



DISPERSE TAG



Age: Families or Elementary

Subject: Science

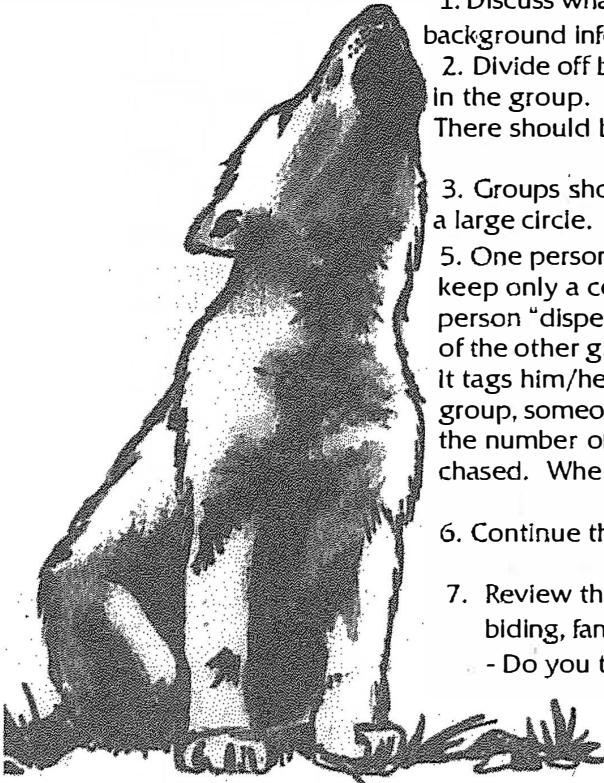
Objective: Families will learn what a pack is and how packs form. They will learn about the social structure of the pack and learn the basic terms: pack, bide, disperse, alpha, subordinate.

Method: Families will divide into small groups of two or more. Through the game of tag, families will understand how packs form and how each individual attains status within the pack structure.

Before: Learn about wolves or invite TWA to give a presentation at your location.

Background: Wolves live in a family group called a pack where they run a very strict hierarchical structure. A pack can have two to twelve animals that include the alpha male and female who are the breeding pair and leaders of the pack, the current year's litter of pups, the subordinate yearlings from the previous year and individuals that have come in from other packs. Subordinates, or non-breeding individuals, can attain alpha status by one of the two ways: either by "biding" their time with the current pack, working their way up the hierarchical ladder, or by "dispersing", leaving their current pack and venturing out beyond its territory.

Activity:

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1. Discuss what a pack is and how the social structure of a pack works from background information.
 2. Divide off by twos, threes or more depending upon how many people are in the group. If there are a number of families, each can divide off together. There should be at least four separate groups.
 3. Groups should stand a considerable distance from one another, possibly in a large circle.
 5. One person is "it" and stands in the center of the circle. The main idea is to keep only a certain number of individuals in each group, let's say three. One person "disperses" to another group (could be any group), he/she runs to one of the other groups and tags someone in that group before the person who is it tags him/her (the person running). Once the individual disperses to a new group, someone from that group will need to run to another group thus keeping the number of individuals the same in each group. Someone will always be chased. When the individual is tagged that person then becomes it.
 6. Continue the game until exhaustion sets in.
 7. Review the new words during the course of the game (pack, dispersal, biding, family structure). Go over discussion questions
 - Do you think packs have a limit as to what size they grow? What determines the size?
 - What do you think is the risk of being a "bider" vs. the risk of being a "disperser?"

Originally produced by Timber Wolf Alliance and Ottawa National Forest
Updated by Angela Lee Rivera Rautmann