

## Frequently Asked Questions about organizing large group Bubble Events.

### How would I set up a bubble activity for a children's camp, retreat, or large group gathering?

Including 5 minutes of instructions, about 15-20 children can participate in a 20-minute segment when 10 to 12" bubble stations" are set up. (A bubble station consists of a pan of bubble solution and a wand or hoop.)

1. Here is a model that has worked at camps of 100 to 150 students from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade. This model incorporates 4 to 6 wands and pans, 4 to 6 hoops and pans, and a large garland set up in the middle.

The garland is the "bonus" activity...some kids may like doing it but usually not for long. Adult sponsors (possibly sharing the activity with a child) are a good source for using the garland to make LOTS of bubbles for kids to chase.

2. With the wind at your back, allow about 3 feet side-to-side between each pan and a little more length between the pans and a garland pan - if a garland is being used in the middle. (Highly recommended)

3. **Critical!** Place a rope or some type of marker about 15 to 20 feet "downwind" from the buckets. This "no man's land" where "bubble breakers" are not allowed to enter. They have to wait until bubbles cross the line before they break the bubbles. Any bubble that crosses the line is fair game and the challenge is to break ALL the bubbles that come across the line. (Establishing this line allows kids making bubbles to create large bubbles before they are broken. Assess the conditions as to how far from the pans to set the boundary...further back if the bubbles are large and traveling far and the wind is just right, closer if bubbles are breaking on their own before they reach the line)

4. Use some method to divide the participants into groups of 15 to 20 kids.

5. Allow about 20 minutes per group for bubble activities.

6. **Basic Instructions:** Gather the group of 15 to 20 at the beginning of each bubble session for 5 minutes of instruction.

#### Group Instructions:

1. Dip the tips of the wand in the pan of solution. (Don't stir!)
2. Lift the wands, holding the tips together until the rope is out of the solution and allow it to drain for about 5 seconds.
3. Raise the wands overhead (with the ends of the wand still together) and slowly separate the wands to allow the wind to make a bubble. If there is no

- wind, move slowly backward - fast enough for a bubble to form in the triangle created by the rope.
4. When the bubble pops, being careful to not allow the rope to touch the ground, re-dip the rope in the solution and try again. (Note! Don't stir...just dip) Dirt and debris in the solution is not conducive to good bubbles and stirring creates small bubbles in the pan which hinder good bubble making.
  5. To use a hoop, simply dip it in the solution, hold it up and let the wind form the bubble, or wave it gently around to create long bubbles. Tipping the wand sideways cuts off one bubble from the next and you then can make a second, third, etc.
  6. When it's your turn to break bubbles, you have to remain behind the rope or the line that has been established.

6. Based on the number and types of bubble stations (all wands or a mixture of wands and hoops), assign  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the group to be "bubble makers" and the other  $\frac{1}{2}$  to be "bubble chasers." Or  $\frac{1}{3}$  to use the wands,  $\frac{1}{3}$  to use hoops, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  to chase bubbles.

7. Depending on the time you have for each group and number of stations set up, allow about 5 minutes for kids to make bubbles with the wands or hoops, then rotate the group. The bubble chasers take over making bubbles with the wands, the kids that were making bubbles with the wand then move to making bubbles with the hoops, and the kids that were making bubbles with the hoops become the "bubble chasers."

### **Is there a correct order for mixing bubble solution?**

Yes. Measure out the correct amount of blue Dawn Ultra dishwashing liquid into a bowl. With gentle stirring, begin adding the Magic Bubble Powder to the Dawn, breaking up any lumps that form, and stir until it is dissolved into a smooth "slurry." In a separate container, measure out 1 gallon of water and with stirring, add the mixed "slurry" being careful to not create a lot of "froth." (The right stirring speed creates a gentle "vortex" in the middle of the solution.)

### **What is the best way to mix quantities of bubble solution?**

For major events, it may be helpful to mix 4 gallons of bubble solution at a time. A clean 5 gallon bucket with lid works well for this. (Available at Lowes or Home Depot)

To mix 4 gallons, measure out 36 oz. of blue Dawn Ultra into some type of clean mixing bowl. While stirring, either by hand, or using an electric drill at slow speed with a paint stirring attachment, stir in the correct amount of Magic Bubble Powder (a 4 gallon powder pack or a 3 gallon pack + a one gallon pack), being sure to break up any lumps that may form. Don't stir radically enough to create bubbles in this "slurry" - use enough speed to create a mild "vortex". About two to three minutes of mixing generally creates a smooth mixture.

Next, measuring 4 gallons of water into the bucket and while stirring, add the slurry to the water. Again, creating a mild vortex is about the right speed.

Tap water, unless it is unusually hard or chemically infused, will work well. If the water source is questionable, I would recommend purchasing drinking water in gallon containers. This gives you good water AND a storage container for the bubble solution. (It is not recommended to use distilled water)

Most five-gallon bucket lids are not leak proof, so if storage is intended, I highly recommend transferring the mixed solution into gallon containers.

Newly mixed bubble solution needs to “brew” or “hydrate” overnight. Mix your solutions at least 8 hours before use.

### **How do I store used bubble solution?**

Store used solution in separate containers from unused solution. Use a small sink drain strainer in a funnel or some type of strainer to remove any large debris from the solution after being used. Over time, contaminants will jeopardize the quality of the solution.

A funnel will help in refilling small mouth storage containers from the pans.

Avoid keeping bubble solution in a hot environment such as a hot vehicle for long periods of time. On hot days, keep your solution in the shade and away from hot asphalt or concrete.

### **How much bubble solution will I need?**

A tri-string wand under constant use for an hour will use about 1 gallon of bubble solution. A garland, used for the same length of time will use about 1.5 gallons.

### **Can I mix my solution in a five gallon water cooler?**

No. Not recommended. The bubble powder is non-toxic, biodegradable and not harmful to humans or animals in small quantities and leaves no more residue than normal dishwasher soap. **However**, it is too easy for a child to mistake a cooler full of bubble solution as potable water, and ingest enough to make them ill. (It’s soap based!)

### **What size of pans do I need for the bubble solution?**

We’ve found plastic dishpans at Walmart that are about 12” X 10” X 7” work quite well and handle the abuse they sometimes take. Less expensive pans like those purchased at a Dollar Tree (\$1) or Dollar Store would also work, but are prone to cracking if not handled carefully. (And they won’t be!)

You want to use a pan that does not tip easily and can hold about 1 or 2 quarts of liquid.

### **How should I care for the wands after use?**

A simple quick rinse with water and hanging them out to dry over a fence, tree limb or railing will keep the wands in good condition. They can be stored by simply wrapping the wet rope around the two sticks and allowed to drip dry, but their condition will deteriorate over time.

### **What size of wands do I need to purchase?**

**18" wands** - Work well for kindergarteners and smaller children.

**36" wands** - Allow two things to happen. 1) You don't have to bend over as far to load the solution onto the rope. 2) You are able to start the bubbles out higher which create longer bubbles since gravity plays a role in how long a bubble lasts.

**48" Wands** - Make larger bubbles and allow you the added height.

**Hoops** - Work well for children as young as 2 years old and are enjoyed by adults as well. Good "medium size" bubble maker.

**Garlands** – Work well in windy conditions and make LOTS of bubbles. **Highly** recommended for any major bubble event.

4 ft Garland – It has 6 loops on 36" sticks and is easier for young children to handle.

5 ft. Garland - It has 8 loops and makes more bubbles than the 4 ft. garland and still manageable by single person.

7 ft. Garland – It has 10 loops and is best used by older children and adults. It can be operated by **two** smaller children. (with supervision) it makes lots and lots of bubbles.

Garlands have a tendency for the loops to get twisted if not used correctly and may require some adult intervention to keep them working as designed.