

GAMES & MAIN ACTIVITIES

Games and main activities can help to ground your youth night sessions. They can be long or short, mixed in to conversation, linked to the theme, and also create something lasting - for instance, with young ones, growing sunflowers or vegetables can be a great way to teach them the importance of looking after creation, and is something over time they will see tangible fruits.

Beyond that, these games also:

- Start conversations
- Inspire social action
- Allow young people to relate sessions to real life situations
- Allow young people to lead and grow in Church roles
- Create a space for them to learn about the Church in different ways
- Increase skills

We hope you find the games main activities listed below useful. Some you may recognise, others you may not, but always try new things, and if the young people know them even better than you do, encourage them to lead and explain to the others!

We've also categorised them so you know the best spaces/ages they work with!

Finally, always remember to risk assess, and then dynamically risk assess for all activities!



HOSTAGES

Older ages 12 +, any size group and a room big enough that they each have space sit in small groups

Each group is given 5 profiles of some random people that have been taken hostage, with a list of information about them - age, gender, job, good things, bad things etc.

What we know, as leaders, is that they are not random but in fact, saints that have been hidden. One profile could look like this:

PERSON 1: Bernie (Saint Bernadette)

Age: 13

Job: none, doesn't go to school but collects firewood for family is very small and poor village

Facts:

often very sick

Is considered a liar by most of the villagers

Is quiet, often a loner who goes off by herself

Wants to be a Nun

With the profiles, they must pick someone they want to set free - explain why they should be, and must argue it out between the groups, voting for each until finally there is one person left.

At the end, it is revealed who they actually are - and that they all went on to lead extraordinary lives - message - we are all called to be saints no matter our background, and you shouldn't judge a book by it's cover.



SCAVENGER HUNT

Ages 8 +, any group size, requires a large amount of space

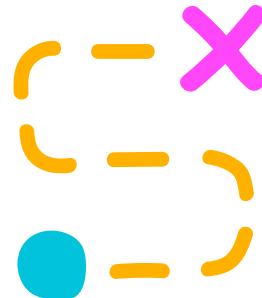
Scavenger hunts are pretty self explanatory, however, they don't need to be average.

Setting scavenger hunts up with clues that are personal to your group, area or surroundings can really help your young people not only to work together but also to learn more about the area around them.

The basic rules are:

1. Hide objects or clues (optional). You can also direct participants to find items that are already in place, which means no prior setup is needed.
2. Make and distribute a list of items for participants to find; determine whether they need to bring the items back or just photograph them or check them off of their list.
3. Define the search perimeter.
4. Tell the players how much time they have to find the objects or clues.

Scavenger hunts can be quick to set up, and can lead to them decoding clues, or deciphering them to make up a word or a phrase. Even scavenger hunts in and around the church (rules made very clear) can help them to discover and learn more about their parish. There are also plenty of rules, ideas and themes online for you to find and personalise.



TOP DECORATORS

Any age, any size group and a room big enough that they each have space to create

This activities work with cakes, cupcakes, pizzas, cookies, and more!

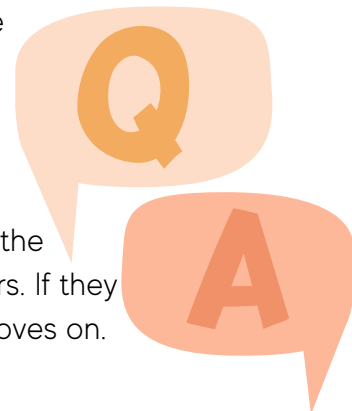
Ask each member to bring something they could decorate your items with. Then, splitting your group into smaller groups, create a competition to decorate. Give them a theme, or each different themes, and give them time to plan, collect decorations, and then create. then, leaders, or appointed people, can judge designs and outcome. This can be used with multiple themes and can be a great way to encourage creativity and fun. You could have Eco themes, stories in the Bible, Saints, Christmas, Easter, anything!



100 QUESTIONS

All ages, works well with medium to large groups, and a room big enough for them to move around in small groups

Splitting your group into smaller groups/pairs, give them a list of questions (the more the better, can be 30, 50, or 75 depending on abilities). These questions must have opinion based answers, or answers the others would not immediately know. The aim of the game is to give each group 10 minutes to learn each others answers to all of these questions. It encourages them to really listen to each other, and learn new things. At the end of the ten minutes, the group comes together, and the question master can ask any question to any group about any of the groups members. If they can answer the question without help, they get a point, if they can't, the question moves on. Which ever group has the most points wins.



UPCYCLE!

All ages, all group sizes - need a room and tables for everyone

This activity is a great way to show your young people the joy of up cycling in a world of fast fashion, and to help them live out the words of Pope Francis in Laudato Si! It can be messy, and while thats something important to consider, with enough preparation and planning, there is no reason to be put off!

For this, all you need is some fabric paints (you can get cheap ones from hobby craft) and get each young person to bring an old t-shirt that they are happy to decorate.

This activity is so versatile, it could be fit into any kind of theme, or used as a simple 'treat' night at the end of a term.

You can include prizes for best design or story, and encourage them to plan, and get creative.



MURDER MYSTERY

Ages 11/12 and up, a medium to large group size, and a room big enough that they can all sit in a circle.

Murder mystery games are a genre of party games where one of the players is secretly playing a murderer, while the other players must determine who among them is the criminal.

Participants of murder mystery games need to solve a mystery, such as a murder or other crime, in an allotted timeframe. Participants play murder mystery games as a party game, team building activity, or fun games that are interactive.

There are different murder mysteries game styles and are often associated with a theme you can choose. Murder Mystery Game Kits are readily available and can be downloadable for free online, and you can pick and choose what is suitable for your group. You could even give them their roles ahead of time and get them to come dressed as their character!



THE APPRENTICE

Ages 11 +, larger groups work better - split into around 3/4 per group, a room big enough to accommodate group

Divide your youth group into smaller groups and invite each group to come up with a fictional product (could be an app, a product, a food, whatever you'd like!). They can draw a prototype or make it out of scrap.

Then invite each group to make a cheesy advert or write a song to promote their fictional product. To keep an element of surprise, try to put the groups in different rooms so the other groups can't see their idea. Then invite all the groups to share their idea with the other groups. This can either be done live or by making a video. Pick a winner and 'fire' the idea that is most naff. You can move onto bigger rounds and the group that lost become judges too, and in following rounds they have to create adverts, jingles, think of the best way to advertise (what will get the most attention worldwide etc) until you crown a winner!



WAKE UP AMERICA!

any age, any size group, ideally multiple rooms or places they can go in small groups

Make a short public information film, to share with people. It can be a way to kick off conversations about social action, and connect with the community.

Why not make a new public information film with young people, it could be funny or serious, but the main idea is to raise awareness of a particular issue or danger.

Themes could include:

- Foodbanks
- How to care for the environment
- Keeping warm this winter
- Bein more sustainable
- Fast fashion/buying second hand
- Lowering your carbon footprint
- Volunteering in your local community



PRESS THE PRIEST

All ages as long as it is kept simple for younger ones, works well with large groups, need a room big enough for group

Invite your parish priest, Deacon, even a nun or seminarian if they are local. Spend time with your group discussing what they'd like to ask, explain to them that it is like a panel, and is a safe space to ask all the questions they've wanted to know about the Church, holy Orders, the Catechism, Catholic social teaching, and prayer/mass.

Often we find our young people have a lot of questions, but not necessarily the space to get answers to them. Give them time to go away, and write down questions in small groups on strips of paper, and MC the conversation as a leader.

Encourage follow up questions, and let them be open! Activities like this can help young people to relate more with and get to know their Priest and community, and it can be a great session with added tea, hot chocolate and biscuits!



NON - PUB QUIZ!

Ages 11 +, all size groups of 5 or more, a room big enough for small quiz groups

Pub quizzes can be a great evening activity - even without the pub elements!

You can come up with your own questions or there are lots available on the Internet.

For fun, you can add in themes appropriate for a youth night, and include interactive ones. Get the team to think up names, and buzzer sounds, and include little prizes for rounds to encourage competition!



CLAY CREATE

All ages, any size group, and a room big enough that they can all sit in a circle.

Get enough clay or dough for groups of four to work with.

Version 1:

Sit your students in a circle and give every fourth person a lump of dough. When you say go, give them an object to create, but when you say "left," they have to pass it to the left and the next person works on the creation for a few seconds. Keep switching people from left to right or left several times. See what gets created after several switches. Change it up and the next time around, and after several switches, tell the next person to destroy the creation and make something completely new. This is a great conversation starter for how God must feel when we try to make ourselves into something we're not or be something we're not created to be.

Version 2:

Sit everyone in a circle (or two circles if it's a large group) and give the first person a lump of clay and a card with a thing/object. They then have 25 seconds to create that thing, and whoever guesses gets their turn. If no-one guesses, it moves to the person on the left.



AFFIRMATIONS

All ages as long as it is kept simple for younger ones, works well with all groups, and any space

Not all affirmations are created equal. The most effective affirmations follow the 3 P's of affirmations:

Positive, Present, and Personal.

This activity aims to remind the young people of the importance of kindness and building others up.

Write the name of each participant at the top of pieces of paper, and pass them to each person. Then, ask them to pass them once to the left. Each person can now take time to affirm that person by writing a small paragraph about them. Make sure to set it up well, explaining the importance of a good affirmation, and how they should write.

Include sentence starters if that helps:

- You are
- I believe you can
- You should know that
- My favourite thing about your personality is
- You bring _____ to this group



TENNIS TRIVIA



All ages, best in a group where they can be split into teams, a room big enough for game, or use outside

Materials Needed: The object of this game is to have the most tennis balls in your basket at the end.

Where is the catch? They are throwing the tennis balls from across the room. All you will need are enough tennis balls and baskets for the size group.

How to Play:

- Divide participants into teams and give each the same amount of tennis balls.
- Ask each person a Bible trivia question. For each correct answer, they throw a tennis ball into a round laundry basket across the room.
- If the ball remains in the basket, it counts as a point for their team. If it bounces out, it does not count.
- At the end of all the questions, the team with the most balls that stayed inside their basket wins.