

**Model Program**

**Program title:** Barter Rummy

**Program summary:** This family or group activity explains how bartering works, shows the difficulty of getting things you want when bartering, and compares bartering to using money.

**Duration:** One hour

**Suggested venue:**  ☑ In Library ☐ At Home ☐ Either

**Instructor led:**  ☐ Yes ☑ No ☐ Either **Facilitation required:** ☑ Yes ☐ No

**Target audience:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | Kids (ages 3–7) |
| ☑ | Tweens (ages 8–12) |
| ☑ | Young adults (ages 13–18) |
| ☐ | Adults |
| ☐ | All ages |
| ☐ | Other: |

**Program budget:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ☐ | $0 |
| ☑ | $1–$50 |
| ☐ | $51–$100 |
| ☐ | $101–$250 |
| ☐ | $251–$500 |
| ☐ | More than $500 |

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

**Advance planning:**

Print copies of the activity instructions for distribution. To save money, you could use a paper cutter to cut the index cards in half down the middle. Then you can get two out of one.

**Partnerships/Collaborations:**

Not needed

**Budget:**

$30 or less to purchase note cards and pens/markers to write daily used items on them. Each playing of the game will need one sheet of paper.

**Day of activity:**

Parents/guardians should attend the program with their kids. Library staff will need to provide instructions for the bartering activity, as well as the cards (cut in half if needed) that will be used.

**Program execution:**

We normally use money whenever we buy things. What would it be like if we had to barter for things, instead of using money to buy things? Bartering involves swapping something you have for something you want or need from another person.

Parents/guardians will play the bartering activity with kids. Two smaller families could do the activity together. It is recommended the activity be done with 6 to 10 people.

The people doing this activity will have to barter for things they use on a daily basis to see what it would be like if they could not purchase them with money.

**Instructions**

How the Bartering Activity Works

An adult or teen serves as the facilitator and reads the instructions aloud to the group.

1. We normally use money, or some form of money, whenever we buy things. Before money was invented, people used a system called bartering. Bartering involves swapping something you have for something you want or need from another person. Bartering is like making a trade.

2. Individuals participating in the activity begin by identifying eight things they use on a daily basis. Examples are listed below. The family/group can select eight of these or use things they come up with that are not on this list:

* Internet
* Computer
* Newspaper
* Car
* Cell Phone
* Shoes
* Backpack
* Radio
* School Supplies

3. Once the eight things have been decided by the group, one member of the group will write them all on a single sheet of paper. A member of the group will then take the index cards and write each of the eight things on the same number of cards as there are people participating in the game. For example, if you have six people playing in your group, you will write each item on six different index cards. If eight people are playing, you will write the item on eight different index cards.

4. The game works best if players sit around a table or in a circle.

5. An adult member of the group shuffles and deals all the cards to the players. Similar to other card games, everyone playing should end up with the same number of cards (in this instance, everyone should get eight cards).

6. All participants should look at the cards dealt to them, but not show them to others.

7. Players will take turns asking one another to trade or barter with them to get the cards they do not have in their hand. This begins with the person who dealt the cards asking one other player to trade something for an item the requester has in his/her possession. If the requester offers to trade shoes for a cell phone, the requester must have shoes to trade.

8. An individual whose turn it is to trade can only trade one card at a time.

9. If the person being asked to do the trade does not wish to trade for the card the person is requesting, or does not have that card, he/she will simply say “rejected” without explaining why the trade is rejected. Counter-offers are not permitted. If there is something you would have liked to counter with, simply wait until your turn and then make the offer. Keep in mind that in order to get the cards necessary to win the game, you must make trades.

10. If the person being asked to do the trade does wish to trade for that card, he/she will say “accepted,” and the two individuals will swap the agreed upon index cards.

11. After a trade request is successful or rejected, it becomes the next person’s turn.

12. The game rotates clockwise as it proceeds to the next person.

13. The activity continues until a player has each of the eight different cards selected by the group at the beginning of the activity. That player wins. This can be confirmed by referring to the sheet of paper prepared prior to starting the game.

14. After playing for 30 minutes, if someone has not won, each player will place half of their index cards in a position where the others playing the game can see them (for example, on the table). Then every player can see some of the cards others have in their possession. This should speed up the game. If someone has already won in less than 30 minutes, the group can play the game again.

After the Game

After the game, players can discuss what it would have been like if they could simply purchase items with money instead of working through the bartering process.

Talk about how there were times during the activity when someone would not make a trade with somebody else because the person did not want what being offered. For bartering to be successful, both sides need to get something they want from the trade. This is tough in a bartering system when someone has something you want, but you do not have something he/she wants. Having money solves this problem.

Discuss how easy it is to go to a store or a restaurant and use money to buy what you want. You don’t need to find something you have or a service you are able to perform that the owner of the store wants to trade with you. We don’t need to find an item that people at a restaurant would want in exchange for the food they cook and serve.

Money makes it convenient to buy things we want and need every day. Money also helps us compare the value of things we are thinking about buying.

**Advice:**

This is not an instructor-led activity, but you may want to let participants know that they can come to the help desk and ask a staff member any questions about the activity.

If kids are interested in learning more about bartering vs. currency, they can go to the link below and play *Escape from Barter Islands*. This interactive online game from the Cleveland Fed teaches how a barter system works and the value of a uniform currency. Players help a castaway on the Barter Islands purchase a sail for his boat to return home by bartering/trading things like coconuts, bananas, and fish.

[www.clevelandfed.org/learningcenter/escape-from-barter-island](http://www.clevelandfed.org/learningcenter/escape-from-barter-island)