

Toxic Marble

Supplies:

- Large marble (one per group)
- PVC pipe (more challenging) or foam pipe insulation cut into 6"-24" lengths, cut in half lengthwise (one per participant)
- Cup/bowl/bucket to represent the containment unit (optional)
- Blindfold, masking tape, neckerchiefs (optional: used to indicate handicaps)

Participants:

This is recommended for a group size from 5-12. If you have a larger group, consider splitting the group. You can have the groups take turns performing the challenge (adding a variation for additional groups) or work on it at the same time. If you have them do it at the same time, be careful that it does not become competitive.

Area:

This can be done indoors or outdoors. It requires a space with a path that is at least 5' long per participant, but can be as long as desired. The path can include stairways, inclines/declines or other obstacles.

Challenge:

Move a marble from one location to another using only the pipe/pipe insulation.

Set-up:

Determine the start and end location of the path. When participants arrive (or begin this activity) have them each take a length of pipe/pipe insulation. The longer the course the greater the challenge.

Story:

There has been an emergency at a nearby plant and you have been called in to deal with the problem. A containment unit has failed and you need to transport this radioactive (show marble) stone from the broken containment (start location) unit to a working containment unit (end location). Since the stone is radioactive, you cannot touch it, but you can use the hazmat halfpipes you have. When the stone is near you/on your hazmat halfpipe, it weakens you and you are unable to move your feet. If the radioactive stone spends too much time on any one hazmat halfpipe, it will become radioactive and unable to be used, so you will need to work together and use all of your hazmat halfpipes to safely transport the radioactive stone to the new containment unit.

You will have a few minutes to develop a plan and then execute it. Remember:

1. You will not be able to touch the radioactive stone
2. When the radioactive stone is in your hazmat halfpipe, you cannot move your feet
3. You may not share your hazmat halfpipe

When you have developed your plan, let me know and I will be asking you three questions:

1. Do you have a plan?
2. Does everybody understand the plan?
3. (Participant), what is the plan?

When selecting a participant to explain the plan, it is recommended that you select one of the quieter and less engaged members of the group. This is to ensure that assertive and extroverted group members do not take over the group and exclude individuals.

Participants develop their plan and complete the activity with the facilitator making sure all participants are safe and included. If participants violate the rules, remove the hazmat halfpipe or handicap the participant appropriately (see variations).

Debrief:

When the group is finished you will want to debrief with questions such as the following:

- How did your plan work?
- What unexpected challenges did you run into?
- What “hero” moments occurred during the activity? (times when a particular person said or did something that was crucial to your success)
- Who contributed as a leader? As a idea generator? As a motivator? As a problem solver?

Variations:

- A time limit can be used to modify the activity.
- There can be multiple radioactive stones to be transported. This is best used in conjunction with a time limit.
- Handicaps can be used to add challenge to the team (or as a penalty for violating challenge rules). For instance, a person could have to perform one handed, not be allowed to speak, or blindfolded.