

# Let's Do Nothing! Non-Activity Kit

## Dear Bookseller or Librarian,

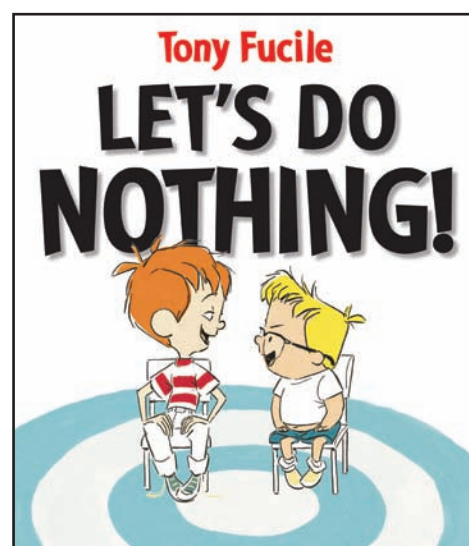
Frankie and Sal, the heroes of the picture book *Let's Do Nothing!*, prove that it is impossible to do nothing. Even when they are sitting as still as a statue or as tranquil as a tree in the forest, their minds are working, their eyes are blinking, and their chests are rising and falling with their breath.

But Frankie and Sal also prove that you *can* take a break from doing something. Taking a few minutes of quiet in between all of your scheduled activities to relax, think, imagine, or daydream rejuvenates you for the next round of doing something.

What else can kids learn from Frankie and Sal? Maybe they can learn how to keep from going crazy when asked to "sit still and keep quiet." What games can they play in their mind to help those minutes tick by?

We hope you enjoy the following games and ideas for doing nothing with young readers.

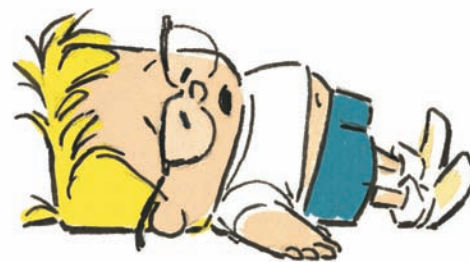
Yours in nothingness,  
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# HOW TO HOST A *LET'S DO NOTHING!* EVENT

How in the world do you plan an event for young readers around the theme of *nothing*? Kids have to do *something* for it to be an event. We agree! Here are a few ideas that challenge kids to do nothing, or at least *seem* like they are doing nothing.

## Promotion

Feel free to use the poster on the next page to invite young readers to your “Nothing Challenge.”

## Read Aloud

Begin your event by reading *Let's Do Nothing!* aloud to the gathered kids. You might ask them before you begin if they think it is possible to do nothing, and see what ideas they have.

After the reading, ask the kids the same question. You might also ask them if there is anything good about taking a break from doing something.

## Do Nothing Activities

- Nothing Challenges (group activities)
- Ways to Do Nothing (solo activities)
- “Nothings” to Make (group activities)
- The Game of Nothing (2 players)



# THE NOTHING CHALLENGE

Learn about  
the power of nothing  
from a reading of the  
new children's book

**LET'S DO  
NOTHING!**

Then join us for games  
that will test your ability  
to do nothing at all!

Come practice staring,  
stillness, balance, and the  
containment of giggling!

Prizes of nothingness  
will be awarded!



Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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# NOTHING CHALLENGES!



## The Balance Challenge

Introduce the activity by reminding the kids that in one of Frankie and Sal's attempts to do nothing, they pretend to be trees. Explain that in yoga, which is a practice that relaxes the mind and body, there is a balancing pose called the tree. Explain that this activity will challenge them to be as still and quiet as trees.

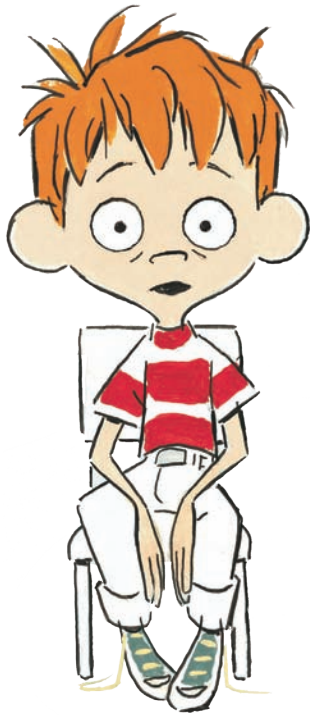
- Have kids put their feet flat on the floor.
- Tell them to feel both the front of their feet and the back of their feet solid on the floor.
- Ask them to lean a little on their right foot, with their left foot very loosely on the floor.
- Have them pick a spot on the wall and stare at it.
- Ask them to lift their left foot and put the sole of that foot on the inside of their right calf.
- Explain that since they are a tree, with many branches, their arms can be in any position to help them balance.
- Have them practice a little bit on both sides. Note that some people balance better on their right and some people on their left.
- Explain that whoever can hold the pose the longest gets a prize.
- Say, "Get ready. One, two, three, go!"
- See who can hold the tree pose the longest.
- Do this exercise several times and give a prize to each winner.
- You may want to award a prize for "trees with the most wind in their branches" to kids who really struggle with it.

## The Staring Challenge

- Set up chairs facing each other.
- Divide kids into pairs and seat them in the chairs.
- Explain that on your signal, the kids will stare into the eyes of the person across from them and that the winner will be the one in each pair who is able to resist blinking or looking away.
- If the results are disputed, suggest that the kids try it again, or have them determine the winner from two out of three tries.
- Give each winner a prize.



# MORE NOTHING CHALLENGES!



## The “Don’t Make Me Laugh” Challenge

- Set up two chairs facing each other.
- Have two kids sit in the chairs.
- Instruct kid number one to keep from laughing while kid number two tries everything he or she can to make number one laugh. Whatever kid number two does, kid number one must stay seated and not make any noise for as long as he or she can.
- Give them a signal to go, and time them using a stopwatch.
- After the first turn, have the kids switch roles and go again.
- The kid who was able to *not* laugh the longest is the winner.
- Give the winner a prize.

## The Statue Challenge

This is a game to play if you have a big room or can be outside.

Remind the kids that in another of Frankie and Sal’s attempts at doing nothing, they pretend to be statues.

Explain that this activity will challenge them to quickly go from doing something (walking) to becoming still with the Power of Nothing.

- Choose a leader to stand at one end of the space.
- Line up the rest of the kids on the opposite end of the space.
- Have the leader turn his or her back on the rest of the kids.
- Tell the kids that, on your signal, they must walk quickly (no running) toward the leader and try to tag him or her.
- Explain that the leader can turn around at random times and that when that happens, the rest of the kids must freeze and stand like statues.
- Note that any kid the leader sees moving will be out of the game.
- Explain that the winner will be the first kid to tag the leader, or the last player remaining.
- Choose a kid who lost early on to be the next leader.



# WAYS TO DO NOTHING

How many times have you been told to “sit still and be quiet”? Here are some games to play in your head that allow you to do *something* when you are told to do *nothing*.

- Pretend you are reading a favorite book, and try to remember how the story begins and what happens next. Remember as much of the story as you can.
- Play a series of imagination games. For example, imagine you are a tall building and a giant gorilla climbs up the side of you. What would you say to him?
- Say the alphabet backwards in your head, or look around the room and find something that begins with every letter of the alphabet.
- Pretend you are walking somewhere that you often walk in real life. Remember every detail you can, from cracks in the sidewalks to colors of houses.



## Prizes

Consider giving prizes that contain “nothing,” such as blank books, drawing pads, water bottles, cups, or wristbands.

# “NOTHINGS” TO MAKE

## The Box of Nothing

When you find a little nothing, how do you keep it from getting away? You could keep it in a box.

Cut a piece of paper into a square and follow any of the many origami box instructions online or in books to turn it into a box of nothing. (One set of instructions, with video, can be found at [www.origami-fun.com/origami-box.html](http://www.origami-fun.com/origami-box.html).)

You may find yourself concentrating so hard on folding the paper that you will think of *nothing* else.

## Make a blank book or sketchpad

- Take three or four sheets of 8 ½ x 11 paper and trim them in half.
- Stack the half-sheets together and fold them like a book.
- Staple twice on the spine. Note that print shops have special staplers that make this assembly easy.

# THE GAME OF NOTHING

## Instructions

The object of the Game of Nothing is to get through the day from morning to night as slowly as possible, by taking lots of breaks to do nothing. The player who makes it from morning to night *last* wins.

### SETTING UP THE GAME

- Attach the game sheets side to side with tape.
- Cut out the ten game cards and place them word-side down on the game sheet.
- Select game pieces from another board game, or use coins, such as a penny and a dime.
- Place the game pieces on the first space, which is labeled MORNING.

## Playing the Game

- Have each player take a turn picking a card. The card will tell the player how many spaces to move.
- If a card tells the player to go back a space and he or she cannot, the player must stay in his or her current space.
- When the card pile is depleted, shuffle the used cards and begin again.
- When a player nears the end of the spaces, he or she can land on NIGHT only if he or she draws a card that would enable the player to land *exactly* on the NIGHT space. If the card would make the player move beyond the Night space, he or she must stay on his or her current space.



You've played every sport ever invented.

**MOVE FORWARD 3 SPACES**

You've baked enough cookies  
to feed a small country.

**MOVE FORWARD 2 SPACES**

You've played every board game  
you could find.

**MOVE FORWARD 1 SPACE**

You've read every comic book ever written.

**MOVE FORWARD 1 SPACE**

You've painted more pictures in a day  
than Van Gogh did in a lifetime.

**MOVE FORWARD 1 SPACE**

You pretend you are a statue.

**DO NOT MOVE**

You pretend you are a tree in a quiet grove.

**GO BACK 1 SPACE**

You pretend you are a tall building  
sitting still for years.

**GO BACK 2 SPACES**

You sit down and take a deep breath.

**DO NOT MOVE**

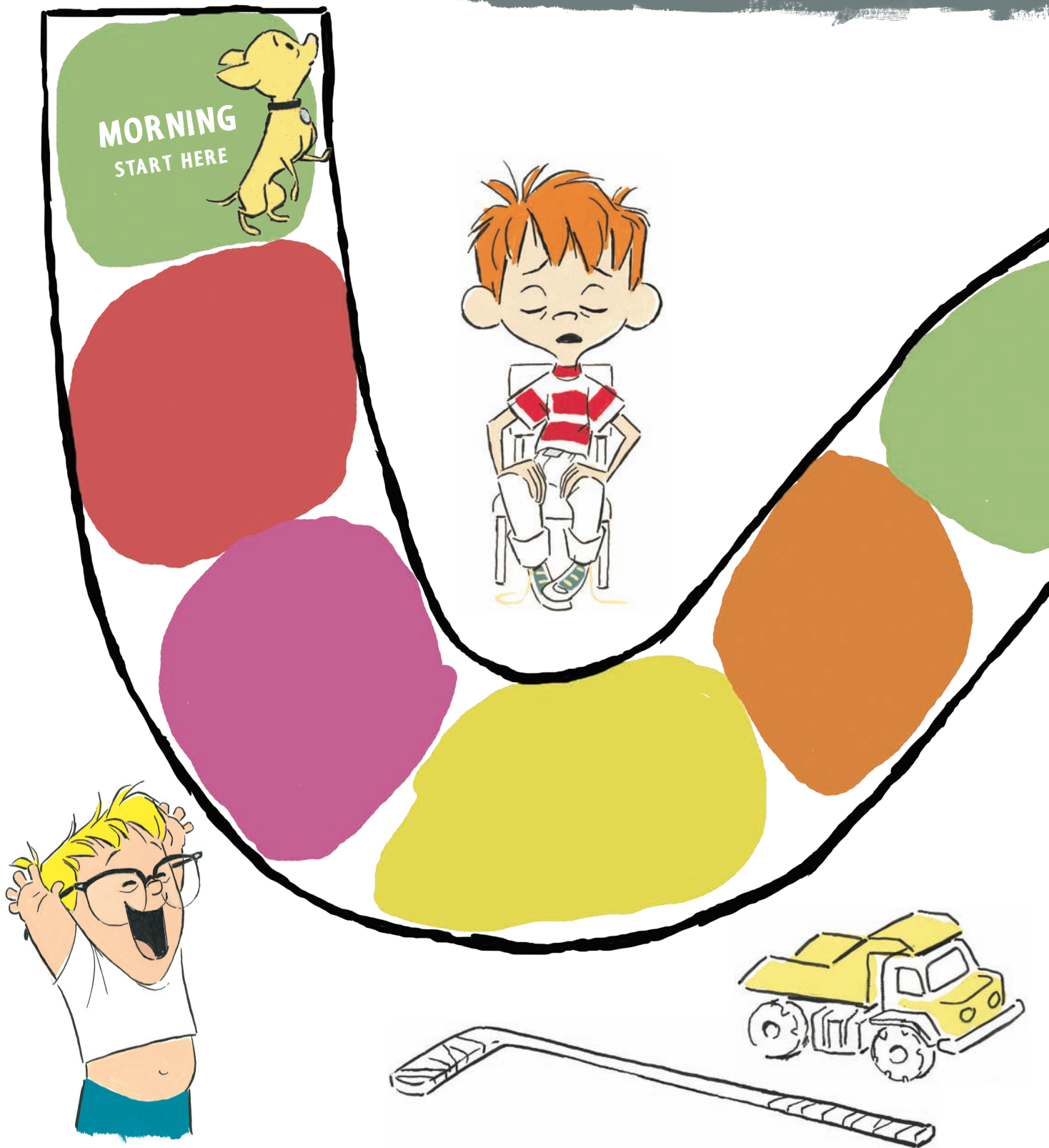
You remember page by page what  
happened in your favorite book.

**GO BACK 1 SPACE**



How slowly and calmly can you make it from morning to night?

# THE GAME



FOLD OR CUT HERE AND TAPE TO THE NEXT PAGE

# OF NOTHING

