



# Group Shaping

## Instructions:

1. Before class knot rope and fasten with tape so that it forms a complete circle. Lay rope out where activity will take place.
2. If class is large, ask for volunteers. You can do this with only 6 people, but 10 is best.
3. Have volunteers form a circle around the rope and assist them with putting on blindfolds. **Reassure them that they are safe and nothing humiliating or embarrassing will happen** while they are blindfolded.
4. Ask volunteers to hold hand open at their waists. Carefully place the spread out rope in participants' hands.
5. Tell participants that right now they are holding a rope that forms a circle. **Their job is to take that rope and form a triangle (any shape will work).** Tell them to let you know when they are finished.
6. As they work on the job, **notice who is talking the most, who is leading, etc.**
7. When complete, allow them to slide off their blindfolds and notice how they did. Be sure to praise them. You can process a little here (see Tips for Discussion and Processing below).
8. Have them replace their blindfolds and ask them to create another shape. This time, however, you will be touching some participants on the shoulder. **Tell participants that if they are touched on the shoulder, they will need to be silent for the remainder of the job.**
9. **Touch the 2 or 3 most directive and talkative people on the shoulder.** This gets other group members engaged.
10. When they have completed their shape, they should tell you. Have them talk about their experience.

## Tip for Discussion and Processing:

This activity can be used in different ways. First, if your group is dominated by a few individuals, this illustrates that everyone should have the chance to talk and/or lead. Second, this lesson can also be applied to families and couples who are experiencing challenges with power balance (i.e. a husband who will not accept input from his wife or parents who will not let their children make decisions). Third, the activity can be used to talk about communication challenges. It demonstrates how difficult communication can be when some information is missing. In the rope exercise, the missing information was the participants' sight. When communicating with a partner, the missing information is often what people feel.

**Title:** Group Shaping

**Group Size:** 10 people or smaller (larger groups can be broken down, or some may participate and some may observe)

**Time Needed:** 10 to 15 minutes

**Goal:** Leads to discussion on communication, problem solving and power

**Audience:** Couples, Parents, Teens, Children, Singles

**Special Considerations:** Requires high level of trust among participants. Because some participants will be blindfolded, always allow the option of not participating in this exercise.

## Materials:

- ✓ One blindfold per participant
- ✓ Rope (length can vary based on size of room)