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## **Progression Ideas:**

For those who might be new to the challenge course experience, here are some progression ideas and focuses that you can use to get you started. The idea is to start off easy, building a foundation of comfortability, trust and encouragement...then as the activities get harder the group has something to go back to when they are being stretched.

### **Cooperation:**

Trolleys  
Whale Watch

### **Communication:**

Balance Beam  
Mohawk Walk

### **Trust:**

Balance Beam  
Tire Traverse  
Magic Carpet

### **Commitment:**

Cracker Barrel  
Traffic Jam  
Toad Stools

### **Community Building:**

Trolleys  
All Aboard

# Processing the Experience:

As the leader you can watch to see how well or not so well your group is working together. It is beneficial to your group to let them do most of the talking and processing. As the leader, it is your job to let them struggle, encourage them and when needed inspire them. By asking your group questions you can get the group to see and think about the activity in different ways. Asking questions forces the group to take ownership of the activity and utilize the gifts and ideas of fellow team members.

## **Questions to ask:**

- \*Is what you are doing working?
- \*What do you need to do differently?
- \* What was the key to your success? Why?
- \* What was frustrating about that activity? How did you deal with that frustration?
- \* What was the best form of communication you used within your group?
- \* Did you accomplish your goal(s)? How?
- \* What do you know now that you didn't know before?
- \* What is one thing that you learned about yourself?
- \* What is one thing that you learned and/or appreciate about the member in your group?

## **Rank the Activity:**

Close your eyes, rank this activity you just did on a scale of one to ten, ten being "We were awesome and worked together great." and one being "I'd rather be somewhere else."

Thumbs up or down, did you like the activity or not, and why?

One word - Go around the group and have each person say one word to sum up the activity.

**PROCESSING DOES NOT HAVE TO BE LONG AND DRAWN OUT TIMES. JUST A MINUTE OR TWO OF REFLECTION BEFORE GOING ONTO THE NEXT THING.**

# Challenge Course Activities:

## Warm-ups:

Trolleys  
Cracker Barrel  
Balance Beam  
Key Retrieval  
Nail Challenge

## Cooperative Activities:

Nail Challenge  
Tire Traverse  
All Aboard  
Whale Watch  
Traffic Jam

## Initiatives:

Barrel Fill  
Magic Carpet  
Mohawk Walk  
Toad Stools

# Toad Stools

## Objectives~

- \* promote the importance of effective communication among individuals within the group
- \* develop problem solving abilities and group support

## Scenario ~

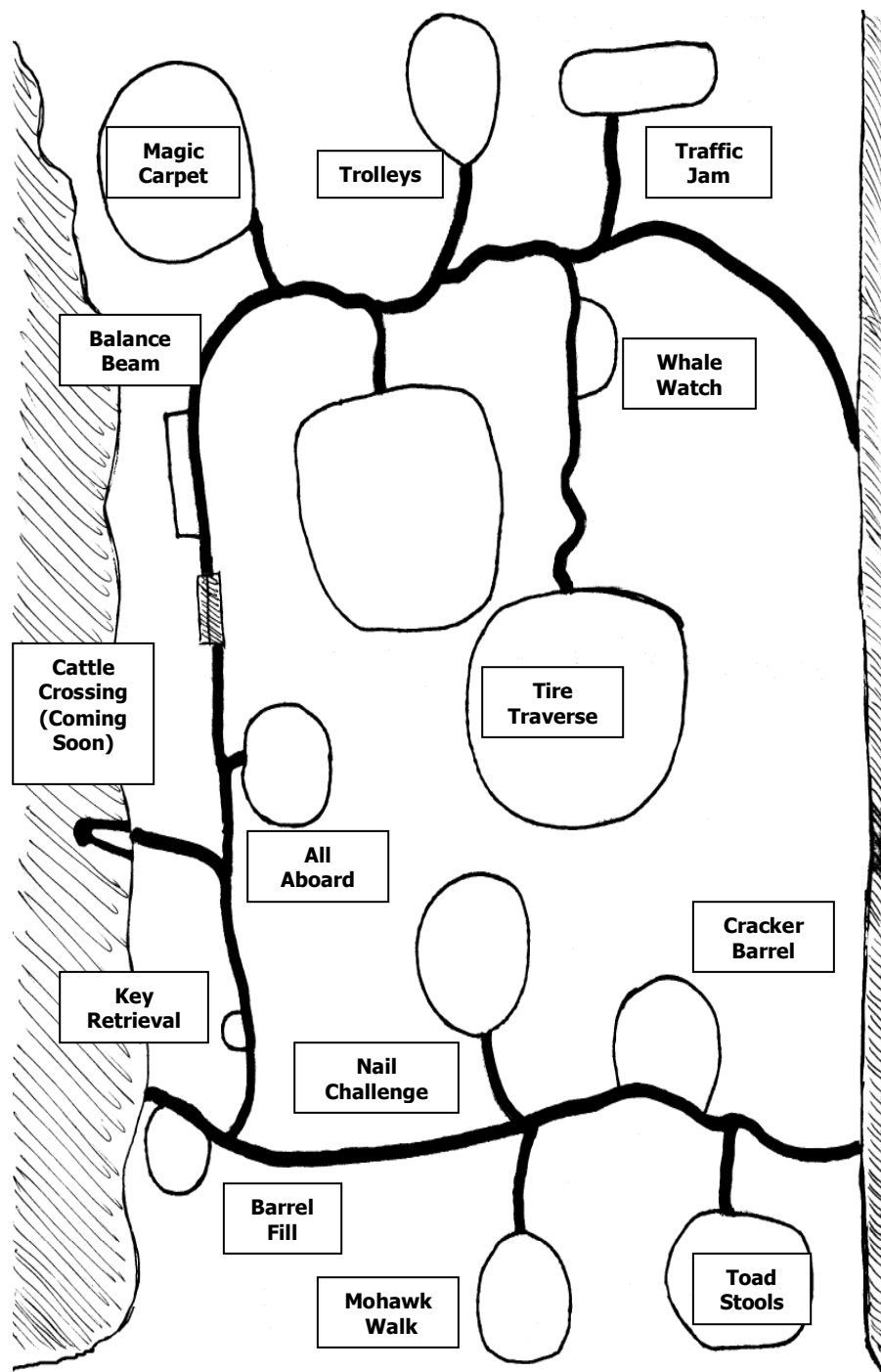
You are living in Dante's Peak. As the volcano has been erupting all of you have been forced to flee your homes to escape the hot lava flowing down the mountain. The lava has moved at an unbelievable speed and suddenly you find yourselves trapped by it with only one way to cross over it to safety. You must start at one end with the entire group behind the first stump. All group members must get across all three stumps with absolutely nothing touching the ground (which is actually a river of molten lava). There are 2 planks, which may be used to assist you, but they cannot touch the ground either. If anyone touches the ground the entire group must start over! People that touch the ground will be disabled in some way (blindfolded, legs tied together, handcuffed, etc.)

## Variation~

- \* Try transferring people across by hair color, shoe size, age...

Digging Deeper: Luke 5:1-6; Galatians 6:9

- \* Why do you feel like giving up sometimes?
- \* Does your focus hinder your persistence? Why or why not? What are you focused on?
- \* In what ways can you relate to the fishermen?
- \* What encouragement does God give you to persevere?
- \* How can we support and encourage one another in this?
- \* Are there times when it's easier to persevere than others? When are these times?



# Mohawk Walk

## Objectives~

- \*To build communication within a group
- \*To work through frustrations in a loving and encouraging way

## The Task~

(Story) The groups must cross the terrain of the Pigmies. Now the Pigmies are cannibals...meaning if you get caught, you get eaten. The Mohawk walk is a trap set for intruders...ringing those bells is like ringing a dinner bell for all to hear.

The group must connect in some way, shape or form (i.e. holding hands, linking elbows etc.) before they start. After the entire group is connected they must travel together through the Mohawk walk without ringing the bells. As they travel and fill in the squares, it is important to watch their feet. There may only be ONE foot in a square at a time. Your foot has to come out before the person's foot behind you goes in. If a square is left open in between group members, if group members disconnect from one another or if the bells ring the entire group must start over.

## Variations~

- \* Blindfold every other person in the group
- \* Make the entire group mute

Digging Deeper: Philippians 3:12-16; Hebrews 12:1-3; Romans 8:1-2,37-39

- \*Where are your eyes while running the race? Do you look at your feet...behind you...the people around you?
- \* What do you let hinder you and keep you from moving forward?
- \* How often do you let sin take control of your life?
- \* Where do you find God's grace in all of this?

## Purpose of the Challenge Course:

Some people view the challenge course as a fun activity on par with other activities like archery or a large group game. While the challenge course can and should be fun, this is a limited view of the challenge course. Utilized properly, it can be an excellent teaching tool for individual and group change. The purpose of these challenge course activities is to promote, in a unique way, the importance of being apart of and working together as a team. **The primary goal and focus of these activities is the interaction between the group members, not the task at hand. "Success is a cohesive, functioning group."**

A team can be defined as a group of people working together towards a common goal. Through the process of these challenges, groups of people are better equipped to reach their common goal. This reinforces the idea that we are all apart of one body; all parts/people have different abilities to contribute to that body; and everyone plays a vital part within the body (I Corinthians 12:12-27).

## Key Things to look for as a Group is Working through an Initiative

- \* Communication - talking and listening
- \* Cooperation
- \* Caring/encouragement
- \* Commitment
- \* Trust

(\*Note: Each of the initiatives is \*Challenge by Choice.\* Individuals may choose not to participate in an activity. While it is important to encourage everyone to participate, do not force someone to do so...this does not work towards your main goal.)

# Key Components of a Successful Teambuilding Activity

**Fun** ~ A great teambuilding activity is fun. It can still be fun if people are struggling, sweating, and working hard. Fun means to engage the imagination.

**Movement** ~ Every great experiential teambuilding activity/program gets people moving, up and out of their seat, interacting with the space around them in a new or different way.

**Risk/Challenge**~ There must be a degree of risk or challenge involved in the activity. This could mean falling backwards into the arms of your group or it could mean sharing a thought or feeling with the group. You want to set things up so people have opportunities to step outside their \*Comfort Zones.\* A skillful leader is able to create a supportive and nurturing environment that encourages risk taking.



## Magic Carpet

Objectives~

- \*Realize and account for individual differences
- \*To determine natural group leadership
- \*To become more comfortable in tight situations

The Task~

The group must turn/flip over the tarp/sheet completely while standing on top of the tarp. Spread out the tarp/sheet. The group must flip the tarp over while standing on top of it without their body parts touching the ground.

Rules:

- (1) You may NOT touch the ground in any way, shape or form out side of the tarp/sheet.
- (2) You must flip the entirety of the tarp/sheet to the opposite side.

Variations~

- \* blindfold a couple of team members
- \* make a few team members mute
- \* give various team members other handicaps (loss of arm, leg etc.)

Digging Deeper: Ephesians 4:17-32; Romans 12:1-2; II Corinthians 5:17-19

- \* In what way(s) are you made new? How are you made new?
- \* In what ways do you need to be renewed/transformed still?
- \* How and why do you go about this process? Does this process come naturally? Is this process important? Why or why not?
- \* How does this effect the way you interact with people around you?

## Barrel Fill

### Objectives~

- \* observe individual roles
- \* deal with success and failure
- \* examine effective communication skills

### The Task-

Group plugs the holes in a barrel while one member fills the barrel with as much water as possible.

Team members must plug the holes in the barrel with body parts. No sticks or anything other than body parts may be used to plug holes.

Other team members must make bucket runs to and from the lake to fill the barrel. Do not move the barrel!

Digging Deeper: Ephesians 3:16-19; Colossians 1:9-13; John 15:11

- \* Under pressure is it God's goodness and grace that abound or something else?
- \* What should you be filled with?
- \* What hinders you from being filled? What drains you?
- \* What can you do to prevent becoming empty?
- \* How might being filled effect your everyday life? Being empty?
- \* How can you use fellow believers in Christ in this endeavor?

## Warm-Ups:

Physical Activity  
20/25 mins.

# Trolleys

## Objectives-

- \* determine natural group leadership
- \* facilitate the surfacing of inner conflict
- \* develop the group process

## The Task-

Group moves from point A to point B using a pair of wooden "skis" attached by rope to wooden handholds. The trolleys are designed to fit the entire group at one time.

Team members must place their feet on the trolleys, hold on to the boards, and walk them down and around the trail. No one may touch any body part to the ground. If this occurs the group starts over.

## Variations ~

- \* have the group back up on the trolleys into the station area.
- \* have the group navigate obstacles in their path

## Digging Deeper: I Corinthians 10:23-33

- \* Do one person's actions affect others?
- \* How might someone's actions or decisions affect someone else?
- \* How should this affect the way you react or make decisions?
- \* How should this affect the way you look at and treat others?

# Initiatives:

# Cracker Barrel

## Objectives~

- \*Determine natural group leadership
- \*Examine effective communication skills
- \*Dealing with success and failure

## The Task~

To jump over each other until only one member is left standing. At the beginning each member is standing on a square, leaving only one square open. A person can move into an empty space, only if that person has someone to jump around. Each time a person is jumped, that person is automatically removed. You can only remove a person by jumping over/around them.

## Variations~

- \* minimize the amount of times an open square can be used
- \* make the group mute
- \* don't touch the ground

## Digging Deeper: *Genesis 12:1-7*

- \* What holds you back from taking chances?
- \* What happens when you take chances?
- \* Do we always get it right? Why or why not?
- \* What promises from God do we have to trust in when making these decisions?
- \* How do you live like you believe in these promises?

# Balance Beam

## Objectives~

- \*being aware of and helping those around you
- \*exploring the realm of communication outside of talking

## The Task~

After assembling your group, have them all step up onto the beam. Have them try to line up by birthday (month and day) without talking and without stepping off the beam. If they step off the beam, they must return to their original positions and start over.

## Variations~

- ~Line up by height
- ~Line up in alphabetical order by middle name
- ~Make half the group blind

## Digging Deeper: Acts 2:1-24

- \* How do you communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you?
- \* What kind of miscommunications can one have with someone who *does* speak the same language as you do?
- \* How and why do miscommunications occur?
- \* How should a believer communicate to a non-believer?
- \* Why is it important to have clear communication when trying to witness to a non-believer?
- \* Think of creative ways to relate to non-believers about the love of Christ that they might truly understand.

# Traffic Jam

## Objective~

- \* To develop problem solving abilities
- \* To deal with success and failure
- \*To work on being patient with others

## The Task~

The goal of the activity is to get Groups A and B to exchange sides, all facing forward. Divide your group onto to 2 groups. Have each group line up on the blocks, leaving the middle block free. Have groups A and B face each other. The people to the left of the extra spot are Group A and the people to the right are Group B. One spot per person, no sharing. If any of these rules are broken, the group must begin again.

## Rules:

- 1) A person can only move forward to an empty space directly in front of them, or around a member of the opposite team to an empty square.
- 2) No one may move backwards or around a member of their own team.
- 3) Only one person may move at a time.

## Variations~

- \* no touching the ground when moving from square to square
- \* have them do it a second time in their new positions
- \* do it a third time as a "test"...see what they can remember; don't allow talking or any facial expressions

## Digging Deeper: Mathew 6:25-34; Psalm 118:24

- \* How often do you rush through your day, or wish your week away?
  - \* Do you continually look forward to come next? Is this good, bad or both?
- ### Why?
- \* Why is it important to live in the moment and seek out God's graces and blessings that He has for you right now?
  - \* How does one balance looking forward to and preparing for the future and living in the here and now?
  - \* What happens when you focus on one area too much?

Physical Activity  
15/25 mins.

# Whale Watch

## Objectives~

- \*To develop the group process - working together as a unit
- \* To facilitate the surfacing of conflict
- \* To deal with success and failure

## The Task~

Have the group get on the platform one person at a time and go to one side or the other. When everyone is on the platform the group must balance it - keeping the platform from touching the ground - through one chorus of "Row, row, row your boat." NO ONE may be allowed to stand in the middle of the platform. NO ONE is allowed to straddle the middle of the platform. No one may be touching the ground or anything else that is around them to help balance the platform.

## Variations~

- \* when a person gets on the platform, don't let them switch sides while trying to balance it
- \*make one side mute
- \*have group balance the platform first, then get on keeping it balanced the whole time
- \*have group get off the platform while keeping it balanced

## Digging Deeper: Judges 16:4-22

- \*Think about a time when you've made something else more important than God. What happened? How did you feel?
- \* What happens when your priorities get off balance and you lose focus?
- \* What do you make a priority in your day to day living?
- \*What does it mean to prioritize?
- \* What can you do to make sure God is always first on your list?

SAFETY~ DO NOT JUMP WHILE ON THE WHALE WATCH. WATCH YOUR FEET AS YOU STEP ON THE WHALE WATCH...GETTING THEM CAUGHT UNDERNEATH WILL HURT!!

Mental Activity  
15/20 mins.

# Key Retrieval

## Objectives~

- \*Encourage problem solving within a group
- \*Making use of the resources around you
- \*Utilizing creative ideas of others

## Scenario~

You are missionaries on a tiny remote island. Upon arriving you find that the inhabitants of this island are carriers of a deadly disease. You have now been infected with this disease and must find the antidote. This antidote is found in a small lock box hanging from a tree. And the only key has fallen into this tube. Your team must retrieve the key and unlock the box, in order to survive.

## The Task~

Challenge is, without moving the tube, to remove the key and unlock the box that ultimately holds the tool that will save their lives. Team may use whatever is around them to get the key out of the tube.

## Variations~

- \* give one person a handicap, (blindness, loss of limbs etc.) every 2 minutes after the first 5 minutes of the activity

## Digging Deeper: John 3:16; Ephesians 2:1-9

- \*What is the key to eternal life?
- \* Is there anything that you can do to inherit eternal life with Jesus Christ?
- \*Do you ever feel like you are not good enough or haven't done enough to merit God's grace?
- \*What causes people to doubt their salvation or live in endless guilt?
- \*Define grace? Define mercy?
- \* How should this truth change the way you live now?

Mental Activity  
15/20 mins.

# Nail Challenge

Objectives~

- \*To think creatively (outside the box)
- \*To develop problem solving abilities
- \*To learn from trial and error

The Task~

The group must balance all the loose 'nails' on top of the large 'nail' sticking up out of the ground. All of these nails must be balanced on top at one time. No one may be holding onto or touching any of the nails to make them balance when all the nails have been put in place. . No nail may be touching the ground. No nail can touch the shaft of the nail in the ground. (Meaning that the group has to balance all the nails on the head of the grounded nail.)

Variations~

- \* make some people in the group mute.
- \* blindfold half the group and only allow the blindfolded people touch the nails

Digging Deeper: Judges 4; Mark 10:27

- \* Name one or two situations that you felt hopeless, like the odds were stacked up against you.
- \* What did God do to get you through those situations?
- \* Why do you think we are put in these situations?
- \* How does going through an impossible situation change your outlook on God? Or does it?
- \* How would one live differently if they truly believed that "nothing is impossible with God?"

Physical Activity  
15/20 mins.

# All Aboard

Objectives ~

- \* get to know each other
- \* begin to feel comfortable with physical contact
- \* start to understand the group make-up

The Task ~

Get the whole group on the platform without any body part touching the ground for a set number of seconds, or through one chorus of "row your boat."

Variations ~

- \* blindfold one or two people
- \* make a one - half the group mute
- \***take off top platform**

Digging Deeper: Mathew 28:19-20, 9:10-13; Luke 15:1-7, 7:36-50

- \* The "great commission" what is it?
- \* What does it mean to make a disciple of all nations?
- \* Define discipleship.
- \* Is it enough to just present the Gospel?
- \* What is the best way to reach out to others?
- \* How did Christ reach out? To whom did he reach out?
- \* What can you learn from His example?

Physical Activity  
25/40 mins.

# Tire Traverse

## Objectives~

- \*Develop trust with group members
- \*Reinforce focus and commitment is necessary

## The Task~

The task is to get the entire group across the outlined area without stepping on the tires or touching the ground outside the tires. To reach the safe side, a participant must be carried. The carrier may not stay on the safe side. The last person may run across unaided (feet within the tires). Any touch outside or on top of the tires requires another trip by that person and his/her rider.

## Variations~

- \* Blind the carriers
- \* Mute the one being carried
- \* Give the group a minimum or maximum amount of tires they will be allowed to use

## Digging Deeper: Psalm 13; Psalm 56

- \* Define trust.
- \* What/whom do you trust in? Why?
- \* Does trust come naturally? Why or Why not?
- \* What reasons has God given you to trust Him?
- \* Why might you hesitate to trust?
- \* How do you combat this?

# Cooperative Activities: