

**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!"

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**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?”