



Smile, You're in Springfield, Illinois!

Marshmallow Challenge

TOPIC: Teamwork

OBJECTIVE: Build the tallest, free standing tower using the materials supplied with the marshmallow on top of the structure.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

In advance of the meeting, create a marshmallow challenge kit for each team. Each kit needs to contain twenty sticks of spaghetti, one yard of masking tape, one yard of string and one marshmallow. These ingredients should be placed into a paper lunch bag, which simplifies distribution.

- Spaghetti: Ensure that you use uncooked spaghetti. Avoid angel hair pasta as it is too thin and breaks easily. Fettuccini is too thick.
- String: Include string that can be easily broken by hand. If the string is thick, make scissors available for the teams to share.
- Marshmallow: Use a name brand or private label brand of marshmallows that measure the 'standard' size, about an inch and a half across. Avoid mini or jumbo marshmallows. Also avoid stale marshmallows. You'll want squishy marshmallows that give the impression of lightness.
- Masking Tape: Get standard masking tape. Generally, you'll want to put the tape on the side of the table, the back of a chair or a nearby wall. Rolling it in the bag tangles the tape.
- Paper Lunch Bags: Standard size lunch bags work well; letter size manila envelopes are another option.
- Also ensure that you have the following tools to run the challenge:
 - Measuring Tape: Have a contractor's retractable measuring tape available after the challenge is finished so you can measure the height of the structures.
 - Countdown App or Stopwatch: The actual marshmallow challenge takes 18 minutes. Eighteen minutes seems to be the magic time. Twenty minutes is too long and fifteen is too short.

TIME: 30-45 minutes

DIRECTIONS:

- Divide attendees into teams of 3-5 members.
- Give each team the tape, string, spaghetti, and marshmallow. Provide each team access to scissors (it isn't necessary for each team to have its own).
- Read the following instructions to all teams at the same time:
- Each team has 18 minutes to build the tallest, free standing structure using the materials provided to each group. The marshmallow must be attached to the top of the structure you build. After 18 minutes, I will measure the height of each structure that remains standing with the marshmallow on top. The winner is the team whose free-standing structure is the tallest.



- Answer any questions the teams may have and give the groups a 30 second warning. After 30 seconds, start the activity and stand back. Keep watch on the teams to ensure they are following the rules of the game. Remind them that the marshmallow must be on the top of the structure, and that the structure itself must be free-standing when the activity concludes. Let them know how much time has passed until 18 minutes is up.
- At the end of 18 minutes, measure the structures created within the rules and that are still standing.
- Declare the winner!

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- Was there a leader on your team?
 - Who was it and who decided who the leader would be?
- If you had no leader, do you think having designated someone a leader would have helped?
- How helpful was everyone on your team in challenging the process of building the tallest structure?
 - Did anyone appear to be an expert?
- Did any team members tune out of the activity—out of frustration with other members or for some other reason?
 - What could you have done to keep all members of the group fully engaged?
- Did you feel everyone's ideas were well received during the activity?
- How did you feel as the time limit was approaching?
 - Did pressure increase?
 - If yes, was that helpful or not?

If you have extra time, you can show the Marshmallow Challenge Video.

And visit the website: <https://www.tomwujec.com/marshmallowchallenge>