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# TEAM BUILDING

## ELEMENTARY LEVEL

### Team Rollercoaster

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This activity is part of the **Junior World Changers kit**, created to give teachers of Grades 4, 5 and 6 a fun and practical resource to introduce younger students to social justice issues and to inspire them to stay involved in their local and global communities throughout their lives. To request your copy of the Junior World Changers kit, email [youth@freethechildren.com](mailto:youth@freethechildren.com).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this activity is to teach cooperation as students bring different ideas and talents to a challenging but open-ended project.

#### Materials:

- Marbles
- Tubing (if available) or Styrofoam cups
- Tape
- Books
- Popsicle sticks
- Scissors
- Toothpicks
- Glue
- Construction paper
- String

#### Activity

##### Step 1: Build a Rollercoaster

**Purpose:** The purpose of this step is for students to work together in a group setting towards a final goal, learning the importance of cooperation when working on a task.

- Divide the class into groups of six.
- Distribute the materials equally among the groups.
- Allow the students two minutes to examine the materials before asking them the following suggested questions:
  - What materials have you been given?
  - How much of each item do you have?
  - What could you create using these materials?
- Explain to the class that each group will be building a rollercoaster out of the materials they have been given.
- They must create a rollercoaster track that will get a marble to roll from one point to another. Explain that they will receive points based on the elements they include in their rollercoaster. Groups will receive:
  - 5 points for their drawn plan.
  - 3 points for each u-turn.

- 5 points for each upside-down loop.
- 1 point each time the marble goes uphill.
- 1 point for design.
- 1 point for creativity.
- 5 points for getting the marble to run along the whole track.
- 10 points if they can get the marble to fly through the air and land in a cup.
- Explain to the class that it is important for everyone to work together to create the final product. Encourage students to plan carefully and create a design on paper before they begin building.
- Allow groups to begin creating their rollercoaster.
- After about 45 minutes, bring the class back together and ask each group to demonstrate their rollercoaster by running the marble through their track. Keep track of the points and announce the winner at the end of the demonstration.

### Step 2: Debrief

Purpose: The purpose of this step is for students to recognize their individual strengths, learning the important ways they can contribute to a group.

- When the activity is complete hold the following debrief around cooperation and team building:
  - What did you find difficult when you were building the rollercoaster?
  - What was difficult about working in a big group?
  - How were you able to overcome any challenges?
  - How did the roles become divided up among your group? Who played what part?
  - Are there certain roles that need to be taken on in order for a group to be successful?
  - What were the strengths of each of your group members? Do the strengths your group members identified in you match up with the strengths you regularly recognize in yourself?
- Explain to students that in a cooperative group setting, it is important for roles and responsibilities to be divided up among the group to achieve a final goal. Groups that work well together usually decide on these roles based on their individual strengths. For example, someone who is good at math will do the counting, someone else who is great at art will draw the plan and design, etc. Explain to students that it is important to recognize these strengths in yourself and in your team members when you approach group tasks.
- To conclude this activity, ask students to write a reflection on their individual strengths and how these strengths can contribute to the success of a group task.