4-H Volunteer Information Series

Nebraska 4-H Youth Development

4-H Team Building

Importance of Team Building Activities

- Trust-building activities are fun ways to bring a team together.
- Trust makes a team much more productive.
- Teambuilding activities are challenging and fun, teaching the importance of cooperation, communication and group planning.
- Get-acquainted or ice-breaker activities can also be used to make the group feel more comfortable.

Team Building for Effective Committees

- Committees have delicate balancing acts to perform.
  - On one hand, they need to be task-oriented.
  - On the other, they want to promote good group relationships.
  - To be effective, tasks must be clearly identified and members must work together.
  - A healthy balance between task and relationship must be found.

Team Building Activities

Try the following activities for team building

- Handcuffs
- Blind Polygon
- All Aboard

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

The 4-H Youth Development program abides with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Team Building Activity – Handcuffs

Equipment Needed: Four feet of string for each person.

Situation:

- Members in the group pair up and are each given four feet of string. Each person ties one end of the string around his/her waist.

- The leader then ties the other end of the string around the wrist of the first person.

- After securing the free end of the string on the first person, the leader loops the string of the second person through the arms or circle of the wrist person and ties it to the wrist of the second person, resulting in a set of handcuffs locking the two people together. **Do not tie the string too tightly!**

Object: The object of the activity is to free yourself without breaking, untying or pulling the string off your wrist. It can be done – it's a matter of perspective.

Answer: After the group has worked on the problem of untying themselves, give the first clue for the solution – they need to be facing each other….think of where the openings are in the loops.

The problem is solved this way:

- Face one another.

- Grasp your partner's string in the center.

- Pass this portion of the string under either of your wrist loops so that the piece of your partner's string is closest to your fingers.

- Pull this piece through with your other hand and open it to the size that will accommodate your hand.

- Pass the piece of your partner's string over your hand.

- Pull it down and through the wrist loop.

- **You're free!**

Team Building Activity – Blind Polygon

Equipment Needed: 40 inches of string (per group of 12), one blindfold per person in the group.

Situation:

- Blindfold all members of the groups or ask them to close their eyes.
- Hand each group a string that is tied into a circle.
- Ask each group to form a perfect square or triangle with the string.
- The group may talk.
- The group cannot change places on the string.
- Allow enough time for the group to form the shape.
- Ask the group when they feel they have made the shape.
- Allow the group to remove the blindfolds and look at their shape.

Discuss:

- Did they plan what they were going to do or just jump at the first suggestion?
- Was everyone involved in the planning or did one person dominate?
- Were their efforts coordinated or was everyone proceeding independently?
- How did they organize themselves?
- How were individual responsibilities assigned?
- Did they choose a leader? If not, did leader emerge from their activity, or was there no leadership?
- What leadership methods were used and how effective were they?
- How could they improve their planning and cooperation for more efficient teamwork?

Team Building Activity – All Aboard!

Equipment Needed: 10 foot of string per each group of 12

Situation:

- Place string on floor to make a 2-1/2 foot square.
- Make one square for each group.
- Instruct the group that the ground has suddenly become covered with a gooey, sticky green slime.
- The group has to get everyone inside the square as quickly as possible to escape the green death.
- No feet can remain outside the square.
- The entire group must be aboard (no feet outside the string) for a full 30 seconds.

Hint: The group will have to support itself to keep everyone in the square.

Adapted from: Seibold, S. *Planning guide for 4-H cubs-working with committees.* University of Illinois Extension. http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/