



# Team Builders

## **BUILD A STRUCTURE**

Divide a large group of people into smaller groups (around 3-8 people per group). Give each group certain materials (can be anything--paper, straws, balloons, pipe cleaners, paper plates, usually a few different materials) and tell them they have 20 minutes (or however much time you think). They have to build a structure. The tallest structure wins. The facilitator leads a reflection on what worked well and what didn't in order to encourage teamwork.

## **ISLAND HOPPING**

**Supplies:** Milk Crates (the number of milk crates you need depend upon the number of people who will participating and the distance of the two "islands"-- 10 is a good number to start off with)  
Something to represent 2 islands (This can be as simple as towels)

You can either do this in teams, or with an entire group of people. The object is to get everyone in the group from one island to the other. You cannot "swim"--you must use the milk crates to get from one side to the other. If anyone falls off a milk crate into the "water," the group must start all over again.

The milk crates are all on the "island" that the group starts out at. The group must place the milk crates in the "water" to get across. Obviously, the greater the distance is between the "islands," the lesser the number of milk crates and the greater the amount of people, the harder this exercise is.

## **HUMAN SCULPTURES**

Divide the group into smaller groups and give everyone a topic. The different groups choose an idea that goes along with the topic and creates a sculpture using their bodies and then others guess that it is.

## **T-SHIRT TOWER**

**Supplies:** T-shirts

Place a T-shirt on the floor, and see how many people you can get on the shirt without anyone touching the floor.

## **THREE PERSON TRUST FALL**

This trust activity should not be done without doing a "two person trust fall" first. The responsibilities and commands are the same as the two person trust fall. This time there will be two catchers, one in front of the faller, and one in back of the faller. Both catchers will go through the commands, and the faller may fall either way (forwards or backwards). The faller's feet are STATIONARY, and the catchers gently push the faller back and forth like a windshield wiper.

## **WILLOW IN THE WIND**

Should follow after a "two or three person trust fall" has been completed. This activity can be performed in one large group or in smaller groups with a minimum of seven people. Have the group stand in circle with their shoulders touching. One person stands in the middle, with his/her eyes closed, body stiff, and feet planted. The rest of the group should be in a tight circle, in a sturdy stance. The outside circle group members have both of their hands up and ready at chest level. The commands are performed, and the faller may fall any way he/she likes. The rest of the group will gently change the faller's direction by easing their "fall" and sending them in another direction. The middle person will change after a few minutes.

NOTE: Address the fact that the more hands on someone, the safer they will feel. The leader also should ask group members to remain quiet during the activity - or even to make the sound of a gentle breeze.

## **LAP SIT**

The group will start in a circle. Every group member will turn placing their left leg towards the inside of the circle. Everyone will take one giant step into the middle of the circle. With hands on the person's shoulders in front of you, the group will sit on each other. The group will need to work together to communicate. Once this has been completed, the group may wish to try to walk in this formation. This is a dynamic activity - and one that will make the group feel a great sense of accomplishment when successfully completed!

## **TRUST WALK**

This is an incredible trust activity! Every group member is either blind-folded, not blind-folded, but promises not to peek, or wishing not to participate. The leaders of the group will organize the group in a straight line or in pairs, singles, etc. The leader will make sure the group begins by holding one another's hands in a circle to help make them feel comfortable. The leader will lead the blinded group members around, periodically leaving them by themselves (but always holding on to something like a tree, fence, sign, etc. – and NEVER for any great length of time), or with new people to hold on to.

THE KEY TO THIS ACTIVITY IS NO TALKING. If there is an object that needs to be stepped over, the leader should raise the hand of the group member, the next person will do the same to warn the next person, and so on. If there is an object that is low, the leader will lower the arm of the blinded group member, indicating they should duck down, and the chain will continue in the same manner as for a raised object. (The leader can pretend as well.) The leader can organize this activity according to their group.

HINT: This activity is best done in the dark, but the leader should make sure everyone feels comfortable participating. If someone is nervous, they could become the leader's partner or just watch. Squeezing the hand of a participant is very encouraging and helpful in making them feel safe.

## **TEAM VS. THE WALL**

Divide the group into two teams. Two members of the team hold the rope at about four to five feet above the ground. The object of the game is to get everyone over the rope. No one can go under the rope. Before you start transferring people over the wall, you meet as a team and decide how to get everyone over.

HINT: If group is small, just have them attempt as one big group.

## **BACK TO BACK**

Every group member must find a partner of approximately equal height and weight, if possible. The partners will lock arms with their backs to one another. With arms remaining locked at all times, the partners will sit down on the ground, kick their legs out straight, and try to stand back up. Then groups of four will try the same thing. Then groups of eight, sixteen, and eventually, the entire group together. This is the perfect activity to begin a trust sequence.

## **TWO PERSON TRUST FALL**

Every group member needs to find a partner of approximately equal height and weight. One partner will designate themselves as the faller, and one will be the catcher. Both partners will get the chance to act in both roles. The faller's responsibilities are to stay as straight as possible, not bend at the waist, keep their arms across their chest, and communicate with the catcher. The catcher's responsibilities are to get in a sturdy stance (usually one leg in front of the other in a lunge position), be aware, keep their hands right below the faller's shoulder blades, use the arms as shock absorbers, not underestimate the force being generated by the faller, and constantly communicate with and reassure the faller. The faller will have his/her back to the catcher. The commands are performed, and the faller falls straight back. After three tries, the partners should switch roles.

NOTE: Give the group members the opportunity to say "no" to this exercise. This and all other trust activities are very serious activities.

## **LEVITATION**

One person will lie on the ground on his/her back, with eyes closed (if they feel comfortable). The rest of the group will place their hands underneath the person lying down. One person will be designated to be the captain, and therefore should place him/herself at the person's head. Once everyone is ready, the captain will softly count to three. At this time, the group will pick the person up to their waist. The captain will again softly count to three, and the group will bring the person to shoulder height. The captain will softly count to three, and the group will bring the person overhead. Finally, the captain will count to three, and the group will gently rock the person (forward and backward) down to the ground.

It is the volunteer's responsibility to stay stiff as a board. It is the rest of the groups' responsibility to take this activity very seriously, not to talk, and to keep the head higher than the feet at all times.