



PECOMETH CHALLENGE COURSE PROGRAM

136 Bookers Wharf Road, Centreville, MD 21617

410-556-6900 fax: 410-556-6901

www.pecometh.org

THE LEADER'S PACKET

CHALLENGE COURSE OVERVIEW

The challenge course program provides a unique opportunity for people to explore teamwork and community-building. Whether participants are on the team challenge course (low elements) or climbing cables suspended 40 feet above the ground (high elements), your group can leave with a better understanding of self, others and the collective whole.

Explaining our **philosophies** and **expectations** to your group can help them prepare for the upcoming challenge course experience. For over 40 years, similar programs have operated with exceptional safety records; we intend to maintain that tradition with your group. We accomplish this by using foundational concepts that follow best practices used throughout the challenge course industry. Please read through these topics and share them with your group.

COMFORT ZONES AND LEARNING THEORIES

As humans we like to remain comfortable; in fact, we strive to avoid stressful situations. On the challenge course, our professionally trained staff **invites** participants to step beyond their comfort zone in order to learn more about themselves, their group and other topics that are relevant to teamwork. Research shows that powerful learning can occur when people step past their self-imposed limitations.

CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

We encourage the power of invitation rather than **coercion**. The philosophy of challenge by choice specifies that the participant chooses their own level of participation and type of support they need during challenge activities, unlike other situations where people use peer pressure to force others into doing things they truly do not want to do.

FULL VALUE COMMITMENT

Our behavior expectations are clear and simple:

1. **Safety is first**, both physical and emotional; recognizing each is critical to the overall safety of the program.
2. **Give 100% effort** to accomplishing individual goals, as well as, the overall group or team goal.
3. **Practice effective communication** by giving and receiving honest and appropriate feedback.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE: ACTIVITY, REFLECTION, APPLICATION

Our program follows a learning model that involves direct hands-on activity followed by a time of **reflection**. From these discussions, the group decides which lessons-learned can be applied to the next activity. Throughout the program, participants are asked how they can take this learning back with them once they leave the challenge course. The ultimate goal of our program is for people to **depart with a greater insight** into themselves and the group they were working with on the course.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

It is critical that participants, observers, and group leaders are **prepared** for the challenge course experience. We help ensure that you are prepared by providing a Leaders Planning Form on the next page. We expect that **all forms will be completely filled out** and that your group numbers are accurately communicated to Pecometh so that we may sufficiently staff your program. Modern technology allows us to communicate openly and often about your program should changes occur.

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LEADER'S PLANNING FORM

CONTACT INFORMATION

Richelle Darrell, Director of Retreat Ministries

410-556-6900 x100 fax 410-556-6901

richelle@pecometh.org

Augie Lankford, Challenge Course Manager

CHECK LIST

- Read Challenge Course Overview.** Read through page one of the leader's packet.
- Lock in Your Dates.** Ensure your dates and times are reserved with Richelle Darrell at Pecometh.
- Lunch Plans.** Think about your lunch plan; Guest Services can provide lunch options or you can bring your own.
- Needs Assessment Form.** Complete the form, fax/mail/email to Richelle [contact info listed in top left of this sheet].
- Copy Participant Forms and Information Letter.** Each participant including all observers, visitors, chaperones, etc., regardless of age, must complete **Participant Form**. We've included an informational letter that explains the Challenge Course and the accompanying forms. The Participant Form serves two primary purposes:
 1. In the event of an emergency, we are able to communicate critical information to local Emergency Medical Services.
 2. Identify anyone with special needs or conditions so that we can provide a safe, effective and appropriate program; it is imperative this information is communicated. Forms are brought to the challenge course on the day of the program.
- Wear and Prepare.** Clearly communicate what participants should wear and how they should come prepared in the event of inclement weather.

WEAR AND PREPARE

DRESS FOR SAFETY, COMFORT AND THE WEATHER

DO NOT BRING: any object that can cut, slice, impale, bruise, etc. such as keys, pens, chained-wallets, sunglasses, knives, jewelry, etc. We recommend removing large earrings and body piercings prior to your arrival at the challenge course for your safety and the safety of others, including our staff.

BRING: comfortable clothing, comfortable **closed-toe shoes**, full water bottle marked with your name, any medications that you may require while participating in the program, camera, insect repellent, clothing that addresses the weather (layers, rain gear, gloves, etc.). Feel free to bring a backpack to carry your things if you'd like.

TEAM CHALLENGE: Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to lift your legs and freely rotate your arms. You should be able to tuck in your shirt to prevent it from lifting up during certain activities that require exaggerated movements. Athletic shoes should be worn; no open-toe shoes are permitted on the challenge course (such as flip-flops, sandals, etc.).

HIGH CHALLENGE COURSE ACTIVITIES: You will be required to wear a harness during certain activities if you choose to participate. We recommend wearing clothing that will protect your skin from the harness such as long pants or shorts that come to the middle of the thigh. Equally important is to wear shirts that can be tucked into your pants.



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NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**** MAIL/EMAIL OR FAX THIS FORM TO RICHELLE DARRELL 410-556-6901 (FAX)**

Please complete in dark legible pen for faxing

SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

ORGANIZATION NAME _____

CONTACT PERSON/TITLE _____

CONTACT NUMBER(S) _____

CONTACT EMAIL(S) _____

SECTION 2: GROUP DESCRIPTION

AGE GROUP	<input type="checkbox"/> Adult	<input type="checkbox"/> High School
	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary School	<input type="checkbox"/> Multigenerational
	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle School	
GROUP TYPE	<input type="checkbox"/> For Profit Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Scouts
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit Organization	<input type="checkbox"/> Sports Team
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public School	<input type="checkbox"/> College Program
	<input type="checkbox"/> Private School	<input type="checkbox"/> Family
	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Youth Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Estimated Total Number of Participants: _____ Estimated Total Number of Chaperones/Non-Participants: _____

Do any participants have special needs? Yes No If yes, explain (use additional page if necessary):

NOTE: There are restrictions for certain elements on the challenge course with regard to participants weighing over 250 lbs.

Do you have participants in your group who meet this criterion? Yes No Not sure

- BACKGROUND: Please tell us about your group. How long has the group been together? What dynamics exist within the group that may have an impact on the experience?
- PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Please describe any teambuilding or experiential activities this group may have done prior to this program.
- GOALS: What do you wish to accomplish with your group via this challenge course experience? Topics might include: communication, teambuilding, solution finding, leadership, etc.

SECTION 3: CHALLENGE COURSE PROGRAM REQUEST

CHALLENGE COURSE DATE(S): _____ START TIME: _____ END TIME: _____

MEALS: Doing lunch on our own Lunch in Dining Hall Lunch at RRC

TYPE OF PROGRAM:

- Team Challenge (no climbing)
- Team Challenge and High Challenge program
- Other (please explain):



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CHALLENGE COURSE INFO LETTER

Greetings from the Pecometh Challenge Course Staff!

Pecometh operates in partnership with the Peninsula Delaware Conference of The United Methodist Church. Our challenge course program is designed for those in reasonable health since the program incorporates a variety of activities including games and initiatives as well as more strenuous low and high challenge course elements. We have chosen to follow safety protocols and procedures that are practiced throughout the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT) and our professional vendors. One important consideration is that participants who weigh over 250lbs are not permitted on specialty elements such as the Giant Swing or The Zip Line. Other high elements may not be suited for participants who exceed the 250 lbs.

Activities may be conducted on the ground or at heights of up to 60 feet; they may be conducted indoors or out. Certain activities may involve close personal contact with other people on the course. Participants must follow the instructions given by our challenge course staff. Each participant may choose their own level of participation, recognizing that there is a risk of harm even though minimizing risks is a high priority at the Pecometh challenge course program. Injuries and other losses can result from, among other causes, moderate to strenuous activity, the possibility of falling, or abrupt contact with other participants, staff or structures associated with the activity. The outcomes of such risks may include, among others, sprains, breaks, abrasions and other trauma, some of which may be serious. Pecometh carries a full array of insurance; however we recommend that participants be covered by health and accident insurance during that time of their participation.

All of our programs are designed to be age appropriate and well with-in the capabilities of participants who are in reasonably good health. Further, each participant may choose the level of his or her participation in every activity.

Managing risks in providing a safe environment is very important in all of our programs at Pecometh. Please help us by providing the information requested in the Participant Form. Let us know of any condition, current or past, prior to attending the program that could affect involvement or participation in activities and provide any other information relevant to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Richelle Darrell at 410-556-6900 x100 or richelle@pecometh.org.