



10 Team Bonding Ideas

By: Kayleigh Butler

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A new season and a new team can prove to be intimidating, but by establishing the team as a family rather than a competitive environment, all tension melts to the wayside. Here are some creative ways to build your family up for a great season.

1. **Team Dinners** – Make a goal to have a team meal prior to every performance. Try to host at each person's house at least once and be sure to rotate meal responsibilities so that each member gets the opportunity to bring the pasta and the cookies! This is not only a great way to bond but also an efficient way to ensure that your team is eating healthy before a game or competition!
2. **Team Outings** – Whether you go bowling, out to a movie, or host a karaoke night, planning activities that are not dance related will decrease any pressure to perform well and will increase the camaraderie within your team!
3. **Team Goals** – When your team is established, have each dancer write down their individual and team goals for the season (coaches too!). Sit in a circle, and take turns sharing goals aloud. Upon the season's completion, such as before the last game or during the last team dinner, read these goals again, and assess whether they were reached.
4. **Team Letters** – After sharing your goals, ask your dancers to each write a letter to their teammates to bring back to the next practice. Ask your seniors to write letters to the underclassmen regarding what they hope to do for the team over the next few months and ask the underclassmen to write letters regarding what they hope to learn from the seniors as well as what they hope to get out of the season as a whole. As the season comes to a close, once more ask the dancers to each write a letter regarding what this season has meant to them.
5. **Team Trust Activities** – When the season commences, spend about 15 minutes at the start of each practice playing a game or initiating a trust activity. The activities can be simple, such as having the dancers fall into each others arms for trust, or can become more complex, such as UDA's "Cross the Amazon" game or a team scavenger hunt throughout the school. Any activities that require teamwork can be used as great icebreakers with a new team.
6. **Team Support** – While supporting other sports teams is important, it is equally important to support each other in your many activities. Attend a fellow dancer's band or choir concert, go watch your peer in the school play, or buy tickets to see your teammates dance in their studio recital. Make sure that each member of the team feels supported, on and off the dance floor.
7. **Team Clothing** – Make t-shirts, headbands, sweatpants, or even hats as a team. Organize a day to tie-dye, rhinestone, or paint clothing items to wear to games, school, or during your team outings.
8. **Team Gift-Exchange** – Create your own Secret Dancer by drawing names from a hat and keeping secret your gift receiver. Set up three dates before the exchange on which the dancers will receive clues as to who their gift giver is. On the day of the exchange, go around and make

everyone guess who their Secret Dancer is; they don't get their gift until they guess correctly! For monetary concerns, have the dancers make homemade gifts or put a limit on the amount of money to be spent.

9. **Team Good Luck Charms** – During the last practice before a competition, have you dancers pull names from a hat. They will then create their own good luck charms for each other, such as by writing a supportive letter, making a small trinket, baking something, or all three! The charms will be given at the team dinner before the competition to wish luck to each dancer.
10. **Team Conditioning** – Plan team runs, trips to the weight room, yoga and spinning sessions, etc. Cheering each other on to the finish will establish a bond that is truly special, and as everyone crosses that line, whether it is after a jog or bike ride, the team will be stronger physically and mentally.

Remind your dancers that being on the team is not about fighting to be the point of the pyramid, but instead a place to build friendships and to make memories. Keeping the bond strong throughout the season will help to prevail over minor, and major, setbacks and will also ensure that the season ends with as much optimism with which it started.