

# Swiss Cheese Parachute

Item #10037-12" & #10054-19"

## What Are The Educational Applications?

The ability to successfully participate as a member of a team is important in athletics and life-roles. In order to develop the skills necessary for successful team membership, students need practice opportunities in the areas of: leading and following, communicating, goal sharing, and problem solving. Today's physical educators are seeking ways to provide experiences that foster the development of these skills in the physical education program. One strategy used in teaching team concepts is to provide novel activities/situations designed to engage students in team-building skills. The Swiss Cheese Parachute offers the physical educator a number of novel activities for developing fundamental team skills.

## How Can I Use This Activity With My Kids?

The following activities are introductory-level challenges. Introductory-level challenges require the use of basic team-building skills (i.e., establishing a goal, planning a strategy, revising a strategy, sharing a plan, placing team members in appropriate roles, etc.), fundamental motor skills (i.e., lifting, rolling an object, tossing an object, etc.) and low-level risk taking.



### Activity #1—A Hole Lot of Fun!

**Team Challenge:** To roll a ball into consecutively numbered holes on the parachute.

**How to Play:** Number the holes on the parachute from 1-5. Begin with the ball in the middle of the parachute. Working as a team, the students will lift and lower the parachute in

order to roll the ball into Hole #1. When the ball has successfully rolled into Hole #1, shake the ball out of the catch net and roll the ball into Hole #2. Continue to roll the ball from hole to hole. At any point in the game, if the ball travels into an incorrect hole, shake the parachute to get the ball out of the catch net and continue to move the ball to the correct hole.

**Facilitating Team Building:** Use the following questions to encourage the use of team-building concepts. Leading questions can be used before, during, and after an activity.

- What skills must the team use to complete the challenge?
- Do we need an appointed leader in order to successfully complete the challenge?
- What kind of feedback/information should we give our teammates to successfully complete the challenge?
- Should the team change the plan if it is not working? If yes, how should the plan change?

**Increase the Challenge:** Students may not use any verbal communication skills to provide information to one another during the game.



### Activity #2—Mouse Trap

**Team Challenge:** To fill all the Swiss Cheese holes with a ball.

**How to Play:** The students will lift and lower the parachute so that the balls travel into the catch nets on the parachute. Each of the five balls should be "trapped" in a different catch net by the end of the game. The students must be careful not to dislodge a ball out of a catch net

while trying to get another ball into a different catch net. The more you dislodge the balls, the longer it takes to complete the challenge.

*Facilitating Team-Building Skills:* Use the following questions to encourage the use of team-building concepts. Leading questions can be used before, during, and after an activity.

- What different skills must the team use to complete the challenge?
- How should we best use the people on our team to complete the challenge?
- How should we deal with a team member who's choices/actions are adverse to the team's goal?

*Increase the Challenge:* See how many balls the class can get into the Swiss Cheese holes in a specified time period.

### **Activity #3—Last Ball Wins All!**

*Team Challenge:* To be the color team with the last ball on the parachute.



*How to Play:* Arrange the class into four color teams (blue, green, red, and yellow). The students will stand around the parachute alternating by color (one blue player, one green player, one red player, and one yellow player). Place five balls on the chute, four balls representing each one of the four color teams. The fifth ball represents all four teams. If you do not have color-coded balls, place colored floor tape on the balls for coding purposes. Students attempt to shake the other teams' balls off the parachute while keeping their ball on the parachute. The last remaining ball on the parachute scores a point for that team color. If the ball representing all four teams is last on the parachute, all four teams receive a point. Place all the balls back on the parachute and begin again.

*Facilitating Team Building:* Use the following questions to encourage the use of team-building concepts. Leading questions can be used before, during, and after an activity.

- What strategy/strategies must the team use to complete the challenge?
- What may happen in the game that would require a change of strategy?

- Would a pregame team planning session be beneficial in this activity?

*Increase the Challenge:* The last ball must end up in one of the Swiss Cheese holes. If the last ball goes off the parachute without going into the hole, there is no point awarded.

### **Activity #4—Count Down!**

*Team Challenge:* To get the ball into the highest value hole(s) by the end of a time period.

*How to Play:* Assign and label point values to each hole on the parachute. The larger the hole, the lower the point value. Each game is played for a period of 10-20 seconds. Students work together to get the ball(s) in the highest point-value holes before the end of the time period. At the end of the time period, points are earned for any ball(s) in the catch net(s).

*Facilitating Team Building:* Use the following questions to encourage the use of team-building concepts. Leading questions can be used before, during, and after an activity.

- Should the team try for a small hole or a large hole? Why?
- What are the cooperative skills we need to successfully meet this challenge?

*Increase the Challenge:* Divide the students into separate teams as in the game, Last Ball Wins All. Each team will have an assigned ball for scoring.

### **Activity #5—Eclipse**

*Team Challenge:* To complete a task in an unusual environment.

*How to Play:* Students will play this game in a semi-dark environment using two glow-in-the-dark balls. The object is to get one or both balls into a hole on the parachute. If one ball goes in the hole, it's a partial eclipse. A total eclipse is when both balls are in a hole.

*Facilitating Team Building:* Use the following questions to encourage the use of team-building concepts. Leading questions can be used before, during, and after an activity.

- What special challenge(s) must the team confront in this activity?
- What safety issues must the team address in this activity?

*Increase the Challenge:* Provide a time limit for completing the challenge.

### **How Do I Make This Developmentally Appropriate For My Kids?**

The games in this Activity Guide are designed as beginner-level instructional activities for elementary/middle

school students learning team concepts. By design, these games are inclusive and noneliminatory, creating a learning environment appropriate for a variety of class settings.

### **How Does This Product Relate To Current Educational Thinking?**

The Council on Physical Education for Children (COPEC) developed the position statement “Developmentally Appropriate Physical Education Practices for Children”. Twenty-six components of a physical education program have been identified. Developmentally appropriate and inappropriate examples are provided as guidelines for recognizing the best practices (appropriate) and the most counterproductive practices (inappropriate). These guidelines are useful as a decision-making tool for developing quality physical education programs. When working with the concept of team building, the following document guidelines are helpful.

#### *Affective Development–Appropriate Practices:*

- Teachers intentionally design and teach activities throughout the year that allow children the opportunity to

work together to improve their emerging social and cooperation skills.

#### *Active Participation for Every Child–Appropriate Practices*

- All children are involved in activities that allow them to remain continuously active. Classes are designed to meet a child’s need for active participation in all learning experiences.

#### *Competition–Appropriate Practices*

- Activities emphasize self-improvement, participation, and cooperation instead of winning and losing.

#### *Gender-Directed Activities–Appropriate Activities*

- Girls and boys have equal access to individual, partner, small group, and team activities. Both girls and boys are equally encouraged, supported, and socialized towards successful achievement in all realms of physical activities.



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