Lean On Me

Equipment

* One rope (regular rope or several clotheslines tied together) measuring at least 100 feet (30 m) long for younger students and at least 130 feet long for high school students and securely tied using a good square knot
* Enough vinyl bases or poly spots to mark a clearly defined standing space for each group member
* For each student, a card bearing either a character-education focus word (e.g., *respect*, *honesty*) or a definition matching one of the words

Starting Position

All group members are spaced evenly around the rope, which is shaped in a circle with the ends securely tied to close the circle. Students hold onto the rope with two hands and slowly back up until the rope is taut. Each student places a poly spot under his or her feet. The group members then lean back. After the group begins the challenge, participants may not move their feet or hands unless they are chosen to let go. Each group member must remember his or her focus word or definition.

The Challenge

The group must decide which two members should let go of the rope at a given time. To do so, the group must choose two people with a matching focus-word card and definition card. This process continues until four people are left holding the rope off the ground.

Rules

1. A student may not step off of his or her base until it is his or her turn to release the rope.

2. Once the activity begins, students may not remove their hands from the rope unless they have been selected to let go.

3. Group members may not slide their hands while holding onto the rope.

4. Before stepping off of a base, a pair of students must match a character-education focus word with its definition and notify the entire team that they have matched and are letting go. Only one matched pair can step off at a time.

5. Once a pair of team members lets go of the rope, they may not touch the rope again. They may assist and touch teammates still holding the rope, but they may not touch the rope itself.

5. No one may call another student by his or her last name or use a put-down.

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6. If a rule is broken or the rope hits the ground, the challenge attempt must stop and the group must start over.

Completion of the Task

The group is considered successful when only four members are left holding the rope and the rope does not touch the ground.