

Activities for instructors by instructors

Compiled for the TRAV Workshop
and annual meeting, Feb. 6th, 2010

At Dream Catchers

Toano, VA

Name: Kerry Gross

Center Name: Simple Changes, Lorton Virginia

Activity Name: Circle Triangle

Riding Skill Level of Student(s): Any TRAV level

Objective of Lesson:

Riders will steer around a triangle 1x in each direction.

Teacher Preparation/Equipment Needed:

have chalk ready

make circle in the ring with maybe 5-6 cones, place 1 cone in center

make a triangle in ring using 3 poles and 3 cones at corners(tape numbers 1, 2, 3 on cones) with 1 cone in center

get sponges and bucket of water ready

give audience instructions

discuss with horse leaders about making shapes feel different to riders (ie try not to "circle" the triangle)

Lesson Content/Procedure:

1. Before mounting: Have riders find a circle and a triangle somewhere around them (on tack, clothing, buildings, cars, etc).
2. Warmup: While walking twice around both directions, draw circles and triangles in the air with arms extended to sides, above head, in front. When riders come to center to have stirrups adjusted and girth checked, have riders draw one triangle and one circle on their horses with chalk. As a group, play number game to stretch and focus on shapes. (For example: We count out loud to 5, and at 2 they need to reach for the circle they drew on their horse, and at 5 they reach for the triangle. We do this a few times, changing the numbers and the actions they do.)
3. Review: Raise your hand if you've done a circle before. Review how to do a circle (look with eyes, turn head and body, shift weight, use rein). Steer around circle with eyes looking over center cone. To prepare for the triangle: Practice posting 3x and jump position to a count of 3 as riders pass the triangle. Practice both directions. Just to get the riders thinking in terms of 3s.

4. New Skill: Steering horse around a triangle. How many turns? Compare to circle. (Move cones of circle to create second triangle in ring)

Have riders count turns as they are led around the triangle.

Next, with no reins and arms out to sides, have riders look over cone and turn head and body at each point of triangle, then look straight ahead over horse's ears for the straight part of the triangle. Remind riders that their bodies can signal the horse to turn as much as the rein.

Have riders use eyes, head, body and rein to turn at each point of triangle.

For more independent riders, ask leaders to do more passive leading.

Practice triangles both directions.

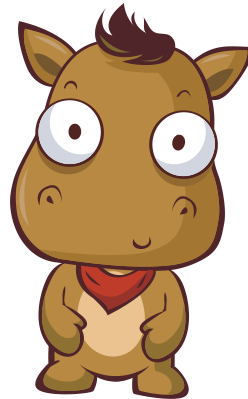
Challenge: Try triangles while in jump position or posting.

Extra challenge: Have rider drop reins while the leader leads horse in empty area of ring and creates a shape. Rider then guesses the shape. Rider can also steer a shape and volunteers have to guess it.

5. Game: Audience participation! In open area in front of observers, rider will make a triangle or a circle.

Observers will use their arms to mimic the shape they see above their heads.

6. Cooldown: Sponge bath horses to clean off chalk while riding cool down. Remind them this is a way to thank their horses for their hard work on a hot day. Have riders tell volunteers one thing they liked doing today and one thing they want to do when they ride again.



Name: Alice Ayles

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Pin the part on the horse

Riding skill level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding skill addressed: Identification of basic parts of a horse

Warm up exercise

Materials needed:

Pictures of a horses' ears, tail, mane, hooves, back, neck and withers,
Scotch tape or other mild tape that can stick to the horse without injury.

Tolerant horse

Containers

Set-up (arena): Pictures of horse parts at different places around the arena. Be creative, they could be in bright colored buckets on barrels or in envelopes posted on the walls or hidden, depending on the level of your student.

Description of activity:

Part 1: On the ground the student simply sticks the picture to the horse in the right place and says the name of the part.

Part 2: While mounted the student will "find" the pictures of the parts of the horse around the arena, name it, then point and/or reach toward that part of their horse (i.e. stretching to reach the ears or reaching down to touch the neck).

Name: Nancy Hawfield

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Where Do I Belong?

Riding skill level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding skill addressed: Reining

Materials needed: 5 big pieces of paper labeled with the names of 5 areas of the riding center (arena, stall, wash stall, feed room, tack room), tape or magnets for hanging the paper, and objects that belong in each of the 5 places (use as many as needed to provide variety for your group). Include reins, hay, bucket, carrots, a toy horse, stirrups, etc.

Set-up (arena): Tape the 5 signs at various points around the arena. Designate a starting point and put all your items in a large container at the start point.

Description of the activity: Have the riders' line up and let the first rider choose an object; tell you what it is, what it's used for and where it belongs. The have him/her find the right sign and lead the group over it. On the way over the kids should rein as independently as possible. Once the item is dropped off everyone returns to the starting point and the next person in line chooses an item.

Adaptations: Use pictures instead of or with printed words on the signs.

Have the rider choose a picture of the object he chose to work on picture/object matching.

Have a small board with pictures of all 5 places on it at the starting point so the rider can show you where the item belongs instead of telling you.

Variations: Play to your riders interests. You can do this with movies and movie characters (save all those Happy Meal toys), sports and sporting equipment, restaurants and food or even Home Depot departments and building supplies.

Name: Deborah Hill

Center Name : Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Which Horse is Which

An activity that not only works on basic reining and control of the horse but also helps the riders become familiar with all the horses in the barn not just the one they ride.

Riding skill level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

However, this activity can be modified to address specific items that are needed to complete the Silver and Gold TRAV Levels. Please see suggested modifications below the activity.

Riding skill addressed:

The student will demonstrate the following skills: Independent reining at the walk while guiding the horse through a variety of patterns or obstacles to include but not limited to the following ideas

- reining horse right/left through a line of tall poles
- two point over four ground poles
- reining the horse around two barrels set up in a figure eight pattern
- maintaining control of the horse by whoaing at the barrel to retrieve the horse's picture

Materials needed:

Pictures of the horses at your center – number can be varied

- Tall poles
- 3 ground poles
- 3 barrels

Set-up (arena):

Place the barrel with the horses pictures at one end of the arena. Set up the specific activities through out the entire arena making sure there is space between each activity for all riders and horses to pass safely.

Description of activity:

Rider will select the picture and identify the horse. After identifying the horse, the rider (or side walker) reads the activity that is under)or on back of) the horse's picture. The rider will then demonstrate the riding skill that is listed on the card .

Modifications:

You can change the pictures to change the level of difficulty. For example: identification of parts of the horse, parts of tack, markings and horse breeds

Name: Kate White

Center Name:

Activity Name: 3 Ring Circus Obstacle Course

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding Skill(s) addressed: ability to follow directions; use correct rein to steer, balance, reach for objects; ability to plan to start and stop in the correct places; balance to get into 2 point position over the jump; ability sustain 2 point or posting trot at either walk or trot.

Materials needed: seven cones, 2 T-poles, 4 ground poles, 12 rings

Set-Up (arena): place 1 cone with T-pole after the letter A; use 5 cones to create serpentine starting at the letter F and ending at the letter M with the 2nd T pole placed in that cone; 2 ground poles placed at the letter C; 2 ground poles crossed on the ground near the quarter line at the letter E for a jump.

Description of Activity: Riders begin to walk at letter K and halt at the first cone with T pole and pick up 3 rings which they place on their body (i.e. Under knees, over their shoulders); riders walk on weaving in and out of the cones and halt at the last cone at letter M and replace the rings on the pole: riders walk on and halt in the middle of the "halt box" and name a circus animal; riders continues down the long side at a walk and "jump" over the crossed ground poles in 2 point position.

Rider basically repeats this pattern but replaces 1 of the 3 rings on top of their head (again weaving through the cones without losing their crown), replacing 3 rings on the T pole at letter M.

Halts in halt box and names another circus animal. Walks on and trots in 2 point on the rail from letter H to letter K. Sits and names another circus animal and halts.

[Note: Can reverse directions with "half circle reverse" after the second cone and repeat pattern in the opposite direction if group is not too large and there is still lesson time.]

Name: Martha Wagner

Center Name: Horses In Service Natural Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name:

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding Skill(s) addressed: Forming good body and leg position.

Materials needed: 2 plastic rings.

Set-Up: 4 Cones, 3 Ground Poles

Description of Activity: Put rings on feet. Toes must be up and heels down in order to hold rings in place. Ride an 'S' curve without dropping the rings. Ride over ground poles without dropping the rings. Do two-point over ground poles with out dropping the rings.



Name: Skip Mollenhaur

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

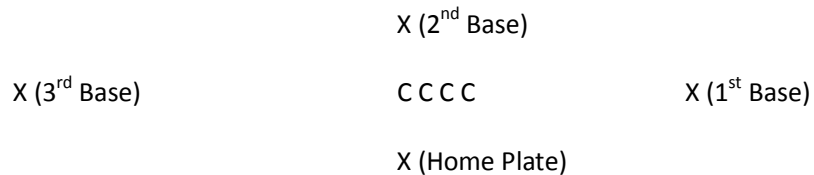
Activity Name: Base Frisbee

Riding Skill Level of student(s): any TRAV Level

Riding Skill(s) addressed: Directing horse to different areas of the arena, any skills that you want the student to work on, hand eye coordination, throwing skills, following directions, balance.

Materials needed: index cards with directions for the student, cards to put on cones with 1st Base, 2nd and 3rd and Home Run (4 cones). Barrels to mark the bases. Frisbee.

Set-Up:



[Note: C's are the cones with base cards on them and home run, they need to be spread out a little more than it looks here.]

Description of Activity: The student rides horse to home plate, throws frisbee and tries to hit one of the cones in the middle. Where the frisbee hits, they ride to the closest cone and see what base they are to go to. They ride to the base. On the barrel (base), there is a card which tells them where they need to go in the arena and what they need to do (ex. From H to K, ride in 2 point, reverse to the inside, and return to home plate). When they return to home plate, they throw again, go to the next base that they come close to, go to the base, pick the card up and go to the area of the arena to execute the skill called for.

If they hit, or come close to the home run cone, they ride all four bases and they get to trot down the long side of the arena or whatever you choose for them to do (I had a prize for a home run). You can have them throw with one hand for 2 throws and then with the other hand.

Name: Debbie Winters

Center Name: Ride With Pride

Activity Name: Number Game

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Beginner Level

Riding Skill(s) addressed: Counting skills, Exercises: simple riding skills (stopping, asking the horse to walk on, making a circle, sitting trot).

Materials needed: Poster board (on it draw a number and a coordinating horse picture: ex. One- Horse has one tail, Two- Horse has two ears, Three- the horse has three socks, Four- the horse has four legs, etc.) Bucket or Hat (with riding tasks written down on index cards: ex. Stand in stirrups for the count of 6, walk 5 steps and stop, trot for 4 counts, touch 3 parts of the horse, etc).

Set-Up: Put pictures around the ring, not in order since the riders are going to have to find the pictures.

Description of Activity: Rider is going to have to find pictures in order of 1 through 6. They can either walk or trot to each picture depending of their ability.

1. Stop their horse at each picture. Talk about the picture, you can have different colors, markings, etc.
 2. After going over the picture, the rider will pick an activity out of the hat/bucket.
 3. Rider does activity and then proceeds on to the next picture.
 4. Game works on attention, problem solving (where is the next picture to go to?), simple riding skills (balance: reaching for the activity card).
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Name: Carol Ivey

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Grooming Hide and Seek

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding Skill(s) addressed: This activity would follow the initial introductory reining lesson. Additionally, this activity would reinforce a previously taught lesson in the use of groom tools.

Materials needed: Grooming box, curry comb, hard brush, soft brush, hoof pick, an assortment of small items (i.e. Soft toys, balls, etc.). Small buckets to hold each item. One large barrel.

Set-Up: Place individual items in separate buckets and place them around the arena. Set up barrel in a central location in the arena.

Description of Activity: After the student has completed a warm up with their horse, review the use of reins to control the horse's movement (i.e. Left & right turns, stops). Ask them to use that skill to locate the items they would use to groom their horse beginning with each item in the order it would be used. Once the item has been located, have them return it to the grooming box, which is located on the barrel in the center of the arena.

Modifications: This activity could be adapted for any number of students with several grooming boxes places around the arena or student could be paired up to form a tag team with one student searching for the next item and the second student using that wait time to explain the use of the tool they had retrieved and explain what the next item should be.

Name: Carol Ivey

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Equine City, USA

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Bronze TRAV

Riding Skill(s) addressed: This activity addresses the Level One riding skills specifically: cueing the horse to walk on and whoa; steering right and left; riding at a walk completely around a circle and completing a 5 step pattern in a given sequence.

Materials needed:

1. Ground poles (at least 8)
2. Barrels (at least 4-- or as many upright poles as you have)
3. 4 upright/freestanding poles
4. 2 portable fence sections
5. Stop Sign
6. Cones (at least 5-8)
7. Large Numbers (1-5)
8. 5 Cards Numbered 1-5)

Set-Up: Set up the arena to appear as a city (see separate drawing) having 5 separate traffic areas. Place the large numbers next to each obstacle clearly visible from across the arena.

Description of Activity: Student are encouraged to consider the arena as a small city with various traffic hazards that they must successfully maneuver their horse through. They draw the five card in any sequence. Once drawn, they go to each traffic area in the order that they drew the numbers and work through that traffic pattern. They should take care to steer their horse in such a way as to avoid "walking on the sidewalk" or "grass".

Modifications: This would work very well with several other riders since they could be encouraged to watch for other 'traffic' and control their horse accordingly. Each student would draw a separate sequence of cards to follow a pattern.

Name: Brittney Anne Fitts

Center Name: Dream Catchers Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Hot Potato

Riding Skill Level of student(s): Silver TRAV

Riding Skill(s) addressed: This activity focuses on using the terms inside and outside which is a silver level skill. However, it can be used with any level as you determine what other riding skills will be practiced. This activity works best when riders have a leader and two side walkers.

Materials needed: A 'hot potato' (ball, stuffed animal or beanbag that can be passed easily from rider to the side walkers) and music.

Set-Up: Minimal, unless you wish to use cones to outline the circle that the riders to ride around.

Description of Activity: Depending on the number of riders and your space everyone rides on the rail or on a twenty meter circle. One rider is 'it'. They have reins but do not use them while they have the 'hot potato'. Music is played. As long as music is playing, everyone is walking. The rider that is 'it' is passing the potato back and forth with their side walkers. Determine two skills that you want the riders to practice (ex. Two point, half circle to change direction). Tell the rider that if the side walker on the outside has the 'hot potato' when the music stops, then everyone will do the first skill (two point while counting to 15) and if the side walker on the inside has the 'hot potato' then everyone will do the other skill when the music stops. However, if the rider has the 'hot potato' when the music stops, then they get to pick what everyone will do. Then the 'hot potato' is given to another student and repeated.



Name: _Melissa Conner

Center Name: Dream Catchers at the Cori Sikich Therapeutic Riding Center

Activity Name: Mounted True or False(Bronze level)

Riding skill level of student(s): Bronze TRAV Silver TRAV Gold TRAV

This activity can be modified for any skill level, and is especially good for 3 or more riders as it keeps them moving the entire time.

Riding skill(s) addressed:

You can address any skill levels with this activity. The easiest ones are reining, 2 pt., whoa, trot, etc. but anything can be added.

This specific activity will address simple right/left reining, 2 pt. over a ground pole, reining for a “whoa,” and a simple trot (about 5 strides).

It also incorporates social development in taking turns and having appropriate interaction with other riders.

Materials needed:

Can be modified as you would like.

For this activity, you will need 5 cones/colored circles to weave, a ground pole, and 1 cone or barrel to mark where to “whoa.” In addition, you will need a mailbox or bucket and barrel to hold your true/false cards. You will need true/false statements on index cards – enough for each rider to have several turns (recommend 4-5 per rider). See attached lists of statements to correspond to bronze, silver and gold level riders.

Set-up (arena):

Mailbox set up at front of the arena near the gate (A) to hold 4-5 index cards per rider with true/false statements on them. Five colored circles/cones set up along left side of arena between K and E on the quarter line about 12 feet apart. Ground pole at H on quarter line and an orange cone about 12 feet past the pole to mark the “whoa.”

Description of activity:

Have riders take turns going to mailbox and choosing a card. If they are able, have them (or their sidewalker) read the statement on the card. They should decide if the statement is true or false. If true, do the “true” pattern (in this case, a short trot from F to B). If false, do the “false” pattern (go to K, weave circles demonstrating right/left reining, 2 pt over ground pole and “whoa” at orange cone). Then return to mailbox and repeat. If student is unsure of the answer, he or she can request assistance from another rider by riding over to them and using appropriate social skills to ask for assistance.

Modifications:

This activity can be easily modified to meet the needs of any skill level rider(s). See attached examples for Silver and Gold true/false statements. Examples of Silver activities are for True – do a posting trot from F to M, and for False – ride a 20 meter circle at a walk first to the right and then to the left (to make it more challenging, you could require the circle to be ridden at a posting walk or in 2 pt at the walk). Examples of Gold level activities are for True – do a posting trot on the correct diagonal once(or twice) around the entire arena or do a 2 pt over ground poles at the trot and for False – do a sitting trot for a 10 meter circle, transition to posting trot down the rail and then up centerline with a whoa at X.

Examples of Bronze Level 1 True/False Statements:

True

- The first grooming tool you use when grooming a horse is a curry comb.
- When leading a horse, you should stand on the left side of the horse
- You should always wear a helmet when riding a horse.
- The “V” on the bottom of the hoof is called the frog
- The front of an English saddle is called the pommel
- When riding, you put your feet in the stirrups
- Three parts of the bridle are the reins, the noseband and the throatlatch
- To ask your horse to whoa using reins, pull your hands straight back towards your pockets at the same time.
- The withers on the horse are located where the mane starts.
- The mane is on the top of the neck of a horse.
- When talking around a horse, you should always speak softly with a gentle voice.
- After riding, it is important to brush your horse under where the saddle was placed to smooth out the hairs on the horse’s back.
- A Western saddle has a horn.

False

- The saddle is placed on the rump of the horse.
- It is correct riding position to ride with your toes pointing down.
- You can use a hoof pick to clean your horse’s tail.
- The girth is the part of the bridle that goes behind the horse’s ears.
- To ask a horse to “whoa,” pull back on just one rein.
- You should always wrap the lead rope around your hand when leading.
- When dismounting, you should lean back in the saddle and bring your legs together over the horse’s neck.
- You should always sit down in the saddle as hard as you can.
- After dismounting, it is okay to drop the reins on the ground and walk away from the horse.
- It is alright to walk up behind a horse’s tail.
- Horse’s feet are called muzzles.
- The throatlatch of the bridle goes around a horse’s nose.
- An English saddle has a horn.

Examples of Gold Level 3 True/False Statements

True:

- The bridle path is the area behind a horse's ears that is regularly clipped to make room for the bridle.
- If you are too close behind a horse when riding, you can make a circle or cut across the ring.
- You should do an emergency dismount if your horse spooks and you think you might fall.
- The correct distance between your horse and another horse is the length of an adult elephant.
- The proper side to lead a horse is the left.
- When a horse is standing square, the front feet are next to each other.
- When mounting, it is important to have the reins in your left hand so that you have contact with the horse's mouth.
- The skirt is a part of an English saddle.
- The hock is located on a horse's hind leg.
- In a working walk, the horse is moving at a faster pace than in a free walk.
- The "outside" is the side next to the rail.
- You should be in 2 pt. position when riding uphill.

False:

- Under the horse's neck should be clipped regularly.
- If you feel out of balance, you should always do an emergency dismount.
- If you are at F and the horse in front of you is at B, you are too close.
- You should release the reins before dismounting independently.
- Horses can eat as much grain as they want until they decide they are full
- Having contact with the horse's mouth means the reins are as short as they can be.
- In a sitting trot, it is okay if you bounce up and down in the saddle.
- When changing directions, you should always turn towards the rail.
- The correct diagonal is when the horse's inside foreleg moves forward.
- The "inside" leg is always your right leg.

Examples of Silver Level 2 True/False Statements:

True:

- ◆ You should attach the girth on the right side first when tacking
- ◆ When bridling a horse, you should gently place the bit in the horse's mouth before putting the headstall over the ears
- ◆ The curry comb should be used in a circular motion on the body of the horse.
- ◆ If a horse pins its ears back, he may be upset or angry.
- ◆ You should take both feet out of the stirrups before dismounting.
- ◆ The poll of the horse is located just behind the horse's ears.
- ◆ Reins should always be held at equal length from the horse's mouth with one in each hand.
- ◆ The girth should always be checked both before and just after mounting a horse.
- ◆ To lengthen your horse's stride at the walk, squeeze your legs gently but firmly on his sides.
- ◆ Your "inside" rein is the one closest to the middle of the arena.
- ◆ When walking over ground poles, you should do a 2 point position to stay off of your horse's back.

False:

- ◆ When cleaning tack, it is okay to use just water.
- ◆ When picking a horse's hooves, you should always use an upward motion.
- ◆ It is okay if your right foot bumps into your horse's rump when you are mounting.
- ◆ When mounting from the left, you should always hold your reins in your right hand.
- ◆ Posting should be in a 3 beat rhythm.
- ◆ The elastic side of a girth should be on the right side of the horse.
- ◆ A serpentine is when you ride your horse straight down the middle of the arena.
- ◆ The rubber band side of a safety stirrup should always be on the inside of your foot (next to the horse).
- ◆ The barrel of the horse is the part of the horse just below the neck.
- ◆ After riding on a hot day, you don't need to sponge off your horse's back where the saddle was as long as you sponge off under the tail.
The billets are the part of the bridle that go under a horse's forelock.

Name: Kerry Gross

Center Name: Simple Changes, Lorton, VA

Activity Name: Candy Land

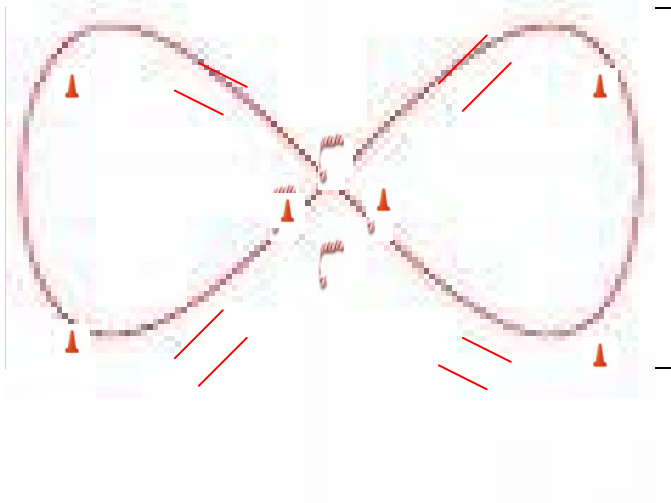
This is easily adapted to a variety of skill levels.

The main skill addressed is ring awareness, specifically awareness of other riders. But clearly steering can also be addressed.

Objective of Lesson:

Rider will acknowledge another rider in the ring twice during the lesson by stopping and verbally asking that rider to pass through “Candy Land” first.

Teacher Preparation/Equipment Needed: eight ground poles, four cones placed in the corners of the ring, four cones holding plastic candy canes set in cones forming a square in the center,



Lesson Content/Procedure:

1. **Warmup:** Riders will warmup at walk with one rider going the opposite way on the inside track so they pass during warmups. (ask riders why horses shouldn't get too close together) Riders will say hello to each other as they pass practicing each other's names.
2. **Review of skills:** Riders will review steering by doing circles at A,C,B,E. (If you're figure 8 takes the whole ring, this space should be open). You could alternately steer circles around the cones. To focus on the awareness of other riders, riders should check as they finish each circle that there is not another horse in the way.
3. **New activity:** (We generally walk the pattern once all together to review doing a figure eight, then we set up two riders on a "collision" path heading toward the center of the figure eight and whoa to explain how one riders needs to stop to allow another to go through the middle.)Riders will make a figure 8 by crossing through the middle on a diagonal making sure to go all the way to track behind the cones on the ends of the figure eight. In the center they will go through a square created by plastic candy canes stuck in cones. Only one horse can go through Candy Land at a time. They will have to whoa if they think they will cross the center at the same time as another rider. When they whoa, they should say tell the other rider to go ahead being sure to use the other rider's name.
4. **Challenge:** To make the figure eight more difficult, riders may trot through Candy Land.

I really like this lesson plan for getting the riders not only to interact with each other, but also to be more aware of other horses in the ring. One thing that is helpful is to let the leaders know that they should ~~adjust~~ the horses speed so the riders meet at Candy Land at the same time as often as possible!

Extra game: My riders love a game which is a version of "touch it" that we call "kiss it." The instructor calls out objects in the ring that the riders have to get their horses to kiss (jump standard, barrel, letter, etc). It's great precision steering practice! And you can always have the leaders help a little if necessary to get the horses to gently touch something with its nose.

