



Parmalat Learn to Play Sample Lesson

The Parmalat Learn to Play Program is a revolutionary way of introducing the sport of softball to children. Activities included in the manuals help foster the involvement of ALL players, including players with high and low skill levels. Activities and lead-up games are patterned after informal playground games and promise an hour of fun and lots of action.

The following lesson has been taken from the Level 1 Parmalat Learn to Play coaching manual and is intended for children between the ages of 5-6. Each manual contains 18 lesson plans and is tailored to specific age and skill levels. Please contact your Provincial/Territorial Softball Association to purchase a copy of these fantastic softball resources.

Sample Lesson:

WARM UP

Activity 1 – BLOB TAG (5 minutes)

Skills: running, dodging, agility, co-operation

Organization: mark out boundaries of playing area desired. One player is chosen to be the chaser (beginning the blob) and the rest of the players scatter.

Activity:

- on 'go', the blob chases and tries to tag the other players
- tagged players join hands with the blob
- when blob becomes 3 players, only the outside players can tag
- when blob becomes 4 players, split it into 2 mini-blobs

- continue until all players are tagged

Activity 2 – DIAMOND ORIENTATION (5 minutes)

Skills: becoming familiar with diamond layout and some softball terms

Organization: put 1 adult in charge of 2 players. Make sure players know the name of their partner, the adult in charge, and the coach.

Activity:

- familiarize players with the diamond layout and terms
- demonstrate as you speak
- start players at home plate, making them familiar with the name **HOME** and inform them that this is where the **BATTER** stands to **HIT**
- let players pretend to hit and run to 1B, run to 2B, run to 3B, run back home

THROWING

Activity 3 – PERT GERT OR PERT BERT (5 minutes)

Skills: proper use of glove for catching, how to wear it, how to use it

Equipment: 1 ball and 1 glove for each player

Organization: each player has a ball and space to work in where they won't bump into others. The objective is to see which "Pert Gert" (girl) or "Pert Bert" (boy) can get under the ball and catch it

Activity:

- each player tosses the ball in the air for a self catch
- coaches emphasize proper use of glove
 - see if players can throw the ball higher each time

- how many consecutive catches can they make?
- have players throw a little away from themselves and run to get underneath the ball
- a progression would be to have 1 adult toss the ball the every 2 players
- If skill level is high enough, players can throw to each other

THROWING/CATCHING

Activity 4 – Powerball

Skill: throwing, catching, co-operation

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Organization: players line up with one adult assigned to every 2 players, an appropriate distance apart

Activity:

- Coach teaches progression for learning proper technique (keep it short) as outlined in skill section.
- players start with no ball then progress to throwing the ball to an adult
- to help make the activity fun, emphasis should be placed on trying to “blast” the adult with the ball

Activity 5 – CHAMP (10 minutes)

Skills: catching, throwing

Equipment: 1 ball for every 2 players

Organization: 1 adult for every 2 players or player can pair up if they are capable of throwing and catching the ball back and forth.

Activity:

- every time a ball is caught by one of the players, they get a letter of the word “Champ”
- partners can compete against other partners to see which pair can spell the word “Champ” the fastest. Letters can be awarded for good throws back to the adult as well
- for variation have players select their own 5 –letter words to spell

BASERUNNING

Activity 6 – GIMME 5 (5 minutes)

Skills: running through 1B, speed development

Equipment: 4 bases

Organization: put bases down 30’ – 40’ from players. Form 4 groups of 3.

Activity:

- players, in turn, take a swing at an imaginary ball, drop the bat and run as fast as they can past their base and give coach a high five. Player returns to base as if running to 2B and upon touching the base yells “Green Light” to the next player to leave
- make sure players are running full speed across the bag and slowing down only after touching it

LEAD UP GAME

Activity 7 – SEMI-CIRCLE SOFTBALL (20 minutes)

Skills: throwing, catching, co-operation, teamwork

Equipment: 1 ball, 4 bases, markers

Organization: 2 teams of 6: 1 team on defense and 1 team on offence.

Activity:

- place a semi-circle of markers approximately at the edge of the infield

- defensive team has 1 player at home and the rest position themselves around the infield at approximately the same distance. Both markers and players can be adjusted according to skill level
- offensive team tries to throw the ball over or through the markers and then runs through 1B
- player gets 1 point if the ball goes through markers or 2 points if ball goes over markers
- no point is awarded if the ball is caught or stopped at the markers
- defense throws the ball home as quickly as possible
- change sides after each offensive player throws