

**Activity: 3 Foot, 6 Foot, 9 Foot****Overview**

3 Foot, 6 Foot, 9 Foot is an excellent activity for demonstrating how an individual's actions can affect everyone in the group. In this activity, your group secretly chooses people to remain 3 feet, 6 feet, and 9 feet from them at all times. Watch what happens when everyone in the group tries to keep their distances simultaneously. When one person moves, everyone in the group must adjust. *3 Foot, 6 Foot, 9 Foot* stimulates great conversation and an awareness of how the challenges presented in this game unfold everyday.

Set Up**Props**

None

Set Up

Have your group form a circle and explain the rules.

Instructions

Ask your group to start by secretly identifying a person in the group and move to a position that is 9 feet from him or her. Allow time for your group to adjust positions.

Next, ask your group to secretly pick a second person. While remaining 9 feet from the first person, ask them to move to a position that is 6 feet from the second person.

Finally, while keeping the first two distances, ask everyone to pick a third person in the group and move that person to a position that is 3 feet from the third person.

Allowing the group to struggle and walk around in circles will prompt excellent topics for conversation.

Round 1: Explain to your group that they should do everything in secret, trying not to let their chosen people know who they are.

Round 2: Ask your group to identify themselves to their 3, 6, and 9 foot people. Now by talking to their 3, 6, and 9 foot people, see if they can successfully move into the final configuration. At the end of this activity, ask the group how the ability to talk changed the dynamic.

Sample Story Line

"This is a controlled experiment in cause and effect. Please remain calm, and please don't talk while this ultra scientific experiment is under way. I thank you in advance for your cooperation in this study. First, secretly choose someone in the circle without letting them know who he or she is. When I say 'go,' I want you to position yourself 9 feet from this person. 'Go.'"

The group will move around until they meet this first objective.

"Now that you have positioned yourself 9 feet from the person you chose, I want you to identify a second person, without letting them know who they are. When I say 'go,' you must remain 9 feet from your first person and position yourself 6 feet from your second person. 'Go.'"

This time the group will take a bit of time to get set in their position.

"Now identify a third person, and when I say 'go,' position yourself 3 feet away from this person. Remember, you must remain 9 feet from the first person, 6 feet from the second, and now 3 feet from your third. 'Go.'"

Let them work through this problem and notice what happens when everyone's actions affect everyone else.

Activity: 3 Foot, 6 Foot, 9 Foot

"Now identify yourself to your three chosen people. Try to maneuver into the final position while communicating with each person. 'Go.'"

Safety

Be sure to pick a nice open space where participants are free to move around. This is a slow-moving activity, so when played with common sense there is little risk involved.

Variations

Ask group members to secretly chose someone they know well, or better than others, in the group. Next, have them secretly identify someone they don't know as well. When you say "go," participants must keep the person they know between themselves and the person they don't know for one minute. As a reflection for this variation, you can discuss how people tend to keep what they know and what is comfortable to them between the things or people they are unfamiliar with. Discuss how this is beneficial and/or limiting in life.

Reflection

Commonly, *3 Foot, 6 Foot, 9 Foot* elicits dialogue in topic areas such as effective communication, problem solving, and strategy. Consider questions such as:

- Discover:** "How did you feel as you tried to keep distances between all three of the people you chose? What caused this feeling?"

Connect: "Where else do you feel this dynamic in your life?"

Create: "Knowing that you may feel like this in other situations, what will you do differently when they arise?"
- Discover:** "What happened to you as you tried to position yourself with your 9 foot person? 9 foot & 6 foot person? 9 foot, 6 foot, & 3 foot person?"

Connect: "What does this exercise demonstrate about how groups function?"

Create: "What will you do or say next time you observe this type of dynamic in a group setting?"
- Discover:** "When you were able to talk in the second round, what changed for you? What changed for the group?"

Connect: "How can we as a group, and you as a group member, improve the way we collectively communicate?"

Create: "What is one point you are taking away from this event? How will you communicate it to others in your life?"

Activity: **Alphabet Soup**

Overview

Alphabet Soup is a fast-paced activity that can be played with groups of any size. It is quick and easy to explain and provides an opportunity for your group to move and be creative. *Alphabet Soup* works great indoors or outdoors and can spark wonderful conversation.

Set Up

Props

Stopwatch or timepiece to keep track of your group's accomplishments

Set Up

To begin, have your group stand in a circle while you give instructions.

Instructions

This is a timed event. Begin by asking participants to secretly choose a letter from A to J. Allow a short amount of time for them to choose.

Have the participants arrange themselves into small groups of like letters. The A's with the A's, B's with the B's and so on. When you yell "go," start the timer.

Next, ask the groups to arrange themselves alphabetical in a line from A to J. Beginning with J and ending with A, have participants raise their hands and call out their group's letter. Like the "wave" at a football game, each group calls out their letter in turn. Stop time when the "A" group has finished. Groups should skip over letters that that nobody has chosen and are not represented.

Keep rounds fast, moving quickly between them. As soon as your group finishes a round, communicate their time and ask if they feel they could do it faster. Then, move right into having them secretly pick a new letter,

leaving no time for strategy. The task is for your group to start working together and communicating on a level other than speech.

Groups should and will become creative. They may decide that when secretly choosing a letter, if they all choose the same one, they could greatly reduce their time. Don't give anything away; allow your group to come up with their own solutions.

Sample Story Line

"Welcome ladies and gentlemen to the annual, bi-annual, and one-time-only millennium alphabet event, the prestigious Alphabet Challenge. Your challenge is to unseat the defending champions, take the crown, the honor, and the glory. As you warm up, keep these things in mind:"

"Phase one: Each one of you must secretly think of a letter between A and J."

"Phase two: When I yell "go," time starts, and you must race to form groups of like letters. For example, all of the A's join with other A's, B's with B's, and so on. You may communicate your secret letter any way you wish, but do it fast."

"Phase three: Your groups must form lines in alphabetical order as quickly as possible. To signify completion and stop the timer, each group, beginning with J and ending with A, must raise their hands together and call out their letter. Think of it like 'the wave' at a football game."

"Don't lose precious time by worrying about letters that are not represented. Just skip them. Remember that there are several rounds of play, so don't get discouraged if you're slow at first. You are elite athletes who are also very creative. Use your creativity to improve your time."

Activity: **Alphabet Soup**

Safety

Ask participants to take care of one another and be aware when quickly forming groups.

Variations

To create an additional challenge, tell the group not to talk while discovering their smaller groups. They may use sign language, write their letter in the air, or use any means other than speech to communicate their letter to others. They may talk once they feel they have arranged themselves in the correct order to call out their letters from "J" to "A."

Reflection

Alphabet Soup stimulates conversation surrounding team work and success. Consider the following questions:

- Discover:** "Come up with one word to describe how the group performed? Why did you feel that way?"
Connect: "When do you feel that way most in our group?"
Create: "What did you learn about yourself during this activity? What did you learn about the group? How will you apply this learning in the future?"
- Discover:** "How did the pressure of time affect your ability to strategize?"
Connect: "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the way our group works through challenges? What works best for us? What are some areas of improvement? How can you contribute more to our groups overall success?"
Create: "What did you learn about your role in this group? How will you share your knowledge and ideas in the future?"



Activity: **Anti-Gravity**

Overview

Anti-Gravity is a fast, fun, and accommodating activity for very large groups. Your team must keep a large beach ball bouncing in the air as long as possible, racking up the most hits. Each time the ball touches the ground your group must start over. Use this activity any time your group needs to release some energy. Best of all, they will be doing it through cooperative play.

Set Up

Props

One large beach ball. The bigger the better!

Set Up

Inflate the beach ball, or ask a participant to help you with this. Have your group stand in a circle while you give instructions.

Instructions

Explain to the group that their task is to see how many times they can hit the ball in the air before it hits the ground. When the ball hits the ground, the hit counter returns to zero and the group must restart.

Round 1: Explain that in this round no one may hit the ball twice in succession.

Round 2: For a more advanced round, tell the group that each person must hit the ball once before anyone may hit it a second time.

Sample Story Line

"Your team has been given the opportunity of a lifetime, having been selected for the final round of the 'Lottery Ball' anti-gravity contest. Now it isn't a matter of 'if' you'll make money, but 'how much!' As the name implies, the money rolls in by keeping the lottery ball from giving in

to gravity."

"For round one, simply keep the ball in the air and off the ground. With every hit, you'll get \$50. But if the ball hits the ground, you're back to zero. You'll also go back to zero if anyone hits the ball twice in a row. You'll have plenty of chances to get the most dough, and it is your decision to stop whenever you'd like."

Play for a while and then move on to round two.

"For round two, the rules are the same, except this time you'll go back to zero if anyone hits the ball twice before everyone in the group has had a chance to hit it once. Every successful hit in this round gives you \$100. As in the previous round, you'll have a few chances to grab the most cash, and you can always take the money and run whenever you wish."

A great concept emerges: the better they work together and trust themselves through risk, the more they can potentially "profit."

Safety

Play this exercise in a large room, or any open space void of obstacles. Remind the group of safety concerns. Avoid running, keep an eye on where your teammates are, call for the ball, and be supportive.

Variations

Variation 1: One variation of *Anti-Gravity* is to have the group play without using any part of their hands or arms to keep the beach ball in the air. Add bonus points for the most creative hits.

Variation 2: Challenge the group by adding additional beach balls to the mix. Two balls will definitely change the dynamic.

Variation 3: Divide the group into teams, each trying to keep its ball in the air for the longest time, and watch

Activity: Anti-Gravity

the world of competition unfold. Be mindful not to set it up as competition, but watch how teams default to it.

your group or personal life?"

Reflection

Anti-Gravity can be used simply as a fun activity, or explored through reflection. Here are some suggestions for creating dialogue.

1. **Discover:** "What was the difference in thinking between round one and round two? How well did your group perform with each round?"
Connect: "How innovative can people be when they have more than one way to achieve a common goal?"
Create: "If you were to suggest some new ways we can work as a group, what would they be? What would we need to do to make it possible?"
2. **Discover:** "How did the concept of risk play into your decisions?"
Connect: "How do you deal with risk as an individual and as a team?"
Create: "How are you going to use what you have learned in this activity somewhere else - perhaps in



Activity: **Don't Touch Me**

Overview

Don't Touch Me specifically targets shifting paradigms, the concept of “what you see and hear is not always what you get,” and the idea of thinking outside the box. *Don't Touch Me* playfully engages your group and challenges them to use their minds.

This activity has been written in many books, and used because it is wildly successful. Kudos to games guru Karl Rhonke at High 5 Adventure Learning Center, and our good friend Sam Sikes and his crew from Learning Unlimited.

Set Up

Props

- A relatively flat object such as a throwing disc, a mouse pad, or a paper plate. Referred to as the “dot.”
- A stopwatch or timepiece to keep track of the group's accomplishments.

Setup

To begin, have your group stand in a circle while you give instructions.

Instructions

Have group members pick a partner across the circle from their position. Each participant must have only one partner. To ensure proper pairing, have partners step to the middle, high-five, and return to their spots. If you have an odd number, you may want to step in and play so that everyone has a partner.

Explain to the group that this is a timed event and that they are trying to satisfy the following 4 rules in the quickest time possible:

1. Participants must switch positions with their partner.

2. Participants must repeat the words “don't touch me!” anytime they are in motion.
3. Everyone must touch the “dot” in the center sometime during the process.
4. No one may touch anyone else in the group. For each touch, a second is added to the overall time.

Let the group know that after you are finished explaining the rules, you will only respond to the phrases “timer ready,” “timer stop,” and “would you please repeat the rules.” Anytime the group asks a question, simply repeat the four rules.

Give the group their time and then add the extra second(s) for touches after each attempt.

Allow your team to creatively establish their interpretation of the rules. For example, groups tend to make the circle smaller, stand next to their switching partner, pick the “dot” up, and even challenge what switching positions means. Positions switched could be from left eye open to left eye closed—not necessarily physical location as was initially thought. The group may also start the activity with everyone touching the dot. The instructions you gave in the beginning limit their ability to see these solutions.

As the facilitator, check-in to see how satisfied they are with their time after each try. After numerous attempts, if they are hovering around 5 to 7 seconds, ask them what they would say if you told them that you had seen it done in about a second. Watch the fire ignite, and how they begin to challenge their own set of assumptions to meet or beat that time.

Sample Story Line

“Your company is working to establish new, more efficient ways of doing its work. You have been assembled to design a process of satisfying 4 requirements of the job in the quickest, most efficient way. By cutting costly time and quality issues, you will all be rewarded.”

Activity: Don't Touch Me

"First, pick a work partner across the circle from you, come to the center, and give that person a high five. You should only have one partner. Next are the requirements. First, you must switch positions with your partner. Second, you must repeat 'don't touch me' anytime you are in motion. Third, everyone must touch the 'dot' sometime during the process. Finally, no one may touch anyone else. For every touch, an unwanted second is added to your time. These are your only requirements. When I am done speaking, I will be a limited resource and only respond to 'timer ready,' 'timer stop,' and 'would you please repeat the rules.' This is a timed event and time will start and stop when you indicate that you are ready and/or have completed the task."

Safety

Remind the participants to be careful as they move across the circle.

Variations

If the group is larger, you may use larger "dots." Garbage can lids or storage lids work well for this. You could also try the dual approach, dividing your team up into two groups each with their own dot and timer. They could independently work on the problem and decide to share or withhold information with each other. Many times you'll notice groups trying to catch a glimpse of the other's strategy. This variation leads to interesting conversations around competition.

Reflection

Don't Touch Me can lead to many types of conversation. The lines of questioning we have provided revolve around thinking outside the box and challenging assumptions.

- Discover:** "Describe how you felt: When I gave you the instructions. As you worked through the challenge. As you completed the exercise."
Connect: "How did your thinking change as you worked through the problem? How did the rules initially limit you and your group? Are there other rules that you live by that may limit your ability to work more effectively?"
Create: "If you were to create a new rule to work/live/learn by what would it be? How would your life be different if you asked for more clarity and were clear about your outcomes?"
- Discover:** "What did you notice the group doing as you kept working to lower your time?"
Connect: "Are there work processes that could be changed if you were to rethink the way you see the problem(s)?"
Create: "As a group, what rules are we going to live by to take on the challenges we face? How will we know if we are living by them?"



Activity: **Drawbridge**

Overview

Drawbridge provides the setting for real and powerful moments of teamwork. Your group must rescue a ball stranded in the middle of a circle without touching the ground inside the circle. They must creatively develop strategies, working only with the tools they are given. The excitement is in how many ways this can be done, and what it takes from everyone to make those ways work. This activity involves everyone, and will surely get them talking.

Set Up

Props

- 1 25' length of webbing
- 1 10' length of webbing
- 1 5' length of webbing
- 1 40' length of webbing, rope, or chalk circle
- 1 Plastic ball
- 1 Pedestal (cardboard tape core works great) on which to rest the ball
- 1 Stopwatch or timepiece to keep track of the group's accomplishments

Set Up

Create a circle on the ground using the 40' length of webbing or rope. Place the plastic ball in the center of the circle resting atop the pedestal. To find the perfect size for the circle, imagine the tallest person in your group laying flat on their stomach with arms stretched toward the center of the circle and feet remaining on the outside edge. Next, place the ball where the hands would reach. Finally, create the circle with the ball as the center point so that the tallest person could reach it from any point around the circle. Using this method will keep all of the solution options open and provide the best experience. Hold on to the remaining lengths of webbing, as you will pass them out later.

Instructions

No person or prop may touch the ground inside the circle. If this happens, a person becomes mute and a prop is lost from play. No one may sacrifice himself or herself for the cause. The ball itself can never touch the ground inside the circle. Should the ball fall during an attempt to lift it from the pedestal and outside the circle to safety, the activity ends (or starts over if you choose).

The pedestal on which the ball rests must remain in the center of the circle and the group may not use any props other than those provided.

NOTE: The next three rules should only be delivered when participants begin to explore tying the webbing around the body or lifting one another into the air:

1. Everyone must participate by either supporting weight, holding the webbing, or properly spotting. When someone is being lowered into the middle or lifted off the ground, **DO NOT** allow him or her to proceed until everyone is helping!
2. Webbing cannot be tied around any soft parts of the body. If the webbing is to be tied around or positioned on a person, it must be positioned on stable parts of the body such as directly underneath the armpits or over the shins.
3. All knots must be inspected by each member of the group and by the facilitator for safety. If there is any question regarding the soundness of the knot it must be retied.

This activity has three common solutions: the "chopstick," "fly-in," and the "drawbridge." If any solution is accomplished quickly, congratulate your group and challenge them to creatively implement a new method. For example, if they retrieved the ball from the circle by means other than a hand physically removing it, put the ball back on the pedestal and challenge them to remove it by hand.

Activity: Drawbridge**Sample Story Line**

"The 'Genie of Jesse' will grant your group three wishes if you prove your creativity and problem-solving abilities. You must pass the test, and do so without harming anyone or becoming angry at them. If you do so, the entire world will open up to your imagination."

"Your task is simple: retrieve the mystical orb from the center of the black circle without anyone or anything touching the ground inside. You may only use the tools provided to do so. Anything that touches the ground inside will be lost forever. The mystical orb is not immune. It is delicate, and will dissolve if it touches anywhere inside the black circle. Be careful and use your resources wisely. If you do, you may have three wishes granted."

Remember to stop the group when they begin to experiment with tying or positioning the webbing around anyone, but not before, because you risk giving them a solution.

Safety

As the facilitator, you have full immunity from the debilitating powers of the circle and must spot any participant suspended inside. Inform any suspended group members to keep their hands and feet out and in a ready position at all times. Also inform the participant to be vocal with his or her group about how they are feeling. No one should be pressured into something he or she does not want to do.

Also, note that even if just practicing, the group must observe all safety precautions of spotting and looking out for one another.

If your group decides to lift anyone in the air, everyone must participate by supporting weight, holding the webbing, or properly spotting. This is absolutely necessary. Webbing cannot be tied around any soft parts of the body, such as the stomach. If the webbing is tied

around or positioned on a person, it must be positioned on stable parts of the body. All knots must be inspected by each member of your group and by the facilitator for safety. If there is any question regarding the soundness of the knot, it must be retied. Safety is key.

Variations

Place more than one object in the circle and ask your group to retrieve all three using different methods. It takes a while longer but encourages creativity. We recommend using three items, because there are three dominant strategies for success.

Reflection

Drawbridge elicits great dialogue. Use your own questions from what you observed, or try some of ours.

1. **Discover:** "How do you feel you and your group performed during the exercise? Why do you feel this way?"
Connect: "How does your performance relate to other projects you have worked on?"
Create: "What is one group strength we need to focus on in future projects?"
2. **Discover:** "What worked for your group? What was missing?"
Connect: "How does this exercise relate to other projects you have worked on?"
Create: "To insure we have success in the future, what skill set or personal characteristic will you bring to the group?"
3. **Discover:** "Do you feel everyone participated? If not, why? If so, how?"
Connect: "How can we be better at accessing everyone's potential on future projects?"
Create: "What is one thing you can do to make sure we have adequate involvement in future projects or events?"



Activity: **Drawbridge**

4. **Discover:** "Did your group take care of the person being lifted into the circle?"
Connect: "Where do we need to be most mindful when working with others who are about to put all their faith and trust on the team?"
Create: "How will we know that we are truly a caring group? If you feel we already are, how could we show more appreciation to others on the team?"

Additional Question: "If you feel comfortable sharing, what did you wish for and why?"

Activity: First Impressions**Overview**

Assumptions, stereotypes, and how they affect a group's ability to work together best describe this high-energy activity. Participants begin by mingling and interacting with one another as the characteristic cards taped on their backs indicate. For example, if a player had "I am a superstar musician" on his or her back, everyone should treat him or her as a superstar musician. Players do not know what is on their backs, and try to figure it out later. Next, group members, while still in character, try to squeeze into a small square on the floor at one time. *First Impressions* stimulates discussion about how stereotypes and assumptions influence everyday life and how a group functions.

Set Up**Props**

- 1 Roll of masking tape
- 1 5x7 index card for each of your participants
- 1 Stopwatch or other timepiece
- Markers

Set Up

You will need to prepare the note cards by writing characteristics on them before play. For example, a characteristic could be "Everything I say is funny." The preface to every characteristic should always be "treat me like/as if."

You may print copies of the sample phrases from the *Team Building & Group Development* software.

Instructions

Ask each participant to take a random characteristic card from the pile and tape it securely to the back of another person. Remind the participants not to tell one another what the cards say.

Explain that the participants will interact with one another as the cards on their backs indicate. Discourage inappropriate comments and actions. Provide a 2- to 5-minute mingle time for them to get used to it.

Next, participants must work to get everyone standing within the tape square for at least 5 seconds while continuing to treat one another as the characteristic cards indicate. No one may touch the ground outside the square. Start time when they are all in, and stop time whenever someone steps out. If any person steps out, the group must restart.

Sample Story Line

"We all know what it is like in a crowded elevator. People act strange. People face the door, eyes front as if in a trance, and remain as quiet as possible. It's like another world. Mentally, everyone is watching other people in the elevator and adopting beliefs about them."

"Imagine that all of you are now standing in a lobby waiting for the elevator to arrive. As you get settled, take a card from the stack I am holding and tape it securely to the back of another person in the group without them seeing it. These are the beliefs you have adopted about the people around you. The game is for you to interact with one another based on what the cards say. Take a moment to read the cards on everyone's back and interact with each other in the appropriate way."
Mingle time: about 2 to 5 minutes.

"The elevator has arrived and you all want to ride at the same time. Everyone must remain inside for the long 5 minute ... just kidding 5- second ride to your floors. The elevator will only operate when everyone is completely inside it. A safety trigger will stop the car anytime someone steps outside of the elevator, and then return you to the ground floor. In the last few minutes you have grown to know one another, but not enough to let someone get on your shoulders. This is too uncomfortable. I challenge you all to stay safe and to stay in character! Good luck."

Activity: **First Impressions**

Safety

In this activity, there is potential for participants to lose their balance. Be sure to stay close to the group and spot around the circle. Do not allow anyone to sit on anyone else's shoulders. Piggyback is fine so long as you are confident that it can be done safely by your group. As always, safety is the most important issue.

Variations

Start with multiple squares of different sizes and remove squares, forcing your group out of cliques and into the final large square. Ask group members to enter any square with whomever they feel most comfortable. Ask them to take a look around and see if it is surprising to see with whom they ended up. Now, ask them to exit and remove the first square. Continue until there is only one square and everyone is in it.

You may also choose to facilitate the two sections of this activity independently.

Reflection

First Impressions can bring up many issues related to stereotypes. Participants should have an easy time relating to this exercise.

1. **Discover:** "What was this event like for you?"
Connect: "Where else do you experience the group dynamics that you witnessed here?"
Create: "The next time you work with a group of people, what will you be more sensitive to as you reflect on this exercise? How will you demonstrate this level of awareness?"
2. **Discover:** "How did it feel to have people talk to you the way they did? Why?"
Connect: "Do you believe you communicate with people based on what you think of them? Are your beliefs about others sometimes wrong? Have you ever been misunderstood?"
Create: "What are three things you can do when working with people you perceive as 'different' from you? If you do these things, how do you think people will perceive you?"

Activity: **First Impressions**

**I'm very
tired**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I have to be
the center of
attention**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**Nothing I
say makes
sense**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I'm a star
athlete**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I'm very
famous**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

I'm sad

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I'm very
friendly**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I don't liked
to be pushed**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I'm very
angry**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**I don't like to
be touched**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

**Everything I
say is funny**

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Activity: **First Impressions**

I'm popular

Inspire! Team Building & Group Development



Activity: First Impressions

Inspire! Team Building & Group Development



Activity: First Impressions

Inspire! Team Building & Group Development



Activity: First Impressions

Inspire! Team Building & Group Development



Activity: First Impressions

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Activity: **Group Jump Rope**

Overview

Jump Rope has been around for ages, and so has this team-building variation. In **Group Jump Rope**, group members try to get through a series of jump rope challenges while having a great time doing it. This activity reinforces the old adage “motion creates emotion” as your group moves, jumps, and enjoys the fun.

Set Up

Props

- 1 30' rope
- Blindfolds (optional)

Set Up

Find a nice, open area and stretch the rope out on the ground. Ask for 1 or 2 volunteer rope turners. Have the rest of the group stand on either side.

Instructions

Start by asking everyone to simply run through the twirling rope to the other side. Everyone must make it through without being touched by the rope. If anyone is touched, everyone must restart.

Next, ask participants to run through in pairs, trios, and finally, the whole group at once.

Try any or all of the above approaches, but add that participants must move through without missing a beat in the rope. Every time the rope hits the ground, someone must move through. Again, if the rhythm is interrupted the whole team starts over.

Next, have the group run in and jump over the rope once and then run out with any or all of the steps above (one at a time, pairs, etc).

Switch rope turners often.

Sample Story Line

“As a superstar circus family, you are accustomed to the limelight. People from around the world come to watch you perform. Now, on the eve of your grandest performance ever, the “Whirling Rope of Fire” is all you can think about. As you practice, get in the zone. Your fans are awaiting an exciting show!”

“Your performances always start off easy. First, everyone must run through the twirling rope without being touched. If anyone is touched, your entire family must start over. Next, you run through in pairs, then trios, and then everyone at once without disrupting the whirling rope. As written in your contract, if the whirling rope is disrupted, everyone must start over. Now the music intensifies, the lights dim, and the rope is set ablaze! Your next stunt requires everyone to go through just as before, but this time not missing a beat in the rope. On every turn, a family member must pass through. Your grand finale is now set. You must pass through just as before, adding one death-defying jump to each step. The crowd goes wild! The fans are screaming!”

Safety

For Group Jump Rope you will need a large space where people can run through the twirling rope safely. You will also need to be running on a flat surface, preferably grass or carpet. Rope turners must hold on to the rope firmly, but also be ready to let go to avoid tripping, hitting, or “clothes-lining” someone.

Variations

Variation 1: You can introduce blindfolds during the pairs and trio attempts. During a trio attempt, participants blindfold their middle person and safely escort them through the rope. Be very conscious of both physical and mental safety.

Variation 2: You could also introduce a second rope and have the group pass through both of them. Leave a little space in between as a safe standing zone.

Activity: **Group Jump Rope**

Reflection

Group Jump Rope is designed as a fun group activity. Here are a few questions to ponder with your group.

Discover: "What's a word that comes to mind that reflects your mood after this exercise? Why did you choose that word?"

Connect: "Do you have examples of ways in which Group Jump Rope can be associated with other tasks you have to accomplish in life? How is it similar? How is it different?"

Create: "What is one learning point you take away from this exercise?"

Activity: **Hands Are Tied**

Overview

Often, our perceptions about a problem affect our ability to solve it. In *Hands Are Tied*, participants work to disconnect from one another in what appears to be an impossible task. Group members twist and turn themselves with frustration, and find that a little creative thinking will do the trick.

Set Up

Props

- 1 Piece of string 4' to 5' long for each participant.

Set Up

Distribute one string to each participant. Ask group members to tie loops large enough for their hands to fit through at both ends of their string.

Instructions

Ask every group member to find a partner and connect with him or her by intertwining the strings and placing the loops on their wrists. Explain that the partners must disconnect from each other without untying the knots, cutting the string, or taking the loops off of their own wrists.

This is a team event. It is not over until all group members disconnect from one another. Participants can and should share information with one another, but don't prompt them to do so. See if they will naturally.

Provide hints when your group is struggling. Start by explaining that no amount of twisting or stepping through each other's loops will help. Tell them to think about the resources they have to work with. Later, if they are still struggling, let them know that the secret is in the loops around their wrists. Sometimes we very secretly show one pair of team members the solution.

How will they handle the information?

The solution: Take the middle of your partner's string and run it through your right or left wrist loop, through the bottom or "take your pulse" part of your wrist. With your partner's string make a loop big enough for a hand to fit through and put your hand through it. This will either allow you to separate, or create another twist in your string. If the latter occurs, re-connect just like you did the first time, but try running the loop through your other wrist loop. Even with knowledge of the solution, this can be somewhat confusing. Refer to the video to see a demonstration of the solution.

Sample Story Line

"What does the expression, 'my hands are tied,' mean?"

Get responses from your group.

"It can mean that you are unable to do something. In this activity, you may believe that you are unable to solve the problem, but I promise you, it can be done. I need everyone to get a partner. Stand face-to-face and connect with each other as shown."

It is a good idea to model for your group with a volunteer.

"To be successful, your whole team must escape from the grips of this situation. Partners must separate from each other without breaking, untying, or switching wrist loops. The loops on your wrists must remain on your wrist at all times. Remember, you are not free until everyone on your team has escaped."

Safety

Watch as pairs twist and turn into strange configurations while trying to escape. Make sure they are not hurting each other, and stop rough behavior.

Activity: Hands Are Tied

Variations

You could start by having everyone connected together in one large group. They employ the same technique to break free from each other, but the new configuration may throw them for a “loop!”

Reflection

Hands-Are-Tied is one of those brainteasers that you can take some time to explore. Here are some questions.

- Discover:** “What was this event like for you? What caused you to react to the challenge in that way?”

Connect: “Have you had similar responses to other challenges in your life? If so, can you give an example?”

Create: “The next time you are faced with a challenge, what will you say to yourself to fully prepare?”
- Discover:** “How many of you thought it couldn’t be done, or said to yourself, ‘I am not good at these brainteasers?’”

Connect: “How did your mindset in the beginning influence the way you approached the challenge? Can you think of other challenges where your beliefs going into it interfered with your ability to discover your true capabilities?”

Create: “What is one thing you learned from this exercise? How will you apply this learning in the future? If you applied this learning what would be the biggest change in your life?”



Activity: **Magic Maze**

Overview

Magic Maze is a classic game. Team members work to move across a grid using the one and only safe path. You have the map. Through trial and error, the participants must work together to discover the correct path of safe squares. The challenge presented in *Magic Maze* will stimulate conversation and act as a springboard into other learning activities.

Set Up

Props

- 48 Sheets of construction paper, paper plates, notebook paper, or large note cards (any will work).
- 1 (or more) master "safe-path" maps (create your own design or print one of the sample maps included on this CD-ROM).
- 1 Bike horn or other annoying noisemaker (optional)

Set Up

Hand each member a piece of paper and ask him or her to make a tube lengthwise, large enough for the marbles to pass through. Secure the tubes with the tape or paper clips.

Instructions

The goal of the activity is for your entire team to safely reach the other side of the maze by finding and following the one and only true path through the squares. Your group must decide how long it will take to do this and work to beat that time.

Ask the participants to step one at a time onto the squares, starting with the first row of six, until the safe square (as determined by the master "safe path" sheet) is found. Inform the team of a correct choice and allow the team member who found it to move on. Each person must have a chance on the grid before anyone goes twice.

The next choice may be any square adjacent to the safe square the team member is standing on. Participants are not allowed to skip rows or columns. The path can go in any direction. If a participant steps on a square that is not part of the predetermined safe path, he or she must leave the grid along the same path on which he or she entered. The team will incur a time penalty of 60 additional seconds to the overall time for each incorrect exit.

The group cannot leave objects (breadcrumbs) on the path to mark the way. Once a square is determined to be off the path, it is always off the path.

Only one person may be on the grid at a time until the team has successfully found the correct path from beginning to end. The team may then form a line and walk along the path all at once to the finish.

Further options to consider:

Once the activity begins, the team must remain behind the start of the grid or around the perimeter of the grid.

Participants cannot use any form of "pointing." For each instance of pointing, by hand, head, or foot, the team will incur a 15 second penalty to be added to the overall time.

Sample Story Line

"The 'Maze of Wonder' is a powerful and complicated artifact said to hold mystical powers. Legend says that mysterious things happen to those who travel upon what is known as 'The One' true path. The ancient language written on The 'Maze of Wonder' has taken many years of work to decipher, and even now scholars have only translated a small portion. From what they have gathered, it seems 'The One' is a secret path through the Maze. As is written, it is the only safe path to the other side. The path is full of danger and dead ends. It is up to you to discover 'The One' and find out what lies beyond."



Activity: Magic Maze

"You will start by stepping to any stone in the first row. If it is part of 'The One,' you may continue to the next stone. If it is not, you must step back off the 'Maze of Wonder' and allow a new person to try. In searching for 'The One,' you may step to any stone around you, but you may never skip a column or row. If a stone is not 'The One' it is always so. Whenever the maze has misguided you to step on an unsafe stone, you must return along the same path from which you entered. If you do not, you will lose 60 seconds of precious time. Again, a new person must pick up where you left off. Final notes to keep you from danger: only one person may be on the maze at a time until you completely discover 'The One.'"

"Once your group finds 'The One' true path, they may pass through to the other side. Your group cannot mark 'The One' by placing anything on the stones. The maze penalizes your group 15 seconds of time for pointing at 'The One' in any way, therefore it is not wise for you to point. Your team must remain on the far edge until the path is found at which time everyone may move through the maze to the other side. You have a limited amount of time to discover 'The One.' In fact, it is in many ways up to you. Try to keep from losing time through carelessness, and be prepared as 'The One' can be very tricky indeed.

Safety

Safety concerns are few during this activity. However, one common issue is participants moving too fast upon the squares. On a slick surface, such as a gym or classroom floor, there is potential for the squares to slide out from underfoot. Taping the squares to the floor can be an effective solution. In addition, you should stress the importance for slow and controlled movement across the grid.

Variations

The following variations can change the dynamic of the Magic Maze activity and lead to different results.

1. Increase the size of the grid by adding more squares.

2. Split your participants into two teams and challenge them to switch sides using the same path but from opposite ends of the grid.
3. Make four teams and one large square grid. Send teams switching from all four sides.
4. Design your own layout for the squares that takes the path around corners, over hills, in circles, or up stairs. Let your imagination design your own unique "magic maze" style and share it with us in the online community.

Reflection

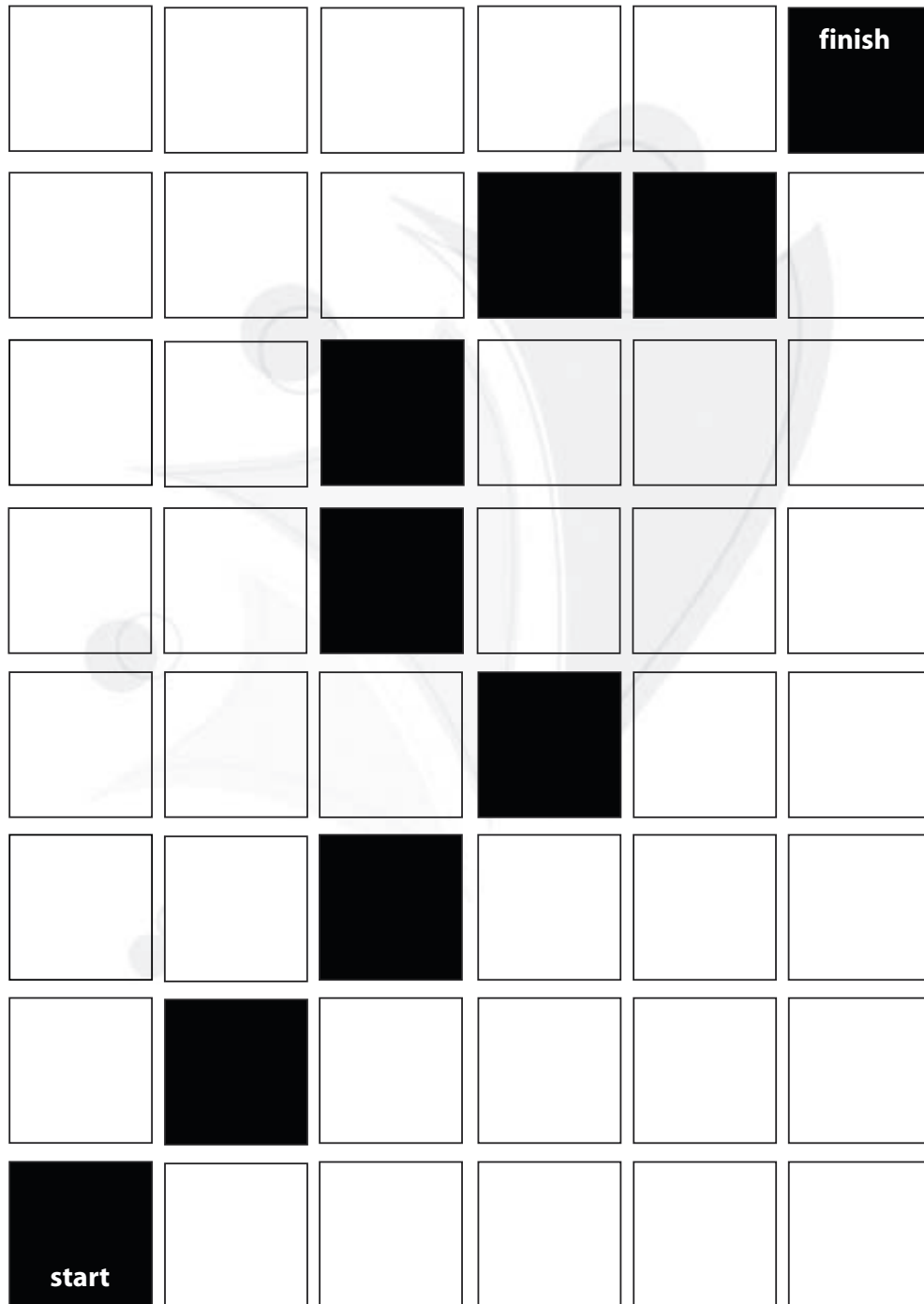
After the activity, consider asking the following questions:

1. **Discover:** "What happened to your group during the exercise? Explain."
Connect: "How did planning affect the group's level of success?"
Create: "What did you learn about effective planning? How will you apply this the next time you have to plan something with a group?"
2. **Discover:** "What was it like for you? What was the difference between being 'on the maze' vs. 'off the maze?'"
Connect: "In your life, where do you see yourself 'on the maze' vs. 'off the maze?' Which do you prefer most?"
Create: "In what area of your life would you like to be 'on the maze' more? In what areas would you like to be off?"
3. **Discover:** "How did the risk of stepping to a wrong stone influence the group? Positively or negatively?"
Connect: "How does risk influence your life? Where does it happen the most for you?"
Create: "Describe one way the feelings cultivated by this game mimicked a real-life situation. How can your observations make a positive difference in the 'real world?'"

Additional Questions: "Your goal was to see what lies beyond 'The One.' What was it for you? What is your 'One?'"

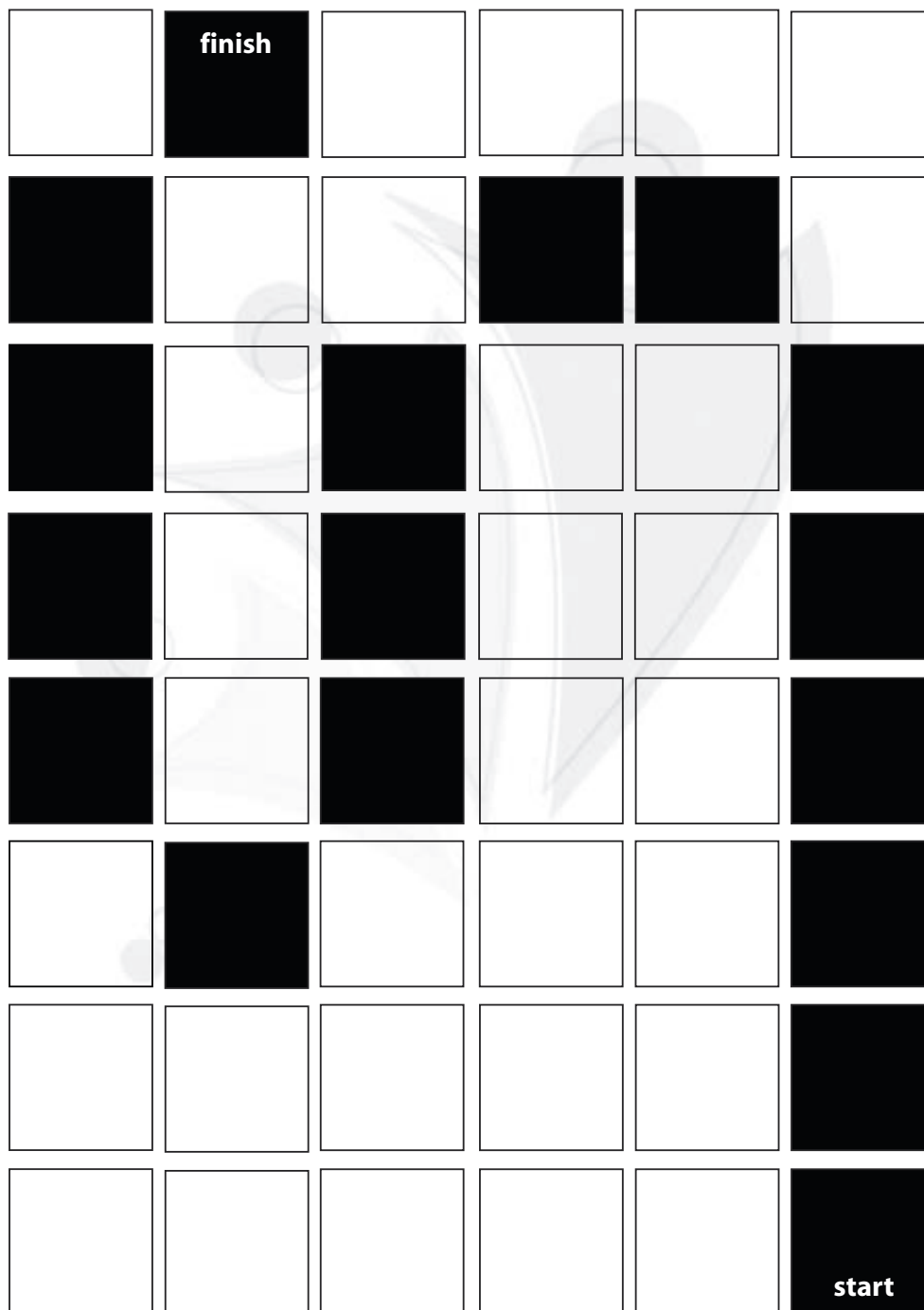


Activity: Magic Maze



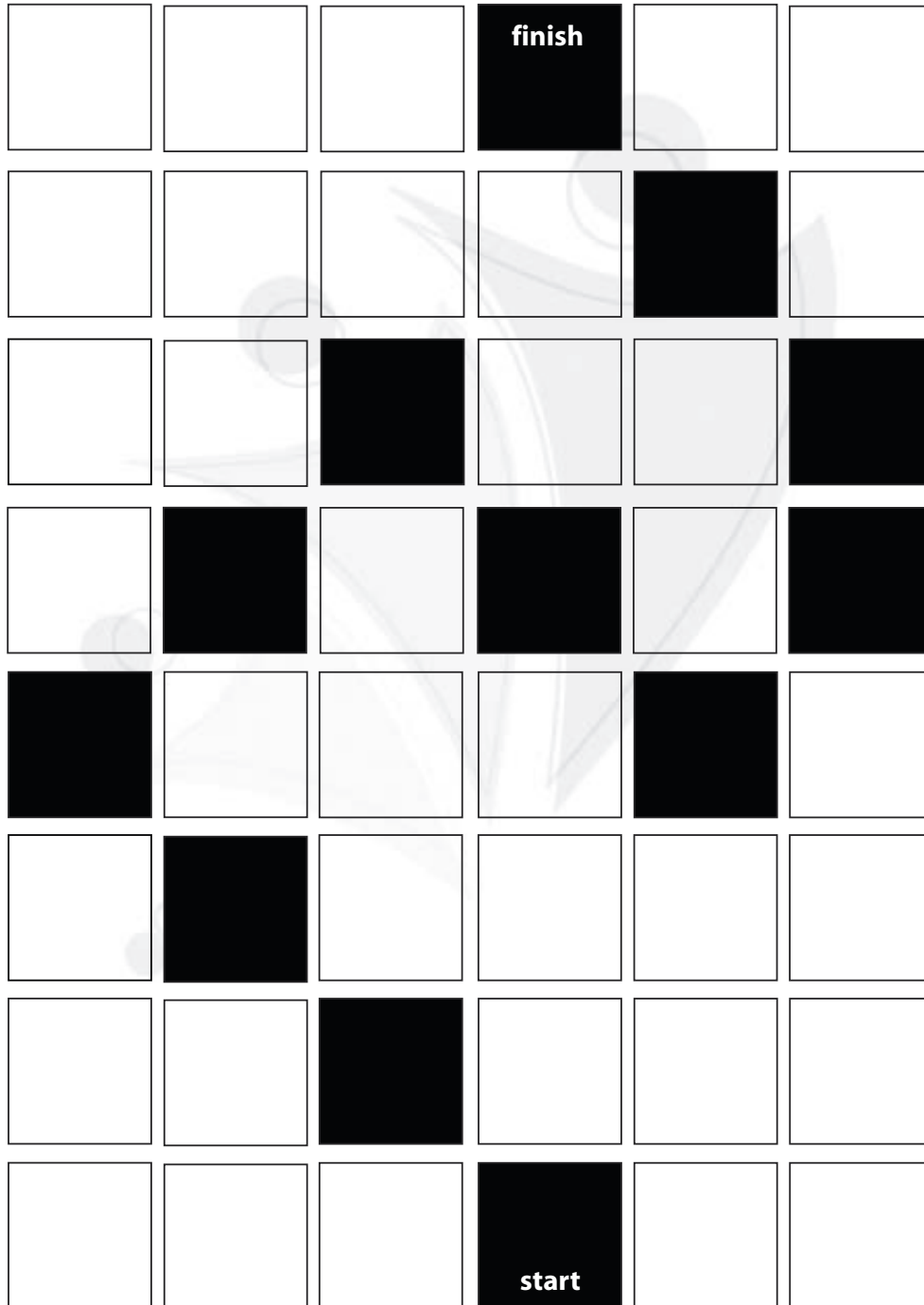


Activity: Magic Maze



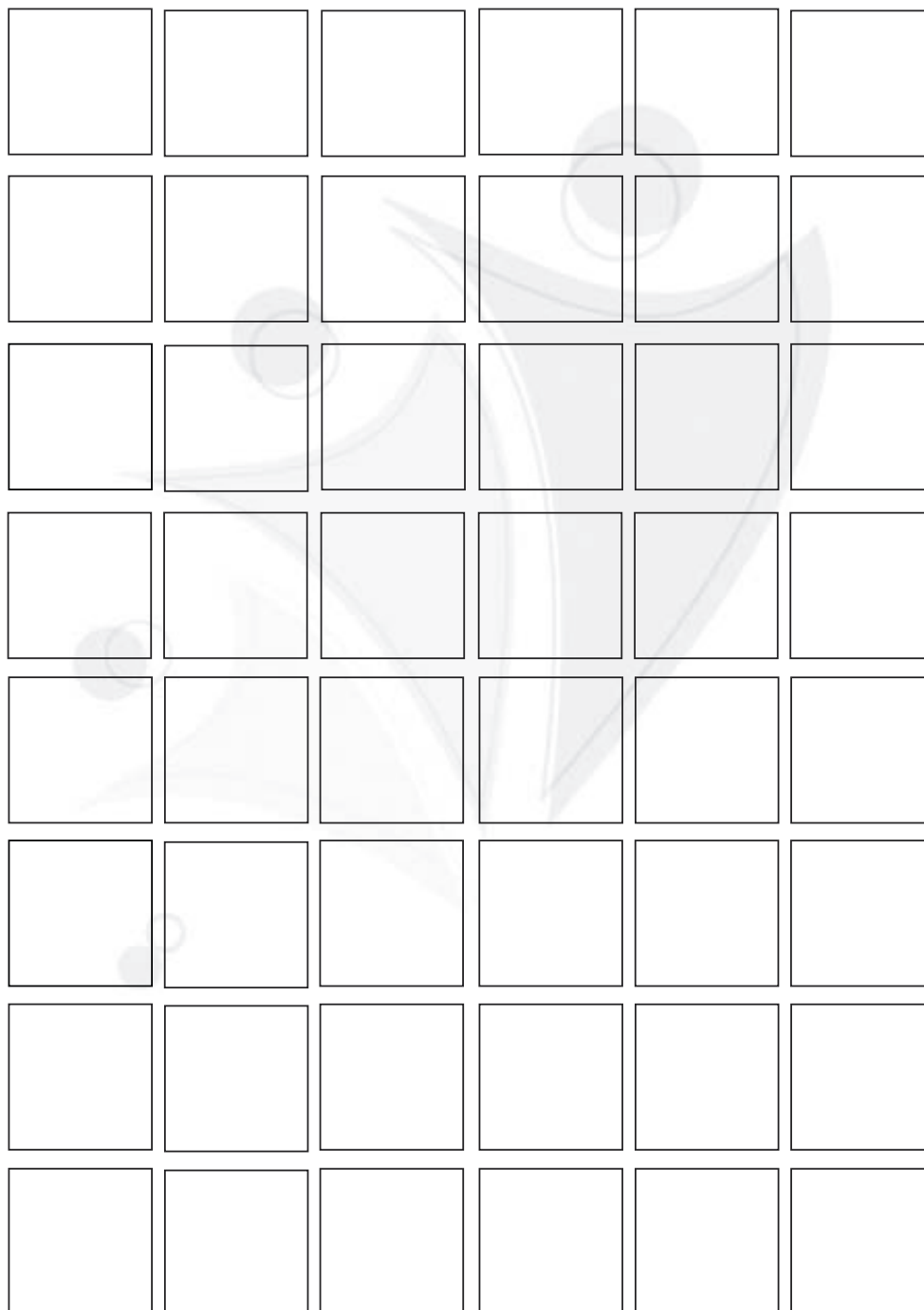


Activity: Magic Maze





Activity: Magic Maze





Activity: **Mountain Rescue**

Overview

Mountain Rescue is about physical teamwork and communication. To be successful, team members have to learn to move together across a narrow path while connected at the ankles. Coordinated movement and an ability to work together will mark the success of this activity.

Set Up

Props

- 4 Hoops
- Large rubber bands (size 107) or flagging tape

Set Up

Create the “bridge” of 4 circles using tape, rope, or hoops. Stagger the position of the circles and place them about 1 foot apart. Have group members form a shoulder-to-shoulder line. Hand all but the last person a large rubber band or length of flagging tape. Ask group members to connect themselves at the ankle so that only the first and last person has a free leg in the chain.

Instructions

While connected at the ankle with the flagging tape or rubber bands, challenge the team to navigate across the “bridge” without stepping outside of the circles, or becoming disconnected. The group has 15 minutes to complete the task; 1 minute will be taken from the group for every step outside of the circles, and 30 seconds will be taken from the group for every tether that is replaced. Also, the group cannot proceed until all group members are tethered.

If you use flagging tape and a tether breaks, give the group another piece of flagging tape to continue. The recommended rubber bands shouldn’t break. Although the rubber bands are a more durable prop, tell the group

to be extra careful when working with the rubber bands. Have no tolerance for horseplay.

Stop the timer when the last person exits the fourth circle.

Sample Story Line

“You are an advanced team of mountain climbers. While making a push for the summit, bad weather forces you into retreat. A landslide that nearly took the whole team down the mountain blocks the way you came. Your only route to safety is by way of an old abandoned ladder bridge that spans a deep crevasse. High mountain storms are quickly approaching, and you have an estimated 15 minutes to cross the bridge before it is too late. As a skilled group, you have put safety measures into place. Tethers that cannot be removed or broken connect your entire team. If a tether is broken it must be replaced and the team loses precious time. Anyone stepping off the bridge (characterized by anyone stepping outside of the circles) will also cause time to slip away. One minute of your time will vanish each time someone steps off the bridge. Thirty seconds will vanish each time a tether breaks.”

Safety

Being connected at the ankles is a potential safety concern. Insist that participants move slowly and carefully, and to notify someone if they aren’t comfortable. Play it safe by having no tolerance for horseplay and reckless behavior while the team is connected. Watch your team closely, and insist everyone keep one another safe.

Variations

Increase the distance between hoops, add more hoops or change the angles between them. Any of these can dramatically change the outcome.



Activity: **Mountain Rescue**

Reflection

Consider the following questions as wrap up to the *Mountain Rescue* activity.

Discover: "What was this event like for you? On a scale of 1 to 10, rank how difficult it was to get over the bridge. Why?"

Connect: "What group characteristic did you use most to complete the exercise? Would you say that characteristic is the group's biggest strength? What other characteristics did our group employ? What attribute do you bring to the group that compliments how we work together?"

Create: "If you could create a list of strengths our group possesses, what would they be and why? What characteristic do we need to work on? How will we know when we have developed that strength? How will you help to make that strength a focus of our group?"



Activity: **Moving Marbles**

Overview

Moving Marbles involves group members working together to roll marbles through homemade paper tubes. The goal is for the group to move the five marbles from a standing position to a slow and controlled finish on the ground. This is another classic activity that has stood the test of time. Using props that you can find anywhere, you can have a quick and intriguing activity ready for your group in no time!

Set Up

Props

- 1 8 1/2 X 11 sheet of paper for each member of the team
- 5 Various sized marbles or gumballs
- Tape and/or paperclips

Set Up

Hand each member a piece of paper and ask him or her to make a tube lengthwise, large enough for the marbles to pass through. Secure the tubes with the tape or paper clips.

Instructions

Beginning in a standing position, your group must use the paper tubes to control the marbles' descent to a slow finish on the ground. Once a marble has entered the first tube, no one may touch it with anything but his or her paper tube; no one may touch anyone else's tube; and the tubes themselves may not touch at any time. If any of these rules are broken, the marbles currently in the system become contaminated and must be restarted.

Explain to the group that upon exiting the final tube, if any of the marbles travel in excess of 2 to 3 inches across the ground it must be restarted. This creates more challenges, and demands more precise techniques to solve the problem.

Sample Story Line

"You have one of those jobs ... you know, the one that everyone describes as, 'Well somebody's got to do it.' Your life in the ball bearing reconstruction industry has been pretty boring. All things considered, refinishing, cleaning, and polishing ball bearings is not what you had in mind as a career. However, today could be your day. You and your team have the most crucial job ever because the 5 bearings in for refinishing make the world go 'round. That's right, 'the world go 'round.' For 15 minutes, the earth will stop spinning while you clean the bearings that, from the beginning of time, have kept the world turning. You have a lot of weight on your shoulders, and with good work you will surely be promoted. The special cleaning process is unlike anything you have ever seen. You must handle this job personally."

"Each of you has a cleaning tube that, when used together, form the system for refinishing the bearings. Each tube handles a different stage of the process, so the bearing must pass through each and every tube. For quality control, the tubes are linked to the person holding them, so no one may touch or handle any tube but his or her own. Also, the tubes must never touch. If either of these occur, the system becomes overloaded and the bearings within become contaminated. This means the process must restart. Once a bearing enters the system, it must travel uninterrupted through each tube to a soft and safe rest on the docking platform known as the 'the ground.' If a bearing falls to the ground without passing through every tube, it must be restarted. Finally, upon exiting the last tube, each bearing needs a cooling off period. The bearings must exit gently with minimum roll to ensure they are properly cooled. Bearings that roll too far must be restarted. If you do not finish in 15 minutes or less, the polar ice caps may melt, causing an uncontrollable shift in climate, and the planet may never spin again. But hey, no pressure!"

Activity: **Moving Marbles**

Safety

As with any marble, make sure the participants refrain from putting them in their mouths, noses, or ears. This could lead to choking or other hazards.

Variations

Have the group stand in a circle and see how many times they can pass the marble around from person to person, following the original guidelines.

Reflection

These questions explore working with limited resources and information.

Discover: “What was it like for you having to move these marbles from point A to point B? How well did your team perform? What was the most challenging part of the exercise and how did your team overcome the challenge?”

Connect: “Can you think of any examples where you were given a task, but felt you weren’t given enough information or the right tools to accomplish the task correctly?”

Create: “In the future, when you are given a task, or you personally decide to achieve something, what will you do to set yourself and others on the road to success?”

**Activity: One Way****Overview**

Sometimes there is only one way to get things done. In this brainteaser turned group activity, participants are trying to switch positions in a 9 square line. It isn't as easy as it seems, and requires some thought. The challenge of the activity will keep them engaged in the process.

Set Up**Props**

9 Sheets of construction paper to build the line.

Set Up

Arrange the 9 pieces of construction paper, or whatever else you have handy, in a line on the floor. Leave about a foot between each piece. This activity can have 8 players at a time. For a larger group, designate teams of 8. While one team is working the other(s) are observing. Teams will swap frequently, so everyone gets plenty of time working on the problem.

Instructions

Teams of 4 must switch sides on the construction paper line. One at a time, players may move forward to any empty, adjacent square.

A player may also skip over another player to an empty square as long as the skipped player is moving in the opposite direction. No skipping your own team members. Players may never move backwards.

Encourage teams who are not actively working on the grid to use paper, pens, or whatever is available to figure out the problem.

Print the solution to this activity from the Team Building & Group Development software.

Sample Story Line

"Your group must work together to switch positions in this 9-square configuration. Doing so will correctly sequence a series of atoms to create a non-hazardous, renewable energy source. To make this work, the 4 people on each end must switch sides following strict safety guidelines. You may move forward if the square in front of you is not occupied. Or, you may skip over ONE player to an empty square, but only if the skipped person is moving in the opposite direction as you. Most importantly, no one may ever move backwards. Each time your group gets stuck, having run out of forward options or moves, you must switch teams and allow a new group of 8 to work on the solution. Good luck!"

Safety

If you use common sense, safety should not be an issue.

Variations

For a large group, use 2 or more grids and lay them side-by-side, in a triangle pattern, or even a square. This variation removes the observation component because everyone is working at once. You may add the requirement that every line must successfully make the switch to complete the challenge. Either way, a lot can be learned through participation, observation of other people's mistakes, and adoption of their successes.

Reflection

The following questions are useful for exploring issues related to this activity.

- Discover:** "What was this challenge like for you? Why? How did your group confront the challenge?"
Connect: "How was this group challenge similar to other challenges we have faced as a team?"
Create: "If there is one theme we could create that represents our team, what would it be, and why? Are there new themes on which we need to focus? If so, what would they be?"

Activity: One Way

The solution is a bit tricky and will take some practice. If your group doesn't figure out the solution in the time available, you have a couple of options. You can set a time to return to the activity and encourage the group to figure

out the solution before the next time you get together. This is an excellent extended challenge. Or, simply follow the instructions below.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. D 4 moves to 5 | 13. B 3 moves to 5 |
| 2. W 6 moves to 4 | 14. A 1 moves to 3 |
| 3. X 7 moves to 6 | 15. W 2 moves to 1 |
| 4. D 5 moves to 7 | 16. X 4 moves to 2 |
| 5. C 3 moves to 5 | 17. Y 6 moves to 4 |
| 6. B 2 moves to 3 | 18. Z 8 moves to 6 |
| 7. W 4 moves to 2 | 19. C 7 moves to 8 |
| 8. X 6 moves to 4 | 20. B 5 moves to 7 |
| 9. Y 8 moves to 6 | 21. A 3 moves to 5 |
| 10. Z 9 moves to 8 | 22. Y 4 moves to 3 |
| 11. D 7 moves to 9 | 23. Z 6 moves to 4 |
| 12. C 5 moves to 7 | 24. A 5 moves to 6 |

Activity: **Pass It**

Overview

Pass It stimulates group rhythm by asking participants to pass a sound around the circle quickly, but more importantly, on beat. This simple activity explores rhythm as a metaphor for life and how well groups work together.

Set Up

Props

No props required.

Set Up

Arrange your group in a circle.

Instructions

Participants work to pass a clapping sound around the circle quickly and accurately. One person “gives” a clap to the next person. That person “receives” the sound by clapping at the same time, then turns to pass the clap to the next person in the circle. Start slowly; if participants are off beat, start again.

Let the sound move continuously around the circle numerous times to get the group into it, gaining speed as they get the hang of it.

Once participants establish a good rhythm, stop play and restart again with two claps. Do this by introducing a second clap right after the first. Now participants must be very alert to make it work.

Ask your group to set a goal as to how many claps they can get around the circle and back to where they started. Allow many opportunities for practice.

Sample Story Line

“Before the invention of the written word, culture was passed from generation to generation through stories, song, dance, and rhythmic performances. Rhythm is still deeply rooted in our heritage and widely used to convey feelings and emotions. It is also an effective method to align or bond a group of people together, like a cadence in a marching band. On a smaller scale we are going to produce a simple rhythm to see how well we connect as a group.”

“I will start by passing the person to my left a sound, a simple clap of my hands. This sound must be passed all the way around the circle. To pass and receive the sound, we simply clap at the same time.”

Show an example

“First, lets just keep the sound going around the circle until we find our pace and get in sync with one another. Now that we are in rhythm, let’s see what happens when we add another clap in the circle. How will this affect our rhythm? Be attentive because I will start the second clap as soon as the first is off and going. This time, the sounds won’t keep going around the circle, they’ll stop when they get back to me.”

“Now, how many claps at once do you think we can get around the circle and back to me successfully?”

Have the group set a goal and try to meet it.

“Now everybody celebrate with high-fives and lots of clapping ... or maybe not.”

Safety

Since some people are rhythmically challenged, be aware of emotional safety. Also, watch for “sore hand” syndrome. Too much clapping can be rough on the hands!

Activity: **Pass It**

Variations

Introduce new sounds and new rhythms. For example, add a snap or a foot stomp. Or, pass a high five around the circle. You could also try passing motions and sounds. The variations are limitless.

Reflection

Pass It is designed for the group to have fun. We advise augmenting the learning process throughout the exercise with questions like:

Discover: "What's working? How can we get in sync? How can we establish a rhythm that everyone can master?"

Connect: "Where can we be in better rhythm in other areas of our lives? At school? At work?"

Create: "If there is one lesson you could take from Pass It, what would it be? Why? How could you implement that lesson in your life?"

Activity: **Perfect Square**

Overview

Perfect Square is a fast-moving game with a team-building twist. Your group must try to keep you at the center of their perfect square. No matter where you move or how you turn, group members must remain in the same orientation to you as when they started. This is a great opener at the beginning of an activity session.

Set Up

Props

No props required.

Set Up

Participants need to form four equal lines to create a perfect square around you.

Instructions

Participants must work to keep the perfect square intact no matter where or how you move. Each line of the square is a team racing to be the first in position every time you change positions or physically move.

Lines must always be in the same order, location, and proximity to you as when they started. The line to your front must always be to your front, the line to your back to your back, and left and right sides to your left and right.

Each line of participants signal that they are in correct position by holding up their hands together and yelling "done!" Be creative. Have fun with this by moving across the room, spinning in circles, and trying to confuse the group.

Variations

Introduce different shapes into the exercise such as triangles, hexagons, trapezoids, and other fun shapes.

Sample Story Line

"Welcome to the 'Wide World of Wacky Games and Crazy Formations' (WWWGCF) brought to you in part by 'Puffy Sugar Things' brand lunch treats. Today we are broadcasting live from (insert your location here) with the craziest contest around, the Perfect Square! It's so crazy! Here's how it works: No matter what I do, your team must create and keep a perfect square around me. Check your distance from me and the order of your line, because everything needs to remain the same no matter what happens. The line to my front must always be to my front, the line to my back always to my back, and the lines to my left and right to my left and right. Each line in the square is a team, racing to be the first in place whenever I change positions. You signify you're in the right place by all holding your hands in the air at the same time and yelling 'done!' Don't jump the gun. Only call 'done' when you are really in place."

Safety

Ask the group to be careful when switching around from place to place. Group members should be careful not to run into one another while getting into position.

Reflection

Perfect Square is a great game for acquainting a group of people. We often use it simply as a mixer, but you can ask the following questions as well.

Discover: "What worked for you?"

Connect: "Where else in life are you moving fast, trying to keep your position (metaphorically)?"

Create: "What is the most important thing you noticed during the activity?"

Additional Questions: "What was the best part about the activity? What strategy did you use to get your line in place?"

Activity: Puzzling Problem**Overview**

Anything and everything can be an experiential activity. Something as simple as putting a puzzle together can lead to a great conversation. *Puzzling Problem* asks three teams to put three different puzzles together in as little time as possible. To make this challenge more interesting, the pieces for the three puzzles are all mixed up, and the teams switch puzzles twice during play. This can be one of the longer activities on this CD-ROM, but well worth the time.

Set Up**Props**

- 3 75 to 100 piece puzzles (use fewer pieces to shorten the activity)
- 3 Stations, either on tables or on the floor for groups to work

Set Up

Pour the pieces from all three puzzles into a bag and mix them up. After they are well mixed, distribute the mixed pieces back into the boxes evenly. Place a box of pieces at each station, being sure to leave the lid to reference the puzzle image, and divide your team into 3 groups.

Instructions

The team must complete all three puzzles in the quickest time possible, or in a designated timeframe. It is often helpful to set the timeframe, usually 20 to 30 minutes.

Each individual workgroup sets out to complete the puzzle at their station. The groups will find that the pieces they were given don't necessarily match the puzzle on which they are working. They must share resources and knowledge with other groups to complete the puzzles.

The stations may not be moved closer to one another, but pieces may be transferred between groups.

Twice during play, stop the teams and have them rotate clockwise one station and pick up where the other team left ended. This forces groups to inherit another groups' successes and/or problems.

Sample Story Line

"Unlock success by unlocking the secrets of the puzzles. Using your wit and skill, your team must put all of the pieces in place for all three puzzles in a few minutes or less. This will take focus, teamwork, and attention to detail. I believe you have what it takes, and know that you have everything you need to be successful. Good luck and time starts NOW!"

Variations

One variation is to spread out the random pieces at each station and not provide the box. This way the participants won't have a clear vision of what they are trying to accomplish. Hand out black and white, poorly photocopied versions of each puzzle solution only when the groups ask for more information. After they struggle with the black and white version, if they ask again, give them a well-copied, colored image of the puzzle and have them finish. The purpose behind this variation is to explore clarity in how we communicate a message. The clearer the vision, the easier it is to work toward making the vision a reality.

Safety

Psychological safety is the largest safety concern with *Puzzling Problem*. Create an environment that encourages people to share their input with the group. Let everyone know that every contribution is valuable.

Activity: **Puzzling Problem**

Reflection

Puzzling Problem introduces the group to some interesting problem-solving dynamics. The questions below explore how the group overcomes change while trying to solve problems.

Discover: “How did you react when you were first given the challenge? How did your reaction change as you discovered your group did not have all the correct pieces? And finally, how did you respond to moving to an entirely different puzzle?”

Connect: “What are some examples of how you have coped with change in the past? How was this exercise similar? How was it different?”

Create: “What has this exercise taught you about change? How will you view change in the future? What can you do to prepare for a life of ongoing change?”



Activity: **Speed**

Overview

With no set up, quick passing, and lots of laughter, *Speed* is an easy and fun team builder. Players pass a disc around a circle using only their backs. This game gets a little crazy because players find the task more difficult than they imagined. The task is light-hearted and full of smiles!

Set Up

Props

- 1 Flying Disc.
- 1 Ball, 1 small bucket, or a large tin can (optional)

Set Up

Have your group form a circle and explain the rules.

Instructions

The group must move the disc around the circle as fast as possible with the fewest drops to the floor.

Group members may only use their backs to transfer the disc.

If the disc falls, it may be put back from where it fell, adding one penalty drop to the group's effort.

Ask the group to keep track of their best times and number of drops, and to work towards improving them.

Sample Story Line

"Speed pits your group against the clock, racing to move the ancient 'Disc-of-Olympus' around to each player in the quickest amount of time and with the fewest drops. As part of an ancient tradition, group members may only use their backs to transfer the disc from player to player. Should the disc fall during passing, it may be put back

from where it fell, adding one drop token each time. It is important that you balance precision with speed, because you are working to move the disc around quickly and successfully with the fewest drop tokens collected. Time will start when you indicate you are ready, and stop when you call 'stop.'"

Variations

Speed can be played many ways. Arrange your group in a circle and try passing a ball from lap to lap, using no hands. A small bucket or tin can may be passed from foot to foot, or simply passed hand-to-hand in this classic version. These variations can be used together in one activity or setting, or independently at any time.

Safety

Watch for group members being rough with one another while passing back to back. No one should ever put all of his or her weight on another's back, or deliberately pass out of control.

Reflection

Speed is a great activity that can be used to explore innovative problem solving.

Discover: "How well did your team perform? Did you use the best solution? If so, how? If not, why?"

Connect: "Where do you see our group being most innovative when it comes to solving problems? How do you approach problem solving?"

Create: "What do you want to consider the next time a problem comes your way? How will you go about solving it? How will you use others to solve group problems?"



Activity: **Spider's Web**

Overview

Spider's Web is an excellent, but more advanced activity. It requires your group to work at a slightly higher level of cooperation. Team members work to pass themselves or one another through a spider's web made of masking tape. Everyone must pass through and make it to the other side safely, without disturbing the web. We recommend that you try some of the other activities on the CD-ROM such as *First Impressions*, and *Mountain Rescue* before moving to this activity.

Set Up

Props

- 1 Large roll of masking tape

Set Up

Find a large hallway or doorway and create the web as shown in the video. The top of the web should be no higher than 6' and the bottom should be approximately 18" from the ground.

Instructions

The goal for your team is to try to get everyone through the web to the other side. Team members must be passed or step through the spaces in the web without touching it. The holes close once they have been used. However, two participants may be passed through each hole as long as they stay in constant contact. Depending on your group size, you may allow three group members through each hole. During the activity, participants may go under the web, but never over it. If a person touches the web during transit they must return and be revived by everyone surrounding them, jumping and chanting "You're OK!" This secret chant may be used three times, only.

Everyone must help spot each time someone is lifted off the ground, including one person spotting just the head and neck of the lifted participant.

The team has 15 to 20 minutes to accomplish this task.

Sample Story Line

"Your team of eco racers has survived eight grueling days in the Australian Outback. You have moved across terrain that is home to some of the most dangerous animals and insects on the planet. Your bodies are beaten and tired, but you press on for the glory of the finish. On your final day across the harsh landscape, you encounter the web of a giant spider, until now only known in myth and legend. You've heard the stories, but you didn't believe them. Turning around and running would do no good, as the spider has already sensed your approach. You know there is only one way to go, right through the giant trap."

"Your team must pass or step through the heart of the spider web without disturbing it in any way. The spider's keen sense of touch will know if it has been moved. You know from legend that the holes in the web secrete a substance that closes them to further traffic after something has gone through, however, you can trick the spider by putting two people through at a time, as long as they stay connected in some way. You want to stay as far from the spider as possible, so going over the web is not an option. You may go under it as if it was a hole. If you are unlucky enough to touch the web, all is not lost. If you were moving through the hole, you must be safely brought back, surrounded, and revived from the poisonous grips by teammates jumping around you shouting 'you're OK!' You may only use this antidote 3 times before all is truly lost."

Be very clear about safety and insist that they take this seriously. Spotting and proper lifting are key to a safe environment. Make sure your group can handle this level of challenge.

Activity: **Spider's Web**

Variations

To increase safety and provide a great variation for a larger group, you can start with two teams on both sides of the web and ask them to trade sides. Teams may help each other when passing. This guarantees that you'll always have enough people on each side for passing.

Safety

Practice appropriate spotting techniques. Make sure that everyone is involved when someone is being lifted off the ground, and appoint one person to focus on spotting the head and neck of the lifted participant. It is very important that any lifted participant say that they choose to be lifted. Also, only allow lifting when you feel that there are enough people on both sides to do so safely. You are a great spotter. Get in and be part of the team.

Reflection

Ask questions based upon what happened during the activity. Here are some questions to get you started.

Discover: "How did you feel when you stepped, or were passed, through the web? How did you feel passing your teammates through the web?"

Connect: "When do you have to depend on your team completely? When do you find your teammates fully dependent on you? How do you show your support? How do you know you are being supported?"

Create: "In which areas can we demonstrate more support for one another? What would it look like to have that level of support? How will you show your team that you support them the next time a tough challenge comes your way?"



Activity: **Structure**

Overview

This activity gets your group to construct teams by building structures. First, your team breaks into smaller groups and with a limited amount of plain paper and tape. The team is then asked to build the tallest structure possible from the resources provided. Each group will begin construction independently, but will soon realize that pooling their resources may be the answer.

Set Up

Props

- 40 Sheets of copy or printer paper
- 1 Roll of scotch or masking tape

Set Up

Divide your team into 4 groups. Equally distribute the paper and approximately 5" of tape to each group. Have each group find a nice flat place to work apart from each other.

Instructions

The team must build the tallest freestanding structure possible. "Team" may be interpreted by your participants as everyone, or each individual group.

The team may only use the props that have been handed out and has only 15 to 20 minutes to accomplish its task.

Groups may pool and/or share resources to build one tall structure (leave it to them to come to this conclusion).

In a grand fanfare, judge the height of each structure when time has expired.

Sample Story Line

"Your team is an assembly of the brightest architectural engineers and construction workers from around the globe. You have been handpicked and brought here to participate in an unconventional and somewhat strange challenge. Your team must build the tallest freestanding structure possible—not out of mortar, brick, steel or concrete—but out of plain paper and tape. You will have 15 to 20 minutes for planning and construction. I will judge height when time has expired. As smart as you are, I imagine that you will succeed with a very good-sized structure. Use your resources and the brains that got you here."

Variations

Try a conservation approach by challenging workgroups to build a six-foot structure using the FEWEST resources possible. This will peak curiosity, promote a little healthy competition, and unlock your group's creative potential!

Safety

If you use common sense, safety shouldn't be a concern.

Reflection

Questions to explore after teams participate in *Structure* include:

Discover: "How well did you use your resources? Did you set a goal for how high you wanted to build your structure before you began your construction phase? If not, why? If so, how did it help your planning?"

Connect: "Where do you find planning to be most important in your life? When do you find yourself being most innovative? What problems do you like working on most?"

Create: "What are the three major points you need to consider when planning future projects? What's the most important one for you? How will this exercise prepare you for future projects?"

Activity: Virtual Group Juggle**Overview**

Virtual Group Juggle demonstrates how lost and confused people can get when there are too many things going on at once. Within the group, players create three separate patterns and try to perform them all at the same time. The confusion comes on gradually as group members accept more responsibilities. This is a fun example of how people can learn through play.

Set Up**Props**

No props required.

Set Up

Arrange your group in a circle.

Instructions

Participants create a pattern in the circle by pointing at someone and saying “you.” The pattern must get around to everyone and then back to the person who started it. You can monitor this by having everyone raise his or her right hand in the air, and bring it down, pointing at the next person in the pattern. Spend time mastering this pattern.

Create a new and different pattern by passing the name of a fruit or vegetable. For example, a player would point to a person other than the person they pointed at in the “you” pattern, and say “apple!” Again, he or she must create the pattern with the last person passing it back to the first. This time, monitor the pattern just as before, but with the left hand.

Now try both patterns at once and see if both make it back to the person who started it.

To challenge participants even more, try the advanced version by adding movement within the “fruit/vegetable

pattern.” The “you” pattern remains unchanged and must be passed as normal. However, during the “fruit/vegetable” pattern, participants must move to where the person they are pointing at is standing. When everything is said and done, if they are successful, they will have executed both patterns in the group and will have made it back to the person who started them, while moving one spot in the “fruit/vegetable” pattern.

Sample Story Line

“I would like to introduce this next exercise by asking a question. How many of you multi-task? For those of you who try to manage many things at once, have you ever messed up because you forgot a step, or because things got a little too busy for you to manage?”

“This exercise will give you an idea of how important communication is when managing many things at once. Are you up for the challenge? I need everyone to raise his or her right hand. I am going to begin by pointing at someone in the circle and saying ‘you’ to them. When I say ‘you,’ I will point right at him or her. The person I passed the ‘you’ to will then point to another person who still has his or her hand in the air. This process will continue until the last person finishes the ‘you’ pattern by pointing back at me. We must remember this ‘you’ pattern before we move on to the next part.”

Practice the pattern several times.

“Now I would like for you to raise your left hand in the air. We are going to create a pattern just like before, but this time by passing to different people and using the name of a fruit or vegetable. For example, I would point to a person other than whom I pointed at in the ‘you’ pattern, and I might say ‘apple!’ Again, we will create the pattern with the last person passing it back to me.”

Practice the pattern several times.

“Now that we have the two patterns, I will introduce the ‘you’ and the fruit or vegetable at the same time.

Activity: **Virtual Group Juggle**

This means that each person passes his or her 'you' after receiving it, and his or her fruit or vegetable after receiving it. The goal is to successfully pass both patterns around the group and back to me. Start with both hands in the air, remembering to point with the RIGHT hand for the 'you' pattern, and the LEFT hand for the 'fruit/vegetable' pattern." [Practice the pattern several times. This might take a little longer.]

"Now that we have successfully passed both patterns around the circle, I am going to introduce one more thing... movement. This will take you to the advanced level. Listen closely. The 'you' pattern will remain the same, but the 'fruit/vegetable' pattern will require movement. When I point to my 'fruit/vegetable' person, I will move into his or her spot. He or she will then continue to pass the 'fruit/vegetable' pattern by pointing to their 'fruit/vegetable' person and moving to that position. All the while, the 'you' pattern is also moving about the circle. Remember, you do not move on the 'you' pattern, just try and get it back to me like normal. If you are successful, you will have passed both patterns through the group and back to me while moving one spot in the 'fruit/vegetable' pattern."

Practice a few times until the team has it down. Be mindful of the breakdowns and use that time to process what's working and how to improve. This obviously can be very confusing, but very powerful if you get it.

Variations

Try one pattern using balls. Ask group members to set a goal of how many balls they can successfully "juggle" through the pattern and back to where they started. This is a classic team-building variation.

Safety

When played with common sense, this activity is very safe. The only potential concern involves the variation. When balls are being thrown back and fourth, remind group members to pay attention and take care of one another.

Reflection

Virtual Group Juggle is rich with learning opportunities. These questions help explore the importance of effectively communicating your message to the appropriate person.

Discover: "What was this exercise like for you? What made it that way? How important was communication in successfully doing this exercise? How much responsibility does the sender have in making sure the receiver gets the message? How much responsibility does the receiver have?"

Connect: "Can you think of a time when you asked someone to do something and this person either didn't do it or didn't do it correctly? How was this exercise similar? Different? What would happen if the message sender and receiver were responsible for sending and receiving the correct information?"

Create: "What do you need to be aware of the next time you are managing multiple tasks? How will you communicate to others who may be as busy as you? What is one thing you will focus on in your own communication with others?"

Activity: Winding Down**Overview**

This activity was inspired by a carnival game at the fair, but the materials are a bit different. You won't win any cheesy stuffed animals and it takes the whole group to make this one work, but hey, close enough. Your group is trying to move a ring down a winding piece of copper tubing without it touching. Success depends on the group's ability to work together and have a good time doing it.

Set Up**Props**

- 1 10' piece of 1/4" soft copper tubing packaged in a roll. (For cost savings, buy the 20' roll and halve it. The cost difference between the 10' and 20' roll is usually small, and you will end up with two game pieces.)
- 1 40' to 60' rope, webbing, chalk, or whatever will work to create a medium-sized circle boundary.
- 1 Large ring (and/or an assortment of different-sized rings for the variations). You could use a Styrofoam wreath (found at any crafts store), or use a large loop of rope. Pool rings also work well and are easy to find.
- 8 Generous lengths of yarn or string.

Set Up

Make a large circle and place the raised copper tubing in the center. (If you are using the rolled tubing, this is easy: Simply step on the outside end and pull up from the center. The tubing should twist down, spiralling to the ground.) Place the eight lengths of yarn/string and the ring(s) near the outside edge of the circle.

Instructions

The team must design and implement a method of lowering the ring to the bottom of the winding copper tubing with the fewest touches.

No one may enter the circle at any time.

Remind teams to be honest and hold themselves accountable for touches. The team must complete the task in 25 minutes or less.

Try goal setting. Ask the group to set a goal for the fewest touches and try to beat it. Provide an opportunity for them to start again.

Be sure to begin with a larger ring, and then graduate your group to smaller rings (if you have the time).

Sample Story Line

"Working in the high-tech industry has always been your thing, and your team has built a great reputation for superior performance through the years. At the request of the board, your team has been transferred to work on a very delicate project. You must work together to place the final o-ring in the world supercomputer mainframe, keeping the flaw or 'oops! rate' as low as possible. You will be working in a controlled environment, known as a 'clean' room. No one may enter the room, so the tools you see before you must be used to wind the o-ring in place. You will be rewarded for the successful completion of your work with a minimum number of flaws!"

Variations

Variation 1: This variation is great for including everyone. Ask participants to stand around the circle, spaced equally from one another. Once in position, their feet become stuck in place and they cannot move for the duration of play. Introduce the activity as before. This variation increases the level of attention and cooperation as participants must pass the yarn from person to person to complete the task. This variation also keeps the more extroverted crowd from dominating the activity.

Variation 2: This activity can also be fantastic when the winding is done by hand. Use multiple rings and ask the group to wind them down as fast as possible, again

Activity: **Winding Down**

with the fewest touches. Or, try it in pairs where each ring must be wound to the bottom by two participants, who must hold on to the ring at all times. Whichever you choose, vary the size of the rings to pose a challenge to your specific group.

Safety

When played with common sense, this activity is very safe. The only potential concern involves the variation. When balls are being thrown back and fourth, remind group members to pay attention and take care of one another.

Reflection

Here are some questions to get you started on the right track. We recommend you form your own questions related to your observation of the group's experience.

Discover: "On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the difficulty of the task. Why did you rate it that number?"

Connect: "Have you ever worked on a problem that was more difficult than it appeared when you started? Have you ever experienced the opposite, discovering a task to be easier than expected? How did you react in either instance?"

Create: "What have you learned about working together on a challenge? What should we consider the next time we take on a challenging task as a group? What have you learned from this exercise? How will you change as a result of this learning?"