



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.

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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?"