

The Marshmallow Challenge

Activities for Collaborative Thinking

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

- To engage in creative problem solving
- To work together as a team
- To design a solution working within certain constraints

MATERIALS


- For this activity, each group will need a Ziploc bag with the following:
 - Twenty sticks of spaghetti
 - One yard of string
 - One marshmallow
 - A one-yard-long length of tape. (You can rip the tape beforehand and stick it to an edge of a table, where groups can retrieve it.)
 - One deck of cards (optional)
- Measuring tape

SETUP

- Prepare the materials in bags. You will need enough bags for groups of four participants each.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Get participants into **groups of four** by passing out a deck of cards and ask participants find three other people with cards of the same suit.
2. Explain that the groups must now **work together to build the tallest freestanding structure they can**. Remind them that **"freestanding" means the structure must stand on its own. It cannot lean against anything, and they cannot hold it up.** However, you will allow them to use **tape to secure it to the table**.
3. **Give each group a Ziploc bag** containing their materials.
4. Explain that the catch is **the whole marshmallow needs to be resting/**

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The Marshmallow Challenge continued

secured to the top of the structure without tipping it over, when you call, "**Time.**"

5. Give participants **fifteen minutes**, call, "**Time.**"
6. **Measure** each tower that remained standing and **celebrate** each group for one aspect of their structure.

DEBRIEF

- What do you think your group did well in this activity?
- If you could have had one more material, what would you have wished for?
- What did you learn in this activity that might help you in real life?

OPTIONAL: At the close of your debrief you can do a Google search for the TED Talk, "Build a Tower, Build a Team," by Tom Wujec, and show it to participants.