

SAVING SAM

Overview: Cooperative and problem-solving activities are a great way to teach students leadership and teamwork. This activity helps students problem solve, work together, and use creativity to overcome a challenge.

SD Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success:

K-12 College, Career, and Life-Ready Competencies for Every Student:

- B-LS 2. Creative approach to learning, tasks, and problem solving
- B-SMS 6. Ability to identify and overcome barriers
- B-SS 6. Effective collaboration and cooperation skills

Estimated time: 10-15 minutes

Materials:

- Gummy worms (one per group)
- Life-Saver gummies (one per group)
- Clear plastic cup (one per group)
- Cocktail stirrers (one per group)
- Paper clips (2-3 per group)
- Saving Sam PowerPoint to use for explaining the rules

Instructions:

1. Show the first slide of Saving Sam PowerPoint so students have a visual.
2. Go to the next slide of the Saving Sam PowerPoint and read the following scenario to the students:
 - a. Poor Sam is a worm that has found himself in a rather unfortunate situation. His boat has capsized, and his life jacket is trapped underneath! Poor Sam can't swim! His oar, his only means of movement, has fallen into the rocky waters as well! He now sits perched on top of his capsized boat and needs our help!
3. Be sure to show the students which item represents which:
 - a. Sam = gummy worm
 - b. Boat = clear plastic cup
 - c. Life-Saver gummy = life jacket
 - d. Oar = cocktail stirrer
4. Transition to the last slide of the Saving Sam PowerPoint and tell the students their challenge:
 - a. It is your job to save Sam! You will be responsible for flipping Sam's boat over and getting him back inside. He needs his life jacket on him this time, and his oar laying horizontally across the top of the boat.

- b. Here is the catch:
- i. You can't touch Sam, the life preserver, the boat, or the oar with your hands. (For younger grades, you could just require they cannot touch Sam but can touch the other items.)
 - ii. You may only use paperclips supplied.
 - iii. Keep in mind we wouldn't want to hurt poor Sam by stabbing him or popping his life jacket by stabbing it!
 - iv. Also, we can't let him touch the water (floor or desk) because he can't swim!
5. Divide students into small groups (3-4 people) and give each group their supplies.
6. Give students time to work together and save Sam. (You may see students get very creative with their paperclips, such as bending them into tweezers or snapping them in half to create more tools.)

Processing/Application Questions:

- How did you figure out how to save Sam?
- Would it have been easier if you were working alone? Why or why not?
- Was there a clear leader in your group? Did someone call the shots or make decisions about how to save Sam?
- Could Sam have been saved if you only had one paperclip?
- How did this activity relate to working with others in school?
- How does this activity relate to working with others outside of school, such as in a job?
- When you've been faced with a challenge in school, how have you worked through it?
- Why is it important to work through challenges rather than give up?

Adapted from:

All for the Love of Teaching. (2013). Saving Sam: A team-building activity. Retrieved from: <http://all4theloveofteaching.blogspot.com/2013/09/saving-sam-team-building-activity.html#.VV6PuBaZKjIV>.

Saving Sam – A Cooperative Activity. (n.d.). Retrieved from: https://www.biologycorner.com/worksheets/saving_sam.html.

