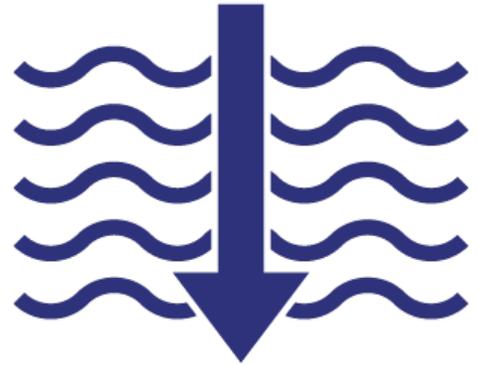




RIVER CROSSING CHALLENGE

Use teamwork skills to succeed



OBJECTIVES

- Students will utilize teamwork skills.
- Students will evaluate personal and group behaviors.

MATERIALS

- “River Stones” (paper plates, vinyl spots...)
- Boundary markers such as tape or rope.

TIME

- 30 min
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LESSON INTRO

This activity pairs well with most of the other lessons on teamwork as it is a sort of learning lab to practice and reflect on skills that have been introduced theoretically. If you are looking to extend time on any lesson, or get students up and practicing skills, this is your ticket!

The objective of this activity is for students to complete a mildly difficult task (crossing an open space using only a few “stepping stones”). For students to complete it successfully they will need to utilize skills such as creative problem-solving, communication, group organization, seeking to understand others, and moments of support.

Students should be allowed to work through the activity without teacher intervention in order for student skills to emerge and struggle to naturally occur. The reflection time of this activity is where the facilitator can guide student learning.

Frame this activity with an emphasis on a teamwork skill you’d like students to practice such as listening, collaboration, or support. Or, instead of bringing up a specific topic, discuss general roles needed to help make this successful and pre-think what team skills the group might need to employ.

LESSON STEP BY STEP

1. In advance, randomly distribute enough “river stones” between two lines spaced about 20 feet apart.
 2. Place “river stones” close enough so that people can step from one to another easily (if you are using paper on a slippery floor, consider taping down the spots).
 3. Gather the group behind a line identified as the start zone.
 4. Explain that this activity is meant for students to practice teamwork skills.
 5. Challenge students to traverse the area between the two lines by stepping only on the river stones.
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6. Spend a few moments creating a list of skills that students imagine they will need to use during this activity. Ask students to pay attention to the behaviors that they observe.
7. Invite individuals to traverse the area first, using any path they choose.
8. If a person happens to step off of a spot, invite them to restart.
9. Next, invite two people to cross together while keeping physical contact at all times.
10. Again, if someone touches the 'no-go' zone, invite the pair to restart.
11. Finally, form small teams of 4 to 6 people.
12. Challenge these teams to cross the area together while keeping constant physical contact.

VARIATIONS

1. Crossing Paths: Divide your group into two and ask each half to start from opposing start zones. The goal is the same, to safely get every person to the other safe zone.
2. Include the rule that students may not touch the opposite shore until everyone has left the shore they started on. In this variation, everyone will be "in the river" at the same time and will need to figure out how to share stones.
3. More Challenging: "Limited Stones" Instead of laying out the "stones" beforehand. Pass out enough spots so that two or three students do not have a steppingstone. The group must figure out how to share space on each stone so that everyone can get across (depending on the surface you're using, decide whether or not you'll allow students to slide their spots across the river—like skis).

FACILITATOR TIPS AND NOTES

Watch for slipping "stones" which can be a safety concern. Tape paper to the floor or move to a carpeted or grassy surface.

REFLECTION & WRAP UP

1. Invite students to reflect on their experience using some or all questions below that best fit the student experience:
 - What did you notice about yourself and the group during this experience?
 - In what ways did you offer, or were you offered, **support** during the traverse?
 - What effective **communication** skills were used?
 - What **role** did you take? What role did you notice others took?
 - What **leadership** skills were needed? Which were used? Give examples.
 - How did you see **integrity** and **trust** in this activity?
 - What skills from this activity can you use in other parts of your life?



NOTES

Source: Some fun variation ideas from [Playmeo](#)

Educational Standards: CASEL: Self Awareness, CASEL: Social Awareness, CASEL: Relationship Skills, CASEL: Responsible Decision-Making, P21: Creativity and Innovation, P21: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, P21: Communication and Collaboration, P21: Social and Cross-Cultural Skills