



# Love Thy Neighbor as Thy Cellphone

## Games for the Digital Age

by Joel Winchip, PCCCA Executive Director

### Group Poll (Text, Email, Zoom)

In order to prepare your group for their time together, use an online polling platform like PollEverywhere.com (free to educators who have less than 40 participants). This will allow you to create a serious or fun questionnaire for your group before they come or as they arrive. Their answers might give you insights into their expectations, their personalities, or just some fun statistics to share with all of the participants (perhaps using a meme).

### Add a Caption to a Picture/Add a Quote to a Cartoon (Text, Email, Zoom)

Find a funny picture and share it with your group. Ask the participants to use their creativity (and sense of humor) to add a caption to the photo. If you send it out by email or text, the group could have many days to contribute captions for the picture. This could also be used as the opening activity during a Zoom meeting with the participants contributing their captions in the Zoom chat. Another option is to share a cartoon with your group and ask them to come up with quote(s) that replace the ones you have removed.

### Name, Place, Animal, Object (Text, Zoom)

This activity involves you giving a letter of the alphabet to your group. The participants respond as fast as they can with a person's name, a place, an animal's name, and an object that all start with that same letter. If you share the letter in person, by phone, or by text, ask the group members to text you directly (and not put their answer in a group text). If you are using Zoom, ask the group to send you a private response in the Zoom chat. This gives everyone the chance to play without seeing the other answers. You could then compile their responses and share them with the group.

### ASCII Pictionary (Text, Email)

Give each participant a simple subject that would not be too hard to draw (like a house, a boat, a church, etc.) and ask them to "draw" it on their phone or laptop using just the characters on their keyboard. Give them 5-10 minutes to complete their creations before they send them to you. You could use these in a game like Pictionary or you could just share them with the group at different times and see if they can guess the subject of the drawing.



### Nature Slideshow by Email (Email)

Instruct your participants to take pictures of their natural surroundings with their cell phones (in landscape, not portrait orientation). These images are to focus only on nature and are not to include people, buildings, vehicles, or any other kind of human-made addition to our world. In order to create variety, you may ask each person or team to concentrate on a particular subject (i.e. tree trunks, leaves, grasses, etc.). The individuals or teams will email these images to you as they collect them. While they are taking pictures, you are putting the images together in a slideshow for the whole group to enjoy when they return. This presentation could be narrated by the team members who took the pictures, appreciated with soft music in the background, or could run during a prayer or other closing activity. For older groups, you could extend the time for picture taking and give each team a more complex theme like transformation, community, resurrection/rebirth, etc.

### Telephone by Text (Text)

This for-times-after-COVID activity is the modern version of the old Telephone game. The leader comes up with a phrase and whispers it in the ear of the next person in the circle. That individual then types what they think they heard and texts it to the next person in the circle. That group member whispers the phrase in the text to the next person and this pattern continues all the way

around the circle. The message will likely get twisted and changed as it is communicated from person to person, so share what the phrase has become when it makes it all the way around the circle. This activity obviously requires your participants to have each other's cell phone numbers in order to text them.

### **Photo Scavenger Hunt (Text, Email)**

Give the individuals or teams in your group a list of items or landmarks which they must capture in a photo. You might require the hand or face of the individual (or team members) to appear in each picture. These could be nature items in the woods, miscellaneous things that can be found in the church building, or points of interest at the camp you are visiting while on retreat. Encourage the group to take pictures using the landscape orientation (not portrait), so these photos could be put together in a slideshow to share with the whole group.

### **Guess That Movie (Text, Zoom)**

This game is similar to the earlier Name, Place, Animal, Object activity. You share an image from a famous movie and the participants respond as quickly as possible with the movie's title. After the first few easy ones, you could start giving them harder movies to guess. You could also give the group more of a challenge by zooming in the photos so they include less of the scene. The real movie buffs in the crowd might be able to guess the movie by just seeing a picture of one of the props in the film.

### **Photo Share (Text, Zoom)**

This activity is a great get-to-know-you game for Zoom, phone, or in-person meetings. Divide your group into pairs and ask the participants to share one somewhat recent photo on their phone with the other person. Hopefully this "slice of life" moment will allow your participants to learn more about each other. If your group is using Zoom, the individuals can just hold their phone up to their laptop's camera. If a participant is using their phone in order to be a part of the Zoom call, just ask them to text the picture to their partner in order to share the image. Another option is to ask the individuals to take a picture of an item in their home and share it "show and tell" style.

### **A Good Book with More Activities Like These**

*Team-Building Activities for the Digital Age: Using Technology to Develop Effective Groups* by Brent D. Wolfe and Colbey Penton Sparkman, 2009 by Human Kinetics, ISBN: 0736079920

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