

A Treasure Hunt

Purpose

The youth will participate in a treasure hunt, followed by reflection on their priorities and what they truly treasure in life. They will also be given the opportunity to share the treasure they have found, as well as to share the treasures of their gifts and talents in service to others.

Event at a Glance

7:00 PM	Welcome
7:05 PM	Icebreaker: Fast Food Mix-Up
7:15 PM	Opening Prayer
7:20 PM	Treasure Hunt
7:35 PM	Reflection and Discussion
	Extend the Session: Living the Treasure (add 15 minutes)
7:55 PM	Closing Prayer Service
8:10 PM	Announcements and Refreshments
8:30 PM	Good Night!

Extend the Event: Living the Treasure (15 minutes)

Invite someone from your community who has chosen to live a modest, simpler life than is the norm for our culture to come and give a presentation on their choice and how it has impacted their life. You might invite somebody from a religious community. You could also invite someone who has had a major lifestyle change, resulting in a simpler way of living. This would fit well between the reflection/discussion and the closing prayer.

Materials Needed

- Bible, candle
- Candy bars, fun sized, enough for each student to find at least five
- Four or Five regular sized candy bars
- Two extra large sized candy bars or bags of candy
- Newsprint
- Markers
- Note cards and pens

Prepare in Advance

1. If possible, this is best done outside. Hide all of the candy around. Some should be fairly easy to find, but the larger the candy, the harder it should be to find. Don't hesitate to make it almost impossible to find the biggest bars. Be mindful of the church grounds, flowers, bushes, etc. You don't want them to end up trampled or damaged in any way.

2. Set up a prayer space, either indoors or out.

3. Call various agencies to inquire about service opportunities for young people. Try to find a variety in order to meet many interests. Some ideas might include food banks, animal shelters, Relay for Life, Special Olympics, and rest homes.
4. Prepare sign-up sheets on newsprint for youth to indicate interest. Post them around your gathering room.
5. Set up a circle of chairs in the middle of the room, one for each participant.
6. Set up tables for refreshments (if you are serving any) and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and name tags. (Skip the nametags if participants know each other and you know them. However, if they wear nametags, you wear one, too.) Hospitality is important: As the facilitator, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

Session Outline

Welcome and Introductions (5 minutes)

Welcome the young people and any others who have gathered. Ask them to gather together in the circle of chairs you have set up. Once all have gathered, begin with some introductory comments without telling the group about the treasure hunt.

Icebreaker: Fast Food Mix-Up (10 minutes)

Divide the participants into four groups by having them count off by fours. Assign each group the name of a fast food restaurant, such as Wendy's, McDonalds, Taco Bell, and Sonic. Ask for a volunteer to begin the game. Give these instructions:

The volunteer will begin the game by standing in the middle of the circle. (Their chair is removed—there is one less chair than players.) The person in the middle calls out one of the four fast food restaurant names. Those assigned to that restaurant get up and run to find another chair. You may not simply stand up and reclaim their chair or move over to the chair next to you. The person in the middle also runs to find a chair. Whoever is left standing is the new leader. The leader also has the option of calling out “fast food” in which case everybody gets up and runs to a new chair.

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Gather participants in the prayer space.

Prayer Leader: (begin with the Sign of the Cross)

God of all things good,

We thank you for this day.

We thank you for fun, laughter, and joy.

We thank you for the gift of friendship.

We thank you for the many blessings you have bestowed upon us and upon those we love.

Be with us this day and all days as we strive to do your will.
Amen.

Invite the participants to think of the many blessings in their life. After a minute, invite them to name a blessing aloud.

Conclude by praying the Glory Be.

Treasure Hunt (15 minutes)

Invite the participants to the area you have prepared for the treasure hunt. Gather them together and begin:

We are going to take the next twenty minutes or so and have a treasure hunt. I have hidden candy bars of all sizes around the room (grounds). There are many small candy bars, a few medium sized candy bars, and two giant sized candy bars. You may keep all that you find. Please be mindful of each other and of the church property as you run around hunting. Don't trample each other or the flowers or bushes. <Give the boundaries for the treasure hunt.> When I call time, we will gather back together here. One, two, three, go!

Reflection and Discussion (20 minutes)

Gather the youth together and begin the discussion. Expect there to be a lot of excitement, laughter, and chaos! Invite the youth to share their candy if they choose.

So who found the most candy bars? Who found the medium ones? Who found the giant ones?

Tell me, how hard did you work to find these hidden "treasures"? If I had hidden money, say, dollar bills, a few fives or tens, and a couple of twenties, how hard would you have searched? Why?

Okay, now let me ask you this... would you, do you, have you looked this hard to find God? Why or why not? What do you truly treasure? If I were to ask your parents what they treasure about you, how do you think they would answer? How do you think God would answer that question?

Take a note card and pen, and jot down five of your gifts or talents that you treasure.
(Pause)

Now cross off two that you would be willing to give up if you had to. (Pause)

Now cross off another...and another. You should be left with that which you most treasure about yourself.

Let's gather now for our closing prayer. Be sure to take your note card with your most valued treasure on it with you.

Closing Prayer (15 minutes)

Gather

Invite the youth to gather again in the prayer space. Ask them to quiet their hearts as you all prepare to hear the Word of God.

Prayer Leader: (begin with the Sign of the Cross)

Loving God, you are our greatest treasure. We are so lucky to be called your children.
Amen.

Listen

Invite the reader to proclaim Matthew 6:19-21. Allow a few moments of quiet.

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Look at the gift or talent you left on your card. Is that what you most treasure? Is that where your heart is? "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be". Think what else you treasure. Do you protect your treasure? Do you honor it? Are you grateful for it? Are you willing to share it?

I have posted several signs around the room with opportunities for service. If you wish to share any of your special gifts with others, please take a few moments to wander about the room and sign up for any of the service opportunities.

During this time play a song such as "[Now Is the Time](#)" by Tom Kendzia (Spirit & Song 2, OCP).

Go Forth

Prayer Leader:

Lord, we pray:

We ask you to guide us throughout the coming week.

Help us to understand that our possessions are not what you ask us to treasure.

Help us to understand that our treasures cannot be measured by human standards.

Help us to use the gifts and talents you have given us to benefit others.

And know that you are at the center of our hearts, for that is where we find our truest treasure.

Amen.

Announcements and Refreshments (20 minutes)

Thank the young people for their participation in tonight's 'treasure hunt'. Make any needed announcements, and enjoy some refreshments!