

Bridge Building

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Bridge Building

A great, high-energy group project for practicing some of the skills for building up the Body of Christ: teamwork, communication, and creative problem solving.

Group Size: Small groups of 5-7 people.

Space Required: a room with ample space for movement.

Time Required: 1 hour

Props Required: Lots of newspaper, rolls (6-8) of masking tape, a gallon jug 1/4 to 1/2 full of water, a plastic dishpan type container, cassette player, cassette tape with "William Tell Overture" or music with a hectic pace.

Activity Instructions: "You are going to build a bridge using only the newspaper and masking tape. The bridge must be strong enough to hold this bottle (show the bottle and let them check the feel of it for weight). Also, the bridge must be tall enough for the pan to pass underneath it. The bridge must be free-standing; not attached to the wall, a piece of furniture, a person or an article of clothing...FREE-STANDING."

Tell the group they are to line up according to birth month and day and CANNOT talk while doing this.

Next, starting with January each person reveals the month and date of birth. If any person is out of sequence, the groups is to say loudly "unh-hah".

Count off so that they are divided into teams.

Rules Summary: (Clarify understanding of rules. I also write them on flip chart.)

1. Cannot use materials other than newspaper and masking tape.
2. Each group to build a bridge that the dish can pass under and hold the gallon jug for 10 seconds.
3. Bridge must be FREESTANDING. Cannot stick/tape to another person or furniture.
4. 7 minutes to plan; 8 minutes to build the bridge.

Process:

Tell them they will have 7 minutes to plan, discuss, etc., and to be sure everyone in the group is included. DO THEY HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? Time the 7 minutes. After the 7 minute discussion period, pass out the newspaper and tape. Inform the group they will now have 8 minutes to construct their bridge and, by the way, there will be no talking allowed during this 8 minutes.

At the end of 8 minutes, allow the groups 30 seconds to speak to each other and then an additional 3 minutes of SILENTLY work to complete their bridge. During this last work session, play the "William Tell Overture" (or other such music) loudly.

Call time and have one group at a time present their bridge. A spokesperson from each group will tell about their bridge and pass the pan under and put the jug on top. When the jug is put on top, all will count for 10 seconds. (This will be done for each group).

Processing/discussion questions:

- How did you work as a group?
- Which part was the most difficult?
- Did everyone participate in some way?
- Did you feel like you contributed to the group?
- Did you feel like you were part of the group?
- Was there one particular person that kept the ball

rolling?

- Were there individuals who were particularly quiet?
 - How was their quietness interpreted: agreement or disagreement?
 - What influenced the type of bridge built by each group?
 - Why were no two alike?
 - How did communication or lack of it affect the work of the group?
 - What characteristics of teamwork became evident during this exercise?
 - What lessons about building up the Body of Christ can we take from this experience?
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Group Juggle

Group Juggle

A fun way to start working together. Can be used to learn names or develop a sense of interconnectedness, group responsibility, collaboration, problem solving.

You will need:

6-8 small, hollow plastic balls (approximately 4" in diameter) per group

Set up and instructions

Arrange 8-12 participants in a circle, standing a bit less than arms length apart

Include yourself in the circle

1st round of juggling

Explain that you are going to throw a ball to someone – pick someone out & ask their name, then say, “Hi Freddy, my name is James...here you go!” (underarm throw a ball to Freddy)

Freddy then says, “Thank you James,” picks someone else and says, “Hi X, my name is Freddy...here you go!”

The new receiver says, “Thank you, Freddy,” and on we go.

- If you’re not trying to learn names, skip the naming part & just throw!
- The challenge from here is simply to get the ball thrown around to everyone in the circle with no repeats, and finally back to the trainer.

2nd round of group juggling

Then say, “Right, well done, now let’s see if we can do that again – making sure we use the same order, and using each other’s names. Remember to say the name of the person you are throwing to, and thank the person, by name, for throwing it to you, OK?”

On the second round, most people will be challenged to remember who to throw it to, and the two names! Take it slow, help the group out, so that each person has a successful second round.

3rd round of group juggling

Then say, “Good, so how about we do it again, but this time, let’s let’s see how fast we can do it, OK? Here we go...Hi Freddy, my name is James....” [throw]

It will go pretty fast this time, and the group will probably feel quite pleased with themselves.

4th round of group juggling – introducing more balls

I then say, "That's great, but I think you can do faster than that. Come on, let's see how we can really go..." [I then throw and say the name with super fast enthusiasm to set the tone!

After the first ball has passed through a few hands, I take a 2nd ball out of my pocket (surprise!), and casually, but earnestly say "Hi Freddy...." [throw].

By now everyone is so well trained, the 2nd ball will automatically keep going, and there will be a detectable sense of challenge/excitement.

After a bit, introduce a 3rd and 4th ball, up to about 6 balls.

A group of 12 adults can usually handle 4 to 6 quite well. It builds a sense of achievement and group cohesiveness.

Once the group is competent, gradually then introduce more balls, or maybe a few unexpected objects (e.g., kids soft toys).

See "WARP SPEED" for the next level of Group Juggle.

Traffic Jam

Traffic Jam

An excellent group strategy game highlighting the key marks of the members of the Body of Christ: Get In Shape, Do Your Part, and Help Others Succeed.

You will need:

One blank sheet of paper

“A” and “B” papers to equal the number in your group.

Space

Set up:

1. Write the rules on the board and be sure they are clear; demonstrate as needed. :
 - NO PHYSICAL PRACTICING or VERBAL STRAGIZING before starting
 - No moving backwards
 - A person can only move forward to an empty space
 - A person cannot “jump over” their own team mate (your team mates share your letter)
 - Only one person may move at a time
 - One spot per person, no sharing
 - If any of these rules are broken, the group must begin again
2. Lay your papers in a line on the floor as below.
 - A A A A A A A (Blank) B B B B B B B B
 - The A and B side should be even or within one sheet of each other
3. Have each student stand on a letter paper, with the blank paper in the middle of the line

Goal:

The goal of the game is to get side A to side B and Side B to side A

(B B B B B B B B (Blank) A A A A A A A A)

Begin when your group is clear on the rules.

Debrief:

This is an awesome group building game, so be sure to debrief. Do not assume that they ‘get the point.’ without your

guidance:

1. At what point was the group functioning like the Body of Christ—In Shape (all heads in the game), Doing Your Part (everyone's gifts offered and used), and Helping Others Succeed (noticing, including, challenging each other).
 2. In what ways did you act together as a group to solve the challenge? (HIGHLIGHT communication, motivation and planning)
 3. In what ways did you NOT act together as a group to solve the challenge? How did you deal with this? DID you deal with this?
 4. For your next challenge, how can you be even better as a team, reflecting the power and potential of the Body of Christ?
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Balloon Games

Build Up the Body with Balloon Games

Weave these games into your small group time, or have a small group play a game during a large group session. Depending on how you introduce, referee, and debrief, each of these games can be an opportunity to build virtues, to foster group identity by working towards a common goal, to identify personal Negative Thinking Habits and temptations, etc.

NOTE: Each person blows up a balloon. Balloons work best for games at about 85% of inflation capacity. Keen participants often over-inflate which leads to higher burstage. Less confident participants may under-inflate. You can turn the ideal inflation into a game and demonstration. Show the ideal inflation and walk around coaching people. 85%

inflation also allows a handy distance for tying a thumb-knot in the neck of the balloon. Some participants may need a hand to tie the balloon off – encourage cooperation amongst participants rather than doing it yourself.

Balloon Juggle & Sort—Challenge participants to keep all balloons (1+ per person) in the air. This gets the group moving and cooperating. Once they've got the hang of it, make it harder by adding in more balloons or placing restrictions e.g., no hands to keep balloons up, elbows only, blowing only, keep juggling the balloons, but to sort them into colors (works best with large groups).

Balloon Frantic—Two to three inflated balloons per person are needed and a stopwatch. Each person has a balloon, with the rest in a nearby pile. Everyone begins bouncing their balloons in the air. Every five seconds, another balloon is added. See how long the group can keep the balloons bouncing before receiving six penalties. A penalty is announced loudly (to create stress!) by the leader when a balloon hits the floor, or once on the floor, if it is not got back into play within three seconds. The leader keeps a cumulative score by shouting out “one”, “two”, etc. When the leader gets to “six”, time is stopped. After some discussion, the group tries to better its record with another attempt.

Pass the Balloon— A handy name game. Stand in a circle. Toss a balloon in the air and call someone's name. That person must catch the balloon before it touches the ground, or must hit it up and call another name. That person must get to the balloon before it touches the ground, hit it, and call a name not yet called, etc. A variation of Group Juggle.

Balloon Bop— An extension of Pass the Balloon. Now the balloon is kept in the air, as well as calling out someone's name, also call out a body part which that person has to use to keep the balloon in the air until he/she calls another person's name and body part.

Balloon Blow—Divide into teams. Each team stands in a small circle. See which team can keep a balloon aloft the longest using only breath. Watch out for hyperventilation!

Balloon Help—Start off with everyone in a circle, facing inwards, hands behind back. The objective is for everyone to be in the center keeping all balloons afloat. Put between zero and three balloons in people's hands behind their backs. Participants should not let on to others how many they have. The leader starts alone by trying to keep three balloons afloat in the center. When it becomes difficult, the leader calls somebody's name and says "X, I need your help!". That person comes in with all their balloons and helps until it becomes difficult and then they call "Y, I need your help!" If a balloon falls on the ground, it must be picked up by someone in the center and kept afloat.

Balloon Ball Games—Ball sports take on a new dimension when a balloon is used instead, e.g., get people into pairs, 1 balloon between them. Get them to play a series of 1 on 1 sports e.g., soccer, volleyball, table tennis, etc. – add equipment if you want, but without equipment people will improvise wonderfully. On a soft surface there can be dramatic diving. Variation: Ask participants to play some points in slow-motion.

Foundations

Foundations

Help kids identify the importance of a strong foundation for the PATH, and the pillars that will uphold this lifelong

journey.

Material:

- 12 index cards, normal (not thin) thickness, per team
- A roll of scotch taper per team
- A lot of good sized textbooks...20 or more
- Prizes for the winning team, optional

Leader Preparation:

Make a foundation out of pillars. Roll index cards into tubes of equal length and secure with tape. Stand the rolls up in a close square about the size of a text book. Test its strength by placing books on it; you may even be able to stand on it.

Disassemble the structure and set the parts aside and out of sight.

Kids usually don't think of this structure. As you explain the task to them, do not give this idea away (or any idea, for that matter).

Process and Set up:

– Exhibit the pile of books. Ask a burly (or not!) student to come forward and fill his/her arms with books, adding a few at a time, to exhibit their weight.

-Explain the challenge: Each team (five people at most) will be given 12 index cards and a roll of scotch tape. Using only these items, they are to create a raised foundation on which textbooks will be piled. The foundation that can support the most books will be victorious.

– Build up the pressure and suspense by establishing a few rules and review them:

- Must be a self-standing structures—no human support allowed

- Tape may be applied to the work surface
 - No testing of foundations during building time.
- Allow and time 4 minutes for group planning (no touching of materials allowed) followed by 5-7 minutes for building
- After groups build, the foundations are tested by placing books on them, one at a time. Keep a tally. If a foundation takes all the books, try having someone stand on top of it. If it is built well it can take the weight of a person.

Lesson:

(Note: If a team created a pillar foundation, use theirs as the model for the following reflection. Likewise, if some other structure proved amazingly strong, use it.)

When all the foundations have been tested, construct your pre-made pillar foundation (if needed) and one by one add books to it. If possible, stand on it to show it's strength.

As you build, lead the kids in a reflection about the need for solid foundations in their life. Have them call out or create a list of weak foundations that are guaranteed to lead to the land of the LOST. As your tower grows, shift focus to living on the PATH. Invite them to take a moment of silence to identify three solid pillars that will help them build a strong foundation of faith for a living a life of holiness. Make a new list.

Bible verses to support this session:

Matthew 7:24-27 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock.”

1 Samuel 2:2 “There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God.”

Psalms 62:2 "He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken"

1 Corinthians 3:11 "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."