

Multi Way Tug of War

- Fun, finale-type activity. Physically exhausting and emotionally climaxing!
- Works for kids through to corporate programs. Ideal for adolescents and possibly youth at risk. Especially with older adults, be careful with this activity, especially if they are unfit or if overexertion is contraindicated (e.g., heart problems).
- Use for any size groups, indoor or outdoor. Ideal is large group outdoors. Pick a soft location e.g., grass/beach.
- In traditional 1 on 1 tug-of-war it is mostly strength that wins, with a few tactics.
- In multi-way tug-of-war it is mostly tactics that wins, with some strength.
- Lay out the ropes, etc.
- Participants should prepare appropriately e.g., watches and hand jewellery off.
- Divide into groups and make sure the groups appear to be of similar strength.
- Brief group on normal tug-of-war safety rules, basically:
 - no wrapping or tying rope around anyone or anything - **only hold rope with hands**
 - watch out for rope burn on hands - **let go if rope is moving through hands**
 - watch out for rope burn on body - **let go if you lose footing**
- First command from the Tug-of-War master is "take the strain". This is only to take up the slack, that's all. The Tug-of-War master makes sure the centre ring is stable and centered. This needs strong leadership because teams are always keen to add extra strain!
- Second command is "Go!!"
- Teams attempt to pull the center ring or knot over their finish line. This can rarely be achieved by strength alone and instead will require guile. Teams can swivel to cooperate / compete with other teams, then switch directions, etc.
- Conduct several rounds. Continue, say, until one team earns 3 victories and the Tug-of-War title.
- Allow teams plenty of time to physically recover and debrief/plan after each round.
- Team building groups may wish to discuss what the secrets to success were in this activity - and whether these lessons apply elsewhere.