



GAME

Pen and Paper Telephone

OVERVIEW

Students will take turns passing a stack of notecards to each other, alternating between writing a sentence or drawing a picture to represent what the person before them wrote or drew. Like the game of “Telephone,” you never know what’s going to show up at the end!

WHAT YOU’LL NEED

- All of your middle schoolers split into groups of 4–8 students (You can have as many groups as you’d like!)
- One stack of notecards for each group (Sticky notes, a notebook, or blank paper will also work.)
- One pen or pencil per group

HOW-TO

PREP

- Optional: You might consider numbering the notecards on the back ahead of time. If the cards are dropped, the numbering ensures that they can be easily put back in order.

PLAY

This game can be played in a variety of environments: in the church van, waiting for food at a restaurant, standing in line for a concert, as an ice breaker for a small group, or whenever you need a laugh and a low prep activity.

Break all of your students up into groups of 4 to 8. Give each group a stack of notecards and a pen or pencil. The first person in each group will write a sentence on the top card. You can give a starting prompt (like suggesting they write a song lyric or common phrase) or allow it to be their choice. Once the first person has written their sentence, they’ll pass the stack of cards and pen to the next person in their group. That person will read the card silently to themselves and then put

it on the bottom of the stack. On the new blank top card, the student will draw a picture representing what they just read. No words or numbers may be used in the picture they draw.

After they’ve completed their picture, they’ll pass the stack of cards to the next person in their group. The third person will look at the drawn picture, put that picture card on the bottom of the stack, and write a sentence that represents that picture on the new top blank card. Once they’ve completed their sentence, they’ll pass the stack of cards and pen to the next person in the group.

This process continues until there is no one left in the group. If someone is handed a card with a phrase or sentence, they should draw a picture. If someone is handed a picture, they should write a sentence or phrase. At no time, should a person look at any other card in the stack besides the one they were given.

Share the first and last pictures/sentences with the larger group at the end for a laugh.
