

## **All In Activity**

For this game you will need four different lengths of rope: twenty feet, fifteen feet, ten feet, and feet long. Each piece of rope should be tied together at the ends so that it forms a loop. The activity begins with placing the largest piece of rope on the floor in a circle. The task is for the entire group to get inside the circle. No part of the body can be touching the floor outside of the circle. After the team has accomplished this goal, they move on to the fifteen foot rope, and so on, until they get to the smallest circle. As the circles shrink in size, teams will need get more creative and cooperative in order to meet the challenge.

## **Mine Field**

This game teaches kids the value of communication and trust. It works best if you have a large area, indoor or outdoor. Setup a series of obstacles (chairs, tables, balls, etc).

Ask the group to pair off - one person is blind folded and must make their way through the 'mine field' by listening to their partner. Their partner verbally talks them through but cannot enter the mine field. If the person hits a 'mine' they must return to the start. After everyone has gone through, swap roles.

## **Back to Back**

This is the game where you start out with two people sitting back to back and they have to stand straight up without using their hands. Add one person every time they stand up successfully.

## **Balloon Master**

Divide the group into 2 or more teams with 3-4 people on each team.

Give each team a roll of masking tape and 30 balloons. On "Go!" have members of each team roll the masking tape (sticky side out) around one of their teammates below the neckline. Next, have kids blow up their balloons as quickly as they can and stick as many as possible to the taped-up team member. You can either end the game here by awarding the Balloon Master to the one with the most balloons attached in the time allotted, or you can set up an obstacle course and when the balloons have been attached, have the player go through and back to their team. Balloons that fall off during the race can't be re-attached. The team whose player has the most balloons still attached is the Balloon Master.

**Big Bad Wolf:**

Supplies: LOTS of newspaper and LOTS of tape.

Wanna see how well your group does building something together? Try this fun exercise.

Divide students into teams of 4-6. Give each team enough newspaper and tape to build a newspaper shelter of some kind. It must be big enough to get three team members inside. Set a time limit on how long you want to give teams to work on the project.

The Big Bad Wolf (youth leader) then attempts to blow the shelter down. Award prize to the best construction job.

**Blind Square:**

This is a quick, but effective teambuilding activity.

Supplies:

- 1.) As many blindfolds as you have team members
- 2.) 1 large rope, at least 40 feet in length

Simply blindfold all your team members and throw a rope on the ground next to them. Tell them to make a square, using the full length of the rope lying on the ground next to them.

There is no trick. It's just great to see who takes charge, how they organize the corners, if one person facilitates from the middle, etc.

**Blindfolded Obstacle Course:**

Supplies: Blindfolds

Do you want to develop some trust within your group? Try this one!

Create an obstacle course (a playground works GREAT) and get your students or leaders to go through it working in pairs.

One person is blindfolded and the other (helper) is not. The helper can only lead their blindfolded partner through the obstacle course by using their voice. No touching is permitted!

For safety sake, have several "floaters" placed along the obstacle course helping as needed.

**Egg Tower:**

This is a great team builder for any group, because athleticism isn't a requirement. Absolutely everybody in your group can participate! Here's what you do.

Divide the group into equal teams, no more than 4 people big. Give each team the exact same amount of newspaper, the exact same amount of tape, and 1 egg.

The object is simple: teams must work together to build a tower that will support the weight of their egg. The team with the tallest tower (that can stand on its own power) is the winner.

NOTE TO LEADER: It's best to give the team about 4 minutes at the beginning to brainstorm their plan, and then give them about 10 minutes to pull it off.

**Encouraging Yarn:**

This team builder is a little different than the rest of the ones on our site. There is no pit of crocodiles to cross over, and no burning buildings to evacuate. Just some good ol team building at the heart's level. Here's what you do.

If you have a group of more than 30 students, break them in half, otherwise, just seat them in a circle facing one another. (Adult leaders can, and should, be included in this!)

Hand one person a ball of yarn and tell him to throw/roll it to someone else. When the other person catches it, the "thrower" says something to that person that is encouraging in nature. ("You are a loyal friend." "You give grace to others." "You are a helpful person." Etc.)

Afterwards, the person who was just encouraged grabs the yarn in one hand and tosses the ball of yarn to another person with the other hand. She then tells that person an encouraging point about his/her nature.

This process repeats until a "spider web" has been created between the students in the circle. (By the way, the same person can be encouraged more than once by more than one person.)

The group needs to be real and genuine with each other. They can have fun while doing this, but they need to be serious when they pass on encouragement to others.

Be watchful of "new" kids that very few people know. You may want to privately call on an adult leader or a great "inner circle" student to focus on him or her.

Also, don't let the "encouragements" boil down to simple compliments ("I like the way you dress.") Force them to reach for deeper meaning behind a person, their nature, or their actions. For instance, "I appreciate the fact that you do not dress in a

provocative way.” Or “I am glad you no longer wear shirts with mean or ungodly messages on them.”

When everyone has had at least one turn, you can have a discussion about this while everyone holds onto their string (maintaining the “spider web”).

### **Floating Rod:**

Supplies: A long, light rod (ex: a tent pole - the kind that unfolds and connects to itself to make a long rod).

First, place the rod on the floor and direct the youth to make two equal lines on each side, facing each other. Then instruct the youth to form their hands into fake pistols and point them at the person across from them. Pick up the rod and hold it over everyone's fingers and tell the youth that you are now going to place the rod across everyone's fingers.

The Rules Are:

Everyone must keep their fingers touching the rod on the underneath side.

No one can use any of their other 8 fingers to help.

Everyone must keep their fingers straight. (No curling their finger around the rod.)

The object is for everyone as a group to lower the rod to the ground.

At first, because not everyone will lower the rod in the same way at the exact same time at the same speed, the rod may seem to rise even though they know the objective is to lower it. After a couple of tries, they will hopefully work as a team to lower the pole to the ground.

### **Get On Board:**

This team builder can be used with just one group of students, or with several groups of students “competing” against one another. All you need is one 8' long 2X4 for each team. Here's what you do.

Tell the students to get into groups/teams of 5. Next, hand them each a 2X4 and tell them to lay it on the ground and step onto it. After everyone is “on board” (get it?), explain that they are to arrange themselves in order of their birthdays, earliest to latest. The first team to properly align themselves, wins. BUT! There are two conditions under which they must work:

1. They cannot talk...at all.
2. They cannot step off the board. (If they fall off the board while trying to configure themselves, they must start all over again, in the same order.)

You can call time, or wait till one team declares themselves the winner. Either way, to check them, at the end of the competition, just have the students whip out their driver's license or student I.D.

### **Hula Hoop Pass:**

Supplies: Hula Hoops for every team you have.

Get all your participants in a circle holding each other's hands. Get someone to 'unlock' one of their hands from the circle, put a hula-hoop onto his/her hand, then reconnect with the circle.

The aim of this game is to get the hula-hoop around the circle and back to where it started without the group letting go of each other's hands. Can also be played with groups against each other and a stop watch; lots of fun!

### **Human Knots:**

Supplies: None.

Get your group in a tight circle and tell them to grab the hand of two different people NOT standing next to them (each person will be holding the hands of two different people- the circle will look like a tangled mess). They must not let go of either of these peoples' hands.

Now the task is simple... just untangle without letting go. It's possible.

### **Picture Challenge:**

Supplies: Cameras and tripods for each group.

This competition works better with larger groups. You can make this a class competition. (You usually want groups or teams of over 20 for this even to be a challenge.)

Mount a Polaroid (old school method) or digital camera (modern method) on a tripod at a marked spot, aiming at a spot only about 10 feet away. Tape a line that the group can't go behind (keeping them close to the camera)

Explain to each class or team that they must try to fit as many people as possible into the view of the camera. The winner is the team with the most faces in the picture. (Hint: if you use a digital camera, have a way of projecting it on a bigger screen for judging.)

**Pile Up:**

Supplies: A twin-sized bedsheet for each team.

**Activity:**

Make two groups of even numbers. Take the two sheets and give one to each group. Have the group lay their sheet down flat on the ground, and tell them that the entire team must stand on the sheet together at the same time, with no one touching any part of the ground that is not covered by the sheet.

Next, have the team get off the sheet and fold it in half. Now instruct them to get their team back on the sheet, once again all of them standing on it together with no one touching any part of the ground other than what is covered by the sheet.

Once they have accomplished this, have them get off of the sheet, fold it in half again, and repeat the process.

The goal of the game is to see which team can have their entire team on the smallest area of sheet. Tell them to do whatever it takes to fit their group on the sheet, even if it means they must carry each other or pile up on each other.

**The Point:** No team can do this without full cooperation from every member of the group. They need each other, some for creativity, some for leadership, and some for pure strength and coordination. You can put the focus on communication or on the fact that everyone in the group has something to offer the entire group.

**Pumpkin Puzzle:**

Supplies: Pumpkins and toothpicks for every team.

This is a great competitive team mixer for the Fall. Cut up pumpkins into 8-10 pieces. Break your group into teams of 5 or 6. Have a supply of round, wooden toothpicks. Give each group two minutes to put its "jig-saw puzzle" pumpkin back together, using the toothpicks to hold the pieces in place. The first team done or the team with the most "together" pumpkin after the time limit is the winner. Pumpkins must be able to stand up alone to be considered a winner.

**River Crossing:**

Supplies: Materials for the starting line, river boundaries, and finish line.

The goal of this exercise is to help teach your students or leaders to work together by having them work as a team to cross a "river."

First, using your youth room, gym, or other space, you need a place to start from (a wall, lines in the gym, etc). The "river" must have easily distinguishable boundaries. It can be made from tape on the floor, wood (like 2 by 4's), or even rope. Finally, there needs to be a designated finish line.

Break the students up into teams and have them race to the other side of the river. The rules are simple: everyone on the team has to get across and no one can fall in the river (touch the floor), or the whole team has to start over.

**Sound Effects:**

Supplies Needed: A blank tape and tape recorder or digital recorder for every team.

Instructions: Each team has 15 minutes to record the sounds listed below and any other sounds that they wish to add. The sounds must last at least 10 seconds, but not more than 15. All members of the group must contribute.

Here's the catch... teams aren't going around and recording the real sounds... teams are "simulating" the sounds themselves! For example, if the list calls for a bunch of barking dogs, the team isn't to go find real dogs, they are to bark like dogs.

Assign each team a different room so they can "create" the sounds undisturbed.

- Herd of cows
- Cat in a dog kennel
- TV show theme song
- Lovesick coyotes on a moonlit night
- A worship song
- Room full of babies
- Traffic
- American Idol audition
- A typical day in a crowded public bathroom
- A pet dolphin trying to warn his master that a kid is pooping in the pool
- A couple in marriage counseling

This is just a sample list. The sky's the limit!

At the end of the allotted recording time, have a team representative come up to the front of the room and play their recordings into a microphone. (If you only have 15 items on the list at an average of 10 seconds an item... it will only take two and a half minutes to play each team's tape.)

**Stand On The Bucket:**

Supplies: A white 5 gallon bucket for each team.

This team builder can be played indoor or outdoor. This quick game can be used in many different ways.

Get as many white, 5 gallon buckets as you have teams. Turn the bucket upside-down. The object is to see how many of their team members they can get to stand on the bucket for more than 3 seconds, at the same time.

**Toilet Paper Blow:**

Supplies: Toilet Paper.

It's simple. Just see how long your team can keep one square of toilet paper in the air by blowing it. Team members are NOT allowed to actually touch the toilet paper; they can only use their breath.

**The Marshmallow Challenge**

Supplies:

Create a marshmallow challenge kit for each team, with each kit containing twenty sticks of spaghetti, one yard of masking tape, one yard of string and one marshmallow. These ingredients should be placed into a paper lunch bag, which simplifies distribution and hides the contents, maximizing the element of surprise.

See who can build the tallest tower with the marshmallow on top following these instructions:

- **Build the Tallest Freestanding Structure:** The winning team is the one that has the tallest structure measured from the table top surface to the top of the marshmallow. That means the structure cannot be suspended from a higher structure, like a chair, ceiling or chandelier.
- **The Entire Marshmallow Must be on Top:** The entire marshmallow needs to be on the top of the structure. Cutting or eating part of the marshmallow disqualifies the team.
- **Use as Much or as Little of the Kit:** The team can use as many or as few of the 20 spaghetti sticks, as much or as little of the string or tape. The team cannot use the paper bag as part of their structure.
- **Break up the Spaghetti, String or Tape:** Teams are free to break the spaghetti, cut up the tape and string to create new structures.
- **The Challenge Lasts 18 minutes:** Teams cannot hold on to the structure when the time runs out. Those touching or supporting the structure at the end of the exercise will be disqualified.
- **Ensure Everyone Understands the Rules:** Don't worry about repeating the rules too many times. Repeat them at least three times. Ask if anyone has any questions before starting.



Sources:

<http://www.thesource4ym.com/teambuilders/>