

Angel Ball

Need: Balls, 2 poles

Description: Break group into two teams. At either end of a room, place one of the 10 foot poles with a volleyball balanced on top of it (works best if placed in a corner). Mark off an area around the pole that is off limits using cones or another marker (10-15 feet is a good distance). No youth is allowed into this area. Decide who will get the play ball first via flipping a coin or a jump ball. The object of the game is to knock the balanced ball off of the pole without hitting the pole. Youth may dribble the ball as in basketball, pass the ball, or take three steps with the ball if they are not dribbling. If a shot is taken at the ball on the pole and the pole is hit, the team shooting is "polarized". The ball is replaced on the pole and the game resumes with the opposing team getting the ball. If a ball is shot and stays in the "off limits" area, the opposing team gets the ball. Also if anyone steps in the off limits area, the opposing team gets the ball. **Be sure there is nothing breakable behind the pole, many shots may be taken after a rebound off of the wall behind the pole, and depending on the players, and they are often hard throws.

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Animal Sounds (ice breaker)

Need: Paper with names of animals on it

Description: As the kids walk in, hand them a folded piece of paper with the name of an animal on it (the amount of names and the number of pieces with the same name depends on number of teams, and how large you want the teams to be.) Tell them not to look until you say to. When everyone has arrived, put them into a boundary (if you are in a gym, use the lines on the floor, if you are on a field, use something VERY visible to show your boundaries). Tell the kids that they can't step out of the boundaries. Now, tell them that each piece of paper holds a name of an animal and that there are so many other people with the same name. Tell them that they have to act out sounds and actions that would tell other team members that they are part of their team; they are not allowed to speak any words, only noises. Tell them to unfold their papers and go to it. (Never have I ever heard my kids be so loud and laugh so much!!!!)

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Ape, Man, Girl... OR... Santa, Elf, Reindeer Game

Author/Source: Youth worker e-group

Category:

Description: Have people pair off. When the signal is given, each person strikes a pose like an ape, man, or girl. Be sure to demonstrate what each looks like ahead of time (and you can decide that!). The ape beats the girl, man beats the ape, the girl gets the man. Santa beats Elf, Elf beats the reindeer, and reindeer beats Santa. Eliminate the losers and pair the winners until you get a champion. (This is just like paper, rock, scissors.)

Suggestions: Ape- turn and look like a gorilla

Man- turn and flex muscles

Girl- turn and pat your hair, while other hand on hip

Baby Food Roulette

Need: various kinds of baby food

Description: Get six volunteers (works well if you don't tell them what they are in for.) Have the jars of baby food in a sack or box so the players can't see them. Have them stand in a circle and pass a spoon while music plays (like hot potato). When the music stops, have the loser blindly pick out a jar of baby food and take a big bite. The grosser the flavor, the better. Continue until there is only one person left in the game. Works well at large group events.

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Balloon Ankle Game

Author/Source: Exploring Your Call

Need: blown up balloons, string

Description: Tie a balloon on a string (at least two feet long) to each person's ankle. The object of the game is to be the last person with an un-popped balloon around one's ankle. Note: this game takes some prep work. Balloons must be blown up and string cut in advance. It is a fun game, though. Don't try in someone's living room if you want to be invited back!

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Balloon Confessions

Author/ Source: Faith Fellowship

Need: helium balloons, marker

Description: Give each of the youth their own balloon and a marker and have them write one sin on that balloon. Then have them write on the balloon something to the effect of "Lord, please forgive me/take this sin..." You then have all the youth release their "sins" up towards heaven. Someday when that balloon comes back to earth, whether it be whole or blown up, maybe it might land in someone's back yard, and that is a way to maybe reach out to someone or make them curious. I hope you enjoy this idea, and maybe the message will reach someone and give them new hope.

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Balloon Dress Up

Need: several sets of clothing/accessories

Description: Get 2 volunteers (you can use more than 2 people if you have enough sets of clothes). The object of the game is to get dressed in the clothing while keeping a blown up balloon in the air at all times. Make sure that the two people have similar items of clothing - for example, a shirt, hat, socks, gloves, sunglasses and a coat. The winner is the first person to get completely dressed without letting the balloon touch the ground.

Burn Your Idols

Need: paper grocery bags, markers or crayons, lighter or matches, safe place for fire

Text: Read the first commandment (Ex 20:3) & read the account in Acts 19— where the people burned all the articles associated with the Devil.

Process: Ask if anybody has ever seen an idol in person? Then why is this verse in the Bible? An idol is anything we worship instead of God. As this goes on, hand out paper grocery bags and markers. Have group make an idol that represents what they are most tempted to place in front of God. Each can explain what their idol is about.

Provide an opportunity to burn their idols if they are serious about keeping God first in front of these temptations.

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Christians and Romans

Author/Source:

Category: Group Activity

Description: (exegete how Romans persecuted Christians)

You have been transported to the first century A.D. where disciples of Christ are being persecuted. You are a Christian, but you are facing opposition from the government.

Anyone who publicly acknowledges that they are a Christian is condemned to be thrown to the lions. Guards wander the streets, interrogating common people in order to eliminate unwanted Christians. It is into this atmosphere that you will find yourself when you step out of this room. Today is not an ordinary day, however. There is a secret gathering of Christians in a yet-to-be-disclosed location. Your goal is to find your way to the secret location and join your brothers and sisters in this secret "underground church" meeting. Along the way you may be approached by one of the guards, who will simply ask you, "Roman or Christian?" If you reply, "Roman," you will not be held any longer and you will be sent on your way. If you reply, "Christian," you will be taken to a holding cell to await your fate with the lions. Picture yourself in such a society.

Ultimately, you would like to remain true to your faith. What will you do? **WHAT THE KIDS DON'T KNOW (but you do):** - - -Where the location of the secret meeting is (make sure it's big enough for everybody) - - -Some of the guards (perhaps one out of five) are actually Christians and will not only set you free if you admit you are a Christian, but they will give you a hint as to where the secret meeting is. - - -Some of those who stand up for their faith and are sent to the holding cell (early in the game) will be broken free by an amazing work of the Holy Spirit (angels come and hold the guards, allowing the prisoners to go free). Those who are caught much later in the game will not be released and will be told of their untimely demise at the hands of the lions (there were martyrs, you know). **OTHER NOTES:** There should be at least one guard for every 5 people or so, or nobody will ever get caught. The secret meeting place needs to be hidden well enough that everybody won't find it within five minutes. Once people find the secret church, they **MAY NOT LEAVE** to bring others in; it is simply too dangerous. The larger the playing area, the better.

DEBRIEFING: This is the most important part of the entire game, and it must be done in a very sensitive way. Some kids will have denied their faith and might feel bad about it.

Others will think it was no big deal to lie about not being a Christian so they could reach their goal. Others might be afraid of what might happen to them if they stand up for their faith in real life. The debriefing is an opportunity for you to really reach the kids on what it means to stand up for one's faith and to totally trust God even in situations where they may face incredible adversity.

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Cleaning Up the Mess

Object Lesson: I had my group of VBS 5th graders pair up. I gave each pair a card which had a "nasty job" written on it -- "being on a road crew that picks up dead skunks", "changing a baby's messy diaper" -- you get the idea. The groups each had a turn to silently act out the nasty job, while the rest of the class shouted out what was being depicted.

When they were done, we turned to the narrative of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. I wanted them to grasp what a lowly job foot-washing was. Then I asked them to count how many of the nasty jobs were ones that involved cleaning up after someone or something else. All of them were.

I then showed them that Jesus' work on the cross was the ultimate act of cleaning up after our mess, and that, as we come to Him daily, asking for forgiveness, that He lovingly and gently cleans up our mess again. What a wonderful Savior we have, what a beautiful example of service, and what a responsibility we have to try to live up to that example.

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Cracker Ping Pong

Author/Source

Category

Description: Get 2 volunteers to kneel at opposite sides of a table with hands behind their back. With masking tape, mark a horizontal line down the center of table, representing the division of the two sides of the table. Tell them the object of the game is when the leaders place the ping pong ball on the table, they have to blow it (no hands!) and try to get it past their opponent (off the side) They can only blow and block the ball with their chest to keep it on the table. The catch is that before placing the ball on the table, each contestant is given a dry cracker, such as a Saltine to chew quickly before they begin blowing! Hilarious fun! They laugh so hard when they blow and cracker crumbs fly out of their mouths that the game gets really goofy!

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Create Camp Critters (like Junk wars)

Take a certain amount of time to collect items such as leaves, pinecones, small stones, bark, twigs, and so on. Design a camp critter; give it a name, etc. After the time period is up, invite each group to introduce their camp critter to the other groups. This activity could also be adapted for individual persons rather than small groups.

Death Drum

Author/Source: NYC 2006

Category: Spiritual Illustration

Description: This idea works well in a worship service stressing hunger and starvation in the world. According to statistics (need to be updated), someone dies of starvation every eight seconds. During the worship service, have someone beat a drum every eight seconds to symbolize another death taking place. The drum interrupting the normal course of the service dramatically illustrates how often we try to ignore the problem of hunger in the world but it just won't go away unless we do something about it.

*** My twist: Show slides of hungry children, etc. and in silence, have the drum beat while the kids watch the slides.

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Do You Love Your Neighbor?

Author/Source: unknown

Category: Icebreaker

Description: Everyone sit in a circle. One person will approach someone in the circle and ask the question "Do you love your neighbor?" The person can answer in two ways:

- a. "No, I don't love my neighbors" The people sitting on both sides of him now stand up and try to change seats before the person who is it jumps into one of their chairs. Whoever is left standing is it and continues the game.
 - b. "Yes, I love my neighbors, but I don't like people who ____" He fills in the blank with anything that refers to anyone in the group, like "who are wearing jeans" or "who have been in a musical". Those people then jump out of their chairs and must find a new seat. The person left standing continues the game by asking a person in the group "Do you love your neighbor?"
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Egg Chariot

Author/Source: AWOL

Need: Eggs, masking tape

Description: Everyone pairs up, and one person stands in front of the other person who puts their hands on the front person's shoulders. The back person has an egg taped to their back. The object of the game is to run around and try to crack other teams' eggs without getting yours cracked. Only the front person can do the cracking. The back person must keep their arms on their teammate's shoulders at all times.

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Electricity

Author/Source: unknown

Category: Icebreaker

Description: Instruct the group to stand in a circle and hold hands. Select one person to be "it" and stand inside the circle. The object of the game is for "it" to catch the electricity that is passed around the circle. The electricity is passed by squeezing the hand of the

person standing beside you. The electricity must be passed quickly and can change directions. When "it" catches the electricity, the person caught becomes "it" and the game continues.

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Find the Imp

Author/ Source: Noel S. Naff

Need: deck of cards or make numbers & symbols

Description: Christians- these people try to find out who the imps are

Imps- try to make chaos during the game

Exorcist- points people out to find out if they are imps

Healer- points Christians out to save them from imps.

Tie it in to Bible Study: talk about false accusations based on assumptions instead of proof, and how we do that in real life by the way a person looks or acts.

Count up how many times they falsely accused people, who they listen to in persuading a vote, how mobsters try to blend in and accuse others so they would not get found out.

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Find the Leader

Description: Sit in circle, one person leaves, when the "it" person comes back, "it" has to figure out who is leading the group. The circle is following the leader and when the leader begins to do something the circle follows (i.e.- clapping, snapping, slapping knees, etc)

"It" has to figure out who the leader is, only has 3 chances to choose.

Lesson: qualities of leadership! What makes a good leader? Who are some good leaders? If you had to describe a good leader in five words, what would they be? Now read Luke 22:14-27.

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Find the Shoe

Author/Source: unknown

Category:

Description: Everybody takes off a shoe from one side (example: right side) and throws that shoe in a pile. Then everybody grabs (at random) a shoe from the pile and puts it on. Now the aim is to pair up the shoes. Each person must find the people who are wearing the same shoes as he/she is, and stand such that the pair of shoes are together. E.g. I'm wearing my shoe A and somebody's shoe G, I must find the person who is wearing the other shoe A, and stand so that that pair of shoes are together (AA), and I must find someone wearing shoe G, and put my shoe G with his/her shoe G. Both shoes A and shoes G should be together in space and time (i.e. the object is to form a sort of a line or 'twister' kind of formation where all the shoes have been paired up.)

Gum Art

Author/Source: Exploring Your Call

Need: bubble gum, toothpick, index card

Description: Give each participant a piece of bubble gum to chew, toothpick and index card. Allow them 3 minutes to chew the gum, place gum on index card and then design something on index card using only the toothpick as a tool (no hands). The person with the best and most creative design is the winner. If you have quite a few players you can have several categories of winners, like “most ingenious”, “most creative” and of course the “What is that?” award.

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Jesus Brings Sight to the Blind

Author/Source

Need: blindfolds

Description: 1st blindfold all the youth, 2nd tell them they are no longer allowed to talk, 3rd whisper a different number to each of them.

{The numbers can be any range, we threw some minus numbers in once, and they don't have to be consecutive, (ex. 1-2-3...), you could go -4 -3 -1 -1 0 2 4 4 7 8 9 13 17 40... and so on, depending on how hard you want it to be you can spread the numbers out, or make them close, with no negative numbers.}

Without talking or being able to see, the kids have to put themselves in order from least to greatest. Some times this goes on for a long time and most kids give up and just sit down. At this point, you can take off the blindfold of one of the kids who's actually putting effort into it and let them have their sight, yet they still can't talk.

Devotion: Once they have successfully completed the task, have them sit down and ask them how it made them feel. You will get a range of answers like frustrated or angry. Then go into how we are sometimes lost and we can't see where we are going in life. And when people come along and try to pull us or push us different ways, and we are afraid to trust them, or we just want to give up when things get tough. Or sometimes we are holding on to something we think is safe and the right thing, but maybe God has a better place for us. It's hard to let go. God is in control and He sees us and is with us even though we don't realize He's there. You can go other ways with this too. It's just an example of a debrief we used.

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Jump Stick Relay

Author/ Source:

Need: broom handle or stick for each team

Description: A broom handle or stick about four or five feet in length is needed for each team. The first and second person in each line takes the stick, and with one on each side of the line of people, quickly moves back towards the end of the line. All the team members must jump over the stick as they move along. When they get to the end, the first person in line stays at the end, the second runs to the front with the stick and the second and third repeat the process. The first team to rotate through everyone wins.

The Monkey and the Seller

Author/Source

Description: Everyone gets into a circle. There are two people in the middle; a seller and a monkey. The seller goes from person to person around in the circle, asking each one to buy his monkey. (Ex. I have this really cool monkey for sale it can _____(sing) would you like to buy it?) The person being asked says "I'll buy your monkey if....." then they add something they would like to see the monkey do. (ex. Skip around the room with his/her arms flopping around) If this person laughs then he/she is the monkey. It sounds hard but it's a riot to see everyone laughing at each other.

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Noah's Ark Game

Author/ Source: Melvin Hill Youth Group

Category

Description: Say to one another "If I went on Noah's ark I would take _____." The rest of the group or leader would say you can enter or not. Only people that can enter are the ones that fill in the blank with something that begins with the first letter of their names.

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Photo Scavenger Hunt

Divide the campers into small groups of eight to ten members each. Give each small group a sheet of photo assignments and either a camera that produces instant prints or a digital camera. (See the sample list of photo assignments below.) Instruct the groups that they have a set amount of time (such as thirty minutes) to try to acquire as many of the photos as possible. Explain that every member must be included in the photos with the exception of the photographer and this role should be rotated so that all are included in the photographs. After the given time has passed, gather the groups back together. Give each group a piece of poster board and ask the groups to tape their photographs to the poster board for the entire community to enjoy. Make arrangements for the campers to use a computer to compose the digital photos. If instant or digital cameras are not available, the groups can capture these photos by drawing them.

The photo list can be modified to emphasize the unique features of your site.

A picture of your team posing as a nativity scene

Your group's best chillin' pose with a plaque that tells the age of a camp building.

A picture of your group spelling out the number of cabins on site

A picture of your group's funniest faces with a camp landmark in the background

A picture of your group with the caption "I can't believe we all fit on here!"

A picture of your group forming a Christian symbol (Be creative!)

A scene from one of the Bible stories found in a daily discovery

Do exactly what the sign says (any sign around camp will work)

A picture of everyone wearing someone else's shoes in front of a body of water

A picture with an insect or animal (You may need to be creative.)

Q-Tip Wars

Author/Source

Need: Q-tips, straws, white t-shirt, trash bags, food coloring, goggles

Description: You pick one person in your group to be a target. They wear goggles, a garbage bag around their waste and a shirt that you've drawn on that is divided into different point sections. Then you split the rest of your group into 4 teams and give each team their own bowl of food coloring and each person gets a straw and 5 q-tips. Let each team go separately and have the team dip their q-tips into the food coloring and blown out the straws hitting the target for points. You can add up the points at the end by the different colored marks on the shirt.

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Spirit Balloon

Author/ Source:

Category: Spiritual Illustration

Need: larger-sized balloons

Description: Have a big bag of the larger-sized balloons. Line up your group at one end of a large room or sanctuary. Tell them that they are each trying to "fly" their balloons from the starting line past the designated finish line. Of course they fill the balloons full of air and let go--but the balloons almost never go in a straight line! They can fly at right angles or behind you. Use this to illustrate the "Spirit blowing where it will" and that on life's journeys, we may not be going where we want all the time, but God might have a different destination in mind or a different path to our future.

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Stare Down

Author/Source:

Description: Start by having all of the kids remove one shoe and placing it in a pile in another room. Then place two chairs facing each other in the middle of the meeting room. Start by having an assistant randomly draw two shoes from the pile. The owners of these two shoes then sit facing each other in the chairs. On "go" they stare into each others eyes until one of them blinks. The object is to "out-stare" your opponent. The winner stays in the chair and another shoe is randomly selected from the pile to face the champion. Whoever is in the chair after all of the "shoes" are gone is the winner and should be rewarded somehow. It is a fun game...however; I had one student who wouldn't play until he doused his shoe and sock with Lysol from the bathroom!

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True or Fiction

Author/ Source: Roundtable Small Group

A guest tells three things about themselves.

Two are true.

One is a lie.

The other guests try to determine which is the lie.

Two Ball Kick-Ball

Need: Two balls, a large cardboard box or a trash can, four bases, an area suitable for running around.

Like traditional kick-ball, except two balls are placed on the home plate and the kicker proceeds to kick the first one and then the other. The fielding team cannot move until the second ball has been kicked and both balls are in play, the fielding team tries to retrieve the balls and place them in a large cardboard box or trash can behind home plate. The kicker runs around as many bases as possible before the balls are put into the box. Score is kept by adding up the number of bases touched. The teams can switch sides after the entire team has an opportunity to kick or after three kickers. For added fun, try using different sizes or types of balls.

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Un-cola Pop Off

Author/Source: Exploring Your Call

Need: several different brands of clear sodas, small cup

Description: Purchase several different brands for clear sodas and here's a list of ideas. 7-UP, Sprite, Squirt, Slice, Lemon Lime, Mountain Dew, Club Soda, Ginger Ale, Surge, Fresca, and others that you might find. One can of each type of soda should be enough for a group of 8-15 players. Pour each soda into separate large cups, number the cups and make a master list with the number and corresponding name of the soda. You do this before participants arrive or in another room out of view of everyone. Players will be given one sheet of paper and they will number that sheet with the number of selections that they will be tasting. They will also be given one small paper bathroom cup. One at a time, introduce one of the large numbered cups of soda to the participants and pour ½ to one ounce of soda into their cups. You would start out with soda #1 and everyone will list down on their sheet what they think that soda is, without telling anyone else. You will repeat with other sodas until all have been tasted. The person with the most correct answers is the winner and you could give them a 2 liter of soda. You can display on a table the empty cans of the sodas that they are tasting to help them guess which one they might have, but for a very smart group it wouldn't be advised.

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A What?

Need: small objects, pencils, erasers, pens, rocks, etc.

Description: *this is a complicated exercise and therefore complicated to explain 1. Have the students sit in a circle on the floor. The instructor will sit within the circle and before him will be many small objects. 2. He will pick up an object, a pencil for example, and while passing it to the person at his right; he will say "This is a pencil" The person will answer, "A What?" The instructor will answer "A pencil", and again the person will ask "A what?" and the instructor will again answer "A pencil." The person will answer "Oh, a pencil." The person then turns to her right and the process continues; "This is a pencil", "A what?" "A pencil" "A what?" "A pencil" "Oh, a pencil!" 3. Practice this once so everyone can follow the pattern. Then start again, this time continually adding in objects so each person is carrying on two conversations at once. One person will say to the

person on his right, "This is a pencil", then turning to his left he'll ask "A what?" and continues, passing on the next object. 4. Try to get the objects clear around the circle.

Who Am I

Author/Source: Exploring Your Call

Need: tags with names of famous people

Description: Pre-make tags with each tag having one famous person on it, mainly divas that everyone would know. These tags will be placed on the back of each guest as they arrive. This is done without them knowing who they are. They are to go around the room asking questions as to who they might be. Questions like "am I a singer?" They can only ask one question and make only one guess as to who they are with each person that they talk to, then they have to move on to another person. They can come visit previous players once they've visited another player.

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Antonio Banderas
Madonna

Clint Eastwood
Richard Nixon
Elvis Presley

Foghorn Leghorn
Fred Flintstone
Harry Potter

Jennifer Lopez
Gandalf
Batman

Who is the Holy Spirit

Author/Source: Unknown

Category: Spiritual Illustration

Need: stack of paper (colored if you have them), one blindfold

Description: The objective is for the blind folded person to walk from one side of the room to the other without touching one of the papers. You blind fold the person and tell them that their goal is to reach the other side of "life" without touching a square paper. After you blind fold that person, pick one person (the blind folded person can not know who this person is going to be) to be the voice of the Holy Spirit.... The rest of the group line up along the two side walls of the hall - they cannot come next to the blindfolded person, and cannot touch them. Neither can they move from their starting positions. Only the person playing the "Holy Spirit" can move along the walls. The rest of your group tries to get the blind folded person to step on the squares of paper. SO the challenge comes for the blind folded person to listen to a voice she trusts and listen to them and try to block out all the other voices in the group... Most of the time they will fail and listen to the wrong person... Use this exercise to lead into a discussion about tons of things -how to better listen to God -trusting other people -the effects of other influences in our lives - how to discern the love of God in a world where people deceive you. Try it out.