

Teambuilding Activities Using Image Cards

AEE Rocky Mountain Region, 2026 workshop by Chris Cavert

Chiji Connection (Getting-to-know-You)

Summary: Players mingle around the room pairing and sharing with other players about what they have in common with the Chiji Card they are holding.

Needs and Numbers: One Chiji Deck for 10 to 50 players.

Timeline: Plays well for about 10 to 12 minutes.

Directions: After dealing out a Chiji Card to each person, say something like this, *Please mingle around the area and eventually pair up with another person. Introduce yourselves to each other and then tell your partner what you have in common with the Chiji Card you are holding. If you absolutely cannot find something in common with the card you have, simply say, 'I can't find anything in common with this card.'* After each of you shares something, exchange cards, consider how you are connected to this new card, and then go off to talk with someone else in the group sharing your connection. *I would like to suggest, to find a partner, raise up your hand and look for someone else doing the same thing. Get together with this person. See how many people you can share within the next 8 minutes. And don't forget to exchange cards before going off to find a new person to talk with.*

Notes: If the players seem engaged in the activity you can surely let it go longer than 8 minutes. Also, this is one of those activities where the facilitator should be a participant. As a participant, you can better monitor the energy and sense when it is time to transition between partners.

Follow-Up: If it seems appropriate, you could ask:

- *Without using anyone's name, did anything surprise you during the activity?*
- *Did you find anything in common with some of the other players?*
- *What made the activity challenging? What made it easy?*
- *What would the activity be like without the cards?*
- *What did the cards represent in the activity?*
- *What "cards" do you have in your lives that are helpful?*

Variation #1: You could have players take (up to 3) guesses as to the connection their partner has with the card they are holding. If a correct guess cannot be made, the player holding the Chiji Card can then share a commonality.

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Variation #2: If you are looking for more of a small group exchange, divide your larger group into groups of 4 or 5 participants. Give each small group an equal number of Chiji Cards. Ask the groups to sit in a circle placing their cards in one stack, picture side down, in the center of their circle. With this set up, have one person turn over the first card. Now, everyone in the group has the opportunity to tell the rest of the group how they are connected to the card – what in the card reminds them of something? After everyone has had an opportunity to share (people can pass if they don't see a connection), have someone turn over the next card and continue the process. Be sure to end the activity before any of the groups run out of cards to talk about.

Variation #3: Fact or Fable – Play as described above where players mingle around with their one card. When people meet, each person must state two connections with the card he or she is holding. One connection is a fact, the other is a fable – make up a connection with the card that is not true about you. The other person must then guess which connection is the fact. For example, *This is a ballot box card. It represents the fact that I worked for the Obama campaign in my hometown. It also represents that I was elected president of my junior class when I was in high school. Which one is the fact?*

Personal Stories (Getting-to-know-You)

Summary: This activity provides an opportunity for group members to learn a little more about each other. Personal Stories can be used at different stages of a group's development – different times during a program.

Needs and Numbers: One deck of Chiji Cards can be used with a group of up to 25 people. However, additional decks can open more opportunities for stories. Also, provide a comfortable place for the groups to sit during this activity.

Timeline: You'll be providing about a minute for each group member to share a story and a few minutes initially to allow everyone to "find" a story they are willing to share. So, if you stay in one large group, the activity will take a bit longer. Another option is to divide the group into smaller discussion groups – you will not need as much time for this grouping.

Set-Up: If you plan to keep the group together for Personal Stories, no prior set-up is needed. If you plan to divide your group of 25 people, for example, into four or five smaller groups (5 to 7 in each group is ideal), then divide your deck of Chiji Cards into four or five (relatively) equal piles – one pile of cards for each group (you knew that!!).

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Directions: This is the first level of possible variations for Personal Stories – see below for two additional levels.

Level 1: Have your group(s) sit around the Chiji Cards that have placed picture side up in the middle of the circle – be sure each card is visible. Tell the group(s) something like this: *Look over the Chiji Cards that you have and identify one that reminds you of a “fun” story in your past that you were a part of. You don’t need to pick the card up from the center just yet. I’ll give you all about two minutes to find a story. When everyone has a story in mind, we will start. Each person will have about one minute to share.*

Give your group the two minutes, and continue with something like this: *Okay, let’s start our stories. Please stick to around one minute so we can stay focused and have time for some of the other activities we have planned. As always, if you don’t want to share a story at this time you can say, “pass” and we’ll come back to you later to check in – you might want to share later. When it is your turn to share, pick up the Chiji Card related to your story and hold it up for the group to see while you speak. During a person’s story, the rest of us will be listening. When you are done with your story, place your card picture side up back into the center and say, “Thank you for listening.” The rest of us will respond, “Thank you for sharing.” Then the next person can pick up a card and share his or her story. We’ll continue this process until everyone has had the opportunity to share. Are there any questions? Okay, let’s take a couple minutes to “find our stories.” Please don’t start your stories until I tell you to begin.*

If you have multiple groups, move around and listen in to a story in each group. If appropriate, and time allows, share a story of your own.

Notes: For logistical reasons, we like to keep time during the activity when there are multiple groups. Giving a couple minutes for reflection time to find a story and then one-minute rounds for each person to share. Now, of course this only works if each group has the same number of people. So, if groups are uneven (usually one more round), have the groups that have finished sharing their personal stories, spend the next minute asking each other questions about their stories. After this minute, provide everyone with two more minutes to ask each other questions before you bring everyone back together for some follow-up questions.

Follow-Up: If you want to take the activity a bit further, you can ask a few questions about the experience. Keep in mind, you don’t always have to debrief or process each activity you present. Sometimes, it’s okay to move on and let the stories settle into those who heard them.

How many people learned something new about the people in your group? Why do you think this type of learning could be valuable?

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- *What might be some advantages of sharing our stories? What might be some disadvantages of sharing our stories?*
- *What qualities make up good listening?*
- *Besides the actual content of the stories, what else, if anything, did you learn about your group members?*
- *Were any of you nervous about sharing your story? Where do you think this nervousness comes from?*

Variations: Using a “fun” story is a good way to introduce this type of sharing. Here are a couple other options to use after your group has an opportunity to work together for a while – after building a level of trust that can open up the space for more personal sharing.

Level 2: Ask your group members to share a story about a memorable event they experienced in their past – something they would feel comfortable telling the group. Saying, “memorable” opens the stories up to other aspects of a person’s life – fun stories, scary moments, nostalgic memories, turning points and challenges. Each group member will have his or her own comfort level.

Level 3: Ask your group members to share a story involving a challenge in their life that they have gone through. Here you are asking group members to be more specific about their stories. At this level, there should be a deeper level of connection within the group so people feel comfortable sharing. As always, each person has the opportunity to “pass” if they choose.

Level of Learning: This variation can be used at the beginning of a program in order to emphasize important “learning moments” in the participant’s lives. Ask each group member to pick a card that tells a story about a memorable learning experience that he or she had. It might have occurred at school, with family, or alone – anything that, in retrospect, has made an impact on the way the person now thinks. Inevitably many of the “learning” stories will be about hands on experiences. Textbooks, lectures, and exams will not be the things that stick in people’s minds. After the participants are allowed to tell their stories, you can (without directly criticizing traditional education), frontload the rest of the day by pointing out the role that experiential education already has had in the participant’s lives. (See Chapter 4 for other examples of frontloading activities.)

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Chiji Get It Back – at the beginning and/or the end of a program.

<https://www.fundoing.com/blog/chiji-get-it-back>

Personal Strengths (Frontloading)

Objective: Individuals choose a card that best represents what they bring to the group in regard to behaviors and/or skills.

Needs and Numbers: One Chiji deck for a group of 15. (If you have up to 25, divide the group into two smaller groups – give each group half the deck. Play out the activity with each group allowing some time for individuals to talk and then come together as a large group and have each person share – one sentence – what they bring.) You’ll also want a comfortable place to for the group to sit – preferably with little wind.

Timeline: 15 to 20 minutes

Directions: Spread out the Chiji cards face up on the floor. Ask everyone to identify one or two cards that show some things – like certain behaviors or skills – they possess that might help to support the group during their program.

Participants can move the card(s) closer to them as they are deciding but ask them not to pick them up. In this way others might chose to share cards that contain the things they bring to the group.

After some time, ask the group if everyone has at least one card they are ready to share with the group (of course, every person has the right not to share anything at this point). Have everyone willing to share talk about one card then go around with the sharing a second time for those who chose another card.

For example, someone might choose the turtle and share that he likes to take things slow and he would be able to help the group slow down when things get a little “crazy.” Another person might pick the eagle and share that she will help keep an eye on the big picture in order to help the group to keep moving towards their goals.

Discussion: If you choose (and you have the time) to discuss this frontload, you might ask: Why is it important to know ahead of time what we all bring to this group experience?

Variations: If the group knows each other well, and it is appropriate and in line with the group’s objectives, have participants choose cards for other people in the group. You might go around to highlight each person – What does Susan bring to the group? Then

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others in the group point to some of the cards that relate to particular skills and behaviors she possesses. Be very careful with this one. If the group does not know each other well they might not have enough information about everyone to share appropriately (or equally).

Notes: It might be useful to keep a written record of what people share in order to refer to the list later. Information can be added or deleted depending on the evolution of the group and its individuals. As a way to assist the group (when appropriate), you might point out something they need during particular times throughout the program (in relation to what you know certain people bring into the group). This might encourage, or remind, participants to step up and provide what is needed at the time.

What Matters (Frontloading)

Objective: Have the group decide on some of the important behaviors they would like to see take place during the program or activity.

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for a group of up to 15 people. (If you have up to 25, divide the group into two smaller groups – give each group half the deck. Play out the activity with each group and then come together as a large group and share what each group found that matters based on their cards.) You'll also want a comfortable place to for the group to sit – preferably with little wind.

Timeline: 20 to 30 minutes

Directions: Divide your group into small groups of 3 or 4 participants. Divide the Chiji cards evenly among the groups. Set the groups apart from each other like hours on a clock – a group at one o'clock, another at two o'clock, three o'clock and so on – the idea is to set up the groups so all the groups together form a larger circle. This activity involves several rounds – each round the task is the same.

During a round, each group's task is to choose one (or two if they just can't decide initially) of the cards from their pile that represents something they would like to see happen during their program – some type of action or behavior they find important to the success of their group. For example, one group might choose the clown so they remember to have fun (this might also bring up the idea of "clowning around" – and how does that fit into the program). Another group might choose the parachutist to encourage everyone to take risks because the group is there for support.

Set a time limit on choosing a card (around 60 seconds) so every group is ready for the switch. Each group will have a set of extra cards – all but the one or two they chose.

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Have each group pass their extra cards on to the group to their left. Once each group has their new cards, the process starts again. Each group adds the card(s) they chose from the last set to their new set. Then, again, they choose one or two cards that best represents something they want to see happen during the program. Now, they can pick the same card(s) as before, or they might find another card they like better.

This process continues so each group has a chance to look at (almost) every card in the deck. For simplicity, you pass around the cards as many times as there are groups (the cards each group receives on the last pass will be, for the most part, the cards they started with).

Once all the passes are made and choices chosen, all the groups come back together to form a large circle. Each small group presents the card(s) they chose, and what they would like to see take place in the group. These cards represent an initial phase of norming for the group.

Follow-through: Throughout the course of the program these cards (norms) can be revisited to assess how the group is doing in relation to the cards. Some cards may not be useful to the group, some cards might be working out well, other cards could be added. It might turn out that some norms are developed without the cards. The idea is to get the group thinking about how they want to “be” as they work together.

That Person Over There (Getting-to-Know-You)

Summary: Holding on to one Chiji Card, players mingle around throughout the group pointing out the person who originally chose the card they are holding.

Needs and Numbers: One Chiji Card deck for a group of 15 to 35 players. A mid-size open space is needed for players to walk around comfortably.

Timeline: Plays well for about 15 to 20 minutes.

Set-Up: Set out all the Chiji Card from one deck face up on a table or the floor – be sure each card is visible to the participants. (Variation: You could simply deal a card out at random to each player before starting)

Directions: Initially, ask all the group members to look over the cards and eventually choose one that represents a quality or characteristic they have. For example, one person might choose the Clown because he likes to make people laugh. Another person might choose the Painting because she is an artist at heart.

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Once all the players have chosen a card (be sure to set a time limit on choosing this card – 60 seconds works well for us), ask them to join you in the open area away from the cards. (If the extra cards are in the way, go ahead and scoop them up and set them aside.)

At this point, ask the player to pair up with someone else in the group (if there is an odd number of players, you can choose a card and join in the activity). Tell everyone something like this: *Every time you meet up with someone new in this game I would like you to introduce yourself. If you know the person already, use his or her name along with a “hello”.*

Now, after you greet this first person you are going to tell him or her about the quality or characteristic you share with the picture on the card. Be sure to really listen to your partner, because you are going to be passing along this information to the next person you meet. Okay, let’s all go through this process with our first partner.

Give the pairs a little time to get through this first step. This shouldn’t take too long – listen for the noise level to go down. Continue with something like this:

Okay. Does anyone need more time to share with your partner? Now, I would like you to exchange cards with your partner. When I say, “GO” you are going to get into the mingling portion of this activity. This is how it works. Move around the room with the intention of finding someone else in the group to talk with – if you need a partner, raise your hand and look for someone else doing the same thing and get together with this person. The first thing you do is....yes, introduce yourself or say hello using the person’s name. Now, here’s the new piece. Look around for that first person you spoke with, the one who has the quality or characteristic related to the picture on the card. Point this person out to the new person you are talking with and tell this new person the name of the person who is connected to the card you are holding and the quality they share with the card. For example, if I have Sam’s card and I’m talking to Sara, I will point out Sam to Sara and say, ‘He chose the Eagle because he likes to go bird watching.’ Sara would then point out Anne, the first person she met, and say to me, ‘That person over there is Anne. She chose the Frog because she likes to swim.’ Be sure you really listen and look for this person when they are pointed out, you’ll want to remember this information. How are we doing so far??

Take some time to clarify the directions up to this point if needed, then add: *Now, one final piece and then we can start playing. After you’ve pointed out the people who are connected to the cards you are holding, you exchange these cards with your new partner – yes, you will want to remember who is connected to the card you now have. At this point, you go off to find someone else in the group to talk with. What’s the first thing*

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you do when you meet this new person? Yes, introduce yourself or say hello using their name. What's next? Yes, you point out the person who is connected to the card you are holding – tell your new partner the person's name and how they are connected to the card. After each person shares, you exchange cards and then move off to find another person to talk with. Continue this process until I call for a stop to the game. Let's answer questions.

After answering questions, give the group the "GO" signal.

Play for about 4 or 5 minutes – if you play too long, like the game telephone, the information exchange could get stretched beyond recognition. Stop the activity with something like this (in a loud enough voice):

Okay, we're going to stop in about 10 seconds. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and Freeze. Now, if all the information you were exchanging was clear, you should be able to go stand next to the person that is connected to the card that you are holding. We might end up in one big circle, or several smaller circles. When you find the person connected to the card, stand next to him or her but do not give them their card just yet. Wait for my next directions. Ready, go.

At this point, there (most likely) will be some extra work involved to connect players back to their cards. Some players may have lost some critical information along the way. In the end, it works itself out.

Now, there are a couple of options as to how to conclude this activity:

Option 1: Say something like this: *Okay, now that everyone is standing next to the person connected to the card, hand the card back to its original chooser and introduce yourself along with the quality that person shares with the card – see if it is the same quality the person originally shared with the first person he or she talked to. You might find some interesting surprises. Ready? GO.* Players will have to take turns sharing information, so there might be a little waiting here – and that's okay.

Option 2: If we are working with a smaller group and we have the time, we will go around to each person in the group and have this type of exchange: *Okay, let's find out who everyone is. Let's start here. [Choose someone to start with.] What is the name of the person that is connected to the card you're holding? It's Susana. Okay group, who remembers how Susana is connected to the Mountain card? [Encourage all the responses people remember – there might be more than one response. Then ask the person holding the card:] And what were you told the connection to the card was for Susana.....Now, Susana, what did you say was your connection to the card. Interesting. Alright. Now, let's go to the next person.....*

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From here you follow the same process for each person in the group. If the energy is good for it, move into some follow-up questions. You also just might leave your group simmer in the fun and laughter the sharing produces.

Notes: If you end up participating in the activity, be sure and take some time to listen (on the side) to what is going on in the group so you can determine if the players understand the rules (we do this during the transition times between connecting up with a new partner). If you needs to, it's okay to stop everyone and clarify. If you do not participate, mingle around and listen in on some of the conversations so you have a chance to get to know your group a little bit.

Follow-Up:

- *In your opinion, what was the most important part of this activity? Why do you think it's important?*
- *Did anyone find himself or herself "lost" during the activity? Describe what lost meant to you? What did you do about it?*
- *How would you describe the outcome of the activity? Why did it turn out this way?*
- *If you were to give some advice to the next group to try this activity, what would you share with them in order to have a more accurate outcome of information?*
- *What, if anything, did you learn about yourself during this activity that you might find useful later down the road?*

Variation: This Chiji Card version is a variation of the no-prop activity of the same name from the book, *The EMPTY Bag*, by Dick Hammond and Chris Cavert. You can go through the same process without the cards. Players simple share something about themselves with their first partner that is passed along. Using the Chiji Cards gives a visual reminder of the information.

If you really want to take this deeper, you might try the no-prop version first. Then, starting out with new partners, try the Chiji Card version and then compare the outcomes of each. What lessons can be learned from the comparison?

Chiji Groupings (Tips & Twists)

Use Chiji Cards to help your larger group get into smaller groups. Be sure everyone in your group is holding on to a card (this happens easily after activities like *Chiji Connection*, *That Person Over There* and *Chiji Line-Up*). Simply ask everyone to get into, say groups of 4 or 5, by finding a relationship or connection throughout the cards they

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are holding. You could make it as challenging as “*all the cards have to have something in common*” or, “*there could be a linear connection where one card relates to one other card, this other card relates to another card and so on down the line.*” We’ve also done this to create pairs as well. Once you have everyone in smaller groups, you’re ready for the next activity....

Relationships (Object Lesson)

Objective: The group works together to find cards that are related to each other.

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for a group of up to 14 participants. (If you have up to 25 players, work together to point out relationship cards and then move to the object lesson when enough examples are provided.) You’ll also want a comfortable place to for the group to sit – preferably with little wind.

Timeline: 15 to 20 minutes

Directions: Spread the Chiji Cards out face up on the floor or ground so all the cards can be seen. Have the participant sit in a circle around the cards.

Ask the participants to look for two cards they believe are related to each other. When someone in the group discovers a pair he or she says out loud “*relationship.*” You as the facilitator give this person permission to pick out the two cards. This process does a couple things. First, if two (or more) players call “relationship” at the same time you have the opportunity to set up the order the players pick out their cards. Second, it prevents all the players from diving into (and “on to”) the cards – in other words, no one is permitted to reach in for any cards until given permission to do so. (The way this is set up could also be a point of discussion for the group – outside management of a process.)

With permission, the player picks out the two cards in question and sets them down together away from the other cards. At this point the player tells the group how the two cards are related. If everyone in the group agrees with the relationship, the group receives a point. If there is any disagreement about the relationship, a discussion can take place to try and determine how the group will decide on the pair. After the decision, the cards go back into the mix and other relationships are explored.

As the group’s points increase, the relationships will end up to be questioned even more. How the group works through this process is an important part of the activity.

Main Object Lesson: How do you define relationship? What are the factors that determine, for you, what a good relationship is and what a bad relationship is? Who do

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you have relationships with in your life? Share some details about one of your relationships? What would you change about a specific relationship that you have?

Discussions: How did you feel about questioning other people's relationships? Did anyone simply give in to a pair in order to get a point even though they questioned the validity of the relationship? Why did this happen? How would you describe, using one word, the process that took place during a discussion about a relationship? How could any one of the discussions been better? If you could have an ideal discussion with your group, that included some differences of opinion, what would the discussion look like? (After an activity..) What relationship did you have with the last activity? What relationships did the group support during the last activity? What is important about relationships?

Notes: I often play this one where I go around the circle giving each person a chance to pick out a pair or "pass." This keeps the process even more streamlined. However, I do like to use the random picking option when it is important for me to work on impulse control with my groups – this helps me set up a structure that limits some behaviors.

Also, I have been in some pretty heated discussion where group members had a difficult time listening to each other. Be prepared to offer some skill development around healthy and productive discussion. You and your group might have to establish some ground rules on how they will determine the relationships.

Variations: Don't return the cards back to the mix – ultimately the game will end when the cards can no longer be matched or there are no cards left. The extra bonus challenge for the group could be to find a relationship for every card.

Obverse (Object Lesson)

Summary: Expand participants' willingness to "see" other viewpoints, i.e., the other side of the coin (the "obverse" side of things).

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for groups of up to 15 participants. If you have more than 15 people, divide into subgroups and give each group enough cards to work with – at least one card per person (one deck for each group is best).

Timeline: 15 to 20 minutes

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Directions: Spread the Chiji Cards out image side up. Have the participant sit in a circle around the cards. There are a couple of presentation options. Go with the one you think will make the most impact with your group.

Option 1: (We would like to say, this is the option we tend to use the most based on the Object Lesson.) Ask the participants to look over all the cards. After consideration, each person is to choose a card (pick up a card) that he or she really DOES NOT like – a card that they think is a bad card – *bad* will, of course, be defined by each person. In this activity, participants will not be able to share a card – it is important for everyone to have his or her own individual card.

Once everyone has a card, go through these questions one at a time – make sure everyone has an opportunity to answer the first question before you move into the second question.

1. *Please tell us what you think is bad about your card. (Or) What makes your card a bad card?*
2. *Now, think about and share something that could be good about your card? (Or) Consider what might make your card a good card.*

Option 2: Ask the participants to look around through the cards. After consideration, each person is to choose a card (pick up a card) that he or she really thinks is a “good” card – *good* will be defined by each person. It will be important for everyone to have his or her own card. Ask people not to share cards for this one.

Once everyone has a card, go through these questions one at a time – make sure everyone has an opportunity to answer the first question before moving into the second question.

1. *Please tell us what is good about your card. (Or) What makes your card a good card?*
2. *Now, what could be bad about your card? (Or) What might make your card a bad card?*

Object Lesson: Here are some possible discussion questions to bring out the object of this lesson: *How can things be perceived in more than one way? What leads us to the way we see things? How can looking at something from a different point of view change your situation? Think about something in your life that could change if you viewed it differently?*

Notes: If you end up presenting this one with more than one group, present the same instructions to everyone. If a group finishes their discussion early, you could present them with one of the Follow Up questions to discuss.

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We like to use this object lesson near the beginning of a program in order to consider how we will perceive the “new” things that might come up for people during the program. Some people might find “things” *boring* or *dumb*, *scary* or *risky*. We can then ask, “How might we look at this *thing* differently? What could be *fun* about it or what could be *exciting* instead of scary?”

When this activity was first considered, choosing the “good” card first was the way it was set up. This was then proceeded by choosing a “bad” card. When we moved into choosing a “bad” card, the group knew what was coming so they put more consideration into choosing. This could work in your favor to emphasize the object lesson, or it could be more than you need to get the lesson across. Currently we pretty much stick to just one option (depending on the energy of the group) and bring up the “lesson” when it presents itself during the program – “*How are you looking at the present situation? Could there be another way to look at it?*” For us right now, one round makes the point.

Follow Up: The object lesson itself might be enough to talk about, but if it seems appropriate you could follow up with questions like:

- *Is there some advice you might give to someone in the group about his or her card?*
- *What were some of the things you thought about before you chose a card?*
- *What one card might help you change your perspective on something in your life right now?*
- *Choose a good card you would give to someone else (within the group or outside the group) – who would you give it to and why?*

Image Perspectives (Object Lesson)

<https://www.fundoing.com/blog/image-perspectives-an-activity-for-chiji-cards>

Chiji Line Up (Initiative Activity)

Objective: The group works together to line up in order based on the resources they have to line up with.

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for one to three groups of 8 to 10 participants (you can play this one with up to 30 people) and a stopwatch.

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Timeline: 25 to 30 minutes

Directions: Considering just one group of 12 participants for the moment, you will need to choose 12 Chiji cards to use for the activity. The difficulty level of the activity will depend on the cards you choose. If you want to make it easy initially, choose cards from the deck that are easier to define. For example, the lighthouse, the frog, the “ballot box”, the rainbow, the sun, and so on. When the group is ready, hand each participant a card with the picture facing down – no one should see the card they have before the activity begins.

The group’s goal is to line up, each person with card in hand, into alphabetical order based on how the card is named by the person holding it. When ready, on “GO” the time starts. When the group is lined up in order the time stops. Then, challenge the group to improve their time. Ask each participant to turn his or her card picture down, and then exchange cards with at least five other people (this is called a “blind shuffle”). When ready (this means when you and the group are ready – if they ask for planning time let them have it), “GO” – stop the time when the group is lined up again. If you give the group a third try will they beat their time?

Here’s one of the learning objectives – mental models. Cards will have to be defined – given a name in order for them to be lined up alphabetically. So, how will the group come to agree on the name of the card as cards change hands? Initially, if the cards are fairly easy to define (don’t be surprised if they aren’t), the group will have little difficulty lining up after an exchange. However, how will the group handle more abstract cards like, the broken pot, the bridge with the ducks, the two masks (happy, sad), the cornucopia (does everyone know what this is?), or father time and baby New Year? How will the group come to an understanding and agreement about the cards? It will take more group work to come to the same “mental model” of each card. In this lies the lesson of mental models – how do we all come to agree on the same definitions?

So, to recap the activity. You could start out with an easier line up (three attempts to get the best time) and then give them a more abstract set of cards and compare the process of the two different sets of cards. How is it that the first set was easier than the second? What needed to happen for the group to be successful with the second set of cards? Why is this important?

Now, if you want to try this with more than one group, simply put together a set of cards for each group. There will not be enough cards to make all easier sets, so have a mix of easy and more abstract for each set. You could have a designated timer for each group and go three rounds, or set up a little competition to see which groups comes in first, second, and third place. Then, after the three rounds of intensity, combine the three

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groups to make one large community. How will they share what they know for everyone to be successful? How will they communicate with each other before, during and after each round? How does competition relate to cooperation?

Discussions: (these are the questions from the paragraphs above) How were you able to decide the name of the object on the card (some are obvious, some are not)? How was the card name effected by the blind shuffle after each round? Was there any group strategy to keep the cards' names unchanged? How were the more abstract cards named – did they change over time and why? How did you come to understand and agree about the names of the cards? What needed to (or did) happen for you to be successful with naming the more abstract cards? Why is this information important? With more groups involved, explain how competition was a factor in your process? Discuss what it was like for you as a group when all the small groups came together as one large group? How did you communicate with each other before, during, and after each round? What did it take for you, as a group, to be successful? What is important about the idea of mental models?

Variation(s): Here are some other possible line up concepts to work with: Largest to smallest - defining can be left up to the group or facilitator; Most powerful to least powerful; Most important to least important. It would be interesting to see how the group comes to an agreement about each of the concepts. There could be a consensus activity in here too if needed. (See “Biggest to Smallest” in this section.)

Notes: Be ready for a number of solutions and problem solving strategies in this one. Will it be okay for participants to “tell” someone what’s on the card they are handing another player during the blind shuffle? Roll with the challenges that present themselves. Allow the group time to sort out their plan. You can force the group to ask for planning time by constantly pushing on through to the next round, or you can give them planning time between each round until they are ready to begin. One of the main aspects of any initiative is to see what the group “gets themselves into” and “how they are able to get out of it.” This can involve some skills building through coaching or group discovery – depends on your program goals.

Biggest to Smallest (Initiative Activity)

Objective: As a group, come to consensus as to the order – biggest to smallest – of a particular set of cards.

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for a group of up to 15 participants and a comfortable place to work. If you have more than 15 participants, divide the group in

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half. Give each group the same timeline and a different set (or sets) of cards to work out. (Note: If you divide your larger group, ask the smaller groups not to share their answer with the other group(s). Then switch sets of cards. See if you find any differences in solutions between groups – something to talk about.

Timeline: 15 to 20 minutes (more time if you have multiple groups)

Set Up: Before you get started, you'll want to create "sets" of cards for the group(s) to work with. The more sets you create to put into order, the more time you will need for the activity. Also, keep in mind, the number and "abstract level" of the cards will affect the time needed for the activity – in most cases, fewer, less abstract cards will take less time to put into order.

A unique aspect of this activity, in relation to your set up, is that you can put together a number of sets, from less to more challenging, and then continue to present the sets in order in relation to the group's engagement in the activity. In other words, you can stop presenting the sets when you see that your group has, 1) met the "facilitated" objective(s) of the activity (in relation to one or more of the group's program goals as opposed to the objective of the activity – to agree on the set or sets), 2) met with their appropriate level of challenge, 3) used the allotted amount of time they have for the activity.

Here are a few examples of some sets in a less to more challenging (relatively speaking) order (cards are not listed in any particular order - what order would you place them in?):

- The Moon, The Farm Scene, The Globe (Earth), The Sun
- The Keyhole, The Tee Pee, The Globe (Earth), The Ballot Box, The Rose, The Rock Bluffs
- The Frog, The Bee, The Rabbit, The Spider, The Owl, The Turtle, The Ostrich, The Butterfly
- The Train Tracks, The Safe, The Clown, The Fire, The Light Bulb, The Cornucopia, The Wind, The Rainbow, The Eagle, The Sunset

Directions: Gather your group around a table or sit on the floor. Spread out the first set of cards you would like them to order on the table (or ground) face up so all the players can see each card. Simply ask the group: *By consensus, place these cards in order from biggest to smallest. When you have reached your solution, let me know.* Then let them work out their solution.

If the group is ready for another set, present them in the same way as the previous set. Move through as many sets as appropriate for your group.

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Discussion: On a scale of 1 to 5 – 5 being very challenging - how challenging was each set to get into an order you all agreed on? What made the each set less or more challenging? How are some of these challenges like the ones in your own life? What can you take from the challenges here into your own day-to-day experiences?

How does each of you define biggest and smallest? You could get into more questions about “mental models” and “paradigms” and the pros and cons about seeing things differently. Then, how do we complete a task when people see things differently – this can go into conceding, compromising and commitment issues? You could also talk about how the group’s consensus process went, how the communication was and if leadership played any part in completing (or not completing) the activity.

Variations: You could go through individual cards to determine if the people in the group believe the image on the card is “BIG” or “small”. You sit in front of the group, hold up a card and ask, “In your mind, is the image on this card big or small.” Then find out where people are at with each card. The probing question for this is, “In relation to what?” Explore what this means. When someone determines something, what is it in relation to? Connect this to “real life”. If you think someone is a bad dresser – in relation to what? If you’re having a bad day – in relation to what, or who (what do other’s bad days look like – your day might not be so bad!!).

Notes: This might be a reasonable activity to teach your group about consensus building since you can create small sets of cards to start with (providing some initial success) and then progress through more cards and more challenging “conceptual” orders (practicing and challenging). Or, be sure your group has some knowledge of the process of consensus building and then use this activity to gain more practice with the concept.

Picture Processing (Processing)

Objective: Each participant chooses and shares one card that represents some aspect of an activity just completed.

Needs & Numbers: One Chiji Deck for a group of up to 15 participants and a comfortable and quite area for a discussion. (If you have up to 25 participants, pair up people and have them decide on a card they both can relate to – then have one from the pair share with the group why they chose the card as described below.)

Timeline: 10 to 15 minutes (allow about 1 minute per player)

Directions: Spread the cards out face up so everyone can see them. Then give the

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following instructions: *"Each person pick out one or two cards that, for some reason, describe your feelings about the last activity (or "today's activities" if you are closing your program with this). – you do not need to "pick up" your card, you'll have the opportunity to point it out when it is your turn. Choose carefully because, in about 60 seconds, I am going to ask you to name your cards and explain why you chose the cards that you did. The feelings may be individual or personal. They may be about the group or about you. They could even relate to something in the past that you were reminded of because of the activity. The only restriction is that you choose a connection to the card you are willing to share with the whole group."*

After all participants have picked their cards, each takes his or her turn in naming and explaining the chosen card(s). Offer the opportunity for anyone to pass if they are not ready or simply do not want to share anything with the group. Usually the facilitator simply lets each person explain the metaphor derived from the cards, but, if appropriate, the facilitator may ask a pertinent follow-up question to each participant. For example, "Could you tell me a little bit more about that?" Or, "You said this...what does that mean to you?"

Additional Questions to Focus Processing:

- *Choose a card (or two) that best represents what showed up during the activity.*
- *Choose a card (or two) that best represents what did not show up during the activity – if this would have showed up it might have been useful to the group.*

Chiji Get It Back – at the beginning or end of a program

<https://www.fundoing.com/blog/chiji-get-it-back>

Needs & Numbers: Image cards and a timing device. Plays well with 12 to 30.

Process: Ask everyone to "Choose an image that represents something the group does well."

The group then circles up, and each person briefly shares their characteristic, showing their card. Then everyone participates in a blind shuffle – exchanging cards with others, not looking at the image side of the cards, until you say "STOP!" Make sure everyone has a card. When you say "GO!" time starts. Participants can look at the card they are holding and then give it back to the person it belongs to. When everyone has their card back and they are all standing in a circle, the time stops.

Play a few rounds to give the group the opportunity to problem-solve and improve their time.