

Pipe Cleaner Tower Challenge



Camp Fire

Purpose: Discover the best ways to work as a team to make the best pipe cleaner tower.

Age Group: Kindergarten-Second Grade

Group Size: 2-4

Time: 20 minutes

Thriving Indicators (*related to activity objective; the indicators the activity promotes*):

Inclusiveness Empathy Confidence

Conflict Resolution Life Skills Purpose Nature

Other _____

Supplies and Teaching Resources:

- Pipe Cleaners
- Measuring Tape

Prep before Lesson: Gather enough pipe cleaners that are needed for each group to be successful.

Youth Outcome: To build the best pipe cleaner tower and achieve success through teamwork.

Methods to Succeed: Explain to the students that a sturdy base is very important in creating a great tower.

Adult Champions: Instructors will give support when needed, guide students into talking about using their materials efficiently, and talk out any problems that arise.

Key Messages: Teamwork is very important. This activity can help your youth find success through different challenges, making success more difficult.

Activity:

Activity Objective: Youth will be challenged through many different means, but will be encouraged to persevere and problem solve to make the best pipe cleaner tower.

Essential Question: What strategies prove to be the most successful to make the best pipe cleaner tower?

Introduction: Discuss with the class the importance of communication and working through problems in order to be successful. Explain that there will be problems thrown their way and that the only way to succeed is to work as a team.

Kid-Friendly Stated Purpose of Activity: Kids need to problem solve to make the best pipe cleaner tower.

Activity Instructions (20 minutes):

1. Get students into groups of 2-4 and give each group 15 pipe cleaners.
2. Tell each group their job is to build the tallest tower from only the pipe cleaners given to them.
3. Give them 4 minutes to work on their tower.
4. Yell, "FREEZE" and tell the groups that there has been a terrible accident and each worker has lost an arm. Now everyone has to put one arm behind their back and work one handed.
5. Give the students another 4 minutes and yell, "FREEZE" and say that your boss felt bad about bad about your lost arm so they brought in some help from France. This means that everyone gets both arms back, but they are not allowed to talk due to the language barrier.
6. After about 4 minutes of silent work, inform the students that they have gotten to know their coworkers and learned their language and are allowed to talk now. However they only have 2 minutes left to finish their structure.
7. Give the group a 1 minute warning and then when the timer hit 10 seconds, count them down aloud.
8. When the timer goes off, hands must go up! Group should stand behind their tower while the instructor inspects each tower. Have students guess the height before it's measured.
9. The team with the tallest tower gets to pick what game is played.

Extensions:

Level Adjustments:

Beginner: Offer tips and tricks in order to be successful throughout the entire challenge.

Advanced: Offer little to no tips for success, rather just observe or prompt questions.

Extra Suggestions/Notes:

Notes:

- Be encouraging and give kids reassurance if they are doing something right.
- If kids are not participating, see if you can shift the leadership in the group to allow for more participation

Processing:

Strategy: Have you tried making a stronger base? Do you think that balance has anything to do with the success of the tower?

Questions: Is everyone getting a chance to help build the tower? What is making your tower more successful? What is working?

Reflection (5-10 minute reflection on the essential question after the activity):

Strategy: Did you all try making a stronger base to be more successful? Did everyone get a chance to be successful and help each other?

Questions: What was harder, not having an arm or not being able to talk to your teammates? Why do you think that we had you not use an arm? Why do you think we did not let you all talk?

