

## **Teambuilding Adventures Guide for School Groups**

**Thank you for choosing a *Teambuilding Adventure*** with Performance Development Network for your school group! We are looking forward to working with your students, and want to make their experience and yours positive and worthwhile.

This brief document is designed to:

- help you know what to expect (and answer students' questions )
- help you maximize the effectiveness of the program for your students
- give you a learning tool to use before, during and after your *Teambuilding Adventure*

### **What will the program involve?**

The Teambuilding Adventures course is all about **experiential learning** – “learning by doing”. Small groups of students (no more than 15 per team) will be given the opportunity to take on a variety of **challenges** – obstacles to overcome, problems to solve, decisions to make, roles to fulfill, tasks to accomplish... – together as a team.

**We will hike to the course** through the woods – about a 10-minute walk. (If you have an adult chaperone who cannot walk that distance, they can drive to it). There we will start with some **simple games** to get everyone comfortable, laughing, and warmed up. Even if your students already know one another, their facilitator will also want to get acquainted with them.

Many groups will bring lunch to eat on the course. We'll have water and a porta-potty available, as well as a first-aid kit, cell-phone and vehicle for any contingencies.

### **fa-cil-i-tate (fə-sil'i-tāt') verb - to make easy or easier, assist the progress of**

A **trained and experienced facilitator** will lead each team through a variety of challenge activities. We will tell the students the facilitator is not a teacher or coach – his role is to enable them to accomplish things on their own, to learn from one another, and have a lot of fun doing it.

The facilitator will give the team specific **safety instructions** for each activity, and make certain those are followed. After each activity, the facilitator helps the team learn from their experiences through the process of **debriefing**. This involves guiding a discussion through questions and observations that will help the team to learn about themselves as individuals and a group.

### The Five Powerful Words

*Teambuilding Adventures* are fun, yet our main objective is learning and application. Besides having fun, we want the participants to learn principles that they can apply in their school and personal lives. To help with this, at the start we'll teach them the acronym **CREST**, which represents the **Five Powerful Words of an Effective Team\***:

<b>C – Communication</b>	involves both speaking and listening – the latter often harder
<b>R – Respect</b>	making certain each person is equally part of the team, included, involved, not denigrated
<b>E – Encouragement</b>	overcoming frustration, not giving up, saying positive, not negative things to one another
<b>S – Safety</b>	both physical and emotional/social
<b>T – Trust</b>	both trusting and being trustworthy

We will use CREST as a basic debriefing tool and refer to these words throughout the day as we discuss our experiences.

You are welcome to use CREST as a learning tool as well. We encourage you to consider ways to assist with transfer of learning from the *Teambuilding Adventure* to the classroom. For example:

- Introduce and discuss the CREST model in the classroom before your *Teambuilding Adventure*,
- Review it afterward to reinforce learning and application
- You might even ask students to “teach to learn” following the *Adventure*; ask them to give mini-lessons to classmates, using CREST, about their learning from the challenges and team experience.
- More ideas are listed on the last page of this document.

#### ADVANCED:

- Initiate further discussions about their goals (school, family, career, what to do about a relationship or the upcoming weekend!), about possible obstacles to achieving their goal (*what MIGHT keep them from achieving a goal*), what actions they might take to overcome each obstacle, who might help them (their ‘team’) and affirmations that support their goal (i.e. *I am a person who takes time to do things right.*)
- Schedule a classroom presentation on *Goal Achievement* or the *Formula for Success* with Mark Sturgell, president of Performance Development Network and a professional personal and business coach.

### **Common Student Questions/Concerns**

#### ***“Do we HAVE to do everything?”***

All of our activities operate on the principle of **Choose Your Challenge**. That means each individual on the team has the right to responsibly choose HOW he or she will participate in each challenge. That doesn't mean we want them to choose NOT to participate, but rather to decide on a means and level of involvement that stretches them a bit. For some, being lifted off the ground may be “too much” – but helping to lift a teammate may be a big accomplishment. Of course, students can always participate by encouraging other team members at all times!

#### ***“But I'm not athletic/strong/fast/smart/outgoing – I won't do well!”***

The course is not a test of your athletic or any other ability. And success on the course has little to do with how talented you are individually in any particular area. It's a TEAM course, and your success will be built on pooling the strengths of each person as you all work together. If you work at listening to one another, helping one another, encouraging one another, together you'll be awesome.

#### ***“Will we get to do THE WALL?”***

The facilitator will select and sequence the activities based on the goals you've communicated to us in advance, the needs of the team, and what they can safely handle. Each team's experience will therefore be a little different from every other team. We will not take any team to an activity that we are not sure they can do safely. We WILL lead them in activities that will challenge them just enough to make their success a reason to celebrate.

#### ***“Are there snakes/bears/other nasty things out there?”***

There are rarely snakes seen in the woods at Rock Springs, and none are poisonous. There are no other dangerous critters. The only natural hazard to be careful of is poison ivy. We will tell the students to stay on the trails, and avoid touching plants or vines.

### **Before the Program**

**YOU MUST make certain everyone going on the course has their forms filled out.**

The 2-sided *Medical Information and Participant Agreement* MUST be filled out. It must be signed and dated by the student, by a parent/guardian, and by a witness. A teacher or school administrator can serve as the witness. Having the forms ready gets your group onto the course faster.

**NOTE: If a student does not have the completed forms the day of the program, he/she cannot be on the course. No exceptions. Teachers and chaperones should also complete the forms.**

**Encourage students to not bring “stuff” or jewelry.**

Cell phones, backpacks, etc. will be a hindrance on the course, and often they get set down and forgotten. Also, earrings, watches, rings and other body jewelry can be a hazard for some activities. It's best to not wear them - either leave them at home or at least on the bus.

**Be enthusiastic.**

Look forward to the day. Let the students know they'll have fun, as well be challenged, and that you'll be there as #1 Cheerleader to celebrate their successes.

**Determine how you want teams divided.**

If your group is larger than 15 students, we'll need to divide them into multiple equal-sized teams. We can do that randomly the day of the program. However, if you are concerned about breaking up cliques or balancing the teams in some way, determining your teams in advance will save a lot of time the day of the program.

## Teambuilding Adventures Guide for School Groups

---

### During the Program

Your role as a teacher or adult chaperone is very important in helping your students gain the most from their teambuilding experience. You can:

- **Be positive.** Expect the best from your students. Teachers have often found that students who have difficulty in the classroom shine in the different environment of the challenge course.
- **Be encouraging.** Praise positive behaviors, celebrate individual and group successes. This is especially appropriate during the debriefing times.
- **Be quiet.** There will be times you'll want so much to "solve the problem" for your students, to give them what seems to you an obvious solution. Part of what makes experiential learning so powerful is that they have to do it on their own. That often means struggle before success, and that's part of the process.
- **Be available to help.** You can help with "spotting" on certain activities. The facilitator may also need for you to handle behavioral problems that require individual attention, and which would keep the rest of the team from succeeding.
- **Take pictures!**
- **In short – be a model for CREST!**

### After the Program

Our hope is that the benefits of the *Teambuilding Adventure* will extend far beyond the day of your program. You can use some of the following ideas:

- Talk about the day afterwards. It will be easy to recall fun moments, but also encourage students to each share one lesson learned.
- Use pictures you've taken to make a web page or bulletin board of the day. Include comments or keywords that highlight lessons learned.
- Use the **Five Powerful Words** as a tool for evaluating behavior, improving performance, or setting goals.
- Decide on one of the **Five Powerful Words** that will be a goal for week, month or semester. Determine a particular behavior to strive for in reaching that goal.
- Periodically do simple, short team-building activities in the classroom. Be sure to debrief afterwards. Contact us for a list of books, websites and ideas for possible activities.

**Thanks for sharing in this experience with your students. We hope YOU have a fun and worthwhile day as well!**

Mark Sturgell & John Schirle  
Performance Development Network  
Website: [www.pdncoach.com](http://www.pdncoach.com)  
Email: [teams@pdncoach.com](mailto:teams@pdncoach.com)