

Adventure Course

DRC 2017

OVERVIEW:

The Adventure Course takes students along a short hike through the woods loaded with obstacles and challenges. Similar to life, students will see things they may never have seen before, face new challenges and think of how to succeed together. The only way to get there is to communicate, utilize everyone's strengths, and work like a team. This is a low ropes course with a goal; can the entire team face these challenges successfully?

OBJECTIVES:

Students will be able to:

-) Establish and experience an atmosphere that makes use of trust, support, encouragement, communication, emotional safety, and challenge by choice through group goal initiatives
-) Demonstrate safe and proper use of adventure course equipment and elements
-) Participate and successfully complete unique problem solving initiatives using mental, emotional, and physical resources of the group
-) Process and share what they saw, thought, felt, and learned during the initiatives
-) Transfer and apply new knowledge to actual situations at High Trails, home, school, and/or the next initiative

MATERIALS:

whiteboard/marker
blindfolds
retired rope
tarp
mats
inner tube

PROCEDURES:

1. Introduction - Team Discussion
 - A. Sit students in a circle on the ground.
 - B. Discuss with students what makes a team successful. Write their ideas on the whiteboard. Topics include: cooperation, trust, listening, safety (physical and emotional), inclusion, commitment, encouragement.
 - C. Review group contract from Team Discovery, and set three goals with the group for the upcoming challenges. Consider such questions as: What does this team need to work on? If strengthening a team is like strengthening a muscle, what characteristics of our team need exercise?
2. Initiatives
 - A. All activities are challenge by choice. Explain to your students that if they do not feel comfortable they do not have to physically participate but they must remain a part of the group (Quitting or sitting out is not a challenge. However, spotting other students or cheering on their group can be.)
 - B. Explain to students that everyone must give 100% toward each activity but must respect that everyone's 100% may be different.

You must choose one activity from Adventure 1 and one activity from Adventure 2. Then choose from any of the available listed activities once you have completed these.

Adventure 1

The Incredible Shrinking Island:

- a. Directions: The objective is for students to remain on a tarp as the instructor folds the tarp in half on each round. However, for a stronger buy-in, the tarp doesn't have to be "a tarp" - use a metaphor, story or analogy. Maybe it is the bus that takes the students to High Trails or maybe it's a free jet to Jenks Lake. Get students excited and using their imagination about what will

encourage them to participate. Have all students stand on the tarp with no one making any physical contact outside the tarp, such as on the ground. Have students step off the tarp; fold the tarp in half. Repeat directions, folding tarp smaller and smaller. Final size depends on size of group and abilities to work together. If students touch the ground they must start over.

- b. Safety: Do not allow students to give each other piggy back rides. Demonstrate appropriate possible ways they can physically help each other, including palm to palm grip, forearm grip or side-hug. Be aware of students comfort level and acknowledge that not every student may be immediately physically comfortable with each other, but here and now is a safe time to face this challenge.
- c. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

Birthday Line-Up:

- a. Directions: The objective is to have the students line up by birthday while facing difficult physical and communication challenges. Begin by having students stand in a line along your retired rope facing the same direction. Once students are ready, introduce the challenge: with voices absolutely silent, the group must line up by birthday without stepping off the rope. If both of a student's feet break contact from the rope or the student makes any vocal noises, a person at one end of the rope must start over at the opposite end. The children must communicate birthday information but without any speaking.
- b. Safety: Be aware of uneven ground. Green Gear may also inhibit students' motion. Because of possible awkward movement, demonstrate appropriate physical helping with palm-to-palm grip, forearm grip, or even the side hug. No pulling of the clothes, fingers or hair.
- c. Variations: Have students line up by height, age, etc. Use small props like polypots or throwables to modify lineup and consequences.
- d. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

Ring of Fire:

- a. Directions: Have the students form a circle and link together through a forearm grip. Bring out the inner tube and have two students separate, linking their arms again through the middle of the inner tube. The objective of this activity is to have the entire group get through the Ring of Fire (inner tube) while staying linked together as a team the entire time. Breaking linked hands will result in starting over from the original starting place. Do one practice round to see if everyone is comfortable, then one timed round. After the group has established one time, give them a minute to discuss how they might beat their time. Have the group try again to see how they do.
- b. Safety: Be aware of uneven ground and have a practice round so students practice how awkward and different their movements need to be without tripping. Make sure all students are linked in a forearm grip or palm to palm – no interlocking fingers. Remind them they don't need to squeeze hands, just simply remain connected.
- c. Variations: Have students facing different directions – mixed between facing inside the circle or outside. Have students create their own stop and go words or cheers while you operate the timer.
- d. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

Stepping Stones:

- a. Directions: The objective is for students to go from point A to point B without touching the ground. They may use the place mats to step on, because being on the mats is not touching the ground. Someone must be touching the placemats at all times. If no one is touching the

placemats they are taken away. If a student touches the ground or they run out of placemats students must start over at Point A.

- b. Safety: Review safe ways to physically help each other, including palm-to-palm grip, forearm grip and possibly side hug. Alert them that while they can touch mats with their hands, they must be careful not to step on hands as well. Students are not allowed to give each other piggy back rides. Be aware of students comfort level with a physically awkward activity.
- c. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

Adventure 2

A-Frame:

- a. Directions: The goal is to have students move the A-Frame from Point A to Point B with the instructor inside the A-Frame, while students hold one rope each. Begin by creating a starting and finishing line for students. Balance the A-Frame upright while students circle around the A-Frame. Have each student in the group grab one piece of rope but not touch the wood of the A-Frame. Step into the A-Frame and begin. Students must learn how to communicate to move the A-Frame toward their goal.
- b. Safety: Be aware of your personal balance while inside the A-Frame. Be careful students do not pull it to the point that another student may be endangered from a falling A-Frame. Model that students should pull on ropes by the end, *not* by pulling as high as they can reach.
- c. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

Whale Watch:

- a. Directions: The objective is to get the entire group to stand on the board while it balances in the middle of the fulcrum. The very basic idea is to let the entire group stand on it first and then balance their weight so that they all balance. You can have the group decide how many times the board may touch one side or the other before having to start over. When they get balanced, have them sing a rousing rendition of 'Row Row Row Your Boat' or an original team cheer they come up with before starting.
- b. Safety: Beware of crushed toes! Establish a clear entrance boundary with backpacks, water bottles, etc. Have the group stand at least a foot back from the board as something drastic may happen if the board goes down on their toes. The first time, only allow the group to enter the board from the middle, and not the ends. If your group is advanced enough and you can trust them, let them enter from the sides. As they then exit the board, stand on one side and have students walk down the ramp you have created.
- c. Variations: If they master boarding and balancing without too many touches to the ground, have them carefully trade sides on "the boat." If they succeed, instead of walking off the ramp you make, make them get off carefully again, without the board touching the ground.
- d. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

The Big Skis (aka Trolleys):

- a. Directions: The objective is to get the entire group to shuttle on the Big Skis from Point A to Point B to Point C. Students first face a mental challenge: to agree on a 3 number code that has a digit of two or greater AND total of the digits equal the number of students in their group BUT no repeating digits (ie, with 14 students the number code could be 5-7-2, because all digits are 2 or greater, no digits repeat, and the total of these digits $(5+2+7) = 14$). Next, separate the group into smaller groups based on their numbers (ie, a smaller group of 5, of 2 and of 7) and send them to clearly marked areas (using backpacks, water bottles, etc.). The objective, again,

is for the group at Point A to shuttle to point B, group at Point B to shuttle to Point C and the group at Point C to shuttle to Point A.

- b. Lay the skis at one of the points out for students with none of the rope handles under any skis. Demonstrate how to stand on the skis and hold the ski poles (the rope handles). Then have the team create a signal when they are all set on the skis as they board one at a time (it can be as simple as: "We're ready!") If they can move together and reach Point B, they must freeze and give a unique victory cry.
- c. Safety: Entrance and exit of the Big Skis must be structured to avoid tripping and crushed fingers reaching for the ski pole ropes. Have the team create their own signals for 'ready to start,' 'we need to stop/freeze,' and 'we did it.' **This is not a timed activity**, but rather a teamwork and communication exercise – reminding students of this can reinforce their own sense of caution.
- d. Variations: Have students face different directions on the Big Skis. Establish an additional group defined goal if the team is working well together (ie, "You all did great! How far do you all think you can go without a single foot touching the ground?")
- e. Debrief: What was the OBJECTIVE of the challenge? Was it reached successfully? Why or why not? What helped this team succeed? What was hard for this team? What were our three goals? How did we do on each one? What can we improve upon for the next activity? Do we want to add or change any goals?

NOTE: All instructors must do Adventure 1 before Adventure 2. Be sure to conduct solid debriefs after each, with active student discussion ranging from 6-10 minutes.

Wrap Up for Adventure 1&2:

- A. *What?* Concisely review the major points of the lesson, all the way back from the introductory activity.
- B. *[So what?]* What was important for you to discover from the lesson? Why was it important for all of us to take this class?
- C. *[Now what?]* What can you now do with this information? What changes can you make in your life? What can you teach to others? Who will you tell? What will you say?
- D. Pass out beads after all students have contributed.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

Special Needs: Be aware of where your group is on its group development. Some activities may be too difficult. It is ok to stop any activity if the emotional or physical safety of a student is at risk. Keep in mind positive language from you will lead the group into positive directions for themselves.

Time Fillers: If you have extra time, add in another initiative.

