



Teen Leadership 20

Intended Audience:

- Teens

Lesson Objectives:

Participants will:

- Develop creative thinking abilities.
- Solve the puzzle by discovering the hidden numbers.

Time: 20 minutes

Equipment and supplies:

- A shoelace

Do Ahead:

- Review lesson
- Gather supplies

Creative Thinking & Problem Solving

BACKGROUND

When struggling to find a solution to a problem, the answer is often right in front of us. People tend to be distracted when focusing too closely to irrelevant information. Too much detail can cause people to lose sight of the “big picture”.

Creative thinking is a way to generate ideas and concepts to look at problems using unorthodox solutions. New ways of thinking may be unsettling to individuals and groups. However, with fresh perspectives, brainstorming with a creative lens can be constructive and provide clarity when solving problems.

WHAT TO DO

- In this activity, the leader will begin by kneeling down on the floor with the group facing the leader (in a semi-circle may work best). The leader will state to the group they are about to show the group a number between 0-10. Next, the leader will place the shoelace in any shape on the floor for the group to see.
- When placing the shoelace on the floor, the leader should act as if they are trying to make a certain shape (be dramatic!). The group will begin to think the shoelace’s shape is significant. In reality, the shape the shoelace is arranged does not matter.
- After the shoelace is placed on the floor, the leader will ask the group “What number do you see?” The group should be looking at the shape the shoestring was placed in and guess what number it is. After a few guesses, the leader will tell them the correct answer.
- The KEY is while kneeling down, the leader must show the “number” with their fingers, which are placed on their thighs. For example, if the number is 5, the leader will keep 5 fingers out with one hand and on the other hand make a fist. If the number is zero then the leader will keep two fists on your thighs. For 10, they will keep all fingers out.



Sources:

- Heck, T. (2006). *Team Building Games on a Shoestring*. Retrieved from http://www.teachmeteamwork.com/teachmeteamwork/files/Teambuilding_on_a_Shoestring_sml.pdf

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- After the first round of guesses by the group, the leader will arrange a different shape with the shoelace. Again, the leader should act like they are making a specific shape with the shoelace. Being theatrical while placing the shoelace will continue to mislead the group. Again, after arranging a new shape with the shoelace, the leader will ask the group “What number do you see?” If the group is still confused, the leader should make it clear that the number is right in front of them.
- If the group continues to struggle answering the question, the leader should now make it more apparent as to what the number is. After arranging the shoelace, the leader should dramatically emphasize placing their fingers on their thighs (possibly wiggling their fingers so the group will notice). If the group still does not understand, the leader should remove the shoelace and ask the group “What number do you see?” while stressing their fingers.
- Before the activity starts, if the leader suspects someone in the group to know the answer for this activity from playing previously, they should state that if someone has experienced this activity before to please keep your responses to yourself.

TALK IT OVER

Reflect:

- What were you focusing on each time when looking for the numbers?
- How did you feel when you found out where the hidden number was?
- Are there any problems you’re faced with right now that have an easy solution that you’re not allowing yourself to see?
- What is it that distracts you when working with a team?
- What will cause us to gain clarity?
- How will this help you when working with teams in the future?

Apply:

- Ask the group how they could use this activity in 4-H, Junior Fair, school, or other situations.

Please take time to complete the Participant and Facilitator evaluations, found online at go.osu.edu/TeenLeadership20.