

Title: Gone Fishing

Aim: To understand interdependence and explore the idea of the system of 'Commons', and to discover how our behaviour influences others

Age: 12+

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Recording template, copy of the scenario, copy of 'Commons Background'



WHAT TO DO

Part 1: Everybody sits in a circle facing outwards. Read the scenario and explain how the game works.

Scenario: We are living in a village where everybody depends on the fish in the pond for eating and selling to buy other goods. Everybody owns the fish. They are a part of our common goods, shared by all. Each angler is fishing by themselves.

Give the rules: The game is played in seven rounds. Each round represents a day. Anglers cannot talk because it scares the fish away. Each player can fish 0 to 3 fish per round. The angler can only fish a second fish if they have fished a first one. If you don't take a first one you cannot take a second or third in that round. Anyone wishing to catch just one fish must do so in the first round. The aim is to get as many fish as you need. You catch fish by raising your arm when the leader asks "Who wants one fish?", "Who wants a second fish?", "Who wants a third one?"




NOTE TO LEADER:

- Don't tell the group that the amount of fish in the pond at the start of the game is the amount of players x 4. (e.g. if you are playing with 10 people, the amount of fish at the beginning is 40)
- The fish replenish naturally at the end of each day (the remaining fish at the end of each day double, but don't tell the group that), but there will never be more than the amount of fish at the beginning of the game (e.g. 40)
- Ways to reduce the numbers of people and fish: People who don't fish enough, i.e. less than 7 during the full week, will die of hunger and are out of the game. Anyone who doesn't fish the first two rounds can also be eliminated. If the group are being too cautious and there are too many fish, you can wipe out half due to a disease in the pond, etc
- If needed, after four rounds, those with the highest number of fish automatically take 3 from each of the remaining rounds whether they want to or not. They have better equipment, more fishing bait, more experience

So the week begins on Day One... Ask who wants to have a first fish? Anglers raise an arm to answer. Continue for second and third catches. Remember, if you don't fish in the first catch of each day, you don't get any fish that day. Use the recording template to capture who fished and how many. Repeat for each round.

	Day 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
Total Fish beginning Day								
Player A								
Player B								
Player C								
Amount fished								
Amount left								


Negotiation and Penalties: At any stage during the game when you see the pond getting severely overfished, allow 2-3 minutes where the participants can go to the 'community centre' to talk and come up with a common strategy for protecting their fish stocks. If they think anyone should be punished for the low stocks, ask them who and why? The maximum fine is half that person's fish stocks. If the meeting takes too long, warn the participants that they can continue talking but that anglers from a neighbouring village are using the pond while they are in the community centre and more fish are being taken.

 **DEBRIEF:** What happened in the game? Were there any fish left? Why? Did the penalties/negotiations change the game? Why were they needed? How did participants feel during the game? How did they react personally? Would it make a difference if they knew how many fish were in the pond? Would they play this game differently if they had to do it again? Do they think that this situation is like anything that happens in real life?

Part 2: Divide into small groups and give each group a copy of the 'Commons Background'. Ask them to read it and discuss the impact of the 'Tragedy of the Commons' on their lives and their communities' future. Alternatively, watch related animations on You Tube by searching for 'Tragedy of the Commons'.

Commons Background

The 'commons' are resources that are owned or shared among communities. The 'commons' were traditionally defined as the elements of the environment - forests, air, rivers, fisheries or grazing land. Today, the commons include literature, music, film, television, radio, information, software and sites of heritage, public spaces, parks and playgrounds. The 'Tragedy of the Commons' is when multiple individuals begin using the commons so much that it means there isn't an equal and fair share for everyone else. This ultimately makes a shared resource scarce and expensive. Even though it is clear that it is not in anyone's long-term interest for this to happen, it still does. Overfishing the seas is an example of this.

 **FURTHER DEBRIEF:** Does this game reflect any situations in real life? What are the 'commons' in your community (e.g. public parks, playgrounds, football fields, local hall, libraries, canals, etc)? Are they used fairly or not? How can we encourage everyone to use only what they need? Should companies pay to use our common resources? Do you think society rewards those who cooperate the best, or those who compete the best?



FACT BOX: Plenty more fish in the sea? According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in 2006, over 70% of the world's fish species were either fully exploited or depleted. Oceans were cleared at twice the rate of forests. Fishing is central to the livelihood and food security of 200 million people, especially in the Global South, while one in five people on this planet depends on fish as their main source of protein. Look out for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) eco-label on fish in your local supermarket.



WARM UP: Happy Mushroom! The group stands in a circle. Each person has to choose another person (without saying anything). When the leader says 'Go!', each person has to do 3 circles around the one they chose. When they do 3 circles, they sit and shout 'Happy Mushroom!'