

# Team Building Initiatives

## Create Team Flag

Each team creates their team flag and large tarp using duct tape and sharpie markers to decorate (small flag and tarp must match)

## Marshmallows

**Materials/Set Up:** Two boundary markers (ropes work well) about 20 feet apart (Make the distance long enough so that the entire group will be out in the hot chocolate, and will need to pass marshmallows to the front person to make their way to the other side.) 8 to 10 “marshmallows” (carpet squares) per group

**Procedure:** Give the group the “marshmallows” they will need for this activity. This number is may be up to one more than the number of people in the group.

Tell students that they are standing on one side of a very large vat of hot chocolate. It is so hot that, if they were to step in, it would scald their legs badly. The side they are standing on represents middle / junior high school. High school is on the other side of the vat of hot chocolate. Their challenge is to get everyone in their group safely from middle / junior high school to high school by crossing the vat of hot chocolate. Luckily, they have some “marshmallows” with them. They can use these to float in the hot chocolate, but there are a few rules

If students lose contact with a marshmallow, they lose that marshmallow. (Model this by having someone stand on a marshmallow – give that person another marshmallow to place on the ground in front of him or her – if that person steps on the marshmallow in front of him or her, and no one is making contact with the one that is left behind, the group will lose that marshmallow.) They must get as many of the marshmallows to the other side as possible when they are done. If anyone should touch the hot chocolate during the traverse, everyone must all start over.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **What did your group members do to support each other during this activity?**
- **Is it always easy for people to ask for or accept support from other people? Why or why not?**
- **If someone made a mistake during this activity (like stepping in the hot chocolate), how did the group react?**
- **Was this supporting the person who made the mistake?**
- **What could the group have done differently?**
- **If you think of the trip across the hot chocolate to be like your trip from high school to college or after school, what kinds of support will be most important to you?**
- **Where and to whom will you go to get this support?**

## Tennis Ball Transport

**Materials/Set Up:** A tennis ball, a 9-10” long piece of PVC piping, a wooden base stand, and a ring with 10 strings attached. The wooden base needs a hole in which the piece of PVC will fit into and stand up.

**Procedure:** The group must transport the tennis ball to another PVC pipe stand without dropping the ball on the ground. If the ball drops, everyone starts over. Participants need to hold the strings at the edge – not holding on to more than 6 inches. If participants start out in a corner and cannot physically be at the end of the string, they can move closer until enough space is created so that they can move back the full length of the rope. For larger groups, have them split up into two teams with each team transporting to the opposite stand.

### **Variations:**

Have the group move the tennis ball around a target and back to the original PVC pipe set-up.

Have the group complete the task without talking.

Make everyone perform the task with one eye closed.

Have multiple teams simultaneously transport their tennis balls to a central PVC candelabra stand.

The situation can be set up with an elastic loop with ropes attached and a can or bucket. For more difficulty, don't attach ropes (just give them the materials). And present the situation where they must pick up the dangerous material (a ball or something that will fit into the can or bucket) and transport it to the “safe” container.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **How did you have to work together to accomplish the task?**
- **Could you have accomplished the task if one person was missing?**
- **How did you encourage one another on as you worked?**
- **How is working in a team on this task similar to living in the body of Christ within the church? What comparisons can you make?**
- **Why is it important to be a part of the body of Christ?**
- **How can your faith grow by being a part of the body of Christ?**

### **Group Tarp Puzzle**

**Materials/Set Up:** Blue tarp that has been cut up into 27 pieces. No real set-up required.

**Procedure:** The group must take the pieces and put the puzzle together. Pieces easily blow around in the wind. This actually can provide extra challenges!

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **What difficulty did you face in attempting to complete the puzzle?**
- **How did each member participate? Be specific, were some leaders, some doers, some encouragers?**
- **What did the pieces all put together correctly make?**
- **How can the different pieces represent the different members of this group?**

### **Tape Tag**

**Supplies:** Duct tape needed, different pattern for each team

**Procedure:** Place a piece of tape down the middle of their backs, object is to rip off their tape. If you have your tape ripped off you are out, last person standing's team wins.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **How did you work together as a group on this game?**
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### **Picasso**

**Materials/Set Up:**

3 pieces of rope or webbing to make three circles that 3-5 people can fit it.

4 different colored balls (use balls with different textures like a tennis ball, wiffle ball, racket ball, and nerf ball)

A solid colored door mat or towel

A beach pail or small bucket

A sponge

A plunger head

An artificial loaf of bread or toy hot dog

**Procedure:** Instruct the group to divide as evenly as possible and go stand in one of the three circles. You can strategically place participants if you wish. (i.e. One participant has been doing a lot of talking in other activities so you could put him/her in Group 1 which is mute to give others the chance to talk) Once each group is formed, approach one group at a time and give the following instructions:

Group 1: Hand them a folder with a page of written instruction (Group 1 Instructions) followed by a diagram. You can choose to tell them the instructions written on the page or just be there as they read the instructions to provide the opportunity for questions. Often it is important to highlight that they are not allowed to talk at all even to each other and that they are the only ones that can see the diagram.

Group 2: Tell them the Group 2 Instructions.

Group 3: Hand each member a blindfold and instruct them to put it on and keep it on for the entire initiative. After they are blindfolded, take all of the objects out of a bag and place them on the ground or floor in the circle while letting the group know that you are giving the objects. Also tell them the Group 3 Instructions.

#### Group 1 Instructions

You may read these instructions aloud to the people in your circle. After reading them aloud, you will be completely mute for the duration of this initiative.

1. Nothing may come into your circle.
2. Nothing may leave your circle.
3. You may not move your circle.
4. You may not communicate verbally to anyone.
5. Using the materials given, you must construct the diagram on the next page. No one outside of your circle may see the diagram.

#### Group 2 Instructions (Middle Group)

1. Nothing may come into your circle.
2. Nothing may leave your circle.
3. You may not move your circle

#### Group 3 Instructions (Blindfolded Group)

1. Nothing may come into your circle.
2. Nothing may leave your circle.
3. You may not move your circle
4. You must remain blindfolded for the duration for this initiative

It is great to frame this activity with the help of another facilitator so that one can be giving the instructions to Group 3 while the other is giving the instructions to Group 1 and 2. Naturally, group three takes a little bit longer to set up because of the blindfolds. If Group 3 is approached first, they are unaware that the rest of the groups are not being blindfolded as well which adds another interesting element.

Once all of the instructions are given, you can announce that they may begin. Some questions will arise on to what they are supposed to be doing. The answer to that question is usually, .you have everything you need to complete this task..

#### **Concluding:**

Once the groups figure out they are to work together (Group 2 figuring out the charades that Group 1 is giving and then passing the information along to Group 3 for the assembly), the facilitator can ask if they think they are finished also giving them the warning that this is the last chance to change anything. If they are still satisfied with what they have constructed, instruct all the groups to go over to see what they have created bringing along the original diagram. Instruct Group 3 to take off their blindfolds and let the discussion begin.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- **What difficulty did you face in attempting this activity?**
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### **Australian Trolleys:**

**Materials/Set Up:** Place the trolleys (2 boards with ropes) in appropriate ground area.

**Procedures:** The group will attempt to maneuver across a set distance using the boards and ropes. Some guidelines include: Leave no ropes dragging. If any member touches the ground, start over or use three strikes then out concept

**Variations:** Do not allow talking, Forbid English, Do not allow participants to wrap hands in hand ropes.

If the group feels themselves falling out of control, just step off the board.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **How did you feel attempting to move the boards towards the goal? (Compare initial feelings and feelings at the end)**
- **How did the movements that you made compare to those of others?**
- **What were the different members of the group thinking about during the activity?**
- **What expectations did you have for the other members of the group?**
- **Did they meet these expectations?**

### **Blind Square**

**Materials/Set Up:** One long rope that is not tied in a circle. Blindfolds for each participant.

**Procedure:** Blindfold all participants. The group must make a perfect square out of the rope given to them. Also, no one may completely leave the rope. (this allows for some to move around but only by constantly being attached to the rope.) When they believe they are done, they must set it down on the ground and then remove their blindfolds to see how they did.

**Variations:** Difficulty can be changed based on the number of problems you give them. If they can't speak and can't see, the initiative is must more difficult.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **How did you feel trying to get everyone in the correct position?**
- **What kind of communication did you use?**

### **Poison Peanut Butter**

**Materials/Set Up:** 3 – 2x4 boards, 3 PVC tubes, and a rope.

**Procedure:** The entire group must get over a Poison Peanut Butter pit without touching the pit. They may only use the resources given to them. The planks may not touch the pit either, only the tubes can float on the poison.

**Variations:** This can be set up so that the boards only move in one direction or move both back and forward. It can be stated that no one may get off the planks until all are on the planks. (i.e. Don't leave anyone stranded with intentions of saving them later). In another variation, a rule is given that all materials must cross the pit as well. Materials can be changed to use wood logs and no ropes but more planks, etc.

**Safety Notes:** Watch for the PVC pipes rolling with planks on them. Be cautious when moving boards. No jumping between boards. Lift boards properly. If participants feel they are losing their balance, it is better to step off than fall and get injured.

#### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **What ideas were shared with the group?**
- **Did you feel comfortable sharing ideas?**
- **What did others do to make you feel comfortable?**
- **What solution worked and what did not?**
- **What resources did you use?**
- **Did you use all supplies?**
- **Did you need all supplies?**

### **House of Cards**

**Procedure:** The participants construct a house of cards. One point is awarded for each room on the ground floor, two points for each room on the second floor, three points for each room on the third floor, etc. The object is for the students to plan and work together to build rooms and levels to get the highest number of points that they can for their furnished structure.

### **Progressive Channels**

**Materials/Set Up:** Oversized Channels, 5 Gallon Bucket, 1 Tennis Ball, 1 Golf Ball, 1 Marble. Designate a place (anywhere from 15-30' from the starting point) for the 5 Gallon Bucket

**Procedure:** The group starts from a designated area. The goal is to transport a tennis ball from the starting point into the 5 gallon bucket. The tennis ball must roll through the oversized channels. The tennis ball cannot touch any part of the body or the ground, and it cannot stop or roll backwards at any time. If this occurs, the group must start over. You may only touch your channel, and you may not move when the ball is in your channel. Nobody can have the tennis ball until everyone has had it once. The group may have to hand off the channels to each other based on the size of the group. Once the group has achieved the goal with the tennis ball, they must do it with a golf ball. After the golf ball, they must do it with a marble.

### ***Discussion Questions:***

- **Discuss the process in solving this one.**
- **How did the design of the channel have to change and adjust?**
- **What characteristics of the group affected the design of the channel?**
- **What role did trial and error play in the success of the activity?**
- **Given the nature of the task, could this have been accomplished alone?**
- **How were you able to accomplish this task in a group, when you could not have done this easily alone?**
- **What changes did the group have to make due to the differing types of balls?**
- **Which one was the easiest?**
- **Which one was the most difficult?**