

Blindfold Maze Embers

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Theme: Exploring life struggles through the medium of a maze game.

Age of campers: 14-16

Time allotted/actual: 60-75 minutes

Location: Any outdoor location where there is safe room to move around on a flat surface, but also structures to wrap twine around and create suspended lines.

Props/Materials/Symbols: Enough twine to make a small maze to wander around in. 200-300 ft will do.

Prep done: Set up a maze by tying chest-high (for campers) lines of twine between various trees and other structures. The trick here is to make it large enough to wander around in, but small enough that it is theoretically possible to realize the truth: there is *no way out!*

Opening/Mood set: Instruct participants: You will be entering a maze. There is only one way out. If you are struggling, go ahead and raise your hand to ask for help, and I will point you in the right direction. You may not untie/cut anything, nor go over/under the twine, and you may not talk.

Questions/Activities:

1st activity: Lead participants blindfolded into the space (create an opening in the twine that you close as soon as everyone enters). If a participant raises their hand, remove them from the maze and take off their blindfold. End activity when everyone has asked for help, or earlier.

2nd activity: Have participants describe experience with attention to their thought process—How did you decide when to ask for help? What feelings accompanied this experience?

3rd activity: Did this activity demonstrate a strength or weakness in your ability to ask for help? What did you learn about yourself? Why do people avoid asking for help?

Closing: Ask the campers to reflect on their experience in silence as you return.

Were other people involved? It is very helpful here to have help setting up the maze. If done in advance, it will save you time and focus to engage more fully in the metaphor and facilitate.

Thoughts on pacing? The part to really press here is the ritual of preparing for doing, and unpacking the maze experience. Each part reveals another piece of the big picture that is one's pathway through emotions like confusion, helplessness, a sense of lostness, asking for help and the feelings about oneself that go with it. Letting those moments happen slowly is supportive of the ultimate message.

What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it? It would be interesting to see what effects the campers felt each other's presence in the maze had and how that influenced their behavior or strategy. Were there temptations to follow someone else? Did you wait to see if others gave up before you? Why?

Camper feedback: Significantly high ratings.