Release the Prisoners - Maths Warm-up Game

Mathematical Focus

➔ Probability
➔ Subtraction

Age Range

➔ 1-6

Introduction

Students find the concept of releasing prisoners highly entertaining and motivating. This game explores dice difference probabilities which can lead to rich discussions and investigations.

Materials
➔ Counters (12 e.g. 6 red and 6 blue)
➔ 2x6 sided dice per pair
➔ A simple board or sheet of paper with the numbers 0-5

Organisation
➔ Partners
➔ Give each student 6 counters each - these will be the "prisoners"
➔ Each pair needs to draw a game mat (see example). This will be the "jail" which consists of 6 different "cells."
Note: make sure each cell is large enough to fit a counter on top of it.

0	1	2	3	4	5

Objective: Be the first player to release all of their prisoners.

Instructions

1. Players place their 6 prisoners (counters) on the numbers. They can choose any numbers and any amounts of prisoners on each number.
2. All 12 counters need to be placed on the board. For example, Player A may have 2 prisoners on cell 3, 2 on cell 4 and another 2 on cell 5. Player B may place all of their prisoners on cell 0.
3. Player A rolls the dice and finds the difference between the two numbers. If they have prisoners on that number, they may release one prisoner from that cell.
4. The first player to release all of their prisoners wins the game.

Variations
➔ Use 2x12 sided dice with jail cells ranging from 0-11.