each pair of partners has different spiritual qualities written on their hearts. So we are going to go around our circle. Each pair of heart partners will look at each other.

Then partner one, with the word "give" written on the heart half, will say the name of his or her partner and then say: **"I can give \_\_\_\_\_ to you today"**.

Then partner two, with the word "receive" written on the heart half, will say the name of his or her partner's and then say: **"I can receive \_\_\_\_\_ from you today."**

Each will say the spiritual quality that is written on their heart half.

**Participants respond: Each pair, in turn repeats statements, inserting their specific spiritual quality.**

**Facilitator says:** Now let's trade heart halves with our partner and repeat what we just said to each other. You now each have the opposite half. If you had giving, you now have receiving. If you had receiving, you now have giving.

Each will say the name of his or her partner and then say: **"I can give \_\_\_\_\_ to you today"** or **"I can receive \_\_\_\_\_ from you today."**

**Participants respond: Each pair exchanges heart halves and in turn repeats statements, inserting their specific spiritual quality.**

**Facilitator says:** Now let's imagine that it is tomorrow. Each of us is not the same person we were yesterday. We feel different. We have learned more about God. We get new ideas from spending time with our friends. The spiritual quality we needed to give or receive yesterday may be different from the one we need for today.

We will do this activity one more time. We will collect all the heart halves and put them back in the basket. Then we will choose another heart half with a spiritual quality and find the partner who has the matching half with the same spiritual quality.

**Facilitator collects heart halves in basket, mixes them up and turns each face down**

**Participants repeat the entire activity**

**Facilitator closing remarks:** Now let's imagine it is a day next week. Again we are constantly changing. We may be spending time with our same friends. We may meet new people. The spiritual quality we needed to give or receive yesterday or last week may be different from the one we need for today.

We never know who we are going to meet. We don't know who may become a close friend. For some of us, it may take more time to make a new friend.

Some of us are happy to make just a few good friends.

Some of us like to have a lot of friends.

It doesn't matter how we connect. It does matter that we connect! Connecting with other people is very, very important.

When we connect with others, we are constantly giving and receiving spiritual qualities that God has put inside of each of us.

## **Resources:**

### **Adult Activity 1**

#### **Materials:**

Meter stick(s) - if available - multiple meter sticks

#### **Images A-B**

### **Adult Activity 2**

#### **Materials:**

Small Basket or bag

#### **Images C-D**

Paper hearts cut in halves - see below

### **Children's Activity 1**

#### **Materials:**

Two child-sized arm slings - One labeled "Given Arm Broken" and one labeled "Receiving Arm Broken"

Three boxes: Labeled: "Giving Only"; "Receiving Only". "Giving and Receiving Balance"

#### **Images E-F**

Scenario cards

### **Children's Activity 2**

#### **Materials:**

Meter stick(s) - if available - multiple meter sticks -- enough for each pair of participants  
"Giving" and "Receiving" labels for meter stick

#### **Images A-B**

### **Children's Activity 3**

#### **Materials**

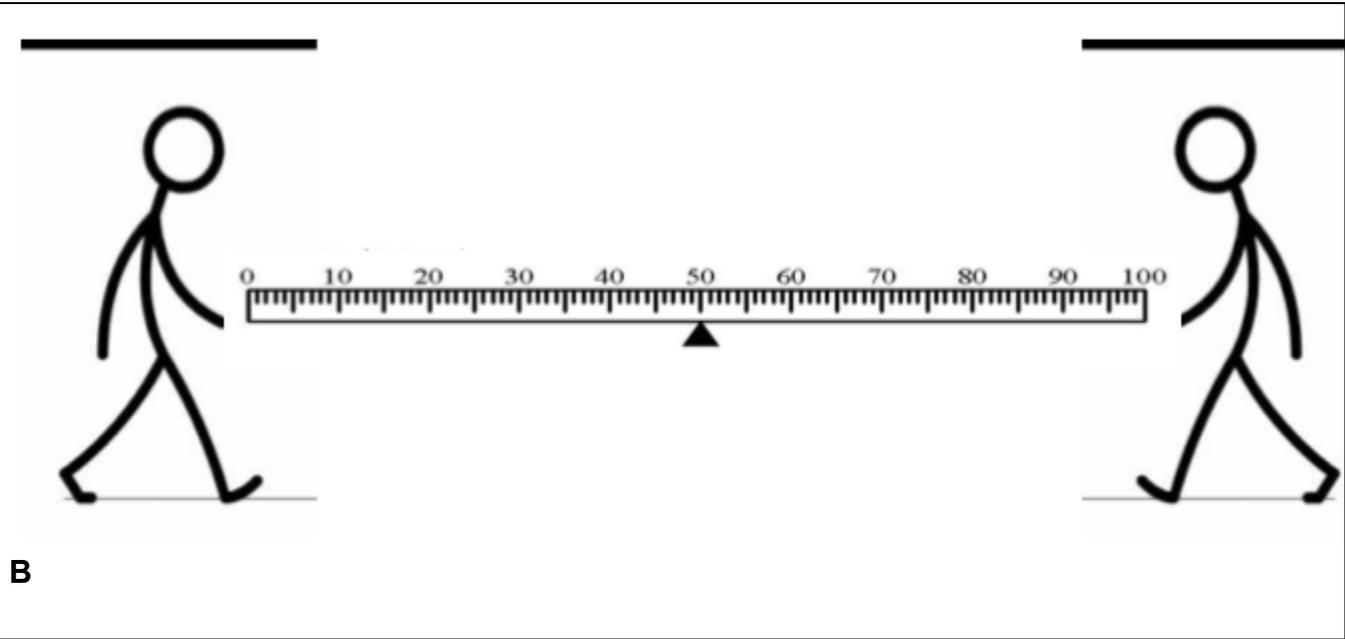
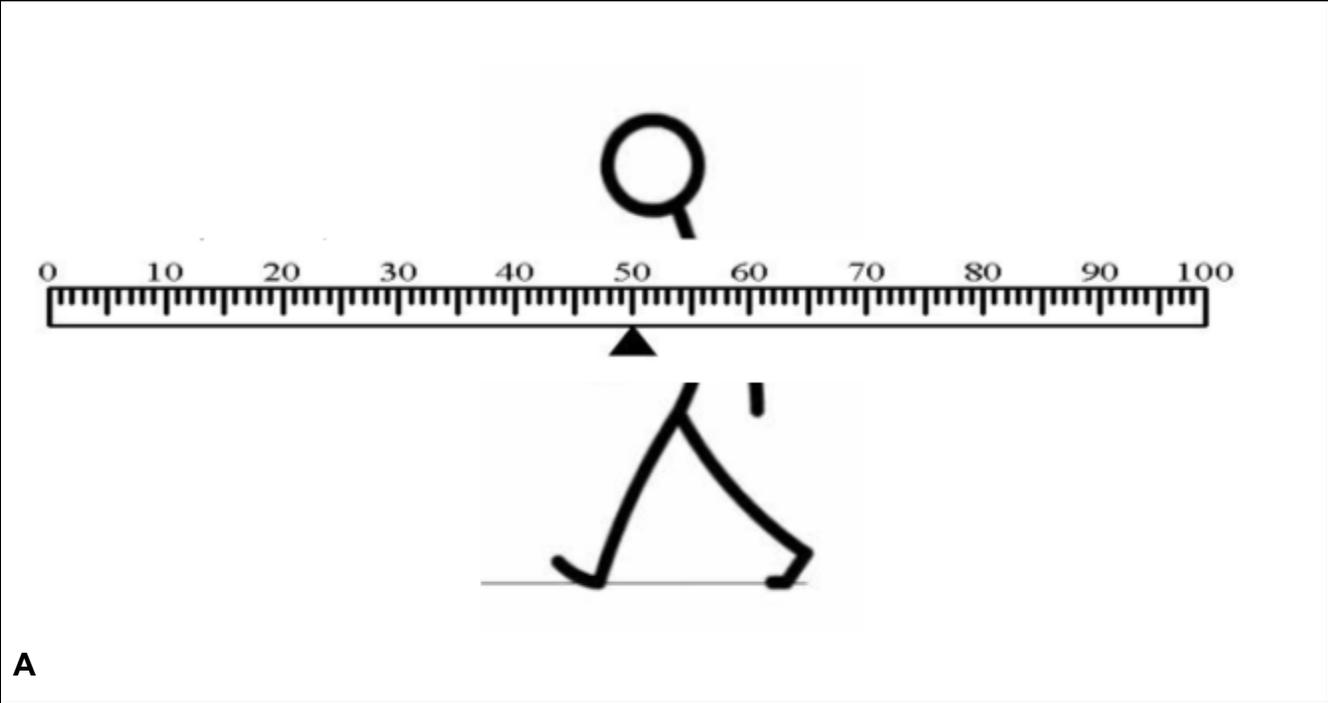
Basket or bag

Paper heart pairs cut in half (see below) -- keep together in pairs until use with the group. One heart matching pair is needed for each two participants. Multiple copies of each pair may be used if needed.

Scenario Cards

#### **Image D**

Images:

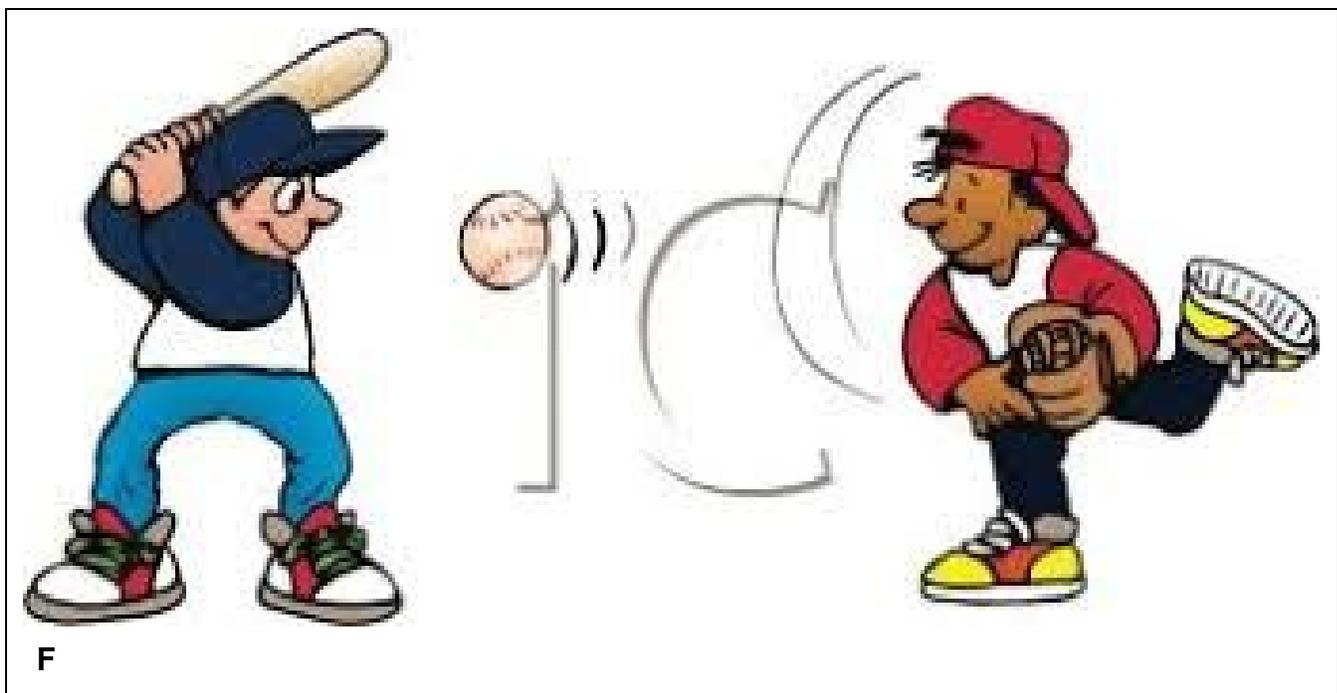
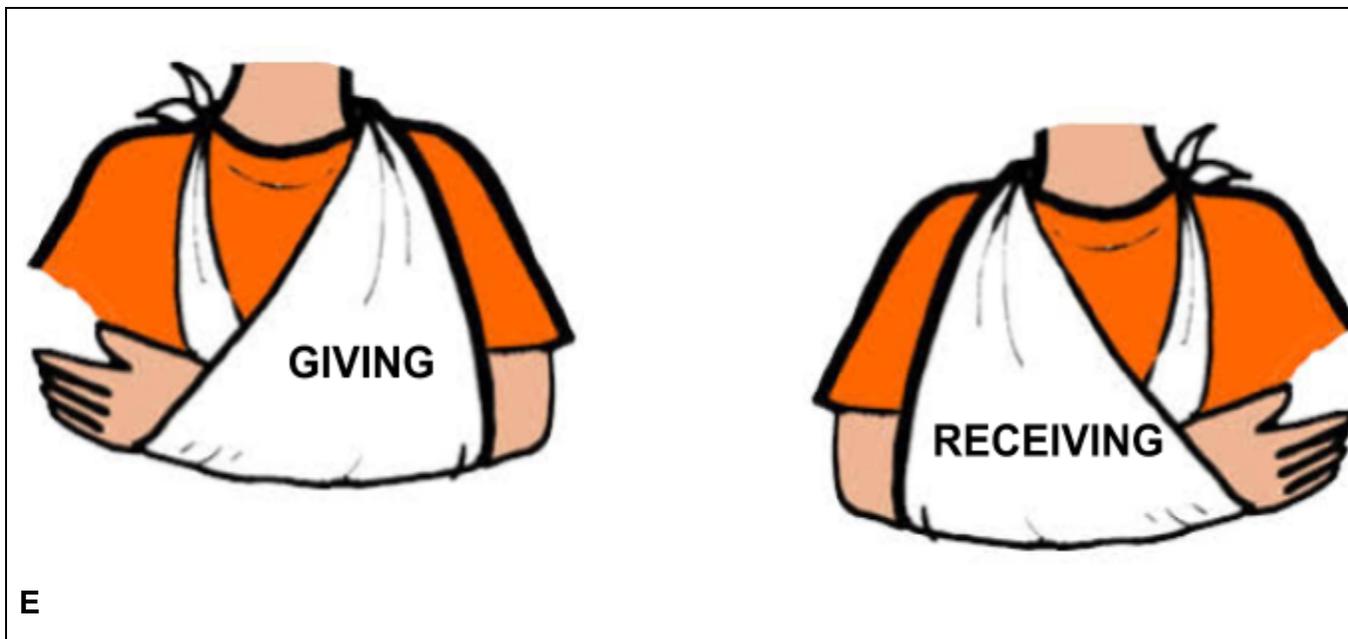




C



D



## Scenario cards For Children's Activity #1

**Card 1:** You want to play a game of ping pong. You have a ball and a paddle. You are ready to play. But you are alone. No one is there to hit the ball back to you.

{card goes into *giving only box*}

**Card 2:** You and your friend plan to get together after school and play ball in the park. You both meet at 3:30.

{card goes into *giving and receiving box*}

**Card 3:** You create a code - a pattern of steps for another person to follow. The other person reads your code and is able to follow it.

{card goes into *giving and receiving box*}

**Card 4:** You get a letter from your grandmother each week. You haven't written back to your grandmother.

{card goes into *receiving only box*}

**Card 5:** You have to move a table but it is too hard to do it by yourself. You ask a friend to help you.

{card goes into *giving and receiving box*}

**Card 6:** You go through a door and plan to hold it for the next person. But there is no one is coming to accept your kindness.

{card goes into *giving only box*}

**Card 7:** You don't understand your math homework. You are at home. You really want to understand how to do it. You are really ready to receive help from someone. No one is there to give you the help you need.

{card goes into *receiving only box*}

**Card 8:** Playing tag.

{card goes into *giving and receiving box*}

**Giving and Receiving Heart Halves: Adult Activity #2 and Children's Activity #3**



