

Human Overhand

What: An initiative where the key is "vision."

Group Size: Small groups of four; as many small groups as your space and skills can handle.

Time: One hour (it seems like this should require less time, but it has almost always taken the full hour).

Props Required: Three four-foot lengths of rope per small group.

Objective: For the group to tie an overhand knot in the middle section of rope without anyone releasing their ropes.

Activity Instructions:

Distribute the ropes, and demonstrate an overhand knot (the kind that you start tying your shoes with ... half of a square knot ...); have the group practice the knot with you a few times to make sure that they understand what an overhand knot is.

Now instruct the group to face you and grab on to the end of someone else's rope so that they form a connected line - not circle - with a rope connecting each person. To truly belabor the point, the human configuration should be person-rope-person-ROPE-person-rope-person.

Why the caps in that center ROPE? Because that is the rope in which the group must tie an overhand knot without anyone letting go of the ropes that they are holding. Simply instruct the group to tie an overhand knot in the center rope without anyone releasing the ends that they are holding and step back.

That's it.

Facilitator Notes:

1. This activity is challenging - folks will ask you several times if there are any "tricks" involved. And there aren't any. The "trick" if you will is simply for the group to consider themselves as one long rope, to get a clear picture of how an overhand knot is tied, and to follow through based on that vision and understanding.
2. If a you have several small groups and any one finishes early, you can
 - ask them to assist other groups by coaching,
 - observe other groups and notice the dynamics for the debrief, or ask them to tie a figure-eight knot in the center rope)