Think in Systems

Mission: the thief locked the mascot back in the box, with the password hidden inside a broken machine. Build human machines, pass the power, fix the jumbled machine on the whiteboard, whisper the password, open the box, free the mascot. Character trait today: **Self-Management**.

1 · The Human Machine (5–16 min) — each kid is one part, change one part changes all

Build Chain or circle. Each kid invents one small repeating motion + sound (pump "chh", stomp "boom", gear "tick", lever "clank", piston "pop", crank "whirr"). Start one part at a time until the whole machine runs together.

Change Speed one up · freeze one · swap two. Each time say it out loud: "one part changed, the whole machine changed."

Differ TK–2: simple motions, coach leads, big funny changes. 3–8: ask "what will happen if we change this part?" and predict before changing.

2 · Pass the Power (16–31 min) — the circle is a circuit, keep your part smooth

Send Hold hands in a circle; a squeeze passes around like a current. The moment you feel it, pass it on. Time the loop, then try to beat your time.

Twist Switch = one kid can reverse the direction. Shortcut = two kids across the circle pass straight to each other. One change reroutes the whole current.

Differ TK–2: just pass the squeeze and cheer the time. 3–8: add switches/shortcuts and discuss how one change alters the whole loop.

3 · Fix the Machine (31–45 min) — order the steps, first letters spell the password

FLOW F "Fill the tank with water" · L "Let the water spin the wheel" · O "Open the gate" · W "Water pours out." Order: Fill → Let → Open → Water.

STEP S "Switch on the power" · T "Turn the first gear" · E "Each gear turns the next" · P "Parts all move together." Order: Switch → Turn → Each → Parts.

Run it Write the steps scrambled. Teams put them in the order they must happen, then read the first letters. First team to whisper the password opens the box. TK–2: 3 steps, coach helps. 3–8: 4 steps, explain the cause and effect.

4 · Finale + Wristband (45–60 min)

Open Winning team announces the password to the room, coach turns the key, mascot lifts out, big cheer. Optional "thief's note" inside: "You put my machine back together. I surrender!"

Award the **Self-Management** trait wristband to detectives who kept their part of the system steady and stayed in control.

Detective's Oath (say together, magnifiers up): I am a detective. / My brain is my best tool. / I don't guess, I reason. / I follow the clues to the truth.