

## **Gumdrop Structure**

**Supplies Needed:** Gumdrops and toothpicks

**Number of People:** Small groups of 6 people

### **Directions:**

- In an area unseen to the participants, structures made of gumdrops should be previously constructed by the facilitator. These are the structures that the participants will need to re-construct (within the given guidelines) in their groups. Each group will be told to choose one “Seer,” three “Runners,” one “Builder” and one “Observer.”
- Explain: In a separate room (or space) is a structure made of gumdrops and colored toothpicks.
  - 1) Seer: only one person allowed to see the structure. Unlimited opportunities. Must communicate what the structure looks like to the runners.
  - 2) Runners: Carry messages from the Seer to the Builder. Runners may not ask questions of seers. Nonverbal signals are ok, but only the Seer can talk to the Runner. Runners may only talk to the Builder, and then only one at a time.
  - 3) Builders: will be in a separate space where they cannot see the Seer or observe the instructions being given. Builders are provided with building supplies. Builders may not face each other or look at each other’s work.. They may not speak to anyone.
- Once a runner has received instruction, he/she will go to the Builder. The Runners may then (one at a time) relay the instructions to the Builder, using words only.
- Runners may not touch or respond to what the Builders are doing. Relay instruction only. The Builder may only listen, without asking questions or responding.
- Observer: observe the group’s process without visibly reacting to them or interacting with them. Observations and comments will be a crucial part of the discussion at the end of the activity.
- There is a time limit of 25-30 minutes (depending on how things are going). At the end of the time, we will bring over the original structure to compare to each of the new creations. How close did everybody get? Colors count!!!!

### **Debriefing Questions:**

- What was difficult about the process?
- How did the Seers feel? Was it hard to give instructions without seeing what was needed? Or was it liberating? How did you feel about the lack of concrete feedback about what was happening regarding your careful instructions?
- How did the Runners feel? Was one-way communication difficult? Was it frustrating to envision one thing and see the Builder doing something else?

- How did the Builders feel? Was it easy or hard to construct something with only verbal instructions and without being able to ask questions? Or did anybody feel liberated by having only instructions to follow?
- Does anybody have personal reactions or challenges to share?
- What does this activity tell us about our communication styles? What are the benefits of two way communication? Would it have been easier to construct something resembling the original structure if questions were allowed? What would you have done differently? What if only a certain number of questions or words were allowed?
- Would you have known what to ask? Would it have helped?