Trainer Tip: How to Keep Peace When Separating Friends

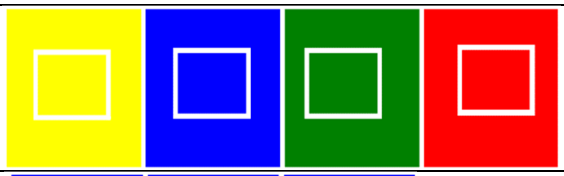
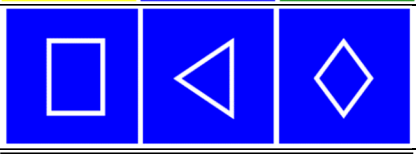
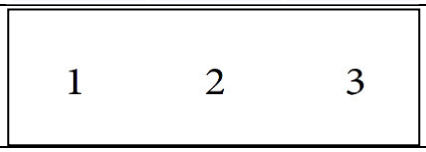
Issue

Trainers typically use techniques such as assigned seating, distance, etc. to keep friendly and acquainted students focused on the course.

This usually works unless there are absences or the need for spontaneous regrouping.

Solution

I created some grouping squares that can split a group multiple ways using:

Color	
Shape	
Numbers	

A square is placed with each student's materials for use throughout the day, course, etc.

I've used them in many different ways in the classroom as well as for meeting facilitation both here in the US and in Germany. They even worked for first graders, although I added a piece of yarn so they could wear it.

Results

I created a job aid for myself to quickly "regroup" when circumstances required it or for less convenient numbers. The job aid shows how to split up a group two ways:

Number in a group		Number of groups	
Groups of…		Number of Groups	
2	Numbers	2	Odd / Even
	Shapes THEN 1 to 3 / 4 to 6		Cool colors / Warm colors
	Shapes THEN Cool colors / Warm colors		□ / ○ THEN split △
	Shapes THEN Odd / Even		1 to 3 / 4 to 6
	Red & Blue / Green & Yellow THEN Shape	3	One of each shape per group
3	Colors		1 to 2 / 3 to 4 / 5 to 6
	Shapes THEN Put blues together		One of each color per group
	Odd / Even THEN Cool colors / Warm colors	4	Colors
	1 to 3 / 4 to 6 THEN all three numbers per group		Shapes THEN Put blues together
			Odd / Even THEN Cool colors / Warm colors
			1 to 3 / 4 to 6 THEN all three numbers per group

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Group of 20

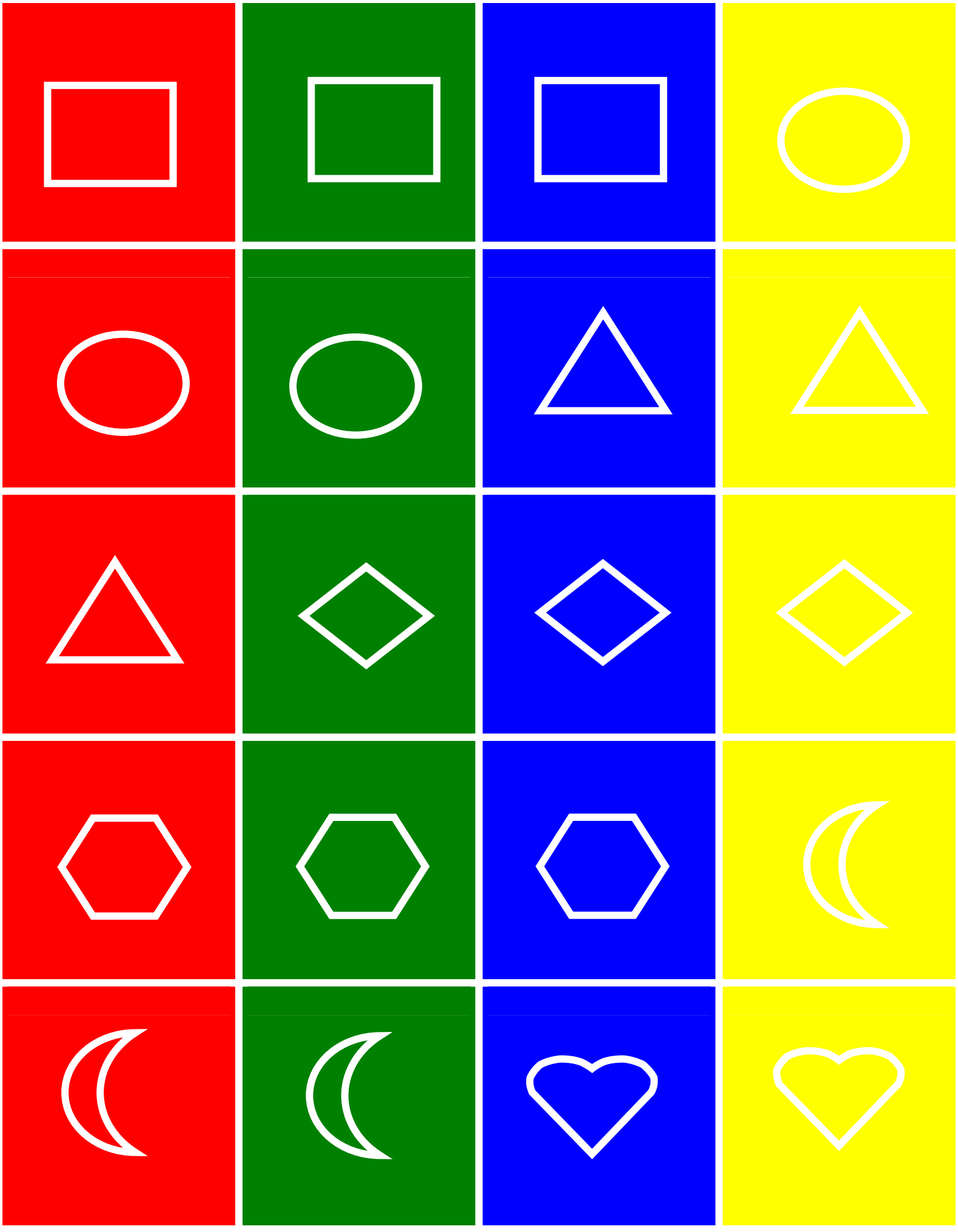
Number of Groups

2	Odd / Even
	Cool colors / Warm colors
4	One of each number per group
	Colors
5	One of each color per group
	Numbers
7*	Shapes
10	One of each color per group **THEN** Cool colors / Warm colors
	Cool colors / Warm colors **THEN** Numbers
	Numbers **THEN** Cool colors / Warm colors

Groups of…

2	Numbers **THEN** Cool colors / Warm colors
	Cool colors / Warm colors **THEN** Numbers
	One of each color per group **THEN** Cool colors / Warm colors
3*	Shapes
4	One of each color per group
	Numbers
5	One of each number per group
	Colors
10	Odd / Even
	Cool colors / Warm colors

*Not even division. One group has 2 people.



1	4	2	5
2	3	1	4
3	2	4	1
4	5	3	2
5	1	5	3