

### Activity: **The Bell**

#### Overview

*The Bell* is a high energy, problem-solving activity that demonstrates how chaos impacts conflict, planning, leadership, flexibility, and cooperation. In addition, participants learn to recognize the differences in style and personality of other participants.

In *The Bell*, participants have one simple task: In the quickest time possible, they must change places with a partner and high five as they pass through the center of a circle. Even such a simple task can prove difficult when planning fails and confusion emerges.

#### Set Up

##### Props

- 1 75-foot rope
- 1 12-foot rope

For this activity you will need one 75-foot rope and one 12-foot rope. Make a large circle with the 75-foot rope and inside this circle, make an inner circle with the 12-foot rope. Be sure to set the circles in a large, flat area free of debris.

#### Instructions

1. Gather the group around the outside of the 75-foot circle.
2. Ask participants to identify a partner across the circle from them by pointing and making eye contact. If there is an uneven number, you may allow one group of three to balance the group.
3. The goal is for everyone to meet their partner in the center of the inner circle, high five one another as they pass through, and reach the other person's spot as fast as they can. The whole group has 3–5 chances to make their best time.
4. 10 seconds is added to their time for breaking the following rules:

- a. Running
- b. Stepping on the rope
- c. More than two feet in the center circle at a time
- d. Missing the high five

#### Sample Story Line

You've made plans to meet your best friend in the hall between classes to exchange notes. When the bell rings, you have 3 minutes to meet, exchange notes (high five one another), and get to your next class. Of course, every other classmate of yours has the same plan! Naturally, there can be no running or yelling since you are all in school. If the bell rings before all of you have had a chance to meet, you'll have to try again to meet after the next class.

#### Safety

During this activity, be sure to remind the group of the following safety rules:

- Watch out for others as people are moving quickly about the play area.
- Absolutely no running, jumping, or otherwise unsafe movements.

#### Variations

You may wish to add that participants may not touch anyone other than their partner during the exercise. Add 10 seconds to their overall time for each errant touch. This will surely change the group's approach and may infuse the activity with more reflection opportunities.

#### Reflection

If the group acts without planning (independently), chaos will ensue. Conflict for space and territory will result. People will experience frustration, irritation,

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impatience, and conflict. They will succeed easily if they plan, communicate, coordinate, and cooperate. In addition, they need to practice patience and flexibility. This will require leadership and vision.

**Discover**

- What happened to your group in the beginning of the exercise?
- What group behaviors contributed to your team's success?
- What did individuals have to be willing to do?
- Specifically, how do these behaviors impact conflict?

**Connect**

- Can you give examples where chaos, which always has the potential to create conflict, could be "ordered" by using these same behaviors at school or in the workplace?
- What leadership characteristics enable someone to "confront" chaos and facilitate order?

**Create**

- What communication strategies will you employ to work through future conflicts?
- What planning tools can be used in the beginning of a group activity to prevent conflict from arising?
- Is there a chaotic situation in your current life where you can apply what you learned here? If yes, describe exactly what you would do.