

Outdoor Games for Small Groups

All the games in this section are ideal for groups of thirty or fewer people in an outdoor setting. These games can also be played with larger groups, often with little or no adaptation.

Frisbee Soccer

For this variation on soccer, use a Frisbee instead of a soccer ball. All other rules of soccer apply. Soccer cages should be used so that they stop the Frisbee when the goal is made. You could also use a hoop or a tire that the Frisbee must pass through to score a goal. Players must move the Frisbee by tossing it from one player to another. They cannot run with the Frisbee.

Another version of this game is to have a Frisbee free-for-all between two teams. A dozen or two dozen Frisbees are placed in the center of the playing area. When the game starts, players try to get as many Frisbees as possible into their opponent's goal. Once a Frisbee is in a net, it stays there. Again, the Frisbees may only be passed. This is really a wild game.

Inner Tube Soccer

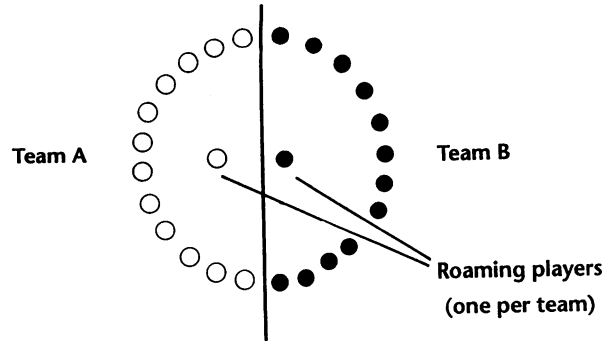
This is a game of soccer that follows the usual rules of the game, but it substitutes an inner tube (the size and shape of an automobile-tire tube) for the soccer ball. The tube should lie on the ground (like a hockey puck), and the playing surface should be relatively flat and smooth.

Circle Soccer

Play this variation of soccer with a soccer ball and on a soccer field. Divide the group into two teams. Select two people, one from each team, to be roaming players and have them stand opposite each other on either side of the center line. Have each team form a half-circle around its roamer so that together the two teams make a circle (see diagram). Explain that the object of the game is to kick the soccer ball through the other team's half of the circle. Hands may not be used at

all, only feet and bodies. If the ball is kicked over the heads of the players, the point goes to the opposing team. No one may move out of position except the roaming players, who may kick the ball to their teammates if the ball stops in the center. The roaming players may not score points or cross into the other team's territory. If the roaming player gets hit with the ball when it is kicked by the opposing team, the kicking team gets a point.

When everyone is in place and ready, throw the ball into the circle and let the game begin!



Roller Basketball

Using an outdoor basketball court, two teams on roller skates or roller blades attempt to score points by hitting the opponent's backboard with a beach ball. Teams can have five to ten players each. Players may either carry the ball or tap it, like in volleyball. If a player is tagged by an opponent while carrying the ball, the ball goes to the other team. The ball is then put in play by a player from the possessing team who passes it from out-of-bounds. A roughness penalty (use basketball rules) gives the opposing team a free throw from the free throw line.

Duck Ball

This game is kick ball with a twist. (Impose a one-pitch per kicker limit if the group is large.) Before the kickers run to first base, they are handed a fully inflated balloon that they must keep between their knees as they run. The fielders, meanwhile, are also equipped with balloons between their knees. The pitchers are exempt, but are not allowed to assist their team at all. Fielders must waddle as best they can to retrieve the ball and attempt to put the runners out. Outs are made by touching runners with the ball, either by a tag or a throw. Balls thrown out-of-bounds limit a runner to a single base.

Points are scored by crossing home plate—but that is not the only way. If a fielder pops his or her balloon, the other team scores a point. Likewise, if a runner pops his or her balloon, the fielding team scores a point. The game ends when a team earns twenty points or when a predetermined number of innings have been played.

You will need about fifty or sixty balloons in a large plastic bag or trash can to begin the game, and perhaps more as the game progresses. Those who do not want to play or cannot play can be recruited to maintain the balloon supply and to hand balloons to runners on their way to first base.

For indoor games, use a Nerf ball rather than a kick ball.

Jungle Football

This is essentially touch or flag football. However, all players are eligible to catch a pass. The quarterback (ball carrier) is permitted to run across the line of scrimmage and to pass the ball in any direction—forward, backward, and so on—to another player. Multiple passes are allowed. Each team gets four downs to score. There are no first downs. Only touchdowns (six points) and safeties (two points) are counted. The rules can be changed or modified to fit any size group, any age, and so on. Have your own Jungle Football Super Bowl!

Jump or Dive

This old camp favorite requires midair decision-making. You will need a swimming pool with a diving board. This is how it works: One at a time the young people take a nice, high bounce off the diving board. At the height of their jump, the leader yells either “Jump!” or “Dive!” and the young people must obey. Their execution is ruled a dive if a hand hits the water first, a jump if a foot hits first.

If the young people get too good at second-guessing the leader, he or she may choose to wait longer before yelling commands. Or he or she may really tie the players in knots with an occasional command to “Jive!”

Field Handball

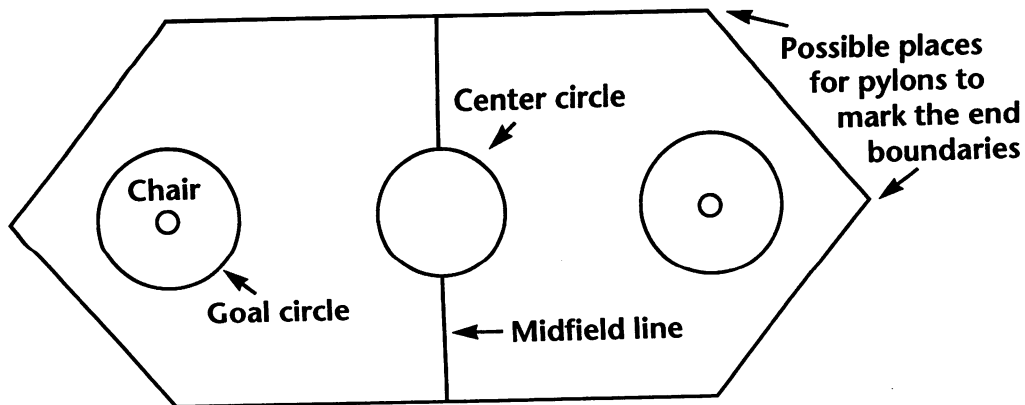
For this hybrid of football and soccer, you will need a large ball (soccer ball, football, volleyball—even a kick ball will do), two durable chairs, and tape or rope. Pylons to mark the field boundaries and armbands to distinguish teams are optional.

Mark off a goal circle at each end of the field. The circles should be twelve feet in diameter. Put a chair in the middle of each one. The goal of the game is simply to hit the opponent’s chair with the ball.

The game is played this way:

- Start with a face-off in the center circle.
- Players may run with the ball or pass the ball to a teammate.
- If a runner is tagged, she or he has three seconds to pass the ball to a teammate. If the runner fails to pass the ball, the other team takes possession on the spot.

- If a player drops a pass from a teammate, anyone can pick up the ball and continue play.
- An intercepted pass is played without a break.
- No one, defender or attacker, may enter either of the goal circles. If this happens, the ball changes possession and play is renewed at the nearest boundary line.
- Following a goal, play begins again in center field.



Soakin' Summer Softball

Make your softball (or whiffle ball or kick ball) games into summer cool-offs with these wet versions.

- Lay a Slip 'n' Slide or something similar between third base and home plate. Require runners to literally slide home all the way from third base.
- Substitute a lawn sprinkler for the bag at first base. Runners who hit a modest single must straddle the sprinkler. The more fortunate, who hit at least a double, have only to jump over the sprinkler on their way to second. A base runner on first and a pitcher with a slow windup equals one sopping player!

To keep both games moving, limit the batter to one pitch—either a hit or an out.

Fizzer Tag

Before you play this summertime game, drill a small hole in the center of as many Alka Seltzer tablets as you have players and run a separate long piece of string through each tablet. Have the players tie their tablet loosely around their neck. Supply each person with a squirt gun (or in advance tell the players to bring one). Establish boundaries and place several buckets of water out-of-bounds for filling and refilling the squirt guns.

Now begin a game of Fizzer Tag. When a player's Alka Seltzer tablet gets hit enough and dissolves sufficiently to drop off the string, that player is out. To shorten the game, bring out the garden hose!

Kick Golf

No green fees are needed for this round of golf! Set up your own nine-hole course: Hula Hoops become “greens,” small sticks stuck within them become “flags,” and small playground balls become “golf balls.” A leg and foot make a “golf club.” Lay markers of some sort to show where players tee off. And do not forget to set par: use hills and other “traps” to vary the difficulty of each “hole.” When the ball touches the stick, it is considered to be in the hole.

Distribute score cards and play by teams if you like.

Wolleyball

This game is great for a group with people of varying ages or skill levels. It suits younger players who may not yet be well-coordinated and is challenging to the more athletic people. Lower the volleyball net until the bottom edge touches the floor or play on a tennis court. Use a kick ball. The game is like traditional volleyball in most ways:

- The six-person team rotates.
- Only the serving team can score.
- The teams are allowed a maximum of three hits per volley.
- No two consecutive hits by any one player are allowed.

Here are the differences:

- Servers serve as in two-square—they bounce the ball once, then hit it over the net.
- Teammates can help a lagging serve over the net.
- The ball may bounce once (but does not have to) before a team returns it, as well as between the two or three hits a team makes before returning the ball over the net.

Guru

The gurus in your group will love this hide-and-see game. It is perfect for summer evenings. Select one of the young people to be the guru, who is to dress in an identifying robe. Give the guru a lit candle and have him or her hide somewhere within the boundaries of the game. When the guru is settled, direct the other players, each armed with a squirt gun and an unlit candle, to spread out to find the guru.

As players discover the guru, they are to light their own candle from his or hers and, by stealth more than speed, try to get back to a designated home base before their candle is extinguished by others' squirt guns. Emphasize that the guru's candle cannot be extinguished by other players. If their flame gets doused, the players must return to the guru to relight their candle. The first player to arrive at home base with a lit candle is the winner.

Caution the players that if their candle gets squirted out and they have to return to the guru for a light, they should not expect to find him or her in the same place—for the guru can move around at will.

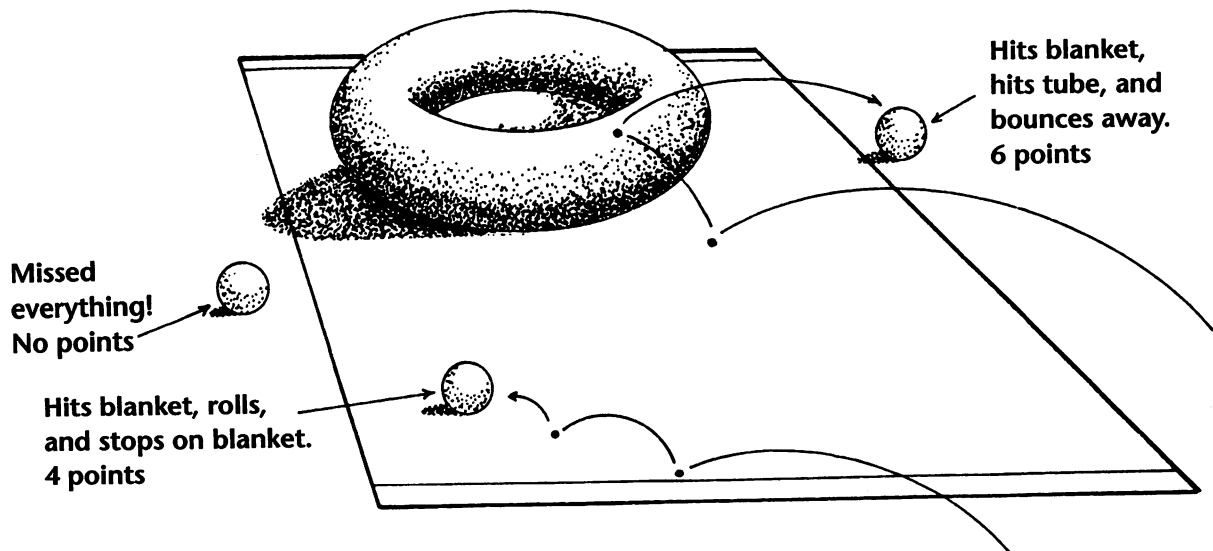
Inner Tube Open

This game can be won by sheer inexperience—so look out, golf pros! You will need one or two nine-iron golf clubs, a dozen tennis balls (six yellow, six orange), a large blanket (or tarp), and a large, inflated inner tube.

Spread out the blanket and mark a line ten to twelve feet away from the front edge of it. Have the players putt from behind this line. Place the inner tube on the far edge of the blanket (see diagram).

Players get six strokes to earn points in the following ways:

- one point if the ball hits the blanket
- three points if the ball stays on the blanket
- five points if the ball hits the inner tube
- twenty points if the ball lands inside the inner tube



Here is what makes this game fun: Points are awarded cumulatively. That is, if a ball hits the inner tube (five points), rolls across the blanket a ways (one point), and remains on the blanket (three points), the player earns nine points. Or if a ball hits the inner tube but bounces away without touching the blanket, that player earns five points. The player with the most points wins. This game can be played by teams or by individuals.

Run 'n' Wet

Got your swimsuits on? Have the players sit in a circle and number off. Then put a plump water balloon in the center of the circle. When you call out two numbers, the two whose number is called must jump up and run around the circle and back to their own place. Then they must race to the water balloon in the middle. Can you guess the rest? The first one there gets to throw the balloon at the loser, who must stand still and not dodge it.

Taxi

This swimming-pool game begins with two teams on opposite sides of the pool. Give each team an air mattress. On the signal “go,” one member of each team should straddle the mattress and paddle it around the pool. When the players arrive back at their own starting point, they must each pick up another teammate and make another lap. This continues until the entire team is on the mattress.

The trick is mounting the mattress, especially with several people already on it. There will be a lot of thrashing and sputtering during this game!

Midnight Volleyball

Start a volleyball game shortly before dark. Play by the customary rules *until* the genuine question, “Where is it?” is shouted by someone—at this point the game changes to Midnight Volleyball.

- The game ends when a team makes five points. A team can win by one point, rather than the customary two-point spread.
- A team can hit the ball as many times as it needs to, provided the ball does not touch the ground.

Play the best two out of three games—if you can stand it that long and if parents allow their children to stay out that late. This game is a blend of frustration, challenge, and a lot of fun mixed with blind luck instead of skill.

eat some of these delicacies at high speed: an onion, a clove of garlic, and a cucumber (all of them small).

• **Manna.** “WHAT IS IT?!” will be the players’ cry as they grab a foil-wrapped food item, unwrap it, and eat it as quickly as possible before running back to tag the next player on the team. Wrap carrots, crackers, Twinkies, marshmallows, and apples.

• **O, Ye of Little Faith.** Some people crossing the Red Sea didn’t have much faith. Maybe they carried inner tubes—just in case. Make a relay out of cramming a tube over two people who must run to a point and back again before surrendering the tube to the next pair on their team.

• **Into the Promised Land.** The goal of this scavenger hunt is to bring back the biggest sample of everything on the list you compile. Give points to the teams with the longest piece of grass, the biggest pine cone, the largest leaf, and so on. *Lynne Hartke*

him or her. The drawing can only be done once. The second person draws what he or she felt onto the back of the person in front of him or her. Finally, on a piece of paper the person at the front of the line draws what he or she felt. The team whose picture most resembles the original wins the round.

Geiger Counter

For this game, everyone is seated casually around the room. The leader selects a “volunteer” to leave the room. While she or he is away, the group agrees on a hiding place for a random object that the leader hides. The person then returns and tries to find the object. The rest of the group says “tick-tick-tick-tick” *slower* as she or he moves away from the object and *faster* as she or he moves closer until the object is found. Repeat this with a new contestant each time. The contestant who can find the object in the fastest time wins.

Ring on a String

Direct the group to sit in a circle on chairs and pick one person to stand in the middle. Slip a ring onto a long string and tie the ends together so that you have one large circle with a ring on it that can slide all the way around. Have every person—except the person in the middle—hold a piece of the string with both hands. Tell the group members to slide their hands along the string and pass the ring along as they try to hide it from the person in the middle, who tries to guess who has the ring by walking around the circle and tapping different people’s hands. When a person’s hand is tapped, he or she opens his or her hands to reveal whether he or she has the ring. When the person in the middle taps someone with the ring, they switch places.

Guess the Ingredients

Copy the ingredients list from a few common items in your pantry or refrigerator. Pass out copies of this list to the young people and have them guess what each item is. Here are a couple of examples:

- soybean oil, eggs, vinegar, water, salt, sugar, and lemon juice (mayonnaise)
- tomatoes, vinegar, corn sweetener, salt, onion powder, and spice (ketchup)

Help Your Neighbor

Young people like to play this card game. You need a minimum of four people. Get several games going if a lot of people want to play. You will need one deck of numbered playing cards for each four people who play. (If you don’t have cards numbered through twelve,

use regular playing cards and let the jack be number eleven and the queen, number twelve.)

Give everyone a set of cards numbered two through twelve and ask the players to turn the cards face up in front of them.

One person in the group rolls a pair of dice. The player turns over the card that corresponds to the number that was rolled. For example, if the dice total comes to seven, the player turns over his or her number seven card.

The player keeps rolling as long as he or she has cards to turn over. To keep his or her turn alive, the player may turn over the cards of the player on his or her left. The players continue until they can no longer turn over any cards from either their hand or their neighbor's. The game ends when one person has turned over all his or her cards.

Guess Who

For an easy get-acquainted activity, ask each young person to write down something about himself or herself that probably no one else knows. If the young people have trouble coming up with a unique contribution, suggest an unusual pet they might have, or a weird snack or sandwich that they like. If you get really desperate, ask for their mother's middle name. Collect all the responses.

Next, instruct the group to listen to the clues as you read them and try to guess the person they think the clue identifies. Give one thousand points for each correct guess, asking everyone to keep their own score. For a prize, give away a copy of the church directory or a notebook or a journal in which to write down the things they learned about people in the group.

Name Six

For this game, everyone sits in a circle except one person, who sits in the center and closes his or her eyes. An object is passed around until the person in the center claps his or her hands. The person holding the object at that time is assigned a letter by the person in the center. The object is then passed around while the person who was assigned the letter tries to name six things that begin with that letter before the object once again reaches him or her. If unsuccessful, that person must change places with the person in the center of the circle.

Magazine Scavenger Hunt

Divide your group into teams of two or three persons each and give each group a combination of old magazines. Then give them a list of various items, such as photos, names, products, and so on, that can be found in the magazines. As soon as a group finds one of the items, they cut it out and continue to collect as many as they can in the time limit. The list can be long or short depending on the time. Some

of the items will be found in several magazines, while others in only one. You can make the list as difficult as you want. The winner, of course, is the team with the most items found.

I Never

This game is not only fun but also fosters communication and openness among young people. Give each person ten tokens of some kind, such as marbles, matches, or pennies. Direct the young people to collect other people's tokens by telling everyone "how life has passed me by." Tell the players to take turns relating a life experience that almost everyone else has had, but they have not, such as riding a roller coaster. Then everyone who *has* done this must give a token to that player.

Make sure the players understand that everyone must tell the truth. You may also want to make some rules about good taste. For the most part, this game can challenge the young people to think creatively, and it will show them that everyone has missed doing something. The person who has missed the most in this game will end up taking home the most.

Wink and Wait

This is a popular game with young people. Everyone sits in a circle and faces the center. The leader must prepare a deck of playing cards that has only as many cards as there are players. It must include a joker. He or she lets everyone in the room take one card without showing it to anyone. Whoever draws the joker becomes the winker. No one, of course, knows who the winker is except the winker. Play begins with everyone looking around at one another and talking casually. The winker gets people out by *winking* at them. When a person notices that he or she has been winked at he or she *waits ten seconds* and then says "I'm out" and closes his or her eyes. The object is to guess who the winker is before being winked at. A person who guesses wrong is declared out. The winker tries to see how many people he or she can wink at before getting caught. When he or she is caught, the cards are collected and shuffled, and the game is replayed.

Match Up

Divide your group into two or more teams of equal number. Have each team choose a captain, who goes to the front of the room. Give everyone several slips of paper and a pencil. Ask the entire group a question, such as *Who's going to win the World Series this year?* Everyone, without any discussion, writes her or his answer on a slip of paper and passes it to the team captain, who has also written down an answer. The team captains announce their answers, and a point is awarded to each team for every answer that matches their team cap-

Instruction sheets send teams to a variety of locations around town within a limited area and include a variety of ways to eliminate numbers. On page 77 are some sample instructions. *Byron Harvey*

SCRIPTURE CLUES

In this treasure hunt use verses in the Bible that pertain to specific places or events that the youth can relate to their own church property or community. Follow the format of giving out the first clue, which is a Bible verse. The group has a person who looks up the verse and reads it to the entire group. They then relate it to some area and go there to find the next clue. Divide the group into two or more groups and compete to find the treasure. It can be almost anything. Place the treasure in a familiar area but hide it somewhere unusual, like in a tree. It is best to use about five or six clues for each group and to position a clue giver at each location. Try to space the clues the same distance for each group so that traveling times will be equal. Here are some verses that could be used:

- Proverbs 26:14 (a door)
- John 4:6 (a well)
- Isaiah 2:5 (light)
- Exodus 12:38 (death...cemetery)
- Psalms 23:2 (water)
- Psalms 23:5 (table)
- Matthew 13:44 (reward or treasure)

Find places for clues in your church and start digging for verses in the Bible. Your Bible Concordance will be of great help. *Ted Seago*

SUBMARINE RACES

This idea is a fun treasure hunt with an intriguing name and an unusual ending. Like other treasure hunts, you divide up into teams and follow clues from one location to the next.

At the last location each team receives a toy model submarine, unassembled, which they must bring back to the church or meeting place and put together. The hunt is not over until the submarine is completed with decals in their proper places. The entire team must participate in the assembly.

TREASURE HUNT BASICS...

Inject new life into the old treasure hunt theme with these creative ideas:

Name the hunt after the object to be hunted, such as Wild Goose Chase. Or, if you've built a snowman and hidden it somewhere in the vicinity, call the game Search for the Abominable Snowman. One group obtained a live hippopotamus and had a Hippo Hunt. All the kids wore safari hats and followed the clues to the hippo, which was tied up in the middle of the city's largest shopping center. This is where your own creativity becomes important. The possibilities are endless. Just don't rely on the same old thing over and over again.

Place clues in different locations to help the searchers in their hunt. Clues should lead to one another and finally to the treasure itself. The first clue should be handed to the leader of each team to get the game going. Make sure each team receives clues in a different order, or receives a different set of clues, so that teams can't simply follow each other. No clue can be skipped or you are penalized. All clues that have been found must be brought back to the original site at the end of the game. Make sure a leader is at

clue site handing out the clues to arriving teams.

Here are sample clues from an actual treasure hunt in San Diego, California:

- An envelope contained an egg yoke and a piece of ham. (Yoke plus ham equals yokahama—a landmark in San Diego called the Yokahama Bell.)
- A piece of paper with scrambled letters which, when unscrambled, spelled out the name of a park in San Diego.
- A list of numbers. When added up, the sum was a seven digit number which was a phone number. Kids used money in the packet to make a phone call to locate the next location.
- A group of sounds were written down: LLL DUH SEE WHR. Teams unscrambled the sounds to discover that the next location was Sea World.

Each team should receive a clue packet that contains items like these:

1. The hunt map (an ordinary road map). The map is marked with numbers and arrows pointing to certain locations. ONLY the locations marked are possible clue locations.
2. List of rules.

The submarines can be found at any toy or hobby store for a few dollars. It's best to buy the one for everyone. You will also need to provide del cement. After the race serve, what else? submarine sandwiches. *Rodney Robertson*

WHITE TREASURE ELEPHANT HUNT AUCTION

This idea combines a treasure hunt, a white elephant sale, and an auction. The treasure consists of poker chips which are placed in caches, perhaps 10 locations, in an area around the church property. If the group is large and there is enough time for transportation, the area can be much larger. Each cache may consist of from one to 10 chips.

A map is made showing the location of the treasures with an X. The map may be posted in a prominent location where all can see it before the hunt begins. If there are many people involved or if the area is large, make copies of the map for each person.

The treasure hunters should work in teams of three to six persons. At night flashlights are required.

At the start the hunters rush out to the nearest locations, with some crafty ones going to the farther locations to avoid the crowd. A return time should be set, within one to three hours, depending on distances. A penalty of five white chips per minute late can be assessed.

Upon return the teams can look over the white elephant gifts and other items, which each person brought beforehand. The team members can decide what they wish to bid on, knowing only what the total value of all the chips are. The whites are one, the reds are five and the blues are ten.

Then the auction begins! By offering small items first and interspersing them with the more valuable gifts, the excitement can really grow. Having more than one auctioneer is a good idea, too. The auction should last between fifteen and thirty minutes. This can be done by offering more than one gift at a time, if necessary. *Robert C. Hockaday*

3. A general clue sheet containing clue phrases that may or may not be important to the clues. If a group is having a difficult time with a certain clue, players should check the general clue sheet to see if it will help. Example phrases: a) The first two letters are all you need; b) Shamu lives there; c) Blue is a pretty color.

4. General clue items. These are odds and ends that may or may not be of help in solving some or all of the clues. Items could be coins, a bandage, etc.

5. Emergency clues, if a group is unable to figure out a clue. However, each team is penalized 15 minutes for each emergency clue used. The emergency clues are numbered and sealed in envelopes just like the regular clues and must be turned in at the treasure location. If any clues are opened, players must wait out their penalty time before claiming the treasure. If another group arrives during that penalty time with no emergency clues opened, they win.

You should also keep these ideas in mind:

If the treasure is not found, the winner is determined by who got the farthest using the least amount of emergency clues. Plan enough time so that everyone can get to the treasure.

If the treasure itself is not something that the kids can keep, then have some appropriate prizes to give to the winning group. Have a presentation of the hunt trophy to the team captain and make a big deal out of it.

Use a variety of creative clues and make clue locations unusual, such as the top of a church tower, a boat in the middle of a lake, up in a tree, buried in a cemetery, at a tourist attraction, etc.

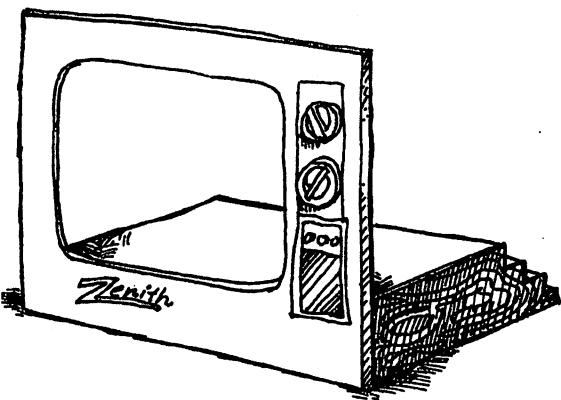
Make sure speed and traffic laws are obeyed. Team drivers should be carefully screened to avoid problems in this area. Make sure drivers have necessary permissions from parents if they are kids, insurance, and a driver's license. One group put a sponsor in each vehicle who held a spoon with an egg raw in it out the window. If the vehicle went too fast, bounced, swerved, etc., the egg would drop and break. Each vehicle starts with a dozen eggs and is penalized for each egg broken during the hunt.

It is usually a good idea to have the last location somewhere suitable for a meeting. After all the kids are back from the hunt, they can share experiences, you can award prizes, perhaps have some singing, crowd breakers, or a speaker, and some refreshments.

lywood which has an opening about 7 feet high
0 feet. A platform is set up behind the opening
n which the program is presented. Paint the
at, including a trade name (RCA, Zenith, etc.)
l affix big dials on the front. The idea is simply to
ate the illusion of a giant TV set to give programs
h a TV theme a more authentic setting.

There are many ways to use your giant TV
een in youth programming. If the props are built
able enough to last, this can be a regular monthly
ture of a youth group. Programs used should take
the format of well-known TV shows like "The
night Show," game shows, the news, amateur
ur, soap operas, and many others. Announce-
nts can be in the form of TV commercials.

Another approach, especially good at
ps, is to divide the group into teams named after
e major TV networks. All the competition and
ivities follow a TV theme. Simply rename
niliar games with TV titles. Evenings can include
ams putting on TV shows for entertainment. Use
ur imagination and the TV idea can work very
ell for you. *Ed Childress*



MAKE IT A DATE

omote a fancy banquet to which everyone is
quired to bring a date—not the girl from third-
eriod English, however, or the captain of the
otball team. Each date must be handmade from
oom sticks, paper bags, basketballs, and any other
ousehold items. Award prizes for Best Male Date,
st Female Date, Most Outrageous Date, etc.

Have fun with the food you serve, too. Suck
l-O through straws, spell words with alphabet
up, build crouton houses. You'll probably want to
ler pizza for later. *John Fehlen*

MUSIC VIDEO NIGHT

Let the kids create their own music videos.

Before you have your Music Video Night,
divide into small groups or bands and allow them a
week or so to plan their show and assemble their
props. They can put anything they want on their
video (within reason, of course). They can perform
their music live, or they can lip-sync a record.

On the night of the event, have the groups
meet in separate rooms to plan and rehearse their
videos. After this let your camera person videotape
each group one at a time. Arrange the taping so that
each group can perform in isolation without the
other groups watching. At the conclusion of the
taping, have everyone meet together and show all
the videos.

Arrange some snacks and things to do for
the kids who are waiting while others are taping. To
speed things up tell the groups they only get one
take. It's a lot of fun to see what everyone comes up
with, and the bloopers are great! *Steve Gladen*

NEWSPAPER NIGHT

To prepare for Newspaper Night get a huge pile of
old newspapers. The following games can be played
with two or more teams:

- **Newspaper Costume Race.** Teams have five minutes or so to dress kids up with newspaper to look like certain things. For example: Santa and his reindeer, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Snow White and the seven Dwarfs, etc. Tape can be provided for each team to help them construct the costumes. Judge for the best job.
- **Newspaper Treasure Hunt.** Put in each team's pile of papers several specially colored pages. The team to find the most in the time limit wins.
- **Newspaper Scavenger Hunt.** Call out certain items from the papers. The first team to find them wins. For example, a Honda ad, a want ad for a 1956 Chevy, a news item about a murder, etc.
- **Wad and Pile.** Teams get ten minutes to wad up all their paper into a big pile. The highest pile wins.
- **Hide and Seek.** Hide as many kids as possible under the pile of wadded-up papers. The team with the most kids out-of-sight wins. Set a time limit.
- **Compact Newspapers.** Teams try to compact the paper on their side.

PROGRESSIVE PICNIC

This is a progressive dinner that has been adapted for summer. Hold the dinners in park picnic areas, friends' backyards, forest preserves, etc. Bring paper plates, plastic utensils, napkins, and cups, and serve each course on blankets on the ground or at picnic tables. You might play a different game at each location as well. It's a nice change of pace. *Bruce Humbert*

PROGRESSIVE POOL DINNER

In the heat of the summer, schedule several families to set up kiddie wading pools in their yards and to prepare one course of an evening meal for the youth group. Invite all the kids to come wearing their swimsuits and towels. At each house see how many kids can get into the wading pool, and then let everyone alternate between eating and cooling off in the pool. Plan so that the last house has a full-size pool. After eating spend the evening swimming. *Harl Pike*

BACKWARD PROGRESSIVE DINNER

This is a variation on a regular progressive dinner, in which the participants travel from location to location and receive one course of their meal at each stop. The fun with this one is that the menu is served in reverse. It would go something like this:

Stop One: Dessert and a toothpick

Stop Two: Potato chips

Stop Three: Sandwich

Stop Four: Vegetable

Stop Five: Salad

Stop Six: Soup

Stop Seven: Appetizer

Have something to drink at each stop. *Andy*

Stimer

BUDGET PROGRESSIVE DINNER

Divide the large group into smaller groups of four people each. Each should have access to a car and some kitchen space. Now give each group \$7.50 to \$10.00 depending on your budget and the size of the group and have them all bring back some part of the meal—appetizer, drink, main dish, fruit, salad,

dessert, etc. It is important that the groups do not confer with each other. This restriction will make for an interesting dinner and at the same time promote creativity. *Bruce Coriell*

HEARTBURN ON THE RUN

Here's how to combine a progressive dinner with a car rally or treasure hunt. First, make sure you have enough cars and drivers. Then choose four homes to visit, one for each course of a meal (soup, salad, main course, and dessert). All of the foods should be as hot and spicy as possible. Require kids to solve clues in order to get from house to house to receive a complete meal. Distribute the first clue at the beginning of the rally. Kids receive a new clue at each home.

Rules for the evening include the following: 1) You must eat all of the food you put on your plate at each house. 2) You can't drink any liquids. 3) your group must be the first to return to the starting point to win.

Provide lots of water and crackers for kids as they arrive back at the starting point at the end of the rally. The prize can be gift certificates to Taco Bell or a local Mexican restaurant. *Stephen May*

AGGRESSIVE DINNER

For this variation on the old Progressive Dinner, load up in cars or vans and eat each course of your meal in a different city. For example go to a McDonald's in one town and have french fries, go to a Burger King in another town and have hamburgers, then head for yet another town and have sundaes at Dairy Queen. (Of course you'll need to have other cities within driving distance.) Kids will enjoy the "trip" aspect of this one. *Kay Jorgenson*

WHEELS AND PROGRESSIVE MEALS

Before students have their driver's licenses, they use bikes, roller blades, skateboards, even wheelchairs to get around. So create a progressive meal, between whose courses kids get around by their own wheels. Of course, it helps if the homes where the courses (appetizer, soup and salad, entree, dessert) are served are fairly close to each other.

Have a lead driver (biker? skater?) and a

chase vehicle to bring up the rear. If you're in a small town, just maybe the police department can spare a motorcycle cop or squad car to escort your hungry parade on wheels. Duane Steiner

RESERVATIONS ONLY

If your normal youth group activities suffer from poor attendance on those long holiday weekends like Memorial Day and Labor Day, this idea might help.

Hold a "reservations only" dinner at the church, complete with linen tablecloths, lighted candles, music, and good food. This would be an excellent opportunity to utilize members of your church of different ethnic backgrounds who can cook exotic foods. Afterwards, have dessert and perhaps show a video at someone's house.

Send out invitations in advance (two to three weeks) and give the event a sense of special importance. Make it an R.S.V.P. deal and you'll find that the kids will respond in a very positive way. Some people are just looking for something good to do on the long weekend, and if you make a tradition out of it, you'll find that it will grow in popularity. It's a creative and effective way to let your kids know that their local church remains active during holiday weekends. James Wilson

SACK LUNCH SHARING

Next time you have an event in which all the kids bring a sack lunch, try this for a change of pace. Stretch out a blanket on the ground and have all the kids dump the contents of their sack lunches onto the blanket. Then have the group gather around the blanket, hold it up by the edges and raise it high as you offer thanks. Then lower it and allow the kids to pick and choose anything they want from the items that are there for lunch.

Tell the kids to keep in mind that everyone needs to eat, so not to be greedy, but instead, to share. The result will be a good experiment in cooperation and community. You might want to follow it with a discussion of the group dynamic that took place. Arlene Thaele

SEARCH-AND-SCROUNGE SMORGASBORD

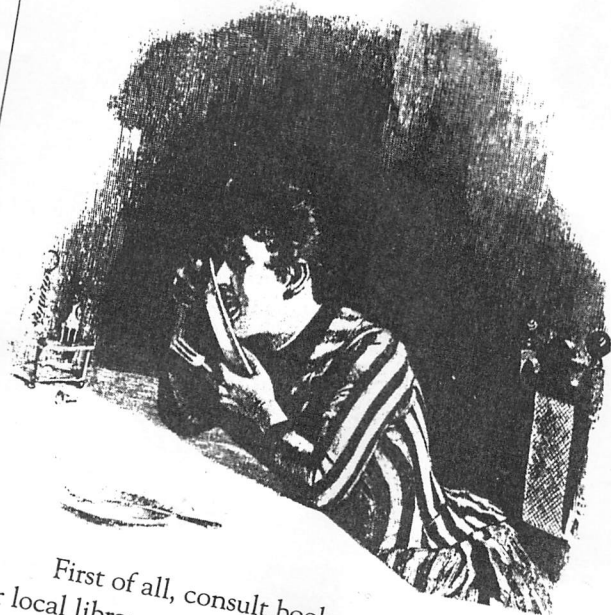
Promote your next banquet as an S-and-S Smorgasbord (don't explain). Collect a reasonable fee for the meal.

As the kids arrive, put them on five teams. Collect the meal fees and equally divide the money among the teams. Have each team draw a sheet of paper from a hat or box on which is written a five-course meal that includes the appetizer, salad, main dish, dessert, and beverage. The teams are then instructed to go out and beg, barter, scrounge, search, or buy the necessary ingredients to prepare and deliver their assigned five-course meal within a given time limit (one or two hours). They may not spend any more money than they are given.

After the kids have prepared and eaten their meals, award prizes for the tastiest, the most unusual, most creative, largest quantity, and best-use-of-the-money meals. You will genuinely be surprised at the great meals kids create. Greg Chantler

SOCIAL GRACES

Conduct a banquet that gently teaches social graces to teens in a fun and nonthreatening way. It will help kids feel confident when they find themselves in a formal social setting.



First of all, consult books on etiquette at your local library to make sure you're right and...

MEMORIZATION TREASURE HUNT

A city park works best for this hunt. Before the group arrives, hide verses of Scripture around the park in various places by taping them to objects—under a park bench, on the bottom of a swing seat, on the back of a sign, etc. Then prepare riddle-type clues giving as little information about the locations as possible. "Something mothers spend much time on," could be a clue for under a park bench. The group is divided into small groups of three or four and each small group is given their first clue. They are then instructed to find the Scripture, memorize it, and come back and recite it, without removing it from the object. Upon successfully doing this they receive their next clue. Everyone should receive the same clues but in a different order. The first group to recite the last verse wins the hunt. *Kent Bloomquist*

HOUSE-TO-HOUSE PUZZLE HUNT

This treasure hunt requires a lot of preparation, but the results are well worth the effort. Here's how it works.

First, you will need to line up a number of homes of church members where the people are willing to stay home the night of this event and help out. The number of homes that you need will vary, but you will probably need at least five or six. Eight or nine is ideal.

On the night of the event, you divide the group into car loads (each team traveling together), or you can do this event on bicycles (or on foot) if all the houses are within close walking distance. When the groups leave the starting point, they are each given one piece to a children's puzzle that has eight or nine pieces to it. On the back of the puzzle is the name of a family in the church. They must go to that family's house where they will be given an instruction. They must then do whatever the instruction tells them to do, and then they will be given another puzzle piece. This puzzle piece will tell them where they are to go next. At the next house they do the same thing. The group that arrives back at the starting place with all their puzzle pieces and successfully puts their puzzle together first is the winner.

Obviously, the number of homes must be the same as the number of puzzle pieces you have

Each team should have a different route so that everyone isn't going to the same house at the same time. You can also give each group a different puzzle so long as the number of pieces is the same. This will involve some advance preparation in which you assign each group a number. When they arrive at each house they receive the puzzle piece with the appropriate number on it. You can set it up so that each group is taking the houses in a different order.

At each house there is a different instruction which the group must do before they are given their puzzle piece. The instructions can be things like:

- Tell three jokes to the family who lives at this house.
- Form a pyramid and sing a Christmas carol while in that position.
- Run three laps around the house.
- Everyone chew a wad of bubble gum and blow a bubble together at the same time.
- Together, recite John 3:16.
- Eat a peanut butter and jelly sandwich (provided there) and have a glass of punch.

The last piece of the puzzle for each group should instruct them to head back to the starting location. Award prizes to the winners, serve refreshments, share experiences, and have a good time of fellowship. It's a lot of fun. *Syd Schnaars*

MONEY HUNT AND AUCTION

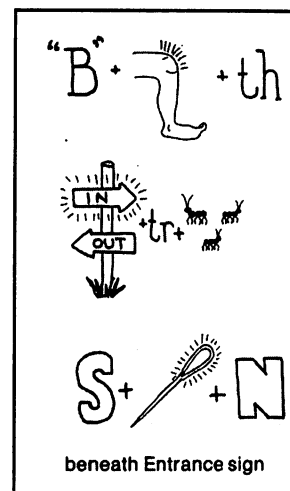
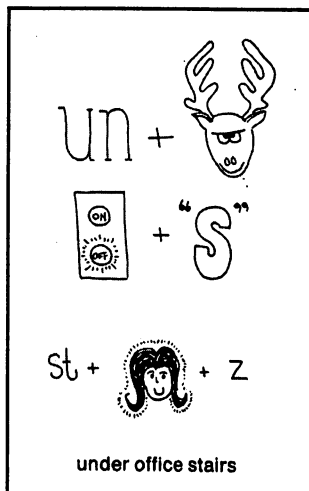
Invite kids to an old-fashioned auction where the bidding is done with play money. Ask them to bring the items to be auctioned—old appliances that still work, fishing poles, not-quite-antique dishes or jewelry boxes. The items should have some appeal to potential bidders.

Before the activity begins hide envelopes containing play money and write out clues to help the kids find the money. The search can cover territory as broad as the neighborhood (using cars the teams search telephone booths, grocery stores, various landmarks, etc.), or as confined as your church grounds.

Start the event by forming teams and handing out the clues to each team. Give a time limit for the treasure hunt. When they return, teams

CONCENTRATION CLUES

At your next treasure hunt, try your hand at making up clues using letters and symbols similar to those used on the old television show "Concentration."



Almost any clue or location can be written this way. Kids really enjoy trying to solve them. Here are some examples. *Stephen K. Weaver*

INDOOR TREASURE HUNT

This is a good indoor game for junior highers. Place 25 objects in plain sight in various places around the room or rooms available. If in a home, use several rooms. Attached to each object is a number. Each person is given a list like the one below. The idea is to find the objects on the list, write in the numbers attached, and be the first one to do so. No one can move or touch an object when it is found. Simply record the number attached to it. A sample list:

Match	Ring
Stocking	Bobby pin
Needle and thread	Postage stamp
Thimble	Paper reinforcement
Straight pin	Paper fastener (brad)
Glass button	Ribbon
Paper clip	Toothpick
White string	Safety pin
Penny	Door key
Dime	Rubber band
Dollar bill	Stick of gum—don't chew it!
Bracelet	Earring

move on to "hors d'oeuvres" (french fries, soup, chili, taco chips, etc.), then the main course (Big Macs, tacos, pizza, fish, hamburgers, etc.). Let the kids decide on the route. (You can allow them to split up for the main course depending on their preferences.) The more creative ideas you can come up with and the more places you can visit, the better. *James Midberry*

JUNK FOOD POTLUCK

Since churches are famous for hosting potluck dinners, host a weird version of one for your youth group. Have a junk food potluck and encourage your kids to bring generous amounts of their favorite junk food to share with others. Anything healthy or nutritious should not be accepted. To add to the fun, plan to show a movie along with the dinner. You might find that this would be a good time to encourage everyone to bring along a friend who has never been to a youth meeting. *Philip Popineau*

WORLD'S GREATEST FRENCH FRY

Here's an excellent activity that lets your kids become critics or reviewers of the things they consume. The object is to find the very best french fry in the city. The kids go from one fast-food joint to another, sampling the french fries. Each person rates the fries on qualities such as taste, appearance, amount per serving, price, saltiness, etc. To really add a professional touch, have each member eat a cracker before tasting the fries to wash the palate. The group's ratings and any additional comments can be shared in the church's bulletin.

Other foods can be tasted, such as the best hamburger, or the tastiest vanilla ice cream, etc. You could compile a "Christian Consumers Guide" or something like that. And by notifying the restaurants in advance, you might even get some free food to sample. *Milton Horn*

FLAKE-OFF BAKE-OFF

Divide into small groups of three or four. Have on hand a number of baking pans and other containers of various sizes and shapes plus the following ingredients: sugar, margarine, oil, eggs, milk, salt, cheese, flour, baking powder, baking soda, cans of fruit pie

filling, honey, and cinnamon.

Each group must make a dessert using anything available. But none of them will have a recipe. They must create their own. Ask each group to write down its recipe (just for the record) and help them use the ovens in the church kitchen to bake their creations. When they're all finished serve the desserts to the group and present awards according to various categories: best tasting, best looking, most creative, most nauseating, most burnt, hardest to chew, or whatever. *Jim Walton*

FUNNY MONEY BOX SOCIAL

You know how these work. Girls pack box lunches or dinners that the guys bid on without knowing which girl made which lunch, and then they eat with that girl. The girls bid similarly on desserts that the guys made.

The bidding, however, is done with funny money. And everyone acquires it at the beginning of the event, before the bidding starts, according to how they answer trivia questions. For example, you say, "Fifty dollars for each state you've lived in." Then you and a few other sponsors hear the kids' answers and dole out the play bucks accordingly. Award the money generously and frivolously. All the kids should have plenty of money for the bidding and should have a good time "earning" it, too.

Beside answering Bible trivia questions, here are other ways for them to earn money:

- \$50 for each filling in your mouth.
- \$100 if you brushed your teeth before coming to the party.
- \$100 if you showered in the last four hours.
- \$100 for all who are wearing colored underwear.
- \$50 for each hospital trip your parent made with your injuries.
- \$50 for every pair of gym shoes you own.
- \$100 if you're wearing socks.
- \$100 if you have to cut your fingernails and don't bite them.
- \$100 for each ring you're wearing.
- \$100 if you flossed your teeth today.
- \$500 if you kissed your mom goodbye today.

Len and Sheryl DiCicco

BACKWARD NIGHT

This is a fun activity in which everything is done in reverse. Invitations and posters should be printed backward (even from bottom to top) and oral announcements should be made with your back to the audience.

As the kids arrive they should use the back door of the church or meeting place. Appropriate signs, spelled backward, could be placed at the regular entrance directing them to the rear. Each person should come to this event with their clothes on backward and inside-out.

Kids should be greeted at the door with "Goodbye! Hope you had a good time," and other such salutations. The program should be run in reverse. Begin with a devotional if you usually have one at the conclusion. As the kids leave, put name tags on them, welcome them, and introduce visitors. If paper plates are used for refreshments, use them upside down, and make everyone eat left-handed if they are right-handed and right-handed if they are left-handed.

Divide the group into at least four teams for the following games. Subtract points for the winner rather than awarding points. Have each team begin with 10,000 points, then they lose points as they win. The team names can be barnyard animals, and the team members must make the noise of their animal during the games. The sounds can be in reverse. For example, a donkey would go haw-hee, a dog would go wow-bow, and a cow would go oooooom.

Here are a few suggested games:

- **Backward Charades.** This game is just like regular Charades, except the titles must be acted out in reverse. For example, instead of *The Sound of Music*, the player must act out *Music of Sound The*. The team must guess correctly the backward title.

- **Backward Letter Scramble.** Prepare ahead of time four sets of cards (one set for each team) with the letters B-A-C-K-W-A-R-D on them. In other words each team gets eight cards, each with one of those eight letters written on them. The cards are passed out to the various team members. You then call out certain words that can be spelled using those letters, and the first team to get in line spelling the word backward is the winner. Words to use include *backward, drab, rack, ward, raw, ark, back, crab, bark,*

etc. If you called out the word *drab*, for example, the kids with those four letters must quickly line up facing you so that the cards spelled it b-a-r-d.

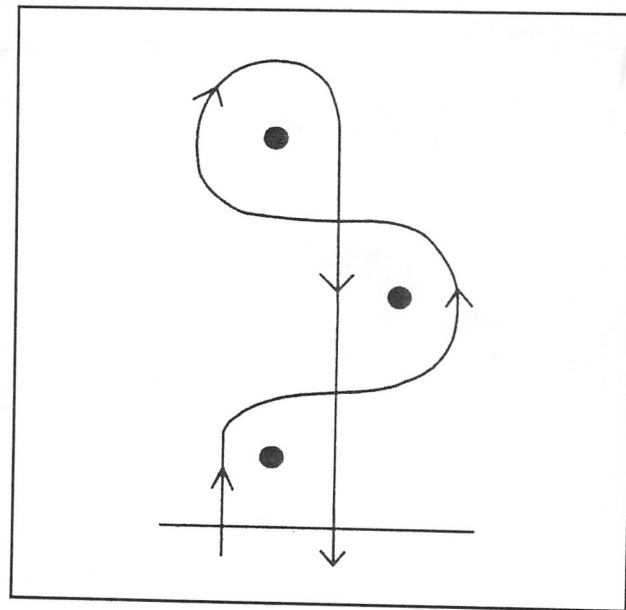
- **Relay Games.** Run any relay you like, only do it backwards.

- **Behind-the-Back Pass.** Teams line up shoulder to shoulder. Several objects are then passed down the line from player to player, behind their backs. The first team to pass a certain number of these objects all the way down the line is the winner. For fun, try using cups of water. Spilling is a penalty and points will be added to the score.

Ed Bender

BALLOON RODEO

Form two teams and let them choose a name for themselves. Allow each team to select contestants for the following events. Each event is worth 25 points to the winner and 20 points to the loser.



- **Barrel Racing.** Place three barrels (or plastic cones or stacks of books) on the floor in a triangle shape (see diagram). Each team enters three racers. Blindfold both starting racers. At a signal each one kicks an inflated balloon in a pattern around the barrels by following their team's shouted instructions. Each team adds up its three times. The lowest total wins.

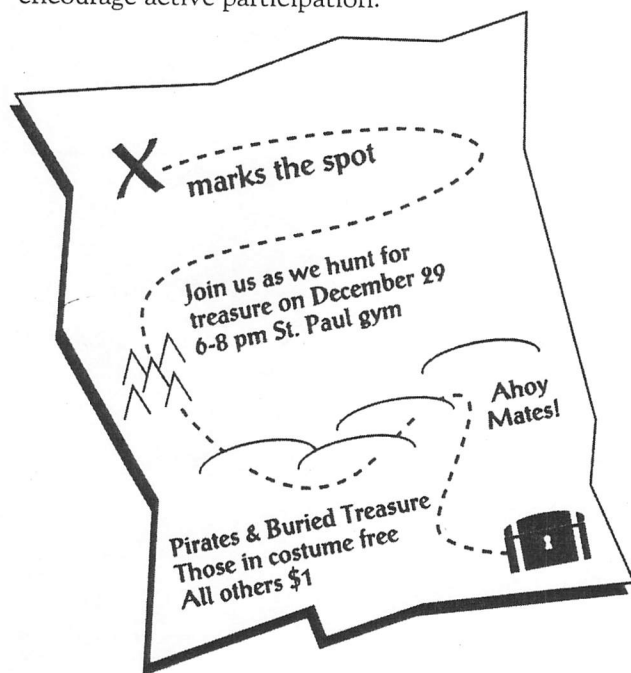
- **Bucking Balloon Riding.** Mark off starting and ending lines about 15 feet apart. Riders each place four balloons between the lines.

• **Group Portrait.** End the event by taking a group picture. Get a professional photographer to take it. Have the group pose for a serious picture as well as a crazy picture. Arrange to have enlargements made that the kids can order for their scrapbooks. Because of this photo alone, you might want to advertise this evening in advance so that everyone is present for the group shots.

Ralph Gustafson

PIRATE NIGHT

Invite youths to the event with posters and treasure maps cut from brown paper bags. Students who come in theme costumes can be admitted free to encourage active participation.



Make a number of treasure chests using the pattern provided. Place chocolate coins from a candy store and a Bible verse pertaining to treasure inside each one. You can use the following verses:

Proverbs 2:1-5	Exodus 19:5
Isaiah 33:6	Malachi 3:17
Matthew 6:21	1 Chronicles 29:3
Matthew 13:44	Proverbs 10:2
Luke 12:33	Matthew 6:19-21

Hide the treasure chests around the meeting location and prepare a list of clues. Be sure plenty of Bibles are available. Decorations can include pirate ships, a large treasure chest, fish netting, and gold

ments provide apple juice for ale, submarine sandwiches with flags inserted, and rum (butterscotch) candies.

The first part of the evening is the hunt for treasure. Give all the students a handout with scriptural clues to hidden treasure chests. For a sample handout see the one below. If you make it challenging, the hunt can last about an hour. When all the chests have been found, the teens return to the meeting spot for the lesson. Read and discuss all the Bible verses in the treasure chests.

During the refreshments enjoy a few sea chanteys. You can finish off the evening with a friendly game of Royal RUMmy. Have fun, mates!

Sue Lilienthal

RECORD-BREAKING EVENT

Since CDs and cassettes have made records obsolete, collect from your neighborhood and congregation a pile of old, discarded records, both 45s and LPs. Then have a record-breaking event! (This is not a bring-your-rock-records-so-we-can-burn-them rally.)

- **Record Hide.** Hide all the records beforehand. When the kids arrive tell them how many records are hidden and give them 10 minutes to find them all. Award a prize to the person or the team who finds the most.
- **Record Wrap.** Give your students wrapping paper, scissors, and tape. Here's the contest: who can gift-wrap a record (not in a jacket) quickest and neatest—with one hand?
- **Bowling Record.** From behind a starting line, have each person in your group roll a record. Award prizes for longest roll and shortest roll.
- **Fetch the Record.** Stack the records at one end of the room. Have players in relay teams race down to bring a record back to their teams. The team with the most records in two minutes wins. Only one record at a time may be carried.
- **Record Sculpture.** With masking tape and records, students must create a sculpture in 10 minutes that resembles a recognizable object. (Hint: by warming records in an oven, you can bend them into shapes.)
- **Frisbee.** Award prizes for Frisbee throwing: farthest throw, most accurate throw (at a target), etc.