



Tree Tops High Ropes Post-visit

Classroom Activity

Brief Synopsis:

Personal growth occurs only when a person moves out of their comfort zone and into the unknown to face a new experience or challenge. Each student attempting Eagle Bluff's ropes course has a personal story to share. Students will reflect on this unique experience by writing their own personal tree tops story. An additional activity will help solidify the importance of supporting others through difficult challenges.

Ages: Designed for 4th–8th grade.

Time Considerations: 20 minutes per activity.

Materials: “My Tree Tops Story” worksheet, pencils.

Vocabulary: Comfort Zone, Safe Risks, Motivation, Encouragement, Support.

Outcomes:

1. Students will reflect and recall past challenging experiences.
2. Students will write a personal short story consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion.
3. Students will be a supportive member of a team to execute a Yurt Circle.
4. Students will learn the importance of being supportive and identify situations in which to be supportive.

Minnesota Academic Standards:

Language Arts:

4.C.1, 4.E.1, 4.III.A.1-5, 5.II.A.1, 5.II.C.1-5, 5.II.E.1
5.III.A.1,2, 6.II.A.1, 6.II.C.1-4, 6.II.E.1, 6.III.A. 1-7
7.II. B, 7.II.C.1-4 7.II.E.1, 7.III.A.1,2,6 8.II.A.1
8.II.C.1-4 8.II.E.1, 8.III.A.1,2,6

Physical Ed:

4.5.1,2,3, 5.5.3, 5.6.2,4, 6.5.1,3, 7.5.1,2,4 8.5.2

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Activity 1: My Tree Tops Story

Background: Your students have just completed Eagle Bluff's Ropes Course. A typical ropes course class will have students who were very successful and others who were very reluctant to even try. Taking both a physical and emotional risk is often difficult. Eagle Bluff's ropes course allowed students to confront their fears and anxieties in a safe setting. There is value in a student who stepped out of his/her comfort zone even if they did not get to the zip line! The following activity allows students to reflect on their own personal ropes course experience. This experience may become a building block for future situations which demand the student to take a risk and step out of their comfort zone.

Materials: My Tree Tops Story worksheet, pencils

Procedures:

1. Review the ropes course experience with your students.
2. Distribute a “My Tree Tops Story” worksheet to each student.
3. Students will draw the ropes course and label the different elements in the first section of the worksheet.
4. The second section of the worksheet encourages students to reflect on their own personal experience and write a short story first hand.
5. The story should include an introduction, body, and conclusion.
6. The story should be filled with descriptive words that define what the student was experiencing despite how far the student traveled on the course.
7. The last section is designed for students to evaluate their experience and write a motivational quote.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did each student encounter the same challenges? If no, why not?
2. How did you overcome your challenge?
3. What are some challenges you face at school, home, or with friends?
4. What skills did you learn on the ropes course that could help you overcome the challenges faced in your own life?

Extensions:

- Each student can create a motivational poster using the quote he/she wrote.
- File the tree tops stories until the following year. When appropriate, distribute the stories to the students who will be coming to Eagle Bluff and attempting the ropes course for the first time.
- Interview an adult who will share a story of a challenge he or she had faced. What was the challenge? How did that individual overcome the challenge? What lessons could I learn from that individual?



Extensions Con't...

- Create a Tree Top's story with a twist. Each student will write the introduction to their story and then exchange papers and write the body. Again exchange papers and write the conclusion.

Activity 2: Yurt Circle

Background: Each student was paired with a ground partner as they attempted the ropes course at Eagle Bluff. Ground partners played an important role watching for safety and encouraging their partner along the way. Without this valuable support, the outcome of the experience may have been much different. Likewise, individuals need to be supported and be supportive throughout daily life. To represent the importance of supporting others, your class will attempt to form a Yurt Circle. Each student will need to contribute and support one another if the Yurt Circle is to be successful.

Materials: Space to stand in a circle

Procedures:

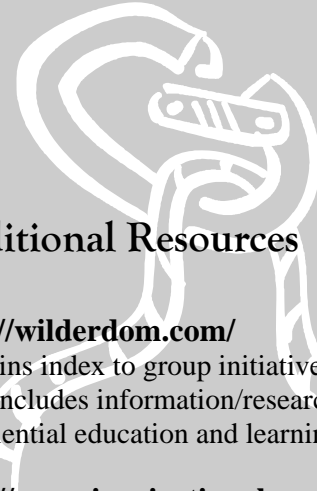
1. Explain what a Yurt is to the students. A yurt is a round domed tent used by nomads across Central Asia. The roof of the tent pushes equally hard against the walls to keep the structure standing.
2. Form a circle with even number of students facing the middle and holding hands. Students should be standing almost shoulder to shoulder.
3. Number the students by twos. Make sure everyone knows if they are an even number or an odd number. Keeping hands held, take a short step back so arms are extended but relaxed.
4. **It is important that no one ever lets go of hands during this activity.** Through tension everyone will be holding the circle together.
5. On a signal, all the odd numbered students will lean back and the even numbered students will lean forward. They should lean **WITHOUT** bending at the waist.
6. Stress that no one should be pulling harder or lighter than the rest of the group. After a few attempts, switch the direction of leans. If your students are doing well, challenge them to change directions at your command, leaning both in and out.

Discussion Questions:

1. What effect did you have on other people in the Yurt Circle?
2. What if someone let go in the middle of the activity?
3. Did you find it easy or difficult to trust the person next to you?
4. Why is supporting others so important?
5. In what ways could you show support at home? Friends? School? Sports team? Etc...

Teacher Tips

- Try the Yurt Circle first in small groups and slowly add participants to form one large Yurt Circle.
- Those with shoulder injuries should not attempt the Yurt Circle.
- Activity #2: Use the back side of the worksheet if more space is needed for writing.
- Read a current event that tells a story first hand of a challenging experience or select appropriate literature.



Additional Resources

<http://wilderdom.com/>
Contains index to group initiatives and games. Also includes information/research on experiential education and learning theory.

<http://www.inspirational-quotes.info/>
Collection of inspirational and motivational quotations.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/professional/teachwriting/>
Scholastic teaching resources which encourages students to be creative and think critically about topics focused on a variety of writing assignments.

