4th Grade

Lesson 5: Physical Education | 15-20 minutes

Activity 1: Sweep the Plankhouse

Summary:

Students play *Sweep the Plankhouse*, an active, community-building game where they move through space, listen for cues, and quickly organize themselves into small groups that represent actions from daily life in a Plankhouse community. Through individual movement and cooperative formations, students practice body awareness, spatial awareness, and teamwork. This game encourages flexible thinking, inclusiveness, and shared decision-making. Skills that help students participate in group responsibilities, much like how community members work together in everyday tasks.

This lesson helps students:

- Organize themselves in changing groups using movement, listening, and cooperation.
- Solve group formation challenges by working with nearby classmates, not just close friends.
- Participate in a shared activity where everyone contributes to the success of the group.

Key Discovery:

Students discover that working together quickly, kindly, and flexibly helps the whole group succeed, and that shared tasks require cooperation and awareness of the people around them.

Standards	• Primary: PE.1.4.5, PE.4.4.1, PE.4.4.2, PE.4.4.3, PE.4.4.4, PE.4.4.5:
Materials	• Sweep the Plankhouse Instructions • Teacher Quick Card for calls (optional)
Vocabulary	• **Round Dance**- A friendship dance done between friends or relatives at a gathering or celebration. • **Plankhouse:** A traditional cedar plank home used by Indigenous people of the region.



Something
4th Grade

Setup and Logistics

- Establish clear boundaries for safe movement.
- Practice the actions and formations so everyone knows how to join in.

Class Flow

Activity 1: Sweep the Plankhouse

Step 1: Introduce the Game and Practice the Movements

- Explain that Sweep the Plankhouse is a movement game where students start by "sweeping" individually and then quickly come together in groups when they hear a call such as:
    - "Sweep the Plankhouse." Individual sweeping motions while walking around the space.
    - "Look over the horse." 2 students: one on hands and knees, one looking over the horse to the horizon.
    - "Build a Fire." 3 students: one squats, two make fire motions by wiggling their hands and fingers.
    - "Do the Round Dance." 4 students make a circle and dance.
    - "Paddle the Canoe." 5 students form a line and paddle while stepping slowly forward.
- Invite the students to listen carefully, practice the moves, and safely in the space.

Ensure that students know they may join any nearby group, so everyone feels welcome.

Step 2: Play the Game

- Students begin by Sweeping the Plankhouse.
- When the teacher calls an action, students quickly form the matching group size, shape, and action.
- Students without a group are "out" for that round only.
- To keep the activity inclusive and movement-based, any student who was "out" comes back in when the teacher returns the call to "Sweep the Plankhouse."

Teacher tips:

- Vary the order and pace of the calls.
- Mix up odd and even numbers for group strategy.
- Allow students who get "out" to help call the next movement.



Step 3: Think and Share

- Gather students to reflect.

Prompts:

  - What helped your group come together quickly?
  - How did you decide who would be which part?
  - What did you notice about working with people close to you versus finding your friends?

Observations:

- This activity is both a movement game and a strategy game. Notice which students quickly choose roles such as the horse or the fire—students who crouch or take supporting roles often stay in the game longer because classmates naturally form groups around them.
- The game promotes cooperation, quick thinking, and flexibility. Many students find success by joining groups near them rather than searching for specific friends.
- Pay attention to emerging leadership behaviors, for example, students who prefer to stand at the front of the canoe. You may notice that effective leaders help make sure others have a place in their group.

