

Magic Maze

Introduction: *Magic Maze* is a classic activity that never fails to impress. Team members work to move across a grid using the one and only safe path. You have the only map. Through trial and error, students must work together to discover the "correct" or "safe path." The challenge presented in *Magic Maze* will stimulate conversation and act as a springboard into other learning activities.

Group Size: This activity works best with 8 students and up.

Time Frame: 30-60 minutes

Materials: 48 sheets of construction paper/paper plates/notebook paper/large note cards and 1 or 2 master "safe-path" maps. Create a grid on the floor, 6x8 with the paper

Directions:

1. The goal of the activity is for your entire team to safely reach the other side of the maze by finding and following the one and only true path through the squares. Your group must decide how long it will take them to do this and work to beat that time.
2. Ask the participants to step one at a time onto the squares, starting with the first row of six, until the safe square (as determined by the master "safe path" sheet) is found. Inform the team of a correct choice and allow the team member who found it to move on. Each person must have a chance on the grid before anyone goes twice.
3. The next choice may be any square adjacent to the safe square the team member is standing on. Team members are not allowed to skip rows or columns. The path can go in any direction.
4. If a participant steps on a square that is not part of the predetermined safe path, he or she must leave the grid along the same path in which they entered. The team will incur a time penalty of 60 additional seconds to the overall time for each incorrect exit.
5. The group cannot leave objects (breadcrumbs) on the path to mark the way.
6. Once a square is determined to be off the path, it is always off the path.
7. Only one person may be on the grid at a time until the team has successfully found the correct path from beginning to end. The team may then form a line and snake along the path all at once to the finish.

Variations:

- Once the activity begins the team must remain behind the start of the grid (or) around the perimeter of the grid.
- Participants cannot use any form of "pointing." For each instance of pointing, by hand, head or foot, the team will incur a 15 second penalty to be added to the overall time.

Sample Story

The “Maze of Wonder” is a powerful and complicated artifact said to hold mystical powers. Legend has it that mysterious things happen to those who travel upon what is known as “The One” true path. The ancient language written on the “Maze of Wonder” has taken many years of work to decipher, and even now scholars have only translated a small portion. From what they have gathered, it seems “The One” is a secret path through the Maze. As is written, it is the only safe path to the other side.

The path is full of danger and dead ends. It is up to you to discover “The One” and find out what lies beyond. You will start by stepping to any stone in the first row. If it is part of “The One,” you may continue to the next stone. If it is not, you must step back off the “Maze of Wonder” and allow a new person to try. In searching for “The One” you may step to any stone around you, but you may never skip a column or row. If a stone is not “The One” it is always so. Whenever the maze has misguided you to step on an unsafe stone you must return along the same path from which you entered. If you do not, you will lose 60 seconds of precious time. Again, a new person must pick up where you left off. Final notes to keep you from danger: only one person may be on the maze at a time until you completely discover “The One.” Once your group finds “The One” true path, they may snake through to the other side. Your group cannot mark “The One” by placing anything on the stones. The maze penalizes your group 15 seconds of time for pointing at “The One” in any way, therefore it is not wise for you to point. Your team must remain on the far edge until the path is found at which time everyone may move through the maze to the other side. You have a limited amount of time to discover “The One.” In fact, it is in many ways up to you. Try to keep from losing time through carelessness, and be prepared as “The One” can be very tricky indeed.

Debrief:

- What happened to your group during the exercise? Explain.
- How did planning affect the group’s level of success?
- What did you learn about effective planning?
- How will you apply this the next time you have to plan something with a group?
- What was the difference between being “on the maze” vs. “off the maze?”
- In your life, where do you see yourself “on the maze” vs. “off the maze?”
- In what area of your life would you like to be on the maze more? In what areas would you like to be off?
- How did the risk of stepping to a wrong stone influence the group? Positively or negatively?
- How does risk influence your life? Where does it happen the most for you?
- Describe one way the feelings from this game mimicked a real-life situation.
- How can what you noticed make a positive difference in the “real world?”

Variations:

- Increase the size of the grid by adding more squares.
- Split your students into two teams and challenge them to switch sides using the same path but from opposite ends of the grid.
- Make four teams and one large square grid. Send teams switching from all four sides.
- Design your own layout for the squares that takes the path around corners, over hills, in circles or upstairs. Let your imagination design your own unique “magic maze” style and share it with us in the online community.

“The One” maps: One team options:

		9			
	8				
		7			
			6		
				5	
			4		
		2	3		
	1				

	10	11	12	13	14
		9			15
			8		16
	4	5		7	17
	3		6		18
	2			19	
1				20	

Two teams:

1				12	13
	2	3	11		
		4	10	9	
7	6	5			8
8			5	6	7
	9	10	4		
		11	3	2	
13	12				1

