

*International
ALERT Academy*

**Low Ropes
Confidence
Course**

Facilitator's Guide

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Introduction

Some very interesting and challenging events at the International ALERT Academy are found on the Low Ropes Confidence Course (LRCC).

Individuals and families are “challenged” through the different events to think “outside the box” for solutions to seemingly impossible problems.

The course is located in the campground on Knot-So Easy Street (12th Street).

As a facilitator, you are responsible for the safety of the participants and for making sure that they understand what is to be accomplished.

At each event you will want to accomplish the following:

- Describe the event and what they are to accomplish,
- Show the spiritual and physical analogy for the event
- Be aware of the safety hazard associated with completing the event and how to mitigate or minimize them, and
- Allow all participants to have fun.

As a facilitator, you must be completely familiar with the information in this booklet and of the LRCC itself to accomplish these goals. If you have any questions at all, please contact your authority for further definition or instruction.

Thank you for serving as a facilitator!

Preparation

Safety

There is no higher priority than safety in running the events on the Low Ropes Confidence Course (LRCC). When in doubt, STOP! Get assistance before continuing.

Several events will require the use of “spotters.” The spotter’s job is to lessen the possibility of injury for the at-risk person should they fall off of the apparatus. This risk is greatly minimized in the first place by the fact that most events are only one to three feet off the ground. Teach the spotter their role and demonstrate proper spotting technique including:

- Closing the fingers into fists, which are easier to grab and also protect the spotter’s fingers,
- Standing close enough to the participant to be of assistance, but far enough away so as to not hinder their progress, and
- Encouraging the participant as they attempt to complete the challenge.

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Ideally, you will want to have male spotters for male participants and female for female. Make sure the spotter is physically and mentally mature enough for the job as the safety of the participant certainly depends upon them.

As a facilitator, you may be the only spotter for the event, if all the participants are involved in the event at the same time.

Preparation

Modesty and Dress

If at all possible wear pants and loose fitting but not baggy clothes. Do not wear jewelry or accessories that could easily come off. Wear lace-up shoes (tennis style) for safety. Ladies are encouraged to wear pants or culottes while participating in the LRCC.

Grouping

Before starting the LRCC, get to know the participants and determine if there are physical limitations. Also be sure to properly group participants so there is a mix of gender, size, and age. Properly mixing the groups will eliminate many potential issues and make the events more fun for all participants

Timing

Plan to spend no more than 20 minutes on each event, including the time for a good debrief. They will have extracted the bulk of the lesson and experiences in this amount of time.

Events

There are 13 total events. Each group will attempt as many events as possible in the allotted time.

The LRCC events are described on the following pages and listed below in counter-clockwise order:

- Tire Swing
- Circular Cables—*
- Inclined Logs—*
- Trapeze Swing
- Cement Cylinder
- Swinging Log
- V-Cables
- Rope Swing—*
- Log Over—difficult
- Mohawk Walk—difficult
- Trust Fall—difficult
- Log Sort—*
- Inclined Cable

Those marked with a “*” are easier events and probably should be the first event to start a group on. This also facilitates having multiple groups on the course at the same time.

Those marked with “difficult” are exactly that and may be omitted or skipped depending upon the group’s level.

To facilitate sequencing of multiple groups space them out along the course. Thus each group moves in a counter-clockwise direction around the course and does not pass the group in front of them.

Tire Swing

Purpose

This event is designed to demonstrate the importance of timing and momentum in accomplishing a goal. Here, the tires are positioned just far enough apart to prevent the simple walking between tires. Instead the participant must swing one tire over to reach the next tire.

Procedure

Have the entire group of participants gather at one end of the line of tires. Explain that they are to move from one tire to the next until they have crossed entirely over to the other side. There may be more than one person on the tires at a time. Explain that momentum and timing will be critical to accomplishing the event.

If they need to rest, it is best to do this between two tires and not sitting on just one, as you will lose all of your momentum. This will also make it difficult for the person behind them in line to reach the tire.

This is not a timed event, but you will want to limit the group to about 15 minutes of total time so they do not lose interest.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if a participant comes off a tire and touches the ground, that participant must start over.

Safety

This event does not usually require spotters, but you may wish to have some accompany the smaller children as they move from tire to tire.

Analogies and Life Lessons

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Tire Swing

Share with them the following points:

- Remember that Change can be a good thing and give us confidence for the future as we look back on the past, seeing the provision and faithfulness of God through it all.
- You must let go of one position to go to the next. We must let go of past hurts and offenses in order to move on in life. We must live today as Matthew tells us to the fullest and be ready to move on to tomorrow.



Circular Cables

Purpose

This event is designed to show our dependence upon other people to accomplish a common goal. Accomplishing the goal will also take balance and a certain level of give-and-take on all the participants' parts.

Procedure

You can conduct this event in two different ways depending upon the group. You can either have two people at a time complete the event, or divide the group in half and have the two half-groups complete the event. Dividing the group into two halves works best when there are many small children.

In either case, place the individuals (or the half-groups) on opposite sides of the cables. Give them each one end of the rope. Instruct them that they are to walk completely around the cable until they reach their starting position, holding only onto the rope.

Position spotters behind each of the individuals or groups.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if a participant touches a spotter, or comes off the cable, that participant must be blindfolded for the remainder of this event. If the event is done in half-groups, only one member of that group must wear the blindfold.

Circular Cables

Safety

The safety and risk factors are low on this event, however, the participants are walking on a cable which is approximately two feet off the ground. Spotters may be appropriate for smaller children.

Analogies

Ask the participant group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Success usually requires the work of more than one person. Each must do their part.
- Standing still is more difficult than moving.
- Working in groups can be more difficult as you are now dependent upon many different inputs, each having their own agendas. Moving as a group requires coordination and understanding as well as a steady leader.



Inclined Logs

Purpose

This event takes the simple task of crossing from one end of a log to the other and increases the perceived risk by inclining the logs. Participants also learn that going down can be more difficult than going up!

Procedure

Have the participants gather at the end of one log. Designate two spotters to follow the participant as they first go up the one log and then down the other log.

Only one participant is allowed on the logs at a time for safety reasons.

Participants may climb the log:

- On their feet, thus balancing with their arms,
- On hands and knees, or
- On their buttocks; be careful of splinters!

This event should not be timed.

Special/Fun Rules

If a participant touches a spotter or falls off the log, he or she must start over.

Smaller participants are allowed to touch the spotter without having to start over.

Allow participants to start over several times if necessary so that they can successfully complete the event. This is a real confidence builder.

Inclined Logs

Safety

The main risk factor is simply falling off of the log at a high elevation. The elevated ends of the logs are fairly high, which makes the spotters' job more difficult. Make sure your spotters realize the importance of their job!

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Perceived risk increases the difficulty of common tasks.
- Having a spotter, which reduces risk, also increases our confidence and willingness to try new things.
- Ask: What could those who are not on the log do to help the one who is?

Trapeze Swing

Purpose

This event is designed to enhance the skill of the participants in being able to work together. They are required to move their entire group across a sizeable chasm without falling to their “death.”

Procedure

Have all the participants assemble on the large platform. Tell them they are to move the entire group over to the small platform in the most expeditious manner without having anyone fall from either platform.

They must use the rope to transfer from one platform to the other.

Place a spotter in the “chasm” to catch anyone who may not have sufficient arm strength to hold themselves onto the rope as they swing.

Time them and then let them repeat the event.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if any participants fall off or touch the ground, at any time, they must go back to the large platform and cross again, except this time they are now blindfolded.

Safety

The safety and risk factors on this event are low. Please be sure to spot on this event, especially with younger and less skillful children. The danger spot is arriving on the rope at the lower platform (the participant can run into the platform).

Inform the older participants to make sure younger par-

Trapeze Swing

Participants hold the rope as high as possible before leaving the larger platform. Have a “catcher” ready on the smaller platform, where possible.

The facilitator may want to stand near, but not in front of, the small platform, ready to slow the smaller participants who might be approaching too low.

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- What was their strategy in deciding the order in which the participants would cross?
- Did they ever think of crossing two or three at a time?
- Why was it more difficult to land on the smaller platform? How could the other participants assist the person crossing?



Cement Cylinder

Purpose

This event is designed to enhance the skill of the participants in being able to work together.

Procedure

Share with them the following points:

Working in groups can be more difficult as you are now dependent upon many different inputs, each having their own agendas. Moving as a group requires coordination and understanding as well as a steady leader.

There are two different things you can do with this challenge.

1. You must get one of your team members through the cylinder without them ever touching or coming in contact with the cylinder in any way or assisting in getting them self through the tube (They should act as if they are unconscious.)
2. In an organized fashion, get your entire team inside the cylinder. This will take teamwork and good communication. Success usually requires the work of more than one person. Each must do their part.

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

Working in groups can be more difficult as you are now dependent upon many different inputs, each having their own agendas. Moving as a group requires coordination and understanding as well as a steady leader.

Cement Cylinder

Swinging Log

Purpose

This event is designed to show the participants that there are multiple ways to accomplish a task, and what is right for one may not necessarily be correct for another.

Procedure

Instruct the participants that they are about to cross a bridge over an alligator swamp. The bridge is solid and will not fall, but it is a bit loose in the joints; it will move if they are not perfectly balanced.

Their objective is to get the entire group across the swamp as quickly as possible. Tell them that only one person can touch the log at any time.

The event should be timed. Allow the group to make the crossing twice so they can improve their technique and hopefully their time.

Special/Fun Rules

If anyone falls off, they must start again and carry a ball across with them. This makes it more difficult because they cannot use their arms to balance as well, if they decide to carry the ball in their arms!

Safety

The safety and risk factors are low on this event. For younger participants a fellow participant may stabilize the log as they cross.

Swinging Log

Analogies

Ask the participant group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Newton's third law of motion (for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction) is definitely at work here. How does this also play in our interpersonal relationships with others?
- When we have an outside force to assist us in stabilizing the log, the impact of our actions is mitigated. The same is true when we ask others to review what we have prepared before we present it to others.
- Speed comes not only from the contributions of individuals, but also from the group learning and the development of a group technique.



V-Cables

Purpose

This event is designed to encourage the participants to work in two-person teams to cross on cables that constantly change their separation from one another.

It is also a test of upper body strength and proper reliance on their partner.

Procedure

Have the participants pair up with a partner of somewhat equal size and strength.

Have each partnership stand on the two cables, facing each other. Have them grab hands, palm to palm, to support one another.

Their objective is then to traverse together toward the wider end of the cables as far as they are able before losing their balance.

For individuals approximately six-foot in height, they should be able to reach the end of the cables. Small children will have difficulty with completing this event.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if a participant comes off the cable, they must begin again from the starting point. Since there are different-sized (aged) people, the facilitator will point to a color painted on the cables that determines how far the participants must make it along the distance of the cables in order to have achieved this event.

Safety

The safety and risk factors are fairly low on this event. For smaller children a spotter between the cables may assist should the participants begin to fall.

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Our individual success depends upon our partner also being successful
- Why is it important to partner with someone of similar size and weight? Would the event work if they were of differing sizes or weights?



Rope Swing

Purpose

This event appears to be designed for completion as individuals. However, if the participants plan and work together, they will be able to cross in groups in significantly less time. This event is designed to help the team understand the value of planning and cooperation in successfully completing a task.

Procedure

Have the participants gather on top of the sand hill supported by the timbers. Tell them that the object is to get the group across the swamp as quickly as possible.

Be sure to time the event.

Instruct the participants to grab the rope as high as they can to prevent dragging their feet over the swap and perhaps losing a toe to the alligators!

Once the entire group is across ask them to evaluate what ideas could have made their group crossing faster. Allow them to do the crossing again and compare times. They will probably reduce their time by a factor of five!

Special/Fun Rules

If anyone falls into the “swamp,” in addition to being “wet”, they must carry a ball across with them. The ball represents a little baby and therefore must remain near the chest of one of the participants at all times.

Safety

You may want to position a spotter to “catch” any participant who is unable to hold themselves up by their arms as they leave the sand hill. The spotter is not so much catching the participant but preventing a nasty fall into the sand.

Rope Swing

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Individuality is what we think of first, but actually doing things as a group can be much faster.
- When they evaluated ideas to cross the swamp faster, why did they choose the one they did? What was it that caused them to settle on this idea rather than one of the others?
- If they had to carry a “baby” what where the ideas to deal with it? What worked the best?



Log Over

Purpose

This event is designed to demonstrate teamwork between those who are more physically agile and those who are less agile. They will all need to work together to get their entire team over the top of the log.

Procedure

Have all the participants assemble on one side of the log. Explain they are to get their entire team over the log.

They may sit on it or boost others, but only from their side of the log. Once they have crossed then they are no longer available to assist anyone on the starting side of the log, but may assist in pulling over those who are on the log.

Special/Fun Rules

There are no special rules for this event. It has enough challenges of its own!

Safety

The safety and risk factors on this event are low. Please be sure to pay attention to those crossing the log so that they do not put themselves in a dangerous position.

Older participants will certainly need to assist younger ones. And, those who are more agile will need to assist those who are less agile for the team to succeed.

Log Over

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- What was their strategy in deciding the order in which the participants would cross?
- Did they ever think of leaving someone on the log to assist those crossing?
- What made this event so difficult?
- What obstacles in life do they face which will also require the assistance of others?



Mohawk Walk

Purpose

This event is designed to encourage balance and planning ahead by each individual participant.

The group must move all of their participants from one end of the cables to the other using only the ropes for balance.

Procedure

Have all the participants assemble at one end of the cables. Show them there are two ropes that they can use to balance themselves as they walk across the cable. They will need to decide when and how to pass the ropes to their other team members as they cross.

The facilitator will only hand the ropes to one participant. After that, if a rope is dropped then a participant will be blindfolded.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if any participants fall off or touches the ground, at any time, they must go back to the beginning and cross again, except this time they are now blindfolded.

Safety

The safety and risk factors on this event are low. Make sure the area around the cables is clear so that when participants fall off the cable, they can land solidly on the ground.

Mohawk Walk

Analogies

Ask the participant group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- What was their strategy in deciding the order in which the participants would cross?
- Did they ever think of crossing two or three at a time?
- How did they decide when to change ropes?
- What made keeping your balance more difficult? What made keeping your balance easier?
- How did non-participants assist those who were on the cable?



Trust Fall

Purpose

This event is designed to show the participants that they can have faith in others and learn to trust family members and friends. Often in life we are required to trust others, especially in emergency situations.

Procedure

Have six but preferably eight of the larger and stronger people in the group line up three (four) in a line facing each other. They should be standing shoulder-to-shoulder out from the side of the platform. Have each person reach out to the person across from them and lock arms by grabbing their forearm as close to the elbow as possible. This forms a “net” of six (eight) arms upon which the trust faller will land.

Individually allow participants from the group to volunteer and demonstrate their trust in their fellow group members. They do this by crossing their arms over their chest, closing their eyes and slowly falling backward, and stiff-legged, off the platform into the supportive arms of family and/or friends.

Special/Fun Rules

Make sure that everyone understands the safety precautions in the next section.

Safety

This event entirely depends upon the attentiveness and strength of the catchers for success. Yes, technique plays a part, but without adequate strength in the catchers, you could have a high risk factor.

Be certain before allowing anyone to fall backward that the catchers are holding each other firmly and correctly. The falling individual must do the following:

Trust Fall

- Remain as straight as a board while falling back into the catchers' arms.
- Do not bend knees as they fall.
- Cross his or her arms over their chest and grab the opposite upper arm with their fingers. This prevents the faller's arms from flying out and hitting a catcher in the face.
- Announce his intentions by saying: "Ready to fall." The catchers then respond "Fall away." The faller then announces "Falling!" as he leans backward.

Analogy

Ask the participant group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

- Share with them the following points:
- We often are faced with situations where we must depend upon others for our own safety and well being. This requires trust
- We must have confidence in those we are placing our trust (and faith) in. As a chair, we either believe it will hold us or not.
- Do they "trust" Christ with their lives or not. The analogy is similar to the trust fall. Do they trust the individuals in their team, or not?

Log Sort

Purpose

This event is designed to show the participants they can accomplish a seemingly impossible task, if they plan and work together and think outside one plane.

Procedure

The objective is to have the participants sort themselves from their starting positions into a completely different order without falling off of the log. Have the entire group get up onto the log in any order they choose. Then have them sort themselves in one of the following ways, from left to right:

- In alphabetical order by first names
- In birth date (day and month only) order
- In height order
- In age order

The participants must plan to move over, under, on, or around each other to arrive in this new order. They must plan (while on the log) and come up with their own strategy of how to achieve this. They cannot step or fall off the log, touch the ground, or the log supporting beams under the log on each end.

Do not time this event.

Special/Fun Rules

If a participant falls off the log, that participant must be either blindfolded or remain completely silent for the remainder of this event. Blindfold only the first two participants who fall off; after that forbid them to talk or communicate.

Log Sort

Safety

The safety and risk factors are very low on this event. The participants will not need to be spotted unless they are blindfolded.

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Even when only two participants are moving, the others can assist by stabilizing them or by making more room on the log.
- Planning is an important part of the process before they begin to move!



Inclined Cable

Purpose

This event is designed to test the participants' ability to trust their balance as they walk from one end to the other of a cable that is elevated at its center point.

Procedure

Have participants cross the complete cable length one at a time. They must get all participants from one side of the cable to the other.

They are permitted to hold on to the cable that is directly above the cable they are crossing on.

Place spotters near the center point of the cable, as this is the most difficult point.

Do not time this event.

Special/Fun Rules

On this event, if a participant touches a spotter, or comes off the cable, that participant must be blindfolded for the remainder of this event and start over.

Safety

Physically tall spotters are necessary so that participants can use them as a support as they near the center of the cable.

Instruct the participants that if they feel themselves falling, they should jump off the lower cable and onto the ground as the spotter will not be able to catch them.

Inclined Cable

Analogies

Ask the group what they learned as a result of going through this event.

Share with them the following points:

- Was it easier to go up or down the cable? Why?
- What made this event more or less challenging than other events?
- How were those not on the cable able to encourage or help the person on the cable?

Notes
