

Creating Faith Communities

Icebreakers/ Trust Builders

Hot Potato – Get to Know You - Use this version of Hot Potato to encourage kids to learn more about each other.

You'll need a small ball and a kitchen timer.

Have kids sit in a circle and play a game of Hot Potato-passing the ball around the circle until a timer sounds after intervals of 5 to 30 seconds. The child who ends up with the ball must answer three questions other kids ask him or her. Encourage kids to ask questions that help them get to know each other as well as some silly questions to generate laughter and fun. *Lisa Leonard, New Providence, New Jersey Excerpted from Children's Ministry Magazine*

FOCUS! *A new twist on this favorite game shows kids that God's blessings are everywhere-all they need to do is look.*

Bible Connect: Matthew 7:7; Romans 2:7

Stuff: You'll need paper, pens, and a tray of theme-related items such as office supplies, candy items, or craft supplies. You'll also need an assistant.

Play: Give each person a piece of paper and a pen. Tell kids your assistant will walk around the room with a tray of items. Kids' task is to write down what they see (be precise with your wording here). Have your assistant walk around the room with the tray, allowing ample time for kids to write down the majority of items on the tray. Once kids have viewed the tray, have your assistant leave the room. Then tell kids they can use their notes or memories to answer questions. Ask questions related to the assistant such as: What color were his shoes? Was she wearing earrings? Was he wearing a watch?

Then call your assistant back into the room to reveal the answers. Kids will realize their focus on the tray contents was so narrow that they missed the obvious.

Cool Down: Ask kids to discuss things they focus on, such as fear, jealousy, or grades. Challenge kids to name things they may miss out on when they focus on one thing or only on the negative. Remind kids that when we focus on God first, we're able to see all he's blessed us with each day.

Carolyn Briles, Los Alamos, New Mexico, Excerpted from Children's Ministry Magazine.

Apples and Oranges - *help kids discover everyone is important in God's family.*

Bible Connect: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Stuff: an apple and an orange.

Play: Form a circle. One person will pass an apple to the right around the circle. Another person will pass an orange to the left around the circle. The key to this game is that kids can't pass the fruit with their hands. Kids can use their feet, elbows, or knees to pass the fruit. If



someone drops the fruit or it touches the ground, the child must close his eyes or get blindfolded to continue playing. Play continues until only one person with his or her eyes open remains.

Cool Down: Ask kids to talk about what was easy or difficult about the game. Ask kids what it was like to play with their eyes closed and how that affected the game. Help kids make the connection between this game and God's family. Celebrate everyone's contributions and emphasize everyone's special role in God's family.

Excerpted from Children's Ministry Magazine

Blindfolded Build

Supplies: LEGO toys, toothpicks and blindfolds

Before beginning, build two sample creations, such a flower and a person. Give the building toys to the students and place your first creation in front of them for 30 seconds. Then have them put on blindfolds and say, "In the dark it's hard to see what you're doing." Allow two minutes for kids to recreate the creation.

After removing the blindfolds, read aloud John 1:1-6 and discuss that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. Have them try the activity again in the light. Show your second creation and this time allow kids to look as they try to recreate your creation.

Discuss: What was different about making your second creation? How can Jesus' light help us see things more clearly? What's an area where you need Jesus' light to shine?

Running on Thirsty

Each child needs two cups (one with water, one without) and a drinking straw.

Have kids stand against one wall, and give each person a straw. Place cups with water on the ground near each child while placing empty cups on the floor about 10 feet away. Demonstrate how to hold water in the straw by dipping it in the cup, plugging the top with a finger and lifting the straw. On "go," give kids 60 seconds to see how much water they can transfer to their empty cups using only their straws.

When time is up, read aloud John 4:7-10. Ask: Can anyone tell about a time when you were really thirsty and how you quenched your thirst?

Read aloud John 4:11-14 and discuss the woman drew water at the well, just like you drew water with your straws. Jesus talked about a different kind of water. What "water" do you think Jesus talked about? What kinds of thirsts do you think Jesus' water can quench. Hold up a cup of water and pray: Just like the water the woman got out of the well, the water in this cup will run out – but help us to remember and trust that Jesus' living water, never runs out.

Michael Capps, East Flat Rock, NC

Shoe Enough! BEST FOR: GRADES 3-6

Form pairs. Have partners remove their shoes. Have partners trade shoes, then stand against a wall. On "go," have children each put on their partner's shoes backward and run to the end of the room and back. When kids return, they can trade shoes with their partner to get their own shoes back. Once partners each have their own shoes on, they're finished.

After everyone has finished, have kids sit in a circle.

*Say: A well-known saying says "Don't judge another person until you've walked a mile in his or her shoes."

What do you think this means? How easy or difficult was it to walk in someone else's shoes?
Read aloud Matthew 7:1-5.

*Ask: What does it mean to judge someone? What does this passage say about judging? Why do you think God doesn't want us to judge others? How have you seen kids judge each other at school? What should we do instead of judging others? How can we "walk a mile" in someone else's shoes? Read aloud Romans 15:7.

Lori Haynes Niles, Sacramento, California

Silly-Mals!

A good activity for teaching about creation... Give each student a piece of poster board, glue, scissors and magazines full of animal pictures. Tell the students to create their own animals by cutting out different animal parts, then piecing and gluing them together.

When the students are finished, their job is to name the animals they created. An example was a ducateaver who was born... with the head of a duck, the body of a cat, and the tail of a beaver.

Discuss how creative God is and how God gave us our imaginations too. Display the creations for others to enjoy.

Foot-Finder Teamwork

Have kids sit barefoot around a table with their chairs pushed in. Under the table, place a bowl containing non-sharp objects such as rubber bands, cotton balls, unsharpened pencils, a nerf ball. Name an object in the bowl. The first person must pick up and pass the object to the next person – without looking and using only his or her feet. Kids work as a team to pass the object to each other under the table to the last person, who holds up the object.

Ask: How did you work together as a team to accomplish this goal? Read aloud Ecclesiastes 4:9-12: Ask: How was this Scripture true during the game? How can we depend on each other as Christ's team? Close with praying to God to help your class grow as a team.

Scrambled Speech

Purpose: To have students search for cue words/phrase; either as individuals or teams. Reinforce key concepts and/or vocabulary.

Materials Needed: Pencils, handouts

Group Size: Can be done individually, in pairs or groups of 6

Directions: Prepare Scrambled Speech handouts ahead of time using your content; i.e., Liturgical seasons, content from your chapter, words of the week, parts of the Mass. Make a list of the words and then scramble the letters. For each word, make an answer card with the point value on it. You may want to assign points based on the number of letters in the word. (You can even give each group a category, and have them create a list of scrambled words to give to another group to solve.)

Explain that each group will work together to unscramble a number of word puzzles. When they correctly identified a word, a representative comes forward to receive a point card for that word. If the points have already been awarded to another team, the representative must return to the group and try for another word.

Disciples of Jesus

Purpose: To focus attention on what it means to be a disciple. Through the use of commercials or want ads, students are asked to imagine what is necessary to be a disciple of Jesus and encouraged to see

discipleship as a way of life that includes valuing what Jesus values and living it out in our attitudes and actions.

Supplies Needed: newsprint, tape, want ads from newspaper, cell phones with cameras or flip video camera, Bibles

Group Size –4-6 students

1. Read several want ads from a local newspaper, then ask what would they like to be when they are older. In the old days, people learned from the previous generation – the skills, trades and businesses were passed down from one generation to the next with little choice. In some parts of the world, this is still true, and many do not have the opportunities and freedom we have here or even the possibility for work that can support them. Fortunately, you get to choose what you will do and there are lots of options available to you. As Christians, we are called to be “disciples,” but what does that mean?
2. Want Ads/Commercials for Jesus – Each group will discuss what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. They will create a want ad/or commercial for the job of disciples, including:
 - a. Job responsibilities
 - b. Qualifications needed
 - c. Risks and hazards
 - d. Rewards/benefits

They will determine how to creatively present this to the group. Ask the students to use Gospel teachings and stories to illustrate their advertisement; i.e., Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7, Lk 6) They may use Bibles to complete this activity.

3. Large group presentations
4. Summary – Being a disciple is who we are and shows through whatever we do or don’t do. It’s not just a job, but a way of life. Discipleship involves both our attitude and actions. It means Jesus’ teachings become the basis for our choices.
5. Closing Prayer – create a prayerful atmosphere. Read Mt 28:16-20.
Reflection: It’s not always easy to be a disciple. Frequently, we get distracted from the job. It is an important job with lots of benefits both for us and for others. There are also costs we must be willing to pay – sacrifices to be made – ways we are used to looking at things and at people that we may have to change. Sometimes our energies just go to other things and we don’t pay much attention. But Jesus is always there to turn to for support, forgiveness and guidance. He’ll never fire us. He always invites us. He loves us. We pray for God’s guidance to live as disciples.

Supporting one another – Middle and High School Activity

Form groups of three. Give each group a Bible, a blindfold and a supply of blocks (jenga) or books. Assign one of the following restrictions to each member of a group:

- You may not talk
- You may not see (blindfold this person)
- You may not use your hands

On your signal, have groups create huge towers out of the blocks or books. After 5 minutes, call time and have blindfold kids take off their blindfolds.

Ask a volunteer in each group to read Galatians 6:3-5. Then have groups discuss the following questions one at a time. Allow discussion time after asking each question then have volunteers share their insights with the whole group.

- How did you act out this scripture's message in your tower building activity? How is that like the way you help others in everyday life? How can we work together and bear one another's burdens at school? At home? Among friends? Among strangers?
- Galatians 6:2 reminds us that we must support each other. How can we apply and live that message and support each other through good and bad times?

Don't be fooled – Middle School Activity

Form groups of no more than four and have each group use a cell phone with video capability. Provide paper and pen. Give each group 20 minutes to go inside or outside the church and record 10 sounds (no more than 20 seconds each) for other groups to guess. Record sounds that might be difficult but not impossible to guess; such as dripping water, footsteps... Make an answer sheet listing the sounds on your paper.

After 20 minutes, have groups each play the recorded sounds for the other kids to guess. The group with the most difficult to guess sounds wins the game.

Discuss: how did it feel to guess the different sounds? How is the way you were fooled by some of the sounds like how we're sometimes fooled by other people into doing the wrong thing?

Have someone read James 1:16-17. What does it mean that every good and perfect gift comes from God? How can God help us avoid being fooled into thinking something is okay when it's not?

Wink

One playing card for each student... battery candle, optional. You can darken the room if you like so the candle is illuminating the room. Object of Game is to identify the winker before being winked at! Good community builder... students need to look at each other. Wink is full of suspense and challenges players to use self-control, caution and perceptiveness.

Players sit in a circle, usually the floor. One of the cards is identified as the winker's card. The cards are shuffled and dealt, one to each player. The winker knows who he/she is when he/she receives the winker's card, but does not tell the other players.

The winker tries to catch the other players' eyes and wink at them. Anyone who looks the winker in the eye and is winked at is OUT. The person winked at should wait a few minutes before he/she announces that he/she is out so as not to reveal the winker. After he/she removes him/herself from the game to be a spectator, the game continues.

The other players try to detect who the winker is before they are "winked out." A player may guess the identity of the winker at any time, but the wrong guess puts him/her out.

A round ends when the winker is caught or when only one player remains. The cards are redistributed for the next round.

(The winker must wink distinctly enough so that players do not confuse winks for blinks. ☺)

Football Quiz

Use this game to review material or words of the week. Make up two lists of review questions. The first list will be regular questions and the second list more challenging. Divide the class into two teams and keep score on chalk/whiteboard.

Ask a toss up question. The first one to stand and answer it correctly gets the ball for his/her team.

The team is allowed four "downs" which means that four different people will be given a chance to answer the same question. The first one to answer it correctly makes ten yards for his/her team. If the first person asked answers it correctly, he/she earns ten points; the second person; eight points; the third person; six points and the fourth; four points.

Gaining eighty yards earns a touchdown and fifty points. If one team is unable to answer a question correctly in four tries, before gaining eighty yards, the ball goes to the other team.

Extra point – If a team makes a touchdown, they may try to answer a harder question for fifteen points.

Field goal – A team may elect at any time they have the ball to try for a field goal. To do this, they must answer a harder question correctly for thirty points.

Set a time limit for the game. If time is limited, the game may be continued over several weeks, carrying over the score and play from time to time.

Scripture Detective: Need a Bible for each person. Object is to find the chapter and verse of each Bible event referred to.

- Each player locates several stories/parables in the Scriptures (i.e. Moses parting the Red Sea, Jesus calming the storm, the Last Supper) and writes down the book, chapter and verse.
- Each person takes a turn as moderator and chooses one of the Scripture stories that he/she wrote. After stating the event/story, the other players search for the exact book, chapter and verse where it is found.
- The first person to discover the location, raises his/her hand and awaits recognition by the moderator. If his/her answer is correct, he/she is awarded 2 points; if wrong, penalized one point.
- The role of moderator rotates to next person after each search. At the end of the rotation, player with most points wins.

Back to Back Art

(Pencils, paper, pictures)

Ask everyone to stand in a single-file line facing the same direction and then sit down. (You may have to have 2 or 3 single file lines to accommodate everyone.)

Explain that the person at the end of the line will be shown a picture (Use simple pictures, like a smiley face, dog, building, boat, church, sunshine). That person uses his or her finger to draw that picture on the back of the person in front of him or her. The person whose back is drawn on will then draw his or her perception of the picture on the back of the next person. The goal is to draw as similar a picture to the original picture as possible.

The last person draws the picture on a piece of paper for everyone to see. The final picture is compared with the original.

You can try it again, having teens switch places to see what it's like at the beginning, middle or end of the line.

Ask:

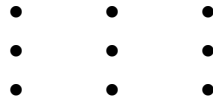
- What made it difficult to come up with an accurate duplication of the original picture?
- In what ways did you work together as a team?

- What was easier: drawing the picture on someone's back or trying to determine what was being drawn on yours? Explain.
- What were the keys to communicating and understanding the picture? What are the keys to communicating and understanding people every day?

Dots

(Yarn)

Assign 9 people to be dots. Have the dots sit on the floor forming a square with three dots per side and one dot in the middle. The dots have to be evenly spaced so that connecting three dots in a row will form a straight line. The rest of the group will be the puzzle solvers.



Tell the puzzle solvers that their goal is to connect all nine dots using four straight lines created with one continuous piece of yarn. (If anyone has seen this puzzle before and knows the solution, ask them not to give it away.)

Have individual volunteers try to solve the puzzle first but don't allow any communication between the individual and other puzzle solvers. If no one figures it out individually, then allow them to work together as a group. They might even have to ask for help from the dots! If no one figures it out in a reasonable amount of time, show the kids the solution.



Talk about the activity:

- What were the keys to success for this activity?
- The solution to this problem is based on seeing a situation somewhat differently than how we normally perceive things. It also involves “moving outside the lines.” How much do you “color outside the lines” in your everyday life? Explain.
- On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being spontaneous and 10 being rigid, where would you place yourself in relation to how you live your life? Explain.
- What did you learn about the role of individuals and the role of the group in problem solving?

Mercy Bags (This might be a good activity to save for the week before your class has Reconciliation.)

Mercy Bag: brown lunch bag with the following items: a button, a rubberband, gold thread, a Lifesaver candy, a tissue, an eraser, a cotton ball, a toothpick, a Band-Aid), paper, pencils

Divide the class into groups of three or four. (To facilitate building community, assign the groups so teens will meet other teens they don't know... you can use the count off by 1,2, 3, 4... all 1's are a group....)

Provide a Mercy Bag for each group. Assign a group leader and instruct the leader to empty the contents of the bag into the center of the group. After one minute, tell the group leader to quickly put the contents back into their bag. Give everyone in the group a piece of paper, and they have to write down everything they remember from the bag. Have them compare lists and if no one remembered all the items in the bag, have them work together to come up with a complete list. Teacher should walk around and see how each group is doing, and offer encouragement.

After playing the game, have leaders empty the contents of the bag again. Have teens look at the items and try to guess what each item might teach us about God's forgiveness and mercy. Have groups share their responses.

Questions for Icebreakers or Just To Get to Know each other...

(Can have people form small groups and discuss a question, pair people by things in common... find a partner who has the same birthday month, can give each person a playing card from a deck of cards, and find a group whose sum = 10... have chairs or people stand in concentric circles and have outer or inner circles move spaces to right or left, thus facing a new partner... The idea is to have parents and teens talk with other people. You can also modify, use as is... the first couple of weeks of class to help begin to build community.)

What's your favorite season of the year?

What's your favorite sport to watch or play?

What's your favorite dessert?

What's your favorite vegetable?

What's the best movie you've ever seen?

What's the best gift you ever received?

What's the best gift you've ever given?

What's the farthest you've ever been away from home? What were you doing there?

How many children would you like to have? Why?

If you won a million dollar lottery, what would you do?

If you could meet one person from history, who would you want to meet? What would you want to ask them?

If you were stranded on a desert island, what two people (now living) would you want with you? Why?

If you could take a dream vacation, all expenses paid, where would you go? Who would you take with you?

If you could be any age you wanted forever, what age would you to be? Why?

If you had the power to solve one world problem, what one would you solve? Why?

If someone who had never heard of Jesus asked you about him, what would you say?

How would you describe God to a three year old?

If you could spend a day with a famous person (now living), who would you choose? What would you do?

What are three words you'd use to describe God?

What are three words which describe you as a person?

Who is the model of being a "good Christian" for you?

What's the hardest thing about being a teenager? (For parents, what was the hardest thing)

Who has taught you the most about God?

Where do you feel closest to God?

(I have also used the above questions on Popsicle sticks... cut the questions in strips, glue them to a Popsicle stick, put the sticks in a cup, pass the cup around after a question is

answered. Participants can always pass, but have to at least read the question aloud. Another variation is that if they answer the question, they can ask someone else to respond too... but of course they can pass too.) I have some sticks in the office if you would like to borrow them.

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Would you Rather.....?

(This is just a sample, the book is in the Youth Ministry Office if you'd like to borrow it.) Have participants start off in the middle of the room, and then select sides; i.e. if you would rather travel by car, move to the right side of the room, plane to the left side of the room. Have participants share their responses with the group congregated on their side. Another option is to print the questions on cards and have participants select a card to answer.

... travel by car or plane?

... be a famous athlete or a famous rock musician?

... be embarrassed in front of friends or in front of strangers?

... be ugly and have 10 good friends or be attractive and have only one good friend?

...pay for a \$100 traffic ticket or lose \$100?

... talk to everyone at a crowded party for a short time or have a significant conversation with two people?

...be friends with Muhammad Ali or Hank Aaron?

...be remembered as a good parent or a good child?

... drink coffee in the middle of a scorching desert or drink a Slurpee in the middle of a snow storm?

...believe you are right, stand your ground, and have someone say "I hate you" or compromise?

... have college paid for but not get a choice in where you go or go anywhere you want but pay for your entire college education?

... attend the Last Supper or discover Jesus' empty tomb?

...break a promise or break a heart?

...live a life of luxury or be known for your generosity?

... have a phone that dials directly to the President of the U.S. or speak to the Creator of the Universe direct from your own heart?

...have the career of Amy Grant or the heart of Mother Teresa?

Would you rather attend the Last Supper or find the empty tomb?

Would you rather lie to your friend or have your friend lie to you?

If you could keep only three photographs, which ones would they be?

Would you rather have the power to fly or the power to disappear? Explain.

Would you rather have lunch with Judas or John the Baptist? Explain.

Would you rather be healthy and homeless or have the AIDS virus and live in luxury? Explain.

Would you rather be embarrassed in front of friends or in front of strangers? Explain.

If you were on trial and needed a character witness, who would it be?

Would you rather have more time than money or more money than time? Explain.

What if you had been Peter when he denied Jesus?

If you could ask Jesus one question about your faith, what would it be?

What if you had been one of the apostles when Jesus washed their feet?

What if Jesus asked YOU, the same question he asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?"

Do you think people today try to imitate Jesus? Why or Why not? What are some specific things in Jesus' life that would be good for us to imitate.

How would you explain heaven?

What are three secrets of a lasting friendship?

How do you see Jesus right now? As a friend, a high and mighty God, or something else? Why? How would you like to see Jesus? What keeps you from doing this?

If you had been living in Jesus' time, do you think you'd be a close follower of Jesus – or someone who wanted to get rid on him? Explain.

Would you rather be considered rich and live in Haiti or poor and live in the United States? Explain.

Describe your life in three minutes.

Would you rather fall in love and lose that person or never fall in love at all? Explain.

Would you rather be wanted or needed? Explain.

Would you rather confront someone about lying or let it slide and try to forget about it? Explain.

Would you rather lose all of your photo albums or all of your saving accounts?

Would you rather be a famous, national hero or discover a cure for cancer and receive no recognition? Explain.

Would you rather have one true friend or lots of acquaintances? Explain.

If you could recapture one great quality you had as a child, what would it be?

Would you rather figure out the solution to a problem or have someone who has already been through it, advise you? Explain.

Would you rather have a phone that dials directly to the President of the United States or speak to the Creator of the Universe from your own heart? Explain.

Would you rather fall in love and lose that person or never fall in love at all? Explain.

<p>If you could live Anywhere in the world, where would you live?</p>	<p>If you could ask God three questions, what would you ask?</p>
<p>If you could be your parents, what rules would you have? How would you treat your children?</p>	<p>What if you could compete on any television games show... what would it be?</p>
<p>What if you could be any person from the Old Testament... who would you be?</p>	<p>What if you could spend an entire day riding one amusement park ride... what would you pick?</p>
<p>What would the world be like if everyone looked identical? Discuss the pro's and con's.</p>	<p>What if you could only keep three of your photographs... what would you keep?</p>
<p>What if you could pass one thing to the next generation... what would it be?</p>	<p>Would you rather travel by car or plane? Why?</p>

<p>Would you rather be a famous athlete or a famous rock musician? Why?</p>	<p>Would you rather be friends with Muhammad Ali or Hank Aaron?</p>
<p>Would you rather be embarrassed in front of friends or strangers? Why?</p>	<p>Would you rather be remembered as a good parent or a good child?</p>
<p>Would you rather be ugly and have 10 good friends or be attractive and have only one good friend?</p>	<p>Would you rather drink coffee in the middle of a scorching desert or drink an Icee in the middle of a snowstorm?</p>
<p>Would you rather pay \$100 traffic ticket or lose \$100? Explain your answer.</p>	<p>Would you rather believe you are right, stand your ground and have someone say, "I hate you," or compromise?</p>
<p>Would you rather talk to everyone at a crowded party for a short time or have a significant conversation with two people?</p>	<p>Would you rather have college paid for but not get a choice in where you go or go anywhere you want but pay for your entire college education?</p>

<p>Would you rather attend the Last Supper or discover Jesus' empty tomb?</p>	<p>If you could marry someone famous, who would it be?</p>
<p>Would you rather break a promise or break a heart?</p>	<p>Describe your most frightening experience.</p>
<p>Would you rather live a life of luxury or be known for your generosity?</p>	<p>If you could change something in the world, would you do?</p>
<p>Would you rather have a phone that dials directly to the President of the USA or speak to the Creator of the Universe direct from your own heart?</p>	<p>What do you think is the most challenging/hardest thing Christ told us to do?</p>
<p>Would you rather have the career of Amy Grant or the heart of Mother Teresa?</p>	<p>Would you do if you knew you only had 24 hours to live?</p>

What if?

(Could also follow up with: What could you do? What would you do? What should you do? ... if?) These are just general sharing questions... can share with a partner or small groups. Count off 1, 2, 3... 7 – if 21 people, and then each number is a small group, i.e. all the 1's, all the 2's...)

- ...if you could live anywhere in the world?
- ...you could be your parents for a day?
- ...you could fly?
- ...you could be any person from the Old Testament?
- ...everybody looked identical?
- ...you could pass one thing to the next generation?
- ...you could ask God three questions?
- ...you were trapped in an earthquake-damaged building?
- ...you could compete on any television game show?
- ...you did nice things for people who would never find out?
- ...you could spend an entire day riding one amusement park ride?
- ...you could only keep three of your photographs...

Virginia Reel: form two rows with chairs, with chairs facing each other, so each person has a partner. Introduce themselves to their partner. Read an open-ended statement and have each partner share their answer with each other. Then call out "rotate" and each person moves one seat to his/her right, now having a new partner. Read another open-ended statement, call rotate, etc... Can use questions above or below!

- If I could be famous, I would be...
- If I could be a movie star, I would be...
- If I could be in the circus, I would be...
- If I could live in the past, I would live in...
- If I could change something in today's world, I would change...
- If I could leave anything in my will for my friends, it would be...
- The most valuable thing I own is...
- My most frightening experience was...
- If I could be someone else in my family, I would be...
- If I could marry someone famous, I would marry...
- If I could invent something, I would invent...
- When I have free time, I like to...

My favorite food to eat/cook is...
Most of my friends like me because...
For my best friend, I give or do...
I think the most difficult thing Christ told us to do is...
I think the Church is...
A great vacation I was on was...
The quality I look for in my friends is...
A terrible thing parents do to their children is...
A birthday/holiday I'll always remember is...
If I have 24 hours to live...
I feel best when people...
Some people seem to want only to...
Something that really annoys me is...
I am best at...
My advice to the President/God/Church would be...

Ezekiel's Wheel: Have students count off "1,2,1,2,1..." Have 1's form an outside circle and 2's form an inside circle facing the outside circle. Each student faces a partner in the opposite circle. Have the partners answer questions from above or below. Tell the inside circle to raise their right hand and then move three people to the right. Have partners introduce themselves and answer a question. Have outside circle raise their left hand and move 2 people to the left. Answer a question. Continue in this manner for as long as you want!

Sample questions: Hometown? How many brothers/sisters do you have? Any pets? What is your favorite season of the year and why? What is your favorite of Jesus' miracles? What is the most meaningful symbol of our faith to you and why?

Card Match: Make color-coded cards with a letter on each to spell out a religious name or reference. For example, five yellow cards might spell J-E-S-U-S, three blue cards might spell G-O-D. Students pick a color, and then find others with the same color and work together to figure out their word.
Can also adapt to use Scripture verses.

Fractured Scriptures: Type or write scripture verses, cut in half. Have teens find the person who has the other half of the Scripture verse. (The last pages have examples of fractured non-biblical sayings!... actually some are proverbs!)

Adjective Name Game: (a little silly, but you'll be amazed at how effective this is in learning names!) Have group sit in a circle. One person starts the introductions by saying his/her name and an adjective that describes him/her and starts with same first letter as his/her name (ie, Radical Rose) The next person does the same with his/her name and also says the previous person's name (ie, I am Loving Lynn, and this is Radical Rose) The game continues with each person adding his/her name and repeating all the ones that went before. The teacher should go last and try to remember all of their names!

Around the Clock

1. Give each person a picture of a Clock." Tell them they will be finding people in the group and asking them to write their names on each hour of the clock. They can only use a person's name one time. Read the questions/items below, allowing time for each person to find a person and write in each other's name.
 - At twelve o'clock, exchange names with a person with different color hair than your own.
 - At one o'clock, exchange names with a person who lives in a different part of town or high school than you.
 - At two o'clock, exchange names with a person who likes a different pro-baseball team than you.
 - At three o'clock, exchange names with a person who is a different gender than you.
 - At four o'clock, exchange names with a person who has a favorite different band or musical taste than you.
 - At five o'clock, exchange names with a person who has a different number of brothers/sisters than you.
 - At six o'clock, exchange names with a person who has different color eyes than you.
 - At seven o'clock, exchange names with a person who has the same color eyes as you.
 - At eight o'clock, exchange names with a person who has different hair length than you.
 - At nine o'clock, exchange names with a person who feels the same way about the "Simpson's" as you.
 - At ten o'clock, exchange names with a person who was born in a different state than you.
 - At eleven o'clock, exchange names with a person who was born in the same month as you.
2. When everyone has finished, tell them they are going to meet with five of the people they met; but only for one minute appointments:
 - Meet with your one o'clock person and discuss this question, "When was the last time you got really angry and why?"
 - Meet with your three o'clock person and discuss this question, "What do you like to do in your free time?"
 - Meet with your four o'clock person and discuss: "On what basis do you choose your friends?"
 - Meet with your nine o'clock person and discuss: "How important to you are the Ten Commandments?"
 - Meet with your twelve o'clock person and discuss: "Tell about a goal you have for your life."

Count them up!

Distribute playing cards - it's easier if you remove the face cards. Each card is worth the number on it - Ace is 1 point. Call out sums and kids have to get in groups to add up to that number. If you have wanders who can't find a group, offer some assistance.

Once they're in a group, shout out a question that each group. After it seems that each group is finished sharing, shout RESHUFFLE and have them form new groups... new groups means not the people they were with previously.

1. What's your favorite season of the year and why?
2. If you won the million dollar lottery, what would you do?
3. What's your favorite movie of all time?
4. If you could take a dream vacation, all expenses paid, where would you go and who would you take with you?
5. Where were you born?

That's Me!

Have kids stand in a circle. When you call out something that describes them, they run into a huddle, screaming, "That's me!" and high five and then go back to their original space. Have a team demonstrate...

1. If you are in high school...
2. If you are wearing a gray shirt...
3. If you have a dog...
4. If you brushed your teeth today...
5. If you are wearing a watch....
6. If you've ever been to Disney World...
7. If you made your bed this morning...
8. If you have a sister....
9. If you are in Middle School...
10. If you like video games...
11. If you are an altar server at Transfiguration Church...

Add on Art

Need white paper and markers

- Have teens sit in a circle and place the markers in the center of the circle.
- Give each person a piece of paper and have them write their initials on the back side of the paper.
- Each person should make a mark on the paper that signifies something good about the group.
- Have teens pass their paper to the right so the next person can add a mark.
- Continue until their original paper comes back to them.
- Encourage them to make each picture different, depending on what each picture looks like when they get it. Emphasize that each picture should be meaningful instead of a collection of stray marks.
- When finished ask:
 - What are your impressions of the group picture that got back to you?
 - What marks do YOU make on other people's lives?
 - How do your marks combine with others' marks to make the picture better?
 - Do you sometimes make marks that mess up the picture?

Class TRIVIA

Need paper and pens

Divide the class into 2 teams

- Each team should come up with 10 trivia questions to ask the other team. These should be strange but true facts about teenagers in the group – for example, "Can you name the person on our team who has a dog named 'Princess?', Which member of our team once ate 24 pancakes at one time?"
- After the teams have written their questions, have them ask each other the questions.
- Award one point for each correct answer.

Forming Groups

Need slips of paper with names of TV characters

- I Love Lucy – Lucy, Ricky, Fred and Ethel
- Gilligan's Island – Gilligan, Skipper, the Professor, Mary Ann, Ginger, Mr. Howell, Mrs. Howell
- The Addams Family – Gomez, Morticia, Uncle Fester, Grandmama, Pugsley, Wednesday, Lurch, Cousin Itt
- The Brady Bunch – Mike, Carol, Greg, Peter, Bobby, Marcia, Jan, Cindy and Alice
 - Give each person a slip of paper. Have them find their other TV family members.

Who's That?

Need index cards and pencils

- Have teens form pairs, give them each an index card and pencil.
- Each pair has ten minutes to interview their partner and find out as many interesting or unique facts about each other. They should write them on the index card.
- Example questions: Does your partner have any unknown talents or received any awards? Has your partner met someone famous? What's the wildest thing your partner's ever done? What's the best thing your partner's ever done for someone else? Have your partner describe themselves in five words.... They should use their imagination!
- Collect the cards and over the next couple of weeks, read the card aloud and have the group guess the identity of the person described on the card.

Vanity License Plate

Give each person the vanity license plate piece of paper and a pencil or markers.

They should come up with a vanity license plate that describes them.

Use no more than 7 letters or numbers, for example H2OSKER (water skier).

Each person should share their license plate and why they put what they did.

M & M Lottery

Supplies - a bowl of M & M's

Each person should take some candy and pass to next person. Do not eat until you talk!

Based on the color of M & M's they have to answer the following questions: (It's a good idea to post the questions after everyone has taken their M & M's - other wise you keep repeating the question. They only have to answer once for each color, in case they have more than one of a color.

M & M Lottery

Orange - If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Red - What is something you enjoy doing in your spare time?

Green - How many people in your family? Name them.

Brown - Whom do you consider to be your personal hero or heroine?

Yellow - What is your favorite song?

Blue - You just won \$10 million. What is the first thing you would do?

Different questions:

Brown - name

Red - email address

Green - sisters/brothers

Orange - favorite subject

Blue - something special about you

Yellow - favorite subject

Follow with a quick game of Ezekiel's wheel - 2 concentric circles: 1 circle inside another circle, partners face each other. Move 2 forward, 3 back, 4 forward, etc... so you are always talking to a new partner.

1. Tell your name and school
2. What is your favorite sacrament and why?
3. Where were you living when you made your First Communion?
4. What Mass do you usually attend?
5. If Jesus could physically spend 20 minutes in class - what would you discuss?
6. What would you ask Jesus if you could ask him only 1 question?
7. If there were an eleventh commandment, what would it be?

You're a What? (Name Game)

- Have teens sit in a circle.
- Have one person say his or her name and the name of an animal that begins with the same letter as the name.
- Have the next person repeat that first person's name and animal before stating his or her own name and animal.
- Continue until teens have gone all the way around the circle.

Months of Thanks

(Kids think of things to be thankful for each month of the year - takes about 10-20 minutes)

Need paper, pencils and a watch

- Divide into teams of 4 to 6, give several sheets of paper and a pencil/pen to each team
- Choose one person to write their answers
- They have 30 SECONDS to write down things to be thankful for that happened in the month of January.
- Then they have 10 SECONDS to choose the most original thing on their list.
- Points are awarded for each item on their list, with an additional 50 points if their original item is different from other teams' original items.
- Allow teams to keep track of their own score.
- Continue until teams have worked their way through the year.

Round of Thanks

- Have teens sit in a circle
- Explain that group members are each to share one thing they're thankful for.
- Teens can't repeat what anyone else has said. They need to listen well and REMEMBER what everyone says.
- When everyone has shared, ask the group to shift one spot to the right. Teens must now state what the person who WAS sitting in that spot was thankful for.
- If they can't remember, they must approach that person and tell him or her one thing you like about that person - You remind me to smile!

Teamwork Turkey's

Need Turkey puzzle - one for each group

Form groups of 3, in each group, one person is blind, one person is mute and one person can not walk or use their hands. The Teams have to work together to complete the puzzle. Ask questions after the activity to lead the groups to understand that we all have gifts and should use those gifts as strengths to help and serve others.

Machines

This is just like charades, except in a group. Your group will be given a machine to act out. Try to involve everyone in making the machine. The group can talk to figure out how to do it, but when they present it to the large group, they can't talk... just act it out and see if someone can figure out what machine they are. It's a good icebreaker to get people moving. (If the machine makes a sound, they can make that sound in the presentation.)

Name that Person

Each person needs 3x5 cards (or paper), pencil, small piece of scrap paper, and the "personals" section from a newspaper.

1. "personals": The leader should read a few personals from a newspaper - only appropriate ones of course! Explain that we will see how well we know each other by trying to identify the "personal ads" for our group. First, write a brief personal. These should be an honest reflection of ourselves, but not so obvious that they easily identify us. For example, don't write "I'm the captain of the lacrosse team," but write about your hobbies or interests or something about your inner character. These are not to be physical descriptions. Think about things you like, the things you like to do, your future dreams and even the things you do not like. Write at least four statements about yourself on the card. Do not put your name on it. When everyone is done, we will try to guess who wrote which card. When you are finished, give your card to the group leader.

2. "Name that Person": When all the cards have been completed and collected, ask participants to number their scrap papers for the number of people in their group. The leader will then read each card slowly, the group members will write down who they think wrote it. These are not to be shared yet. Remind them to write down their own name also. If they just sit when their card is read, everyone will know who wrote it! After all cards have been read, have the leader go back and read the first card, and have people name who they think wrote it. After the guesses, the author will be revealed. Continue until all authors are known.
3. Optional discussion: Were there things you discovered about people in your group which surprised you? How well were you able to guess the authors? What did you learn about how well you know each other?
4. Can also adapt to do with name that saint!

As much as we think we know people, there is always something new to discover and sometimes those discoveries can really surprise us!

Fire Drill

If your house were on fire, all the people and animals were safe, and you had time to grab five things and still get out safely, what would you take with you?

Urge them not to choose items that can easily be replaced, like a refrigerator, DVD, or money, but rather items that have special value for them, like photos from their childhood, a necklace from grandma or scrapbook of childhood memories.

When everyone is finished, have them share their choices and reasons.

PICTIONARY! A great way to introduce concepts and vocabulary. Supplies: Newsprint, markers and a set of Pictionary instructions.

- Form teams of 4-6
- Give each team a piece of newsprint and have each draw a giant cross, dividing the paper into four sections.
- Ask one volunteer from each group to come forward. Tell them the name of an item to draw. They must wait until all team reps have returned to their teams, and you have given the GO signal. The rules of Pictionary are followed. The team which guesses correctly first receives 5 points. Play several rounds with a different team "artist" each time. Keep a tally of team points.

Classroom Census



Transfiguration PREP

Important Stuff

Name _____

Birthday _____

Date of Baptism _____

Any pets in the home? Type _____ Name(s): _____

Good friends (1st Names): _____

Favorite Stuff to do _____

Favorite School Subjects _____

Mom's first name _____ Birthday _____

Dad's first name _____ Birthday _____

Brothers/Sisters _____ Birthday _____

_____ Birthday _____

_____ Birthday _____

Other important people _____ Birthday _____

Parent Email: _____

Your Email: _____

Any special events happening this year?

HAVE A LITTLE FUN BIBLE CHALLENGE

CAN YOU FIND 20 BOOKS OF THE BIBLE IN THIS PARAGRAPH?
(Watch out for the Plurals)

SOMEONE SHOWED ME THIS STORY AND REMARKED THAT THERE ARE TWENTY BOOKS OF THE BIBLE HIDDEN HERE. HE CHALLENGED ME TO FIND THEM. SURE ENOUGH, THEY'RE HERE. STILL, THIS THINGS A LULU KEPT ME LOOKING SO HARD FOR THE LONGEST TIME! SOME OF YOU WILL GET BOGGED DOWN WITH FACTS. OTHERS ARE HIT BY THEM LIKE THEY ARE SOME KIND OF REVELATION OR SOMETHING. YOU MAY GET IN A JAM ESPECIALLY SINCE THE NAMES ARE NOT CAPITALIZED AND OFTEN LEAP THE SPACES BETWEEN THE WORDS. THIS MAKES IT A REAL JOB TO FIND THEM, BUT IT'LL PROVIDE A MOST FASCINATING FEW MINUTES FOR YOU. YES, THERE ARE SOME REALLY EASY ONES TO SPOT BUT DON'T GET THE BIG HEAD, CAUSE TRUTHFULLY, YOU'LL SOON FIGURE THAT IT WOULD TAKE FEDERAL JUDGES AND PREACHERS NUMBERS OF HOURS TO FIND THEM ALL. I WILL ADMIT THAT IT USUALLY TAKES A MINISTER TO FIND ONE OF THEM AND THAT IS NOT UNCOMMON FOR THERE ARE TO BE LOUD LAMENTATIONS WHEN IT IS POINTED OUT. ONE LADY SAYS THAT WHEN SHE IS CONFRONTED WITH PUZZLES LIKE THIS, SHE BREWS A CUP OF TEA TO HELP HER CONCENTRATE BETTER. BUT THEN THIS GAL'S A REAL PRO. VERBS, NOUNS, AND ALL THAT STUFF ARE HER THING. SEE HOW WELL YOU CAN COMPETE. RELAX. THERE REALLY ARE TWENTY NAMES OF BIBLE BOOKS IN THIS STORY. IF YOU FAIL TO FIND THEM THERE'S A PENALTY! YOU'LL HAVE TO GO FLY A KITE, SIT ON A BANANA, HUM THE BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC, OR HOSE A DOG (a MEAN ONE). GET TO IT. HAPPY LOOKINGS!

Small Group Q's

- Distribute a playing card to each person (sort through the deck so that you only have 2 out of 4 suits)
- For the first round, each person finds the person with the same card, introduce themselves by name, ask first question (Q), each person should answer.

Q Which season best represents your personality and why?

- Round Two – find a group that has the card above your number... Ace is high. I.e., #10 find a Jack..., introduce yourselves...

Q If someone told you a secret about your best friend and told you not to tell your friend, would you keep the secret or tell your best friend?

- Round Three – make a group whose sum is 18 – all face cards and ace count as #1.

Q If Jesus went to your school/ work, what one group would he hang out with most often?

- Round four – make a group whose sum is 25

Q If you had to name one person who has influenced you the most, what person would you name?

- Round five – make a group whose sum is 13.

Q Who are you most like, your mom or your dad – in what ways?

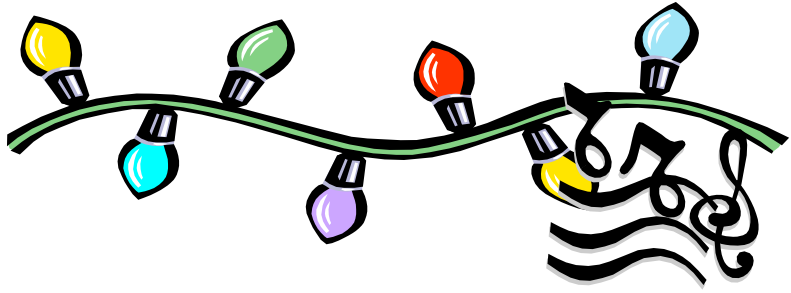
- Round six – make a group whose sum is 27

Q Do you believe God always answers our prayers?

- Round seven – find your original partner! (the card that is the same as yours!)

Q In your opinion, what is the biggest obstacle that keeps people from believing in God?

Team Members (no more than 4!)



Classroom # _____

Christmas Synonyms

Translate each of the twenty-two statements listed back into recognizable English. Each one is a common Christmas saying or song.

1. Move hitherward the entire assembly of those who are loyal in their belief.
2. Listen, the celestial messengers produce harmonious sounds.
3. Nocturnal time span of unbroken quietness.
4. An emotion excited by the acquisition or expectation of good given to the terrestrial sphere.
5. Embellish the interior passageways.
6. Exalted heavenly beings to whom hearkened.
7. Twelve o'clock on a clement night witnessed its arrival.
8. The Christmas preceding all others.
9. Small municipality in Judea southeast of Jerusalem.
10. Diminutive masculine master of skin-covered percussionistic cylinders.
11. Omnipotent supreme being who elicits respite to ecstatic distinguished males.
12. Tranquility upon the terrestrial sphere.
13. Obese personification fabricated of compressed mounds of minute crystals.
14. Expectation of arrival to populated area by mythical, masculine perennial gift-giver.
15. Natal celebration devoid of color.
16. In awe of the nocturnal time span characterized by religiosity.
17. Geographic state of fantasy during the season of mother nature's dormancy.
18. The first person nominative plural of a triumvirate of far Eastern heads of state.
19. Tintinnabulation of vacillating pendulums in inverted, metallic, resonant cups.
20. In a distant location the existence of an improvised unit of newborn children's slumber furniture.
21. Proceed forth declaring upon a specific geological alpine formation.
22. Jovial Yuletide desired for the second person singular or plural by us.

Answers:

1. O Come, All Ye Faithful
2. Hark, the Herald Angels Sing
3. Silent Night
4. Joy to the World
5. Deck the Halls
6. Angels We Have Heard on High
7. It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
8. The First Noel
9. O Little Town of Bethlehem
10. Little Drummer Boy
11. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
12. Peace on Earth
13. Frosty the Snowman
14. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
15. White Christmas
16. O Holy Night
17. Winter Wonderland
18. We Three Kings of Orient Are
19. Jingle Bells
20. Away in a Manger
21. Go Tell It on a Mountain
22. We Wish You a Merry Christmas

A Letter Perfect Ending

To bring the year's learning to a meaningful conclusion, have students create a booklet or poster reviewing what was taught/learned.

This requires the class to create an illustrated booklet that highlights major curriculum topics. Students plan the content of their booklet by brainstorming as a class. Choose a student to write the letters of the alphabet across the top margins of several sheets of paper. The class moves through the alphabet recalling key elements of the year's work, beginning with the letter of the alphabet. The scribe records all the suggested words beneath the appropriate letter. For example, someone might call out "Ascension" and "Apostle" for the letter A. If no words come to mind for a given letter, move on, return later to letters they skipped. The class can look through the textbook for ideas.

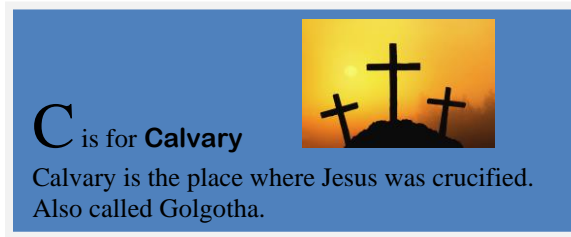
The scribe distributes the letter sheets among the students who work in pairs. At the top of the piece of construction paper, students use markers to print the letter... followed by ... is for.. and one word that the class associated with that letter. For example, B is for Bethlehem. Below that students illustrate the word with a symbol or drawing. Below that, write a sentence that explains the word and drawing. For example, Mary and Joseph traveled to the town of Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

When all the pages are complete, they are assembled in alphabetical order and a cover sheet is finished.

The project gives good results while requiring minimal preparation, instruction or discipline. The illustrations and explanations give the catechist a glimpse of how their teaching has been processed by learners.

The pages of the book can be displayed on the cork boards in the hallways for everyone to see... and learn from!

Another option is to create a poster. Instead of having book pages, do the brainstorming part and have students draw on the poster.



One man's trash is another man's treasure.

A penny saved is a penny earned.

Don't count your chickens before they've hatched.

Silence is golden.

Let sleeping dogs lie.

When in Rome, do as the Romans do.

Haste makes waste.

Different strokes for different folks.

The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Once a fool, always a fool.

Nothing ventured, nothing
gained.

Variety is the spice of life.

There's no smoke without a fire.

**Cleanliness is next to
godliness.**

Love conquers all.

Finders keepers, losers
weepers.

It takes two to tango.

Fight fire with fire.

A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

Two wrongs do not make a right.

Easier said than done.

Beauty is only skin deep.

All's fair in love and war.

The last straw breaks the camel's back.

The early bird catches the worm.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.

A rolling stone gathers no moss.

No pain, no gain.

Better to be alone than in bad company.

Practice what you preach.

Rome was not built in a day.

Actions speak louder than words.

Necessity is the mother of invention.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON.

One good turn deserves another.

Look before you leap.

Don't judge a book by its cover.

Patience is a virtue.

Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE.

Practice makes perfect.

To err is human, to forgive is divine.

The bigger they are the harder they fall.

It's always darkest before the dawn.

Money is the root of all evil.

Never look a gift horse in the mouth.

Easier said than done.

Beggars can't be choosers.

God helps those who help themselves.

A trivia card with a yellow background and a decorative red and black border. The border has a scalloped, ribbon-like appearance. There are four floral illustrations, one in each corner, featuring pink and purple flowers with green leaves. At the top of the page, there is a row of small white dots. The title 'Catholic Trivia' is centered at the top in a large, black, sans-serif font. Below the title, the text 'Team Members Names and Classroom:' is followed by two lines of blank space for writing names and a classroom. Below this, there is a note '(No more than 4 to a team!)'. The main body of the card contains a list of 16 numbered questions and a bonus question. The questions cover various aspects of Catholicism, including the Bible, sacraments, feasts, apostles, and the Holy Spirit.

Catholic Trivia

Team Members Names and Classroom:

_____, _____, _____,

_____ (No more than 4 to a team!)

1. Name the last book of the Bible.
2. Name the sacrament that men who become priests receive.
3. Name the feast that occurs 50 days after Easter.
4. Who was the Apostle of Jesus who did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead?
- 5-7. Name the apostles who were at the Transfiguration of Jesus.
- 8-9. List two images of the Holy Spirit.
- 10-14. Name the first 5 books of the Bible.
15. Who walked on water the water with Jesus?
16. Who was the first Pope?
- 17-20. Name 4 of the 12 Apostles.

Bonus: Who was the only person at both the birth and death of Jesus?

Scripture Detective: Need a Bible for each person. Object is to find the chapter and verse of each Bible event referred to.

- Each player locates several stories/parables in the Scriptures (i.e. Moses parting the Red Sea, Jesus calming the storm, the Last Supper) and writes down the book, chapter and verse.
- Each person takes a turn as moderator and chooses one of the Scripture stories that he/she wrote. After stating the event/story, the other players search for the exact book, chapter and verse where it is found.
- The first person to discover the location, raises his/her hand and awaits recognition by the moderator. If his/her answer is correct, he/she is awarded 2 points; if wrong, penalized one point.
- The role of moderator rotates to next person after each search. At the end of the rotation, player with most points wins.

