



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.



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Sample Story Line

"The 'Genie of Jessee' 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.

- 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?"
- 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?"
- 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?"



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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?"