



Unit: Team Building
Skill 31: Becoming A Team
Activity C: Helium Hoop

Activity Skills:

Cooperation,
communication.

Leadership Skills:

Creative Thinking,
cooperation,
communication.

Suggested Level:

Advanced

Time:

15-25 minutes

Supplies needed:

- One or more hoola hoops (or substitute with long, thin, lightweight rods).

Do Ahead:

N/A

Source:

Developed by:
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Based On:
Helium Stick published by
the Wilderdom Store
(www.Wilderdom.com)

BACKGROUND:

This activity will truly challenge your group to communicate and work together as they attempt to lower a hoola hoop to the ground while it rests upon their fingers. Although this activity sounds simple enough, it is surprisingly challenging and quite fun, especially when the hoop mysteriously rises instead of dropping. As a variation try using a long, thin, lightweight rod instead of a hoop to create a "helium stick."

WHAT TO DO:

In order for this activity to work properly, everyone must be touching the hoop at all times. The collective upward pressure from everyone's fingers will often be greater than the weight of the hoop, causing the hoop to float upward. If the group appears to be succeeding quickly at lowering the hoop, be particularly vigilant in making sure that everybody is touching the hoop at all times. Conversely, if the group becomes frustrated, allow them to stop for a moment to discuss a strategy before resuming the activity. Also, when working with a particularly large group, you may want to create several teams and have them compete to be the first group to successfully lower their hoop to the ground.

Begin by explaining that the object of this activity is to lower the helium hoop to the ground while supporting it with just your index fingers. Arrange the participants in a circle with their arms straight in front of them and their fingers pointing toward the people in front of them.

(Alternatively, if using a rod instead of a hoop, you will want to arrange participants in two rows facing each other on either side of the "helium stick"). Participants index fingers must remain touching the hoop at all times or the group will have to start over. Likewise, participants may not grab or pinch the hoop at any time or the group will have to start over.

As the participants are arranging themselves in a circle, be sure they leave enough room in the center for the hoop to rest on their fingers. If the circle is too small, ask everybody to take a step backward.

Next, lay the hoop on the participants' fingers so that they now support the weight of the hoop. They may now begin attempting to lower the hoop to the ground.

TALK IT OVER:**Reflect:**

- What did you think when you were first told the object of this activity? Did you think it sounded difficult?
- How did you react when the hoop began to rise?
- Did anyone in your group come up with a creative way to solve this problem?

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Notes:

- How did you finally manage to lower the hoop to the ground?
- If you had been an outside observer, what might you have noticed were the strengths and weaknesses of your group's teamwork abilities?

Apply:

- How does this activity relate to other experiences at school, work or at home?
- What did this activity teach you about teamwork and communication?
- What did you learn about your ability to work as a team?
- What have you learned about your own communication skills?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Option 1: Ask participants to write about a time when the harder they tried to accomplish something with a group, the harder it got. Why was it so difficult for the group to accomplish its task? Did the participants have different visions of what they were to accomplish? How did your group resolve the situation?

Option 2: Think about some people you know who are very good team players. What skills do they have that make them good at working with others? Do they usually lead their groups? If so, do they lead at all times or do they allow others to step forward as well?

Resources and Web Links:

The Wilderdom Store, [Helium Stick](http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HeliumStick.html)
<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/descriptions/HeliumStick.html>

The Wilderdom Store, [Team Building Activities, Leadership Initiatives and Problem Solving Exercises](http://www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html)
<http://www.wilderdom.com/games/InitiativeGames.html>

Ultimate Camp Resource, [Helium Stick](http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/helium-stick.html)
<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activity/helium-stick.html>