

Let's Get Loopy

This is a series of actions that build on each other. Andrew Bogue first put this series together as an introduction to P-cord loop activities.

Activity Objective: Using only the P-cord loops, start by simply picking up a ball, but end in being able to transfer to other loops and transporting the ball to a desired location.

Facilitated Objective: Cooperation, collaboration, communication, working through failure, perseverance, goal setting, planning, anticipating challenges...

Needs:

- 1 P-cord loop for every two people. We make them with 25 feet of P-cord and tie them with a double fisherman's.
- 1 dodge ball per pairing
- 1 bucket

Numbers: This works well with 10 to 30 people, with about 20 being the sweet spot.

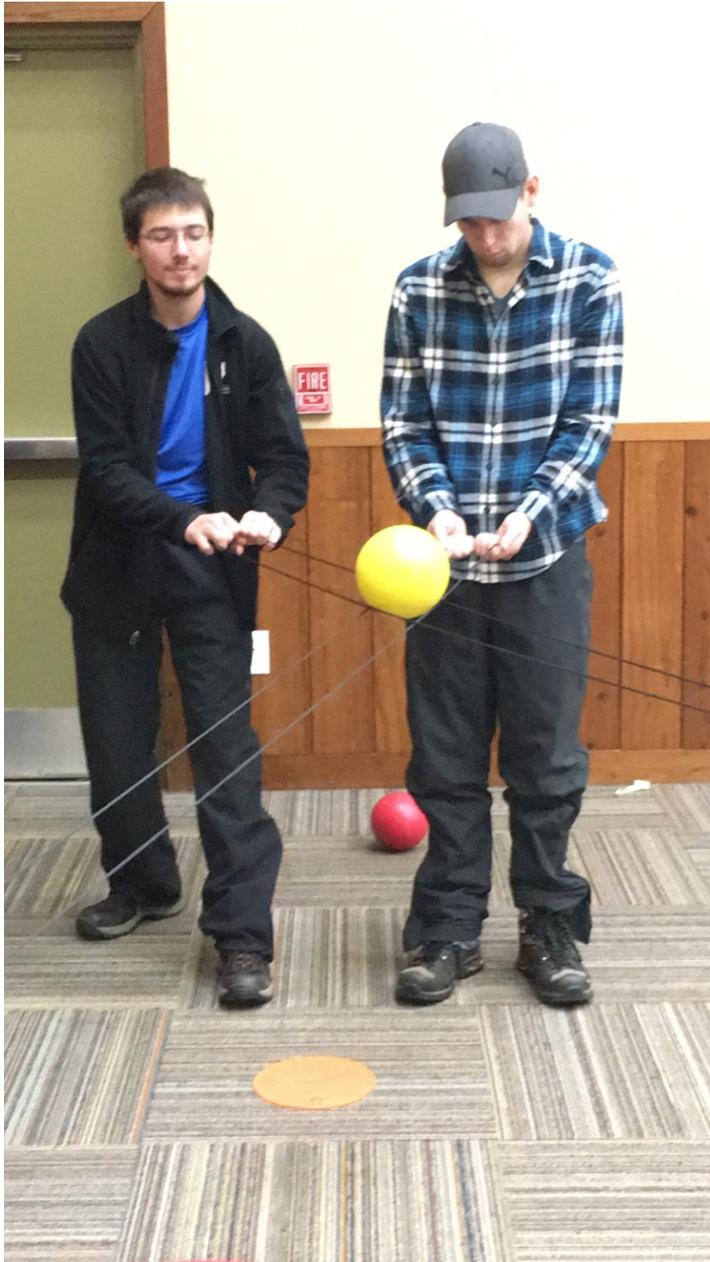
Time: About 30 minutes.

Procedure: The first stage of Let's Get Loopy is with only the P-cord loop, being able to pick up the dodge ball from the ground. We do not show them how to do this. We believe that it is important for them to experiment until they figure it out. If there are pairs that are struggling, we encourage other pairs to come along side and show them what has worked for them. Eventually, all groups will find that they need to keep the loop tight and have a fairly narrow gap between the two loop sides.

The second stage is to get the ball rolling. Now have groups start passing the ball back and forth between the partners. They should be able to start, stop, and change direction. This will once again require experimentation resulting in many dropped balls and excitement as they start to figure it out.

Next we add a target, often this is a water bottle, but they can use anything that they want. Their goal is to be able to drop the ball on the target. Have them practice this with the target in the middle, close to one end, rolling the ball a short distance, and rolling the ball a longer distance. This is typically the shortest round as most groups are fairly skilled with the loop at this point.

Now have each pairing join another pairing. One pairing will pick up the ball roll it to the other side, have the other pairing pick the ball off of their loop and roll it to the other side, where the original pairing can pick it up and so on. After they have mastered picking it up from each other, have them practice setting the ball on the other loop and then taking their loop out.



The last stage is the full team pass. Have each person stand across the circle from their partner. The ball will be placed at the top of all of the P-cord loops, and they will have to pass the ball down to each loop, and eventually drop the ball into the bucket. Have the group set a goal as to how many drops they can have before starting over. Give them a few minutes to plan and set their goal.

When they are ready to start, it helps to stand towards the middle and help pass the loops from one partner to the other as they form the web. When they are ready, start the ball on the loop of the stack. It helps to have an extra ball with you, so if there is a drop, you can place it where they left off and then retrieve the dropped ball.

Safety: We point out common sense safety concerns with P-cord loops like being tripping hazards and rope burns if they are being irresponsible with them. Depending on the age of the participants, you may have to tell them not to put it around their heads and necks, because it has been surprising how often we have to tell them this. During the second stage there is a higher potential for running into each other while retrieving stray balls.

Facilitation: As with any rope while facilitating it is important to store and put away the loops in a way that they will not be a big mess afterwards. We store all of our P-cord loops in a butterfly coil that is only about a foot long and then hang them all together on a carabiner.

Observations/Questions:

- What would you have thought/felt if I were to tell you, that you were going to be passing a ball with these loops before we did anything with them? How did taking each step we did, help prepare you for our team pass and dropping it in the bucket? When else have you had to take things in steps to be able to be successful at an activity?
- What were the most important factors in working with your partner? When you started working with another pairing, what were the most important factors in working with them? Why are some skills more important with your partner than with another pairing and vice-a-versa?
- How did you determine your goal for passing the ball down to the bucket? After completing the task was it a realistic/accurate goal, and why? How do we determine realistic/accurate goals for ourselves?
- What do you consider to be the most difficult part about this activity? How did you overcome this difficult part? How can we help each other overcome difficulties?
- How were you cooperating during this activity? What is collaboration, and how is it different from cooperation? How did you collaborate during this activity? As we continue, how can you both cooperate and collaborate?

Variations:

- The activity changes fairly dramatically based off of what kind of ball you use. We really like the weight and size of the foam dodge balls, but we have used tennis balls, ping-

pong balls, volleyballs, four-square balls. Really light for their size (beach balls) or really heavy for their size (lacrosse balls/basketballs), do not work well.

- If you have a lot of random balls you can allow each pairing to experiment with them. If we do this, we have them discuss and decide on one type of ball to use when they move it down to the bucket.
- For the final round place the ball on the ground next to the bucket. They will then have to pick the ball up and pass it to the top and then pass it down and drop it in the bucket.
- For a higher skilled group, on the final round, have every person touch the ball. This forces each pairing to pass it to each person before passing it on to the next pairing.
- To increase the need for communication, you can blind fold one person in each pair or even a couple different pairs.

Zigzag

This is usually the first activity that we do with the P-cord loops after Let's Get Loopy. This is an adaptation of Karl Rohnke's Pipeline.

Activity Objective: Using only the P-cord loops, move a ball from one zone to another.

Facilitated Objective: Cooperation, communication, failure and success, perseverance, strategizing, goal setting

Needs:

- 1 P-cord loop for every two people.
- 1 dodge ball
- 1 bucket
- 2 ropes or other boundary markers

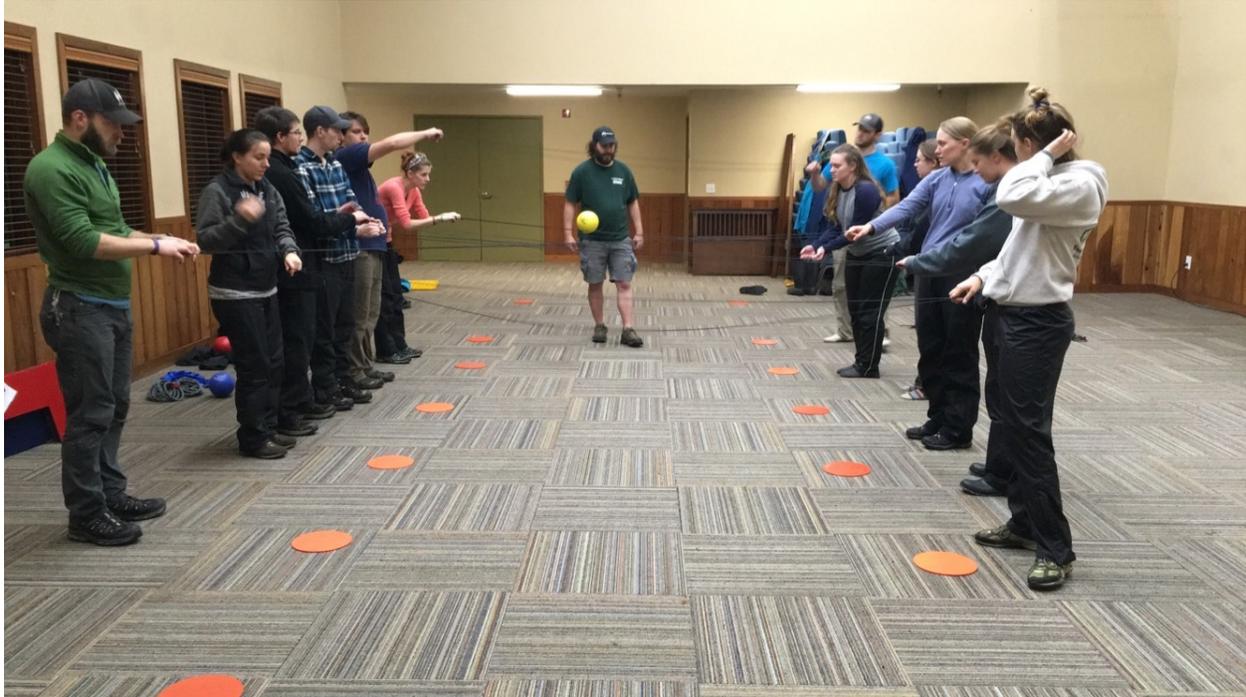
Numbers: This works well with 10 to 30 people, with about 20 being the sweet spot.

Time: About 20 minutes if they are already proficient with the loops.

Procedure: For setup, put down two parallel ropes (or other boundary markers) that are about 50 ft long and 10 to 15ft across from each other. This is the no man's zone, and they will not be able to step into this zone at any time. Put the bucket at the end of the no man's zone as this is where they will put the ball to end the activity.

One person from each pairing will be on each side of the no man's zone. If the ball is on their loop, they cannot move their feet. This will cause them to have to zigzag the ball across the no man's zone towards the bucket at the other end.

Since the overall distance is greater than what can be achieved in one series of passing, groups will have to leap frog each other to be able to make up the greater distance. This will present the added challenge of both people having to hold their end of their loop and pass the people with the ball.



If the ball touches the ground or someone catches it with their hands, this is considered a fall. Depending on your group and their goals, you can give them a number of falls, or they can choose a number of falls before they start over.

If someone loses an end of their loop, we have done a number of different things. You as the facilitator can grab the end and give it back to the person who dropped it where they were at the time of the drop. They could just be out until the rest of the group either succeeds or needs to start over. Or you can allow other pairs to use their loops to pass the dropped end to the other side. The strategy of “loosing” one end of the loop can become some group’s solution to passing each other.

Safety: The most dangerous part is when they are passing each other. Before they start, I point out that this will be difficult, and have them come up with the way that they want to pass each other. Depending on the group, you may have to lead them in considerations, and it is usually best to have them practice it. If they start to deviate from their agreed plan, it is best to stop them before they get into possible clothesline situations.

Facilitation: The extra complication of passing each other requires groups to strategize and plan ahead. With some groups, you may use a different variation, and with others you may have to show them a proper way of passing each other.

Observations/ Questions:

- How successful were you? How did planning enter into your level of success? If you were to do it again, how would you change your plan?
- Who are some of the people that you had to work together with? How did you have to work with these people? What happened/would have happened if you did not work well with these people?
- How well did our group do, and why do you think so? Why do we want to compare our group/ourselves to how others have done while evaluating how well we have done? How can these comparisons help or hinder our success and how we view our performance?

Variations:

- For elementary school kids we eliminate the no man's zone and allow them to go around to get to the front. This still requires communication and cooperation, as they will have to decide which way to go around to get to the front.
- You can also eliminate the no man's zone and tell them that all passes must be perpendicular to the last group. Some groups will move it in a staircase shape and others will move it like a stacked of capital I's, only rolling the ball when it is going straight at the bucket.
- You can change the no man's zone into the passing lane. To pass another person in order, they must step in between the ropes and can then move and pass people however they want. Be mindful of your group with this- if you have adults, some of them could have bad knees and crawling could be bad for them.

Toxic Waste

This is a variation of Toxic waste where groups use their P-cord loops to perform each task.

Activity Objective: Using only the P-cord loops, retrieve “toxic” materials, and dispose of them properly.

Facilitated Objective: Cooperation, communication, strategizing, planning, collaboration

Needs:

- 1 P-cord loop for every two people.
- 3 dodge balls
- 2- 5 gallon buckets
- 2- 40 foot lengths of rope

Numbers: This works well with 10 to 30 people.

Time: About 20 minutes if they are already proficient with the loops.

Procedure: Place a rope in a circle on the ground with a diameter of about 10-12 feet. In the center of the circle place one 5 gallon bucket on its side, and the dodge balls around the bucket while still being inside the circle. Place the second rope in a circle with a diameter of about 10-12 feet some distance from the original circle. Place the second bucket in the center of this circle.

Due to the danger of toxic/radioactive materials participants will need to stay a safe distance from the toxic waste spill. Anyone who steps within the may have the misfortune of having “strange and wonderful things” happen (talk like a pirate/Darth Vader, only speak in questions, become blind, their hand becomes a ventriloquist dummy and only it can talk, or anything else you come up with).

Using their p-cord loops they will have to right the bucket, and place the toxic/radioactive materials back in the bucket. After this, they will need to work together to pick up the bucket, and transport it to the proper waste disposal site (the other bucket). Once there they will need to pour the contents of the carried bucket into the other.

Safety: Other than possible tripping hazards during the transportation (we typically do this outside) we have not run into issues.

Facilitation: This is one that is fun to know some toxic waste/radioactive material facts. Some groups really get excited and have fun with this aspect of the story/briefing.

Observations/ Questions:

- What were some of the difficulties that you encountered? What was your solution to this problem? How did you come to that solution?
- How much of this activity could be accomplished with just you and your partner? What could only be accomplished with the whole group? What were the roles did the different pairings take on?
- What was your initial plan? How did your plan change during the course of the activity? If you were to give the next group advice, what would you tell them?

Variations:

- Using different color dodge balls you can designate different materials that need to be deposited in different locations using multiple ending buckets. You can also assign half-lives of different materials to bring in time restraints.
- Using different types of balls will change strategies and may take longer depending on the number of them. Tennis balls and ping-pong balls are good to use, but you can end up with overwhelming numbers of them. You can also combine different types of balls, and the idea of multiple ending buckets and/or time restraints.
- You can make it easier by designating a safe zone for the container with the toxic/radioactive materials that it can simply be placed in.