

Going In Circles

Knowing how to accomplish a task is not enough to attain success in today's workplace. Most work situations involve a group effort. This means that working with others is a skill that must be mastered by today's youth. This activity allows the participants to problem solve a specific challenge and then work together to accomplish the challenge. Communication and teamwork skills will be vital in any successful attempt.



Time Needed: 10 minutes plus discussion time

Materials Needed: One rope long enough for each member of the group to grab it with both hands while standing in a circle. A watch with a second hand or a stopwatch.

Activity: Before you begin, tie a knot in the rope creating a circle. Lay the rope on the ground in the shape of a circle. Have the participants stand around the outside of the rope circle. Have all of the participants reach down and grab the rope with both hands and bring their hands up to their waist so the rope is at waist level all around the circle.

The challenge of the activity is to see how fast the group can move the knot around the circle. The person holding the knot becomes the starting and ending point. Before you begin, have the group estimate how long they think it will take them to have the knot travel around the circle one time. The rules for passing the knot are that the rope must never touch the ground and every person must be in contact with the rope at all times. This point of contact point can be anywhere from the shoulder to the hand. Only one point of contact is required by each participant. Time their effort and see how close they come to their completion estimate. Allow for additional tries to see if they can improve their time.

Variations:

- Instead of one trip around the circle, have them try two circuits.
- Have them go one time around in one direction and then immediately go back the other way for a second circuit.
- Require them to use only one hand instead of two.
- Except for the first person, have the participants close their eyes.

Discussion Ideas:

“What” Questions

How long did our first effort take us?

How close were we to our estimate?

What methods were tried to help reduce our time?

Were any of these methods successful? Which ones?

Were any of these methods unsuccessful? Which ones?

How did the variations change the nature of the challenge?

“So What” Questions

What role did communication play in the challenge?

How does working together help us solve a problem?

How many leaders can there be when trying to solve a problem?

What happens if everyone wants to be the leader?

What happens if no one is willing to assume the role of leader?

How many people in the group contributed to helping solve this challenge?

How can the group be sure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the solution?

What happens in a group if everyone is not given a chance to be a contributing member?

What would have happened in this challenge if one or more people purposely tried to slow the rope down?

What steps could the group take when one or more people are not actively helping solve the challenge?

“Now What” Questions

List specific behaviors which show that a group is working together?

List specific behaviors which show that a group is not working together?

