

Creative Youth Ideas



Creative Holiday Ideas

Games, Icebreakers &
Learning Activities for
Those Special Occassions



By Ken Sapp & Joshua Goh



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New Year's Day

1 January





New Year Party Hats

Description

It's a common custom to hold New Year's Parties and distribute party hats and noisemakers to the guests. In this game, the objective is to NOT be the last person wearing the party hat!

Resources

Party Hats for all participants

Preparation

Separate the plastic skeleton parts into pieces or cut them out if they are on paper.

What to Do

1. Announce the simple objective of this game - NOT to be the last person remaining with your hat on. The only rule is that no one can take their hat off until the organizer of the game has removed his or her hat. Then continue with the rest of your celebration activities!
2. As time goes by, people will take their attention off you, and even forget about the game. At that point, casually remove your hat and watch as people catch on.
3. Gradually the hats will come off, amidst snickers, smirks and giggles.
4. Eventually, one unsuspecting person will be last to notice, while everyone else gets a good laugh!
5. Serve up an appropriate forfeits (see the forfeits below), then put the hats back on and give the loser the chance to start the next game.

Forfeits

Funny, but fairly innocuous forfeits

- Tell your best joke in the style of the cookie monster from Sesame Street
- Make at least 3 people laugh.
- Tell a joke no one in the room has heard.
- Describe how to make a pie without talking.
- Give a 1-minute talk about elephants.
- Make your funniest face
- Wear a blindfold until the next forfeit
- Wear handcuffs until the next forfeit
- Wear a straight jacket until the next forfeit

Slightly embarrassing forfeits

- Tell someone in the room how much you love them for one minute
- Pinch your nose and sing the first line of a song "Aud Lang Syne"?
- Do your favorite dance
- Hop around the room like a penguin
- Wear a tin foil skull cap until the next person gets a forfeit
- William Tell - place a wad of paper on your head... everyone else throws paper wads at it trying to be the first to knock it off.



Notes



- Get mummified (with toilet paper)
- Dance a jig.
- Yawn until you make someone else yawn.
- Read out your last SMS
- Do an impression of a squeaky toy
- Do an impression of the dog that just found a squeaky toy
- Sing and perform the actions to the “I’m a little teapot song”
- Make a marriage proposal to someone in the group

A bit wilder forfeits

- Spell out a word using your bum. Group must correctly guess the word
- Scream as loud as you can
- Howl like a werewolf
- Bark like a dog
- Do your best chicken impersonation while you make a noise like a chicken
- Crawl across the room on your knees.

Joint Forfeits (Some of the forfeits above can also be done in groups)

Air Band - Each person is assigned some imaginary instrument and required to impersonate a performer in a band, imitating not only the action of the players but the sound of the instrument as well.

Important Note

Be cautious with forfeits. The idea is to have a little embarrassment, but not too much. Know your youth and what they can handle. You might allow more sensitive youths to choose someone else from the group to do the forfeit with them. You can also do forfeits as a group at the end of an activity. When in doubt about how a person will respond, don't do it! Also take care that forfeits don't degenerate into acts or comments with sexual overtones.

Keywords

New Year Party Game, New Year Celebration, New Year's Eve, Midnight

Notes





New Year's Charades

Description

In this classic variation of charades participants must act out phrases or words in order for team members to guess the correct phrase. The essence of Charades is pantomimes: you must act out a word or phrase without speaking or making any sound effects. For a New Year's Party Game, use events from the past year for items. You can still use the typical categories of charades like TV shows; Movies, books etc, but use those that were released in the previous 12 months!

Resources

1. A list of key words
2. Index cards

Preparation

You will need to create a list of items relating to events, and things that were done within the past 12 months. For inspiration, look to the internet, the newspaper, magazines, etc. Print them on slips of paper and put them in a bag to be drawn from during the game.

What to Do

1. Divide players into two teams of 6 or more members and try to guess the events from the person acting them out.
2. High die roll decides which team will play first.
3. The first team selects a person to mime the phrase; all other first team players are then the Guessers. The mime must rotate so that everyone is required to mime a clue before someone can go again.
4. Each time a new mime begins, he must draw a new name or phrase.
5. A timer is used... an hourglass can be used or a 2 minute timer. (The opposing team keeps track of the time limit.)
6. As one team mimes and guesses a name or phrase, the opposing team watches.
7. As the mime pantomimes the words his teammates start shouting out what they think is being portrayed. Players can guess as many times as they want. Guessing is NOT done in turn!
8. First, indicate to your team through motions (no words allowed) whether you're going to mime the title of a movie, book, TV show, book, or Newspaper Headline (event) etc.
 - to indicate a movie, pretend to crank an old-fashioned movie camera
 - to indicate a book, pretend to be reading
 - For a TV show, draw a square in the air for a TV screen.
 - For a newspaper headline, pretend to be reading with your hands wide apart as if to read a newspaper.



Notes



Notes

9. Indicate how many words are in the title by holding up the same number of fingers as words. You might also indicate which word you are miming first by holding up a finger for that word. Usually you put the number of fingers flat against your arm to indicate the number of syllables in a word.
10. Use clues along the way to guide the answers:
 - “sounds like” --cup your hand around your ear
 - “Little word”: bring your thumb and index fingers close together.
 - “Longer version of the word”: pretend to stretch elastic.
 - “Shorter version of the word”: chop with your hand.
 - “Close, keep guessing!” frantically wave hands to keep the guesses coming.
 - “Knows”: Point to you nose to indicate that someone “knows” the word and is correct.
 - Continue until all the words in the phrase are correct.
 - If the Mime’s team guesses correctly before the timer is emptied, the Mime’s team gets one point and marks the score on a piece of paper. It is now the opposing team’s turn to mime and guess a new name or phrase from a new slip of paper.
 - If the Mime’s team does not guess correctly before the timer is emptied, they do not win the point. The opposing team then gets ten seconds to make one guess to win the point. If the opposing team guesses correctly, they win the point and mark the score on a separate sheet of paper. It is then their turn to mime and guess a new name or phrase. If the opposing team does not guess correctly, no one wins the point. It is now the opposing team’s turn to mime and guess a new name or phrase.
 - Play alternates between teams with each phrase to be mimed.
 - At the end of game play or the end of your clues, the team with the most correct guesses wins!

Discussion

What were the key events in your personal life during the past year?

What were some of your achievements?

What dreams and goals did you have? Did you reach them?

Did you make any New Year’s Resolutions at the beginning of last year? Did you keep them?

Application

What are some of the things you want to do in the new year? What will the new year will look like for you? On a separate piece of paper make a list of some things you would like to see in the upcoming year. If you want to, you can share it with someone in the group to help keep you accountable to achieve it, or if it is personal, that is also ok... Seal it away in an envelope and write the date on it. Put it someplace where you can see as a reminder of the resolution you have made for the upcoming year!

Keywords

Resolutions, New Year Party Games, charades, mime, holiday celebrations, goal setting, planning for the future, dreams, visions, growth, change





New Year's Pictionary

Notes

Resources

1. A piece of paper
2. Pen
3. A list of items commonly associated with New Years and large sheet of paper
4. flip chart or a whiteboard for each team
5. Classified ads also work if you use a broad tip marker.

What to Do

1. Each team selects a person to draw.
2. The person leading the game shows all those who are drawing the first item on his list.
3. Each returns to his/her group and tries to get the group to guess the name of the item by **DRAWING ONLY**.
4. As soon as the group knows the item, they must write it down on a piece of paper for you to check.
5. They send the piece of paper and a new person to you.
6. If the item is correct you give the person the next item to draw.
7. The first team to complete the entire list wins the game.
8. Here are some of the common New Year items:
Champaign, cork, ginger ale, party poppers, a toast, clock, midnight, fireworks, streamers, calendar, resolution, noisemakers, party hats, confetti, balloons, time, year, party, health, happiness, prosperity, black-eyed peas, ham, cabbage, tamales, appetizers, Auld Lang Syne, Father Time, baby, firecrackers, January 1st, beginning, countdown, prayer, fasting, watch night service, Times Square, Dropping of the Ball, church bells

Variation

Instead of items associated with the New Year, use events, movies, and highlights from the past year for items. These could be specific to your church or youth group, or general world events.

Important Note

There should be no Speaking, No sound effects, especially no humming, and no gestures are allowed.

Keywords

New Year, Party Games, New Year's Party





New Year's Resolutions (1)

Notes

Resources

1. 3 to 5 slips of paper for everyone
2. Pencils or something for participants to write with
3. A bowl or hat
4. Envelopes that can be sealed (optional for closing)

What to Do

1. As participants arrive, everyone must write 3 personal New Year Resolutions or goals for the New Year. Fold them in half then place them in the bowl or hat. Names may or may not be included depending on how you intend to play the game.
2. After everyone has done this, each person must draw 3 slips of paper from the bowl.
3. One at a time the resolutions are read and participants try to guess who wrote each one.

Discussion

What are your spiritual goals for the next year?

What areas of your life do you need to get in order?

What new Beginnings do you wish to create?

What do you believe God's plan for your life is for the next year?

How will you make a difference in the life of others during the next year?

Application

As a closing, provide envelopes and pieces of paper for each youth. Ask you to write that their goals and resolutions on a piece of paper. Place the resolutions in the envelopes and seal them. Assure youth that no one else will read them. Then choose a date (e.g. 6 months, at youth camp, or in one year) to return the envelopes to the youth to check their progress.

Keywords

Ice Breakers, New Years Resolution, New Year's Party Games, New Year, Holiday Activities





New Year's Resolutions (2)

Description

Everyone writes New Years Resolutions which are randomly read by participants. Can you guess who wrote it?

Resources

A slip of paper and something to write with for each participant

Preparation

Prepare slips of paper for people to write their resolution(s) on

What to Do

1. As each person arrives, give them a piece of paper and ask them to write down a new years resolution (which is not too personal or embarrassing)
2. Put all the New Year resolutions in a bowl.
3. Each person must pick one piece of paper out of the bowl.
4. Resolutions are read, one by one and everyone must write down who they think wrote down each New Year's resolution.
5. The person who correctly guesses the most is the winner.

Variation

Instead of writing single resolution, participants must write down 4 resolutions (3 true and one false). Everyone tries to guess the author based on the resolutions and then try to also guess which one is false.

Important Note

A traditional New Year's Tradition is to think of something you want to change in the new year and commit yourself to it. Here are some hints for making an effective New Year's

Be realistic by setting achievable goals. Don't set something as a resolution for which you have no control - like winning a lottery.

Describe your resolutions in specific terms. The more detail you provide, the more likely you are to accomplish it. Instead of "I want to improve my health" choose "I will exercise at least once a week!" or "I will only have a maximum of 1 carbonated drink each day."

Break down large goals into smaller ones. For instance, instead of "I want to live a healthier lifestyle", commit to losing weight by resolving to join a gym and eat at least one healthy meal each day"

Find alternatives to a behavior that you want to change. If you want to lose weight, but eat to reduce stress, what other ways can you reduce stress?

Target things that are truly important to you. Do not choose things you think you ought to do or what others think you should do.



Notes



Discussion

What is a change you would like to see in your life for the next year?

How can God help you to make this change?

What steps can you take to see this change in your life?

Application

Make a resolution to yield your life to God's control in the upcoming year.

Have you given your life to Christ? Is there an area of your life you have not yielded or that you previously yielded but then took back control?

Commit yourself to this change and find someone to help keep you accountable for it and pray for you in this area of your life.

Keywords

New Year, New Year's Party, New Year's Resolutions, Party Games

Notes





New Year's Time Capsule

Discussion

Celebrate the previous year and create a fun activity for the next by creating a time capsule.

Resources

1. A container that can be sealed and stored away.
2. Items for the time capsule (see below)

Preparation

Beforehand, brainstorm with the youth the kinds of things to include in the time capsule – Stuff that means a lot to you now, and stuff you might think is funny or cool when you open this thing up again in a year!

What to Do

1. Give the youth the ideas on what to write or put on their time capsules.
2. Then instruct them to place it in the container.
3. Tell them to seal the container tightly.
4. Lastly, tell the youth to store or keep the “time capsule”.

Time Capsule Items:

Pictures of themselves

A letter to themselves in a sealed envelope to be opened one year from today

A letter from a friend to the future you

A videotape of the youth group to themselves in the future

A paragraph about what you want to be

Favorite scripture verse or Bible Story

A list of favorite things

What is cool

Slang words

Things that are considered in/ popular

Popular activities, movies, books, clothes

Prices of favorite things

A timeline of key events from the past year (Ask everyone to bring newspapers, magazines to cut things from)

Photographs of family, themselves, pets, and special occasions

Allow each youth one small item each to seal away (Size will depend on what you use for your time capsule.)

Ticket stubs from your favorite movies

A recording of your favorite songs

A list of best friends

Pictures of your room



Notes



Variation

Have a design a time capsule contest. Ask youth to create and fill their own time capsules and bring them to the meeting. Include all these in your main time capsule. Ask youth to share with each other what they have included and why.

Important Note

Remind the youth that they can only open the sealed container in a year.

Keywords

New Year, memories, trends, change

Notes





New Year's Win, Lose or Draw

Discussion

This variation of charades began as a TV show in which participants drew illustrations of the phrases in order for team members to guess the correct phrase. For a New Year's Party Game, use events from the past year for items. You can still use the typical categories of charades like TV shows; Movies, books etc, but use those that were released in the previous 12 months!

Resources

1. You will also need large white sheets of paper or a whiteboard
2. Colored whiteboard markers.

Discussion

You will need to create a list of items relating to events, and things that were done within the past 12 months. For inspiration, look to the Internet, the newspaper, magazines, etc. Print them on slips of paper and put them in a bag to be drawn from during the game.

What to Do

1. Divide players into two teams of 6 or more members as they try to guess the events from the illustrations that are drawn.
2. High die roll decides which team will play first.
3. The first team selects a Sketcher; all other first team players are then the Guessers. The sketcher must rotate so that everyone is required to sketch a clue before someone can go again.
4. Each time a new sketcher begins, he must draw a new name or phrase.
5. The Sketcher then announces the category of the name or phrase to be sketched. For example: Books, TV Shows, etc. and begins drawing.
6. A timer is used... an hourglass can be used or a 1 minute timer. (The opposing team keeps track of the time limit.)
7. As one team sketches and guesses a name or phrase, the opposing team watches.
8. As the Sketcher sketches, the Sketcher's teammates start shouting out what they think is being drawn. Players can guess as many times as they want. Guessing is NOT done in turn!
9. If part of a name or phrase is guessed correctly, the sketcher may write that word next to his sketch.
10. If the Sketcher's team guesses correctly before the timer is emptied, the Sketcher's team gets one point and marks the score on a separate sheet of paper. It is now the opposing team's turn to sketch and guess a new name or phrase from a new card.



Notes



Notes

11. If the Sketcher's team does not guess correctly before the timer is emptied, they do not win the point. The opposing team then gets ten seconds to make one guess to win the point. If the opposing team guesses correctly, they win the point and mark the score on a separate sheet of paper. It is then their turn to sketch and guess a new name or phrase from a new card. If the opposing team does not guess correctly, no one wins the point. It is now the opposing team's turn to sketch and guess a new name or phrase from a new card.
12. Play alternates between teams with each phrase to be sketched.
13. At the end of game play or the end of your clues, the team with the most correct guesses wins!
14. aper from the bowl.
15. One at a time the resolutions are read and participants try to guess who wrote each one.

Important Note

No letters, words or numbers can be drawn. Symbols such as dollar signs(\$), arrows, plus signs(+), etc. are acceptable. However, if part of a name or phrase is guessed correctly, you may write that word next to your sketch. No speaking is allowed while sketching — but you may gesture to indicate whether the guess is close or off-track! You may draw an ear to mean "sounds like" and then sketch a rhyming word.

Discussion

What were the key events in your personal life during the past year?

What were some of your achievements?

What dreams and goals did you have? Did you reach them?

Did you make any New Year's Resolutions at the beginning of last year? Did you keep them?

Application

What is your vision of what the new year will look like for you? On a separate piece of paper create a picture with symbols and sketches of some things you would like to see in the upcoming year. If you want to, you can share it with someone in the group to help keep you accountable to achieve it, or if it is personal, that is also ok... Seal it away in an envelope and write the date on it. Put it someplace where you can see as a reminder of the resolution you have made for the upcoming year!

Keywords

Resolutions, New Year Party Games, Sketch, charades variation, holiday games, goal setting, planning for the future, dreams, visions, growth, change





Predictions

Discussion

Can you predict what will happen in the New Year? This little game gives you a chance to give a small party favor (gag gift) to each visitor to your New Year Party and generate a few laughs at the same time.

Resources

Numbered Gifts with corresponding clues

Resources

Wrap the gifts and number them to match the descriptions. Guests will draw out a piece of paper and read the clue and then open the gift with the matching number. Tape the response to the gift inside the wrapped paper. You can make up your own gag gifts, but here are some suggestions:

Clue: "Your wisdom will begin to show"

Gift: "Black hair dye to cover the gray hairs"

Clue: "There will be unexpected revelations in the new year."

Gift: "Safety pins for when you have a busted zipper"

Clue: "You will be at a loss for words"

Gift: "Here's a dictionary so you can find some!"

Clue: "You'll need to wipe away the results of your efforts"

Gift: "Here's a roll of toilet paper for a clean break!"

Clue: "I expect you will lose more than a few"

Gift: "Here's some golf balls to replace the ones you lose"

Clue: "Things will move a little too slow for comfort" Gift: Here's some Chocolate Ex-Lax to make things move a little faster"

Clue: "You will be a little short of dough"

Gift: "Here's a cookie recipe and cutter"

Clue: "Circumstances may be a little bitter"

Gift: "Here's some sugar to sweeten things up"

Clue: "You will not quite measure up"

Gift: Here's a ruler to help"

Clue: "With great changes you will need a new yard stick"

Gift: "Here's a stick from my yard to help"

Clue: "You will need to clean up a mess!"

Gift: "Here's a dust pan to make it easier"

Clue: "You will need to release a little stress"

Gift: "Here's some stress relieving capsules" (Bubble wrap)

Clue: "You'll need a washer and dryer"

Gift: "Here's a dual purpose washer or dryer" (hand towel)

Clue: "You will discover a great deal"

Gift: "Here's a deck of cards to help you learn"

Clue: "You will want to take a bubble bath"

Gift: "Here's jar of beans. Boil and eat 1 hour in advance for a natural bubble bath."

Clue: "You will need to make some great calculations"

Gift: "Here's a pencil - use your head!"



Notes



Clue: "You will make more than a few mistakes."

Gift: "Here's an eraser for a clean start"

Clue: "You will want a bigger paycheck"

Gift: "Here's a magnifying glass to help"

Clue: "everyone will believe you have lost your marbles!"

Gift: "Now you have at least a few." (bag of marbles)

Clue: "You will want to pull your hair out in frustration."

Gift: "Here's a wig to hide the bald spots!"

What to Do

1. Guests draw a numbered clue from a bag and read the prophecy aloud.
2. Guest then open the matching gift and show it to everyone while reading the attached response.

Discussion

What predictions would you like to make for yourself for the next year?

How can you make those dreams become a reality in your life?

How do we discover these plans?

Can you predict what will happen in the New Year?

Application

God's gifts are no joke.

Read Jeremiah 29:11-14

God says that he has plans for each of us, plans to prosper us and not to harm us, and plans for a hope and a future. How do we discover these plans? He will bring them to pass when we seek him with all our heart!

Scripture Reference

Read Jeremiah 29:11-14

Keywords

New Year's predictions, future, hope, dreams, New Year Party Games, gag gifts, prophecy

Notes





Change the World

Illustration

A Middle Eastern mystic said, “I was a revolutionary when I was young and all my prayer to God was: ‘Lord, give me the energy to change the world.’ As I approached middle age and realized that my life was half gone without my changing a single soul, I changed my prayer to: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change all those who come into contact with me, just my family and friends, and I shall be satisfied.’

Now that I am an old man and my days are numbered, I have begun to see how foolish I have been. My one prayer now is: ‘Lord, give me the grace to change myself.’ If I had prayed for this right from the start, I would not have wasted my life.’

Source: John Maxwell’s “Developing the Leader Within You”

Keywords

New Year’s Resolutions, change, New Year



Notes





January

Illustration

In Roman mythology there was a god who was the guardian of doorways, He had two faces on his head and could look backward and forward simultaneously. He was the patron of beginnings and endings, and in 46 B.C. Roman emperor, Julius Caesar introduced a new calendar and gave the first month of the year the name of this pagan God, Janus' month or in latin Ianuarius from which we get our word, "January".

Janus' month has always been a time of endings and beginnings, when we have the feeling of making a fresh start on a clean slate. People are obsessed with beginnings and endings. They hold meaning for us, they fascinate us, we like them because they somehow magically make life seem simpler, not so complex and overwhelming. It helps us place life into small compartments that are easier to deal with.

- We mark the beginning of a new year.
- The day a person is born.
- The day a person graduates from school.
- The day a person is married.
- The day this church was started.

Like the greek mythological figure from which we get the name "January", we look backward and forward. We reminisce about how things were. But we also look forward to the future! I have here a daytimer... people are fond of giving these away at the end of the year. Last week I was looking over last years appointments. It was nice to be able to look back over the year:

- See the things I accomplished.
- Look at all the appointments, the people I had met, the events I attended.

But there were also regrets:

- the vacation I never took.
- the things I wanted to do, but in the hectic pace of life, never found the time.

Even so, there was something nice about being able to set it aside, and to say, "That was last year.!" Now I have a clean slate. A new start. New possibilities. I have great expectations looking forward!

You may not even have a daytimer. But we all have memories in which we record the events of our lives. What will you record in your New Year's book? Do you plan to make any changes?

Let God guide you to the changes he wants to make in your life! Just remember, God doesn't love you for what you've done or what you will do, but because of what he did on the cross. On the cross he forgave your past and gave you a future!

How will you make a difference in the life of others during the next year?

Keywords

Ice Breakers, New Years Resolution, New Year's Party Games, New Year, Holiday Activities



Notes





A Positively Prosperous New Year!

Description

This New Year Party Game serves as an ongoing icebreaker which encourages everyone to initiate and engage in conversations. Because of the setup of the game, it keeps everyone involved throughout the night until the final prize is awarded just after midnight!

This makes a great icebreaker and encourages people to have conversations with strangers and people they don't know very well throughout the whole New Year Party event.

Resources

While my preference is to use silver garland leftover from Christmas to make necklaces, this New Year Party game can be played with party hats, New Year Hats, or even nametags. Check those after-Christmas sales for great discounts on silver garland! Then you can just cut it to length to make a necklace for each person.

Preparation

Provide enough garlands or whatever item you have substituted for the garland for everyone that will attend the party. Every guest at the New Year party is given a silver garland necklace when they arrive at the party. You can also give them party hats and noisemakers to help usher in the new Year. This game is played while people mingle during the party and the prize is awarded right after midnight.

What to Do

1. Party Guests must ask other guests any questions in which the natural answer would be "no" or have the word "know" as part of the answer.
2. If anyone uses either word ("no" or "know") in conversation, the guest they are talking to gets to take all their silver garlands (or party hat, nametag, special sticker or whatever item you have chosen for your New Year Party.) Those wearing the greatest number of garlands become hot targets!
3. After midnight, the Party guest with the most garlands wins.
4. If a guest has lost his or her garland, he or she can still play and ask questions. They could even jump to the lead again by gaining the garlands from someone with a lot of them.

Discussion

As we approach the New Year, a positive attitude and optimistic outlook will help us to make it a prosperous one. After all, as Christians, we have a lot to be hopeful for! It's easy to get caught up in pessimism based on past mistakes, failures, and unrealised dreams and goals. But with Christ, everyday can be a new beginning! Christ came that we might have life and might have it abundantly. Jeremiah 29:11+ reminds us that God has plans for

Notes



our lives, plan for a hope and a future! Instead of saying “no” to things this year, say “Yes”!

What is something that God might ask you to in the New Year? Say “YES!” Maybe you have been saying “No” to Jesus becoming your Lord and Savior! Maybe you have been saying know to something he has placed on your heart to do?

Begin the New Year by saying “Yes” to Him and his lordship in your life. Seek God first and all God’s blessing he plans for you will be yours!
How will you make a difference in the life of others during the next year?

Keywords

new year party game, holiday celebrations, creative game ideas, a new beginning, optimism, future, hope, evangelistic message, evangelism ideas

Notes





Remember When?

Description

Participants can be given photos, objects, newspaper clippings or headlines, as reminders of key events. They must identify the month that event took place.

This game provides a reflection on the previous year by requiring participants to remember which month key events of that past one year occurred!

Resources

1. photos, objects, newspaper clippings or headlines, or other reminders for events that occurred during the past 12 months.

Preparation

Go through old newspapers, magazines, or Internet articles from the past year. Make a list of notable things that happened, and the dates that they took place. You can list the events, read headlines, or even show object and photos for key events... You can put them into powerpoint slides and project them for everyone to see or simply call them out and show them any objects.

What to Do

1. Give each player a piece of paper and something to write with.
2. One by one, reveal the events from the past year.
3. Each player must write down what month they believe that event took place.
4. After all the events have all been revealed announce the correct answers and reward the person who had the most correct answers.

Discussion

What was the most important event for the world in the past year? Why?

What event will forever be etched in your mind? Why?

What was the most important thing that happened to you during the past year? Why is it significant?

Keywords

New Year Celebration, remembrance, reflection, Holiday Party Game, New Year's Party Activity



Notes





False Predictions

Illustration

We are often quick to make judgments about people. We say that we believe in forgiveness and the transforming power of God, but then so often, the church acts as if we do not believe it. People who make mistakes are forever labeled by their mistakes. We believe God forgives and forgets, but while we say we forgive them, we seem unable to forget. Listen to some of the predictions or judgments that were made about some very famous people. Can you guess who is being referred to?

1. "We don't like their sound, and guitar music is on the way out."
2. "We don't need you. You haven't got through college yet."
3. 'Far too noisy...Far too many notes.'
4. 'I watched his countenance closely, to see if he was not deranged ... and I was assured by other senators after he left the room that they had no confidence in it'.
5. "You ain't going nowhere, son. You ought to go back to driving a truck."
6. "You better learn secretarial work or else get married."
7. "It doesn't matter what he does, he will never amount to anything."
8. "You have a chip on your tooth, your Adam's apple sticks out too far and you talk too slow. "
9. "Can't Act. Slightly Bald. Also Dances."
10. , objects, newspaper clippings or headlines, or other reminders for events that occurred during the past 12 months.

Answers

1. Decca Recording Co. rejecting the Beatles, 1962.
2. Rejection of Apple Computer Inc. founder Steve Jobs on attempts to get Atari and HP interested in his and Steve Wozniak's personal computer.
3. Emperor Ferdinand of Austria referring to Mozart, 1786.
4. U.S. Senator Smith of Indiana, after witnessing a demonstration of Samuel Morse's telegraph, 1842.
5. Jim Denny, manager of the Grand Ole Opry, in firing Elvis Presley after a performance, 1954.
6. Director of the Blue Book Modeling Agency, advising Marilyn Monroe, 1944.
7. Albert Einstein's teacher to his father in 1895.
8. Universal Pictures executive to Clint Eastwood
9. Review of Fred Astaire's Original Screen Test, January 1933.

Fortunately, God has much more accurate predictions about our future.



Notes

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NIV)

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the LORD, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.”

Discussion

So as you start the New Year, listen to God. Don't listen to the voices of discouragement, but to the great encourager, the one who knew you before you were even born. The key to realizing God's plan for you, of release from whatever captivity you may be in, of restoration to God and his place for you is to seek Him with all your heart. When you do, you not only find him, you also find yourself!

Scripture Reference

Jeremiah 29:11-14 (NIV)

Keywords

New Year, plans, prosperity, goals, dreams, hope, future, forgiveness, restoration, new beginnings, new starts

Notes





Building a House

Illustration

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his boss of his plans to leave his job and live a more leisurely life with his wife and family. He would miss the paycheck, but they could get by.

The contractor was sorry to see such a worker go, so he asked the carpenter to build just one more house as a personal favor.

The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. The house was not up to his usual standards. It was an unfortunate way to end a dedicated career.

When the carpenter finished his work, the contractor came by, but instead of inspecting the house, he handed the carpenter the front door key and said, "This is your house," he said. "It is my gift to you."

The carpenter was shocked! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently.

Application

So it is with us. We build our lives, a day at a time, often putting less than our best into the building. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built.

If we could do it over, we'd do it much differently. But we cannot go back...

You are the carpenter of your life. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall.

Your attitudes and the choices you make today build your "house" for tomorrow... It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, build wisely!

to remember which month key events of that past one year occurred!

Keywords

New Year, planning, future, legacy, growth



Notes





Carrots, Eggs, and Coffee



Notes

Illustration

A daughter complained to her father about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved a new one arose. Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In one he placed carrots, in the second he placed eggs, and the last he placed ground coffee beans. He let them sit and boil, without saying a word. The daughter sucked her teeth and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. In about twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl.

He pulled the eggs out and placed them a bowl. Then he ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her he asked. "Darling, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. He brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. She smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. She humbly asked. "What does it mean Father?"

He explained that each of them had faced the same adversity, boiling water, but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. But after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water. "Which are you," he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Application

How about you? Are you the carrot that seems hard, but with pain and adversity do you wilt and become soft and lose your strength? Are you the egg, which starts off with a malleable heart? Were you a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a divorce, or a layoff have you become hardened and stiff. Your shell looks the same, but are you bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and heart? Or are you like the coffee bean? The bean changes the hot water, the thing that is bringing the pain, to its peak flavor as it reaches 212 degrees Fahrenheit. When the water gets the hottest, it just tastes better. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and make things better around you.

Keywords

New Year, improvement, adversity, trials, difficult circumstances, struggles, tribulations





Cleaning House

Illustration

Last Week I threw out Worrying, it was getting old and in the way. It kept me from being me; I couldn't do things God's way.

I threw out those Inhibitions; they were just crowding me out. Made room for my New Growth, got rid of my old dreams and doubts.

I threw out a book on MY PAST (didn't have time to read it anyway). Replaced it with New Goals, started reading it today.

I threw out hate and bad memories, (remember how I treasured them so)? Got me a NEW PHILOSOPHY too, threw out the one from long ago. Brought in some new books too, called I CAN, I WILL, and I MUST. Threw out I might, I think and I ought. WOW, You should've seen the dust. I ran across an OLD FRIEND, haven't seen him in a while. I believe his name is GOD, Yes, I really like His style.

He helped me to do some cleaning and added some things Himself. Like PRAYER, HOPE and FAITH, Yes I placed them right on the shelf. I picked up this special thing and placed it at the front door. I FOUND IT - its called PEACE. Nothing gets me down anymore.

Yes, I've got my house looking nice. Looks good around the place. For things like Worry and Trouble there just isn't any place.

Its good to do a little house cleaning, get rid of the old things on the shelf. It sure makes things brighter; maybe you should TRY IT YOURSELF. This is a start of my "NEW BEGINNING"

Keywords

house cleaning, new beginning, new year, perspectives, direction



Notes



Planning for Prosperity

Illustration

The next few days in Singapore will be the beginning of the Chinese New Year. For several days before the eve of Chinese New Year, Chinese housewives clean and redecorate their homes and shop for waxed duck, Chinese Sausages, mandarin oranges and traditional cakes. They will not sweep during the first few days of the new year because they might sweep out the good luck. Each food eaten has special significance for luck. Red paper scrolls bearing good luck verses in Chinese are posted all over the house.

It is believed that the first few days of the New Year will effect the rest of the year. So everything is done to insure a prosperous future. What you do and how you act during the period is crucial in determining how the rest of your year will go. So, eating the right foods, such as black moss seaweed, which is a homonym for exceeding in wealth, and dried bean curd, which is another homonym for fulfillment of wealth and happiness, is a must.

Officially the holiday lasts for three days, but Singaporeans often take the entire week off from work to celebrate, visiting relatives and friends. Everything has to be just right to set the stage for an auspicious New Year. A Chinese New Year's Eve feast doubles as a family reunion, bringing people from all corners of the world back home. Meals are decadent with a spread of symbolically lucky foods Hong bao, or red envelopes stuffed with money, are passed out to the younger folk as a an auspicious start for a prosperous new year.

In the Bible, Peter also spoke of things that will insure a Christian will be spiritually prosperous. Like the Chinese New Year, a little house cleaning and what we nourish ourselves with become important.

Application

1 Peter 2:1-17

Peter call us all to a life of holiness (cleaning up our spiritual house) and love in 1 Peter 1:13-25. Verse 23 mentions being born again or born anew. "New borns" must grow into maturity. Much of a parent's responsibility lies in nurturing and creating an environment for this growth to occur.

Peter begins by assuming that his readers are like newborn babies. Most newborns are passive about everything but getting their nourishment. They enthusiastically go after milk. Peter relates this enthusiasm for nourishment to a new Christian's desire for spiritual nourishment that will lead to growth in Christ.

That nourishment is pure, spiritual milk. The word milk is part of the figure of speech that goes with newborns. The word pure is genuine - not thinned down milk and refers to the Word of God.

Notes



Since you have already tasted and discovered that the Lord is good, the command to long for more spiritual nourishment should be an easy command to obey. The fact that Peter talked about desiring the word in verse 2 and tasting the Lord in verse 3 reminds us that this growth is in our relationship with Christ.

I wonder how many of us are as enthusiastic about the pursuit of God as the Chinese are about the pursuit of good luck. Our reward is not prosperity for a year, but life eternal. Are we willing to do a little personal house cleaning to insure a life of holiness? Do we have that hunger for the word like new born babies craving milk?

Scripture Reference

1 Peter 2:1-17

Keywords

Chinese New Year, Luck, prosperity, growth, nourishment, holiness, cleaning house

Notes





The Old Tree

Illustration

Once upon a time there was a leafy tree in a field. Leaves grew densely on the tall branches. The roots were deeply into the ground. The tree was the most remarkable among the rest.

The tree then became the home for some birds. They built their nests and they lived on his branches. The birds made holes on him, and they hatched their eggs within the greatness of the tree. The tree felt so delighted because he was accompanied as he walked through his long lasting days.

People were grateful for the presence of the tree. They often came over and sheltered under him. Under his branches, they sat down and opened their picnic baskets. "This tree is very useful," that's what the people said every time they went home from shelter. The tree was very proud hearing those compliments.

However, time went on. The tree was beginning to be sick. His leaves and twigs were falling, then his body became thin and pale. The greatness he used to have was fading away. Birds felt reluctant to build their nests there. No one would come to sit under the tree to shelter anymore.

The tree wept, "Oh God, why is it so hard for me? I need friends. Now no one would come close to me. Why do you take all the glory I used to have?" The tree cried loudly, so it echoed throughout the forest. "Why wouldn't you cut me down, so I don't have to bear this suffering?" The tree kept on crying, and his tears were running down his dry body.

Seasons came and went, but his condition had not changed. The tree was still feeling lonely. His branches became drier and drier. Every night the tree wept and cried, until the morning broke.

"Cheep...chirp....cheep" Ah, what was that noise? Oh, it's a little baby bird who has just pipped from the egg. The old tree woke up from his daydream. "Cheep...chirp...cheep", the noise became louder and louder. There was another baby bird. Not long after that, the tree became noisy because of the birth of new baby birds. One...two...three...and four baby birds have been born to this world. "Ah, He has answered my prayers," exclaimed the old tree.

The day after, there were many birds flying to the old tree. They were going to build new nests. The dry branches have turned out to attract their attention to nest there. The birds felt warmer to stay inside the dry branches instead of their place before. The number of birds was increasing and there were more kinds of them. "Wow, now my days are brighter with their presence here", murmured the old tree gladly.

Notes



The old tree was back to cheer again. And when he looked down, his heart was flowing with joy. There was a new little tree growing near his roots. The new tree seemed to smile at him. The tears of the old tree has grown a little tree who would continue his devotion to nature.

Application

Only God knows the plans he has for us. Do not despair!
“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11

Scripture Reference

Jeremiah 29:11

Keywords

New Year, improvement, adversity, trials, difficult circumstances, struggles, tribulations

Notes





Tomorrow

Illustration

“...Sit down and think for a moment, please. Find a quiet spot in your dwelling, just for sixty seconds. Think--just think about the two statements...’you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow...’ and ‘... you do not know what a day may bring forth.’

Man’s knowledge seems impressive - awesome. We can split atoms, we can build skyscrapers, transplant kidneys, program computers, explore and explain outer space, and even unknot the problems of ecology. But when it comes to ‘tomorrow,’ our knowledge plunges to zero. Whoever you are. You may be a Ph.D.from Yale, you may be a genius in your field with an I.Q. above 170, marvelously gifted and totally capable in any number of advanced, technological specialities--but you simply ‘do not know’ what tomorrow will bring. Scientists may project, program, predict, deduct, deduce, and compute diagrams about the future. They’re still only guessing. In algebraic terms, tomorrow remains Factor X.... a mystery. It cannot be explained. It defies all attempts to be exposed. It lies hidden in the depths of God’s unfathomable, intricately interwoven plan. He has not been pleased to unveil it until this old earth spins sufficiently to see the dawn. And then...only one moment at a time...

This sort of thinking leads to an inevitable question: Are you ready? ‘Ready for what?’ you may ask. ‘Ready for anything’ is my answer. Is your trust, your attitude of dependence sufficiently stable to sustain you ‘regardless?’ Remember Job’s avalanche? Should your Lord be pleased to turn you into a Job, would He still be your Treasure and your Triumph? Don’t let the answer slip off your tongue too easily. Think about the implications of that question to your life, health, job, and family. Should your Lord make you an Enoch, would you be reluctant to make that eternal journey?

Thank the Lord, it is His ‘love’ that arranges our our tomorrows... and we may be certain that whatever it brings, His love sent it our way. That is why I smile every time I read Romans 11:33. Let it bring a smile into your world: ‘Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are His wisdom and knowledge and riches! How impossible it is for us to understand His decisions and His methods! (TLB) ‘ “

SOURCE: Charles R. Swindoll, “Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life”

Scripture Reference

Romans 11:33

Keywords

future, trust, tomorrow, knowledge



Notes





Priorities

Description

Use this creative teaching idea to lead youth in a discussion on priorities and fulfilling the purpose in life for which God placed us in this world.

Resources

1. Large sheets of paper or newsprint
2. Whiteboard markers (that will not bleed through the paper)

Preparation

Put a Poster or large sheet of paper in each corner of the room for each of the following labels:

- Possessions or provision
- Power or Position
- Popularity
- Others

Place a chair in the exact center of the room as a marker.

What to Do

1. Explain:
 - Possessions refer to the material things we seek in life.
 - Power refers to positions we want to obtain in life.
 - Popularity refers to social recognition and fame that people seek in life.
 - Explain that the center of the room represents living for God.
2. Allow youth to brainstorm about the things that people have as priorities in their lives. Examples might be good grades, a good job, a marriage partner, a house, to serve God, to have lots of money, etc.
3. Then have youth write the priority on the poster that represents that priority. Some items might fit into more than one category (i.e. good grades might be a priority but the reason could be for popularity or for the purpose of getting a job with more money and a higher position - power.)
4. After the posters have been filled with examples of each priority, have youth stand somewhere in the room that reflects their most important priorities in life. (For example, if someone's priority is to make lots of money they might stand in the possessions corner.)

Discussion

How does this passage relate to the posters in the corners of the room?

Which poster represents each of the temptations?

How did Christ's understanding of his purpose in life reflect his priorities?

What are some things that are part of God's plan for every person's life?

How can you discover God's plan for YOUR life?

What do you believe is part of God's purpose for bringing YOU into the world? (You may not know all the details yet, but you might have some ideas.)



Notes



Each of you has positioned yourself in a specific corner of the room based on your own priorities. How can someone in your position move closer to “God’s Purpose” for your life and away from the wrong priorities? What are some of the practical steps you can take that would move you closer to God’s ideal plan for your life?

Commit to one of the steps you can start this week!

Take it to the Next Level

Jesus was tempted with popularity, power, and possessions (material needs). But because Jesus understood his purpose in the world he did not give into temptation. There is nothing wrong with material possessions, power or popularity. But when they replace God as a priority in our lives they become a problem. In fact, later in Jesus’ ministry we would see him providing for the physical needs of people, he would demonstrate the power of God, and he would be popular. Yet his priority was to do the will of God, to accomplish the purpose for which he had been sent into the world. God has brought each of us into the world for a purpose. The better we understand our purpose, the better we will be able to balance our priorities to fulfill that purpose.

Important Note

This type of activity can be used for a variety of active learning lessons. Anytime there are choices to be made, or 2 or more facets of an issue, you can write these on posters and have kids move to that area of the room. The easiest is when there are two choices and youth are asked to move to the left or right of the room depending on whether they agree or disagree with a statement... or whether it is true of them or not. If there are lots of choices, just place them on the walls around the room. It gets the youth physically and mentally involved in the lesson by getting the kids out of their seats and thinking about where they personally stand in relation to a question or issue.

Scripture Reference

Matthew 4:1-10

Keywords

priorities, purpose, God’s will, God’s plan, temptation of Jesus

Notes





Backwards

Description

Students will navigate across a room looking into a mirror. Do we live life looking to what lies ahead or looking back?

Resources

1. Hand held mirrors (or better - rear view mirrors from a car)
2. Obstacles

Preparation

Place obstacles randomly distributed around the the game play area

What to Do

1. Everyone must walk BACKWARDS from one side of the area to the other using only mirrors to see. You can do this as a relay race between teams or as individual participants.

Variations

Allow someone else to hold the mirror while a participant races forward.

Discussion

Was it difficult to move forward while looking backward? Why?

What are some of the difficulties faced when we are focused on looking back?

How is this activity similar to focusing on our past and future?

What lessons can we learn?

Application

If you have ever driven a car, you can glance from time to time in the rear view mirror. As we move forward we regularly glance at it to keep us aware of what is behind us. The past makes us more knowledgeable and wiser. And in that regard, the past is good. But if you spend all your time looking in the rear view mirror you are sure to meet a disaster ahead. The same is true with life. We can learn some incredible lessons from looking back to the past. Someone has said that if you refuse to look to the past you are doomed to repeat it's errors. We can learn from the past to avoid making mistakes ahead. But past failures can also prevent us from moving forward and sometimes we have difficulty seeing beyond those failures to a brighter future.

The past can be good or bad.. We can be content with our past accomplishments as easily as we can live with regret for our past mistakes. We can look back to reproduce the success we have experienced. But we cannot be content living in the past with past successes. We will never grow and move forward.

Notes



“Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.” —Luke 9:62, NIV

If you have ever mowed the grass with a lawnmower and then looked back, you’ll discover that you have often mowed in a crooked line. The key to mowing a straight line is to look ahead to a target or goal and move toward it. When you are mowing the lawn it is not so bad, because you can correct it by mowing over your mistake. When plowing a field, things are different. If you have plowed a crooked furrow in the field, you have to keep plowing crooked furrows to match your first rows. A person who plows has to keep his eyes fixed straight ahead on a goal or he’ll mess up the whole field.

Paul said: “...One thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:13-14)

Scripture References

Luke 9:62; Phillipians 3:13-14

Keywords

past, regret, mistakes, future, opportunities, goals

Notes





Cleaning Your Room

Illustration

As a teen, your bedroom is a mirror on which your personality and passions are reflected. Though it may be small it is your domain. Its Yours! Your room becomes your mansion, your castle. Inside you are King of your palace, at least until you are dethroned by parents telling you to clean it, pick it up. Three aquariums, a nursery for caterpillars that would become monarch butterflies, a chemistry lab, an enormous rock collection, an apple IIE computer, and a bookshelf filled with books of science and science fiction showed my general interest in anything science. At one point mom replied that if I added another rock to my collection I'd have to start sleeping outdoors.

Of course, like all teens, the music was too loud, and at times you couldn't see the floor. For some reason, mom never accepted the excuse that with everything on the floor "I wouldn't get the carpet dirty." Like most teens, I was at times sent to my room to "pick it up". I always wanted to go outside and lift the house and reply with a sly grin on my face "where would you like me to put it?" I had this incessant habit of taking everything literally if it gave me an opportunity to be mischievous. "Put up the towels" meant tossing them in the air and telling mom they wouldn't stay up. "Pass the mashed potatoes" was translated into passing the potatoes by you, but not stopping, or better yet, passing them to you basketball style. Unless you were prepared to catch you'd be wearing them. But in reality, for the record, it was mom who usually started the food fights.

It took some time before I understood the importance of cleaning my room. Surely my parents understood that if I picked it up, in a few hours time it it would be cluttered again as a result of my hectic schedule. And of making my bed? What a waste of time. What was the use of making something look nice when it's sole purpose was its destruction in a matter of hours? If I was in my room for any matter of time, I was sprawled across my bed, listening to music or reading a book. After a good night's sleep I'd have the sheets pulled from the corners. Sheets and quilts, once nicely covering the bed, would be plastered across the room. If I was lucky I would awake on the bed in the same position in which I went to bed. Most of the time, I'd wake up somehow turned around 90 or even 180 degree and would be sleeping on the bed in the opposite direction from which I went to sleep. If my bed had been a soccer field, I am sure I would have covered the entire field every night.

Eventually I came to pride myself in a clean room, though at times our definitions of clean were different. My key concern was that it was neater than that of my two sisters. Sometimes that meant really cleaning mine, at other times, like any good older brother, it meant sabotaging theirs. My favorite method of sabotage was to hang all their dolls from the canopy bed with ropes around their necks. Often they wouldn't have the slightest



Notes



inclination I had been up to my tricks until they entered their room and let out a squeal, which precipitated a corresponding giggle from me.

I later discovered that my parent's primary concern in cleaning my room was the development of self-discipline and responsibility. Now it seems that I have more than just a room that needs self-discipline to keep it in order. Our lives, like our bedrooms as teens, reflect on us. What passions and aspects of your personality does your life now reflect? Does it reflect a passion for God? What clutter do you have scattered about the floor? What, like your teenage bed, have you left undone? It seems things get cluttered so much easier as adults. Work commitments, family matters, bills, and personal habits need the same self-discipline and responsibility we needed as teens. Spiritually, the task of keeping our lives picked up is even more daunting. It seems there is always cleaning, fixing, changing, and maintaining to be done. Maybe its time someone sent us to pick up our lives, as our parents sent us to pick up our rooms.

Yet, may we always remember, like our parents, God always loves us, even when our room is a mess.

Keywords

devotion, clutter, discipline, cleaning, spiritual habits

Notes





Sermon from a Salmon

Illustration

“Years ago I got a sermon from a salmon.

Here’s how it happened. While riding on a ferryboat to Galiano Island in British Columbia, I struck up a conversation with Mr. Thompson, a dignified and friendly gentleman who served as the Chief Clerk for the City of Vancouver.

I said, ‘I’ve heard that after a salmon is spawned, it will swim out into the ocean, and that after an extended time something happens inside the brain of the salmon, and it will then have the overwhelming urge to return to the place where it was spawned. The salmon will swim along the coast, find the right harbor, the right river, the right stream; and finally it will get back to the very spot where it started out. How in the world does the salmon do all that?’ I added, hoping it would be taken as a joke, ‘After all, the salmon is underwater all the way, and it has no periscope.’

Mr. Thompson chuckled, thought a bit, then replied, ‘Yes, that is true, but it is even more remarkable than that. An experiment was recently carried out in which salmon eggs were removed from the stream where they had been laid and were put into another stream some distance away.’ Thompson then added with a questioning grin, ‘When the salmon grows up and swims out to the ocean and finally swims back home, which location will it swim to? Will it swim to the place where the eggs were laid--or to the place where they had been moved to?’

I paused for a moment, then I gave what I thought was the only sensible answer, ‘The salmon will swim back to the place where the eggs had been transported, of course. That’s where the salmon actually turned into a fish and got to know its environment.’

‘Wrong!’ said Mr. Thompson. ‘The salmon will swim back to the original place where the eggs were laid.’

I was dumbfounded then, and I still am, by the uncanny built-in guidance system of the salmon.

What a sermon on the guidance of God! If God provides such a marvelous guidance for a fish, there is certainly nothing fishy about believing that He can provide guidance for us. We are far more important to God than any fish. We are created in God’s own image. God only knows how much we need His wise and loving guidance as we try to find our way through the jungle of ‘this world.’ And, thank God, He has personally promised His guidance.”

Source: Donald Russell Robertson, “Dear You” 1989, Word, Inc.

Keywords

guidance, direction, destiny, decision making



Notes





The Room

Illustration

In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in the room. There were no distinguishing features except for the one wall covered with small index card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subject in alphabetical order.

But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endless in either direction, They had very different headings. As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read “Girls I have liked.” I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, Shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one. And then without being told, I knew exactly where I was. This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life.

Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn’t match. A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching.

A file named “Friends” was next to one marked “Friends I have betrayed.” The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. “Books I Have Read,” “Lies I Have Told,” “Comfort I have Given”, “Jokes I Have Laughed at.” Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: “Things I’ve yelled at my brothers.”

Others I couldn’t laugh at: “Things I Have Done in My Anger” “Things I Have Muttered Under My Breath at My Parents.” I never ceased to be surprised by the contents.

Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped. I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had the time in my years to write each of these thousands or even millions of cards? But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature. When I pulled out the file marked “TV Shows I have watched,” I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, and yet after two or three yards, I hadn’t found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not so much by the quality of shows but more by the vast time I knew that file represented.

When I came to a file marked “Lustful Thoughts,” I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed content. I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded. An almost animal rage broke on me.



Notes

One thought dominated my mind: No one must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!” In insane frenzy I yanked the file out. It’s size didn’t matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it. Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long, self-pitying sigh.

And then I saw it. The title bore “People I Have Shared the Gospel With.” The handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained on one hand. And then the tears came. I began to weep. Sobs so deep that they hurt. They started in my stomach and shook through me.

I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes. No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key. But then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him. No, please not Him. Not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus. I watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. I couldn’t bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes.

Why did He have to read every one? Finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But this was a pity that didn’t anger me. I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so many things. But He didn’t say a word. He just cried with me. Then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card.

“No!” I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was “No, no,” as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn’t be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive.

The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood. He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and began to sign the cards. I don’t think I’ll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, “It is finished.” I stood up, and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still cards to be written.

Keywords

New Year, improvement, adversity, trials, difficult circumstances, struggles, tribulations

Notes





Waiting on God

Resources

1. Egg timer, stop watch, alarm clock, wall clock, a metronome and anything else used to tell time.

What to Do

1. Show children all the time devices. Explain how each works.

Discussion

What are some things you really would like to have, but don't have yet?
What are some things you would like to do, but haven't done yet?
Where are some places you would like to go, but haven't gone yet?

Application

It's often hard to wait on things. For some things we are not old enough yet? For other things we don't have the money yet? Maybe we don't even have the ability yet. You are not old enough to drive a car. You may not have enough money for a new bike. You may not have the skills to be a doctor yet. God has plans for everything, but not everything may be ready yet. Sometimes we have to wait until God has everything ready. We have to trust he knows the right time for everything.

God says that learning to be patient is good for us. We can't expect everything we want immediately. We must learn to wait on God's perfect timing. (Hold up a clock) God has a set time for everything to happen, according to his plan. (Ecclesiastes 3:1) We must trust God completely, because we know he has a perfect plan for each one of his children. Sometimes doing God's will means waiting for his timing.

Scripture References

Ecclesiastes 3:1; Romans 5:3-4; Hebrews 10:36

Keywords

Choices, decision making, patience, time



Notes





Finding Time



Notes

Resources

1. Egg timers, cooking timers, an hour glass, stop watches, wrist watches, alarm clocks, wall clocks, calendars, a metronome and anything else used to tell time.

Preparation

Hide as many time keeping devices as possible around the room. Set the alarm clocks to go off sometime during the session. Wind the egg timers up so that they are ticking but then hide them so that they can only be found by sound.

What to Do

1. Have a “time” scavenger hunt where kids must write down the locations for everything they can find in the room related to time.

Discussion

What are the things that you have to “find time” for each week?

Why is finding time difficult?

What happens when time runs out in life?

How can you make better choices and find time for the things in life God wants you to do?

What alarms have gone off in your own life as reminders of your time and using it in a worthwhile way?

Application

Have each youth place a small colored dot on their watch as a reminder that our time on earth is comparatively short and we need to live it for God. Everytime the notice the colored dot the should pray that God will show them how to best use their time for his Kingdom today. Whenever anyone asks them about the dot they should use the opportunity to tell them about their desite to live every moment for Christ!

Scripture References

Ecclesiastes 3:1-17; Ephesians 5:16

Keywords

time opportunity, living for Christ, time management, choices, scavenger hunt





Yo-Yo's

Resources

1. 2 or 3 yo-yos

Preparation

Hide as many time keeping devices as possible around the room. Set the alarm clocks to go off sometime during the session. Wind the egg timers up so that they are ticking but then hide them so that they can only be found by sound.

What to Do

1. Invite someone skilled with a yo-yo to give a demonstration. And/ Or have a yo-yo competition and invite all who have yo-yo's to bring them to the meeting.
2. Each yo-yo looks a little different, but all yo-yos are made the same way.
3. Hold up a dangling yo-yo, string unwound. This string is attached to a post inside the yo-yo. When you hold on to your string and drop your yo-yo, the yo-yo spins up and down the string.
4. This yo-yo reminds me of the Christian life. God puts us down on earth. (Spin the yo-yo down.) We spin around for awhile, but eventually we need God's power to keep on spinning. (Take the yo-yo up). Like the string, we are connected to God by prayer and worship.
5. Even though we're on earth, God wants us to aim for the things in heaven. God wants us to remember that we belong to him. If we run out of strength down here (let the yo-yo stop its spin), God reaches down and gathers us back up (wind the yo-yo up). And one day God will take us up to heaven to be with him forever.
6. In the meantime, as Christian yo-yos we keep spinning around, living on earth (spin the yo-yo down), but always connected to God up in heaven (take the yo-yo up).

Application

Every year has its ups and downs, mountains and valleys, depressions and mountaintop experiences, difficulties and triumphs.

But through it all our connection and relationship with God gives us security and prevents life from spinning out of control! Make a commitment to nurture a closer relationship with God in the upcoming year. Use this object Lesson of a yo-yo as reminder that while life has ups and downs, and things seem to be spinning out of control, that if we yield to the Master's hand he can do perform a spectacular performance with our lives for the world to see!

Keywords

Difficulties, Trials, Ups and Downs, Highs and Lows, Connected to God, God's Purpose, God's Will



Notes





Who's in Control

Illustration

Once there was this very wealthy young man. He lived in a great, elaborate house with dozens of rooms. Each room was more comfortable and more beautiful than the one before it. There were paintings and sculptures. Crystal chandeliers, golden, ornate railings on the stairs. More beauty that most have ever seen.

One day he decided to invite the Lord to home and stay with him. When the Lord arrived, this young man offered him the very best room in the house. The room was upstairs and at the end of the hall. "This room is yours, Jesus! Stay as long as you like and you can do whatever you want to in this room, remember Jesus, its all yours." "Thank you" the Lord replied, and with that the man shut the door and went about his daily business.

That evening after he had retired for the night there came a loud knocking at the front door. The young man pulled on his robe and made his way downstairs. When he opened the door he found that the devil had sent three of his demons to attack the man. He quickly tried to close the door but none of the demons kept sticking his foot in the door. Sometime later, after a great struggle, he managed to slam the door shut and returned to his room totally exhausted.

Can you believe that! The man thought. Jesus is upstairs in my very best room sleeping while I am down here battling demons. Oh, well, maybe he just didn't hear. He slept fitfully that night.

The next day things went along as normal and, being tired as he was, the young man retired early that evening. Along about midnight, there came such a terrible ruckus at the front door that the young man was sure that whatever it was would tear the door down. He stumbled down the stairs once again and opened the door to find that there were dozens of demons now trying to get into his beautiful home. For more than three hours he fought and struggled against the demons from hell and finally overtook them enough to shut the door against their attack. All energy seemed to fail him.

I really don't understand this at all. Why won't the Lord come to my rescue? Why does he allow me to fight all by myself? I feel so alone. Troubled he found his way to the sofa and fell into a restless sleep.

The next morning he decided to inquire of the Lord about the happenings of the last two evenings. Quietly he made his way to the elegant bedroom where he had left Jesus. "Jesus," he called as he tapped at the door. "Lord, I don't understand what is happening. For the last two nights I have had to fight the demons away from my door while you laid up here sleeping. Don't you care about me?"



Notes



Did I not give you the very best room in house? He could see the tears building in Jesus' eyes but continued on, "I just don't understand. I really thought that once I invited you in to live with me that you would take care of me and I gave you the best room in my house and everything.

What more can I do?" "My precious child," Jesus spoke so softly. "I do love and care for you. I protect all that you have released into my care. But when you invited me to come here and stay, you brought me to this lovely room and you shut the door to the rest of your house. I am Lord of this room but I am not Master of this house I have protected this room and no demon may enter here."

"Oh, Lord, please forgive me. Take all of my house - it is yours I am so sorry that I never offered you all to begin with. I want you to have control of everything." With this he flung open the bedroom door and knelt at Jesus' feet. "Please forgive me Lord for being so selfish." Jesus smiled and told him that He had already forgiven him and that He would take care of things from now on.

That night the young man prepared for bed he thought to himself, "I wonder if those demons will return. I am so tired of fighting them each and every night." But he knew that Jesus said that he would take care of things from now on..

Along about midnight the banging on the door was frightening. The young man slipped out of his room in time to see Jesus going down the stairs. He watched in awe as Jesus swung open the door, no need to be afraid. Satan stood at the door this time demanding to be let in. "What do you want, satan?" the Lord asked. The devil bowed low in the presence of the Lord, "So sorry, I seem to have gotten the wrong address." And with that, he and the demons all ran away.

Application

There is a moral to this tale. Jesus wants all of you, not just a part. He will take all that you give Him but nothing more. How much of your heart have you given to the Lord? Are you keeping a portion of it away from Him?

Will you be merely another person in the crowd in the new year who ultimately goes nowhere or will you, put your belief into action?

Perhaps the attacks are coming more and more each day. Why not let the Lord fight the battles for you. He is always victorious.

Keywords

house, devil, battles, control, yield

Notes





Life on a Tightrope

Illustration

Jean François Gravelet, “The Great Charles Blondin”, was a famous French tightrope walker and acrobat.

Blondin’s greatest fame came in 1859 when he attempted to become the first person to cross the rushing and roaring waters of Niagara Falls on a tightrope.

With a balancing pole, Charles Blondin walked across the 335m long tightrope in only five minutes. He went on to walk across the falls several times, each time with a different theatrical flair. Later crossings were made in a sack; on stilts; on a bicycle, in the dark with sparks flaring from his pole tips; with his hands and feet manacled; and sitting down halfway to cook an omelet!

On one such occasion a large crowd gathered as word went out that Blondin was going to attempt yet another incredible feat. A buzz of excitement ran along both sides of the river bank. The crowd “Oooohed!” and “Aaaaahed!” as Blondin carefully walked across one dangerous step after another -- blindfolded and pushing a wheelbarrow.

Upon reaching the other side, the crowd’s applause was louder than the roar of the falls! Blondin suddenly stopped and addressed his audience: “Do you believe I can carry a person across in this wheelbarrow?”

The crowd enthusiastically shouted, “Yes, yes, yes. You are the greatest tightrope walker in the world. You can do anything!”

“Okay,” said Blondin, “Get in the wheelbarrow.....”

No one did! It’s one thing to believe, it’s another thing to take a step of faith based on that belief. Belief must be followed by action if it is to take you where you want to go!

Later, on Sept 15, 1860, the world was amazed as Blondin made a crossing carrying his manager, Harry Colcord on his back.

Application

Will you be merely another person in the crowd in the new year who ultimately goes nowhere or will you, put your belief into action?

Scripture Reference

He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

- Matthew 17:20

Keywords

faith, believe, belief, trust, take action

Notes





Even Eagles Need a Push

Illustration

Even the greatest and most powerful have weak moments. At such times, they may need a push before they stretch their wings and fly.

Golden and bald eagles are among the largest and most powerful birds in the world. Eagles are symbols of strength, bravery and courage -- and proud independence. But their independence must be learned.

As young eaglets, the nest is comfortable, safe, and secure. But if the eaglets are to survive on their own, they must leave the comfort of the nest and learn to fly! To convince the eaglets that it is time to leave the parents make the nest uncomfortable by tearing up the bedding with their talons, allowing the sticks and sharp ends to be exposed.

The mother eagle then beats her wings at the eaglets, harassing them, and driving them forward. Cowering before such an attack, the little eaglets climb up on the edge of the nest, only to be pushed over the side by the mother eagle. The eaglet falls, its wings struggling to catch the air currents, but flopping out of control due to inexperience.

Just before the eaglet crashes upon the rocks below, the mother eagle swoops down, catches it on her back, and soars upward into the sky. Much relieved, the young eaglet feels safe, until suddenly, without warning, the mother eagle dives downward, depriving the little eaglet of its grip. Once again it finds itself plummeting toward the ground.

Repeatedly the eaglet is dumped then rescued until it learns to catch the rising air currents and ride the winds. Its wings strengthen and soon the eaglet soars high above the earth, taking on the character of a true eagle. Unfortunately, some eaglets refuse to use their wings and fly. Eventually, the mother eagle soars high one final time with the eaglet on her back, and with a wild screech of disappointment and pain, she dives out from under it and flies away, leaving it to its fate -- either "fly or die."

Application

Is there an area of your life that you need a little push to accomplish in the next year? Are you ready to leave the comfort of the familiar and fly to new heights in the next year! Take that step of faith today and commit yourself to that task God has placed on your heart for the next year!

Scripture Reference

Isaiah 40:31

Keywords

eagles, strength, humility, restoration, endurance, perseverance



Notes





Blind Polygon

Resources

1. a blindfold for each participant
2. a 15-30 meter rope connected into a circle

Objective

For the group to form a perfect square / triangle with a rope while blindfolded.

What to Do

1. Blindfold the group
2. Say: "This game is played in rounds. Each round will have a task to complete"
3. Say: "When you move, do so slowly and with your hands out in front of you to prevent injury."
4. Say: "Any Questions?"

Round 1

1. Lay the rope on the ground somewhere in the middle of the group.
2. There is something in your midst you need to find. You will know it when you find it."
3. Your objective is for everyone to be holding it.
4. Begin.
5. When everyone is holding the rope. Congratulate them on a job well done. Then announce round 2.

Round 2

1. You must remain blind-folded and holding the rope.
2. You have 20 minutes to make the rope into as perfect a square as you can.
3. Begin.
4. When the group decides that it has completed a square, allow them to remove their blindfolds and check their work. Total time to this point is 30 minutes.

Round 3

1. You must remain blind-folded and holding the rope.
2. You have 10 minutes to make the rope into as perfect of an equilateral triangle as you can. (3 equal sides)
3. Begin.
4. When the group decides that it has completed a perfect triangle, allow them to remove their blindfolds and check their work. Total time to this point is 40 minutes.



Notes



Important Notes

You can use smaller groups and shorter ropes and make it a competition. For additional application, videotape the activity and play it back for the group(s) to see. Pause at key turning points and significant moments in the process. Invite the participants to make observations.

Discussion

1. What happened?
2. How did order develop out of chaos?
3. What factors limited your success?
(frustration, lack of cooperation, ego/pride, weakly developed goals, lack of enthusiasm/motivation, lack of direction, lack of alignment, need for instant results, not knowing your position in the overall scheme of things, lack of teamwork)
4. What factors contributed to your eventual success?
(concentration, knowing your place in the overall scheme of things, designating clear roles for important positions like the corners, aligning yourself to those nearest you, clear expectations/rules, ability to see the “bigger picture”, encouragement, enthusiasm, clear goals, being able to deal with frustration, putting aside ego, effective leadership)
5. What did you do to bring order from the chaos?
(someone must take charge, discussion of strategy, more attentive to our position related to those around us, clear communication, keeping focused on the task, relinquish some control & power to a leader, manage frustration, play to group member strengths, share insights, cooperation, etc.)
6. What are the possible applications of the lessons learned from this activity to business, personal development, spiritual life, and relationships?

Application

Personal

What are some things that people use to find personal direction in life? What things do people use to align their lives? What are your key reference points for your life (corners)? What are you aligning your life with? How accurate are these guides? How does a sense of direction help us in the twists and turns of life and bring about order from chaos? What shape do you want your life to take? What steps will help you to shape your life to what you want to become as a person—to shape your character? What steps will it take to help you achieve what you want in life?

Spiritual

How does your faith provide direction in your life? What spiritual truths and precepts are most important for providing direction in your life? How do they help you to align your life? What area of your life is most chaotic at the moment? What area is out of alignment with the will of God? How can you bring your life back into alignment? What are the key reference points (corners) in your life? How do they help bring order to your relationship with God and others?

Notes



Relationships

Would you describe your significant relationships as chaotic or in order? Are those nearest to you helping you to discover your place in the patterns of life? If you had to describe your relationships as a shape, what shape would it be? Why? Do you have a common sense of direction with those closest to you? Is this good or bad? What are the key reference points in your relationships? What are the key characteristics and character attributes that give them shape? In what areas of your relationships would you like to have more order? More freedom?

7. What will you do differently as a result of this activity?
8. Is your life aligned with God's Will? Use this creative group trust game as a simulation to remind us of the importance of aligning out lives with the will of God!

Keywords

group builders, team games, initiative games, simulations, alignment, Listening, Roles, Group Dynamics, Problem-Solving

Notes





Icebergs

Illustration

In the frigid waters around Greenland are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents.

When we face trials and tragedies, it's helpful to see our lives as being subject to two forces--surface winds and ocean currents. The winds represent everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing. But operating simultaneously with these gusts and gales is another force that's even more powerful. It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of His unchanging love.

Application

Has the past year been one in which you feel tossed around and tossed about by the winds of difficult circumstances? Use this illustration to help you to discover how God can give them direction and move them steadily according to his purposes in the upcoming year!

Keywords

pain, suffering, trials, tribulations, circumstances, adversity, struggles, overcoming, hurt, affliction, testing, sovereignty of God



Notes





Imaginary Chains

Illustration

We live in a world of limitations. Limits protect us from very real dangers. But when those limitations are based on a lie, they become chains that prevent us from becoming all that we could be. The little elephant was so curious, so full of life. He stretched his nimble little trunk, straining to catch butterflies. He bent down to take a closer look at the vibrant flowers that were just out of reach, their sweet scent drawing him nearer. He longed to play in the fresh cool waters of the river. Life was an adventure to be experienced. His future was full of dreams and of hope, but of a hope that was quickly dying.

In desperation, the baby elephant pulls and fights with all his strength against his bonds. Yet the heavy steel bracelet and chain still bind him to a tree. He learns he cannot break free, so he stops trying. The spark of life dims in his eyes. The joy of life is replaced with a lingering sadness. Hope is lost. Unable to free himself, he surrenders in defeat.

“Elephants never forget.” He will stay within the boundaries learned by his experience for the rest of his life. This remains true, even if the mahout replaces the strong steel bracelet with a weak leather strap and the heavy chain is replaced with a feeble little rope tied to a stake. When he becomes full-grown he will possess great strength, but he will not pull free. As soon as he feels the slightest tug on his rear leg, he remembers and surrenders in defeat. “Elephants never forget.”

It's neither the rope nor the stake that binds him. It is the elephant's belief. He is bound by something that really has no power to control him, except the power he chooses to give it.

Elephants aren't the only ones bound by imaginary chains. We may have a dream in our heart, but our thoughts and beliefs, lock us into old limitations. Many of us have given up, believing that there's no hope for change in our lives. But unless we grasp the striking fact that we are tied with a thread, that the chain is an illusion, that we are believing a lie, that others were wrong about us, that we were wrong about ourselves -- we will continue to live within the confines of our fears and limitations. Our own chains of insecurity and self-doubt will forever bind us and blind us to the possibilities of success. We will allow our lives to be controlled by things that no longer have the power to control us, except the power we choose to give them.

It's time that we, like Toomai of the Elephants, in Rudyard Kipling's "Jungle Book", take a stand and refuse to live according to our learned limitations. I will remember what I was, I am sick of rope and chain--
I will not sell my back to man for a bundle of sugar-cane
I will go out until the day, until the morning break--
I will forget my ankle-ring and snap my picket stake.



Notes



Application

Are you allowing the things of the past to chain your thinking and prevent you from being all that God wants you to be, to have the freedom in your life that God intends? Exchange your old limiting beliefs for a quiet trust in God! With Him all things are possible in the New Year!

Scripture References

Matthew 17:20

Keywords

faith, belief, limitations

Notes





The Weaver

Illustration

My life is but a weaving
Between my Lord and me,
I cannot choose the colors
He worketh steadily.
Oft times He weaveth sorrow
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I, the underside.
Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the canvas
And explain the reason why.
The dark threads are as needful
In the Weaver's skillful hand
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern He has planned.

Application

All the events of our life are Part of God's plan! Will you allow God to weave your life, the good and the bad, and to make this upcoming year of your life part of a beautiful tapestry that shows His glory?

Keywords

pain, sorrow, hurt, plan, purpose



Notes





Exchanges

Resources

1. 10 cent coins or tokens
2. Film canisters
3. Prizes (coupons, vouchers, toys)
4. Useless items (twigs, leaves, seeds)
5. Labels

Preparation

Number the canisters.

Leave some canisters empty, others will have useless items, and others will have bigger rewards, or a coupon to be exchanged for a larger prize.

What to Do

1. Ask youth a questions from recent lessons for a review.
2. As a reward for correct answers they will be given 10 cent coins.
3. Tell them they can exchange their coins for film canisters with various prizes inside.

Important Note

As a start to your lesson you might have youth list the things that are important to them and some examples of decisions affected by these things.

Application

Everyday we make exchanges. We exchange time with God for time watching our favorite TV show or for study time. We choose time with one friend over time with another. Sometimes we make wise choices and exchange something of worth for something worth more. Other times we exchange something of worth for something worthless... The difficulty lies in the fact that we often have difficulty choosing what is good and what is best.

We are often confused about the comparative worth of different things or are unable to see which is most valuable. Yet in every decision we make, we make our choices based upon what is worth the most to us - the acceptance of friends, enjoyment, entertainment, good marks in school, pleasing God. What is something in your life you need to exchange for something better in the upcoming year? What is something you should give up and replace with something else?

Keywords

Priorities, importance, time



Notes





Well Established

Illustration

When an old farmer was asked about his spiritual well being, he described his Christian experience by saying, "Well, I'm not making much progress, but I'm well-established!" One spring when he was hauling some logs, his wagon wheels sank down to the axles in mud. He tried everything he could, but he couldn't remove the wagon from of the mud. Defeated, he sat atop the logs, viewing the distressing situation. Soon a neighbor who had always felt uncomfortable with the farmer's wornout testimony came along and greeted him, "Well, brother, I see you're not making much progress, but you must be content because you're well-established!"

Application

Many Christians dream to be like the wagon and the farmer. They want to be well-established before they allow God to bring about the spiritual progress he desires. The journey God has prepared for them waits while they are content to be stuck in the mud. "Let me establish some order in my life first." "I want to get my family in order." "I am engaged and I want to wait until I've settled down into married life." "I have a new job and I want to settle down in it first." "I want to wait until my children grow up." "I want to wait until I settle down and retire" But the truth of the matter is, they will spend their entire existence settling down into the mud of life until the only time when they are truly settled down - 6 feet under in a grave. But even then, they won't truly be established... because the graves will one day release their dead and all will go before the judgement seat of Christ. "I wonder if we will use the same excuse then... I never served you, never progressed in my Christian life, but I was well established."

Do you want to see growth in your life, in your relationships with God and others? Are you happy with things as they are now? Are you satisfied? Do you think God has been pleased with your spiritual growth over the past year? Commit to growing your spiritual walk in the upcoming year!

Scripture Reference

John 5:28-29

Keywords

growth, judgement, journey, farmer, wagon, testimony, complacency, grave



Notes





I Can't

Illustration

My one and a half year old daughter has picked up a new phrase "I can't" which really means I won't. Often times in our lives we are called upon by the Lord to display a commitment that doesn't say I can't but how can I?

I read this story in our local newspaper a few years ago. In the seaside town of Provincetown, MA, on Cape Cod a man and his wife were sitting on their porch over looking the ocean when the man noticed a disturbance in the water just a few feet from their house. At first he assumed it was a school of blues that had traveled to close to shore and were in a feeding frenzy.

But upon closer examination he noticed it was actually one large fish, a shark perhaps, since they are not uncommon in these waters. But as he stared he made out the distinct shape of a large Tuna with it's characteristic forked tail. Knowing that these fish weigh hundreds of pounds and can fetch thousands of dollars, he wondered how he might catch it. He returned to his porch and found an old rope from a lobster pot. He fashioned the rope into a lasso and set out for the water. On his second attempt he was able to throw the lasso around the forked tail of the Tuna and drag it into shore. A few phone calls later and the fish was off to market.

How diligently we seize the opportunities that God sends our way in large amount will determine what we accomplish while on this earth and what praise we will receive from His lips in heaven.

Author: Ben Feldott

Application

Who knows what opportunities God will send our way in the upcoming year! Are you looking ahead for the opportunities or focused on the past? use this illustration as a reminded that in the upcoming year, we need to keep our eyes focused on the opportunities God has for us! What might seem a tragedy may actually be an opportunity if you are able to see it through God's eyes!

Keywords

commitment, daughter, fish, taking action, solutions



Notes





You Find What You Are Looking For

Illustration

It is said that two kinds of birds fly over the California deserts: the hummingbird and the vulture. All the vulture can see is rotting meat, because that is all he looks for. He thrives on that diet. But the hummingbird ignores the carcasses and the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, he looks for the tiny blossoms of the cactus flowers. He buzzes around until he finds the colorful blooms almost hidden from view by the rocks. Each bird finds what it is looking for.

What are you looking for? Better still, what are you finding? What you are finding tells what you are really looking for. Your expectations of life will determine your outcome. If you come to church looking for a blessing, you will find one. If you come to church looking for a fault or an excuse for staying home the next time, you will find that also.

When you leave church with the great expectation and desire to worship and serve God during the week, you will find what you are looking for.

Application

Are you focused on the opportunities or the difficulties. What are some things you want to find in the upcoming year? Let God help you to see them by changing your focus!

Keywords

Expectations, optimism, pessimism, hummingbirds, vultures, attitudes



Notes





A Penny

Illustration

Several years ago, a friend of mine and her husband were invited to spend the weekend at the husband's employer's home. My friend, Arlene, was nervous about the weekend. The boss was very wealthy, with a fine home on the waterway, and cars costing more than her house.

The first day and evening went well, and Arlene was delighted to have this rare glimpse into how the very wealthy live. The husband's employer was quite generous as a host, and took them to the finest restaurants. Arlene knew she would never have the opportunity to indulge in this kind of extravagance again, so was enjoying herself immensely.

As the three of them were about to enter an exclusive restaurant that evening, the boss was walking slightly ahead of Arlene and her husband. He stopped suddenly, looking down on the pavement for a long, silent moment. Arlene wondered if she was supposed to pass him. There was nothing on the ground except a single darkened penny that someone had dropped, and a few cigarette butts.

Still silent, the man reached down and picked up the penny. He held it up and smiled, then put it in his pocket as if he had found a great treasure. How absurd! What need did this man have for a single penny? Why would he even take the time to stop and pick it up? Throughout dinner, the entire scene nagged at her.

Finally, she could stand it no longer. She casually mentioned that her daughter once had a coin collection, and asked if the penny he had found had been of some value.

A smile crept across the man's face as he reached into his pocket for the penny and held it out for her to see. She had seen many pennies before! What was the point of this?

"Look at it." He said. "Read what it says."
She read the words "United States of America."

"No, not that; read further."

"One cent?"

"No, keep reading."

"In God we Trust?"

"Yes!"

"And?"

"And if I trust in God, the name of God is holy, even on a coin. Whenever I find a coin I see that inscription. It is written on every single United States coin, but we never seem to notice it! God drops a message right in front of me telling me to trust Him? Who am I to pass it by? When I see a coin, I



Notes



pray, I stop to see if my trust IS in God at that moment. I pick the coin up as a response to God; that I do trust in Him. For a short time, at least, I cherish it as if it were gold. I think it is God's way of starting a conversation with me. Lucky for me, God is patient and pennies are plentiful!

When I was out shopping today, I found a penny on the sidewalk. I stopped and picked it up, and realized that I had been worrying and fretting in my mind about things I cannot change. I read the words, "In God We Trust," and had to laugh. Yes, God, I get the message. It seems that I have been finding an inordinate number of pennies in the last few months, but then, pennies are plentiful!

And, God is patient...

Application

Are you willing to trust your life to God in the upcoming year?

Keywords

trust, God's provision, God's sovereignty, God's care

Notes





Walking Like a Pigeon

Illustration

Have you ever wondered why a pigeon walks so funny? According to an interesting article in the Detroit Free Press, a pigeon walks the way it does so it can see where it's going. Because it can't adjust its focus as it moves, the pigeon actually has to bring its head to a complete stop between steps in order to refocus. This is the way it walks: head forward, stop; head back, stop. Don't laugh -- that's how it goes!

Application

In our spiritual walk with the Lord we have the same problem as the pigeon. We have a hard time seeing while we're moving. We also need to stop between steps -- to refocus on where we are in relation to the World and the will of God. That's not to say we have to stop and pray and meditate about every little decision in life. But certainly our walk with the Lord needs to have built into it a pattern of "stops," which enable us to see more clearly before moving on. Take a moment to refocus, to set your priorities and goals and commitments for the new year!

Keywords

focus, pigeon, sight, walk



Notes





Every Moment is Precious

Illustration

To realise the value of ONE YEAR

Ask a student who has failed his exam.

To realise the value of ONE MONTH

Ask a mother who has given birth to a pre-mature baby.

To realise the value of ONE WEEK

Ask an editor of a weekly.

To realise the value of ONE DAY

Ask a daily wage labour.

To realise the value of ONE HOUR

Ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realise the value of ONE MINUTE

Ask a person who has missed the train.

To realise the value of ONE SECOND

Ask a person who has survived an accident.

To realise the value of ONE MILLI-SECOND

Ask the person who has won a silver medal in Olympics.

Application

Life is short! Will you take advantage of the opportunities ahead?

Keywords

value, time, time management

Notes





New Shoes

Illustration

I recently bought a new pair of sports sandals. Actually I really needed a new pair quite some time ago but was perfectly content with the old ones. They served me well. We've been to a lot of places together. In work and play, we have been constant companions. We've been to relaxing tropical beaches and on rigorous hikes. We've also gone through a lot of trials and stress together. Imagine supporting a 100kg American on your back for just a few minutes! They've been carrying me almost every day for the last couple of years.

Forget the fact that the straps are frazzled, the bottoms are worn smooth, and one sniff by the city sanitation department would leave you with a citation for air pollution.

A pair of shoes becomes something of an old friend. Over time they have personally adapted themselves to my uniqueness. They are worn in all the right places. Wearing them is like a soothing massage rather than necessary equipment for my journeys. Unfortunately, the sole of my sandals became completely detached and there was nothing I could do to repair them. So now I am wearing a new pair of shoes. I contemplated getting some brand-named Air Jordans. Of course everyone knows if you wear the same basketball shoes as Michael Jordan you will jump just like him. But I went back with the same brand I had before... just a newer, improved model. Even change has its limits sometimes!

Even though I psyched myself up for the new shoes, I wasn't surprised when they were awkward on my feet and abrasive to my ankles. They have worn blisters on my feet on more than one occasion. They will be uncomfortable for some time, but as my old shoes are forever gone, I couldn't go back to my old comfortable ones.

In spite of the awkwardness and abrasiveness, I have to press on. The change, though it has its painful moments, is a necessary step in my journey. No one would consider a change of shoes to be among the most significant events in life. But basic principles seem to be surprisingly similar in any area of change, including those changes that need to occur regularly in our lives and churches. Change rarely, if ever, comes easily or automatically. Often change only occurs when we find ourselves in a situation where we are not given a choice. Its either change or be forever stopped in your tracks. Changes initially tend to be awkward, even abrasive. It always takes a little time to settle into any change.

Several months later, guess what? The new shoes will become increasingly comfortable. And in time change will again be needed. Then the process begins anew.



Notes

Discussion

Is there something in your life that needs to be renewed?
Have you been resisting change because things are comfortable?
Has your soul become detached and stopped you spiritually dead in your tracks?

Application

Maybe its time for you to make that change in life you have been resisting!
Things might be a little awkward or even abrasive for a while, but its a necessary step for you to move forward in the journey God has prepared for you!

Keywords

object lesson, children's sermon, change, transitions, moving forward, life's journey

Notes



Action Bingo (Enhanced)

Description

Participants compete to be the first to perform all the actions on the list. Can you perform all the action on the list before someone else? It's wacky and silly fun for everyone. Have a digital camera ready for some really crazy snapshots!

Resources

1. Worksheet and pen or pencil for each participant

Preparation

Preprint the worksheet. Items can be arranged in a normal bingo grid or simply as a list for simplicity. Some possible items are:

Tell a Joke

Pretend you are taking a bath or shower in the middle of the room!

Select someone else to sing a song with you.

Recite a nursery rhyme.

Imitate a comic strip character until someone guesses its identity.

Behave like a duck for 10 seconds

Say something nice about three different people in the room.

Shake hands with three other people in the room.

Pantomime a two year old child taking a bone away from a German shepherd dog.

Walk from one end of the room to the other with an object between you knees.

Act like an egg being cracked and fried.

Do an impression of a well known celebrity. Identify the person first.

Confer with another person and make a short poem about one of the leaders

Select a few people to aid you in selecting a scene from a popular Bible story and act it out.

Draw a picture of yourself and give it to someone in the room.

Find something in your pocket or purse to give to the person on your left.

Retell the story of Goldilocks and the three bears using the name of four other people in the room as the bears and Goldilocks.

ADD Your Own Crazy Actions!

What to Do

1. Each person must perform all the actions from a list of actions in front of someone and then those who participated or observed that action must sign beside the item.
2. Whoever gets all the items signed first, wins!

Discussion

What is the craziest thing you have ever done? The most embarrassing?

Have you ever done something silly that you later regretted?

If you could go back and change one thing you did in the past, what would you change? Why?

Notes



What is one thing you did that was seen by others as a little silly, but that you wished you could do again?

Has the possibility of being embarrassed ever stopped you from doing something that you should have done or wish you would have done? important to them and some examples of decisions affected by these things.

Take It to the Next Level

One of our greatest fears is the fear of being embarrassed. We don't want to lose the respect of others or to be the subject of ridicule. But anything worthwhile in life carries with it some risk. You usually have to go out on a limb to get the fruit. Everything worthwhile in life lies outside of your comfort zone. Some of the greatest achievements in history took place because men and women were not afraid to risk embarrassment and ridicule to reach for their dreams! It's a good thing the Wright brothers, Thomas Edison, Louis Pasteur, Christopher Columbus and others weren't afraid of ridicule. Otherwise we wouldn't have planes, light bulbs, vaccines, and many of the other technological marvels we enjoy today!

..so many centuries after the Creation it is unlikely that anyone could find hitherto unknown lands of any value. - Committee advising Ferdinand and Isabella regarding Columbus' proposal, 1486

Drill for oil? You mean drill into the ground to try and find oil? You're crazy. - Drillers who Edwin L. Drake tried to enlist to his project to drill for oil in 1859.

Louis Pasteur's theory of germs is ridiculous fiction. - Pierre Pacht, Professor of Physiology at Toulouse, 1872

Such startling announcements as these should be deprecated as being unworthy of science and mischievous to its true progress. - Sir William Siemens, 1880, on Edison's announcement of a successful light bulb.

Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible. - Lord Kelvin, president, Royal Society, 1895.

The energy produced by the atom is a very poor kind of thing. Anyone who expects a source of power from the transformation of these atoms is talking moonshine. - Ernst Rutherford, 1933

Application

Don't be afraid to reach for your dreams! Write down at least one of your dreams and put them up someplace where you will see them everyday!

Keywords

Dreams, goals, vision, courage, determination, purpose in life

Notes



Valentine's Day

14 February





Valentine Balloon Shavers

Resources

1. Heart shaped balloons
2. Razors
3. Shaving cream or whipped cream

What to Do

1. Break your group into boy-girl couples.
2. Each guy blows up a heart shaped balloon and sits in a chair facing the girl.
3. The girl then spreads the shaving cream or whipped cream onto the balloon while the guy holds it in his mouth.
4. The girl then attempts to shave the cream from the balloon with the razor.
5. The first couple to remove all the cream from the balloon without popping it wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, Love, Relationships, Heart



Notes





Valentine Balloon Race

Resources

1. Red, white, pink balloons (Its even better if you can find heart-shaped balloons)

What to Do

1. Divide the group into teams.
2. Give each person a balloon.
3. On "go," the first member of each team must blow up his/her balloon but not tie it shut.
4. They must then aim the balloon toward the opposite end of the room and let them go.
5. You may require that the balloons touch the opposite wall or cross a certain point you have marked upon the floor.
6. If a balloon doesn't land beyond the finish line (or touch the opposite wall), the player goes to the balloon, blows it up and again lets it go toward the finish line.
7. The same process is repeated to go back to the team. When a balloon crosses the team line, the second team member blows up his or her balloon and lets it go.
8. First team for everyone to compete the relay, wins!

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Heart, Holiday Games, Love, relationships

Notes





Valentine Balloon Shavers

Resources

1. Heart shaped balloons
2. Razors
3. Shaving cream or whipped cream

What to Do

1. Break your group into boy-girl couples.
2. Each guy blows up a heart shaped balloon and sits in a chair facing the girl.
3. The girl then spreads the shaving cream or whipped cream onto the balloon while the guy holds it in his mouth.
4. The girl then attempts to shave the cream from the balloon with the razor.
5. The first couple to remove all the cream from the balloon without popping it wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, Love, Relationships, Heart



Notes





Cinderella's Valentine

Resources

1. None, for the Variation a Sheet is required

What to Do

1. At your next Valentine's Day celebration, label the girls as Cinderellas and the guys as the princes.
2. The Cinderellas sit in chairs.
3. Each prince kneels in front of his lady and removes her shoes.
4. Each Cinderella is then given a blindfold, which she puts on her prince.
5. Now take all the shoes and put them in a line, all mixed up, behind the princes in the center of the room.
6. On your signal, each Cinderella tries to verbally direct her prince to where her shoes are located. She must stay seated at all times.
7. The first couple whose blind-folded Valentine finds the right shoes and puts them on his Cinderella wins.

Variation

As each girl arrives, ask her to remove her right shoe. After you've collected all the shoes, send the girls into another room. Then give each shoe to a guy to hold. In the other room, have the girls step behind a sheet that is hanging from the ceiling. Only the girls' feet should show under the sheet curtain. Call in the guys and have them each find their partner by matching the shoe they're holding with the shoe under the curtain. Or, to add some difficulty, have the girls remove the other shoe so the guys have to try to fit the shoes, Cinderella style.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Love, Relationships, Heart, Holiday games



Notes





Valentine Candy Bingo

Resources

1. Valentine candy conversation hearts (BE MINE, COOL KID, LOVER BOY, KISS ME, MY GAL, etc.) Buy enough candy hearts for all players to fill up all their bingo cards.

Preparation

Make up a variety of bingo cards--but instead of putting numbers in the squares, fill the squares with phrases from the valentine candy hearts.

What to Do

1. Give players equal quantities of randomly selected candy hearts.
2. Players don't wait for a caller, but on your signal, immediately try to cover their KISS ME squares with KISS ME candy hearts, their BE MINE squares with BE MINE hearts, etc. If they have a surplus of one kind of candy heart, they can trade with other players for hearts with phrases they need in order to cover every square on their card (or achieve a "bingo"-- You decide!)
3. Players can eat the candy when the game is over.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Hearts, Holiday Games, Love, relationships



Notes





Valentine Candy Teams

Resources

1. Valentine candy conversation hearts (BE MINE, COOL KID, LOVER BOY, KISS ME, MY GAL, etc.)

Preparation

Determine before your event how many teams you want to have and how many people you want on each team. Choose one of the phrases for each team and collect the pieces of candy with that phrase according to the number of people you desire to have on each team. Place all the pieces you have selected into a bag and mix them up.

What to Do

1. When participants walk into the party, give them each one heart to hold onto--not to eat!
2. When everyone has arrived and you are ready to form teams, tell everyone to shout out their phrase until they find everyone else in their team.
3. You can change the team divisions by using the colors of the valentine heart candy instead of the phrases, but you will need to check and make sure you have an equal number of each color before the game begins.

Variation

Obtain or print some Cheap valentine cards and use identical cards instead of Valentine Hearts.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Hearts, Icebreakers, crowbreakers, Valentine's Games



Notes





Valentine Twister

Resources

1. Valentine's Day Conversation Candy hearts "BE MINE", "I'M YOURS" etc.
2. The normal mat in the boxed game that forms the playing surface is decorated with six circles each of red, yellow, green and blue. Instead of the standard twister mat, cut heart shapes from colored construction paper and use sticky-tack to adhere them to the floor. Place them randomly. Vary the number of phrases/colors and rows to accommodate the size of your group. Add the common phrases to the various hearts to match those of Valentine's Day Conversation Candy hearts.
3. If you don't have a spinner you can easily make one. Make a twister spinner that includes right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot. You can also paste these onto the side of a die and roll the die in place of a spinner.

Preparation

Make the game mat using the same colors and phrases as those found on Valentine's Conversation hearts. Put the real candy hearts in a bag and draw them out. Use the spinner or die to select the body part. Example: "left hand PINK: BE MINE"; "right foot: Green: I LOVE YOU"; etc.

What to Do

1. An appointed person spins the spinner and chooses the heart and calls out instructions for the players to follow, such as: "left hand: Blue: YES", "right foot: yellow: I'M YOURS".
2. The players follow the directions, moving their hands and feet to the relevant hearts and try not to fall over--a knee or an elbow on the ground and they're out. Use the wrong body part or the wrong heart and you are also eliminated from the game.
3. The board can get quite crowded and the participants quite distorted hence the name "Twister." How flexible are you?

Variation

Instead of playing on an individual basis, divide the group into teams. The team with the last remaining members in the game wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Games, Hearts, Holiday Games, Love, relationships



Notes





Valentine Card Puzzler

Resources

1. Valentine Cards

Preparation

Select the front panels of several Valentine's Cards with different pictures. Use 2 identical cards for each group. Each group must have different card. Cut one card of the 2 cards into pieces. The other card remains intact. The number of pieces is determined by the number of people you want to have on each team.

Write a question on the back of each piece. Questions should be along the lines of:

- What is your idea of "True Love"?
- What is one characteristics of your ideal mate?
- What was the most romantic date you ever had?
- What was the most special gift you ever gave to someone you love?
- What is the most romantic movie you have seen?
- ETC..

Place the remaining uncut card on the wall or at each table.

One good idea is the keep the pieces separate until needed. Once everyone has arrived, place the necessary number of pieces in a bag and mix them up.

What to Do

1. When each person enters the room they are given a piece of the cards that have been cut into jigsaw puzzles, with the question at the back of each.
2. Participants must ask people the question found on the puzzle piece and find the rest of the people whose pieces combine to form 1 card. 8. You may only reveal your puzzle piece after you have answered the question of each other.
3. Only once the puzzle is solved, are participants allowed to find out their respective table or location to group together by matching the picture of the puzzle with the uncut version.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Heart, Icebreaker, Crowdbreaker, Love, Relationships



Notes





Valentine's Day Famous Couples



Notes

Resources

1. One or two sets of hearts (as many as you will need for your group size). If you have teams use different colors of hearts to distinguish between them. On each heart write the name of one person in the Bible. Write its match on another heart.

Preparation

Suggestions for Couples:

Adam and Eve

Abraham and Sarah

Isaac and Rebekah

Samson and Delilah

King David and Bathsheba

Priscilla and Aquila

Ruth and Boaz

Elkanah and Hannah

Moses and Ziporah

Hosea and Gomer

Joseph and Mary

Jacob and Rachel

Ahasuerus and Esther

Zacharias and Elizabeth

Want to add some more, add a comment with your favorite Bible couple

What to Do

1. Hide the hearts around the room or building.
2. Have the participants find the hearts and match their set together. ie Adam with Eve, etc.
3. First team finished is the winning team.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Hearts, Love, Valentine's Games, Holiday Games, Scavenger Hunt, crowdbreakers





Valentine's Back to Back



Notes

Resources

1. A variety of simple Valentine's images. (e.g. Cupid, hearts, etc) You can also use simple Valentine's cards for the design.

What to Do

1. Form teams of six people.
2. Instruct each team to sit in a line, one person behind another, and take a vow of silence for the duration of the game.
3. Give the first person in each line a pencil and a piece of paper.
4. Then show the last person in each line a simple image of an object associated with Valentine's Day.
5. That person must use his or her finger to draw the object on the back of the person in front of him or her.
6. This continues until the drawing reaches the first person in line. He or she must draw it on the piece of paper.
7. Have judges determine which team's picture closest resembles the original picture.
8. If time permits, play more rounds, letting team members change positions if they wish.

Discussion

Define "love" and "relationships" in Biblical terms. How would the world define "love" today?

What guidelines does the Bible give for intimate relationships? What are the world's standards for relationships?

In what ways has "true love" been distorted over time?

How can we get back to a Biblical view of relationships and love?

Application

Things get distorted the farther we get from the source, especially when we have our backs turned on God. In today's world, too often love has degraded to lust, and commitment in relationships has been replaced with convenience.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Love, Relationships





Roses

Illustration

Red roses were her favorites, her name was also Rose.
And every year her husband sent them, tied with pretty bows.
The year he died, the roses were delivered to her door.
The card said, "Be my Valentine", like all the years before.
Each year he sent her roses, and the note would always say,
"I love you even more this year, than last year on this day.
My love for you will always grow, with every passing year."
She knew this was the last time that the roses would appear.
She thought, he ordered roses in advance before this day.
Her loving husband did not know, that he would pass away.
He always liked to do things early, way before the time.
Then, if he got too busy, everything would work out fine.
She trimmed the stems, and placed them in a very special vase.
Then, sat the vase beside the portrait of his smiling face.

She would sit for hours, in her husband's favorite chair.
While staring at his picture, and the roses sitting there.
A year went by, and it was hard to live without her mate.
With loneliness and solitude, that had become her fate.
Then, the very hour, as on Valentines before,
The doorbell rang, and there were roses, sitting by her door.

She brought the roses in, and then just looked at them in shock.
Then, went to get the telephone, to call the florist shop.
The owner answered, and she asked him, if he would explain,
Why would someone do this to her, causing her such pain?
"I know your husband passed away, more than a year ago,"
The owner said, "I knew you'd call, and you would want to know.
The flowers you received today, were paid for in advance.

Your husband always planned ahead, he left nothing to chance.
There is a standing order, that I have on file down here,
And he has paid, well in advance, you'll get them every year.
There also is another thing, that I think you should know,
He wrote a special little card...he did this years ago.
Then, should ever I find out that he's no longer here,
That's the card...that should be sent, to you the following year."
She thanked him and hung up the phone, her tears now flowing hard.
Her fingers shaking, as she slowly reached to get the card.
Inside the card, she saw that he had written her a note.
Then, as she stared in total silence, this is what he wrote...
"Hello my love, I know it's been a year since I've been gone,
I hope it hasn't been too hard for you to overcome.
I know it must be lonely, and the pain is very real.
For if it was the other way, I know how I would feel.



Notes

The love we shared made everything so beautiful in life.
I loved you more than words can say, you were the perfect wife.
You were my friend and lover, you fulfilled my every need.
I know it's only been a year, but please try not to grieve.
I want you to be happy, even when you shed your tears.
That is why the roses will be sent to you for years.

When you get these roses, think of all the happiness,
That we had together, and how both of us were blessed.
I have always loved you and I know I always will.
But, my love, you must go on, you have some living still.
Please...try to find happiness, while living out your days.
I know it is not easy, but I hope you find some ways.

The roses will come every year, and they will only stop,
When your door's not answered, when the florist stops to knock.
He will come five times that day, in case you have gone out.
But after his last visit, he will know without a doubt,
To take the roses to the place, where I've instructed him,
And place the roses where we are, together once again.
I have selected into a bag and mix them up.

Keywords

Love, Valentine's Day

Notes





Girl with the Rose

Illustration

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose. His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library.

Taking a book off the shelf he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name, Miss Hollis Maynell.

With time and effort he located her address. She lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II. During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A romance was budding.

Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like. When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting - 7:00 PM at the Grand Central Station in New York.

"You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel." So at 7:00 he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen.

I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened:

A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blonde hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small, provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured.

Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away.

I felt as though I was split in two, so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own. And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle.

Notes



I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful. I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment.

“I’m Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell I am so glad you could meet me; may I take you to dinner?” The woman’s face broadened into a tolerant smile. “I don’t know what this is about, son,” she answered, “but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. She said it was some kind of test!

“It’s not difficult to understand and admire Miss Maynell’s wisdom. The true nature of a heart is seen in its response to the unattractive.

“Tell me whom you love,” Houssaye wrote, “And I will tell you who you are.”

Source: Unknown

Keywords

Love, Valentine’s Day, appearance, heart

Notes





Eternal Love

Illustration

He doesn't bring me roses
but He is called the Rose of Sharon.

He doesn't send flowers to my office
but He grows beautiful flowers in my garden.

He doesn't kiss me
but I sense His kiss when I feel sunshine
or softly falling rain.

He doesn't give me sparkling diamonds to wear
but the stars He set in the sky shine
even more brilliantly.

He doesn't whisper in my ear
but His still small voice is ever with me.

He isn't a valentine who has pledged lifelong
love but He is Eternal Love.

He demonstrated it
Not by gifts or well-intentioned promises
but by offering Himself as the
fulfillment of promise.

Not by standing with me at the wedding altar
but by placing Himself on the altar.

That I may know life
That I may know Him
and love Him forever.

Keywords

Love, Valentine's Day, God's Love



Notes





Love Is

Resources

1. A large sheet of poster board or newsprint (classified ads work best for newsprint)

What to Do

1. As people walk in the door direct them to a large sheet of poster board or newsprint upon which you have written the words “Love is....” Ask the participants to finish the sentence and write their answers on the poster.
2. Use this creative teaching idea as an introduction to a lesson on love or for Valentine’s Day

Variation 1

Have a competition between teams of people to name as many things as possible that are associated with love. Based upon these lists have participants form a definition of “true Love.” You could also make a list of things on your own and play a game of charades.

Some ideas: Heart, Kiss, Roses, Flirt, God, Valentine, Red, cupid, Date, Sacrifice, Marriage, Wedding, honeymoon, ring, family

Variation 2

Break into small groups around the room. Provide old magazines, newspapers, and scissors. Instruct the groups to search for and cut out anything that relates to love. Examples might be pictures of loving parents, friends, hugs, children, etc. After about ten minutes, bring them back together and let each group share what they found. Discuss the different examples of love. Ask the participants how they would define love if all they had were the clippings to base their definition upon.

Discussion

Ask how God would define love.

Point out that God’s idea of unconditional love or sacrificial love is a rare trait today, but one that is essential to being a follower of Christ.

Keywords

Valentine’s Day, God’s Love, purity



Notes





Acting As If

Illustration

Newspaper columnist and minister George Crane tells of a wife who came into his office full of hatred toward her husband. “I do not only want to get rid of him, I want to get even. Before I divorce him, I want to hurt him as much as he has me.”

Dr. Crane suggested an ingenious plan “Go home and act as if you really love your husband. Tell him how much he means to you. Praise him for every decent trait. Go out of your way to be as kind, considerate, and generous as possible. Spare no efforts to please him, to enjoy him. Make him believe you love him. After you’ve convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him, then drop the bomb. Tell him that your’re getting a divorce. That will really hurt him.” With revenge in her eyes, she smiled and exclaimed, “Beautiful, beautiful. Will he ever be surprised!” And she did it with enthusiasm. Acting “as if.” For two months she showed love, kindness, listening, giving, reinforcing, sharing. When she didn’t return, Crane called. “Are you ready now to go through with the divorce?”

“Divorce?” she exclaimed. “Never! I discovered I really do love him.” Her actions had changed her feelings. Motion resulted in emotion. The ability to love is established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds.

Source: Unknown

Keywords

Valentine’s Day, Love, Relationships



Notes





Valentine's Day Treasure Hunt

Description

In this Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt, youth must find a series of valentine's by following a set of clues. When they reach the final Valentine the youth will also find a very special Valentine Gift.

Resources

1. Buy a packet of inexpensive Valentines. These usually include a variety of simple valentines for youth and children to share with their school friends. If you want to have more than one hunt, you can different Valentine's day cards in different themes or different colored envelopes and hide more than one set of cards. (i.e. great for more than one youth or teams of youth)

Preparation

If you have more than one set of Valentine's cards be sure the different themes are easily distinguishable from each other or indicate different teams with a different colored envelopes.

Write a different love note on each valentine card (ten to 15 cards). You can also write one word per card and number them to form a single message of love.

Hide the Valentine cards throughout the house or in other suitable places. As you hide each card, write a clue on the outside of the card to direct the youth to the next hidden card. These can be simple clues or riddles.

Along with the last Valentine, include a small love gift like a box of chocolates, etc.

Important Note

If you are hiding more than one set of Valentine's day card, be sure to tell the youth that they may only touch their own cards. They may not take cards that belong to another team if they happen to find them.

What to Do

1. Divide everyone into two or more groups and give them a time limit with which to find the Valentine's Day cards.
2. Give the kids the clue to the first valentine and let them search until they have found all of them. Remember to tell them there is something special hidden with the last Valentine.
3. The first group that returns with the all the cards AND the final gift within the limited time wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Day game, Valentine's Cards



Notes





Valentines Wink'em

Description

This is a classic Valentine's Day game where the objective is for the girls to catch a guy or vice versa!

Resources

1. Chairs for everyone

Preparation

If you have more than one set of Valentine's cards be sure the different themes are easily distinguishable from each other or indicate different teams with a different colored envelopes.

Write a different love note on each valentine card (ten to 15 cards). You can also write one word per card and number them to form a single message of love.

Hide the Valentine cards throughout the house or in other suitable places. As you hide each card, write a clue on the outside of the card to direct the youth to the next hidden card. These can be simple clues or riddles.

Along with the last Valentine, include a small love gift like a box of chocolates, etc.

Important Note

If you are hiding more than one set of Valentine's day card, be sure to tell the youth that they may only touch their own cards. They may not take cards that belong to another team if they happen to find them.

What to Do

1. Seat all the guys in a circle.
2. Leave one chair empty.
3. A girl stands behind each chair (including the empty one) with her hands behind her back.
4. The objective is for the girl standing behind the empty chair to get a guy into her chair. She does this by winking at one of the guys.
5. The guy winked at tries to run and sit in the empty chair without being tagged by the girl behind his chair.
6. If successful the guy takes his new seat and become her Valentine and the game continues with the girl who just lost her guy.
7. At some point, you may switch and put the girls in the chairs and let the guys do the winking. (But make sure they are gentle when they tag the girls)

Keywords

Valentine's day, games, fun

Notes





Toothless Valentine

Resources

1. Love songs to play while the youth are enjoying this game.

Preparation

If you have more than one set of Valentine's cards be sure the different themes are easily distinguishable from each other or indicate different teams with a different colored envelopes.

Write a different love note on each valentine card (ten to 15 cards). You can also write one word per card and number them to form a single message of love.

Hide the Valentine cards throughout the house or in other suitable places. As you hide each card, write a clue on the outside of the card to direct the youth to the next hidden card. These can be simple clues or riddles.

Along with the last Valentine, include a small love gift like a box of chocolates, etc.

What to Do

1. Everyone sits in a circle.
2. From this point forward, you may not show your teeth.
3. To speak, you must pull your lips inward around your teeth to hide them.
4. A question is started, related to Valentine's Day. For example, "Would you like a rose for Valentines day?"
5. The person asked then replies "I don't know I'll have to ask my neighbor." He then asks the neighbor the same question without showing his teeth.
6. This keeps going around the circle.
7. When someone's teeth show due to laughter, he or she is out. Once it goes all the way around the circle, the next person gets to change the question. Smiling is permitted provided the teeth don't show.
8. The choice of questions can be a source of laughter so question choice is important.
9. When asking or answering, contorting the facial muscles may be used to try to make the person next to you laugh.
10. If a question is vulgar or suggestive, the person is removed from the game.

Variation

Add a few lines of Solomon and have youth repeat them all the way around the circle. Can you quote them without showing your teeth? When everyone has quoted it go around again with a different verse. Here are some classics from the 4th chapter of Song of Solomon.

Verse 1

How beautiful you are, my darling! Oh, how beautiful!
Your eyes behind your veil are doves.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
descending from Mount Gilead.



Notes

Verse 2

Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just shorn,
coming up from the washing.
Each has its twin;
not one of them is alone.

Verse 3

Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon;
your mouth is lovely.
Your temples behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.

Verse 4

Your neck is like the tower of David,
built with elegance;
on it hang a thousand shields,
all of them shields of warriors.

Keywords

laugh, Valentine's Day, love, humor, funny

Notes



The Greatest Love Was Not Shown On Valentine's Day!

Introduction

On valentine's day, people often show their love to each other. Someone who is special is called a "sweetheart" or a "Valentine." Chocolates and Flowers, especially roses, are also given to sweethearts on Valentine's Day. Sweethearts often send little notes to each other with messages of love or with the simple question, "Would you be my Valentine?" But the Greatest Love was not shown on Valentine's Day, but when Jesus opened the way to heaven for us 2000 years ago!

Description

Use this evangelistic Valentine's day object lesson as a children's sermon or teaching activity. Based upon the "wordless book" concept, it uses black, red, white, green, and gold (or yellow) hearts to explain the key points of the gospel message. It is similar to the Jelly Bean Evangelism idea found elsewhere in this book.

Resources

1. Colored paper. You will need black, red, white, green, and gold (or yellow)

Preparation

Create several hearts from colored paper.

What to Do

1. Hearts are the main symbol of love seen on Valentine's Day. Today I have some special Hearts to tell you a story of a very special love.

Yellow Heart

Our hearts are treasures, which we lay at the feet of God when we get to heaven. The yellow heart also reminds us of Heaven itself. Do you know what Heaven is? Heaven is God's home. Heaven is filled with the glory, the shining brightness of God. There is no night there. The Bible says, "God is The Light and in Him is no Darkness at all"(I John 1:5). The Bible tells us that in Heaven, the street of the city is pure, clear gold-like glass (Rev.21:21). God tells us many other things about His home. No one is sick there. No one is crippled or blind. No one ever dies. Every person in Heaven will be perfectly happy-always (Rev. 21:4-2Psalm 16:11). The most wonderful thing about Heaven is that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus will be there. God made Heaven. He made you too. He loves you very much. Because he made you and loves you, He wants you to belong to Him and be with Him in Heaven someday. Jesus promised long ago, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 3:16; John 14:1-3).

Black heart

The black heart is just like our hearts are before Christ comes in to be our Savior. It is black with sin. There is one thing that can never be in Heaven. That is sin. Because you and I are sinners we want to have our own way

Notes



instead of God's way. Wanting our own way is sin. Doing, or saying, or thinking bad things is sin. Sin is anything that displeases God. Sin has caused sorrow and sadness in our world. God tells us in the Bible that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). All means every one of us.

This black heart reminds us of our sinful way - that we walk in darkness (Proverbs 4:19). When it is dark, you stumble and cannot find your way. Because of your sin, you cannot find God. Your sin separates you from God, who is holy (I John 1:5). God cannot allow sin where He is. I am sure you can think of a sin which you have done. God has said that sin must be punished. The punishment for your sin is death-to be separated from God forever (Rev. 6:23). The Lord Jesus, God's Son, said that if you die in your sin, you cannot go to Heaven where He is (John 8:21, 24). God knew there was nothing you could do to get rid of your sin. He knew you could not be good enough to please Him. But He loves you and He made a way for you to be forgiven.

Red heart

The red heart shows the way God made for you to have your sins forgiven-taken away. God loves you. He sent His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, from Heaven to take the punishment for your sin (John 3:16). Wicked men nailed the sinless Son of God to the cross, but while He hung there God put all of your sins on Him. The Bible says, "...God bath laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). (Iniquity is another word for sin). All your bad temper, all your lies, your meanness-all your sin-was laid on the dear Son of God, and He suffered and suffered until He cried out with a loud voice and said, "It is finished."

When you finish a job, how much is left? Nothing. What did the Lord Jesus come to do? He came to save us from punishment for sin, didn't He? And He finished the work. When He was nailed to the cross, what came from His hands, and His feet? His blood. God calls it the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and He says "...the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). There is no other way, for God says, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]"-no forgiveness, no payment (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus not only died for you, but He was buried, and He rose again. He is a living Saviour (I Corinthians 15:3, 4). God showed His love for you by sending His own Son to die for you. Now he says there is one way for you to be saved from your sin.

White heart

Tears cannot wash away sin. Prayers cannot wash away sin. Doing good cannot wash away sin. But the blood of the Lord Jesus can wash away all sin (Psalm 51:7; I John 1:7). This white heart reminds us that Jesus has healed our black hearts by washing away the sin with his blood. A white heart is pure again. It is clean again. Did Jesus die for everyone? (YES!) Is everyone going to Heaven? (No, because some do not believe that Jesus died for them. They have not received Him as their Saviour from sin.) God's word says, "...as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). God has promised you when you receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, you

Notes



become a child of God. The Lord Jesus Christ died to save you from your sins. He wants to clean your heart and live in your heart and give you power to obey God. Are you sorry for your sin? Do you believe Jesus died for your sin? Would you like to receive Jesus today? You must decide.

(Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment. Question the person to respond carefully. Encourage them to express to you before they pray: why they need to receive the Lord Jesus; what the Lord Jesus has done for them; what they want to tell God. When dealing with a group, emphasize what each person must personally believe and receive the Lord Jesus. Give opportunity for prayer. If possible, question each person individually after the prayer to clarify the meaning of His decision. Where is Jesus now? Where are your sins? What took them away?)

Any one of the following verses can be used effectively in helping to know what God has done: John 1:12; I John 5:13; Rev. 3:20.) God promises to you when you receive Him, "...I will never leave nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Ask Him to help you each day to please Him. When you do sin, tell God that you have sinned. He will forgive you right away (I John 1:9). Ask Him and trust Him to help you not to do it again. (Lead the person in offering a prayer of thanks.

Green heart

Green is the color of plants. It is the color of growth, of life. The green heart reminds me of the new life, everlasting life, you have received from God. The color green reminds me of things which are growing outdoors, like leaves, grass, flowers, and trees. When you receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour from sin, you are like a newborn baby in God's family. The Bible tells you to "grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18).

(As the time permits, talk with the person about those things which help him grow as a member of God's family. Explain you are not talking about growing taller or gaining weight, but the kind of growing which will help others know that he loves the Lord Jesus.)

Listen to God- Learn God's Word reading and memorizing it (II Timothy 2:15; Psalm 119: 11).

Talk to God. Pray (I Thessalonians 5:17).

Talk for God. Witness or tell others (Mark 16:15).

Worship God. Go to Sunday School and Church (Hebrews 10:25).

Blue heart (Optional)

Some will add a Blue heart to represent Baptism

Application

Use the various colors of the hearts to present the plan of salvation.

Use this as a presentation of the plan of salvation for Valentine's Day.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, salvation, evangelism, hearts

Notes



Story of Valentine's Day

Illustration

The story of Valentine's Day begins in the third century with an oppressive Roman emperor and a humble Christian martyr. The emperor was Claudius II. The Christian was Valentinus.

Claudius had ordered all Romans to worship twelve gods, and he had made it a crime punishable by death to associate with Christians. But Valentinus was dedicated to serving Christ, and not even the threat of death could keep him from following the Savior. He was therefore arrested and imprisoned.

During the last weeks of Valentinus' life a remarkable thing happened. Seeing that he was a man of learning, the jailer asked whether his daughter, Julia, might be brought to Valentinus for lessons. She had been blind since birth. Julia was a pretty, young girl with a quick mind.

Valentinus told stories of Rome's history to her. He described the world of nature to her. He taught her arithmetic and told her about God. She saw the world through his eyes, trusted his wisdom, and found comfort in his quiet strength.

"Valentinus, does God really hear our prayers?" Julia asked one day.

"Yes my child, He hears each one," he replied.

"Do you know what I pray for every morning and every night? I pray that I might see. I want so much to see everything you have told me about."

"God does what is best for us if we put our trust in Him," Valentinus said.

"Oh, Valentinus, I do believe in Him," Julia said intensely. "I do." She knelt and grasped his hand. They sat quietly together praying when suddenly there was a brilliant light in the prison cell. Radiant, Julia shouted, "Valentinus, I can see! I can see!"

"Praise be to God" Valentinus exclaimed, and they knelt to thank God.

On the eve of his death Valentinus wrote a last note to Julia, urging her to stay close to God, and he signed it "From Your Valentine."

His sentence was carried out the next day, February 14, 270 A.D. near the gate that was later named Porta Valentini in his memory. He was buried at what is now the Church of Praxedes in Rome.

Keywords

Love, Valentine's Day, Relationships

Notes





Perfect Love...

Resources

1. A sheet of clean, unwrinkled paper.

What to Do

1. Give each youth a clean, unwrinkled sheet of paper.
2. Ask the youth to close their eyes, and imagine this piece of paper represents the person in their life they love most.
3. Order them to wrinkle it up into a ball.
4. Then ask the youth smooth it out back to the way it was.
5. "How do you feel?"
6. some special Hearts to tell you a story of a very special love.

Take it to the Next Level

Who was the person you thought of when holding the piece of paper?

Were you hesitant to wrinkle up the paper?

Did you find crumpling up the piece of paper difficult? Why or why not?

In what ways does this paper represent relationships in life?

Think about a time in your life when you felt like this wrinkled piece of paper?

What happened?

How did you feel when you tried to restore this piece of paper to its original state?

Think about a time when you did something in a relationship and wished you could have set things back to the way they were before. What happened?

Why is it so difficult to repair damaged relationships?

What lessons does this simple object lesson hold for us when it comes to relationships in our own lives?

In what ways do people ruin relationships?

What can be done to put things back to the way they were?

Application

The saying says "forgive and forget" but it is rarely that easy. In some relationships, people have greatly suffered physical, sexual and emotional abuse. How can they forgive? Sometimes we wonder, "How can I ever forgive this person for what s/he did to me?" How do we forgive? How do we receive forgiveness? How do we restore things back to the way they were?

It is impossible to smooth everything out when the paper has been damaged. Wrinkles and rough areas will remain. In the same way, when we take the important relationships in life lightly, there is a great potential for us to create rough areas and other areas that are difficult to smooth out. While forgiveness may take place, scars may still remain. Sometimes only God and time can repair the scars.

Things we do can damage our relationship with God AND with people.

"Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, or his ear too dull to hear, but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden

Notes



his face from you, so that He will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:1-2) “He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.” (Proverbs 17:9)

But fortunately, God can mend broken hearts and he himself is forgiving and eternally loving. Sin has the same effect on our lives.. especially in the area of sexual purity. But when we go to God seeking forgiveness he restores the relationship with Him completely. We can find NEW life in Christ. In this lifetime there may still be some scars, but in the life to come everything will be made new. When we confess our sin, His blood washes us white as snow, and purifies us. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.” (Isaiah 43:25)

And in the same way God forgives us, we need to forgive others. “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

Scripture References

Isaiah 59:1-2; Isaiah 43:25; Proverbs 17:9; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 1:9

Keywords

forgiveness, purity, true love, relationships, Valentine’s Day

Notes





Valentine's Day Forward and Backward

Description

In this Icebreaker game for your Valentine's Day Party, youth will move forward or backwards when they meet the Valentine's day criteria that is called out.

Resources

1. List of actions related to valentine's Day or Dating
2. Chairs in a circle, one chair per person.

Preparation

Arrange the chairs in a circle, facing inward to the center of the circle.
Prepare the list of items

What to Do

1. Sit everyone in a chair and then read the instructions for participants to follow. Instructions should be related to Valentine's Day or dating.
2. If someone is in the chair you move to, just sit on his or her lap. You can stack people three or four high.
3. The first youth to make it all the way around the circle wins. Have youth to take note of the chair they start in before you begin calling out situations.

Sample Instructions

If you are wearing something red, move forward one chair.

If you are wearing black, move back three chairs.

If you have a cute stuffed animal at home, move forward one chair.

If you are not dating anyone right now, move back one chair.

If you like chocolates, move forward one chair.

If your birthday is in the month of February, move forward one chair.

If you didn't buy your sweetheart something for valentine's Day, move back Two chairs.

If you have said "I love you" to someone today, move forward two chairs.

If your sweetheart has a habit that irritates you, move back one chair.

If you have ever sang a serenade to your sweetheart, move forward 1 chair.

If you have ever gone out on a date with a best friend's boyfriend/ girlfriend move back 2 chairs.

If you have ever made your own home-made Valentine's Day card move forward one chair.

If you kissed on a first date, move back one chair.

If you have ever bought or received a red rose on Valentine's Day, move forward one chair.

If you have never enjoyed a candlelight dinner on Valentine's Day please move one chair backward.

If you have ever shared a drink using two straws in the same glass move forward one chair.

If you have ever forgotten to celebrate Valentine's Day move back one chair.



Notes



If you have a special love song that you share as a couple move forward 1 chair.

If you have ever been embarrassed by your date on Valentine's day, move backward one chair.

If you have ever received roses or a gift from a secret admirer move forward one chair.

If your car broke down on a date, move back 1 chair.

If you have ever called your sweetheart just to hear his/her voice move forward two chairs.

If you have ever called your boyfriend or girlfriend by the wrong name move backward 2 chairs.

If You have ever sent flowers to someone anonymously move forward 1 chair.

If you have ever gone to McDonald's on a date move backward one chair.

If you have ever left your sweetheart a message of love on an answering machine move forward one chair.

If you have ever sent a Valentine without signing it with your name move backward one chair.

If you have ever Sent you sweetheart a mushy SMS message move forward one chair.

If you have ever bought your sweetheart an item of clothing that was too small or too large move back one chair.

If you initiated the very first kiss with your sweetheart move forward one chair.

If you blush when kissed move backward one chair.

If you have never been on a romantic date then move forward two chairs.

If you have held hands with your sweetheart in a public place move back one chair.

If you like to do things for someone to show you love them move forward one chair.

If you have ever received a call from an ex boyfriend / girlfriend while out on a date with your new sweetheart move back two chairs.

If you have ever been chaperoned on a date before move forward one chair.

If you have ever dated someone on the rebound move back one chair.

If you tend to be the decision maker in the relationship move forward one chair.

If you have ever refused to answer the phone after an argument with your sweetheart, move back one chair.

If you think having a steady is overrated, move forward one chair.

If you have ever walked out on a date move back one chair.

If you have ever been offended by the body odor of your sweetheart, move forward one chair.

If you have ever gone to a party with a date, but left with someone else move back one chair.

If you like to give gifts to show someone you love them move forward one chair.

If you have ever made an embarrassing body noise while on a date, move back one chair.

If you have ever been recognized by a friend while on a date, move forward one chair.

If you have not brushed your teeth today, move back one chair.

Notes



If you wore something special on Valentine's day move forward one chair.
If you have ever eaten at a lousy restaurant on Valentine's day move back one chair.
If a friend introduced you or set you up with your sweetheart, move forward one chair.
If you tend to be passive in relationships move back one chair.
If you are still friends with someone you used to date move forward two chairs.
If you have a difficult time expressing love move back one chair.
ADD your own...

Take it to the Next Level

Do you ever feel that some of your dating relationships are like this game - sometimes you move forward and sometimes you find yourself moving backwards?

As you think back over the past year, do you think you have moved forward in your relationships or backwards?

How do you measure progress in your relationships?

Do you ever feel you are going in circles in your relationships? Why?

What are some things that move relationships forward?

What are some of the things that create setbacks in relationships?

What are some Biblical guidelines for relationship?

Application

Take a few moments to commit your self to a couple plans of action (things to avoid or things to do) in order to improve the significant relationships in your life!

Keywords

Valentine's Day, love, dating, relationships

Notes





Valentine's Day True or False

Description

Can you separate the Valentine's Day related facts from the fiction?

Resources

1. Valentine Heart shaped pieces of paper or Index cards and pens (or pencils)

What to Do

1. Let everyone write four statements about themselves on the heart related to Valentine's Day. (They can be in any order, but three must be true, and one must be false.) People should be encouraged to make the false statement sound plausible to make it more fun. (The clever ones will use something true about someone else in the group in order to mislead the group about the author's identity.)
2. In this Valentine's Day variation of a classic icebreaker, the statements should relate to Valentine's Day or romance / love:
3. Write down four things you have received or given your sweetheart for Valentine's Day.
4. Write down your four favorite love songs.
5. Write down four things you find romantic.
6. What happened on your four most memorable dates?
7. The Valentine's Day Hearts are then distributed randomly to the participants.
8. As each person receives a heart, he or she will read the statements out to the group that are written on it. The group tries to decide which statement is false and the identity of the person who wrote it.
9. Once the group guesses the correct person, the next person reads his or her heart until all the hearts are completed.

Take it to the Next Level

What are some of the things our hearts reveal about us?

What are some of the things the Bible teaches is about our hearts?

Is honesty important in relationships?

What are some of the potential consequences of dishonesty?

What are some of the other essentials for a good relationship?

What are some of the Biblical guidelines for relationships?

How can we restore relationships that have been damaged by dishonesty?

Application

Make a point to be truthful in your relationships and to do those things that will make them last!

Keywords

Valentine's Day Party Game, Valentine's Day Icebreaker, heart, truth, honesty, integrity, identity, character, personality



Notes



Love Birds On A Perch

Resources

1. Valentine's Day Music - Use a few romantic tunes or famous love songs.
2. Large open area for people to mingle.

Preparation

All girls must stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle facing outward.

All the guys form a circle around them, with each guy facing his chosen partner (Valentine).

Make adjustments so that the inner and outer circles contain an equal number of people.

Girls and guys must take note of their Valentine as they will need to find each other again every time the music stops.

What to Do

1. Staying in a circle, the girls begin walking clockwise.
2. The guys walk counterclockwise, also maintaining their circle around the girls.
3. When the music stops and the leader calls out "Lovebirds on a perch", both circles stop and the Valentine's Day couples must immediately move to find their partners.
4. The guy must get down on one knee with the other knee extended so that the girl may sit on it. The slowest couple to assume the "Lovebird on a perch" position is eliminated.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, party game, love birds, holiday games, birdie on a perch

Notes





Valentine Heart Candy Relay

Description

The objective of the Valentine's Day party game is to be the first team to remove all the Valentine candy Hearts of their assigned color.

Resources

1. Large bag (or several small boxes) of Valentine Candy Hearts
2. A roll of paper towels.

Preparation

On the floor at one end of the room, make a long strip of paper towels. Spread the Valentine Heart candy randomly over the entire length of paper towels making sure that there is an equal number of candy for each color.

What to Do

1. Form two teams and assign each team one color of Valentine Heart Candy. You can have as many teams as you have colors of candy. For a more difficult variation, assign each team a phrase from the candy like "Be Mine." The objective is to be the first team to remove all the candy of their assigned color.
2. One at a time, team members run to the paper towels, and bend down and use their teeth to pick up one piece of Valentine Heart candy (No hands allowed).
3. Once they have one of the Valentine Candy Hearts in their teeth, they run back to their team.
4. They must then show the Valentine Candy Heart in their mouth to the next person in line, who shouts out the color.
5. If the color's is the correct one that was assigned to the team, the person eats his/her candy and the next person goes to the row of paper towels to get a Valentine Candy Heart in his or her teeth and return to the team.
6. However, if the color is the wrong color (one assigned to another team) the person eats the candy and continues to go back and get another piece of candy until the return with the correct colored Valentine Heart candy.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Candy Heart, Party game. Holiday games



Notes





Valentine's Day Trivia

Illustration

About 1 billion Valentine's Day cards are exchanged each year. That's the largest seasonal card-sending occasion of the year, next to Christmas.

February 14, 270 A.D. : Roman Emperor Claudius II, dubbed "Claudius the Cruel," beheaded a priest named Valentine for performing marriage ceremonies. Claudius II had outlawed marriages when Roman men began refusing to go to war in order to stay with their wives.

In the Middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. To wear your heart on your sleeve now means that it is easy for other people to know how you are feeling.

Some people used to believe that if a woman saw a robin flying overhead on Valentine's Day, it meant she would marry a sailor. If she saw a sparrow, she would marry a poor man and be very happy. If she saw a goldfinch, she would marry a millionaire.

In the 17th century a hopeful maiden ate a hard-boiled egg and pinned five bay leaves to her pillow before going to sleep on Valentine's eve. It was believed this would make her dream of her future husband.

The Italian city of Verona, where Shakespeare's lovers Romeo and Juliet lived, receives about 1,000 letters addressed to Juliet every Valentine's Day.

The red rose was the favorite flower of Venus, the Roman goddess of love. Red stands for strong feelings which is why a red rose is a flower of love.

Wearing a wedding ring on the fourth finger of the left hand dates back to ancient Egypt, where it was believed that the vein of love ran from this finger directly to the heart.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Trivia



Notes





Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt



Notes

Description

This is the traditional scavenger hunt where participants are given a list of items to retrieve and bring back within a designated time limit. The Valentine's Day scavenger hunt consists of a list of the Valentine's Day related objects and some rules. Variations may allow photos of an object to replace the actual object or creative substitutions. The rules may forbid the purchase of items or restrict the participants from going to their own homes or malls to collect items. Various points are assigned to the objects based upon the difficulty necessary to obtain them.

Resources

1. Valentine's Day List for each team.

Preparation

Make a photocopy of your list of items and rules for each team. Set a time for groups to be back then send them off to collect the items. Assign one adult as camera man / sponsor to be attached to each team.

Important Note

Don't let any youth drive - put adults in charge and don't allow horseplay on the roads like "Chinese fire drills". Make sure everyone wears seat-belts or take major points away if they are caught on film without them on. You could also conduct the scavenger hunt on foot. You don't want a participant killed while speeding during your scavenger hunts.

Participants must obey all laws and instructions from sponsors. Limit the play area and place people at strategic locations if needed to ensure the safety of participants.

Make sure each group has a mobile phone and contact numbers for emergency.

Sample Rules

- Only one object will be counted for each item on the list.
- 500 points off for each minute after the deadline you are late.
- Words written on paper or drawings will not be counted if used instead of a place or object.
- Be respectful in everything you do.
- Stay with your sponsor at all times and obey him/ her.
- No collaborating with other teams.
- Winners will be announced after the items are tabulated.

Suggested Scavenget Hunt List

Heart shaped balloon, Chocolate Candies, Chocolate Kiss, Red Ribbon, Red Rose, Red Carnation, Italian Dinner Menu, Cupid, Valentine's Day Card, Something with the words "Be Mine" written on it, Candle, Calendar with Valentine's Day on it, Red Arrow, Heart pendant, love letter written more than a year ago, Lovebird, Passion fruit, Poetry on love, Sweetheart



cup, DVD movie where some is serenaded, CD with a Love Song, Red and white Stuffed Animal, Honey, Valentine's Day Candy Heart, matching rings, wedding invitation, Wine bottle, Red Dress, Something made from lace

What to Do

1. Divide everyone into two or more groups and give them a time limit with which to find the items on the list.
2. The first group that returns with the all the items or the most items on the list within the limited time wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, Scavenger Hunt

Notes





Love: A Paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 13

Illustration

If I talk a lot about God and the Bible and the Church, but I fail to ask about your needs and then help you, I'm simply making a lot of empty religious noise.

If I graduate from theological seminary and know all the answers to questions you'll never even think of asking, and if I have all the degrees to prove it and if I say I believe in God with all my heart, and soul and strength, and claim to have incredible answers to my prayers to show it, but I fail to take the time to find out where you're at and what makes you laugh and why you cry, I'm nothing.

If I sell an extra car and some of my books to raise money for some poor starving kids somewhere, and if I give my life for God's service and burn out after pouring everything I have into the work, but do it all without ever once thinking about the people, the real hurting people--the moms and dads and sons and daughters and orphans and widows and the lonely and hurting--if I pour my life into the Kingdom but forget to make it relevant to those here on earth, my energy is wasted, and so is my life.

Here is what love is like--genuine love. God's kind of love. It's patient. It can wait. It helps others, even if they never find out who did it. Love doesn't look for greener pastures or dream of how things could be better if I just got rid of all my current commitments. Love doesn't boast. It doesn't try to build itself up to be something it isn't. Love doesn't act in a loose, immoral way. It doesn't seek to take, but it willingly gives. Love doesn't lose its cool. It doesn't turn on and off. Love doesn't think about how bad the other person is, and certainly doesn't think of how it could get back at someone. Love is grieved deeply (as God is) over the evil in this world, but it rejoices over truth.

Love comes and sits with you when you're feeling down and finds out what is wrong. It empathizes with you and believes in you. Love knows you'll come through just as God planned, and love sticks right beside you all the way. Love doesn't give up, or quit, or diminish or go home. Love keeps on keeping on, even when everything goes wrong and the feelings leave and the other person doesn't seem as special anymore. Love succeeds 100 percent of the time. That, my friend, is what real love is!

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Keywords

Valentine's Day, Love, Corinthians



Notes



Hearts in a Bottle

Description

Can you guess the number of Valentine Candy Hearts in the bottle?

Resources

1. A glass jar filled with Valentine Candy Hearts.

Preparation

Count the number of Valentine Candy hearts as you put them into the glass jar.

What to Do

1. Pass the jar around as everyone is arriving and ask them to write their name and their guess at the number of Valentine Candy Hearts contained in the jar.
2. At the end of your Valentine's Day party, give a prize to the person who's guess is closest to the correct number.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Party Ideas



Notes





Valentine Heart Tower

Description

How high can you stack your pile of valentine candy hearts? In this game for a Valentine Party event, participants will try to stack a box of valentine candy hearts as high as possible. It's not as easy as it may seem!

Resources

1. One small box of Valentine candy hearts candy for each team. (These are the heart shaped candies with phrases like "Be Mine", "Love", "Kiss Me" and other Valentine's Day phrases printed on them.)
2. A timer or stopwatch

Preparation

Divide the Valentine's Day party participants into teams. Give each team a box of Valentine candy hearts.

What to Do

1. Announce the objective - to build the tallest tower using only the Valentine's Day candy hearts you have been given. At the end of the time, the group with the tallest standing tower will win! (30 seconds to one minute should be sufficient)
2. Start the timer. Teams will rush to build their towers. But often they will get greedy and the towers will come tumbling down. Some teams may choose to stop and allow the time to run out. Others may keep going until the last minute. If a tower falls they can start over again.
3. When the timer runs out, the team with the tallest standing tower is awarded the prize.

Variation

Play as couples or as girls against guys!

Play such that each person, in turn must add a single heart to the tower.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Party Games



Notes





Valentine's Day Boggle

Notes

Description

In this Valentine's Day Game, party participants are to create as many words as possible before the timer runs out using only the letters in the word "Valentine".

Resources

1. Word List (possibly a dictionary as well)
2. Timer
3. Paper and pencil/ pen for each person

What to Do

1. Participants are to create as many words as possible using only the letters in the word "Valentine"
2. You may wish to allow only those words for which the participants can give the definition.

Word List

ae, ai, ail, ain, ait, al, ale, alee, alevin, alien, aline, alit, alive, alt, alvine, an, ane, anele, anent, ani, anil, anile, ant, ante, anti, anvil, at, ate, ave, eat, eave, eel, el, elain, elan, elate, elative, elint, elite, en, enate, enliven, entail, entia, et, eta, etna, eve, even, event, evil, evite, ilea, in, inane, inlet, inn, innate, invent, it, la, lain, lane, lat, late, lateen, laten, lati, lav, lave, lea, lean, leant, leave, leaven, lee, leet, lei, lenient, lenite, lent, lenten, let, lev, levant, levin, li, liane, lie, lien, lieve, lin, line, lineate, linen, linn, linnet, lint, lit, lite, live, liven, na, nae, nail, naive, naivete, nan, native, nave, navel, ne, neat, neat, neaten, nee, nene, net, neve, nieve, nil, nine, nit, nite, nival, ta, tae, tael, tail, tain, tale, tali, tan, tav, tea, teal, tee, teel, teen, tel, tela, tele, ten, tenail, tenia, ti, tie, til, tile, tin, tine, tinea, vail, vain, vale, valet, valine, van, vane, vat, veal, vee, veena, veil, vein, veinal, veinlet, vela, velate, vena, venal, venetian, venial, venom, venine, vent, ventail, vet, via, vial, vie, vile, vina, vinal, vine, vineal, vita, vital

Variation

Pin a large card bearing a letter from one of the above words to each person's sleeve

Give each person a small card and a pencil.

The goal is for people with the various letters to get together and spell words. Once they have spelled a word, they must write the word on their cards and have both people sign it.

They can then separate and look for new words.

Award a prize to the person with the longest list of words.

And you might award a special prize to the members involved in making the longest word.



Important Note

If your group size is bigger than the length of the word, double up on some of the letters, but realize that there may be additional words possible that are not in the list above.

Keywords

valentine's day game idea, valentine party, holiday games, word games

Notes





Love and Time

Illustration

Once upon a time, there was an island where all the feelings lived: Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all of the others, including Love. One day it was announced to the feelings that the island would sink, so all constructed boats and left. Except for Love.

Love was the only one who stayed. Love wanted to hold out until the last possible moment.

When the island had almost sunk, Love decided to ask for help.

Richness was passing by Love in a grand boat. Love said, "Richness, can you take me with you?"

Richness answered, "No, I can't. There is a lot of gold and silver in my boat. There is no place here for you."

Love decided to ask Vanity who was also passing by in a beautiful vessel.

"Vanity, please help me!"

"I can't help you, Love. You are all wet and might damage my boat," Vanity answered.

Sadness was close by so Love asked, "Sadness, let me go with you."

"Oh . . . Love, I am so sad that I need to be by myself!"

Happiness passed by Love, too, but she was so happy that she did not even hear when Love called her.

Suddenly, there was a voice, "Come, Love, I will take you." It was an elder. So blessed and overjoyed, Love even forgot to ask the elder where they were going. When they arrived at dry land, the elder went her own way.

Realizing how much was owed the elder, Love asked Knowledge, another elder, "Who Helped me?"

"It was Time," Knowledge answered.

"Time?" asked Love. "But why did Time help me?"

Knowledge smiled with deep wisdom and answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how valuable Love is."

Keywords

Valentine's Day, inspiration, love, commitment, dedication



Notes





Rose Within

Illustration

We often associate roses with love. But the rose is also a reminder that all of us are worthy of love, in spite of the thorns.

A certain man planted a rose and watered it faithfully and before it blossomed, he examined it.

He saw the bud that would soon blossom, but noticed thorns upon the stem and he thought, "How can any beautiful flower come from a plant burdened with so many sharp thorns? Saddened by this thought, he neglected to water the rose, and just before it was ready to bloom... it died.

So it is with many people. Within every soul there is a rose. The God-like qualities planted in us at birth, grow amid the thorns of our faults. Many of us look at ourselves and see only the thorns, the defects.

We despair, thinking that nothing good can possibly come from us. We neglect to water the good within us, and eventually it dies. We never realize our potential.

Some people do not see the rose within themselves; someone else must show it to them. One of the greatest gifts a person can possess is to be able to reach past the thorns of another, and find the rose within them.

This is one of the characteristics of love... to look at a person, know their true faults and accepting that person into your life... all the while recognizing the nobility in their soul. Help others to realize they can overcome their faults. If we show them the "rose" within themselves, they will conquer their thorns. Only then will they blossom many times over.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, love, inspiration, nurture, potential



Notes





Most Beautiful Heart

Illustration

One day a young man was standing in the middle of town proclaiming that he had the most beautiful heart in the whole world. A large crowd gathered and they all admired his heart for it was perfect.

There was not a mark or a flaw in it. Yes, they all agreed it truly was the most beautiful heart they had ever seen.

The young man was very proud and boasted more loudly about his beautiful heart.

Suddenly, an old man appeared at the front of the crowd and said, "Why your heart is not nearly as beautiful as mine."

The crowd and the young man looked at the old man's heart. It was beating strongly, but full of scars, it had places where pieces had been removed and other pieces put in, but they didn't fit quite right and there were several jagged edges. In fact, in some places there were deep gouges where whole pieces were missing.

The people stared -- how can he say his heart is more beautiful, they thought?

The young man looked at the old man's heart and saw its state and laughed.

"You must be joking," he said.

"Compare your heart with mine, mine is perfect and yours is a mess of scars and tears."

"Yes," said the old man, "Yours is perfect looking but I would never trade with you."

You see, every scar represents a person to whom I have given my love - I tear out a piece of my heart and give it to them, and often they give me a piece of their heart which fits into the empty place in my heart, but because the pieces aren't exact, I have some rough edges, which I cherish, because they remind me of the love we shared.

"Sometimes I have given pieces of my heart away, and the other person hasn't returned a piece of his heart to me. These are the empty gouges -- giving love is taking a chance."

Although these gouges are painful, they stay open, reminding me of the love I have for these people too, and I hope someday they may return and fill the space I have waiting. So now do you see what true beauty is?"



Notes

The young man stood silently with tears running down his cheeks. He walked up to the old man, reached into his perfect young and beautiful heart, and ripped a piece out. He offered it to the old man with trembling hands

The old man took his offering, placed it in his heart and then took a piece from his old scarred heart and placed it in the wound in the young man's heart.

It fit, but not perfectly, as there were some jagged edges. The young man looked at his heart, not perfect anymore but more beautiful than ever, since love from the old man's heart flowed into his.

They embraced and walked away side by side.
Only then will they blossom many times over.

Keywords

Valentine's Day, Love, sweethearts, giving, sacrifice

Notes





Emotional Charades

Resources

1. Word List (possibly a dictionary as well)
2. Timer

What to Do

1. This is like normal charades, but the items to be pantomimed are different emotions.
2. Do not announce this beforehand, but let the groups figure it out for themselves.
3. The person who guesses the emotion gets a point.

Suggested List

Some suggested emotions that can be used are: anger, fear, happy, nervous, bored, bitter, overwhelmed, depressed, at peace, embarrassed, loved, proud, detached, shocked, hate, and finally, love.

Icebreaker Variation

In larger groups you might give each person one of the above motions. There should be at least two people that have each emotion. The objective will be to display the emotion until you find the other members of your group. When you think you have found your partners/group have a seat. Continue until all groups are seated. Then have each group strike a pose of their emotion.

Photo Variation

Obtain a variety of photos from newspaper clippings, magazines, and advertisements. Have the group identify the emotions displayed on people's faces. Discuss the difficulty of recognizing love and other emotions.

Couples Variation

Couples must perform the charade and whoever guesses it gets the next item on the list to pantomime. The person who guesses the emotion and the nearest person of the opposite sex on his/her right will be the next couple to get the clue. This means the two will have to demonstrate the emotion with each other... (e.g. Anger - pantomime yelling at each other, being upset, etc.)

Discussion

What does love look like? What actions show love?

How did you find your group? How do we find love?

What do our emotions reveal about us?

Are negative emotions a sin? Is it easier to control positive or negative emotions?

Which emotions are the easiest to show? The most difficult?

Discuss the different emotions Jesus portrayed in his life as revealed in the scriptures.

Discuss the fruits of the spirit and how they relate to our emotions.



Notes

Application

Focus in on the emotion of love and use the activity for Valentine's Day
Use this as an introduction to a discussion on God's Love

Keywords

emotions, feelings, icebreaker, crowdbreaker, showing love, positive and negative emotions

Notes





True Love

Resources

1. Paper and pencils for each group of youth

What to Do

1. Have a competition between teams of children to name as many things as possible that are associated with love.
2. Based upon these lists have kids form a definition of “true Love.”
3. You could also make a list of things on your own (like those listed below) and play a game of charades.

Suggested List

Heart, Chocolate, Roses, Carnations, Dinner, Kisses, Cupid, Love, Valentine Card, Be Mine, I’m Yours, Beloved, I love you, True Love, Be My Valentine, Romance, 14th, courtship, Date, February, Arrows, Boyfriend, Girlfriend, Candlelight, Candy, Diamonds, Flowers, Forever, Gifts, Hugs, Infatuation, Love Letters, Lovebirds, Lovers, Only You, Passion, Pink, Red, Poetry, Relationship, Secret admirer, Sweetheart, Flirting, Serenade, Love Songs, Stuffed Animals, Cuddle, Honey, Casanova, Amore, Wink, Heartthrob, God, Sacrifice, Marriage, Wedding, honeymoon, ring, family, (sex).

Keywords

Love, Valentine’s Day, True Love, Relationships



Notes





Circle of Love

Resources

1. Tennis ball (small ball)
2. Newsprint and a marker
3. A Bible

What to Do

1. Form kids into circles of 10-20 people.
2. Ask each group to sit in a circle.
3. Explain that you're going to toss the ball to someone across the circle.
4. The receiver is to pick out another person across the circle that has not received the ball yet and toss the ball to him or her.
5. Continue tossing until everyone in the circle has had a chance to catch and toss the ball.
6. Repeat the pattern, catching and tossing to the same people as before. But this time, ask kids to each say one thing they really "love" (basketball, skateboarding, trench fries, movies, and so on) before they toss the ball to someone else.
7. On the third round, repeat the catch-and-toss pattern, this time asking kids to each say one thing they really love about the person they're tossing the ball to (this will probably be much harder than the previous round).

Discussion

How did you feel when someone told you something he or she loved about you?

Why is it easier to talk about things we love than about what we love in others?

What's one thing we can do in our group to show we love each other?

Application

Write the answers to the last question on newsprint. Then vote on the best idea and do it at each class.

Keywords

Love, Relationships, Valentine's Day



Notes



Held Together

Resources

1. Tape
2. Glue
3. Stapler
4. A bolt

What to Do

1. I would like for you to discover what this tape, glue, stapler, and bolt have in common. Think about it.
2. (Allow them to answer.)

Discussion

That's right! They are all used to hold things together. Most of you probably have tape and glue in your desk at school or in your room. You may also have a stapler of your own, or perhaps your teacher or parents do. Your father probably has a jar of bolts in the garage that he uses to hold metal or wooden objects together. Almost everything we have has to be held together by something. Can you name a few other things that hold things together?

Application

There is something else that needs to be held together as well and that is people. We need to be close to people. If we are not, life becomes very sad and lonely. We need to be close to our family, to our friends, and to our fellow church people-plus many others. Let me tell you what holds people together better than anything else: Love! Love is the best tape, the best glue, the best staple, the best bolt that you can find to keep you close to people. There are other things that we sometimes think keep us close to others but they don't work as well as love. You may think that it's because you live on the same street that you are friends with a certain person, but if that is all that makes you friends it will be over with the first time you have a serious fight. Sometimes we think we are close friends with someone because we like the same sport or the same games but this usually doesn't last either. Even living in the same house with your family will not automatically make you close to them. In every case what we really need is love for that person. No matter what you like doing with someone close to you, just remember that to love that person is the most important thing of all. Love will be the tape, the glue, the staple, the bolt that holds us together in unity.

Scripture References

Matthew 22; Luke 10; John 13:34

Keywords

Love, relationships, Valentine's Day



Notes





Pocket Scavenger Hunt

Notes

Resources

1. Develop a list of 15-20 items that teens carry in their wallets, purses, or on themselves.

Some possible items for your list are:

black comb, facial tissue, a cross, five dollar bill, Bible, a book mark, white shoe string, 1 cent coin, an identity card or driver's license, brown belt, safety pin, a ring, watch with a second hand, toothbrush, a friend's phone#, pen, fingernail file, a pencil, picture of dad, friendship bracelet, blank paper, student ID, a blonde hair, credit card, a cosmetic mirror, house key, glasses, foreign currency, lipstick, note from a friend

What to Do

1. Divide into groups of 4-5 students.
2. Tell the groups that you are going to ask for an object and the first group to run up to you with the object will receive the point.
3. The object of course is to receive the most points.

Application

After the game, tell the group that today's lesson is like the game. Seemingly insignificant items became valuable as we tried to win. So it is with us. We may view ourselves as nothing too special, yet God says he can and will do amazing works through people who may seem insignificant by the world's standards, yet who are faithful to him. God wants use you to demonstrate his love to others. Conclude by saying that just as they used small insignificant items, God wants to use the small things in our life to show others his love.

Keywords

Love, Relationships, Evangelism, Valentine's Day, Scavenger hunt





Matching Emotions

Resources

1. Pieces of paper or notecards with emotions written on them.

Suggested List

anger, fear, happy, nervous, bored, bitter, overwhelmed, depressed, at peace, embarrassed, loved, proud, detached, shocked, hate, and finally, love.

Preparation

There should be at least two people that have each emotion and the total number will depend on how many people you want to have in each team.

What to Do

1. Display the emotion until you find the other members of your group.
2. When you think you have found all your partners/group have a seat.
3. Continue until all groups are seated.
4. Finally have each group strike a pose of their emotion for other teams to guess.

Discussion

What does love look like?

What actions show love?

How did you find your group?

How do we find love?

What do our emotions reveal about us?

Are negative emotions a sin?

Is it easier to control positive or negative emotions?

Which emotions are the easiest to show? The most difficult?

Keywords

Love, Emotions, Heart, Feelings



Notes





Valentine's Day Love Letters

Resources

1. Newsprint, or two whiteboards
2. Markers

What to Do

1. Tell the groups that they as a team will be writing the best love letter they know how.
2. Line each team up in a single file line and one at a time write one word of their letter on a large piece of paper you have taped up onto the wall in front of each group.
3. Start both teams out with the same line such as "Honey, I love you so much that..."
4. One at a time team members will go to the board and add a word to their team's letter.
5. Tell them ahead of time that they will be disqualified if they write anything inappropriate. Make sure your leaders are watching this as well.
6. When one person is done writing one word he/she will go to the end of their line and the next person will write a word.
7. They cannot talk with one another or share ideas with one another.
8. Give them four minutes to complete the letter.
9. Pick on student from each team to read their letter out loud to the rest of the group and have a panel of leaders vote on the best letter.

Variation

You can do it again, this time writing a break-up letter. This time start the letter, Honey I know we've had good times but...

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, relationships, love



Notes





Valentine's Day 'Honey, If You Love Me'

Resources

1. Chairs for youth arranged in a circle.

What to Do

1. This is a "lose when you smile" game.
2. Everyone sits in a circle and one person is "it" in the center.
3. The goal of the person in the center is to get someone of the opposite sex to smile.
4. He/ she does this by going up to a person of the opposite sex and saying in whatever manner desired to get a smile, "Honey, if you love me would you please, please, smile."
5. The person chosen must then say, making eye contact, without a smile, "Honey, I love you, but I just can't smile."
6. If he/she smiles, then he/she becomes "it."

Important Note

You may want to set specific rules, such as "no body contact" to keep this from getting out of hand.

Application

Conclude this activity by saying that we often place conditions on our love. "I will love you if..." "If you love me you will..." "I love you because.." True love is unconditional.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, love, relationships



Notes



Valentine's Day "Who Am I?"

Resources

1. Cut out hearts
2. Pencils

What to Do

1. Pass out a heart to each youth.
2. Have each youth write their favorite color, movie, book, food, animal, etc. and name on one side of the heart.
3. Put all the hearts in a bowl.
4. A leader pulls one heart out, reads out the answers, then the youths try to guess who's heart it is.
5. The youth that guesses correctly gets the heart. The youth with the most hearts wins.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, Relationships, love, hearts

Notes





Fractured Valentines

Resources

1. A Valentine Design

Preparation

Before the party, design a crazy-looking valentine, listing four parts to the message: (Be sure to leave plenty of space between the lines. You'll want to experiment with different valentine designs and choose the one that works best. See the following example.)

Dear

I want you to be my valentine because

The thing I like most about you is

Love,

What to Do

1. At the party, hand out the blank valentines and instruct everyone to write his or her name in blank 1.
2. Then fold and tape the top over his or her name. It is important that no one sees the names.
3. Valentines are then gathered and randomly redistributed.
4. Everyone fills in blank 2 with a funny message. Fold down the top to cover blank 2.
5. Gather and randomly redistribute again
6. Everyone then fills in blank 3 and signs his or her name in blank 4.
7. Gather all valentines.
8. Read the valentines aloud to the group. Be alert to edit any portions of the valentine that might be embarrassing or inappropriate to the receiver.

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Hearts, Holiday Games, Love, relationships



Notes



Valentine's Day Cupid

Resources

1. A cheap, rubber-tipped bow and arrow or dart gun for each team.
2. Heart shaped or red balloons
3. Straight pins
4. Slips of paper

Preparation

Stick a straight pin carefully through the rubber tip so that the arrow or dart is "loaded."

Create a corny love poem such as: "Roses are red, violets are blue; if you kiss me, you'll come down with the flu."

Write each word of the poem on a slip of paper and place it in a balloon.

Inflate the balloons and tape them to a wall. Have a different color or balloon designation for each team. Red, White, Pink, pastels are nice.

Mark a tape line on the floor at least 10 feet from the targets and line up each team single file behind the tape.

Have a responsible assistant handle the "ammo." To avoid dangerous crossfire, ammo should only be collected once all teams have shot all thier arrows.

What to Do

1. Each person gets one shot at the balloons, then moves to the back of the line.
2. When a balloon pops and after all shooting ceases, retrieve the word-clue from any balloon that popped and give it to the team of that color (It is possible that another team may pop the balloon for you if their aim is off)
3. The first team to figure out the poem wins!

Variation

Instead of love poems, use Bible Verses related to love or relationships.

Keywords

Valentine's Games, Hearts, Holiday Games, Love, relationships

Notes





Valentine's Day Candy Charades

Resources

1. Valentine's Day candy conversation hearts (BE MINE, COOL KID, LOVER BOY, KISS ME, MY GAL, etc.)

Preparation

For this game to be effective, there must be quite a number of different conversation hearts to choose from.

Put all the candy in a bowl.

What to Do

1. One person from a group picks out one of the candies from the bowl and, using the regular rules for Charades, tries to pantomime the message.
2. The person who correctly guesses the saying gets to eat that piece of candy.
3. It's fun to watch the participants try to do phrases like LOVER BOY, KISS ME, and all the other crazy sayings found on the candy.

Variation

Use Valentine Cards instead of Valentine candy.

Use different emotions for the items to be pantomimed. The person who guesses the emotion gets a point. Emotions that can be used are: anger, fear, happy, nervous, bored, bitter, overwhelmed, depressed, at peace, embarrassed, loved, proud, detached, shocked, hate, and finally, love. In larger groups you might give each person one of the above emotions. There should be at least two people that have each emotion. The objective will be to display the emotion until you find the other members of your group. When you think you have your partners/group have a seat. Continue until all groups are seated. Then have each group strike a pose of their emotion ending finally with that of love. What does love look like? What actions show love? How did you find your group? How do we find love?

Keywords

Valentine's Day Games, Holiday Games, Hearts, Relationships, Love



Notes



Mother's Day

Second Sunday of May





Are You My Mother?

Description

This game can be a fun filled activity for Mother's Day. For a nice bridge into mother's day... say it is not really storks that bring babies, but God. And God puts them into the loving care of mothers.

What to Do

1. Play this like "doggie doggie where's your bone!" Except you choose one child to be the baby bird in the middle and the child with the hidden block or toy is the mommy.
2. The Bird points to a child and asks "Are you my Mother?" the child answers "Yes" if they have the block or "No I am a ____" and fills in the ____ with cat, dog, boat.. etc.
3. On the third guess if the child guesses incorrectly the child should respond "I am a Stork" and everyone can point to the "Mother" for them. Of course the stork brings new babies so someone else become the baby bird and the game continues.

Keywords

Mother's Day, mom, mother



Notes





Baby Animals

Notes

What to Do

1. Ask: "Every mother knows her baby---but do you? Take the quiz!"

Quiz

- A mother horse gallops with her _____.
- The mother cow gives milk for her _____.
- A baby tiger hunts food for her _____.
- The mother hen looks for worms for her _____.
- The mother dog plays with her _____.
- The mother duck swims with her _____.
- The mother cat catches a mouse for her _____.
- The mother goat nibbles grass with her _____.
- The mother pig is busy caring for her _____.
- The mother sheep calls her _____.
- The mother fox hunts for her _____.
- The mother kangaroo keeps her _____ in her pouch.
- The mother deer lies with her _____.
- A mother frog takes swims with her _____.
- The mother bear takes care of her _____.
- The mother donkey runs with its _____.
- A mother eagle brings back a worm for it _____.
- A mother Ferret takes care of it's _____.
- A mother goose swims with its _____.

Answers

pony, calf, cub, chick, puppy, duckling, kitten, kid, piglet, lamb, pup, joey, fawn, tadpole, cub, colt, eaglet, kit, gosling

Variation 1

You can place the cards on a table and play a concentration style card game. Kids turn over two cards. If a mother is matched with the baby animal they can go again. If not they turn the cards back over and the next child turns over two cards. The child with the most cards at the end wins. As a variation you can get photos of parents and children and paste them to cards or photocopy them on cards. Then they must also match mother and child.



Notes

Variation 2

“Battle” also known as “slap”-- Add animal cards (see website below for more animals and babies) as well as duplicates. Shuffle and deal the cards into two equal piles. Divide the class into two teams. Each team chooses a person to turn over cards. Each team turns over a card at the same time as the other team. When the two cards go together the first person to slap the top of the discards in the center gets all those cards. If they slap the stack and the cards do not match, the other team gets all the cards. The team can shout directions for its player and help them to determine when to slap the deck. Once the deck has been slapped, the next person from each team turns over the cards. The game is over when one team obtains all the cards in this manner.

Variation 3

Have each child bring a stuffed animal. Put them all put in a pile. Then one by one mothers are blindfolded and they have to find their child’s stuffed animal without looking!

Variation 4

“Name That Animal”- This is a fun game for small children just beginning to learn their animals. Pass out animal stickers or small stuffed animals, and have the kids imitate the animal they receive. You might write the names of a baby and a mother. Then by imitating the animal they have been given they most find the mother of that animal.

Application

Each animal has a special name for its baby. Your mother gave each of you a special name as well. And God knows each one of you by name. Just as mother animals take care of their babies, your mother takes care of you. Take some time to thank your mom for taking care of you.

Keywords

mother, mother’s day





Famous Biblical Mothers

Notes

Resources

1. Valentine's Day candy conversation hearts (BE MINE, COOL KID, LOVER BOY, KISS ME, MY GAL, etc.)

Preparation

Make a list of famous mothers from the Bible.

Eve, Naomi, Hannah, Elizabeth, Mary, Rebecca, Sarah and many others come to mind.

Write the name on a card, one card for each name.

You can tell each of the Biblical stories and then discuss how our own mothers are in many ways like the Biblical mothers.

Biblical Mothers List

Naomi

She was the Mother-in-law of Ruth. Ruth accompanied Naomi to her homeland saying 'Where you go, I will go, where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.' She guided her daughter in law into a marriage with Boaz.

Hannah

She was the wife of Elkanah. She was childless for many years, but after much prayer, became mother to Samuel the prophet. She dedicated him to the Lord and brought him a linen ephod every year. After Samuel, she became mother to three more sons and two daughters. 1 Samuel 1; 2:1, 21

Elizabeth

She was the Mother of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for the Lord. She was Mary's cousin and a godly woman who in her old age, God allowed her to give birth.

Sarah

She is the wife of Abraham and gave birth to Isaac when she was over 100 years old. Isaac was the father of Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Mary

She is the Mother of Jesus and is often remembered for her answer faith when she answered the angel Gabriel. 'I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said.' (Luke 1:38)

Bathsheba

She was the mother of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived. She is mentioned in Jesus' family tree - Matthew 1:6 - 'whose mother had been Uriah's wife.'



Eve

She is known as the “Mother of mankind” because she was the very first mother.

Rebekah

She ensured that the more righteous son, Jacob, receive the patriarchal blessing from his father, as the Lord intended (Genesis 27).

Abijah

Her son Hezekiah was a king who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 29:1, 26:5 , 2 Kings 18:2

Jochebed

When the Pharaoh gave order to kill all the baby boys of the Hebrews, she hid Moses for three months. By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict (Hebrews 11:23). (See also Exodus 1-2)

Rachel

She was the mother of Joseph who had a coat of many colors.

Azubah

She was the wife of King Asa and was the mother and godly influence of Jehosaphat. It is said that he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord 1 Kings 22:42, 2 Chronicles 20:31

Jedidah

She was the mother of Josiah who succeeded his father as king when he was only eight years old. He reigned for almost 31 years. Josiah's father was a wicked king but Josiah was godly, again attesting to the influence of a godly mother. 2Kings 22:1,2

What to Do

1. Place the name of a Biblical mother on the back of each person.
2. Each person must identify the Biblical mother placed on his/her back by asking others yes/no questions.
3. Note: Some of these mothers may be too difficult for some youth.

Variation

See how many of the Biblical mothers kids can correctly identify from the descriptions. Make it a competition between two teams.

Application

Use these example of Biblical Mothers for Mother's Day or at another opportunity to recognize mothers.

Keywords

Mother, Mother's Day, Mom

Notes





Mother Child Trivia



Notes

What to Do

1. Invite mothers to the Sunday School classroom.
2. Temporarily separate the mothers and the children or youth.
3. The teacher asks some planned questions to the group of mothers and each mother is expected to try and guess the answer her child/teen will give to each question.
4. Answers are written on a large piece of cardboard or a piece of paper that can later be held high for everyone to see.
5. Bring the mothers and children/youth back together.
6. Assign point values for each question in which the parent successfully guessed the child's answer. You can also reverse roles for the next set of questions and have the kids try to predict their mother's answer.
7. Note: The parent and child could answer the questions on an index card, without talking to each other or having any type of collaboration at all on answers.
8. The mother-child with the most points wins a prize.

Sample Questions

"Most common thing you fight over?"

"You are most alike in what characteristic?"

"What is your favorite activity together?"

"What is the funniest thing that happened when you were together?" "What is one music group you could listen to and both enjoy?"

"What is a television show you watch together?"

Keywords

Mother, Mother's Day, Mom





Mother of Who?

What to Do

1. Have youth make a list of famous mothers. Award the team or individual youth with the most.

Variation

Using the lists, play a game of charades. Add bonus points for naming the children of each listed mother.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Mother, Mom



Notes





Mother Says

What to Do

1. You can play this game like “simon says.” but simply replace the name “Simon” with “Mother.”
2. “Mother Says” has a very simple rule.
3. If a child is given a command and the teacher does not preface it with “Mother Says”, children must ignore it.
4. If they mistakenly follow it they are eliminated from the game. Continue until only one child remains.

Variation

Instead of playing “Simon says”, play a game of “Mother May I?”

One person (it could be Mom) stands facing away from a line of kids. She then chooses a child (at random, or in order), and announces a direction.

These follow a pattern, such as, “Brian, you may take (NUMBER) “giant steps” forward/backward.”

The child responds with “Mother may I?” Mom then states “Yes” or “No”, depending on her whim, and the child complies.

If the child forgets to ask “Mother may I?” he/she goes back to the starting line. First one to touch Mother wins.

Other possibilities are:

“regular steps”

“baby steps”

“ballet steps”

“Scissors steps”- jump while crossing your feet, then jump while uncrossing them

“Banana steps”-laying down with feet at current spot, marking where the top of your head was, and getting up there for new spot, and

“Bunny steps” - a hop

Application

Obedying our Mother is one way of showing them we love them.

Keywords

Mom, Mother’s Day, Mother



Notes





Mother's Day Icebreakers

Notes

WHOSE KISS?

What to Do

1. Blindfold the mother.
2. Then have a couple of the children in attendance kiss her on the cheek.
3. Give each child a number and have the mother guess which number her child is.
4. Give a few Hershey's Kisses to the mother-child who guesses correctly.

MOTHER - CHILD

What to Do

1. All mothers stand in a circle. Then all children form a circle around them.
2. The inner and outer circles contain an equal number of people.
3. Each mother should be with their child.
4. Mothers begin walking clockwise while the children walk counterclockwise.
5. A leader then interrupts by calling out "Birdie on a perch". At that moment, both circles stop and children must find their mother. The mother must place the child on her knee.
6. The slowest mother and child to assume the designated position is eliminated.
7. Continue until one couple is left.

Variation

Instead of calling out "Birdie on a perch" call out two body parts and in a position couples must assume. For instance, one might call out, "Wrist to nose!" or "Knee to elbow".

SILHOUETTES

What to Do

1. Set up a sheet so that if someone is standing behind it you can't see them, only their shadow.
2. You can then place mothers behind the sheet and have children try to identify their mother, or vice-versa.

Keywords

Mom, Mother's Day, Mother





Sayings of Mothers

Description

This Mother's Day teaching activity can be a Children's Sermon or a reminder for any day that mothers look after us just as the Heavenly Father does.

What to Do

1. Have children / youth list things that their mothers say to them.
2. As a fun variation, ask them to list three of the most common things said by their mothers to them on a piece of paper.
3. Place them in a bowl and randomly distribute them.
4. Youth must then try to guess whose mother the sayings come from.

Discussion

Discuss how these things are a mother's way of taking care of them. See the list below for some ideas.

You could also ask children / youth how many of their mothers have said things like these. What is the rationale behind these sayings? Are they all true?

Sayings of Mothers

A little "birdy" told me!

A little soap & water never killed anybody.

Always wear clean underwear in case you get in an accident.

Am I talking to a brick wall?

Answer me when I ask you a question!

Are you deaf or something?

Are you going out dressed like that?

Are you lying to me?

Are your hands broken? Pick it up yourself! I'm not your maid!

As long as you live under my roof, you'll do as I say.

Call me when you get there, just so I know you're okay.

Clean up after yourself!

Close the door behind you ó were you born in a barn?

Cupcakes are NOT a breakfast food!

Did you brush your teeth?

Did you flush?

Did you clean your room?

Did you comb your hair?

Do as I say, not as I do

Do I look like a maid?

Do you think I'm made of money?

Do you think this is a hotel?

Do you think your socks are going to pick themselves up?

Don't ask me WHY. The answer is NO

Don't break your arm patting yourself on the back

Don't cross your eyes or they'll freeze that way.



Notes



Don't eat the seeds or you'll have watermelons growing out your ears
Don't EVER let me catch you doing that again!
Don't go out with wet hair, you'll catch cold.
Don't make me come in there!
Don't make me get up!
Don't pick it, it'll get infected.
Don't put that in your mouth, you don't know where it's been.
Don't run in the house
Don't sit too close to the television
Don't talk with your mouth full!
Don't use that tone with me!
Don't walk away when I'm talking to you!
Don't you have anything better to do?
Eat those carrots, they're good for your eyes. Have you ever seen a rabbit wearing glasses?
Eat your vegetables, they're good for you.
Enough is enough!
Go ask your father
Go to your room and wait until your daddy gets home!
How can you have nothing to wear? your closet is FULL of clothes!
How do you know you don't like it if you haven't tasted it?
How many times do I have to tell you...don't throw things in the house!
I can always tell when you're lying.
I can't believe you can sleep in this filth!
I didn't ask who put it there, I said "Pick it up!"
I don't care what "everyone" is doing, I care what you are doing!
I don't care who started it, I said stop!
If it were a snake, it would have bitten you.
If you're too sick to go to school, you're too sick to play outside.
If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.
If you don't stop crying, I am going to give you something to cry about!
I'm doing this for your own good.
I'm not going to ask you again.
I'm not just talking to hear myself.
I'm going to give you until the count of three.
I'm going to skin you alive!
Isn't it past your bedtime?
I've had it up to here with you.
Life isn't fair.
Look at me when I'm talking to you.
Men perspire, ladies glisten.
Money does NOT grow on trees.
No child of MINE would do something like that. Over my dead body!
Pick that up before somebody trips on it and breaks their neck!
Say that again and I'll wash your mouth out with soap.
Shut the door! I'm not heating (air conditioning) the entire neighborhood!
Sit like a lady!
So it's raining? You're not sugar -- you won't melt.
Someday your face will freeze like that!
There's enough dirt in those ears to grow potatoes!
This hurts me more than it hurts you.

Notes



What if everyone jumped off a cliff? Would you do it, too?
What part of NO don't you understand?
When you have your own house then you can make the rules!
Who died and left you boss?
Why? Because I said so, that's why?
You can be anything you want to, if you just set your mind to it.
You had better wipe that smile off your face before I do it for you.
You must think rules are made to be broken.
You will ALWAYS be my baby.
You won't be happy until you break that, will you?
You'd forget your head if it wasn't attached to your shoulders!
Your father is going to hear about this when HE gets home!
You're going to put your eye out with that thing!
I LOVE YOU!

Application

God gives us instructions and takes care of us, just like our mothers do. Everything he says can be trusted and is for our benefit. We should be thankful to God for mothers to take care of us. They might not always be perfect as God is, but they do love us and are a little bit of heaven on earth.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Mother, Mom

Notes





Sock Guess

Description

This game for Mother's Day reminds children and youth of the numerous roles that mothers play in our lives.

Resources

1. Purchase several pairs of tube socks (at least four).
2. Gather the same number of items that relate to mothers -- lipstick, pacifier, ring, kitchen utensil, etc.
3. Be sure objects are not fragile. Place one item in each sock, tie it closed, and pin a number on it.

Preparation

For this game to be effective, there must be quite a number of different conversation hearts to choose from.
Put all the candy in a bowl.

What to Do

1. Children and Youth have to feel each sock using their FEET ONLY and try to guess what is in the sock.
2. Write down each guess by number on a sheet of paper.
3. Whoever guesses the most items correctly wins a prize.

Variation

Obtain interesting objects belonging to various individual mothers or have the children bring a "show and tell" item relating to his/her mother. For a mother-child activity you can also put items belonging to the children in a sock.

Application

Just as there are numerous items related to mothers, the things that mothers do for us are also numerous. But the true glory of a mother is not found in the things she owns but in the child she nurtures. Her children are her greatest treasure.

Keywords

Mother, Mom, Mother's Day



Notes





A Mother's Creed

Illustration

I will worry less about my children and trust God more.

I will commit them into the Lord's care.

I will love my children unconditionally and let them know I do.

I will believe in them constantly and encourage them often.

I will pray for them daily.

I will teach them responsibility for their own actions.

I will try to be an example of godliness, but I will be unafraid to let them see my faults.

I will give them generous doses of laughter, interspersed with fun.

I will release them when they are grown but they will always be my own.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed. Proverbs 31:28

Source: Unknown

Keywords

Mother's Day, commitment, children



Notes





A Mother's Sacrificial Love

Illustration

Years ago, a young mother was making her way across the hills of South Wales, carrying her tiny baby in her arms, when she was overtaken by a blinding blizzard.

She never reached her destination and when the blizzard had subsided her body was found by searchers beneath a mound of snow. But they discovered that before her death, she had taken off all her outer clothing and wrapped it about her baby. When they unwrapped the child, to their great surprise and joy, they found he was alive and well.

She had mounded her body over his and given her life for her child, proving the depths of her mother love. Years later that child, David Lloyd George, grown to manhood, became prime minister of Great Britain, and, without doubt, one of England's greatest statesman.

Source: James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited, Tyndale, 1972, p. 375

Keywords

Mother's Day, love, sacrifice, mother

Notes





America's Greatest Source of Strength

Illustration

What is America's greatest source of strength and inspiration?

According to the U.S. Congress, it's American mothers. Stay-at-home moms, Congress declared, are "doing so much for the home . . . and [for] religion," which leads to "good government and humanity."

Congress used these in 1914 when it created Mother's Day. The words reflect the widespread belief that full-time mothers were performing a vitally important task.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Holiday, Importance of Mothers



Notes





Angel

Illustration

Once upon a time, there was a child ready to be born. She asked God, “They tell me you are sending me to earth tomorrow, but how am I going to live there being so small and helpless?”

God replied, “Among the many angels, I chose one for you. She will be waiting for you and will take care of you.”

“But tell me, here in Heaven, I don’t do anything but sing and smile, that’s enough for me to be happy.”

He said, “Your angel will sing for you and will also smile for you every day. And you will feel your angel’s love and be happy.”

And how am I going to be able to understand when people talk to me, if I don’t know the language that men talk?”

“Your angel will tell you the most beautiful and sweet words you will ever hear, and with much patience and care, your angel will teach you how to speak.”

And what am I going to do when I want to talk to you,” the little child asked.

God said, “Your angel will place your hands together and will teach you how to pray.”

“I’ve heard that on earth there are bad people, who will protect me? “Your angel will defend you even if it means risking its life,” God promised.

“But I will always be sad because I will not see You anymore,” she said.

“Your angel will always talk to you about me and will teach you the way for you to come back to me, even though I will always be next to you.”

At that moment, there was much peace in Heaven, but voices from earth could already be heard, and the child in a hurry asked softly, “Oh God, if I am about to leave now, please tell me my angel’s name.”

God silenced all fear when He said, “Your angel’s name is of no importance. You will simply call her Mommy.”

Keywords

Mother, Mother’s Day, angel, children



Notes





Augustine's Mother

Illustration

Around Mother's Day we hear the old saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." But is that true?

Augustine was a fourth-century scholar who is considered one of the greatest thinkers of all times. He was born under Roman rule in what is now Algeria. His Christian mother, Monica, was married to a pagan who lived an immoral lifestyle. Even so, she gained a reputation as a peacemaker and counselor in turbulent times.

At 23, Monica had her firstborn, Augustine, and she dedicated her life to raising him as a Christian. Despite their pagan culture, Monica won her husband to Christ just before his death, and her mother-in-law as well.

Augustine was 17 when his father died and he was sent to the University at Carthage for a classical education. But Carthage was a decadent place, and he wallowed in carnal pleasures. Monica cried and continually prayed for his soul. When Augustine did come to faith, years later, Monica rejoiced and told him her work was done. One week later she died.

Augustine, who went on to become a great saint of the Church, wrote this prayer:

"My mother, Your faithful servant, wept to You for me, shedding more tears for my spiritual death than others shed for the bodily death of a son. You heard her."

Source: Mom's who changed the World by Lindsey O'Connor

Keywords

Mother's Day, salvation, a mother's prayers



Notes





Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul

Illustration

"There were two warring tribes in the Andes, one that lived in the lowlands and the other high in the mountains. The mountain people invaded the lowlanders one day, and as part of their plundering of the people, they kidnapped a baby of one of the lowlander families and took the infant with them back up into the mountains.

The lowlanders didn't know how to climb the mountain. They didn't know any of the trails that the mountain people used, and they didn't know where to find the mountain people or how to track them in the steep terrain.

Even so, they sent out their best part of fighting men to climb the mountain and bring the baby home.

The men tried first one method of climbing and then another. They tried one trail and then another. After several days of effort, however, they had climbed only a couple of hundred feet.

Feeling hopeless and helpless, the lowlander men decided that the cause was lost, and they prepared to return to their village below.

As they were packing their gear for the descent, they saw the baby's mother walking toward them. They realized that she was coming down the mountain that they hadn't figured out how to climb.

And then they saw that she had the baby strapped to her back. How could that be?

One man greeted her and said, "We couldn't climb this mountain. How did you do this when we, the strongest and most able men in the village, couldn't do it?"

She shrugged her shoulders and said, "It wasn't your baby."

Source: Jim Stovall- "Bits & Pieces" in "Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul"

Keywords

Mother's Day, Mother's strength, mother's determination, Mother's love



Notes





Children Learn What They Live

Illustration

If a child lives with criticism,
HE learns to condemn.
If a child lives with hostility,
HE learns to fight.
If a child lives with ridicule,
HE learns to be shy.
If a child lives with shame,
HE learns to feel guilty.
If a child lives with tolerance,
HE learns to be patient.
If a child lives with encouragement,
HE learns confidence.
If a child lives with praise,
HE learns to appreciate.
If a child lives with fairness,
HE learns justice.
If a child lives with security,
HE learns to have faith.
If a child lives with approval,
HE learns to like himself.
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,
HE learns to find love in the world.

Source: Dorothy Law Nolte

Keywords

Raising children, mother, mother's day, family



Notes





God's Embroidery

Illustration

When I was a little boy, my mother used to embroider a great deal. I would sit at her knee and look up from the floor and ask what she was doing. She informed me that she was embroidering. I told her that it looked like a mess from where I was. As from the underside I watched her work within the boundaries of the little round hoop that she held in her hand, I complained to her that it sure looked messy from where I sat. She would smile at me, look down and gently say, "My son, you go about your playing for awhile, and when I am finished with my embroidering, I will put you on my knee and let you see it from my side." I would wonder why she was using some dark threads along with the bright ones and why they seemed so jumbled from my view.

A few minutes would pass and then I would hear Mother's voice say, "Son, come and sit on my knee." This I did only to be surprised and thrilled to see a beautiful flower or a sunset. I could not believe it, because from underneath it looked so messy. Then Mother would say to me, "My son, from underneath it did look messy and jumbled, but you did not realize that there was a pre-drawn plan on the top. It was a design. I was only following it. Now look at it from my side and you will see what I was doing."

Many times through the years I have looked up to my Heavenly Father and said, "Father, what are You doing?" He has answered, "I am embroidering your life." I say, "But it looks like a mess to me. It seems so jumbled. The threads seem so dark. Why can't they all be bright?" The Father seems to tell me, "My child, you go about your business of doing My business, and one day I will bring you to Heaven and put you on My knee and you will see the plan from My side."

Keywords

Lessons from Mothers, Mother's Day, God's sovereignty, God's Will, God's plan, Purpose, meaning



Notes





George Washington's Mother

Illustration

George Washington, “father of his country,” was a Christian gentleman, of whom Thomas Jefferson said, “He was, indeed, in every sense of the word, a wise, a good, and a great man.” George Washington’s father died when he was just 11, but a Christian mother, Mary Ball Washington, molded his character with Bible reading, and with CONTEMPLATIONS MORAL AND DIVINE by Sir Matthew Hale.

He wrote later: “All that I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual, and physical education I received from her.”

Keywords

Mother’s Day, Mother, Founding Fathers



Notes





Quotes From Famous Mothers

Illustration

PAUL REVERE'S MOTHER: "I don't care where you think you have to go, young man. Midnight is past your curfew!"

MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY'S MOTHER: "I don't mind you having a garden, Mary, but does it have to be growing under your bed?"

MONA LISA'S MOTHER: "After all that money your father and I spent on braces, Mona, that's the biggest smile you can give us?"

HUMPTY DUMPTY'S MOTHER: "Humpty, If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times not to sit on that wall. But would you listen to me? Noooo!"

COLUMBUS' MOTHER: "I don't care what you've discovered, Christopher. You still could have written!"

BABE RUTH'S MOTHER: "Babe, how many times have I told you -- quit playing ball in the house! That's the third broken window this week!"

MICHELANGELO'S MOTHER: "Mike, can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?"

NAPOLEON'S MOTHER: "All right, Napoleon. If you aren't hiding your report card inside your jacket, then take your hand out of there and prove it!"

CUSTER'S MOTHER: "Now, George, remember what I told you -- don't go biting off more than you can chew!"

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MOTHER: "Again with the stovepipe hat, Abe? Can't you just wear a baseball cap like the other kids?"

BARNEY'S MOTHER: "I realize strained plums are your favorite, Barney, but you're starting to look a little purple."

MARY'S MOTHER: "I'm not upset that your lamb followed you to school, Mary, but I would like to know how he got a better grade than you."

BATMAN'S MOTHER: "It's a nice car, Bruce, but do you realize how much the insurance is going to be?"

GOLDBLOCKS' MOTHER: "I've got a bill here for a busted chair from the Bear family. You know anything about this, Goldie?"

LITTLE MISS MUFFET'S MOTHER: "Well, all I've got to say is if you don't get off your tuffet and start cleaning your room, there'll be a lot more spiders around here!"



Notes

ALBERT EINSTEIN'S MOTHER: "But, Albert, it's your senior picture. Can't you do something about your hair? Styling gel, mousse, something...?"

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S MOTHER: "The next time I catch you throwing money across the Potomac, you can kiss your allowance good-bye!"

JONAH'S MOTHER: "That's a nice story, but now tell me where you've really been for the last three days."

SUPERMAN'S MOTHER: "Clark, your father and I have discussed it, and we've decided you can have your own telephone line. Now will you quit spending so much time in all those phone booths?"

THOMAS EDISON'S MOTHER: "Of course I'm proud that you invented the electric light bulb, Thomas. Now turn off that light and get to bed!"

Keywords

Mothers, Mother's Day, humor, jokes

Notes





Honoring Mother

Illustration

Listen, my child, to what your father teaches you. Don't neglect your mother's teaching. What you learn from them will crown you with grace and clothe you with honor.

- Proverbs 1:8-9 (New Living Translation)

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first of the Ten Commandments that ends with a promise. And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, "you will live along life, full of blessing."

- Ephesians 6:1-3 (New Living Translation)

The Bible says that our responsibility as children in a family is to obey our parents. This is a command (not a suggestion) from God.

Discussion

In what situations is it most difficult for you to obey your parents?

Why is obedience an important character trait?

How does obedience to your parents help you with your obedience to God?

What are some ways in which you can honor and show respect to your parents?

What are some things about your parents that you are thankful for?

What is God's promise to those who are obedient to their parents?

Application

God is your heavenly Father and he gave you to your Mom and Dad.

Give those circumstances when it is difficult to obey your parents to God in prayer. Ask for His guidance in overcoming your difficulty.

Seek God's and your parents forgiveness for those times of disobedience and start afresh with your parents and Him.

Ask God to help you better understand the importance of obedience.

Look for a way to honor your parents, especially your Mother today!

Thank your parents for giving you guidance.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Parents, thanks, obedience



Notes





Honoring Mother

Illustration

If I live in a house of spotless beauty with everything in its place, but have not love, I am a housekeeper--not a homemaker.

If I have time for waxing, polishing, and decorative achievements, but have not love, my children learn cleanliness--not godliness.

Love leaves the dust in search of a child's laugh.
Love smiles at the tiny fingerprints on a newly cleaned window.
Love wipes away the tears before it wipes up the spilled milk.
Love picks up the child before it picks up the toys.

Love is present through the trials.
Love reprimands, reproves, and is responsive.
Love crawls with the baby, walks with the toddler, runs with the child, then stands aside to let the youth walk into adulthood.
Love is the key that opens salvation's message to a child's heart.

Before I became a mother I took glory in my house of perfection.
Now I glory in God's perfection of my child.
As a mother, there is much I must teach my child,
but the greatest of all is love.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Mother, Love, parenting



Notes





Mother's Influence

Illustration

When Robert Ingersoll, the notorious skeptic, was in his heyday, two college students went to hear him lecture. As they walked down the street after the lecture, one said to the other, "Well, I guess he knocked the props out from under Christianity, didn't he?" The other said, "No, I don't think he did. Ingersoll did not explain my mother's life, and until he can explain my mother's life I will stand by my mother's God."

Source: James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited, Tyndale, 1972, p. 381

Keywords

Mother, Mother's Day, love, testimony, parenting, children



Notes





Mother's Translation

Illustration

Four preachers were discussing the merits of the various translations of the Bible. One liked the King James Version best because of its simple, beautiful English. Another liked the American Revised Version best because it was closer to the original Hebrew and Greek.

Still another liked a contemporary version because of its up-to-date vocabulary. The fourth minister was silent for a moment, then said, "I like my mother's translation best."

Surprised, the other three men said they didn't know his mother had translated the Bible. "Yes," he replied. "She translated it into life, and it was the most convincing translation I ever saw."

Keywords

Mother's day, Bible translation, living by God's Word, authenticity



Notes





Outstretched Arms

Illustration

A story from Scotland tells of a mother's dramatic rescue of her child. Workmen were blasting rock in a quarry. One day after they had attached the fuse and retired to a safe place and gave the alarm they saw a three year old child wandering across the open space where danger threatened. Every passing second meant death was closing in on the child.

The workmen called to the child and waved their arms, but he only looked on their strange antics with amusement. No man dared run forward knowing the explosion was only seconds away. The child most certainly would have been killed, had not his mother appeared at this moment of crisis.

Taking in the situation at a glance she did what her mother's heart dictated. She did not run toward her son or yell to frighten him. Instead, she knelt down, opened wide her arms and smiled for him to come. Instantly the child ran towards her. Shortly later the area shook with the force of the explosion, yet the child was safe in his mother's arms.

What a picture of the grace of God and of the cross. With outstretched arms on the cross Jesus gives his gracious invitation to the world. Indicating we are to come to him for eternal safety.

Source: PULPIT HELPS, Sept., 1990

Keywords

Mother's love, Mother's day, safety, salvation, evangelism



Notes





Rescue the Perishing

Illustration

Hymn: "Rescue the Perishing" by Fanny Crosby

"I remember writing the hymn in 1869. It was written following a personal experience at the New York City Bowery Mission. I usually tried to get to the mission at least one night a week to talk to 'my boys.' I was addressing a large company of working men one hot summer evening, when the thought kept forcing itself on my mind that some mother's boy must be rescued that night or he might be eternally lost. So I made a pressing plea that if there was a boy present who had wandered from his mother's home and teaching, he should come to me at the end of the service. A young man of 18 came forward - 'Did you mean me, Miss Crosby? I promised my mother to meet her in heaven, but as I am now living, that will be impossible.' We prayed for him and suddenly he arose with a new light in his eyes - 'Now I am ready to meet my mother in heaven, for I have found God.'"

Source: Fanny Crosby's Story - S. Trevena Jackson p.76

Rescue the Perishing

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing, duty demands it;
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior had died.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.

Keywords

Mother's Day, Mother, salvation, missions, evangelism



Notes





The Greatest Preacher

Illustration

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan had 4 sons and they were all preachers. Someone once came into the drawing room when all the family was there. They thought they would see what Howard, one of the sons, was made of so they asked him this question: "Howard, who is the greatest preacher in your family?" Howard had a great admiration for his father and he looked straight across at him and then without a moments hesitation he answered, "Mother."

Source: A. Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life, , Eerdmans, p. 139

Keywords

Mother, Mother's day, preaching

Notes





The Price of Children

Illustration

The US government calculated the cost of raising a child from birth to 18 and came up with \$160,140 for a middle-income family. Talk about sticker shock! That doesn't even touch college tuition. But \$160,140 isn't so bad if you break it down. It translates into \$8,896.66 a year, \$741.38 a month, or \$171.08 a week. That's a mere \$24.24 a day! Just over a dollar an hour. Still, you might think the best financial advice is don't have children if you want to be "rich." Actually, it is just the opposite. What do you get for your \$160,140?

Naming rights. First, middle, and last! Glimpses of God every day. Giggles.... under the covers every night. More love than your heart can hold. Butterfly kisses and Velcro hugs. Endless wonder over rocks, ants, clouds, and warm cookies. A hand to hold, usually covered with jelly or chocolate. A partner for blowing bubbles, flying kites, building sandcastles, and skipping down the sidewalk in the pouring rain. Someone to laugh yourself silly with, no matter what the boss said or how your stocks performed that day.

For \$160,140, you never have to grow up. You get to finger-paint, carve pumpkins, play hide-and-seek, catch lightning bugs, and never stop believing in Santa Claus. You have an excuse to keep reading the Adventures of Piglet and Pooh, watching Saturday morning cartoons, going to Disney movies, and wishing on stars. You get to frame rainbows, hearts, and flowers under refrigerator magnets and collect spray painted noodle wreaths for Christmas, hand prints set in clay for Mother's Day, and cards with backward letters for Father's Day.

For \$160,140, there is no greater bang for your buck. You get to be a hero just for retrieving a Frisbee off the garage roof, taking the training wheels off a bike, removing a splinter, filling a wading pool, coaxing a wad of gum out of bangs, and coaching a baseball team that never wins but always gets treated to ice cream regardless. You get a front row seat to history to witness the first step, first word, first date, and first time behind the wheel. You get to be immortal. You get another branch added to your family tree, and if you're lucky, a long list of limbs in your obituary called grandchildren and great grandchildren.

In the eyes of a child, you rank right up there under God. You have all the power to heal a boo-boo, scare away the monsters under the bed, patch a broken heart, police a slumber party, ground them forever, and love them without limits, so . . . one day they will, like you, love without counting the cost.

Source: Unknown

Keywords

Father's Day, dad, parenting. Mother's Day, Mother



Notes



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Thomas Edison's Mother

Illustration

Who was greater, Thomas A. Edison or his mother?

When he was a young lad his teacher sent him home with a note which said, 'Your child is dumb. We can't do anything for him.' Mrs. Edison wrote back, 'You do not understand my boy. I will teach him myself'. And she did, with results that are well known.

Keywords

Mother's love, education, understanding children, teaching, mother's day, mother

Notes





True Courage

Illustration

“Courage is the power to do well when the air is turbulent and the going gets tough. It is having the character to do well when things are tempting, when things are painful.

It is easy to be a mother when a baby is cooing and gurgling over breakfast; it takes courage to be a mother when the child suffers from a terrible and incurable handicap.

Courage is the power to do well in the face of a threat--to your life, to your security, to your future, to the things you hold dear.”

Source: Lewis Smedes “Practical Christianity” (Tyndale House Publishers)

Keywords

Courage, threat, mother, Mother’s Day



Notes





A Mother's Rest

Illustration

A four-year-old and a six-year-old presented their Mom with a house plant. They had used their own money and she was thrilled. The older of them said with a sad face, "There was a bouquet that we wanted to give you at the flower shop. It was real pretty, but it was too expensive. It had a ribbon on it that said, 'Rest In Peace,' and we thought it would be just perfect since you are always asking for a little peace so that you can rest."

Keywords

humor, jokes, mother, Mother's day, peace, rest



Notes





A Mother's Stress

Illustration

A cartoon showed a psychologist talking to his patient: "Let's see," he said, "You spend 50 percent of your energy on your job, 50 percent on your husband and 50 percent on your children. I think I see your problem."

Keywords

Mother, Mother's day, time



Notes





Definition of a Mother?

Illustration

A teacher gave her class of second graders a lesson on the magnet and what it does. The next day in a written test, she included this question: “ My full name has six letters. The first one is. I pick up things. What am I?” When the test papers were turned in, the teacher was astonished to find that almost 50 percent of the students answered the question with the word ‘Mother’.

Keywords

Mother, Mother’s day



Notes





Job Description for Mothers

Illustration

“Mother of all jobs”

An exhilaratively exhausting profession, exceedingly rewarding and exhaustively expensive. Guarantees educational and medical debts.

The work hours require 24 hour-a-day, seven day a week attention with unexplained and unprogrammed emergency calls. Warning: occupationally hazardous to your health, lasting a lifetime. No previous experience needed.

Apply at the labor department, Ob-gyn ward of the hospital of your choice.

Reference needed: one qualified, encouraging, husband, who is willing to join you in this venture, no experience needed.

Benefits: The product of your labor is a one of a kind, designer gift from God and responds to a lifetime of love, attention, and nourishment. Batteries not required. No exchanges or refunds accepted.

Keywords

Mother, Mother's Day, job, description

Notes





Mother's Day Gifts

Illustration

What NOT to Buy Your Wife

Although the only person a man usually shops for is his wife, the whole experience is a stressful one.

Don't buy anything that plugs in. Anything that requires electricity is seen as utilitarian.

Don't buy clothing that involves sizes. The chances are one in seven thousand that you will get her size right, and she will be offended the other 6999 times. "Do I look like a size 16?" she'll say. Too small a size doesn't cut it either: "I haven't worn a size 8 in 20 years!"

Avoid all things useful. The new silver polish advertised to save hundreds of hours is not going to win you any points.

Don't buy anything that involves weight loss or self-improvement. She'll perceive a six-month membership to a diet center as a suggestion that's she's overweight.

Don't buy jewelry. The jewelry your wife wants, you can't afford. And the jewelry you can afford, she doesn't want.

Finally, don't spend too much. "How do you think we're going to afford that?" she'll ask. But don't spend too little. She won't say anything, but she'll think, "Is that all I'm worth?"

Source: Herb Forst in Cross River, NY, Patent Trader, in Reader's Digest, Page 69

Keywords

Mother's Day, gift, mother



Notes





Mother's White Hair

Illustration

One day, a girl walk to her mother and look at her mother's hair and sadly said: "Why are some of your hair white mom?"

The mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white.

The girl thought about this revelation a while, and then said, "Momma, how come *all* of grandma's hairs are white?"

Keywords

Mother's Day, joke, humor, age



Notes





Poem for Moms and Dads

Illustration

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray my sanity to keep.
For if some peace I do not find,
I'm pretty sure I'll lose my mind.

I pray I find a little quiet
Far from the daily family riot
May I lie back--not have to think
about what they're stuffing down the sink,
or who they're with, or where they're at
and what they're doing to the cat.

I pray for time all to myself
(did something just fall off a shelf?)

To cuddle in my nice, soft bed
(Oh no, another goldfish--dead!)

Some silent moments for goodness sake
(Did I just hear a window break?)

And that I need not cook or clean--
(well heck, I've got the right to dream)

Yes now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray my wits about me keep,
But as I look around I know--
I must have lost them long ago!

Keywords

Mother's Day, Father's Day, humor, funny jokes, raising kids

Notes





Really a Mom

Illustration

YOU KNOW YOU'RE REALLY A MOM WHEN...

You count the sprinkles on each kid's cupcake to make sure they're equal.
You want to take out a contract on the kid who broke your child's favorite toy and made him/her cry.
You have time to shave only one leg at a time.
You hide in the bathroom to be alone.
Your child throws up and you catch it.
Someone else's kid throws up at a party and you keep eating.
You consider finger paint to be a controlled substance.
You mastered the art of placing food on a plate without anything touching.
Your child insists that you read "Once Upon a Potty" out loud in the lobby of the doctor's office, and you do it.
You hire a sitter because you haven't been out with your husband in ages, then spend half the night talking about and checking on the kids.
You hope ketchup is a vegetable because it's the only one your child eats.
You can't bear the thought of your son's first girlfriend.
You hate the thought of his wife even more.
You find yourself cutting your husband's sandwiches into unusual shapes.
You fast-forward through the scene when the hunter shoots Bambi's mother.
You obsess when your child clings to you upon parting during his first month at school, then obsess when he skips in without looking back the second time.
You can't bear to give away baby clothes--it's so final.
You hear your mother's voice coming out of your mouth when you say, "Not in your good clothes."
You stop criticizing the way your mother raised you.
You read that the average five-year-old asks 437 questions a day and feel proud that your kid is "above average."
You say at least once a day, "I'm not cut out for this job," but you know you wouldn't trade it for anything.

Keywords

mother's day humor, mom, parenting, raising children



Notes





Ten Signs of a Frustrated Mother

Illustration

Your children know how to read HTML code but can't operate a vacuum cleaner.

Your children tell you that you said "yes" and you don't even remember the question.

You go to the grocery store and find yourself having a good time.

Your husband asks how your day went and you rate it on a scale of 1-10 repeats of "stop that!" or "no!"

You can't remember the last time you didn't have to share your drink.

You mistakenly tell the kids it's "sanity" time when you meant to say "bed" time.

The laundry seems to have taken on an evil nature and you begin to feel that it's out to get you.

You dread hearing the phone ring because it's a sure sign there's about to be trouble amongst the children.

It's finally your turn on the computer and "Touched by an Angel" is just coming on.

You go to sleep with "I'm bored" or "I'm hungry" still ringing in your ears.

Keywords

mother, Mother's day, raising children, parenting



Notes





Top 10 Sayings of Biblical Mothers

Illustration

10. Samson! Get your hand out of that lion. You don't know where it's been! (Judges 14:5-8)
9. David! I told you not to play in the house with that sling! Go practice your harp. We pay good money for those lessons!
8. Abraham! Stop wandering around the countryside and get home for supper!
7. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego! Leave those clothes outside, you smell like a dirty ol' furnace!
6. Cain! Get off your brother! You're going to kill him some day!
5. Noah! No, you can't keep them! I told you, don't bring home any more strays!
4. Gideon! Have you been hiding in that wine press again? Look at your clothes! (Judges 6:11)
3. James and John! No more burping contests at the dinner table, please. People are going to call you the sons of thunder! (Mark 3:17)
2. Judas! Have you been in my purse again?!
1. Jesus! What do you think, you were born in a barn?

Keywords

humor, wisdom, mother, children, parents, Mother's Day



Notes



Father's Day

Third Sunday of June





Searching for Dad

Resources

1. Instruct each student to bring a color photograph of his or her father to class. You might enlist the parents of smaller kids to do this.

What to Do

1. During the first five minutes, students must write a description of their fathers as seen in the photograph.
2. For example, "My father is tall and handsome. He is wearing blue jeans and a white shirt." The teacher should then collect all photographs. Photographs are then shuffled and distributed to various students.
3. No student should have his or her own photograph. After photographs have been exchanged, the first student chooses another student and says, "Excuse me, but have you seen my father?" The student he or she asks responds, "I don't know. What does he look like?"
4. The first student then reads the first sentence of his or her description. The student being questioned responds with, "No, I'm sorry. I haven't seen him," "Yes, as a matter of fact, he's right here [returning the photograph]," or "I'm not sure. Describe him further."
5. If called upon to describe him further, the student reads more of his description.
6. A small prize may be given to each student upon his or her successfully locating his or her father.

Keywords

Father's Day



Notes





Who's Father?

What to Do

1. Make a grid of squares on a piece of paper. In each square write a characteristic. Children must then find someone whose dad fulfills that characteristics and have them sign in the square. First person to get all their squares signed wins.
2. Some possibilities for characteristics are:
 - Hair color isn't black
 - Wears specs
 - travels on business
 - Works as(name a job)
 - Drives a car
 - Wears tennis shoes
 - Favorite hobby is (Name of a hobby)
 - Likes (a specific food)
 - Is tall/short
 - Is on church council
 - Wears a ring
 - Is between 30-40 yrs old
 - Is wearing (name an item)
 - Has a brother
 - Has a sister
 - Lives (location)
 - Has been to (country)
 - Has a gold colored watch
 - Watches soccer on TV
3. If possible think about the father's of children in your class and use that as a guideline for characteristics.

Keywords

Father's Day



Notes





Father's Day Relay

Resources

1. Collect several sets of clothing items worn by fathers. Some possibilities include a large jacket, work boots, work cloths, a tie, a belt, a hat, etc. Divide youth into several teams of equal number of participants. If a team is short designate someone to go twice.

What to Do

1. Provide one set of clothes to each team.
2. The team must race to put on all the clothing items and then rush to the opposite side of the rooms and complete a task.
3. The task could be anything associated with fathers, like emptying a rubbish bin, putting together a toy, tying a tie, driving a nail or putting a screw into a board, etc.
4. Once the task is completed, the person rushes back to the team, removes father's clothing, and the next person repeats the process.
5. First team to have all participants complete the task wins the game.

Keywords

Father's Day



Notes





Father May I?

Preparation

Establish start line and finish line.

What to Do

1. Choose one student to be the father. This student will go to the finish line. All other students must go to the start line.
2. Explain to students on start line that their goal is to cross the finish line first; however, they must ask Father's permission for each move they make toward the finish line.
3. For example, the first student might ask, "Father, may I take four large steps?" The next student might ask, "Father, may I make five jumps?" And so forth.
4. If Father responds, "Yes, you may," the student may proceed. If Father replies, "No, you may not," the student must wait until next turn and make a different request.

Keywords

Father, Father's day, dad



Notes





Father's Business Trip

Preparation

Establish start line and finish line.

What to Do

1. Choose a student to begin.
2. This student says, "My father [Name] is leaving on a business trip, and he is going to [a city or country item beginning with the letter 'a']."
3. The next student repeats, "My father [name] is leaving on a business trip, and he is going to [place listed by previous student for the letter 'a']," then adds and [a city or country beginning with the letter 'b']."
4. Students progress through the alphabet, adding a new city or country item each time.
5. Any student who forgets a place on Father's itinerary is out.

Keywords

father's day, father, dad, game ideas

Notes





Searching for Dad

Resources

1. Photos of all the fathers of students

Preparation

Instruct each student to bring a color photograph of his or her father to class. You might enlist the parents of smaller kids to do this.

What to Do

1. During the first five minutes, students must write a description of their fathers as seen in the photograph. For example, "My father is tall and handsome. He is wearing blue jeans and a white shirt."
2. The teacher should then collect all photographs.
3. Photographs are then shuffled and distributed to various students. No student should have his or her own Father's photograph.
4. After photographs have been exchanged, the first student chooses another student and says, "Excuse me, but have you seen my father?" The student he or she asks responds, "I don't know. What does he look like?"
5. The first student then reads the first sentence of his or her description. The student being questioned responds with, "No, I'm sorry. I haven't seen him," or "Yes, as a matter of fact, he's right here [returning the photograph]," or "I'm not sure. Describe him further."
6. If called upon to describe him further, the student reads more of his description.
7. A small prize may be given to each student upon his or her successfully locating his or her father.

Keywords

Father, Father's Day, dad



Notes





Find Father's Tie

Resources

1. A necktie. You can also cut out a small necktie and color it.

What to Do

1. Choose one student to be the father. This student sits in a chair at the front of the room with his or her eyes closed.
2. The tie should go beneath the chair.
3. Choose another student to remove the tie and hide it somewhere in the classroom.
4. After the tie is hidden, all students call "Daddy, Daddy, come on! Let's go! Hurry, please. We don't want to be late!"
5. The student turns and "discovers" his or her missing tie. He or she wants to find the tie before leaving, but has only one minute in which to do it.
6. He or she may ask up to ten yes or no questions before attempting to guess the location of the tie. (Is it up high? Is it behind something? Is it near the books? etc.)
7. If he or she guesses correctly, he or she remains the father for another turn. If he or she guesses incorrectly, the student who hid the tie becomes the father.

Keywords

Father's Day, father, dad, game ideas



Notes





Family Dress-Up

Resources

1. A Bible
2. Dress-up clothes
3. Four paper grocery bags.

Preparation

Place dress-up clothes suitable for a young child in one bag, for a teenager in another bag, for a mother in a third bag, and for a father in a fourth bag. Make sure you have the same number of dress-up items in each bag. Set the four bags of clothing at one end of the room.

What to Do

1. Have kids count off by fours to form teams. Have each team stand across the room from one of the bags.
2. This is a relay. You'll run to the bag, put on all the clothing items you find inside the bag, take the clothing off, and return it to the bag.
3. Then run back, and tag the next person on your team.
4. Have everyone applaud as each team finishes.

Discussion

What's great about being a member of a loving family?
What's something about your family that you especially like?
What makes a happy family?
Why are fathers important in the family?

Application

Turn to a partner, and tell one thing you'll do this week to show that you love your family. Close with prayer, asking God's blessing on the families of all the children and especially thanking God for fathers..

Keywords

Father, Father's Day, Game ideas, dad, relay race



Notes





My Father

Illustration

When I was:

Four years old: My daddy can do anything.

Five years old: My daddy knows a whole lot.

Six years old: My dad is smarter than your dad.

Eight years old: My dad doesn't know exactly everything.

Ten years old: In the olden days, when my dad grew up, things were sure different.

Twelve years old: Oh, well, naturally, Dad doesn't know anything about that. He is too old to remember his childhood.

Fourteen years old: Don't pay any attention to my dad. He is so old-fashioned.

Twenty-one years old: Him? My Lord, he's hopelessly out of date.

Twenty-five years old: Dad knows about it, but then he should, because he has been around so long.

Thirty years old: Maybe we should ask Dad what he thinks. After all, he's had a lot of experience.

Thirty-five years old: I'm not doing a single thing until I talk to Dad.

Forty years old: I wonder how Dad would have handled it. He was so wise.

Fifty years old: I'd give anything if Dad were here now so I could talk this over with him. Too bad I didn't appreciate how smart he was. I could have learned a lot from him.

Keywords

Father's Day, Dad



Notes



The Origin of Father's Day

Illustration

In 1909 a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd thought of the idea of a day to honor fathers while listening to a Mother's Day sermon. She wanted a way to let her father, William Smart, know how special he was to her. William Smart, who was a Civil War veteran, was widowed when his wife died while giving birth to their sixth child. Mr. Smart was left to raise the newborn and his other five children by himself on a rural farm in eastern Washington state. In the eyes of his daughter, he was seen as a courageous, selfless, and loving man.

In 1909, Mrs. Dodd approached her own minister and others in Spokane about having a church service dedicated to fathers on June 5, her father's birthday. That date was too soon for her minister to prepare the service, so he spoke a few weeks later on June 19th. From then on, the state of Washington celebrated the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Children made special desserts, or visited their fathers if they lived apart.

President Calvin Coolidge, in 1924, supported the idea of a national Father's Day in the United States. Then in 1966 President Lyndon Johnson signed a presidential proclamation declaring the 3rd Sunday of June as Father's Day. President Richard Nixon signed the law which finally made it permanent in 1972.

Keywords

Father's Day, Father, dad, daddy

Notes





Father's Are Wonderful People

Illustration

Fathers are wonderful people too little understood,
And we do not sing their praises as often as we should ...
For, somehow, Father seems to be the man who pays the bills,
While Mother binds up little hurts and nurses all our ills ...
And Father struggles daily to live up to 'HIS IMAGE'
As protector and provider and 'hero of the scrimmage'
And perhaps that is the reason we sometimes get the notion
That Fathers are not subject to the thing we call emotion,
But if you look inside Dad's heart, where no one else can see,
You'll find he's sentimental and as 'soft' as he can be ...
But he's so busy every day in the gruelling race of life,
He leaves the sentimental stuff to his partner and his wife ...
But Fathers are just WONDERFUL in a million different ways,
And they merit loving compliments and accolades of praise,
For the only reason Dad aspires to fortune and success
Is to make the family proud of him and to bring them happiness ...
And like our Heavenly Father, he's a guardian and a guide,
Someone that we can count on to be always on our side.

Keywords

father's day, dad, parents



Notes





The Right Thing

Illustration

“This is a reminder of the legacy we have been given and the responsibility we have to pass it on to our children and those that we mentor by our example and words.

He was 11 years old and went fishing every chance he got from a dock at his family’s cabin on an island in the middle of a New Hampshire lake.

On the day before the bass season opened, he and his father were fishing early in the evening, catching some fish and perch with worms. Then he tied on a small silver lure and practiced casting. The lure struck the water and caused colored ripples in the sunset, thin silver ripples as the moon rose over the lake.

When his pole doubled over, he knew something huge was on the other end. His father watched with admiration as the boy skillfully worked the fish along side the dock. Finally, he very gingerly lifted the exhausted fish from the water. It was the largest one he had ever seen, but it was a bass. The boy and his father looked at the handsome fish, gills playing back and forth in the moonlight. The father lit a match and looked at his watch. It was 10 pm -- two hours before the season opened. He looked at the fish, then at the boy. ‘You’ll have to put it back, son,’ he said. ‘Dad!’ cried the boy. ‘There will be another fish,’ said his father. ‘Not as big as this one,’ cried the boy. He looked around the lake. No other fishermen or boats were around in the moonlight. He looked again at his father. Even though no one had seen them, nor could anyone ever know what time he caught the fish, the boy could tell by the clarity of his father’s voice that the decision was not negotiable. He slowly worked the hook out of the lip of the huge bass and lowered it into the blackwater. The creature swished its powerful body and disappeared. The boy suspected that never again would he see such a great fish.

That was 34 years ago. Today, the boy is a successful architect in New York City. His father’s cabin is still there on the island in the middle of the lake. He takes his own son and daughters fishing from the same dock. He was right. He has never again caught such a magnificent fish as the one he landed that night long ago. But he does see that same fish--again and again--every time he comes up against a question of ethics. For, as his father taught him, ethics are simple matters of right and wrong. It is only the practice of ethics that is difficult. Do we do right when no one is looking? Do we refuse to cut corners to get the design in on time? Or refuse to trade stocks based on information that we aren’t supposed to have? We would if we were taught to put the fish back when we were young. For we would have learned the truth.



Notes



The decision to do right lives fresh and fragrant in our memory. It is a story we will proudly tell our friends and our grandchildren. Not about how we had a chance to beat the system and took it, but about how we did the right thing and were forever strengthened.”

Someone that we can count on to be always on our side.

Keywords

integrity, ethics, decision making, choices, character, fishing

Notes





Dream Car

Illustration

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son, and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box.

Curious, and somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely, leather-bound Bible, with the young man's name embossed in gold. Angry, he raised his voice at his father and said, "with all your money, you give me a Bible?" and stormed out of the house.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family, but realised his father was very old, and thought perhaps he should go to him. He had not seen him since that graduation day.

Before he could make arrangements, he received a telegram telling him his father had passed away, and willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come home immediately and take care of things.

When he arrived at his father's house, sudden sadness and regret filled his heart. He began to search through his father's important papers and saw the still gift-wrapped Bible, just as he had left it years ago.

With tears, he opened the Bible and began to turn the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse, Matt.7:11; "And if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father which is in Heaven, give to those who ask Him?"

As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name, the same dealer who had the sports car he had desired. On the tag was the date of his graduation, and the words "PAID IN FULL."

Application

How many times did we miss God's blessings because we can't see past our own desires?

Keywords

father, son, expectations, paid in full, car, Bible, key, gifts, blessings, desires



Notes





The Father's Eyes

Illustration

Bob Richards, the former pole-vault champion, shares a moving story about a skinny young boy who loved football with all his heart.

Practice after practice, he eagerly gave everything he had. But being half the size of the other boys, he got absolutely nowhere.

At all the games, this hopeful athlete sat on the bench and hardly ever played.

This teenager lived alone with his father, and the two of them had a very special relationship. Even though the son was always on the bench, his father was always in the stands cheering. He never missed a game.

This young man was still the smallest of the class when he entered high school. But his father continued to encourage him, but also made it very clear that he did not have to play football if he didn't want to. But the young man loved football, and decided to hang in there.

He was determined to try his best at every practice, and perhaps he'd get to play when he became a senior. All through high school he never missed a practice nor a game, but remained a bench-warmer all four years. His faithful father was always in the stands, always with words of encouragement for him.

When the young man went to college, he decided to try out for the football team as a "walk-on." Everyone was sure he could never make the cut, but he did. The coach admitted that he kept him on the roster because he always put his heart and soul to every practice, and at the same time, provided the other members with the spirit and hustle they badly needed.

The news that he had survived the cut thrilled him so much that he rushed to the nearest phone and called his father. His father shared his excitement and was sent season tickets for all the college games. This persistent young athlete never missed practice during his four years at college, but he never got to play in a game. It was the end of his senior football season, and as he trotted onto the practice field shortly before the big playoff game, the coach met him with a telegram.

The young man read the telegram and he became deathly silent. Swallowing hard, he mumbled to the coach, "My father died this morning. Is it all right if I miss practice today?" The coach put his arm gently around his shoulder and said, "Take the rest of the week off, son. And don't even plan to come back to the game on Saturday."



Notes



Saturday arrived, and the game was not going well. In the third quarter, when the team was ten points behind, a silent young man quietly slipped into the empty locker room, put on his football gear, and as he ran onto the sidelines, the coach and his players were astounded to see their faithful teammate back so soon. "Coach, please let me play. I've just got to play today," said the young man.

The coach pretended not to hear him. There was no way he wanted his worst player in this close playoff game. But the young man persisted, and finally feeling sorry for the kid, the coach gave in.

"All right," he said. "You can go in."

Before long, the coach, the players and everyone in the stands could not believe their eyes. This little unknown, who had never played before was doing everything right. The opposing team could not stop him. He ran, he passed, blocked, and tackled like a star. His team began to triumph. The score was soon tied.

In the closing seconds of the game, this kid intercepted a pass and ran all the way for the winning touchdown. The fans broke loose. His teammates hoisted him onto their shoulders. Such cheering you never heard.

Finally, after the stands had emptied, and the team had showered and left the locker room, the coach noticed that this young man was sitting quietly in the corner, all alone. The coach came to him and said, "Kid, I can't believe it. You were fantastic! Tell me what got into you? How did you do it?"

He looked at the coach, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Well, you knew my dad died, but did you know that my dad was blind?" The young man swallowed hard and forced a smile, "Dad came to all my games, but today was the first time he could see me play, and I wanted to show him I could do it!"

Application

Like the athlete's father, God is always there cheering for us. He's always reminding us to go on. He's even offering us His hand for He knows what is best, and is willing to give us what we need and not simply what we want.

God has never missed a single game. What a joy to know that life is meaningful if lived for the Highest. Live for HIM, for He's watching us in the game of life!

Keywords

God, sight, omniscient, blind, football, athlete

Notes





A Father's Words of Wisdom

Notes

Illustration

Don't ask me, ask your mother.
Were you raised in a barn? Close the door.
You didn't beat me. I let you win.
Big boys don't cry.
Don't worry. It's only blood.
Now you listen to ME, Buster!
I'll play catch after I read the paper.
A little dirt never hurt anyone.
Get your elbows off the table.
Keep your eye on the ball.
Who said life was supposed to be fair.
Always say please and thank you. That way, you get more.
If you forget, you'll be grounded till the end of the world.
You call that a haircut?
"Hey" is for horses.
This will hurt me a lot more than it hurts you.
Turn off those lights. Do you think I am made of money?
Don't give me any of your lip, young lady.
You call that noise "music"?
We're not lost. I'm just not sure where we are.
No, we're not there yet.
Shake it off.
When I was your age , I treated MY father with respect.
As long as you live under my roof, you'll live by my rules.
I'll tell you why. Because I said so. That's why.
Do what I say, not what I do.
Sit up straight!
So you think you're smart, do you?
What's so funny?
Wipe that smile off your face.
If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times.
C'mon, you throw like a girl.
You want something to do? I'll give you something to do.
This is your last warning.
Your mother worries.
I'm not sleeping, I was watching that channel.
I'm not just talking to hear my own voice!
Don't believe anything you hear and only half of what you see.
What do you think I am, a bank?
What part of NO don't you understand?
I don't care what other people are doing! I'm not everybody else's father!
You're not leaving my house dressed like that!
If you're gonna be dumb, you've gotta be tough.
Didn't your teacher learn you anything?!



You can marry a rich guy just as easily as you can a poor guy.
It's hard to be good, and easy to be bad.
Don't tell on anybody unless you tell on yourself first.
Hey, did you hear me talking to you?
You know you're always gonna be Daddy's little girl.
I'm not watching television. I'm resting my eyes.
Don't use that tone with me!
Am I talking to a brick wall?
If I catch you doing that one more time, I'll...
Act your age.
Two wrongs do not make a right.
Wipe your feet!
Enough is enough!
Don't make me stop the car!
What did I just get finished telling you?
Someone that we can count on to be always on our side.

Keywords

Father, Father's Day, dad, wisdom

Notes





Father's Day Quotes

Illustration

According to Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a father's involvement with a child increases the child's IQ, the child's motivation to learn, and the child's self-confidence. In addition, children with involved dads are more likely to develop a sense of humor as well as an "inner excitement."

- Victor Parachin, "The Fine Art of Good Fathering," *Herald of Holiness*, February 1995, pp. 32-33.

"A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society."

- Billy Graham

Keywords

Father, Father's day, dad



Notes





When God Created Fathers

Illustration

When the good Lord was creating fathers, He started with a tall frame. And a female angel nearby said, "What kind of father is that? If you're going to make children so close to the ground, why have you put fathers up so high? He won't be able to shoot marbles without kneeling, tuck a child in bed without bending, or even kiss a child without a lot of stooping." And God smiled and said, "Yes, but if I make him child size, who would children have to look up to?"

And when God made a father's hands, they were large and sinewy. And the angel shook her head sadly and said, "Do You know what You're doing? Large hands are clumsy. They can't manage diaper pins, small buttons, rubber bands on pony tails or even remove splinters caused by baseball bats." God smiled and said, "I know, but they're large enough to hold everything a small boy empties from his pockets at the end of a day-yet small enough to cup a child's face."

Then God molded long, slim legs and broad shoulders. The angel nearly had a heart attack. "Boy, this is the end of the week, all right," she clucked. "Do You realize You just made a father without a lap? How is he going to pull a child close to him without the kid falling between his legs?"

God smiled and said, "A mother needs a lap. A father needs strong shoulders to pull a sled, balance a boy on a bicycle or hold a sleepy head on the way home from the circus."

God was in the middle of creating two of the largest feet anyone had ever seen when the angel could contain herself no longer. "That's not fair. Do You honestly think those large boats are going to dig out of bed early in the morning when the baby cries? Or walk through a small birthday party without crushing at least three of the guests?"

And God smiled and said, "They'll work. You'll see. They'll support a small child who wants to "ride a horse to Banbury Cross" or scare off mice at the summer cabin, or display shoes that will be a challenge to fill." God worked throughout the night, giving the father few words, but a firm authoritative voice; eyes that see everything, but remain calm and tolerant

Finally, almost as an afterthought, He added tears. Then He turned to the angel and said, "Now are you satisfied that he can love as much as a mother?" And the angel shutteth up!

Author: By Erma Bombeck

Keywords

Father, Father's day, dad

Notes





Father's Day: A Tribute

Illustration

Today is Father's Day. A day of cologne. A day of hugs, new neckties, long-distance phone calls, and Hallmark cards.

Today is my first Father's Day without a father. For thirty-one years I had one. I had one of the best. But now he's gone. He's buried under an oak tree in a west Texas cemetery. Even though he's gone, his presence is very near--especially today.

It seems strange that he isn't here. I guess that's because he was never gone. He was always close by. Always available. Always present. His words were nothing novel. His achievements, though admirable, were nothing extraordinary.

But his presence was.

Like a warm fireplace in a large house, he was a source of comfort. Like a sturdy porch swing or a big-branched elm in the backyard, he could always be found...and leaned upon.

During the turbulent years of my adolescence, Dad was one part of my life that was predictable. Girl friends came and girl friends went, but Dad was there. Football season turned into baseball season and turned into football season again and Dad was always there. Summer vacation, Homecoming dates, algebra, first car, driveway basketball--they all had one thing in common: his presence.

And because he was there life went smoothly. The car always ran, the bills got paid, and the lawn stayed mowed. Because he was there, the laughter was fresh and the future was secure. Because he was there my growing up was what God intended growing up to be; a storybook scamper through the magic and mystery of the world.

Because he was there we kids never worried about things like income tax, savings accounts, monthly bills, or mortgages. Those were the things on Daddy's desk.

We have lots of family pictures without him. Not because he wasn't there, but because he was always behind the camera.

He made the decisions, broke up the fights, chuckled at Archie Bunker, read the paper every evening, and fixed breakfast on Sundays. He didn't do anything unusual. He only did what dads are supposed to do--be there.



Notes

He taught me how to shave and how to pray. He helped me memorize verses for Sunday school and taught me that wrong should be punished and that rightness has its own reward. He modeled the importance of getting up early and staying out of debt. His life expressed the elusive balance between ambition and self-acceptance.

He comes to mind often. When I smell “Old Spice” aftershave, I think of him. When I see a bass boat I see his face. And occasionally, not too often, but occasionally when I hear a good joke, (the kind Red Skelton would tell), I hear him chuckle. He had a copyright chuckle that always came with a wide grin and arched eyebrows.

Daddy never said a word to me about sex or told me his life story. But I knew that if I ever wanted to know, he would tell me. All I had to do was ask. And I knew if I ever needed him, he’d be there.

Like a warm fireplace.

Maybe that’s why this Father’s Day is a bit chilly. The fire has gone out. The winds of age swallowed the late splendid flame, leaving only golden embers. But there is a strange thing about those embers...stir them a bit and a flame will dance. It will dance only briefly, but it will dance. And it will knock just enough chill out of the air to remind me that he is still...in a special way...very present.

Source: God Came Near, Max Lucado

Keywords

Father’s Day, fatherhood, father, dad

Notes





A Father's Support

Illustration

In the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona Derek Redmond of Great Britain was on the way to fulfilling his lifetime dream of winning a gold medal in the Olympics.

He had earned a spot in the semifinals of the 400 meter race, and as the gun sounded to start the race, Derek got off to a great start. He was running the race of his life, and the finish line was in sight, when suddenly he felt a stab of pain in his right leg. He fell face first onto the track with a torn hamstring.

The race was over for Derek. He struggled to his feet before the medical team could reach him. Though every runner had passed him, he began hopping forward, tears of pain and disappointment streaking his face, determined to finish the race.

Suddenly, a man plowed through the security guards on the sidelines and ran onto the track. He raced up to Derek and hugged him, "You don't have to do this," Jim Redmond told his weeping son. "Yes I do," Derek answered. "Well, then," his father said, "we're going to finish the race together."

Derek's father gripped his son around the shoulders, and they faced the finish line, resolutely waving off the security men who hovered around them. They limped and hopped together, Derek's head sometimes buried in his father's shoulder, and stayed in Derek's lane all the way to the end.

The watching crowd gaped at first at the unusual scene. Then one by one, they rose to their feet, and began cheering and crying at the son's determination and the father's support.

Keywords

Father's day, support, children, youth, teens, A father's support, sports, competition, Olympics



Notes





A Father's Support

Illustration

A father is a thing that is forced to endure childbirth without an anesthetic.

A father is a thing that growls when it feels good--and laughs very loud when it's scared half to death.

A father never feels entirely worthy of the worship in a child's eyes. He's never quite the hero his daughter thinks, never quite the man his son believes him to be--and this worries him, sometimes. So he works too hard to try and smooth the rough places in the road for those of his own who will follow him.

A father is a thing that gets very angry when the first school grades aren't as good as he thinks they should be. He scolds his son though he knows it's the teacher's fault. Fathers are what give daughters away to other men who aren't nearly good enough so they can have grandchildren who are smarter than anybody's .

Fathers make bets with insurance companies about who'll live the longest. Though they know the odds, they keep right on betting. And one day they lose.

I don't know where fathers go when they die. But I've an idea that after a good rest, wherever it is, he won't be happy unless there's work to do. He won't just sit on a cloud and wait for the girl he's loved and the children she bore. He'll be busy there, too, repairing the stairs, oiling the gates, improving the streets, smoothing the way.

Source: Paul Harvey

Keywords

father's day, dad



Notes





A Father's Hugs

Illustration

A cartoon strip reveals a father coming into the room where his teenage daughter was sitting on the couch watching television and eating popcorn. He decides to sit down next to her and help himself to some of the popcorn.

As he was sitting there, a little thought balloon appears over his head. He's thinking, "I remember when she was so young. I held her in my arms & loved her, and it was wonderful. Now look at her. She's all grown up, and such a beautiful girl, too. I wonder what she would think if I held her like I used to and told her again that I love her?" He finally concludes that she would be uncomfortable if he did that.

While he's thinking that, his daughter is thinking, "I wonder why Dad never hugs me anymore?"

Source: From the comic strip "For Better or for Worse"

Keywords

Father's Day, love, affection, growing up, children, raising daughters, teens, teenagers, youth

Notes





Your Father

Illustration

Fred Craddock while lecturing at Yale University, told of going back one summer to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, to take a short vacation with his wife. One night they found a quiet little restaurant where they looked forward to a private meal—just the two of them.

While they were waiting for their meal they noticed a distinguished looking, white-haired man moving from table to table, visiting guests. Craddock whispered to his wife, “I hope he doesn’t come over here.” He didn’t want the man to intrude on their privacy.

But the man did come by his table.

“Where you folks from?” he asked amicably.

“Oklahoma.”

“Splendid state, I hear, although I’ve never been there. What do you do for a living?”

“I teach homiletics at the graduate seminary of Phillips University.”

“Oh, so you teach preachers, do you. Well, I’ve got a story I want to tell you.” And with that he pulled up a chair and sat down at the table with Craddock and his wife.

Dr. Craddock said he groaned inwardly: Oh no, here comes another preacher story. It seems everyone has one.

The man stuck out his hand. “I’m Ben Hooper. I was born not far from here across the mountains. My mother wasn’t married when I was born so I had a hard time. When I started to school my classmates had a name for me, and it wasn’t a very nice name. I used to go off by myself at recess and during lunch-time because the taunts of my playmates cut so deeply.

“What was worse was going downtown on Saturday afternoon and feeling every eye burning a hole through you. They were all wondering just who my real father was.

“When I was about 12 years old a new preacher came to our church. I would always go in late and slip out early. But one day the preacher said the benediction so fast I got caught and had to walk out with the crowd. I could feel every eye in church on me. Just about the time I got to the door I felt a big hand on my shoulder. I looked up and the preacher was looking right at me.”

‘Who are you, son? Whose boy are you?’

“I felt the old weight come on me. It was like a big black cloud. Even the preacher was putting me down.



Notes

“But as he looked down at me, studying my face, he began to smile a big smile of recognition. ‘Wait a minute,’ he said, ‘I know who you are. I see the family resemblance. You are a son of God.’

“With that he slapped me across the rump and said, ‘Boy you’ve got a great inheritance. Go and claim it.’”

The old man looked across the table at Fred Craddock and said, “That was the most important single sentence ever said to me.” With that he smiled, shook the hands of Craddock and his wife, and moved on to another table to greet old friends.

Suddenly, Fred Craddock remembered. On two occasions the people of Tennessee had elected an illegitimate to be their governor. One of them was Ben Hooper.

Source: Power for Living, Jamie Buckingham

Keywords

Father, Father’s day, dad, self-esteem, self image

Notes





A Father's Hugs

Illustration

Be a mentor to a boy without a father through Big Brother or some other agency

Contact your local junior or senior high school to tutor a needy kid

Teach Sunday School

Become a leader in Awana, Pioneer Clubs, or Adventure Club

Meet one-on-one weekly, with a boy in your church or neighborhood who doesn't have a father in the home

Become a leader in Boy Scouts or Cub Scouts

Coach Little League or some other sport

Volunteer to work with needy kids in an inner city ministry

Hire a potentially "at risk" kid for yard work or in your business

Become active youth leaders in your local church or a parachurch organization

Start a church-based sports league that reaches out to needy kids in the community

Lead a Bible study in a juvenile detention center or group home

Source: June 1996 issue of The Standard (pp 20-23), published by the Baptist General Conference, 2002 S. Arlington Heights Rd., Arlington Heights, IL.

Keywords

Father, Father's Day, dad



Notes





Father's Day Humor

Illustration

I figured out why they call our language the “Mother Tongue.” Fathers never get a chance to use much of it.

Say what you will about healthy eating and all, but I’ve always found it awfully difficult to explain to my son (who’s 6’4” to my 6’ in height), why junk food is bad for you.

One time my kids wanted to surprise me with a good breakfast in bed on Father’s Day. They put a cot in the kitchen.

If you think about it, Adam had more trouble than any of the rest of us buying his Father a gift for Father’s Day. I mean, what do you get somebody who’s Everything?

I started early teaching my kids the value of a dollar. From then on, they demanded their allowances in gold.

Keywords

Father’s Day, humor, fatherhood, dad, parenting



Notes





Outhouse Confession

Illustration

Once there was a little boy who lived in the country. For bathroom facilities, they had to use an outhouse. The little boy hated it because it was hot in the summer, cold in the winter and stank all the time.

The outhouse was sitting on the bank of a creek and the boy determined that one day he would push that outhouse into the water.

One day after a spring rain, the creek was swollen so the little boy decided today was the day to push the outhouse into the creek. So he got a large stick and pushed. Finally, the outhouse toppled into the creek and floated away.

That evening his dad sternly told him to sit down. Knowing he was in trouble, the little boy asked why. The dad replied, "Someone pushed the outhouse into the creek today. It was you, wasn't it, son?"

The boy answered yes. Then he thought a moment and said, "Dad, I read in school today that George Washington chopped down a cherry tree and didn't get into trouble because he told the truth."

The dad replied, "Well, son, George Washington's father wasn't in that cherry tree!"

Keywords

humor, funny, joke, actions, consequences, father son, Father's Day



Notes





Top Ten Things You'll Never Hear a Dad Say

Illustration

10. Well, how 'bout that? I'm lost! Looks like we'll have to stop and ask for directions.
9. You know Pumpkin, now that you're thirteen, you'll be ready for unchaperoned car dates. Won't that be fun?
8. I noticed that all your friends have a certain hostile attitude. I like that.
7. Here's a credit card and the keys to my new car. GO CRAZY!!
6. What do you mean you wanna play football? Figure skating's not good enough for you, son?
5. Your Mother and I are going away for the weekend. You might want to consider throwing a party.
4. Well, I don't know what's wrong with your car. Probably one of those doo-hickey thingies--ya know--that makes it run or something. Just have it towed to a mechanic and pay whatever he asks.
3. No son of mine is going to live under this roof without an earring. Now quit your belly-aching, and let's go to the mall.
2. Whaddya wanna go and get a job for? I make plenty of money for you to spend.
1. What do I want for my birthday? Aahh -- don't worry about that. It's no big deal. (Okay, they might say it. But they don't mean it)

Keywords

Father's Day, Dad, humor, jokes



Notes





Top 10 Things a Teen Daughter Doesn't Want to Hear from Her Dadty

Illustration

10. "Let me explain what 'deductible' means on car insurance."
9. "Your mom's almost ready. Where are we going on our double date?"
8. "Seems to me last year's prom dress still has some life in it."
7. "I signed us up for the pairs karaoke contest this Friday night."
6. "We ate possum toes like popcorn when I was a kid."
5. "Let's get ice cream, my treat! Just let me grab my jar of coins."
4. "I am proud that you decided to keep the family uni-brow."
3. "You don't need to go shopping after all. I picked out a purse for you on my way home."
2. "I ran into Bobby at the grocery store. I told him that you're really hoping he'll ask you to the dance."
1. "By the way, I had to borrow your deodorant yesterday."

Keywords

Father's Day, Dad, Daughter, humor, joke

Notes





The Fatherhood Cycle

Illustration

4 years: "My Daddy can do anything."

7 years: "My Dad knows a lot, a whole lot."

12 years: "Oh, well - naturally - Father doesn't know that either."

14 years: "Father? Hopelessly old-fashioned."

21 years: "Oh, that man is so out-of-date. What did you expect?"

25 years: "He knows a little bit about it - but not much."

30 years: "Maybe we ought to find out what Dad thinks."

35 years: "Let's ask Dad what he would do before we make a decision."

40 years: "I wonder what Dad would have thought about that? He was pretty smart."

50 years: "My Dad knew absolutely everything."

60 years: "I'd give anything if Dad were here so I could talk this over with him. I really miss him."

Source: Mikey's Funnies: www.mikeysFunnies.com

Keywords

Father's Day, Dad, Father, humor, jokes



Notes



Don't Eat the Forbidden Fruit

Illustration

Whenever your kids are out of control, you can take comfort from the thought that even God's omnipotence didn't extend to God's kids. After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing he said was:

"Don't."

"Don't what?" Adam replied

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit." God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We got forbidden fruit?"

"Hey Eve! We got forbidden fruit!"

"No way!"

"Yes way!"

"DON'T EAT THAT FRUIT!" Said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" said God, wondering why he hadn't stopped after making elephants.

A few minutes later God saw his kids having an apple break and was angry.

Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" the First Parent asked.

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?"

"I dunno," Eve answered.

"She started it!" Adam said.

"Did not!"

"Did too!"

"Did NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus, the pattern was set and it has never been changed.

Source: Rev. Morgan Murray

Keywords

Parenting, father, fatherhood, Father's day, dad



Notes





We Thought You Said Daddy!

Illustration

As we celebrate Father's Day today, I would like to share the following story about the effect that one father had on his family. This particular family had three small children who were determined to have a puppy. Mom protested because she knew that somehow or other, she would end up caring for the critter. True to form, the children solemnly promised that they would take care of it. Eventually, she relented and they brought their little puppy home. The children named him Danny and cared for him diligently - at first. But, sure enough, as time passed, Mom found herself becoming more and more responsible for taking care of the dog. Finally, she decided that the children were not living up to their promise so she began to search for a new home for Danny. When she found one and broke the news to the children, she was quite surprised that they had almost no reaction at all. One of them even said rather matter-of-factly, "We'll miss him."

"I'm sure we will," Mom answered, "but he is too much work for one person and since I'm the one that has to do all the work, I say he goes."

"But," protested another child, "if he wouldn't eat so much and wouldn't be so messy, could we keep him?"

Mom held her ground, "It's time to take Danny to his new home." Suddenly, with one voice and with tears in their eyes, the children exclaimed, "Danny?"

We thought you said Daddy!"

Keywords

Father, Fatherhood, Father's Day, dad



Notes





Father's Day Discussion

Notes

Discussion

Why is Father's Day celebrated?

Why is such a day good/beneficial?

How old was your father when he got married?

At what age do most men in our country get married?

In our culture, what are a father's duties to his children? to his wife? to his parents? to his community?

What does your father do?

What are your father's hobbies?

What makes a good father?

What makes a bad father?

What is your favorite memory of your father?

What do you like best about your father?

How can you show your love for your father?

How can you show your father you appreciate him?

Variation

"My Father is the best Because... "

Each student is given one minute to give as many reasons as possible why his or her father is the best father in the world.

Keywords

Father's Day, Father, dad





God is My Father

Resources

1. You'll need men's dress-up clothes such as old shoes, jackets, shirts and ties.

What to Do

1. Invite kids to put on one or two items of the dress-up clothing that fathers wear. Give them several minutes of playtime to act like dads. Encourage responses by asking questions such as "How do fathers talk?" "What do fathers do?" "How do fathers walk?" and "What do fathers like?"
2. Have children sit in a circle.
3. Ask: Are dads always perfect?
4. Say: Our fathers are human, and sometimes they make mistakes just like we make mistakes sometimes. Today we're going to talk about a special father who is perfect. We call God our heavenly father because he lives in heaven. God is perfect-he'll always love us and take care of us.
5. Ask: What do you call your earthly father?
6. Say: Children in every country have special names for their fathers. You may call your father "Daddy." A Japanese child might call his or her father "Chichi." A German child might say "Papa." In the Bible, Jesus called God "Abba." Let's sing a song to our heavenly father in all these languages. Lead children in singing "Father, I Adore You." Each time you sing a new verse, insert the other-language words for "father": daddy, chichi, papa and abba.

Application

Knowing they have a heavenly father can make children feel protected and cared for. Many children have known the loving care of earthly fathers and can easily comprehend God as a caring father. For other children, "father" isn't a pleasant term. Some children may never see their fathers. Some fathers have mistreated their children. Use this lesson to introduce children to their loving, caring heavenly father-God. And redefine the term "father" for those children who haven't had a good experience with their earthly fathers. today, but one that is essential to being a follower of Christ.

Close with this prayer: Father God, thank you for taking care of us. We know you are a perfect father. You love us and you'll always take care of us. Amen.

Keywords

Father, Father's Day, Dad, game ideas



Notes

Halloween

31 October





Bobbing for Apples

Description

Bobbing for apples is a common Halloween tradition in which youth try to take a bite out of an apple floating in a tub of water.

Resources

1. Large tub of water
2. Towels
3. Apples with all stems and leaves removed

What to Do

1. Fill a large tub with clean water and put washed apples into the water. Apples are less dense than water, so they will float on the surface.
2. Instruct the youth to try to remove an apple from the tub by biting into it with their teeth. No use of hands is allowed.
3. Traditionally, the winner was the first person to retrieve an apple, but you can also award prizes to everyone who is successful or those who retrieve specially marked apples.

Variations

- Smaller apples makes this game easier, larger apples make it more difficult.
- Larger and deeper tubs are more difficult.
- Fewer the apples in the tub make it more difficult to bite into one.
- Harder apples are more difficult to bite than softer dessert varieties.
- Forcing a youth to go after a particular apple also makes it more difficult.
- Make it a team relay with one person from each team trying to bite into an apple at the same time.
- Add some ice before the game to wake everyone up!

If you are concerned about hygiene, an alternative of this game has everyone trying to bite out of an assigned apple on a string. You'll need one apple (with the stem still attached) and one length of string for each participant. Tie the strings to the stems of the apples and then tie the other ends to something solid so that they can hang freely. You can use an open door frame, a tree branch, or even a pole fixed between two ladders. One advantage is that everyone can go at the same time. The objective remains the same, to retrieve the apple using only your mouth - or at least take a bite out of it.

Key Truth

The original tradition of bobbing for apples stated that whoever bit the apple first would be the first to get married. In fact, instead of throwing rice at weddings they used to throw apples. DUCK! Whoever succeeded in getting an apple first was supposed to be the lucky person to be the first person to enter into a marriage relationship.

Notes



Application

The apple is also commonly associated with a broken relationship. While the apple is never mentioned in the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis, the apple is commonly associated with the forbidden fruit offered by Eve to Adam. If you cut an apple in half horizontally, it is supposed to look like a pentagram, an occult symbol.

Regardless of whether it was an apple or not, Adam took a bite of the fruit, in disobedience to God, and through that disobedience damaged his relationship with God. The Bible says that Adam “sinned.” Sin is an archery term which means to miss the mark, to fall short of the target. Because God is perfect and just, he cannot allow disobedience to go unpunished. Because we all fall short but disobedience to God, He in his infinite love, sent Jesus to pay that penalty for us, to suffer the consequences of sin which is death. All we need to do is accept him and our relationship with God is restored.

We each have weaknesses and we all sin. What sin or temptation does the apple represent in your life?

Halloween is a time when people try to scare each other. But one of the greatest fears we all have is that of death. But when you trust Jesus as Savior, you don't need to fear anymore. Your relationship with him is restored and he will give you eternal life.

At this point, present the gospel plan of salvation.

Closing

Have youth exchange their apple (representing sin) for a cross (Representing Christ) or to place the apple at the foot of a cross to represent their giving up of sin and living for Christ. Take some time for prayer and quiet meditation

Keywords

Halloween Party Game, Evangelism

Notes





Bump, Bump, Bump

Illustration

A man was walking home alone one night when he hears a “BUMP...BUMP... BUMP...” behind him. Walking faster, he looks back, making out an image of an upright coffin banging its way down the middle of the street towards him... “BUMP...BUMP...BUMP...” The man begins to run towards his home, and the coffin bounces after him faster...faster... BUMP...BUMP...BUMP. He runs up to his door, fumbles with his keys, opens the door, rushes in, and locks it behind him. The coffin crashes through his door, with the lid of the coffin clapping BUMP ...BUMP ...BUMP on the heels of the terrified man. The man rushes upstairs to the bathroom and locks himself in, heart pounding. With a CRASH, the coffin breaks down the door, coming slowly towards him, the man screaming, reaches for something, anything...all he can find is a box of cough drops which he throws at the coffin...and the coffin stops!!!

Keywords

coffin, death, humor, humour, halloween



Notes





Candy Gifts

Description

Youth will take part in a learning simulation experiencing what it is like when gifts are not appropriately utilized as a blessing to all members of the body of Christ. Makes a great activity for a Halloween Alternative or for a creative Bible Study lesson.

Resources

Round 1:

1. You'll need a Bible and several large bags of individually wrapped candy. There should be 10 different types of candy. Depending on the size of your group, you might have more than 1 bag of some of the 10 types of candy. Since in the second part of this activity people will be trading candy, individually wrapped candy that is not chocolate and does not easily melt is preferable.
2. For one of the 10 types of candy, only allow enough of that candy in circulation for 10% of the total group to be able to have some.
3. Set aside an extra bag of candy to be available for anyone who finishes ROUND 1 without candy.

Round 2:

4. Use the same candy already passed out in ROUND 1. Using the extra bag of candy you set aside, distribute a couple pieces of candy to anyone who did not receive a piece in ROUND 1.) Continue to retain the candy you have chosen to represent salvation so that only 20% is in circulation. Hold the rest back for the end of ROUND 2.

Preparation

Round 1:

1. Select one of the 10 types of candy to represent salvation. Only allow enough of this candy in circulation for 10% of the entire group to have some.

Round 2:

2. Continue to keep the candy aside that you have chosen to represent salvation. Remember you should only allow enough of this candy in circulation for 10% of the entire group to have some.

What to Do

Round 1:

1. Take an equal number of students away from the rest of the group as you have bags of candy and explain to them how the game works. Be sure that the other youth cannot hear your instructions. Tell each of the those you have chosen that you are going to give them bags of candy to share with the other students.



Notes



Notes

2. There's only one catch: They can give candy only to the guys, or only to the gals, only to those with spectacles, only those in youth choir, those with a "d" in their name, those with 4 letters in their surname, only to kids with black tennis shoes, those with buttons on their shirts, those without socks, those who frown, etc. (The idea is to pick something that will eliminate at least half of the kids - these are only suggestions - be creative. Also remember you want the criteria to be difficult to discover.)
3. Remind kids not to tell the others why some youth are getting candy and others aren't. Warn kids to only give candy to those in the designated group, even if the other kids beg.
4. After giving the these designated ones their instructions, tell the rest of the group that the game will be played in 2 ROUNDS. For ROUND 1, I'm going to let the youth I took aside back into the room. When they come in, they'll have some candy to share. You can ask, bribe, and beg them for it, but do not take it from them. You may or may not get some candy. If you figure out what the criteria is for getting candy, you'll be entitled to an extra portion. Do NOT eat your candy yet. You will need it later for ROUND 2
5. Call those with the candy back into the room. Allow them time to circulate through the group handing out candy according to their criteria to the chosen few.

Discussion

Once you have completed this Round, ask:

What was it like to be one who received the gifts?

What was it like to be left out or passed over?

Did anyone figure out why he or she did not get gifts? (Give extra candy to the first person who identified any of the criteria.)

Are you willing to share your gifts with some people because of the way they look, or do you ignore others because they appear to be different?

What makes you treat some people differently than others?

Application

Near the end of the discussion, say: The Bible instructs us to treat each other fairly and equally, and to place what we have into His hands to bless others. God wants to bless others through us, but we often limit those he can touch through us by personal prejudice, misconceptions, jealousy, greed, personal ambition, bitterness, or even laziness.

Round 2:

1. Say, "Of course, we all have our favorites when it comes to candy. Before we begin ROUND 2, take a moment to trade candy with each other in order to get your favorite candy." (Give them some time)
2. Say, "Now we are going to do something a little different. Imagine that like King Solomon, you are granted anything you wish by God. Each type of Candy represents something special. You may trade and bargain with each other to get whichever candy you like. At the end of this activity, we will see what blessings you are gifted with in life, depending on your candy you possess. You may not forcibly take candy from anyone."



Notes

3. Depending on time, announce one or two of the items below, in any order. Eventually go through all the types of candy, but leave “salvation” for last.
4. After each announcement, give youth an opportunity to trade again based on this new revelation.
5. Continue through the list. Then end with Salvation.
6. Of course there won't be enough of salvation for Choose colors or different types of candy to represent different things. Some possibilities are:
 - Wealth
 - Power
 - Good looks
 - Meaningful career
 - Love
 - Popularity
 - Pleasure
 - Long Life
 - Health
 - Salvation

Important Note

Initially make certain there is only enough candy representing “salvation” for about 20% of people to have a piece. At the end of this activity, give each person one from those you have set aside.

Discussion

At the end of the activity, ask youth:

Are you happy with what you possess in this game? How do you feel about your situation in life as reflected by the candy you have?

Before salvation, what did you evaluate as most important to obtain? What was that you tried to collect?

What were you willing to give to others?

Were you selfish or generous with what you were given?

Application

In life, we will all be blessed with different things. Some people may receive an abundance while others may receive the simpler things in life and only according to their needs of the moment.

Some may be blessed with wealth - will you use it for selfish pursuits or will you use it to bless others?

Some may be blessed with power - will you use your power to help those who cannot help themselves.

Others will be blessed with popularity - will you use your influence to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak up for themselves.

Not only are we blessed in different ways, but we also receive different gifts and talents. Everything we have is a gift from God. If God didn't give something to us directly, he blessed us with the means or abilities to obtain them.



Will you use what you have been given selfishly, or for the benefit of others?
Will you cling to them or place them into the hands of God to use?
How did you feel if you were one of those without the candy representing salvation?

Closing

As Christians, we are all given the knowledge of the gospel - the good news - salvation. Do we keep that knowledge to ourselves or do we share it with the remaining 90% of Singaporeans who do not yet know Christ as Savior? (Give each 2 pieces of candy representing salvation) Take these pieces of candy you have been given and give them to someone and tell them about the activity you have done today - share with them the good news of salvation.

What is it in your life that is a priority for you?

What have you been blessed with?

Will you selfishly keep it top yourself or will you place it in God's hands for him to use?

Keywords

Halloween Alternative, candy, salvation, gospel, evangelism, gifts, helping others, spiritual gifts and talents, giving, greed, priorities, generosity, fall festival, harvest festival

Notes





Candy Relay

Resources

1. Candy in the following colors: Yellow, White, Black, Green, Red

Preparation

1. Form two teams and assign each team one or two colors of candy. You can have as many teams as you have colors of candy.
2. On the floor at one end of the room, unroll a several foot long strip of paper towels.
3. Spread the candy randomly over the entire length of paper towels
4. Have the teams line up at the other end of the room.

What to Do

1. One at a time, team members rush to the paper towels, and bend down and use their teeth to pick up one piece of candy (team colors only and no hands allowed).
2. Once they have a piece of candy in their teeth, they stand back up, run back to their team.
3. They must then show the candy in their mouth to the next person in line, who shouts out the color.
4. If the color's wrong "Trick", the person must eat the candy and then go back and get another piece of candy of the correct color.
5. When the color is correct "Treat", the person eats his/her candy and the next person goes to the paper towels and repeats the process.
6. The first team to remove all the candy of their assigned color wins.

a open door frame, a tree branch, or even a pole fixed between two ladders. One advantage is that everyone can go at the same time. The objective remains the same, to retrieve the apple using only your mouth - or at least take a bite out of it.

Application

Yellow Candy

The yellow Jelly bean reminds us of Heaven. Do you know what Heaven is? Heaven is God's home. Heaven is filled with the glory, the shining brightness of God. There is no night there. The Bible says, "God is The Light and in Him is no Darkness at all"(1 John 1:5). The Bible tells us that in Heaven, the street of the city is pure, clear gold-like glass (Rev 21:21). God tells us many other things about His home. No one is sick there. No one is crippled or blind. No one ever dies. Every person in Heaven will be perfectly happy-always (Rev 21:4-2; Psalm 16:11). The most wonderful thing about Heaven is that God the Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus will be there. God made Heaven. He made you too. He loves you very much. Because he made you and loves you, He wants you to belong to Him and be with Him in Heaven someday. Jesus promised long ago, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 3:16; John 14:1-3).



Notes



Black Licorice

There is one thing that can never be in Heaven. That is sin. Because you and I are sinners we want to have our own way instead of God's way. Wanting our own way is sin. Doing, or saying, or thinking bad things is sin. Sin is anything that displeases God. Sin has caused sorrow and sadness in our world. God tells us in the Bible that all have sinned (Romans 3:23). All means every one of us.

This dark jelly bean reminds us of our sinful way (Proverbs 4:19). When it is dark, you stumble and cannot find your way. Because of your sin, you cannot find God. Your sin separates you from God, who is holy (1 John 1:5). God cannot allow sin where He is. I am sure you can think of a sin which you have done. God has said that sin must be punished. The punishment for your sin is death-to be separated from God forever (Rev 6:23). The Lord Jesus, God's Son, said that if you die in your sin, you cannot go to Heaven where He is (John 8:21, 24). God knew there was nothing you could do to get rid of your sin. He knew you could not be good enough to please Him. But He loves you and He made a way for you to be forgiven.

Red Candy

The red jelly bean shows the way God made for you to have your sins forgiven-taken away. God loves you. He sent His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, from Heaven to take the punishment for your sin (John 3:16). Wicked men nailed the sinless Son of God to the cross, but while He hung there God put all of your sins on Him. The Bible says, "...God bath laid on Him [Jesus] the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). (Iniquity is another word for sin). All your bad temper, all your lies, your meanness-all your sin-was laid on the dear Son of God, and He suffered and suffered until He cried out with a loud voice and said, "It is finished." When you finish a job, how much is left? Nothing. What did the Lord Jesus come to do? He came to save us from punishment for sin, didn't He? And He finished the work. When He was nailed to the cross, what came from His hands, and His feet? His blood. God calls it the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and He says "...the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). There is no other way, for God says, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]"-no forgiveness, no payment (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus not only died for you, but He was buried, and He rose again. He is a living savior (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4). God showed His love for you by sending His own Son to die for you. Now he says there is one way for you to be saved from your sin.

White Candy

Tears cannot wash away sin. Prayers cannot wash away sin. Doing good cannot wash away sin. But the blood of the Lord Jesus can wash away all sin (Psalm 51:7; 1 John 1:7). This white jelly bean reminds me that you can be made clean from sin. Did Jesus die for everyone? (YES!) Is everyone going to Heaven? (No, because some do not believe that Jesus died for them. They have not received Him as their savior from sin.) God's word says, "...as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). God has promised you when you receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you become a child of God.

Notes



The Lord Jesus Christ died to save you from your sins. He wants to live in your heart and give you power to obey God. Are you sorry for your sin? Do you believe Jesus died for your sin? Would you like to receive Jesus today? You must decide. (Ask the Holy Spirit for discernment. Question the person to respond carefully. Encourage them to express to you before they pray: why they need to receive the Lord Jesus; what the Lord Jesus has done for them; what they want to tell God. When dealing with a group, emphasize what each person must personally believe and receive the Lord Jesus. Give opportunity for prayer. If possible, question each person individually after the prayer to clarify the meaning of His decision. Where is Jesus now? Where are your sins? What took them away?) (Any one of the following verses can be used effectively in helping to know what God has done: John 1:12; 1 John 5:13; Rev. 3:20.) God promises to you when you receive Him, "...I will never leave nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Ask Him to help you each day to please Him. When you do sin, tell God that you have sinned. He will forgive you right away (1 John 1:9). Ask Him and trust Him to help you not to do it again. (Lead the person in offering a prayer of thanks).

Green Candy

The green jelly bean reminds me of the new life, everlasting life, you have received from God. The color green reminds me of things which are growing outdoors, like leaves, grass, flowers, and trees. when you receive the Lord Jesus as your savior from sin, you are like a newborn baby in God's family. The Bible tells you to "grow in grace in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

(As the time permits, talk with the person about those things which help him grow as a member of God's family. Explain you are not talking about growing taller or gaining weight, but the kind of growing which will help others know that he loves the Lord Jesus.

1. Listen to God- Learn God's Word reading and memorizing it (2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 119: 11).
2. Talk to God. Pray (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
3. Talk for God. Witness or tell others (Mark 16:15).
4. Worship God. Go to Sunday School and Church (Hebrews 10:25).

Blue Candy (Optional)

Some will add this in to represent Baptism or the Holy Spirit

Keywords

Gospel, Evangelism, Witnessing, Halloween, Trick or Treat, harvest festival, fall festival

Notes





Candy Toss

Description

Toss the candy into a Halloween Jack-o-lantern pumpkin and if it lands inside, you get to keep it!

Resources

1. At least two large pumpkins - one to hold the candy and one for participants to toss the candy into.
2. Individually wrapped candy, mini candy bars

Preparation

1. Cut a hole in the top of the largest pumpkin, remove the contents and clean it.
2. Combine all the candy and place it into the large pumpkin with the top removed.
3. Do the same with the smaller pumpkins. These are to be placed across the room for participants to toss the candy into them. You might have pumpkins at various distances and with different sized holes cut into the top. If you get into one of the special pumpkins, you not only get to keep the candy, but you also get a bonus prize.

What to Do

1. Line up the participants in a single line, behind the big pumpkin containing the candy.
2. Youth will take turns trying to toss the candy into the pumpkins placed across the room. (Depending on the amount of candy you have, you can allow them 3 or more tries each)
3. They can keep the candy that they get in the pumpkin. If they get the candy into one of the special pumpkins they may also get a bonus prize.
4. Allow the kids to keep playing until all the candy and prizes have been given away.

Variations

Vary the size of the candy and the size of the whole pumpkins. You can also use tokens, plastic spiders, and other tokens instead of candy.

Keywords

Halloween party game, Carnival games, harvest festival, Halloween alternative, pumpkin games



Notes





Cupcake Faith

Description

Use this creative object lesson as a surprising illustration to kids that God looks at our heart, not our appearances. It can be used on any occasion or as a children's sermon, but with a reference to tombs, and masks it also serves as a fun lesson for an alternative to Halloween.

Resources

1. Cupcake mix
2. Cotton balls
3. Cupcake cups
4. Cupcake Tin

Preparation

1. Using a cake mix or any cupcake mix, prepare the batter according to instructions.
2. Place the paper cupcake liners in the cupcake tin.
3. For about 50% of the cupcakes, place several cotton balls in the middle of the cup to partially fill them.
4. Pour the batter into the cups. For those with cotton balls, be sure it seeps into the sides of the cup and covers the cotton balls.
5. Bake the cupcakes as per directions.
6. Make enough untainted cupcakes for your entire group.
7. Decorate the cupcakes containing cotton balls with icing and candy sprinkles etc so they look very enticing. Do not decorate the normal cupcakes in any way i.e. leave them plain.

WARNING: One person who tried this had the batter soak into the cotton balls so that the kids didn't notice and swallowed one. While they are harmless and will simply pass through the digestive system, to prevent this make sure you fill the bottom of the paper liner full of cotton balls so that you don't have this problem. An alternative to cotton balls is to slice off the top with a bread knife and then hollow out the center of the cupcake. Put the top back on and frost it for a hollow cupcake? Are some of our pursuits in life a little hollow when we finally get hold of them?

What to Do

1. Pass the cupcakes to the youth or children as a group. They must not eat them until everyone has one. Only allow one cupcake per person.
2. Some will choose the fancy ones while others may choose the plain ones.
3. When the youth or children begin to eat the cupcakes, some of them are in for a surprise. Beneath the shallow top layer of cupcake there is cotton!
4. Wait for their responses.
5. After the lesson have some cupcakes available for everyone who got the tainted ones with the cotton balls inside



Notes

Discussion

Does your icing match your cupcake?

How much time do you spend getting ready to leave the house in the morning?

Do you take time to shower, comb your hair, and spend a little time in front of the mirror to make sure you are presentable to the world?

Do you spend as much time daily nurturing your inner spirit through Bible Study and prayer as you do on your external appearances?

Do you sometimes find yourself putting on a facade, a mask, pretending to be more “spiritual” so people will be impressed with you?

Application

You can't always tell how good something is by looking at the outside.

Sometimes what seems attractive on the outside hides something far less attractive inside.

While people typically look at the outward appearance, God looks inside - at the heart. It's difficult to tell what a person is really like simply from their appearance. Some people may be beautiful on the outside, but inside they hide a very mean, selfish, and hateful heart. Some people may seem a little plain or less attractive in appearance, but inside they are loving, gentle, and kind.

Most of us spend lots of time and attention on making ourselves look good. We pay careful attention to the clothes we wear (designer jeans etc), the shoes we wear, our complexion, our hairstyle, etc. Yet, how much time do we spend making sure our heart is right? When our heart is right with God, when our attitudes are Christlike, when we have a loving spirit, then when others get a taste of God in us, they will find Christianity attractive. Christ's greatest criticism of the pharisees was that they focused on their appearance yet left ugliness in their hearts:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” (Matthew 23:27-28)

Christ called the Pharisees hypocrites. The Greek word for hypocrite actually refers to someone who is wearing a mask, who is an actor. Halloween isn't the only time of the year when people dress up and wear masks. Throughout the year we often show a different personality on the outside than the person we are in reality. Jesus also called the pharisees “whitewashed tombstones.” “Rotting graves with whitewashed tombstones” vividly paints for us a picture of hypocrisy. Cemeteries are actually quite tranquil and beautiful on the surface. There are flowers, statues, and beautiful memorials to those that have died. But beneath the surface there are rotting bodies.

It's not that we should not care about our external appearances. In fact we should be concerned about both our internal and external life that we present

Notes



to the world. Our lives need to reflect the goodness of God both inwardly and outwardly, in our heart attitudes, and in our actions that everyone sees. use tokens, plastic spiders, and other tokens instead of candy.

Closing

Take a little more time preparing your heart each day to get right with God and reflect his heart. Make sure you spend some time with God so that you reflect the goodness of God inside and out before you ice it for all the world to see?

Scripture References

Matthew 23:27-28

Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. (1 Peter 3: 3-4)

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. (1 Samuel 16: 7)

Keywords

Halloween, fall festival, harvest festival, appearances, masks, internal, heart, attitudes, hypocrisy, hypocrits, pharisees, inner beauty

Notes





Halloween Bowling Party

Description

Take the youth to the local Bowling Alley for a little dress-up fun! Use Halloween costumes or if you are adverse to the idea of doing something related to Halloween, have Biblical costumes or wacky clothing items available.

Resources

1. Halloween/Biblical/wacky costumes
2. Pieces of papers
3. Pencils

What to Do

1. Come up with silly bowling stances and place them on pieces of paper for the youth to draw from a hat.
2. Here are some ideas:
 - bowling backward
 - Fred-Flintstones-style
 - bowling with your weak arm
 - Ballerina Bowling (tip toes)
 - Dizzy bowl (spin around 3 times first)
 - cross your legs
 - Blindfolded
 - One step
 - Bunny bowling (2 hops) then bowl
3. Decide the number of pins that should be knocked down for each frame. If a youth doesn't knock down the number of required pins, he or she has to select a silly costume piece (for example, a tutu, a sombrero, or a wig) to wear for the next frame. These costume pieces can be cumulative or just for the next frame.

Keywords

Halloween Costume Bowling Party

Notes





Halloween Message

Illustration

October 31st is a very special day, not because of Halloween, but because of another important event that literally CHANGED the world!

On October 31st, almost five hundred years ago, in the year 1517, Martin Luther nailed a letter to a church door in Wittenberg, Germany.

His letter invited a debate on ninety-five different statements and initiated what is known today as the Protestant Reformation!

Martin Luther was a deeply religious man who was seeking salvation. To find answers, he became a monk and tried to earn his way into heaven by good works. But all his efforts never seemed enough! As he studied the Word of God he realized that “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and “For it is by grace we have been saved through faith, it is a gift of God and not from yourselves, not by works that no one can boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

Martin Luther then began reading Romans in the Bible and came to verse 1:17 and discovered “The just shall live by faith.”

Luther realized that no amount of good works would achieve salvation for him. People are not saved by their works, but by their faith in Jesus Christ!

Have you been trying to earn your way into heaven?

Read Philippians 3:1-11.

Paul and Martin Luther both realized that anything they might do to earn eternal life was rubbish. Righteousness can only come through faith in Christ. Only through that faith can we enter into the presence of God!

October 31st was a new beginning for the church. It can also be a new beginning for you! All you need to do is to believe in Christ.

Halloween costumes or if you are adverse to the idea of doing something related to Halloween, have Biblical costumes or wacky clothing items available.

Keywords

Halloween, Fall festival, harvest festival, evangelism



Notes



Halloween Squares

Description

This game, based on the television show “Hollywood Squares” makes a great review activity after a lesson series has been taught! You can also use it with trivia questions and modern events as a fun activity for a game night or outreach activity! As an alternative to Halloween have a fall festival and have 9 Bible personalities dress up for this game!

Resources

1. Large Cards or Flipchart paper

Preparation

1. Make namecard signs for each of your squares (make sure they're large enough for everyone to see) even if you're using real names.
2. Make nine signs (large enough for the audience to see) of an X on one side and an O on the other.
3. Make a list of questions related to your Bible passage or lesson. These should be facts or details that can be answered with a clear correct answer. You will need at least 20 questions for each round you intend to play.
4. You can give a copy of this list of questions to your nine personalities ahead of time and then have them choose to give a correct or wrong answer for each.
5. You will need:
 - One (1) Moderator or host
 - Two (2) contestants. The two contestants can be teams or individuals. One is assigned 'X' and the other is assigned 'O'
 - Nine (9) personalities - one for each square in a normal tic-tac-toe grid.
6. The 9 Personalities
If you want to make the game more interesting, ask important personalities in your church or members of your youth leadership team to participate. You can also have the 9 personalities dress up as famous Biblical characters and role play according to those characters. Adam, Eve, Moses, Jesus, Paul, Gideon, David, Elijah, Abraham... the possibilities are endless. If you are studying a book of the Bible and can select 9 personalities from that book it will be even more fun!
7. Time Required
One round of the game can take anywhere from 15-45 minutes (depending on the length of the answers given by each square). Choose the number of questions according to the desired time slot for the activity. It is better to have extra questions rather than not enough.



Notes

Notes

8. Setup

The seating arrangement for the 9 squares should be three rows of three as per a normal tic-tac-toe grid. A stadium seat or choir riser works great. You can also have the first row sitting on the floor, second row sitting in chairs and the top row on a stage or high stools! You will need to setup their chairs in a way that everyone can see them. You could also just arrange 9 chairs in a 3x3 grid on the floor, but move each row slightly over to the right or left so that you can see each square.

What to Do

1. The moderator / game show host should introduce each contestant or team as well as the 9 personalities. (You could also have the personalities introduce themselves)
2. The moderator should explain the rules so everyone knows how to play the game.
3. The moderator tosses a coin to decide which participant will start the game.
4. The chosen participant must choose a square (personality)
5. Moderator then reads a random questions to the personality in the chosen SQUARE who must then answer the question.
6. The chosen personality provides an answer. A personality can answer correctly or with a bluff or false answer. He or she can explain the answer also if they wish and be humorous or serious! It is even more fun if personalities respond in character.
7. The contestant (or team) who picked the square THEN decides whether the answer provided is TRUE or FALSE. You can also use AGREE - DISAGREE.
8. If the contestant chooses correctly the personality in the selected square will show the corresponding X or O of the contestant's team.
9. If the contestant chooses incorrectly the square does NOT raise the contestant's sign. (For a quicker round you can play so that the opponent receives the square and his or her sign is displayed)
10. The first contestant to create a Tic-Tac-Toe (three x's or o's in a diagonal, horizontal, or vertical row) wins. If there is a tie (no tic-tac-toe) you can play a round of "Sudden Death" where each contestant picks a square who answers a question. The first contestant to wrongly choose a square's answer loses.

Keywords

game show, review, hollywood squares, quiz, party game, Halloween, Fall festival





Jack O' Lantern

Resources

1. A pumpkin

Preparation

1. Create a Halloween lantern with stars for eyes, the Christian fish symbol for a mouth, and a cross for its nose. Then pass out the following poem (source unknown)

What to Do

I am a Jack O' Lantern
My lights will shine so bright
For I'm a Christian pumpkin
My symbols tell what's right

My nose is like the cross
On which our Savior died
To set us free from sin
We need no longer hide

My mouth is like a fish
The whole wide world to show
That Christians live in this house
And love their Savior so!

The story starts at Christmas
My eyes are like the star
That shone on Baby Jesus
And wise men saw from far

My color, it is orange
Just like the big bright sun
That rose on Easter Day
Along with God's own Son

And so on Halloween
Let's set our pumpkins out
And tell the trick or treaters
What God's love is all about!

Keywords

Christian alternatives to Halloween, October, fall, gospel, evangelism, witnessing, trick or treat, fall festival, harvest festival



Notes



Like a Halloween Pumpkin

Description

In Athens, Paul was disturbed by the culture around him. (Acts 17:16). But instead of coming against it, he used things from that culture to present the gospel. (Acts 17:22-31).

Resources

1. A pumpkin (instructions for preparing it are below)
2. A candle or flashlight to go inside the pumpkin
3. Lighter or matches if you are using a candle
4. A large knife (not sharp, it is for effect).
5. Some mud or clay dirt
6. A damp cloth
7. A cloth large enough to cover the pumpkin
8. Cards or Flipchart paper

Preparation

1. Cutting carefully so that you can set it back in place, cut the top from the pumpkin.
2. Scoop out the seeds and inner membrane. Rinse, dry and save it. You may want to soak them in coffee or something similar to turn them dark. We will be returning them to the pumpkin.
3. Making sure to keep the cuttings on one side of the pumpkin only, cut a design into the pumpkin. You can use a traditional jack-o-lantern or some other design. Carving 'JESUS' into the pumpkin or carving a candle is effective. Be careful not to carry the design to the sides or back of the pumpkin as you do not want to show the cuts at the beginning of the lesson.
4. Put the seeds and membrane back into the pumpkin. If it is going to be over a few hours before the lesson, it would be better to put the seeds and membrane in the refrigerator until closer time.

Just before the session:

5. Set the pumpkin in front of you so that the carved part is toward your body. You do not want the audience to see that it has been carved.
6. If the seeds were refrigerated, return them to the pumpkin.
7. Put the top on the pumpkin matching it as good as possible so that the cut is not too obvious.
8. Smear a little clay or mud on the front of the pumpkin so that the audience can easily see it.
9. Set the other supplies (knife, light, damp cloth) where you can reach them.
10. Cover the pumpkin with a cloth so that it is not visible from any side when your group comes in.
11. PRAY

Notes



What to Do

1. Sometimes people ask what it is like being a Christian. I'd like to tell you that it is all fun and easy.
2. But I'm a Christian. I'm supposed to tell the whole truth. And here it is.
3. It is fun to be a Christian because I am God's child and God loves me. And it is never too hard for me because God helps me.
4. But sometimes it is pretty hard to be a Christian. (Lift the cloth off of the pumpkin). I think I can use this pumpkin to help explain.
5. We all start out like pumpkins. We're out in the garden along with all the others. God is always walking through that garden asking if any of us what to belong to Him.
6. When we say 'yes' to God, he picks us up out of the garden. (Use damp cloth to clean the dirt off the pumpkin). And he gently washes away the dirt.
7. That feels really, really nice. (Pick up the knife). But there is more to be done.
8. You see, dirt was not the only thing we brought with us from the garden. (Pretend to cut around the top of the pumpkin)
9. Some of what we brought back requires surgery and that can hurt. (Lift off the top.)
10. While we were out there in the garden, some things grew inside us. (Take out a few seeds and hold them out to be seen.)
11. Sometimes the others were not fair to us. (Take out more of the seeds)
12. We became angry and the seed of bitterness started to grow inside. (Continue to take out seeds as you talk)
13. Sometimes others let us down or hurt our feelings. We began to feel sorry for ourselves. And the seeds of rejection started to grow.
14. We try to get even with those who hurt us. The seeds of unforgiveness and violence begin to grow inside. (Remove the last of the seeds)
15. Yes, all of this cleaning up hurts a bit. But if we won't let God clean all of this out, it gets infected. And then we really have problems.
16. Christians who won't let God clean out all the junk from the pumpkin patch are really miserable. They have spiritual infections and they can spread them to others. (Wipe the inside with the cloth)
17. (Pretend to make a few cuts with the knife on your side of the pumpkin) I'm learning to hold really still and let God take care of anything that needs cleaning! Sure it hurts sometimes.
18. (Put the light inside the pumpkin and light it) And sometimes I wonder what God is trying to do!
19. (Turn the pumpkin around for the group to see). Then God reminds me that He has a wonderful plan for my life. He wants the beauty of Jesus to shine through me so others can see the way to Jesus.

Notes



Application

That's what we are, you know.

We are not really better than those poor pumpkins who are still in the garden. We are just a whole lot better off because Jesus has taken us out of the darkness and into His wonderful light.

(Lights off)

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world.

A city on a hill can't be hidden.

Also, people do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl.

Instead, they put it on its stand.

Then it gives light to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine in front of others.

Then they will see the good things you do.

And they will praise your Father who is in heaven.*

Please pray with me.

Father God, thank You for asking us to be Your children.

Father, we want to be more like Jesus.

We want others to see Your light shining in our lives.

Help us to open our hearts to You.

Take away all our bad attitudes.

Give us Your light and love inside.

We're asking this in Jesus' Name. Amen

Source: <http://www.beau.org/~vickir/halloween/>

Keywords

Redemption, Evangelism, Witnessing, letting our light shine, fall festival, halloween alternative, harvest festival

Notes





Masks

Description

“Who was that masked man?” Find out in this icebreaker that reveals who is behind the mask and why...

Resources

Printer labels with names of some masked characters, examples below:

Batgirl	Kato
Batman	Leonardo (Ninja Turtles)
Captain America	Lone Ranger
Catwoman	Michelangelo (Ninja Turtle)
Cyclops	Mr. Incredible
Darkman	Mrs. Incredible
Darth Vader	Phantom of the Opera
Dash	Rafael (Ninja Turtles)
Doctor Doom	Riddler
Donatello (Ninja Turtle)	Robin
Dread Pirate Roberts	Spiderman
Flash	Stormtrooper
Green Arrow	The Joker
Green Goblin	The Mask
Green Hornet	The Penguin
Green Lantern	The Riddler
Iron Man	Ultraman
Jason (Friday the 13th)	Violet
Jack-Jack	Wolverine
Juggernaut	Zorro

Preparation

1. On adhesive name tags or white printer labels write the names of famous masked characters. Write a name on each nametag.

What to Do

1. As people enter the room, put the nametag in the middle of their back (without showing them what it says). Their goal is to figure out who they are (on the tag) by asking a series of yes/no questions.
2. Each question must be asked of a different person.
3. After a set period of time, or after everyone has discovered his / her identity.

Take It to the Next Level

It's not just Halloween that people wear masks. If we are honest with ourselves, most of us put on masks from time to time. We put on a mask any time we are not honest with others or don't want to reveal some aspect of who we are. Anytime we try to make ourselves come across as something we are not, we are putting on a mask.



Notes

The word for an actor is the word “hypocrite” in the Greek language. It means ‘the person who wears a mask’ (or covers on his face). In the original Greek plays, actors pretended to be someone else by putting on a mask.

- If you could be any superhero who would you be?
- What is it about this character that attracts you?
- Why do most of the superheroes wear masks?
- What masks do you put on? Are there certain things about yourself that you prefer to hide?
- In what situations do you hide behind a mask, afraid to reveal who you really are and what you really feel?

Bonus Activity: What Masks Do I Wear?

1. Give each participant a piece of paper cut into a mask shape.
2. On one side, ask them to write or draw characteristics of how they want people to see them.
3. Then, on the other side, ask them to write down some characteristics of who they really are and some of the things about their life that they don't want other people to see.
 - Is there a difference?
 - What are the risks of revealing what is hidden behind the mask?
 - What are the benefits of hiding behind a mask?
 - Is there a mask you would like to remove?

Action Point

Let participants crumple up their mask and toss it away. Name one truth about yourself that may be hidden, but that you would like people to know.

Take It Spiritual

Jesus used the word “hypocrite” to describe the Pharisees and in a parable teaches us an important lesson about masks... (see Luke 18.9-14)

- Why was the Pharisee called a hypocrite - one wearing a mask?
- Why do you think the Pharisee “acted” this way?
- Have you met people like the Pharisee? How did they make you feel?
- In what ways are you like a Pharisee? What are some of your masks?
- Why is the Tax-collector unwilling to even look up to heaven? Have you ever been so ashamed that you wanted to hide your face from heaven? How is this similar to wearing a mask?
- How is it different from the mask of the Pharisee?
- What is Jesus' main point in this story?
- In what areas of your life do you need to be honest with God?
- How would being honest with God make a difference in your life?

Scripture Reference

Matthew 23:27, Luke 18.9-14

Keywords

Halloween masks, hypocrisy, identity, fears, weaknesses, being Christ-like, revealing Christ, Bible study for October 31st

Notes

The Opposite of Hypocrisy is Intimacy - “Into me see”

What are some of the reasons people wear masks as Christians?

Don't know how to live the Christian Life so we fake it - Most of us really want to reflect Christ but just don't know how. We know what we are supposed to do, but we don't know how?

Ashamed -Everyone else seems ok and seems to have their lives together. So we become convinced that no one else has the same problems as us. We seem to be the only ones so we hide our true thoughts and feelings.

Fear -We are afraid of how people will react if they see our faults. They might not like the true us.

Avoidance - It is easier to put up a mask than to face who we really are. Insecurities and past hurts make us want to avoid dealing with the problem so we hide from ourselves.





Noah's Ark Party

Preparation

Animals. Assigning animals prevents an abundance of lions or elephants and no giraffes. Each two participants should receive a name of an animal. You might also include simple directions on how to create a costume for each animal that is assigned. Costumes can be simple or elaborate, home-made or store bought or rented. Masks can be created but it's often easier to paint faces to compliment the animal costume. You can easily make ears, tails, and noses. Paint details, whiskers, spots etc. Each guest assumes the role of the animal assigned, acting and talking like that animal.

Noah. Find a few stuffed animals to keep with him. (two of one kind!) Small beanie babies size animals sticking out of his pockets would work. You could also make a big rainbow out of cardboard and paint and make a cutout for a handle for him to carry.

What to Do

Feed the Lion

Draw a Lion on a cardboard box and cut out the mouth of the lion. The mouth should be large enough to easily toss a small beanbag through the opening. Color the Lion. The participants must tossed the bean bags into the mouth of the lion to win a prize. A great source for pictures of a lion is coloring books. If you have an OHP available, copy the cartoon to an OHP cell, project it onto the cardboard, and simply draw the lines that are projected. Tempra Paints are great for coloring it and filling in the details!

Animal Tag

Have the group form a circle sitting in chairs. Everyone chooses an animal name for themselves (dog, rhino, hippo, monkey, etc.) Fitting the Noah Theme there should be two of each animal. One person stands in the middle as the "Noah" with a rolled up newspaper. The game begins with one person calling out the one of the animal names in the circle. The two animals must change places before "Noah" can grab a seat. Call out "flood" and everyone must change chairs.

Monkeys Bowling

Set up 10 pins (You can make them using empty 2 liter plastic soda bottles. Fill with a little water or sand for stability, but don't make them too heavy) For added fun, put a drawing of a yellow banana on the pins. Grab a small coconut or simply a small ball for the bowling ball. Children are awarded prizes based on the number of bananas they bowl over.

Follow the Leader

For younger kids this is a lot of fun. Play "follow the leader" and go through all types of animal motions and sounds. Award prizes for the best sounds, best portrayal of an animal.



Notes



Animal Sounds

As everyone arrives, assign the names of animals to various persons in the room making sure that the animals assigned are scattered around the room. Then shut out the lights and have the teens make the animal sound assigned to them. They must then mingle around the room (in the dark) listening for the other animals of their kind. The first group to find each other wins.

Animal Relay Races

Have relay races with animal actions and sounds: “walk like a duck”; “hop like a kangaroo”; “laugh like a hyena”; “slither like a snake”, “swim like a fish”, “walk like a crab”, etc.

Two-by-Two

Each person should receive a card with an animal on it, and either a sound (moo, oink, meow) that they have to do, or a motion (laughing for a hyena, hopping for a kangaroo, etc.) and they have to make their sound/motion and find the other person doing the same thing (two by two).

Snacks

Animal crackers
Gummy worms (for the birds)
Snack mix - Nuts, dried fruits
Fruits and vegetables

Prizes

Animal related items such as animal print notepads, a book on the Promises of God, an animal beanie baby or pair of small stuffed animals, a large box of animal crackers.

Application

Tell the story of Noah. Discuss the Promises of God.

Keywords

Halloween, Salvation, Mercy, Grace, God’s Promises, fall festival, harvest festival

Notes





Pass the Brains

Description

The youth will search for the candy inside the pumpkin with spaghetti.

Resources

1. Pumpkin
2. Cold -cooked spaghetti
3. Candy

Preparation

1. Cut a circle in the top of the pumpkin and remove the stem and set it aside.
2. Scoop out the pumpkin and set the seeds aside. (They can be roasted for a great snack)
3. Draw a face on the pumpkin with a black marker pen.
4. Boil the spaghetti and let it cool.
5. Fill the pumpkin with the cold, cooked spaghetti and candy. There should be one piece of candy hidden amongst the spaghetti for each kid playing.

What to Do

1. Play some music as the pumpkin head is passed around.
2. When the music stops (like pass the parcel) the youth holding the head feels through its ‘brains to find some candy.’

Variation

1. Finding God’s treasures amongst life’s trials (James 1)
2. Instead of candy use coins and discuss the Parable of the lost coin
3. Discuss the things people search for in life and the garbage they sift through in order to find it. Discuss the search for God.

Scripture Reference

James 1

Keywords

Halloween Alternative, Searching, Seeking, Finding, Treasures, fall festival, harvest festival



Notes



Perky the Orange Pumpkin

Illustration

Once upon a time, there was a little orange pumpkin named Perky. One day he looked around in the pumpkin patch and saw that all his friends were orange. He thought he would like to be some other color. So he sat up proud and said, "I'm a pumpkin round and fat, (make a round shape with hands) and I can change my color (point to self) just like that!" (on that, snap your fingers)

All of a sudden, at the snap of his fingers, he was a green pumpkin. Green as the grass. Perky went to play with the other pumpkins, but what do you think happened? His friends did not see him because he was the same color as the grass. He was disappointed. He didn't think it was fun to be a green pumpkin. So he said, (encourage the children to join in and repeat motions as above) "I'm a pumpkin round and fat, and I can change my color just like that!"

And then what color was he? He was blue, all over! Blue like the water and blue like the sky. Perky was so proud of his pretty new color that he decided to go for a walk and let everyone admire him.

He came to a little pond of water. But do you know what happened? Perky leaned over to look at himself and kerplop! Splash, he went into the water. Poor little Perky did not know how to swim. He was scared. He called for help. He called so loudly, his friends came rolling over to help him. They looked in the water but they could not see him because he was blue like the water.

Luckily, his friend, Timothy Turtle came swimming by. He told Perky to climb on his back. Timothy Turtle gave him a safe ride back to the shore. Perky thanked his friend for helping him. Right there he decided he didn't want to be blue anymore. So he said, "I'm a pumpkin round and fat, and I can change my color just like that!"

And what color was he then? He was yellow like the sun. He was so proud of his new color. He decided to go back to the pumpkin patch and show his friends. Well, when his friends saw him they laughed and said, "You look silly." How do you think that made Perky feel? He felt embarrassed and sad. He decided to show them and make himself into a better color. So he said, "I'm a pumpkin, round and fat, and I can change my color, just like that!"

And what color was he then? He was red, red like an apple. He began to go back and show his friends, when he saw people coming to pick a special pumpkin to take home. He thought for sure that he would get chosen because he was such a beautiful color red. But the people walked right past him. They looked at all the others and said "This one is nice and round and

Notes



fat, AND such a beautiful ORANGE color.” Many of Perky’s friends found new homes that day. But not Perky.

Perky decided he didn’t want to be a red pumpkin anymore. He decided he didn’t want to be yellow, or blue, or green either. Do you know what he thought? He thought he would just like to be himself, round and fat and a beautiful orange color - maybe he would find a nice home like his friends. So Perky said, “I’m a pumpkin round and fat, and I can change my color just like that!” And what color do you suppose he was now? A beautiful orange!

Just then a family came to the pumpkin patch. The children got out and ran to Perky. “This is the best one we’ve seen all day.” Said the little girl. “Can we take him home, please?” Said the little boy. And they scooped Perky up in their arms and took him home. Now Perky was a very happy pumpkin just being himself. Just the way God made him - an orange pumpkin.

Source: <http://www.sunday-school-lessons.com/pumpkin.html>

Keywords

Halloween Alternative, Searching, Seeking, Finding, Treasures, fall festival, harvest festival

Notes





Peter Pumpkin

Resources

1. One pumpkin, ready to carve
2. Sharp knife
3. Candle for inside of pumpkin
4. Matches or lighter

What to Do

1. Have children offer their suggestions on how to carve a face in the pumpkin. Proceed to carve a mouth, nose, and two eyes. Insert the candle and light.
2. "Now let's pretend that this pumpkin is one of our friends. Let's name him Peter Pumpkin. Pete Pumpkin is in (pick a grade or class that matches your group) like us."
3. Peter woke up one morning bright and happy and ready for the day. His light was shining and he felt good. Let's see what happens Peter's day.
4. "Oh, Peter!" cried his mother, "Did you remember to brush your teeth this morning?" "Yes, Mother," Peter lied. He really hadn't brushed his teeth, but if he stopped to do it now, he'd be late for school! So Peter lied. Peter's mouth wasn't shining quite so brightly any more. (Put the mouth piece from the pumpkin back in the mouth hole)
5. So Peter went on his way to school. He felt kind of bad lying to his mother, but he wasn't going to let it spoil his day. When he got to school, some of his friends were playing with the toys already. Peter went over, too, but they had already started using the ones he wanted. (you can adapt this to be art supplies or whatever matches your group) Peter wanted the toys too. When one of the boys left, to go talk to his teacher, Peter took the toy. Oops, there goes part of Peter's happy face. (insert eye piece)
6. Continue with similar stories for the remaining parts of the pumpkin face, each time, inserting another piece until the whole face is back in place. Watch what happens to the light.
7. "Peter's light has gone out. His face is all dark and sad now." (Relate this to sin in our lives.)
8. "There is a way for Peter's face to get bright and happy again. It's the same way that our sin can get taken care of. Do you know who helps our sin?"
9. With the answer of "Jesus" --carve a cross into the other side of the pumpkin. Pop out the face pieces again, and light the candle.
10. "With Jesus in your life, your light will never go out. The Bible tells us that Jesus is our light and that when He shines through us, our sins are forgiven and His love shines through instead!"
11. Relate how we may still sin (at this point put the pieces back into the face, except the cross) but with Jesus, the light will not go out--He is with us always!



Notes

12. Use your “Christian Jack-O-Lantern” at home and shine the cross out the window on October 31st. A witness for all the passers-by!

Source: Karen Schuster, Redeemer Lutheran--Flint, MI, <http://www.sunday-school-lessons.com/pumpkin.html>

Application

When the light of Jesus, shining through us flickers and goes out because of sin in our life, Jesus’ death can restore that light.

Keywords

pumpkin, christian alternatives to halloween, sin, evangelism, fall festival, harvest festival

Notes





Pumpkin Bowling

Description

Another bowling activity using of pumpkins and bottles.

Resources

1. A couple small round pumpkins (about the size of a bowling ball)
2. Use a knife or cutter for apple cores to cut finger holes in the pumpkins similar to those on a typical bowling ball (A Thumb, index finger and middle finger should fit in the holes.)
3. Empty plastic bottles filled with a little water and the screw top replaced (up to 12 bottles). More water will make them more difficult to knock over. Adjust the difficulty to suit your group.

Preparation

Level outdoor ground surface area about 10 feet long and 3 feet wide

What to Do

1. Place the plastic bottle “pins” at one end of the level area in a triangle formation.
2. Youth take turns bowling with the pumpkins. (Caution: pumpkins have been known to self destruct on occasion so have a few extras)
3. Award 1 point for each pin knocked down. Play one or more rounds. The person with the most points at the end wins.

Variation

While designed for a fall “Harvest Festival”, this activity can be used at any time of the year. You can also use other seasonal vegetables and fruits. Cucumbers, zucchini or gourds can be used for bowling pins. Simply cut off the bottoms to create a flat surface that can allow them to stand upright. Watermelons, cantaloupe (rock melons) or other melons can be used for the bowling ball. Choose smaller fruits and vegetables for a table top version of bowling.

Application

Trials and struggles - Have you ever felt like one of the bowling pins? What things seemed to be focused on knocking you down in life? How can you respond to setbacks / failures? (2 Corinthians 4:8)

Scripture Reference

2 Corinthians 4:8

Keywords

Struggles, Halloween, Harvest Festival, Sports, fall festival, thanksgiving Halloween costumes or if you are adverse to the idea of doing something related to Halloween, have Biblical costumes or wacky clothing items available.



Notes





Pumpkin Patch Relay

Description

In this relay, participants will try to replace the missing pieces that have been removed from their team's pumpkin. It can be used as party game for your October 31st Halloween alternative, a harvest festival, or a carnival.

Resources

1. One carved pumpkin for each team. (Keep the pieces that are cut out)
2. Sharp knife for preparing the pumpkins.

Preparation

1. Cut off the top of the pumpkins and remove the seeds and pulp so that they have been cleaned out. Cut a different face in each pumpkin, but save the pieces that you remove and set them aside.
2. Collect all the pieces you removed from the pumpkin and mix them up and place them on a table at one end of the room.
3. At the other end of the room set up a small table for each team and place each team's pumpkin on the table.

What to Do

1. The objective of this game is to have team members run across the room... grab one piece that looks like it might fit the holes in that team's pumpkin and return to his team with the piece.
2. If the piece fits in the pumpkin, the next person can run to get a new piece. If the piece doesn't fit, the next person on the team must return it to the table at the end of the room and collect another piece to try.
3. First team to complete its pumpkin wins the relay!

Variation

Play the game blindfolded.

Applications

Use it with one of these ideas for a meaningful lesson:

- Talk about how we all have holes in our lives (an emptiness) we are trying to fill. Some people may try to fill it with money, with relationships, with various types of pleasures, etc. But the only thing that can fill the emptiness we have in our lives is a relationship with God. Blaise Pascal says we were all created with a God-shaped vacuum that only he can fill.
- Just as you had to align the pieces with the various holes in the pumpkin, we have to align the various areas of our lives with the will of God. Only those things of God which are aligned with his plan for our individual lives, will fit correctly and make us whole.

Keywords

Halloween alternatives, fall festival, church events, fall carnival, fall festival, harvest festival, October 31st



Notes

Be sure to remove any furniture or other things in the room that might injure the participants. You can also place helpers at strategic locations to protect the players.





Pumpkin Picasso

Description

How well can you draw the Halloween Jack-o-Lantern?

Resources

1. Paper
2. Colored pens or pencils
3. Several different Pumpkin Faces (Drawings or actual pumpkins)
4. One blindfold for each team

Preparation

Create several different pumpkin jack-o-lantern faces either by drawing them or by cutting them into actual pumpkins. The more intricate and detailed the face, the more difficult it will be for participants.

What to Do

1. Divide your Party Participants into various teams or into couples.
2. Have each team choose one "Picasso" who will draw the pumpkin face.
3. Blindfold all the Picasso's
4. Reveal the carved pumpkin or the sketched pumpkin Jack-O-lantern face.
5. Teams must instruct their blindfolded "Picasso" using words only how to draw the pumpkin face on a piece of paper. (No touching is allowed.)
6. You might want to give them 2 or 3 minutes to complete their masterpieces.
7. Compare the masterpieces to the actual pumpkin or original drawing and the one that is closest to the original wins!
8. Swap roles and have a new "Picasso" to play again!

Variation

1. Allow team members to roam about the room and try to distract or give incorrect instructions to opposing teams. But beware, this can get very noisy! (In debrief, you can discuss the distractions and false instructions we face in life.)
2. Give the Picasso 10 seconds one round to see the jack-o-lantern face before blindfolding them. Did it help them to better understand the instructions?
3. Instead of judging which pumpkin is closest to the original, create a list of items to award various points:
 - 20 points for drawing a circle so that the line crossed or connected with itself
 - 10 points for each eye that was drawn INSIDE the circle.
 - 20 points for a stem that was actually on top of the pumpkin
 - 5 points for getting the mouth inside the circle
 - 5 points if the mouth was BELOW both of the eyes



Notes



- 5 points for each eye that was the correct shape
- 5 points for each mouth that was the correct shape
- 5 points for getting the nose inside the circle
- 5 points for putting the nose between the mouth and the eyes
- 5 points for any triangle that is drawn
- 1 point for each place that lines cross each other.
- ETC

Take it to the Next Level

- How do you judge the things you do?
- Are there things in your life that are out of place?
- What role does “vision” play in accomplishing goals?
- If you were able to see the desired result before putting on the blindfold would it have made a difference? Explain.
- Is it more important in life to focus on the Big picture or the small steps needed to reach a goal?
- Did the person giving instructions do so clearly, orderly, in a way that helped you achieve the desired results? Could any of the instructions be clearer? How could the person giving instructions be more effective?

Take it Spiritual

- Has God given us a pattern for life? Do we know what the end result is supposed to look like?
- Do you know what you are supposed to create with your life or do you feel you are struggling in the dark?
- Does God focus more on the big picture or on the small steps needed to create the end result?
- Are God’s instructions clear? Explain.
- How will God judge the end results of your life?
- What are some of our references for comparison for the Christian walk?
- What are some of the references that have played the biggest role in how you have formed your own Christian life?
- What is something you can do this week so that God can use you for greater results your life?

Key Truth

The youth will learn many things out of this activity; about how will it turn between following the pattern of this world and the plan of God for us.

Scripture Reference

Jeremiah 29:11

Keywords

Halloween Alternative, harvest festival, jack-o-lantern, October 31st, fall carnival, fall festival, pumpkin

Notes





Pumpkin Prayer

Description

A halloween-themed object lesson demonstrating how to pray.

Resources

Large pumpkin and a carving knife.

What to Do

[cut off top of pumpkin]

Lord, open my mind so I can learn new things about you.

[remove innards]

Remove the things in my life that don't please you.

Forgive the wrong things I do and help me to forgive others.

[cut open eyes]

Open my eyes to see the beauty you've made in the world around me.

[cut out nose]

I'm sorry for the times I've turned my nose at the good food you provide.

[cut out mouth]

Let everything I say please You.

[light the candle]

Lord, help me show your light to others through the things I do. Amen

Keywords

pumpkin, christian alternatives to halloween, sin, evangelism, fall festival, harvest festival

Source

Liz Curtis Higgs

<http://www.sunday-school-lessons.com/pumpkin.html>



Notes





Pumpkin Puzzles

Description

Youth will cut up pumpkins and then try to put a cut up pumpkin back together again. (This game can get a little messy with the slimy pumpkin innards.)

Resources

1. Sharp knife for each team
2. Pumpkin for each team
3. Toothpicks for each team
4. Wet towels for cleanup

Preparation

1. Prepare a table for each team by covering it with newspaper so soak up an debris from the pumpkins.
2. Place a pumpkin, a knife, and toothpicks at each table

What to Do

1. Divide the group into teams
2. Give the teams one minute to cut up the pumpkin into at least 10 pieces.
3. Teams move to a different table.
4. Teams have 2 minutes to put the pumpkins at their table back together using the toothpicks to hold it together
5. The team with the most complete pumpkin at the end of 2 minutes is the winner.

Important Note

There is some risk of injury with this activity and as such it is only suitable for older youth.

Key Truth

Fixing or putting broken pieces together is not that easy, so as in broken relationships and broken lives. But God is near to those who are brokenhearted, and as long as we seek Him with all our heart, He will make us whole again. Only God can make you whole again. You are sometimes broken to be blessed.

Application

Use this as an object lesson on how sin destroys the wholeness in our lives. Things can become quite a mess. Yet Christ restored us with his sacrifice on the cross. It's not toothpicks that hold us together but his forgiveness and the nails in his hands.

Keywords

Sin, forgiveness, halloween alternatives, pumpkins, evangelism, restoration, the work of Christ, fall festival, harvest festival, thanksgiving



Notes

NOTE: For a safer variation, cut a pumpkin yourself for each team. Try to cut them in the same pattern, and then simply allow the kids to put them together.





Pumpkin Seed Toss

Resources

1. Several Carved pumpkins with different size mouths or with different size holes in the top. As an alternative, have a watermelon seed toss on a hot summer afternoon. Cut off the ends of the watermelon. Hollow it out and then pit it back together with toothpicks. Carve funny faces in the watermelons as you would a pumpkin.
2. Small Bean Bags (Referred to as Pumpkin seeds / or watermelon seeds)
3. Place the pumpkins on a bale of hay or cloth covered table some distance from the participants.
4. Choose one of the discussion ideas below... Choosing only one will keep everyone focused and create a more powerful object lesson.

What to Do

1. Each Youth / Child is given 5 chances to try to toss the pumpkin seeds into the pumpkin.
2. Each pumpkin, depending on the size of the hole is worth different points.

Discussion

Targets

Why did you choose your pumpkin target?

Some people chose the smaller pumpkins because they were worth more. Others chose the pumpkins with the larger mouth because they were an easier target.

When it comes down to real life, do you choose your targets based on value or upon which is easier?

What are your targets in the Christian life? Are they easy? Why do you value these targets?

Your Mouth

In this game you were judged by your ability to toss an object into a mouth. But in God's kingdom we are not judged by what goes into our mouths, but by what comes out of our mouths.

What do your words reveal about you?

When is it more valuable to be a "big mouth"? To keep your mouth closed?

What does the Bible say about our words?

Keywords

Halloween Alternative, 4th of July Watermelon party, Words, Mouth, Goals, Targets, fall festival, harvest festival, thanksgiving



Notes





Skeleton Race

Description

Even if you don't want to be involved with Halloween, you'll want to grab at least one of those plastic or paper Halloween skeletons for this object lesson / game.

Resources

Purchase one or more plastic skeletons commonly found during the Halloween holiday season. You can also use a paper skeleton that is already cut into parts or make your own.

Preparation

Separate the plastic skeleton parts into pieces or cut them out if they are on paper.

What to Do

1. Obtain one skeleton for each team.
2. Place all the parts for each skeleton in its own sack and give one sack to each team.
3. When you say 'Go', each team must take out the skeleton parts and correctly reconstruct the skeletons.
4. Award prizes for the fastest times. You can also give additional prizes for weirdest skeleton, etc.
5. Play some crazy music while the game is going on like "Dem Bones"

Variation

1. Hide the skeleton bones before the lesson starts.
2. Let the participants search for them and then reassemble the skeleton.
3. For older youth, you can hide the bones and then write out clues for them to follow to find them.
4. You can also get a few skeletons and break the kids into teams. You can have it as a free for all (i.e. hide all parts and award the first team to find one of each part and put the skeleton together), or you can add a spot of color or a colored ribbon to identify which skeletons belong to which team.
5. Team members must first find a complete set of parts... then they must assemble it correctly.

Application

One of the scary things about Halloween is the skeletons. A lot of people are afraid of death. When they see bones it reminds them of death and they become afraid. But they are just bones and there is nothing to be scared about. They can't come to life right? Or can they?

The prophet Ezekiel might have had the first Halloween scare! We don't know what day it took place, but it probably wasn't October 31st.

Let's look at Ezekiel 37 to find out more!



Notes

Read the key verses from this vision.

God's question to Ezekiel, "Can these dry bones live?" (v3) might be a question a lot of people ask on 31st of October.

But God was talking about more than a skeleton in a closet. He was giving Ezekiel a glimpse into the future when Jesus would conquer death and bring life to us. Jesus did conquer death on a cross. He also resurrected Lazarus from the dead.

Yet God was giving Ezekiel a picture of something more.

The bones represented the house of Israel and their dryness and loss of hope. (v11) The spirit of God would enter their bodies and they would experience restoration and life.

There may be a situation in your own life when you feel like a pile of dry bones. A new life may seem impossible. But like Ezekiel's response to God when asked "Can these bones live?", we can answer "You alone know." God knows and with God all things are possible.

God can breath life into any situation you are in. Not only can he bring you a new life, but he can also give you a new heart: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

- We are all dead in our sin, like a pile of dry bones (Ephesians 2:1)
- But God, because of his great love for us, makes us alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5)
- We experience new life through faith in Christ! Doing good things doesn't get us eternal life, but we are made alive in Christ that we might do good things for Him. (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Lyrics to Dem Bones

E-ze-kiel cried, "Dem dry bones!" (x3)

Oh hear the word of the Lord.

*The foot bone con-nected to the leg-bone,
The leg bone connected to the knee-bone,
The knee bone connected to the thigh-bone,
The thigh bone connected to the back-bone,
The back bone connected to the neck-bone
The neck bone connected to the head-bone
Oh hear the word of the Lord!*

Dem bones, dem bones gon-na walk a-roun' (x3)

Oh hear the word of the Lord

*The head-bone connected to the neck-bone,
the neck-bone connected to the back-bone
The backbone connected to the thigh-bone
the thighbone connected to the knee-bone
the kneebone connected to the leg bone
the leg bone connected to the foot bone
Oh hear the word of the Lord*

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 37, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Ephesians 2:1, Ephesians 2:4-5, Ephesians 2:8-10

Keywords

Halloween, skeleton, death, life, bones

Notes





Sleepy Hollow

Description

Can you play the wacky game without losing your head?

How quickly can you pass the hat around the circle? While you may not lose your head playing this game, the head to head play is wild and fun!

Resources

1 hat for each team -- Use cowboy hats for a western theme, a baseball hat for a sports theme, etc., or simply find two of the wackiest hats you can.

What to Do

1. Divide the group into two evenly numbered circles all holding hands.
2. Place a hat on the head of one player in each circle.
3. The objective is to pass the hat round the circle from head to head without releasing your hands.
4. The team which passes the hat round the circle first wins the game.

Variations

- For a more difficult variation, play it with only right hands, or do not allow the use of hands at all!
- For Halloween or a fall festival, use your favorite mask or hat from a costume!

Keywords

games, hat, Halloween, fall festival

Notes





The Mummy

Description

Use this game about a mummy as part of Halloween Alternative or as an introduction to the story of Lazarus.

Resources

Several Rolls of Toilet Paper (One or more for each team)

What to Do

1. Divide the youth into teams.
2. Each team selects one person on their team to be the mummy. you could also randomly appoint a member as the mummy by drawing straws or some other unbiased method.
3. The objective is to wrap the team member up like a mummy using the rolls of toilet paper.
4. You can choose the winner as:
 - the team that uses up their rolls of toilet paper the quickest,
 - the best wrapped mummy,
 - the scariest,
 - most creative, etc

Variations

- Have the teams wrap up youth leaders instead of one of their own team members.
- Instead of teams, split the group into pairs. You can also make the partners wrap each other before they can win so EVERYONE ends up as a mummy.
- Set a timer and award the group that has the best mummy at the end of the time.

Application

When many people think about mummies, they think about Halloween costumes, scary movies, and Egypt. But the Bible also has a story about someone who was wrapped up like a mummy. His name was Lazarus and his story can be found in John 11: 1-46. When Lazarus died, Jesus brought him back to life. But his sisters were not SCARED, they were very happy. Jesus had brought their brother back and he was the same person he was as before. Jesus did it so that he could show how powerful God is and also so we could know for sure that he will also bring us back to life in heaven if we believe in him and trust him.

Scripture Reference

John 11:1-46

Keywords

Halloween alternative, Halloween Costume, death, mummy, resurrection, Lazarus, October 31st, Halloween party games



Notes

Note:

You may want to make game rules such as:

- Do NOT wrap the head or face
- Do not throw the rolls of toilet paper.
- Everyone on the team must be involved.





Trick or Treat Relay Game

Description

Messy game based upon the common Halloween adage:
“Trick-or-treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat.”

Resources

1. Any kind of wrapped candy. Chocolates get a little messy, but sometimes that is the intention. Use miniature candy bars if your youths are game for something a little messy and gross.
2. Damp towels for cleaning up

What to Do

1. Break the group into teams. Team members must pair up with a partner for the relay.
2. One person of each pair takes off their shoes.
3. Give each pair a wrapped candy bar.
4. The object of the game is for the first person to open the candy with your toes and hands behind your back and then feed it to the next person with your feet.
5. The person eating the candy bar must chew and swallow it before the next pair on the team can start.
6. The first team finishes all their candy bars wins.

Application

Sin often seems a treat. It may even be pleasurable, but there is always a trick involved. But if God is in our hearts, the enemy can never win over us. We can resist sins if we are going to rebuke it in the Name of our Savior Jesus Christ. Greater is He that is in us, than he who is in this world.

Scripture Reference

1 John 4:4

Keywords

Halloween alternative, trick-or-treat, deception, sin, fall of man, harvest festival, fall festival



Notes

Thanksgiving

Last Thursday of November





Cluck, Cluck, Gobble

Description

This Thanksgiving party game is played similar to the classic children's game "Duck, Duck, Goose" but with some variations to make it a little more sophisticated for youth and adapt it to the Thanksgiving theme.

Instead of "Duck", use "cluck, cluck" and make the motion for a chicken by flapping your elbows like wings.

Instead of "goose" make a "gobble, gobble" sound and grab the skin under the chin and pull it down reflecting the "wattle" of a Turkey (The red fold of skin that hangs beneath a turkey's chin.)

Preparation

Players may either sit in chairs, stand in a circle, or sit on the ground.

What to Do

1. Players sit in a circle facing inward.
2. One player walks around the outside of the circle. As he or she passes each person in the circle he / she must tap them GENTLY on the head and make the motions and sounds for either the chicken or the turkey.
3. When the person outside the circle makes the sounds and motion for a "Turkey", the tapped player must leave his place in the circle and chase the person who just tapped him around the outside of the circle.
4. The first person back to the empty spot just vacated gets to fill it.
5. If the person doing the tapping succeeds, the the person replaced now begins the process again, walking around the circle making the sounds and motions until he or she selects another person to be the turkey.
6. If the person doing the tapping fails three times, they are required to walk around inside the center of the circle - "the oven" and make turkey sounds. This adds to the confusion. (to speed up the process of elimination, you can have anyone who fails more than once to go to the center)
7. You can continue the game until only 3 or four persons remain as part of the circle. Declare these the winners and give them an appropriate prize for Thanksgiving.

Keywords

Thanksgiving holiday, icebreaker, game, celebration, party games



Notes



In Everything Give Thanks

Notes

Resources

1. Several pairs of scissors
2. Newspapers and magazines
3. Blank thank you notes
4. Pens or pencils

Preparation

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

What to Do

1. Say, "Search through the newspapers and magazines and find one story about someone experiencing either good or bad circumstances. Cut out the story using the scissors for easy reference."
2. Once everyone has a story, collect them into a pile and shuffle them up. Walk around the room and ask each youth to take the story on the top of the pile.
3. Give each person a blank thank you note and a pen or pencil.
4. Say, "Read through the story you've been given and write a thank you note to God. Express how you would be thankful in the circumstances your story describes."
5. When youth have finished writing their Thank You notes, have each youth, in turn, read his or her thank you note aloud. (You can do this in pairs or small groups if you have many youth group members).
6. Then youth to respond to each circumstance: "In the circumstance you read about, how does being thankful affect your perspective?"

Application

God wants us to be thankful in all circumstances -- in both good situations and bad ones. Being thankful changes our perspective. It helps us take our eyes off ourselves and the circumstances and look to God instead.

Scripture Reference

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

"Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Keywords

thanks, perspective, thanksgiving, thanks, circumstances





Mayflower Memory

What to Do

1. Sit everyone down in a circle.
2. The first person says, "I am sailing on the Mayflower, and I am taking..." [The first person then says something that starts with "A" like apples.]
3. The second person says, "I am sailing on the Mayflower, and I am taking..." [The second person then repeats what the first person said and adds something that begins with "B."]
4. The third person must remember what the first two people said and then adds a "C" item.
5. Continue through the alphabet. If you complete the alphabet go through a second or third time, adding a new item at each letter to those previously stated before.
6. If a player can't remember all the items, that player drops out, until there is one player left. Award the winner!

Variation

The first player starts by saying, "At my Thanksgiving dinner I ate turkey." Each adds a thanksgiving food. In this variation, the items do not need to follow the alphabet.

Keywords

Thanksgiving Games, Holiday Games



Notes





Pin the Tail on the Turkey

Resources

Large picture of a turkey (If you aren't very artistic, use an projector and a coloring book image and project it on to a large piece of poster board.) Leave a gap for a missing large tail feather.

What to Do

1. Blindfold one child / youth and have them attach the feather to the turkey.
2. Play this game for Thanksgiving in the same way you would play "pin the tails on the donkey." Instead of a donkey tail, pin a feather on the turkey where it would belong in the gap.
3. The youth that can pin the feathers closer will have an extra prize.

Variations

- Pin the snood (the red flesh growth that hangs over the beak) on the turkey
- Pin the wattle on the turkey.
- Leave all the tail feathers off the turkey and award every child who gets one near the right place.

Important Note

If played in groups, notice if members from other groups attempt to distract the person who is blindfolded.

Application

It's easy to get distracted when there's so many other voices shouting instructions at you. Some of the instructions are misleading, others are distracting. However, if you pay attention to the right voices in the crowd, they will lead you on to the right path. We need to learn to recognize God's voice in the "noise" of the world so that we can hear, understand, and obey His directions for our lives.

Scripture Reference

John 10:14-16

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Turkey, Good Shepherd, hearing God's voice



Notes



Tail Feathers

Resources

1. At least 2 Clothespins for every participant
2. Craft feathers

Preparation

With a glue gun or piece of adhesive tape, attach feathers to both legs of each clothespin.

What to Do

1. Give every person two clothespins (Turkey Feathers) as they enter.
2. When everyone has their turkey feathers, tell them you're giving them two minutes to get rid of their feathers. The only way for participants to get rid of the feathers is onto pin them to someone else.
3. Chaos results as everyone tries to get rid of their feathers!
4. Award a prize to the person with the least number of feathers. The person with the MOST feathers is the official TURKEY!

Variation

As a variation, use this as an icebreaker activity for your next Thanksgiving Party or Thanksgiving Celebration. After playing the game, each person must state one "Fun Fact" about themselves for each feather they are wearing. If they have no feathers they only have to say ONE thing about themselves.

Application

While we don't carry clothespins with us through life, we do carry our sins. Sometimes they pinch us in uncomfortable places. Sometimes we don't even realize they are there. But the sins carries with them pain and suffering.

Jesus suffered the ultimate pain and suffering on the cross as he bore the penalty for our sin. Ultimately that penalty is death. He chose to bear the consequences for us. He did not run away from sin, but said place all your sins on me and I will carry them for you. (Let everyone take their clothespins off and stick them to a cardboard cross.) While pain and suffering still accompany sin in our lives, the penalty of death has been removed for those who will trust in Christ.

Keywords

Turkey, Thanksgiving Party Game, Thanksgiving events, Sin, forgiveness, cross



Notes



Tearable Turkey

Resources

1. Sheet of brown construction paper for each participant.

Preparation

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

What to Do

1. Participants must rip a sheet of construction paper into the shape of a turkey -- behind their back.
2. They are not allowed to look at their creation until it is complete.
3. Hang the works of art up for everyone to judge.
4. Give prizes for the best-looking turkeys.

Keywords

Thanksgiving Games, Holiday Games



Notes





Ten Lepers

Description

Use this Thanksgiving Children's sermon / Thanksgiving Object lesson to create a situation in the Sunday school classroom or Worship service to illustrate the story in Luke 17 of the healing of ten lepers and the ONE that return to Jesus and thanked him for what he had done.

Resources

1. 10 small gifts (You can choose any gift as long as the gifts are the same and something the participants would enjoy. A candy bar or individually wrapped piece of candy works well.)

Preparation

Put all the smaller gifts inside a box and wrap it box so that it looks special! (Do not individually wrap the smaller gifts.)

Write the following instructions on slips of paper for each youth and put them in a bowl.

- On 1 slip of paper

"Do not show this to anyone. Do not talk about it to anyone. Congratulations: You are the grand prize winner! Later when I announce the prize, come forward and claim your prize! But before you can claim your prize you must agree to ONE condition. If ANYONE asks you to share, you MUST give them one of the smaller prizes found inside, even if it means you will have none left for yourself!"

- On 10 of the slips of paper, write the following instructions:

"Do not show this to anyone. Do not talk about it to anyone. Someone will be announced as a grand prize winner. Once the person has unwrap his prize, go to him and ask him to share it with you. When he does, do not say ANYTHING. Do NOT say thank you or anything else. Take the candy and return to your seat. If you say anything after he shares his prize with you, you will lose it"

- On the remaining slips of paper (one for each other person participating) write:

"Do not show this to anyone. Do not talk about it to anyone. Something interesting is going to happen today. Watch carefully. Do not do or make any comments until I announce that "We are going to discuss what just happened."

What to Do

1. Pass the bowl around with each participant taking a slip of paper.
2. Ask the participants if they have read their instructions and if they are clear about what to do.
3. Once everyone has understood, announce that someone has won a prize and invite the grand prize winner to come forward.



Notes



Variation

Add an additional instruction to the 10. "Leave the room and stay outside until you hear that someone has received the grand prize. Do not talk to anyone inside the room. Do not touch anyone inside the room."

Take it to the Next Level

To the whole group:

What was strange about what just happened?

To the grand prize winner:

How did it feel to receive the prize?

Did you say any words of thanks for it? Why or why not?

How did it feel to have to give what you received away to everyone else?

Were you upset that no one said "thank you"?

Would you have felt different if someone has expressed a few words of thanks?

To the 10 who received gifts:

Did any of you receiving the candy feel bad about accepting it without expressing your thanks?

To all:

Why are thanks important?

and bad ones. Being thankful changes our perspective. It helps us take our eyes off ourselves and the circumstances and look to God instead.

Application

Read the story of the ten lepers in Luke 17.

Lepers were required to keep away from people in fear that others would catch their disease. The disease is quite terrible, that you cannot feel anything. No pain, nothing. Because of this they get infections and injure themselves without knowing it. Then the infection spreads and they smell like rotting meat. They often lose finger arms feet and other body parts.

Lepers were outcasts. Their condition had made them unclean in the eyes of the public and the authorities. They were not allowed to join in with the rest of society. They had to avoid ANY contact with any other people. They could not touch anyone and no one dared to touch them. They could not touch anything that others would touch. And no one dared touch anything that belonged to them. They could not stay in the same place, they could not worship with others, they could not work, could not drink the same water, could not eat the same food. They were forced to live away from everyone else - completely isolated. They were rejected. Lepers were not allowed to mingle with the public in any way.

If the lepers had tried to approach Jesus there would have been a riot. Instead, they kept their distance and shouted all together as one voice "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" In this way, Jesus was drawn to them. By what they had heard about Jesus, they knew that had the power to heal them.

Jesus healed them, but then Jesus did something that may seem a little strange. He asked them to go to the Priests? Why? Even though healed, people would want to have a public validation that they had been healed.

Notes



Only the Priests could do that. Priests were the ones who could inspect a leper and say, “yes, you are clean now, go free. You don’t have to remain an outcast anymore”. By this, Jesus not only healed the lepers, but also brought them back into fellowship with the community.

How do you think the Savior felt as the lepers left?

How do they think it felt when the one leper returned to thank Jesus for healing him?

What kinds of things should we be grateful for? (Make a list on the board)

What are some things that have happened to you for which you should be thankful?

Closing

God has done and still doing so many things in our lives. The bible says, all good things come from God. There are so many things we have to thank God for. That is why we have to offer God a prayer of thanks for what he has done in our lives.

Scripture Reference

Luke 17

Keywords

Thanks, gratitude, leprosy, ten lepers, 10 lepers, giving thanks, thanksgiving, Thanksgiving Holiday

Notes





Thanksgiving Back to Back

Notes

Description

A variety of simple images related to the Thanksgiving.

Resources

1. Some possibilities include a turkey, a pumpkin, a pie, an Indian, fall leaves, the Mayflower ship, pilgrims, etc. You can also use simple greeting cards for the design.

What to Do

1. Form teams of six people.
2. Instruct each team to sit in a line, one person behind another, and take a vow of silence for the duration of the game.
3. Give the first person in each line a pencil and a piece of paper.
4. Then show the last person in each line a simple image of an Thanksgiving object.
5. That person must use his or her finger to draw the object on the back of the person in front of him or her.
6. This continues until the drawing reaches the first person in line. He or she must draw it on the piece of paper.
7. Have judges determine which team's picture closest resembles the original picture.
8. If time permits, play more rounds, letting team members change positions if they wish.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Holiday Games





Thanksgiving Bingo

Resources

1. Bingo cards for each participant.
2. Make Bingo cards using a grid of squares (5X5) and placing Thanksgiving related items in each square.
3. Make each card different in the choice of items on it and the placement of the items.
4. Coins or markers to cover squares. You can also simply allow them to mark on the cards.
5. Bingo items in bag to pull out. Write them on small pieces of paper or ping pong balls.

Preparation

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

What to Do

1. Play according to standard bingo rules.
2. Randomly draw the items from a bag and call them out..
3. The first person to get all of a row horizontally, vertically, or diagonally yells out "Gobble, Gobble, Gobble,"
4. Possible Thanksgiving Bingo items:
1621, Autumn, Blessings, Corn, Cornucopia, Cranberry, Dinner, England, Fall, Family, Feast, Giblets, Gobble, God, Gravy, Harvest, Mayflower, New World, November, Pie, Pilgrim, Plymouth Rock, Pumpkin, Puritans, Stuffing, Thanks, Thursday, Turkey, Wampanoag Indians, wattle

Variation

Instead of words, you can also include photos of common objects associated with Thanksgiving and Harvest

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Holiday, Fun



Notes





Thanksgiving Boggle



Notes

Resources

1. Timer
2. Paper and pen for each participant

What to Do

1. Participants are to create as many little words as possible before the timer runs out using only the letters in the word "Thanksgiving".
2. Whoever gets the most words wins!

Sample Wordlist

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

Application

ag, agin, aging, against, agist, ah, aah, ahi, ai, ain, ayin, ait, akin, an, angst, ani, ankh, ant, anti, as, ash, ask, asking, at, gain, gaining, gainst, gait, gan, gas, gash, gaskin, gast, gat, gating, ghash, ghat, ghi, giant, gin, gink, gist, git, gnash, gnashing, gnat, ha, hag, haik, haint, hang, hanging, hank, hant, has, hast, hastening, hat, hating, having, hi, hin, hint, his, hisn, hist, hit, ikat, in, ink, inn, is, it, its, ka, kain, kas, kat, khan, khat, khi, ki, kiang, kin, kina, king, kist, kit, kith, kiva, knight, knish, knit, kvas, na, nag, nah, nigh, night, nit, nth, sag, sain, saint, saith, saki, sang, sangh, sank, sat, sati, satin, sating, savin, saving, sh, sha, shag, shaking, shank, shanty, shaving, shin, shining, shiv, shiva, shtik, si, sigh, sight, sighting, sign, signing, signa, sika, sin, sing, singing, sinh, sink, sinking, sit, sith, ska, skag, skat, skating, ski, skiing, skin, skint, skit, snag, snath, snit, stag, staging, staig, stain, staining, stang, stank, sting, stinging, stink, stinking, ta, tag, tain, takin, taking, tan, tang, tank, task, tasking, tav, than, thank, thanking, thin, thing, think, thinking, this, ti, tin, ting, tsk, vagi, vain, van, vang, vanish, vanishing, vas, vast, vast, vat, via, vig, viga, vina, vis, visa, vista, vita

Variation

This game can also be done by groups.

Keywords

Thanksgiving holiday party games, thanks, gratitude





Thanksgiving Memory Game



Notes

What to Do

1. Sit everyone in a circle. (You can also play this as a family around the Thanksgiving Dinner table)
2. Start the game by saying, the chosen phrase (i.e. "This Thanksgiving I am thankful for....") then add something you are thankful for... (i.e. "my health")
3. The next player must repeat what is said and then add something they are thankful for. (This Thanksgiving I am thankful for my health and my parents.")
4. Each player in sequence must repeat the previous responses in the exact same order then add one of their own.
5. Players cannot add something that is already mentioned in the list.
6. If a player makes a mistake, he or she is eliminated from the game
7. The game continues around the circle until only 1 person is left.

Variation

When someone makes a mistake, you can choose to start over with a new list of items or continue around the circle with the same list.

Take it to the Next Level

What is easy or difficult to think of new things you were thankful for?

Were there some things mentioned by people that were a surprise to you?

Were there things in the list that were mentioned by other people, but that you were NOT thankful for?

If you played this game every day, do you think your answers would change?

If you played this game every day, do you think your life would be different?

Your perspective?

Take it Spiritual

Why is an attitude of gratefulness, of thankfulness important?

How does an attitude of Thankfulness change us? What effect does it have on the way we approach life and other people?

How can you cultivate the habit of being thankful in your own life?

Application

To have a thankful heart really can help us change. It helps us being grateful all the time, and to appreciate even the smallest blessings that we received from God. We must always remember that we have to thank God from the smallest to the biggest thing that He has given us, and that is the life of His Son Jesus Christ.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, thankfulness, Holiday, Party Game, Dinner Table Activity





Thanksgiving Twister

Resources

1. Instead of a twister game sheet, cut Thanksgiving shapes from construction paper and use sticky-tack to adhere them to the floor.
2. Make a twister spinner that includes right hand, left hand, right foot, left foot and another that contains the various Thanksgiving symbols.
3. Some optional symbols are:
Autumn Leaf, Corn, Cornucopia, Cranberries, Family, Mayflower ship, Pie, Pilgrim, Plymouth Rock, Pumpkin, Puritans, Turkey, Indian

Preparation

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

What to Do

1. Play a game of Twister, but instead of colored dots use pictures of Thanksgiving items taped to the floor.
2. Change the spinner to reflect the pictures.

Variation

Instead of playing on an individual basis, divide the group into teams. The team with the last remaining members in the game wins.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Games, Just for fun



Notes





Top Turkey Artist

Resources

1. Sheet of paper and a tray or hard cover book for each participant.

Preparation

Set the scissors and the pile of newspapers and magazines in the center of the room / table.

What to Do

1. Everyone places a tray or large book on top their head with a piece of blank paper on it.
2. Participant are to draw on the page resting on the top of their head, without looking, according to the instructions given.
3. Instructions might be:
 - Draw a circle for the body of the Turkey.
 - Draw the turkey's head and neck on top of the body.
 - Draw two feet for the turkey.
 - Add the turkey's beak and waddle.
 - Add the Turkey's Tail feathers
4. At the end of instructions, everyone removes the pictures from their heads. It can be very funny to see what they have drawn.
5. Scoring options:
 - 2 points for every line that crosses
 - 1 point if your turkey's feet are touching the body
 - 1 point if your turkey's head is attached to the body.
 - 1 point for feather that is ON the turkey.
6. Award the person with the greatest number of points the prize!

Keywords

Thanksgiving Games, Holiday Games



Notes





Turkey Hunt

Preparation

Play a classic game of “Hide and Seek,” but call it a turkey hunt.

What to Do

1. One player covers his eyes and counts to a number while all the turkeys hide.
2. When he reaches the number, he uncovers his eyes and tries to find all the turkeys!

Variation

Only one turkey hides. When the first player is far away from the hidden turkey, everyone else makes quiet gobbling sounds. As he gets closer to the turkey’s hiding location, everyone makes louder gobbling sounds until the hunter finds the Turkey.

Keywords

Thanksgiving Games, Holiday Games



Notes





Turkey in a Tree

Preparation

Have kids get in groups of three. Two of the kids hold hands so that there is an open space in the middle between them, as a hollow tree. The remaining participant stands in the center between the arms and is the “Turkey in a tree”.

What to Do

1. There are three options that participants must respond to in this game:
2. If HUNTER is called, all the trees remain where they are and the turkeys must flee and duck into another tree. A tree may only contain one turkey. The last turkey to find a tree to hide in is eliminated from the game along with the tree.
3. If LIGHTNING is called, all turkeys remain in their positions and the trees must change position and partners. The last two people to position themselves holding hands around a turkey are eliminated.
4. If EARTHQUAKE is called, everyone, both turkeys and trees, must change positions and find new partners. Turkeys can become trees and vice-versa as long as there are new groups of three. As with the other options, the last group to form is eliminated.
5. Continue the game until there is only one group of three remaining and give them a prize.

Important Note

Make sure that there is enough space for the youth to run to avoid accidents.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Just for fun



Notes



Count Your Blessings



Notes

Resources

1. A blank sheet of paper and something to write with for each person
2. A timer

What to Do

1. On your signal to begin, everyone should write down everything they are thankful for that can be described in two words or less.
2. Set a timer, for two minutes (or less) and tell them to begin.
3. When the timer goes off each youth must count how many items they have.
4. The person with the most items should read their list and if anyone else has those items on their list also, then everyone who has the items must cross them off the list. Only unique items remain.
5. The next person continues in the same way, calling out the items that remain on his/ her list. If the item is unique it remains. If someone else has the same item, then all who have it cross the item off their lists.
6. Continue until everyone has gone, then each person must count up the unique items he or she has on the list.
7. Award a prize for the person with the highest number of unique answers.

Application

What was the most surprising thing that someone was thankful for?

How did creating your list affect you?

Did you have more or less items than you thought you would have?

How did it make you feel when you discovered that others felt blessed for the same things as you?

Of all the things on your list, which is most significant for you?

Scripture Reference

Colossians 3:17

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him”

Keywords

thanks, perspective, thanksgiving, thanks, circumstances





Kernel Cornucopia

Description

The cornucopia, also known in English as the Horn of Plenty, is a symbol of prosperity and affluence, dating back to the 5th century BC. It was often filled with the fruits of the harvest which included corn, fruits, and other vegetables. Corn itself was one of the staple foods of the early settlers.

Resources

1. Dried Corn Kernels or popcorn
2. Candy Corn
3. Bowls

What to Do

You could use the following three games on their own, or at stations where youth rotate around, or as a relay.

Turkey Feed

1. Turkeys are often fed corn to prepare them as guests at Thanksgiving.
2. Fill a bowl with dried corn kernels and add several pieces of candy corn.
3. Blindfolded players and have them retrieve the candy corn from the bowl within a designate amount of time.
4. As a gross out variation, have them retrieve it with their bare feet then eat it.
5. The player that retrieves the most candy corn in the designated time limit wins.

Corn Pitching

1. How accurately can you toss corn kernels into bowls?
2. Players takes turns pitching ten corn kernels, one at a time, into a bowl from a set distance.
3. You might choose to have various bowls of different sizes and at different distances.
4. Display the points based upon difficulty.
5. Keep score of how many kernels end up in the various bowls.
6. The winner is the one with the highest score after three rounds.

Odds or Evens

1. Can you guess if there are odd or even numbers of kernels are in your partners hand?
2. Each player starts out with the same number of corn kernels.
3. Players rotate about the room pairing up with others.
4. When they find a partner, one player hides a few kernels of in his hand.
5. The other player must guess if the number of corn kernels is odd or even. If guessed correctly, the player can add the kernels to his own collection.



Notes

Discussion

In these games are you someone who plays it safe or shoots for the moon? Was the voyage to the new world by the pilgrims a safe bet or a big risk? What were some of the potential risks? Potential rewards? What were some of your strategies in these games?

Application

Some people play it safe in life. Others take risks. Most of the time we evaluate if the potential reward is worth the risk. For the Pilgrims, coming to America was a great risk. But the lure of religious freedom was worth the risk. Many of them lost their lives in pursuit of the opportunity to freely worship God as their conscience dictated. After the first year of the Plymouth colony, only half of the 102 settlers were still alive. Times were hard. Later during a particularly tough winter it was said that each person had only 5 kernels of corn to live on each day.

Yet in spite of their hardships, they gave thanks to God. Eternal blessings outweighed the physical ones. There may be times when we do not have much, but to have a relationship with God is worth any cost and any hardship! They made a choice, a decision to pursue God at any cost.

Has God called you to do something out of the ordinary?

To what has God called you?

What risks are worth the reward of knowing Jesus as Lord and living for him?

Just as a single grain of corn has the potential for an abundant harvest, even one decision for God can lead to a harvest of blessings in your life. What choice is God calling you to make today? Take a kernel of corn home as a reminder of a decision God has called you to make for him regardless of the risk.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Giving, Thanks, gratitude, pilgrims, risk, cost

Notes





Thanksgiving A to Z

What to Do

1. Using the alphabet as a guide, the first person tells everyone the things he is thankful for that start with the letter “A,” like apples and aunts.
2. The next person uses the letter “B”. Keep going around until all the letters are used up.
3. If people still have things to add, go a second round.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Thanks, Blessings, Thanksgiving Games, Holiday Games



Notes





ABC's of Thanksgiving

Illustration

A lthough things are not perfect
B ecause of trial or pain
C ontinue in thanksgiving
D o not begin to blame
E ven when the times are hard
F ierce winds are bound to blow
G od is forever able
H old on to what you know
I magine life without His love
J oy would cease to be
K eep thanking Him for all the things
L ove imparts to thee
M ove out of "Camp Complaining"
N o weapon that is known
O n earth can yield the power
P raise can do alone
Q uit looking at the future
R edeem the time at hand
S tart every day with worship
T o "thank" is a command
U ntil we see Him coming
V ictorious in the sky
W e'll run the race with gratitude
eX alting God most high
Y es, there will be good times and yes some will be bad, but...
Z ion waits in glory...where none are ever sad!

Source: Cindy Blackamore, copyright 1994 - Used by Permission

Keywords

Thanks, Thanksgiving



Notes





Around the Thanksgiving Table

Illustration

One Thanksgiving season a family was seated around their table, looking at the annual holiday bird. From the oldest to the youngest, they were to express their praise. When they came to the 5-year-old in the family, he began by looking at the turkey and expressing his thanks to the turkey, saying although he had not tasted it he knew it would be good. After that rather novel expression of thanksgiving, he began with a more predictable line of credits, thanking his mother for cooking the turkey and his father for buying the turkey. But then he went beyond that. He joined together a whole hidden multitude of benefactors, linking them with cause and effect.

He said, "I thank you for the checker at the grocery store who checked out the turkey. I thank you for the grocery store people who put it on the shelf. I thank you for the farmer who made it fat. I thank you for the man who made the feed. I thank you for those who brought the turkey to the store."

Using his Columbo-like little mind, he traced the turkey all the way from its origin to his plate. And then at the end he solemnly said "Did I leave anybody out?"

His 2-year-old brother, embarrassed by all those proceedings, said, "God."

Solemnly and without being flustered at all, the 5-year-old said, "I was about to get to him."

Well, isn't that the question about which we ought to think at Thanksgiving time? Are we really going to get to him this Thanksgiving?

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Thanks



Notes





Be Thankful For...

Illustration

The mess to clean after a party because it means I have been surrounded by friends.

The taxes I pay because it means that I'm employed.

The clothes that fit a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.

My shadow who watches me work because it means I am out in the sunshine.

A lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning and gutters that need fixing because it means I have a home.

All the complaining I hear about our government because it means we have freedom of speech.

The space I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking.

My huge heating bill because it means I am warm.

The lady behind me in church who sings off key because it means that I can hear.

The piles of laundry and ironing because it means I have clothes to wear.

Weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive.

The alarm that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I'm alive.

Getting too much email bogs me down but at least I know I have friends who are thinking of me.

Author Unknown

Keywords

Thanks, Thanksgiving



Notes





Blessings

Illustration

Today I stood at my window and cursed the pouring rain,
Today a desperate farmer prayed for his fields of grain
My weekend plans are ruined, it almost makes me cry
While the farmer lifts his arms and blesses the clouded sky.

The alarm went off on Monday and I cursed my work routine,
Next door a laid off mechanic feels the empty pockets of his jeans.
I can't wait for my vacation, some time to take for me,
He doesn't know tonight how he'll feed his family.

I cursed my leaky roof and the grass I need to mow,
A homeless man downtown checks for change in the telephone.
I need a new car, mine is getting really old,
He huddles in a doorway, seeking shelter from the cold.

With blessings I'm surrounded, the rain, a job, a home,
Though my eyes are often blinded by the things I think I own.

Keywords

Blessing, thanksgiving



Notes





Christ's Banquet Table

Illustration

Imagine that you have been invited to Thanksgiving dinner at the home of the richest man in the world. You pull up a chair at a table two football fields long that's piled high with so much turkey, dressing, potatoes, bread, carrot cake, pumpkin pie, mixed vegetables, milk, and anything else you can think of that the table is about to break under the load. Your host tells you to take your fill of anything you see.

Thank you very much,' you say. 'Might I please have half a cranberry?'

Your astonished friend nearly chokes on a candied yam and replies, 'Please have all you would like. That's why I invited you! You're hungry, and here is everything you need to get full.'

'Thank you so very much,' you say. 'Perhaps I will have a sip of water.'

Ridiculous, we say. Who would ever act like that? If it were us, we'd gobble up so much food they'd have to use a bulldozer to move us out.

Why is it, then, that when it comes to getting full spiritually, we settle for a half a cranberry?

Paul doesn't want that for us, and in this passage he reminds us that in Christ we have all we need to be all that God wants us to be.

Not infrequently you'll come across people who say either in word or deed that their lives are impoverished. Sometimes, remarkably, you'll find a believer who for some reason is looking for something else. He is not satisfied. She is not filled full.

Remember: The extent to which you need something else to fill you full is the extent to which you find Christ deficient. If you find Christ deficient, then you have found something in contradiction of Scripture, which says that in Christ all the fullness of Deity resides in bodily form.

We've got to decide, Is it true that in Christ we have all that we need?

You'll find in the church today many people propagating all kinds of things that believers 'need.' Not infrequently these things that Christians 'need' have exceedingly tenuous connections to Christ, 'in whom all fullness dwells.' As soon as someone tells you that you need this, that, and the other thing, ask yourself, Is this in any way diverting my attention from Christ? Is there any sense in which this is perverting the gospel of Christ, which tells me all fullness is in him? If I get into this particular thing, will it in any way subvert the authority of Christ in my life?



Notes

Beware! Scripture declares that in Christ is all fullness, and if you are related to him, you have been given all fullness. We don't need something super-added, extra-plus to Christ. What we need is to daily discover all that we already have in him.

How much have you eaten off of Christ's banquet table? How full are you?"

Source: Secrets of Spiritual Stamina, Stuart Briscoe

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Feast, Abundance, Blessings

Notes





Everyday Thanksgiving

Illustration

Even though I clutch my blanket and growl when the alarm rings,
Thank you, Lord, that I can hear.
There are many who are deaf.

Even though I keep my eyes closed against the morning light as
long as possible,
Thank you, Lord, that I can see.
Many are blind.

Even though I huddle in my bed and put off rising,
thank you Lord, that I have the strength to rise.
There are many who are bedridden.

Even though the first hour of my day is hectic, when socks are lost, toast is
burned, and tempers are short, my children are so loud,
Thank you, Lord, for my family.
There are many who are lonely.

Even though our breakfast table never looks like the pictures in magazines
and the menu is at times unbalanced,
thank you, Lord, for the food we have.
There are many who are hungry.

Even though the routine of my job is often monotonous,
Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to work.
There are many who have no job.

Even though I grumble and bemoan my fate from day to day and wish my
circumstances were not so modest,
Thank you, Lord, for life.

Author Unknown

Keywords

Thanks, Thanksgiving, Being Thankful

Notes





Thanksgiving Quotes

Illustration

“We ought to give thanks for all fortune: if it is ‘good,’ because it is good, if ‘bad’ because it works in us patience, humility and the contempt of this world and the hope of our eternal country.”

--C.S. Lewis

“Pride slays thanksgiving, but an humble mind is the soil out of which thanks naturally grow. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves.”

--Henry Ward Beecher

“A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.” --Cicero

“The Pilgrims came to America not to accumulate riches but to worship God, and the greatest wealth they left unborn generations was their heroic example of sacrifice that their souls might be free.”

--Harry Moyle Tippet

“O Lord, that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness.”

--William Shakespeare

Keywords

Thanksgiving, thanks, gratitude



Notes





Leftovers

Illustration

Lord, don't let my attitude of gratitude be like leftover turkey. I don't want to give you "recycled" thanks like turkey soup or turkey casserole. I don't want to say the same old words without thinking, like turkey burgers or turkey salad. May I never pull cold words out of a freezer. May each day be a new day of thankfulness. May each day be a "holyday" to gather with family and friends--in thought and prayer. You said that Your mercies are new every morning. May my thankfulness be fresh and new and warm every morning, too. May I daily choose the ingredients of my thankfulness and spend as much time in preparation as carefully as I chose the ingredients and prepared the special dishes. May my thankfulness be a pleasing aroma to You, like the enticing odors of a Thanksgiving dinner.

Keywords

Thanks, Thanksgiving, Prayer



Notes





Remembering Well

Illustration

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them. John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday among all holidays. It's special to me because it's when I look back, reflect on the past year and give thanks. Also because it's a time when God reminds me of my burning bush experience. Every year, I use Thanksgiving as a point in my spiritual journey to (a) re-define (b) re-align (c) rejuvenate myself in Christ.

Our memory is like a hard drive in a computer, events, experiences etc get logged into it. This year, God's been asking me if the past year's experiences are logged well or poorly. I don't know about you but it's harder to forget the bad things that happen to you. Somehow it gets replayed like a movie over and over. But God wants us to have those events that have wounded us to be logged into our memories without us feeling hurt.

The form of how it has been logged into our memory bank is important. As I sat to remember the past year to put down a thanksgiving list, He identified 3 things for me to recognize and practice so that my default system of remembering poorly will be transformed into - Remembering WELL.

Not Alone

When Christ died and rose again, He left us a helper so that we don't need to walk on our own. 'I will talk to the Father, and he'll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can't take him in because it doesn't have eyes to see him, doesn't know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!' John 14:16-17 (The Message)

We have the Holy Spirit! HIS ministry - to help us to remember well. Our experiences in life need to run by the Holy Spirit just like water gets filtered by a filtering system. When we do that, it gets logged into our memory bank correctly.

It doesn't mean that we forget what has happened. It just means that we remember those events in a way that doesn't hurt us.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Now I know why Paul says that we need to bring our thoughts into captive. 'We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.' 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV).



Notes



It's not enough to say Holy Spirit come filter my thoughts. We have to make that pre-decision to literally bring our thoughts into captive. It's not a one time thing, it's something we have to do daily.

So if we don't dwell on the things that hurt us, what do we dwell on? 'Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.' Philippians 4v8-9 (NIV).

When we keep practicing, we get better and better at something. After a while, it becomes part of us.

Remembering the Cross

Jesus knew we'd forget, so He instituted communion and guess what He said... yep, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

When we bring the events of our lives that may have caused us hurt to the cross, we're not saying that God is going to erase our memory of that ever happening. Nope, it means that we are allowing the Holy Spirit to wash it with the blood of Christ and then log it into our memory bank. So that when we bring it to remembrance, we no longer feel the hurt.

Christ has set the example for us when He was crucified. He chose to not hate those who crucified Him, instead He forgave and loved them. We won't be saved by grace if He didn't.

Likewise, I pray that you will look back upon the past year and say 'God I'm going remember the good and the bad in my life well. I'm going to surrender the bad events in my life to you so that you can wash it with your blood and return it to my memory bank for it to be lodged well. '

Happy Thanksgiving!

Source: Charissa Ee

Keywords

Thanksgiving

Notes





Thanks, Forgiving Day

Illustration

"It's happening already!" he said to me.

"What?"

"The last I looked it was July 4th and now suddenly it's the holiday season," he said smiling.

"I'm not ready for this at all," I told him.

"Oh, it may have come too fast, but I'm always ready for my 'Thanks Forgiving Day!'"

"You mean Thanksgiving Day?"

"Oh, that too!"

"I'm confused!" I said.

"Well, Thanksgiving Day isn't celebrated on the same day around the world. I'm not even sure if some countries have such a day. So I celebrate Thanksgiving Day with my family and friends in America. However, the day before Thanksgiving, I celebrate 'Thanks, Forgiving Day' with all my international friends as well as those here at home."

"Do you travel that much?"

"Oh, no. I've never had that luxury. I met all of these wonderful people on the Internet."

"I call them 'friends I've never met'," I said proudly. "I too, have many from around the world."

"Well then you must celebrate it, too."

"Tell me about it."

"Well, on Thanksgiving Day I give thanks for all the blessings in my life. Good health, love, friendship, work, the food I eat and everything I value." He paused for a moment, took a deep breath and sighed with great satisfaction that his life is so blessed.

"But on 'Thanks Forgiving Day', the Wednesday before, I make an effort to ask for forgiveness for any wrongs I have done. Even the smallest things that may have gone unchecked over the past year. You know, those little things that may have hurt someone's feelings and I didn't realize it. But also the big things which may have caused a hurt or lost friendship. I simply ask everyone to forgive me and thank them for opening their hearts to me again."

I stood there listening to this wonderful man. He was one of those people whom you immediately trusted. His voice, his demeanor, were warm and welcoming.

It was a wonderful thought. A gesture that gives hope to the world. To think that in some small way we could undermine all of the hate and anger in the world by humbly asking to be forgiven even when we have done nothing wrong. The act itself is a reflection of the greatest love God has for us.



Notes



“So will you join me?” he asked.

“I just did!”

To you, my friend, reading this message: When I awaken each morning my heart sings a grateful tune to God for giving me still another chance to make a difference in this world.

On this -- my Thanks, Forgiving Day -- I humbly ask for your forgiveness if I have slighted you in any way during the past year. I treasure your presence in my life and if you would forgive me, I would be forever grateful. Thanks!

Source: Bob Perks - Used by Permission

*Bob is an Inspirational Columnist for Beliefnet
http://www.beliefnet.com/author/author_148.html
and you can visit his site at <http://www.BobPerks.com>*

Keywords

Thanksgiving, forgiveness, gratitude

Notes





Worship and Worry

Illustration

“It was early in the morning in another country. Exhausted, I awoke around 3. The name of someone I loved dearly flashed into my mind. It was like an electric shock. Instantly, I was wide awake. I knew there would be no more sleep for me the rest of the night. So I lay there and prayed for the one who was trying hard to run away from God. When it is dark and the imagination runs wild, there are fears that only a mother can understand.

Suddenly the Lord said to me, ‘Quit studying the problems and start studying the promises.’ Now, God has never spoken to me audibly, but there is no mistaking when He speaks.

So I turned on the light, got my Bible, and the first verse that came to me was Philippians 4:6: ‘Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God’ (italics mine). And verse 7, ‘And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.’

Suddenly I realized the missing ingredient in my prayers had been ‘with thanksgiving.’ So I put down my Bible and spent time worshiping Him for who He is and what He is. This covers more territory than any one mortal can comprehend. Even contemplating what little we do know dissolves doubts, reinforces faith and restores joy. I began to thank God for giving me this one I loved so dearly in the first place. I even thanked Him for the difficult spots which taught me so much.

And you know what happened? It was as if suddenly someone turned on the lights in my mind and heart, and the little fears and worries which, like mice and cockroaches, had been nibbling away in the darkness, suddenly scuttled for cover.

That was when I learned that worship and worry cannot live in the same heart.”

Source: It’s My Turn, Ruth Bell Graham

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Worship, Worry



Notes



Both of Them

Illustration

It's the day before Thanksgiving, and the butcher is just locking up when a man begins pounding on the front door.

"Please let me in," says the man desperately. "I forgot to buy a turkey, and my wife will kill me if I don't come home with one."

"Okay," says the butcher. "Let me see what I have left." He goes into the freezer and discovers that there's only one scrawny turkey left. He brings it out to show the man.

"That's one is too skinny. What else you got?" says the man.

The butcher takes the bird back into the freezer and waits a few minutes and brings the same turkey back out to the man.

"Oh, no," says the man, "That one doesn't look any better. You better give me both of them!"

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Truth, Turkey



Notes



Thanksgiving Cookbook

Illustration

Thanksgiving Cookbook by Mrs. Geraghty's Kindergarten Class

NOTE: Mrs. Geraghty will not be responsible for medical bills resulting from use of her cookbook.

Russell -- Turkey: You cut the turkey up and put it in the oven for ten minutes and 300 degrees. You put gravy on it and eat it.

Jeremy -- Turkey: You buy the turkey and take the paper off. Then you put it in the refrigerator and take it back out and cut it with a knife and make sure all the wires are out and take out the neck and heart. Then you put it in a big pan and cook it for half an hour at 80 degrees. Then you invite people over and eat.

Andrew -- Pizza: Buy some dough, some cheese and pepperoni. Then you cook it for 10 hours at 5 degrees. Then you eat it.

Shelby -- Applesauce: Go to the store and buy some apples, and then you squish them up. Then you put them in a jar that says, "Applesauce." Then you eat it.

Meghan H. -- Turkey: You cut it into 16 pieces and then you leave it in the oven for 15 minutes and 4 degrees. You take it out and let it cool and then after 5 minutes, then you eat it.

Danny -- Turkey: You put some salt on it to make it taste good. Then you put it in the oven. Then you cook it for an hour at 5 degrees. Then you eat it.

Brandon -- Turkey: First you buy it at Fred Meyer. Then you cut it up and cook it for 15 hours at 200 degrees. Then you take it out and eat it.

Megan K -- Chicken: You put it in the oven for 25 minutes and 25 degrees and put gravy on it and eat it.

Christa -- Cookies: Buy some dough and smash it and cut them out. Then put them in the oven for 2 hours at 100 degrees. Then take them out and dry them off. Then it's time to eat them.

Irene -- Turkey: Put it on a plate and put it in the oven with gravy. You cook it for 1 minute and for 100 degrees. Then it's all cooked. Your mom or dad cuts it and then eat.

Moriah -- Turkey: First you cut the bones out. Then you put it in the oven for 10 hours at 600 degrees. Then you put it on the table and eat it.



Notes

Vincent -- Turkey: You cut and put sauce on it. Then you cook it for 18 minutes at 19 degrees. Then you eat it with stuffing.

Jordyn -- Turkey: First you have to cut it up and put it on a plate in the oven for 9 minutes and 18 degrees. Then you dig it out of the oven and eat it.

Grace -- Turkey: First you add some salt. Then you put it in a bowl. Then you put brown sugar on it. Then you mix it all together with a spoon and then you add some milk and mix it again. And then you put it in a pan. Then you put it in the oven for 15 minutes and 16 degrees. Then you take it out of the oven and then you eat it.

Alan -- Turkey: First you shoot it and then you cut it. And then you put it in the oven and cook it for 10 minutes and 20 degrees. You put it on plates and then you eat it.

Jordan Salvatore -- Turkey: First you put it in the oven for 15 minutes at 100 degrees. Then you cut it up and then you eat it.

Jordan Simons -- Chocolate Pudding: Buy some chocolate pudding mix. Then you add the milk. Then you add the pudding mix. Then you stir it. Then you put it in the refrigerator and wait for it to get hard. Then you eat it.

Whitney -- Turkey: Cut it and put it in the oven for 50 minutes at 60 degrees and then you eat it.

Jason -- Chicken Pie: Put the chicken in the pot and put the salad and cheese and mustard and then you mix it all together. Then put chicken sauce and stir it all around again. Then you cook it for 5 minutes at 9 degrees. Then you eat it.

Ivette -- Banana Pie: You buy some bananas and crust. Then you mash them up and put them in the pie. Then you eat it.

Christopher -- Pumpkin Pie: First you buy a pumpkin and smash it. Then it is all done. And you cook it in the oven for 12 minutes and 4 degrees. Then you eat it.

Christine -- Turkey: First you buy the turkey. Then you cook it for 5 hours and 5 degrees. Then you cut it up and you eat it.

Ashley -- Chicken: Put it in the oven. Then cut it up. Then I eat it.

Jennie -- Corn: My mom buys it. Then you throw it. Then you cook it. Then you eat it.

Jordan -- Cranberry Pie: Put cranberry juice in it. Then you put berries in it. Then you put dough in it. Then you bake it. Then you eat it.

Adam -- Pumpkin Pie: First you put pumpkin seeds in it. Put it in a pan and bake it at 5 degrees for 6 minutes. Then take it out and eat it.

Notes



Jarryd -- Deer Jerky: Put it in the oven overnight at 20 degrees. Then you go hunting and bring it with you. Then you eat it.

Christina -- Turkey: Get the turkey. Put it in the oven. Cook it for 43 minutes at 35 degrees. Put it on a plate, cut it up, then eat it.

Joplyn -- Apple Pie: Take some apples, mash them up. Take some bread and make a pie with it. Get some dough and squish it. Shape the dough into a pie shape. Put the apples in it. Then bake it at 9 degrees for 15 minutes.

Isabelle -- Spaghetti: Put those red things in it. Then put the spaghetti in it. Then cook it in the oven for 2 minutes at 8 degrees.

Bailey -- Chicken: Put pepper and spices on it. Cook for one hour at 60 degrees. Then eat it.

Nicholas -- White and Brown Pudding: First you read the wrapper. Get a piece of water. Stir. Then you eat it.

Sean -- Turkey: Put it in the oven for 5 minutes at 55 degrees. Take it out and eat it.

Lauren -- Turkey: First you find a turkey and kill it. Cut it open. Put it in a pan. Pour milk in the pan. Put a little chicken with it. Put salsa on it. Take out of pan. Put it on the board. Cut into little pieces. Put on a rack. Put in the oven for 7 minutes at 10 degrees. Take out of the oven and put eensy weensy bit of sugar on it. Put a little more salsa on it. Then you eat it.

Olivia -- Corn: Get hot water and put on stove. Wait for 8 minutes. Put corn in. Then put it on a plate. Then eat.

Siera -- Pumpkin Pie: Get some pumpkin and dough for the crust. Get pumpkin pie cinnamon. Cook it for 20 minutes at 10 degrees.

Kayla -- Turkey: Buy it. Take it home. Then you cook it. Put it in the oven for 1 hour. Take it out of the oven. Put it on a plate. Then you eat it.

Tommy -- Pumpkin Pie: Get a pumpkin. Cook it. Eat it.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, humor, dinner, children

Notes





Thanksgiving is Coming

Illustration

When I was a young turkey, new to the coop
My big brother Mike took me out on the stoop,
Then he sat me down, and he spoke real slow,
And he told me there was something that I had to know.

His look and his tone I will always remember,
When he told me of the horrors ofBlack November,
“Come about August, now listen to me,
Each day you’ll get six meals instead of just three.

“And soon you’ll be thick, where once you were thin,
and you’ll grow a big rubbery thing under your chin,”
“And then one morning, when you’re warm in your bed,
In’ll burst the farmer’s wife, and hack off your head.”

“Then she’ll pluck out your feathers so you’re bald and pink,
Scoop out your insides and leave ya lyin’ in the sink.”
“And then comes the worst part” he said, almost blushing
“She’ll spread your cheeks and pack you with stuffing.”

Well, the rest of his words were too grim to repeat,
I sat on the stoop like a winged piece of meat,
And decide right then that not to be cooked,
I’d have to lay low and remain overlooked.

I began a new diet of nuts and granola,
High-roughage salads, juice and diet cola,
And as they ate pastries, chocolates and crepes,
I stayed in my room doing Jane Fonda tapes.

I maintained my weight of two pounds and a half,
And tried not to notice when the bigger birds laughed,
But ‘twas I who was laughing, under my breath,
As they chomped and they chewed, ever closer to death.

And sure enough when Black November rolled around,
I was the last turkey left in the entire compound,
So now I’m a pet in the farmer’s wife’s lap,
I haven’t a worry, so I eat and I nap.

She held me today, while sewing and humming,
And smiled at me and said “Christmas is coming.....”

Keywords

Thanksgiving, humor, jokes



Notes





Thanksgiving Prayer

Illustration

Little Logan and his family were having Thanksgiving dinner at his grandmother's house. Everyone was seated round the table as the food was being served. When little Logan received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Logan, wait until we say our prayer," his mother reminded him.

"I don't need to," the little boy replied.

"Of course you do!" his mother insisted, "We say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Logan explained, "but this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook!"

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Prayer, Giving Thanks



Notes





Thanksgiving Weather Report

Illustration

Turkeys will thaw in the morning, then warm in the oven to an afternoon high near 190F. The kitchen will turn hot and humid, and if you bother the cook, be ready for a severe squall or cold shoulder.

During the late afternoon and evening, the cold front of a knife will slice through the turkey, causing an accumulation of one to two inches on plates. Mashed potatoes will drift across one side while cranberry sauce creates slippery spots on the other. Please pass the gravy.

A weight watch and indigestion warning have been issued for the entire area, with increased stuffiness around the beltway. During the evening, the turkey will diminish and taper off to leftovers, dropping to a low of 34F in the refrigerator.

Looking ahead to Friday and Saturday, high pressure to eat sandwiches will be established. Flurries of leftovers can be expected both days with a 50 percent chance of scattered soup late in the day. We expect a warming trend where soup develops. By early next week, eating pressure will be low as the only wish left will be the bone.

Keywords

Thanksgiving



Notes



The Turkey Shot Out of the Oven

Illustration

The Turkey shot out of the oven
and rocketed in to the air;
It knocked every plate off the table
and partly demolished a chair.
It ricocheted into a corner
and burst with a deafening boom,
Then splattered all over the kitchen,
completely obscuring the room.
It stuck to the walls and the windows,
it totally coated the floor,
There was turkey attached to the ceiling,
where there had never been turkey before..
It blanketed every appliance,
it smeared every saucer and bowl;
There wasn't a way I could stop it;
that turkey was out of control.
I scraped and I scraped with displeasure
and thought with chagrin as I mopped,
That I would never again stuff a turkey
with popcorn that hadn't been popped

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Turkey, Feast



Notes





Too Much Turkey

Illustration

I ate too much Turkey, I ate too much corn,
I ate too much pudding and pie.
I'm stuffed up with muffins and too much stuffin'
I'm probably going to die.

I piled up my plate and I ate and I ate.
But I wish I had known when to stop,
For I'm so crammed with yams, sauces, gravies, and jams
That my buttons are starting to pop!

I'm full of tomatoes and french fried potatoes
My stomach is swollen and sore,
But there's still some dessert so I guess it won't hurt if
I eat just a little bit more!

Keywords

Thanksgiving, humor, food



Notes





Top Ten Signs You've Eaten Too Much at Thanksgiving

Illustration

10. Hundreds of volunteers have started to stack sandbags around you.
9. Doctor tells you your weight would be perfect for a man 17 feet tall.
8. You are responsible for a slight but measurable shift in the earth's axis.
7. Right this minute you're laughing up pie on the carpet.
6. You decide to take a little nap and wake up in mid-July.
5. World's fattest man sends you a telegram, warning you to "back off!"
4. CBS tells you to lose weight or else.
3. Getting off your couch requires help from the fire department.
2. Every escalator you step on immediately grinds to a halt.
1. You're sweatin' gravy.

Keywords

Thanksgiving, Feast

Notes





Twas the Night of Thanksgiving

Illustration

'Twas the night of Thanksgiving, But I just couldn't sleep.
I tried counting backwards, I tried counting sheep
The leftovers beckoned --- The dark meat and white,
But I fought the temptation with all of my might.

Tossing and turning with anticipation
The thought of a snack became infatuation.
So I raced to the kitchen, Flung open the door,
And gazed at the fridge full of goodies galore.
I gobbled up turkey and buttered potatoes,
Pickles and carrots, beans and tomatoes.

I felt myself swelling so plump and so round,
Till all of a sudden, I rose off the ground !!

I crashed through the ceiling. Floating into the sky....
With a mouthful of pudding and a handful of pie,
But I managed to yell as I soared past the trees ...

HAPPY EATING TO ALL !!
PASS THE CRANBERRIES PLEASE !!

Keywords

Thanksgiving



Notes





“Unleash An Unstoppable Torrent Of Youth Ministry Resources That Youth Are Guaranteed To Love... Best Of All It’s Free!”

Discover the Ultimate Youth Ministry Resource with almost 1,500 unique ideas.

What’s more, new ideas are added all the time! Better yet, you can access this growing, SEARCHABLE library of incredible ideas ANYTIME and ANYWHERE. Forget about going out and buying those expensive youth books that only give you a couple dozen ideas, most of which you can’t even use. Yes, I’ve wasted a lot of money doing that too. I’m offering the best teaching ideas, illustrations, devotionals, curriculums, games, icebreakers, object lessons, sermons, inspirational stories, and training materials gathered from over 20 years of experience at ABSOLUTELY NO COST to you.

Not only can you access the website free anytime, but when you sign up for the mailing list you get an idea of the week, every week in your email that you can immediately use for your youth events.

Access is free at
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A Few Sample Testimonials

“Thanks for all the fantastic resources, I use many of your ideas regularly and always look forward to your encouraging emails. Though we’ve never met it’s good to feel you are partnering with me in my work with the youth of our church over here in Kent, England!” – Susan Wood, Kent, England

You have no idea how much I appreciate YOU and your ministry. I look forward to your email every week!!! I have taken on a new ministry for after-school children who have never heard the gospel. So, your ideas give me an amazing object lesson every week! In addition, I lead Children’s Worship on Sundays. – Florence McClure

Oh my goodness!!! This site has SAVED MY LIFE!!! It is awesome! I just “inherited” a group of young people that didn’t know ANYTHING about the Word and now I have all these resources! Thank you, thank you, thank you!!! God Bless!! – Cassandra Byrd, North Carolina, USA

I’d like to say huge THANK YOU for sharing your amazing ideas with us. I find your ideas very useful, stimulating and inspiring. Most of all kids like your games and activities. Your websites makes my teaching easier and it’s more fun for both kids and me – Zuzana, Slovakia

Creative Object Lessons

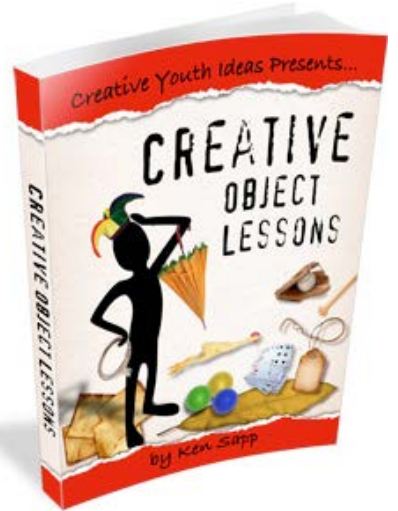
The only resource you will ever need to help you use no-fail object lessons simply and effectively!

"Creative Object Lessons" is a 200 page e-book that explains everything you need to know when planning your very own object lessons. It contains more than 90 full lessons (and unlimited variations) to get your creative juices flowing! It also contains hundreds of starter ideas and everything else you need to help you prepare your own!

What most of us need isn't a complete "I'll-tell-you-everything-you-just-follow-the-instructions" solution. Part of the fun is opening our eyes to see object lessons in our homes, on the street, on the train, EVERYWHERE! All you're probably looking for is a push in the right direction and enough reassurances that whatever you're about to try won't fall flat - a few ideas to spark off the creativity you already have inside you. Maybe all you need is a little help, a few pointers, and plenty of no-fail examples to take your Object Lessons from "great" to "awesome".

That's why in addition to the 90 complete "I'll-tell-you-everything-you-just-follow-the-instructions" Object lessons I have also included chapters with pointers and guidelines to find object lessons, prepare them, and teach them effectively.

This resource comes in an ebook (PDF) downloadable format that is fully searchable. And you can download it and start using it in mere minutes! Buy it once, then send copies to all of your leaders!



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Are Your Youth Bored With Playing The Same Old Icebreaker Games?

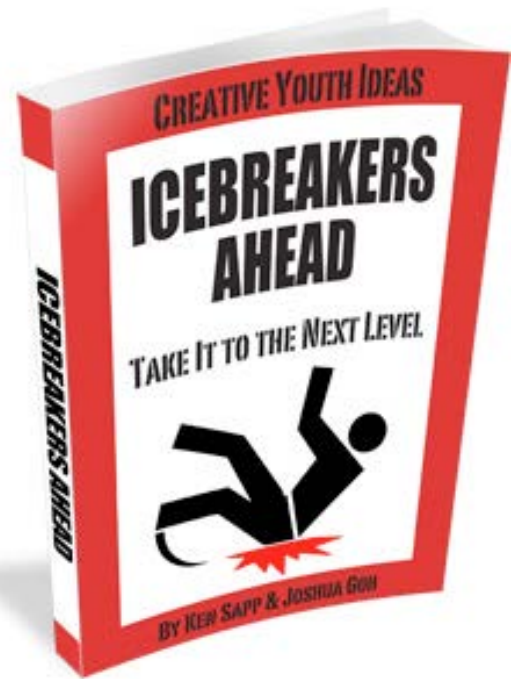
Discover What You and Your Youth Have Been Missing Out On...

52 of the best icebreakers of all time are right here. I didn't just pick these icebreakers out of someone else's book or pull them off websites. We've personally used, tweaked and perfected each and every one of these icebreakers personally from more than 30 years combined youth ministry experience in countries all around the world.

All of these ideas require little or no materials. They don't need a lot of preparation. The instructions are simple. AND...All of them come with applications for you to take the game to the next level.

How much would you expect to pay for icebreaker ideas of such quality in your local bookstore or on the internet? \$54.97? \$34.97? My special price to you is \$19.97!

What are you waiting for? Discover what hundreds of other youth leaders are already using today. Don't dawdle and waste more time thinking about it. It's time to act. Get your hands on all these icebreakers in "Icebreakers Ahead: Take it to the Next Level" for this amazing low price.



Only USD \$19.97

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Creative Scavenger Hunts

Everything you need to plan, create, and run a successful Scavenger Hunt!

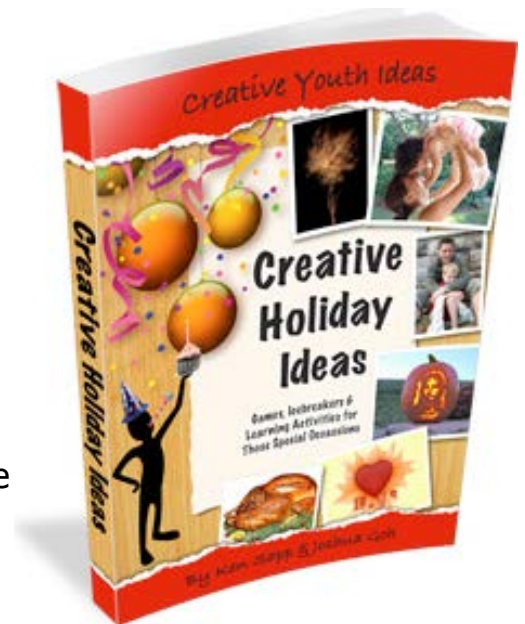
Scavenger Hunts are great fun for all ages! You can adjust them for any level of difficulty, different interests, and different levels of physical ability (special needs groups included). Easily adapt them to fit a variety of themes and party ideas. You can plan for an icebreaker that will take a few minutes or a camp that will take the whole day. And all the ideas are fully customizable to suit YOUR unique needs.

Scavenger Hunts are a great opportunity to build group relationships, encourage teamwork, and have a lot of fun as participants are stretched and prodded to think outside the box. Participants discover hidden talents, stretch their creativity, and find treasured new friendships in the process. Scavenger hunt ideas are a great way to bring a holiday party, event or special occasion to life.

Include puzzling clues, and difficult tasks to be accomplished, or keep it to a simple scavenger hunt list.

In some scavenger hunts you collect objects, while in others you collect snapshots, video footage, or simply solve the clues to find a final treasure or location.

"Once Lost, Now Found: Creative Scavenger Hunts" is a 160 page e-book that explains everything you need to know when planning your very own scavenger hunt. Discover more than 50 ideas (and unlimited variations) to get your creative juices flowing! It also contains a very detailed checklist to help you cover every area needed to conduct a successful scavenger hunt. Rules, Safety tips, Guidelines, Scoring, hints for facilitators and more. It contains thousands of items to put on your scavenger list. There are ideas to use at home, around the neighborhood, at the mall, in the park, on the beach, at church, and around town!



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"Once Lost, Now Found: Creative Scavenger Hunts"
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Creative Christmas Ideas

Get more than 200 Christmas Ideas from Creative Youth Ideas and start planning your Christmas Party IMMEDIATELY!

I have collected the most creative Christmas materials together in a convenient format for you to easily download and print.

- Imagine being able to have the Christmas Ideas in a simplified, easily printable format without needing to search through the website.
- How would you like to be able to access all the ideas through an index where you can just click on the title and go straight to the page you want?
- How would you like to be able to copy and paste an idea into your favorite word processor to create your own customised lesson plan?
- How would you like to have all the ideas now, immediately, before you leave this website?
- Take your ideas with you as an adobe acrobat PDF file so that you can access the ideas from anywhere, even if there is no internet connection.



I can remember all the times I have spent late nights throughout my 20 years of youth ministry trying to think of just the right idea for that youth party, for that children's sermon, or to create that special event that will be talked about for weeks!

That's why I have created an ebook in PDF format that includes an index with bookmarks to all the most creative ideas. It couldn't be easier! Now you can spend your time actually planning the event instead of looking for ideas! You will get more than 200 ideas including games, icebreakers, devotions, illustrations, object lessons and MUCH MORE!

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**Get your copy of
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Order NOW Bonus: FREE Christmas tangram puzzle series!

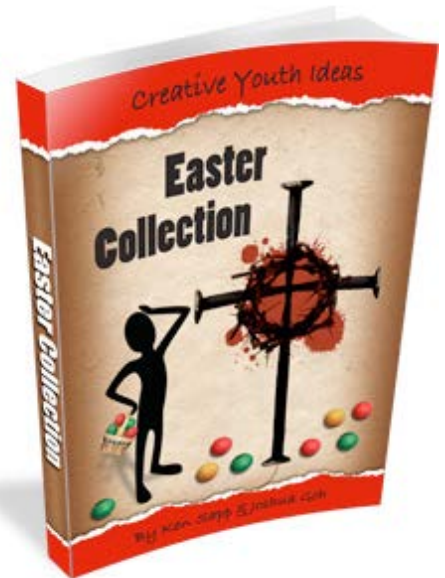
Creative Easter Ideas

Get more than 80 Easter Ideas and start planning your Youth Easter Party in the next 5 minutes!

These Easter games and Ideas can be used, not only for youth groups, but for schools, company meetings, family gatherings, community events, and social clubs, Use them for parties, on company retreats, family get-togethers, School Easter parties, and more!

Whatever the occasion, you'll find a Easter idea in here appropriate to it. Included are Easter games, get to know you questions, object lessons, teaching ideas and wacky activities from mild to wild! From children to Senior citizens!

Now you can spend your time actually planning your Easter Party or Easter / Good Friday event instead of looking for game ideas to make Easter memorable!



This is an electronic book (e-book) that can be downloaded to your computer in a flash. Which means you can be reading it and discovering all these wonderful ideas in as little as 5 minutes from now! No wait! No shipping charges! Use the search feature and you can find every icebreaker, game, object lesson and teaching idea based on any key word or theme. It couldn't be easier! You can't do that with a traditional book!

As an ADDED benefit, I allow you to print it out (or email a copy) to the leaders and staff on your ministry team. That means you don't have to purchase multiple copies like you would with a physical book. (Just please don't give it to those outside your own ministry team.)

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Creative Holiday Ideas

"Never Feel Frustrated Looking For Ideas During The Holiday Season Ever Again!"

Introducing our top selling resource to help you plan Junior High, High School, and even college age events and parties for New Year's Day, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Halloween or Fall Festival, and Thanksgiving. You don't need to start from scratch planning your event, finding the resources, looking for a theme, and somehow relating it to God. We've already done it for you.

You'll find game ideas, creative teaching ideas, icebreakers, object lessons, illustrations, and humor to suit pretty much every occasion throughout the year. We've given you enough ideas to fill over 300 pages of resource material to put into your hands to tide you through the holiday seasons. We really didn't want you to be too flustered searching for ideas when you should be enjoying the holidays with your friends and family.

Inside Creative Holiday Ideas, you'll find:

- 43 New Year's Day Ideas,
- 46 Valentine's Day Ideas,
- 39 Mother's Day Ideas,
- 33 Father's Day Ideas.
- 26 Halloween or Fall Festival Ideas,
- 38 Thanksgiving Ideas,

For Christmas ideas, be sure to check out Creative Youth Ideas: Christmas Collection. And for Easter ideas, check out Creative Youth Ideas: Easter Collection!



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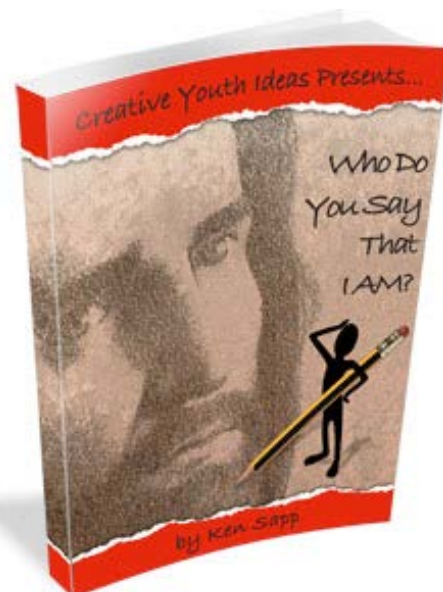
Visit

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to learn more!

Who Do You Say that I Am?

Jesus asked the disciples, "Who do others say that I am?" It was easy to answer because it required no conviction, no commitment, and no risk. But then he follows that question with another, "Who do YOU say that I am?"

It was a simple but profound question and one that each of us must still answer today. Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God." Then Jesus responded, "Blessed are you.... For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven." It was a defining moment for Peter and he would spend the rest of his life figuring out what that answer meant for who he was and how he lived.



Jesus was many things to many different people. Certainly if you are the Alpha and Omega, you must be everything in between! In these lessons and activities, my objective is to bring each participant into a functional relationship with Jesus Christ so that each person KNOWS who Christ is to him or her.

There are 7 Primary Bible study Sessions in the series, but you can pick and choose from these for a shorter youth camp:

- Jesus the Life Saver
- Jesus, My Friend
- Jesus, Fear Slayer
- Jesus, the Healer
- Jesus, The Obedient
- Jesus, The Spirit-Powered Man
- Jesus, The Cleanser

This Bible Study Series comes in an ebook (PDF) downloadable format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. And you can download it in minutes! Buy it once, then send copies to all of your leaders! Make as many student copies as you want. It's great for a camp or for a weekly Bible Study series.



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Fruit of the Spirit

Discover the fruitful, abundant life that Jesus promised.

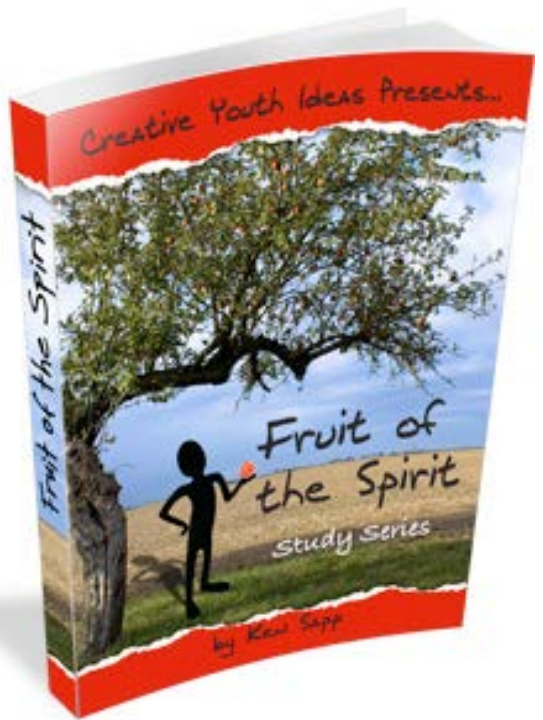
While Jesus walked the earth, He painted two beautiful pictures of what it meant to be His disciple. The first was "the Parable of the Sower and the Soils" and it revolved around seed being planted in various soils. The seed planted in the good soil not only flourished, but produced fruit in abundance. His teaching was meant to be implanted in a person's heart, to take root, to grow, and eventually to culminate in a fruitful life.

The second picture is in John 15:1-6 where Jesus refers to himself as the vine and his disciples as the branches. The result of His disciples' relationship of abiding in Him and His words is that they would bear much fruit.

There are 7 Primary Bible study Sessions in the series, but you can pick and choose from these for a shorter youth camp:

- "The Good Soil"
- "Pulling Weeds"
- "Planting Seeds"
- "Drawing from the Source"
- "The Fruitful Life"
- "Pruning"
- "Tree-mendou Fruit"

This Bible Study Series comes in an ebook (PDF) downloadable format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. And you can download it in minutes! Buy it once, then send copies to all of your leaders! Make as many student copies as you want. It's great for a camp or for a weekly Bible Study series.



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A Whale of a Tale?

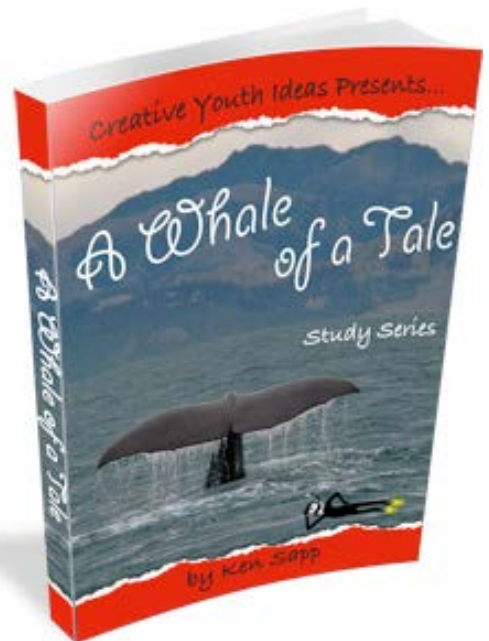
Jonah could be called the "Reluctant Evangelist." "Don't send me to Ninevah? God, you mean I have to love them and preach to them so that they can be spared your wrath? They don't deserve your grace! Can't you send someone else?" For whatever reason, we are often reluctant witnesses ourselves. We have our own prejudices. And like Jonah, sometimes God has to get our attention, sometimes in dramatic ways in order to impress upon us his heart for the lost.

This Bible Study series uses the life of Jonah to teach the basic truths of obedience to God's call to be an evangelist to the lost. By looking at one man's personal story, we see not only God's teaching but a practical example often reflecting our own struggles and difficulties. Because it is easy for us to relate, God's truth becomes much more real and personal!

You'll explore how principle characters probably felt and how they responded. Then you'll explore how each of us would also feel and respond in similar circumstances. We are able to see Jonah from beginning to end, his disobedience and his obedience, his faults and his triumphs, his bad attitudes and his good ones.

Student questions take the form of multiple choice with options. At times the options provided are seem humorous and while we might laugh or shake our head at Jonah's actions, we will soon realise we do the same things ourselves. Each key point takes the form of a rhyme and is applied both to Jonah's situation and to ours.

This ebook is in an downloadable format (PDF) format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. You can have it in mere minutes. The Teacher's guide explains the options and comes with an additional commentary on the book of Jonah. Student worksheets are found at the end of the teacher's guide and are intended to be printed on three sheets of letter-size paper (front and back) and folded in half. Make as many copies as you need of the teacher's guide and student worksheets. It couldn't be easier!



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The Great Adventure

"The Great Adventure" is western themed Bible study series loosely based around the song of the same name by Steven Curtis Chapman.

There are 8 Bible study Sessions in the series:

- **Saddle Up: The Journey of Faith** - To begin the "Great Adventure" we must "Saddle Up" our faith. We must pack our bags and prepare for the journey. Only God knows where our faith will then take us! Abram, before he was called Abraham, began a similar adventure.
- **Pony Express: The Bible as a Letter from God** - The Pony Express delivered the mail in the early days of the West. Mail was loaded into saddle bags and carried by riders upon horses. The Bible is like one of those saddle bags in that it contains letters. Yet the letters in it are to God's people, written by God and delivered by his prophets, disciples, and other men that He chose. To read the Bible is to read God's letters to YOU!
- **Jail Break: Freedom from Sin** - The jailhouse was a common feature in most towns of the Old West. Wanted Posters were placed around the town with the photos of famous outlaws and bandits. It was the local Sherriff's duty, with his star badge to make sure all the lawbreakers were captured and locked away. In the Kingdom of God, all of us are lawbreakers as well. But Christ didn't put on the sherriff's badge, six-shooter, and cowboy hat to lock us away. In fact, he came to set all prisoners free!
- **Trailblazing: The Wide and Narrow Paths** - As the first wagon trains and settlers traveled west, they not only cut the trail and found the mountain passes, but also marked them clearly so that others would be able to follow. Known as trailblazing, markers might be as simple as a pile of stones or a hatchet chop to a tree that would help others to find the correct route. Christ taught us how to find the route to God. Are you willing to follow the trail?
- **Tracking: Knowing God's Will** - Where am I going? How do get there? What signs mark the path? What direction should I take? It is important that each of us discover the path that God wants us to take in life. There will be challenges and adventure. The struggles will be tough, but the rewards will outweigh anything we could ever imagine. Every Christian must learn to recognize the call of God, to recognize the signs along his path, and to follow God's directions for his individual life.
- **The Blacksmith's Shop: Tools to be Used by God** - The blacksmith begins to pound, envisioning what the tool was planned for, making it sharper, more durable, useful. The pounding and melting down of the metal is not comfortable or easy. Change is never easy, but over time the flaws are removed, the cracks are filled, and the impurities are burned away. The dull becomes sharp. The crooked becomes straight. The weak becomes strong. The useless becomes useful. Then we are plunged into water & the moldable becomes the strong tool to be used!
- **The Christian Frontier: Becoming Christlike** - What is the new frontier for new believers? In actuality it is as much the journey as the destination, but the ultimate aim for all believers is to become Christlike in character, attitudes and actions.
- **Gold Rush: Salvation** - No story of the wild west would be complete without the tales of the gold rush. Many men gave up everything to find it. For Christians, heaven is described as having streets of "gold." In John 3:1-21 God gives Nicodemus directions to get to the streets of Gold. Those same directions are a map for us today, to find the greatest treasure mankind has ever known!



This ebook is in an downloadable format (PDF) format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. You can have it in mere minutes. Make as many copies as you need of the teacher's guide and student worksheets. It couldn't be easier!



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Destined to Win

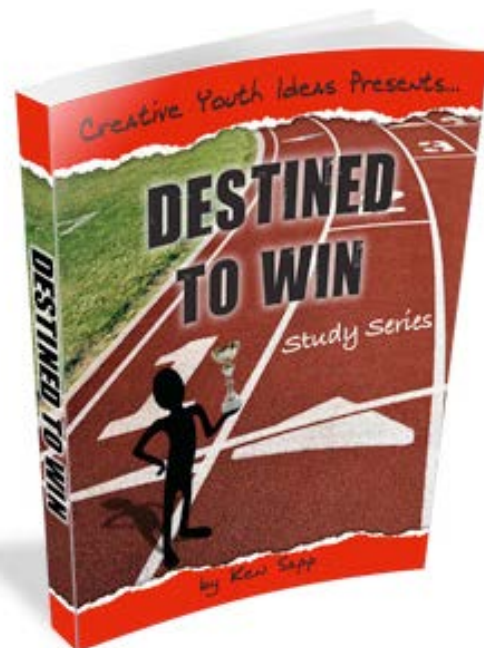
Discover the amazing plan that God has for your life right now with this sports-themed Bible Study Series

Knowing our destination and the direction we are heading in are essential to planning every journey. Our spiritual journey is no different. But then, as with any trip, things rarely go as planned; in fact, if there's one thing you can expect, it's the unexpected.

Our responsibility as youth leaders and teachers and ministers is to help guide our youth in dealing with the choices they have to make every day - to point them in the direction of their eternal destiny. That's no easy task. The best description I've found in the Bible about our Christian walk is one that Paul wrote about running the race. And that's the focus of this study.

These lessons are designed to help youth in their spiritual development and it doesn't matter if they're pre-believers, new Christians, mature in the faith, or backslided. This study is meant to reach out to youth at any level, at any point in their spiritual race. In any race, many lose their way. If we're honest with ourselves, I believe everyone of us have. My desire is for you to be able to use this tool to challenge your youth to take that next bold step of faith to love God more, to be more disciplined in their pursuit of the King. And those who have been sidetracked and hurt will find restoration through this study and will no longer stand defeated but be truly victorious winners in the Kingdom of God.

This Bible Study Series comes in an ebook (PDF) downloadable format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. And you can download it in minutes! Buy it once, then send copies to all of your leaders! Make as many student copies as you want. It's great for a camp or for a weekly Bible Study series.



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Go For the Gold

Sharing the gospel has never been easier with this Olympics-themed Study Series

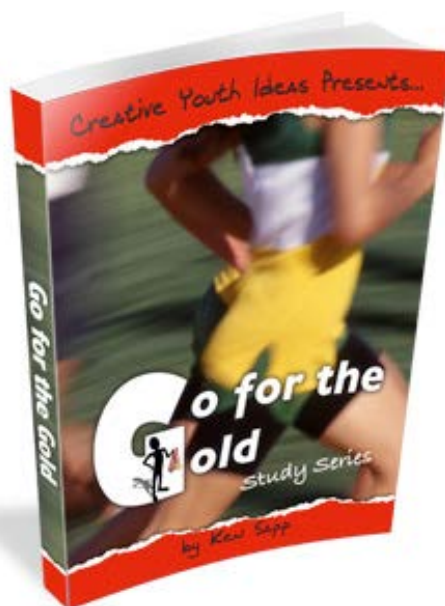
Who is Jesus and what did He ever do for me? For some of our youth groups, most have been brought up knowing about Jesus and the message of salvation. But what about the other youths who are part of your communities?

What if you could reach the youth in your community with the truth of the gospel with a simple message that they could relate to? Something that just as they have heard and received the good news, they can now tell their friends and take up the call to "make disciples of every nation". What if you could relate the message of Salvation with the largest international sporting event in history?

The Olympic Games is all about the spirit of healthy competition where the most important thing is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well. The similarities with our faith are startling! Our Christian walk is not so much about the end of it, as much as it is growing in intimacy, step by step, learning to love God more, struggling with our flesh, participate in God's plan for us and be faithful to our calling.

These lessons are designed to be a road map to Salvation and are best done with the pre-believing friends of your youth or Christians who are new to the faith. You may also wish to have more mature Christians use this study as a tool to share the Good News to their friends and loved ones.

This Bible Study Series comes in an ebook (PDF) downloadable format that includes both a teacher's guide and student worksheets. And you can download it in minutes! Buy it once, then send copies to all of your leaders! Make as many student copies as you want. It's great for a camp or for a weekly Bible Study series.



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Creative Sermon Ideas

“All The Help You Need To Prepare Powerful, Life-Changing Youth Sermons That Will Turn Your Preaching Around And Make Your Youth Sit Up And Listen!”

Inside Creative Sermon Ideas, you’ll discover and learn how to prepare and preach sermons that will impact and empower your youth. This includes:

- A general guide to understanding the different parts of the Bible (even the difficult passages),
- In depth explanations of the rationale behind each step; the ‘why’ the ‘what’ you need to do,
- How to study the Bible and figure out the meaning of any given passage in the Bible,
- How to expand on that idea in the passage,
- How to put all that study together into a sermon outline,
- How to use illustrations to keep your youth interested and understand the point you’re making,
- Techniques you can use to improve your vocal delivery.



“Creative Sermon Ideas” is a 100 page e-book that explains everything you need to know when planning your very own sermons. It contains all that you need to get you started and everything else you need to help you prepare and present your own sermon. Order your copy today and you’ll get the following bonuses!

- BONUS #1 – Ultimate Youth Sermon Library
- BONUS #2 – Awesome Preaching Calendar Guide
- BONUS #3 – Step-by-Step Sermon Prep Checklist



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