

Activity: City as Play

Goal:

- o To get students immediately engaged
- o Stimulate students' creativity related to a topic

Materials:

- o Play materials
- o Construction paper—1 sheet for each student
- o Camera
- o Flip chart to scribe what students say during share out

Directions:

We're going to do an activity called *City as Play* or *Place It*. It was designed by James Rojas, an urban planner. An urban planner is someone who helps to decide how cities look; he or she helps think that through with people in the community. (Note: This activity is fun for people of all ages. It doesn't matter if you speak English, don't speak English, whether or not you can read or write. This works for everyone.)

Each of you will get a piece of paper. The paper is going to represent the land that you are going to build on. This is going to give you some space to build on. We are going to answer a question...and we're going to do it by taking some materials and building with them.

So, based on what you just heard about the Parks and Rec Master Plan...if you could design anything related to Parks and Rec--their facilities, their parks, their services, and programs, what would you design? You can build the ideal park or the ideal rec center or the ideal Parks and Rec program. It can be sustainable and good for the environment, but it should also be good for all children and youth-- and their families, grandparents and friends.

So, you are going to have 10-15 minutes to build your ideal park or rec center or Parks and Rec program. We're going to come around with "common or found objects". Use your imagination to create your ideal facility, park, service, or program. Remember, you are working by yourself. We'll tell you when you have 5 minutes remaining. You may begin.

Adults take photographs while students are creating.

Share Out: Everyone is going to have 30 seconds to describe what they built. I know everyone has amazing masterpieces, but we're going to keep it short so that each person has a chance. Please be good listeners to each person's idea.

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*Adult scribes onto chart paper what each young person shares
(Name/description of what they built)*

Creating themes/categories--after each youth shares, facilitators ask the youth to look at all the ideas and to create themes or categories of the kinds of things they see listed. The themes might be water or interactivity or movement or equity. This work demonstrates how each student may have their own idea, but that each idea often ties into a broader idea or theme and that all ideas are connected.

Closure: End the session by letting students know that GUB takes each of their ideas as a recommendation to the city project they are working on. GUB writes a report with all of their ideas and themes that emerged that is shared with the city department. The department in turn shares it with the architects and planners on the project. GUB's mission is to elevate their voices and give their recommendations to decision makers.