

Games for Friends
From the Circle of Friends
Westside Fellowship CRC
Kingston, Ontario

Games Night

Once a month, we set aside our regular evening's program of open session (singing, story, prayer), individual sharing and lesson time, and social time with refreshments by replacing the one-on-one middle part of the program with a period of time playing games and other activities together. We call this 'Games Night' and of course it is an evening that most of our friends look forward to. We deal with the exciting challenge of having a group of about 45 friends ranging in age from 6 to 60 all having diverse abilities and faced with a variety of challenges. So what can we do that will involve and be fun for as many as possible of these wonderful friends?

For games, we meet in our fellowship hall, friends sitting in a big circle, usually with buddies standing behind their friends. Typically we set aside about half an hour for this and most often we can fit in three types of short games. We try to vary the activities chosen in each category from month to month.

- A short, quiet warm-up game
- A longer game
- A short but lively game

The first game:

Name the song

Our pianist plays the first lines of several of our praise songs that we sing regularly and our friends have to guess the name of the song.

Guessing objects

We put out about 12 to 15 objects on a low table in the middle of the circle – placing them one by one and making sure each is identified and seen by everyone in the group. We then cover them with a sheet and ask people to guess what is under the sheet. Usually more than three quarters of the objects can be recalled.

Typical objects – screw driver, fork, clock, book, calculator, pen, cd, doll, hair brush, book, banana, etc.

In the bag

We have soft cloth bags into which we have put objects similar to those above. We take the bag around to our friends who, by feeling with their hands, try to guess what is inside.

Typical objects – hammer, cup, book, scissors, cordless phone

Who is it – 1?

In advance of the games night, we record a number of our buddies saying something impromptu and brief like

‘I enjoy coming to the Circle of Friends every week. We get together for singing songs, praying to God, hearing stories from the Bible and I especially enjoy talking to my own special friend’.

We play these recordings back one by one and ask the group to try to identify the name of the buddy

Who is it – 2?

Before we move from our open session in the sanctuary into the fellowship hall, one of our buddies leaves and sits in the middle of the circle where he/she is covered with a sheet. Then when everyone else has joined the group, we try to guess who it is by asking questions of this mystery person (who obviously answers in a disguised voice and a cryptic manner)

Half songs

We have prepared cards on which is written part of the title of various songs that we sing frequently. Our friends pick one at a time from these cards and ask the group to give the complete title.

...so good
...in his hand
Give me.....
....flown high
No one.....
.....yah
This is.....
No one....
...a friend of...
I have the...

God is so good
He's got the whole world in his hand
Give me oil in my lamp
Joy is the flag flown high
No one but Jesus
Kum ba yah
This is the day
No one exactly like me
Jesus is a friend of mine
I have the joy, joy, joy

....of the Sun
My God is....

From the rising of the Sun
My God is so big

Friendship Peter Coddles

This is a modified version of an early twentieth century game called 'Peter Coddles'. A story is read out, leaving pauses in the narrative from time to time. During the pause, a container holding cards with various words/phrases, is passed around to our friends who choose a card and read out (or have it read out by their buddy) what is on the paper. Very amusing stories result.

Some of the words/phrases that are read out at random to fill in the blank spaces

A nest of rats
Some garbage
A block of ice
A computer
An ostrich egg
A red-headed boy
A subway car

An oily rag
Some purple paint
A very long snake
A hurricane
Some sawdust
A bonfire
Some frogs' eggs

A jackrabbit
A lemon
A smelly cigar
Whale blubber
A snowman
A pile of rocks

Here is one of our stories (It uses some places and activities familiar to our friends).

Nathan and Thomas were walking down the street one day. "I'm hungry said Nathan. Let's go and eat somewhere". They went to a restaurant and ordered some food. Nathan ate _____, along with _____ for dessert. Thomas said "I don't like those things, so I think I'll have_____". They were both happy with their food, so they again went outside and continued walking down the street.

They came to a park, and decided to rest there for a while. Thomas looked up in a tree and saw something unusual. "What's that?" He said. "Oh it's just _____" said Nathan. I don't know why it is up in the tree.

They saw Andrew and Erica on the other side of the park, so they ran over toward them. Nathan tripped and fell on_____. Thomas helped him to get up and said "I hope you aren't hurt". Andrew saw Nathan and Thomas and came over in his wheel chair so fast that he ran into _____. Erica said "That's the second time you've hit something. Last week you crashed into _____". Fortunately, Andrew was also ok.

By now Nathan and Thomas were very tired, so they decided to get on a bus. They were going to go to Hart studio for the afternoon. When they got on the bus, they saw Sarah Barber sitting there, holding a _____ on her lap. There were hardly any seats left on the bus, so Nathan had to sit down beside _____.

When they got to Hart studio, there was _____ standing beside the door. In the classroom, Nathan and Thomas and Sarah found that Joel was already there. He was drawing a picture of _____. Sarah liked Joel's picture very well and told him, "I painted a picture of _____. My father thought it was so beautiful, he hung it in our living room". That afternoon, they continued practicing their play. The name of the play was _____. Sarah had the part of _____ and Joel was _____.

In the same evening, there was a meeting of the Circle of Friends. Nathan and Thomas went there early along with Nathan's mother and father. When they got there, they opened the trunk of the car and found_____.

Inside the church, Asha was already getting some snacks ready. She had taken out a plate of _____ which everyone would enjoy. Then Paul came along with his father and, as usual, his mother had also made a nice snack for everybody to share. Look what she sent for us to eat said Paul and he showed _____, Alan said, "I'm not hungry for any of that because I already ate a big supper. We had _____".

Harold came in to the church. He was carrying _____ which he had won for his part in floor hockey at the special Olympics. Kirsten arrived on the bus. She had just had her birthday and wanted to show everyone the gift that she got. Elly called her up to the front and Kirsten showed us her gift. It was _____. That's really nice said Anita. On my birthday, my mother gave me _____.

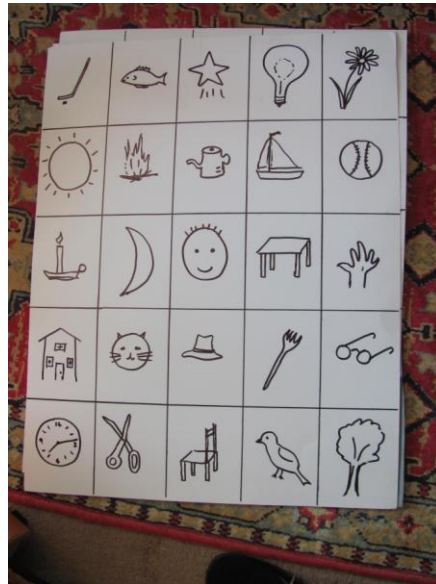
Everyone in the group sang all their favourite songs and played some games. In one of the games, while the music played, they passed _____ from person to person until the music stopped. In another, they had to throw a ball at _____ to see if they could knock it over.

The evening ended with snacks. Oakley and Cyprus helped serve the cookies and then cleaned the floor using _____. Willy thought this was very funny. He had a great time and when he got home, that night he had a very pleasant dream about _____.

The second game

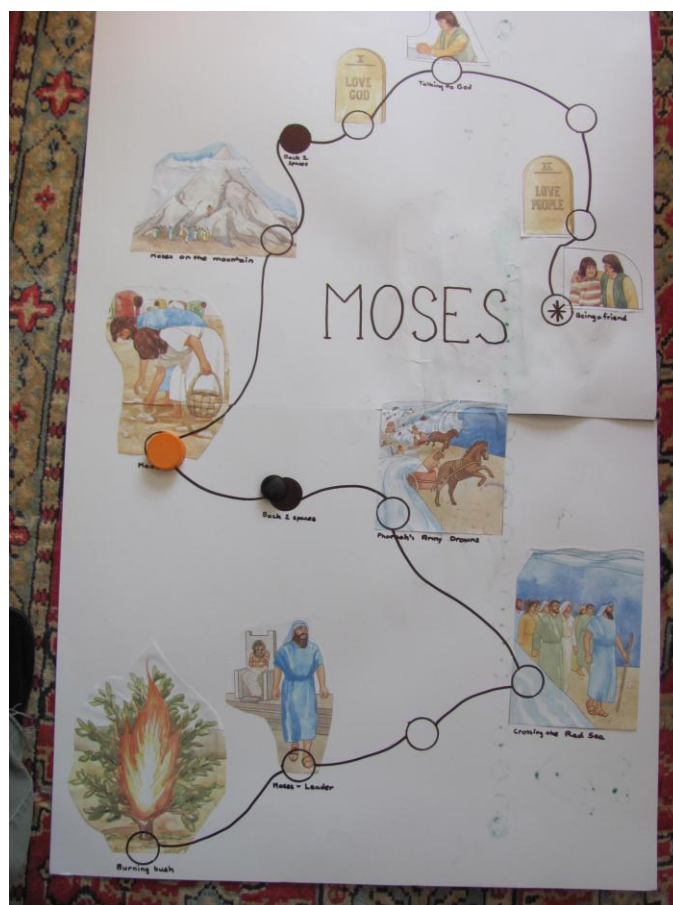
Bingo

We prepared two large boards with simple images (they can be anything), large cards to match the images, and large markers (checkers or stones or anything appropriate). The group is divided among two teams, we pick cards and then give different people each time a chance to place the marker on the appropriate square. It's very important to keep things moving quickly, so we have three buddies involved: one to pick cards and one for each team to assist friends to get to the board.



Moses to the Promised Land

This game is played by dividing the group into two teams. A board was prepared from two bristol board sheets, and shows a pathway from Egypt to the promised land. Other events in Moses life are included and squares set out so that there is an appropriate distance to complete the journey. Some squares give another turn or invite the person to move ahead one or two squares. We recommend that no penalties to move back or lose a turn should be indicated as we want to avoid disappointment. We made a large (5 cm x 5 cm x 5 cm) cube as a die, and marked it with three 1's, two 2's, and one 3. This way no team gets too far ahead. Friends take turns rolling the die and then moving.



Helping Hand

This is another board game similar to the Moses game, but this can be played either cooperatively, or in teams; in any case we do not emphasize any one team winning. The game was originally suggested by the Friendship Group short program on Helping Each Other. We have expanded and modified it somewhat. Again, it uses a set of two bristol boards taped together and it follows a one-day journey through a person's life where there are opportunities to help that may or may not be taken. To show this, various squares are marked with items like:

You don't hold the door for an older man who is carrying a heavy parcel.....lose a turn

You help your neighbour rake his leaves in the autumn....move ahead two spaces



Other squares have a question mark on them. Using the large die as in the Moses game, the group moves through the day, following the events marked on the squares. Question squares are where different people pick cards with a question on them. The questions are all about helping. There are some good suggestions provided by 'Helping each other'. Some other examples are:

Your caregiver has prepared a very nice supper for you. Now she is very tired. How can you help after the supper is over?

At the Circle of Friends, two of you have not yet had a snack but there is only one cracker and one piece of cheese left. What can you do?

All the people in your home got Christmas cards except for one person. What can you do to make this person feel happy?

Bowling

For this, one of our buddies has made some large soft cloth balls, about 15 cm in diameter. We make bowling pins out of water bottles partly filled with water (and capped tightly!). Friends take part one by one, bowling three times. We don't keep score, just cheer when one or more bottles are knocked down.



Stuffed animals into bowls

Using small stuffed animals, or sometimes hackysaks, we give our friends 3 or 4 tries to throw them into small plastic bowls. We keep the bowls on a small carpet that can be pulled around from person to person, making it possible for everyone including persons in wheel chairs to take part.



Musical whatever

This is a version of musical chairs, or hot potato, in which we pass one of our soft cloth balls around the circle (sometimes friends may need the help of their buddies) while music plays. When the music stops, the friend chooses a card from a hat – a card that requires them to do or say something.

Examples are:

What is your middle name?

Give your buddy a hug

What is your favourite food?

Help us to sing (for example) the first verse of 'He's got the whole world...'

What kind of pie do you eat on

Thanksgiving?

Wave to the person across the circle from you.

Make a sound like a cat

Who was the mother of Jesus?

What is the name of one of your caregivers?

What is your favourite animal?

The third activity

We end the fun session by a short time when we can do something more active and even more noisy, in a large group. This will get everyone in good spirits and ready for our snack and social time. As with the other games, we always make a special effort to see that each person can take part in some way that is appropriate for them.

Balloons

Using two good-sized balloons, and with a couple of leaders in the middle of the circle we try to see how long we can keep the balloons aloft. This means that the leaders have to make sure that each friend gets a chance to hit the balloons, sometimes with the help of their buddies.

Dodge ball

Again, using our soft cloth balls, we choose a very mobile young friend or an equally mobile buddy to be in the middle. Friends around the circle throw the balls at the targeted person.

Sometimes the evening ends with some of our friends dancing with each other or with their buddies.