



Exploring Leadership

PLANNING & ORGANIZATION: PRIORITIZING

Mastering prioritization can change your life. Knowing your priorities can help reduce stress, improve focus, increase productivity, and lead to better time management and work-life balance. It's not just about getting things done—it's about focusing on the things that truly matter and will make a difference.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

This jar represents your life. The rocks are the important things – family, health, and work. The pebbles are the other things – house, car, etc. The sand represents the small stuff. How do you prioritize the key areas of your life?

Once you understand how to prioritize, you'll realize that much of what seems urgent isn't as important as you thought. In both business and life, we often waste time on things that don't deserve our attention. Prioritizing helps you focus on the activities that align with your values and goals, giving you more time for what truly matters.

KEY OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the concept of prioritizing tasks.
- Practice prioritization through a team-based activity.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Large jar
- Rocks, pebbles, and sand
- A large bowl
- Computer and projector for task list (see Appendix)
- Art supplies (markers, index cards, scissors, tape, etc.)
- Timer
- Paper and pencils

EXPLORATION ACTIVITY:

In this activity, you'll practice managing time and making decisions to earn points while having fun with your team.

FACILITATION TIPS:

- Before the activity, test to make sure everything fits into the jar.
- For the Conversation Starter, use the time jar as a visual. Add rocks, pebbles, and sand in that order to show how everything fits. Then, dump it out into the bowl and try to put everything back in, showing how it won't fit without proper prioritization.

- Divide participants into teams of 3-4.
- Give each team a paper and pencil to track completed tasks.
- Explain that activity:
 - Each task has a point value—choose tasks wisely.
 - Each task can only be completed once.
 - The goal: have fun and earn the most points.
 - Teams will have 8 minutes to complete as many tasks as possible.
- Display the task list and start the timer
- Let the chaos begin!
- After time is up, tally the points to determine the winner.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- How did your team decide which tasks to tackle first? What influenced your decision?
- If you had more time, what would you have done differently in prioritizing tasks?
- Were there any tasks that your team didn't even consider? Why not?
- What was your strategy for prioritizing tasks to earn the most points?

APPLICATION DISCUSSION:

- In your daily life, when do you need to prioritize tasks and time?
- What are your top priorities in life? Do you feel like you spend enough time on them?
- How does prioritizing your most important tasks impact your stress levels and overall productivity?



CONCLUSION:

When you prioritize tasks and time, you're choosing to do the most important things first, just like with the Time Jar activity. We all have a limited amount of time, and it's up to you how you spend it. Prioritizing means making choices that create the life you want to live—by focusing on what counts most.

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REFERENCES

- Top 21 Time Management Games: <https://everhour.com/blog/top-time-management-games/>
- Time Prioritization Game Activity and Team-Building Ice-Breaker by Dr Valeria Lo Iacono: <https://symondsresearch.com/free-time-management-games/>
- The "Everything is Important" paradox by Jory MacKay: <https://blog.rescuetime.com/how-to-prioritize/>



APPENDIX:

Tasks List

- As a team, do a lap around the room. (5 points)
- Perform the “I’m a Little Teapot” song loudly with appropriate gestures as a team. (15 points)
- Each team member makes a paper airplane to throw, and one must travel across the room in one toss. (10 points)
- Get everyone in the room (including members of other teams) to sign a single piece of paper. (5 points)
- Name your team and create a slogan. (5 points for the name, 5 points for the slogan)
- As a team, loudly re-create the sounds of the Amazon rainforest for one minute. (10 points)
- Form a conga line and conga across the room. (5 points; bonus 5 points for each member of another team who joins)
- Count how many pets are owned by your team. (20 points)
- Build a stable tower at least two feet high using available materials. (10 points)
- Create something for the facilitator to wear using available materials. (10 points; bonus 5 points if the facilitator actually wears it)
- Find something unique about each person on your team. (5 points)
- Create nicknames and name cards for each team member and wear them. (10 points)