

JESUS
all about life



14
Easter
Discovery
Games

14 Easter Discovery Games

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Introduction

This collection of games helps people of all ages to explore the Easter themes of sacrifice and forgiveness and to discover and share the good news of Jesus.

The message is rich and multifaceted, so games are an ideal way to explore it together. But be careful, no one game can capture the whole Easter message. Instead, each game will highlight one or more aspects of the Good News and leave out other aspects. Therefore, the debriefing time is very important to help clarify the players' understanding of the message and correct it where necessary.

It can be helpful to ask these questions to assist people to discover the Good News for themselves:

- How does this game highlight the good news of Jesus?
- What part of the game doesn't fit the Good News?

Another helpful tool is to play the game again after the debrief time. Ask the group to suggest ways we could change the game to make it more like the Good News. Then play it again.

This is a wonderful way to explore and revise the good news of Jesus.

1. One, two, three, four

Discover: The key aspects of the Good News

Read: Romans 5:1-2, Colossians 1:15-20

Players: Any number | Play as big group | Ages 5 and up

Time: 5-15 minutes

Equipment: None

How to play

This is a simple game to play with children to reinforce the basics of the Good News.

Each child stands facing a partner. The leader counts 1, 2, 3 and 4 slowly.

- As 1 is called, each child puts their right hand in the air with the pointer finger up.
- As 2 is called, each child puts their left hand out in front of them with palm up and open.
- As 3 is called, each child puts the pointer finger on their right hand over the left hand of the other player.
- As 4 is called, each child uses their left hand to try and grab the pointer finger on the right hand of the other player.



1 2 3 4

After playing this game a few times, ask the players to say these words as you play the game.

1. **God is good ...**
2. **He gave me faith ...**
3. **Jesus came ...**
4. **To save us from sin.**

Variations

- Play the game in groups of 3, 4 or 5 people.
- Play the game with the whole group standing in a large circle.

Debrief



Divide into small groups.

Read **Romans 5:1-2** or **Colossians 1:15-20** and discuss each of the four statements in the game. Ask:

- How do we know that God is good?
- What unique gifts has he given us?
- Why did Jesus come to earth?
- How does Jesus save us from sin?

2. Stuck in the mud

Discover: The consequence of sin and our need to be rescued

Bible: John 3:16, John 8:32

Players: 10-100 players | Play as big group | Ages 5 +

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: None

How to play

Mark off an area 20 metres by 30 metres (for about 50 children).

One person is the **boss** of the game. They stand in the middle of the play area with arms out to the side. Another person is the **chaser**. The chaser's role is to chase and tag as many players as possible.

When a player is tagged, they are ***stuck in the mud***.

They must stop, stand still with their arms out in front of them and wait to be released. Any untagged player may release anyone who is *stuck in the mud* by touching the hand of the **boss** in the middle of the field and then running under the arms of the stuck person and saying, 'you are now free!'

While someone is releasing someone else, they cannot be tagged.

Debrief



Observe and be curious. Notice how being stuck and getting rescued is at the heart of the Good News. Ask the **5 questions** on page 29.

- Read **John 3:16** and **John 8:32**.
- What can “being rescued by another” in the game look like in sharing the Good News?
- How is being “stuck in the mud” like sin in our lives?
- What stops the Good News from being shared?

Variations

- For more players allocate more chasers. Play the game for 10 minutes or until everyone is caught.
- After debriefing, play the game again. But first ask the group how they could change the game to make it more like the Good News.

See video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8m8SvhOJbs>

3. Partner tag

Discover: We must continually repent and also forgive others

Read: Colossians 3:13-14

Players: 10-100 players | Play in pairs | Ages 5 and up

Time: 5-15 minutes

Equipment: None



How to play

Each player stands with a partner. One in each pair is the *chaser* and the other the *runner*. They move five metres apart but remain in the big group.

On **GO**, each *chaser* runs after their partner and tags them. When tagged the *runner* must turn around 3 times while their partner runs away. The *runner* then becomes the *chaser*. Swap roles every time the partner is tagged and continue playing.

This is a hectic game. Everyone is either tagging or running away from their partner simultaneously. Stop the game at any time.

Debrief



During the game, watch and be curious. Notice how players never give up and keep wanting the game to go on. Then use the **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate discussion or use the questions below.

- Read **Colossians 3:13-14**.
- What can we remember about forgiveness?
- What can we do for those who wrong us?
- How does this game remind us of forgiveness?
- How is God's offer of forgiveness different to human forgiveness?
- If we keep reading to the end of verse 17, we can see more about the interactions between God's people. What do we discover about the way God wants us to live?

4. Paper cross

Discover: Finding joy through forgiveness

Read: Acts 3:19-20, John 3:16-17

Players: Any amount | Any space | 5 years +

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: One A4 sheet of paper per person

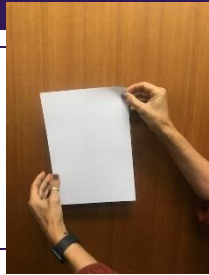


Figure 1

How to play

The storyteller invites the group to follow along with the story, folding their sheet of paper as indicated **(Figure 1)**.

“There was once a rich man who had no joy in his heart. He took some of his money and bought himself a sailboat. **(2)** He sailed all around the world and saw many islands and beaches. It was very beautiful. When he got home, he still had no joy in his heart.

So he took more of his money and bought himself a new house. **(3)** This house had many rooms and a big yard. It was a beautiful house. After he moved in, he still had no joy in his heart.

He took some more of his money and bought an aeroplane. **(4)**

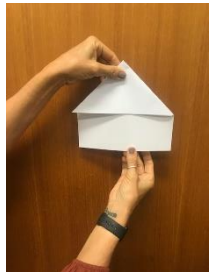
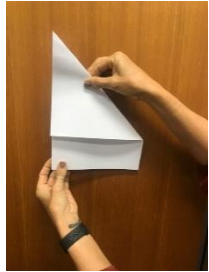


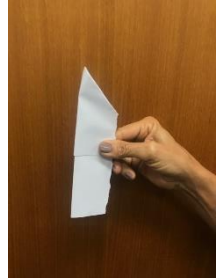
Figure 4

He flew the plane all over the world and saw how beautiful the land was. After he came home, he still had no joy in his heart.



Figure 5

So he took more of his money and bought himself a rocket. **(5)** He had a big party at his house and then lit the rocket. It went into the sky and exploded with many beautiful colours. Everyone loved the rocket. But then it was over. He still had no joy. A friend came to him and told him, the reason you have no joy is because no matter where you go, no matter what you have, your heart is full of sin. There is no room for joy. There is only one way for forgiveness and removal of sin, and that is through the cross. (Unfold rocket, and it will be in the shape of a cross. See next page.)

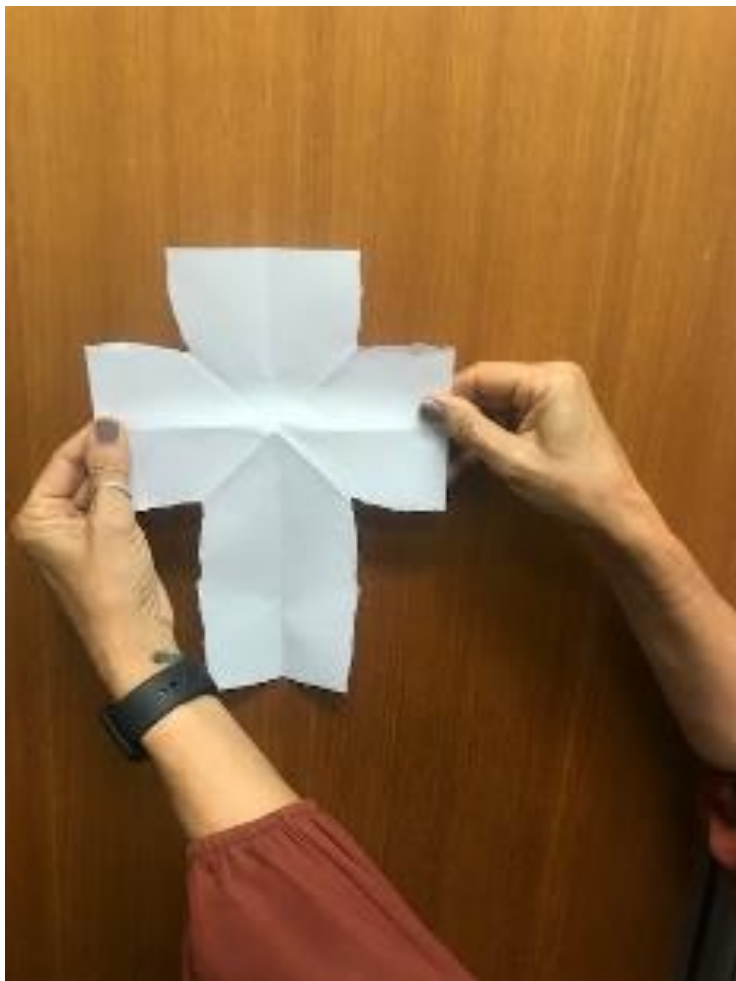


Read **Acts 3:19-20** and **John 3:16-17**.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Ask questions about the story: what makes people try and be happy and does it really work? Look for the surprise on people's faces when you get to the cross.

*Use the **5 questions** on page 29 to debrief.*



5. Power ball

Discover: Jesus is powerful to save

Read: Acts 4:12

Players: 10-100 players | Ages 5 and up

Time: 5-10 minutes

Equipment: A soft ball or balls

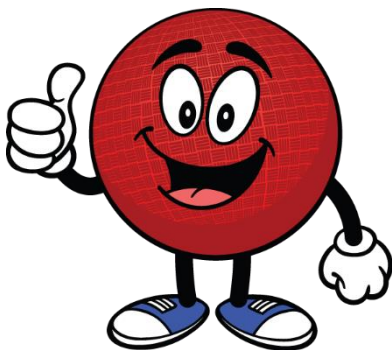
Children stand in a circle around one child in the middle. The child in the middle is called 'powerless' and must avoid being hit by the ball thrown by children in the circle. Add a second child into the circle. They are called 'powerful' and their job is to protect the 'powerless' by using their own body as a shield.

When the 'powerless' child gets hit, swap places. The 'powerful' child becomes the 'powerless', and the child who hit the 'powerless' becomes the 'powerful'.

Essentially, it's a game of bodyguard dodgeball.

Variations

- The ball could be rolled along the ground instead of thrown.



Debrief

- What was it like to be 'powerless' and have people throw the ball at you?
- What was it like to be 'powerful' but not always be able to save the 'powerless'?
- How is this game like Easter?



Read **Acts 4:12**.

- What makes Jesus powerful?



6. Good News hopscotch

Discover: Understand and memorize the Good News

Read: John 3:16

Players: 10-30 | Teams of 5 | Ages 5 and up

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: Chalk or tape to make hopscotch grid, images of Good News pictures, an object to toss per game.

How to play

The Good News message is explained to the children using the six images on the next page.

Draw a hopscotch grid and place the different images of the Good News story in each of the boxes of the game. *(See diagram)*

To start the game, a player will throw the object into one of the squares. They will hop to that square. Once on the square, they must identify or explain the image.

Then the next child will have a turn. The goal is for each child to toss an object on all images and explain the Good News.

Debrief

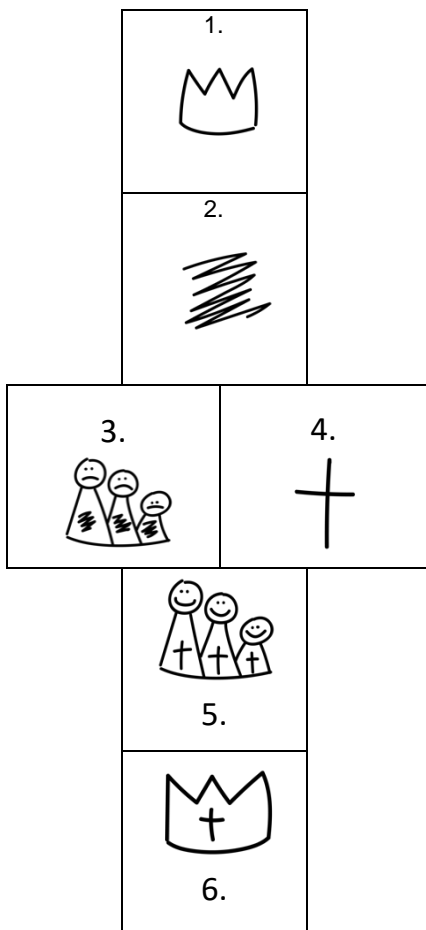
During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players talk differently about the Good News. Saying things in different ways can be correct, just differently expressed. Be careful to not just correct, but to also encourage.



Read **John 3:16**.

Then ask some questions to facilitate discussion.

- Which symbol do you like best? Why?
- Which symbols do you have questions about?
- What are they?
- What is the best news for you about this message?



7. Finding the gift

Discover: Understand that Jesus is our gift!

Read: Romans 6:23

Players: 10 players or multiple teams | Teams of 10 | Ages 8 +

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: A special object to find, blindfolds

How to play

Divide into teams of 10 players. One player from the team is chosen as the leader who stands to the side. All other players in the team are blindfolded and stand in a line with hands on the shoulders of the player in front.



The goal for each team is to find the *gift* that is hidden. Only the person at the front of the line can ask the leader where to go. The leader may only say **YES** or **NO**. No other help can be given unless there is danger. Then the leader must say **STOP**.

After 1 minute, the first person in line goes to the back of the line and the next team member can ask which way to go.

The winning team will be the first to find the *gift*.

Variations

- Start teams in different locations.



Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice the unity of each team and any problems that occur.

Use the **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate discussion, OR ask:

- How does this game show our need for the Good News?

Read **Romans 6:23**.



- What questions do people ask about God?
- How is searching for God a bit like being blindfolded?
- Who do we need to ask for *directions to eternal life*?
- How can we see and hear those directions?

8. Impossible jump

Discover: Anyone can be saved, because with God, nothing is impossible

Read: Matthew 19:26

Players: 10 or more players | 10 years +

Time: 5-10 minutes

Equipment: Line marked on the ground or rope

How to play

Ask everyone to stand with their toes touching a line. Challenge the players to jump a few inches.

- Who can do this? It sounds easy!

Add a rule: each player must jump over the line while holding on to their toes without letting go. Their whole foot must go over the line.

This will be an impossible task!

Debrief

Watch for those who felt this was easy to do but then discovered it was impossible.

Discussions can lead into trying to do good and failing, and trying to please God and not reaching the mark. What is possible for God, but not us?



Read **Matthew 19:26** and use the **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate the discussion.

9. Mouse trap

Discover: Jesus taking our sin to the cross

Read: 1 Peter 2:24

Players: 12-20 | Work in groups of 4 | 8 years +

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: sticks, chairs, blindfolds, water guns

How to play

Fill a play area with many obstacles. Divide the group into teams of four. Each team will have a **mouse**, an **instructor**, a **sacrificial leader** (or older child) and a **water gun player**.

The **mouse** is blindfolded and stands on one side of the play area. The **instructor** stands on the other side of the play area. The instructor tells the mouse how to move through the obstacle course without hitting anything. Run two or more groups at a time.

If the **mouse** hits any obstacle – no matter who is responsible, the **water gun player** will fire water at the **sacrificial leader** only.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how the mouse listens, and the instructor instructs. Also notice how the leader reacts. Ask questions about the fairness of the leader taking the punishment.



Use **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate discussion.

Read **1 Peter 2:24**.

10. Get rid of sin

Discover: It is impossible to get rid of sin without Christ

Read: 1 John 1:8-10

Players: Any amount | 6 years +

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: Small balls or wadded up paper. Boundaries made with rope or cones.

How to play

Divide into 4 or more groups, depending on the number of people. 6-8 per group is best.

Each group gets three balls or three wadded up paper balls per person.

The goal is to get all the balls into another group's marked off area and have no balls in their own area. They may only run with, throw, or place one ball at a time (per person). If another group adds any ball to their area, the team must try to run that ball to another team's space.

Give them two minutes, then try the game again.



Variations

- Groups can only run with a ball to another team's space
- Teams can only throw the balls
- 1 person from each team is blindfolded.



Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how hard everyone worked to get all the objects out of their own space. Did you see some trying harder than others? Or how some thought their space was empty, but another group added more balls while they were focussed somewhere else?

Lead into discussion on how we try and stop doing the wrong thing, yet it keeps happening over and over.



How can we get our life *clean*?

Read 1 John 1:8-10.

11. Multiplication

Discover: Spreading the Good News by multiplying disciples

Bible: Psalms 96:2-3 or Hebrews 12:1-2

Players: 10-200 players | Play as big group | Aged 5+

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: Stopwatch or clock

How to play

Players stand on one side of a play area which is at least 15 metres by 15 metres. This is the river. If the group is bigger, make the area wider.

Round 1: One player must run to the other side of the play area and take another person with them by holding their hand. The first player leaves that player there and then runs back and takes another person across. Continue one at a time. How long does it take for everyone to be taken across?

Round 2: The game starts the same way. But each player who is taken across the river can return and get another, until everyone is going back to get people again and again.

Time how long it takes for everyone to be taken across and compare it to round 1.

Debrief

Observe the similarities between running to get others and the time we have to share the Good News. Also notice holding hands to be in a relationship to share Good News, plus getting them to a safe place in the game to getting to a safe place in Christ.

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how round 1 is different from round 2. Then use the **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate discussion.



See how this game is like **Psalm 96:2-3**.

Variations

- Discuss a relevant New Testament Bible verse such as **Hebrews 12:1-2**.

12. Knee tag

Discover: Opportunities for telling the Good News can be anywhere, not just in front of us.

Bible: Colossians 4:5-6

Players: 10-100 players | Play as big group | Ages 5 and up

Time: 5-10 minutes

Equipment: None

How to play

Work in pairs.

Stand facing your partner about half a metre apart. Put hands on your knees.

The aim of the game is to get as many points as possible by tagging the unguarded knees (no hand on them) of your partner in 20 seconds.

Round 1: Feet must stay in one place as you tag your partner's knees.

Round 2: Feet can move as you tag your partner's knees.

Round 3: Move feet and tag any other person's knees as well as your partner's.

Debrief

During the game watch and be curious. Notice how players saw their opportunities increase. Then use the **5 questions** on page 29 to facilitate discussion.



Read **Colossians 4:5-6**.

13. Listen for the word

Discover: Recall and review ideas in the Easter story

Bible: Luke 22-24 (Easter account)

Players: Active game for all ages

Time: 5-10 minutes

Equipment: None

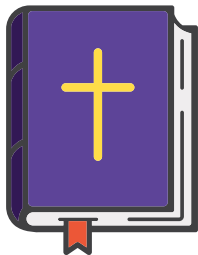
Preparation

The leader needs to have taught the Easter account from Luke's Gospel, preferably Luke 22 – Luke 24 inclusive. Or a smaller part of the Easter story if it better suits the ages of the children.

How to play

Children line up along one side of the room.

The leader calls out random names of people, places or objects such as rooster or right ear.



If the word is mentioned in Luke's Easter story, then the children run to the other side of the room. If the word isn't mentioned (e.g. computer or lightning), the children stay where they are.

If the word is also in another part of the Bible (not just the Easter story), then children run to the middle. (e.g. pray, forgive)

14. Easter craft spelling race

Discover: Review key ideas in the Easter story

Bible: Any Gospel account of the Easter story

Players: Aged 7+

Time: 10-15 minutes

Equipment: assorted boxes, junk, tape, cardboard things, recycled packaging



Aim of game

Work in teams of 4 or 5 to spell a simple word using the craft items that have been given.

How to play

The leader names a different word for each round, with some association with Easter. (e.g. egg, cross, tomb, risen, Jesus)

Teams must spell the word correctly.

Keep score of the results.

How to lead games well

Think about whether the game is suitable for the age, group size, location and weather.

Be prepared to explain the game and rules. Know them well. Organise all the equipment beforehand.

Explain the rules to the participants and demonstrate the key parts of the game. Bring everyone close to you so they can hear you.

After explaining the rules of the game, ask if anyone has any questions.

To add energy, play music during the game.

If music is already part of a game, adjust it to be suitable for your culture and age group.



How to debrief games

Bring the group close together to discuss the game after you have played. Ask the players to sit. Lower your voice.

The most important aspect of debriefing is to observe carefully while the game is being played. Always be curious. This will help prepare you to ask powerful questions.

As you notice what is happening in the game, use these **5 questions** with the group in a debriefing time to help them discover powerful lessons for life.

1

Did you notice _____ in the game?
(e.g. disharmony, anger, confusion, isolation, pride, selfishness)

2

Why did these things happen?

3

Where does this happen in other areas of life?
Your life?

4

What needs to change in your life as a result of what you learned in the game?

Then read part of the Bible and help the group make a connection with what they did in the game and what they need to think differently about and change.

5

What will you do differently in your life from today?



The powerful questions unpacked

Here is a model of 5 powerful questions by Micah Jacobson and Mari Ruddy.

These 5 questions will be a starting point for you to debrief the game. The questions lead players through a process of reflection so that they can connect the game to real life application.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you ways to debrief. He will guide you. And you will learn how powerful debriefs can be!

Here are the 5 questions explained for facilitators:

1

Did you notice _____ in the game?
(e.g. disharmony, anger, confusion, isolation, pride, selfishness)

This involves being observant and curious. Watch behaviour and emotion in this stage. Curiosity will help you see the game from different perspectives.

- How much time passed?
- Was the objective reached?
- How many strategies were tried?

Make sure the group is able to notice the things you have observed too. Did they notice something you didn't?

2

Why did these things happen?

With a nod of the head from the first question, you have gained some ground with your group. The second question will now start the reflective process; it is associated with the *interpretation stage* of learning. Here is where you listen for the right answer; an answer that is accurate and meaningful.

3

Where does this happen in other areas of life?
Your life?

The first two questions focus on the experience. This question invites participants to see if there is any connection from this game into areas of their lives.

4

What needs to change in your life as a result of what you learned in the game?

‘Who? What? When? Where? Why?’

The anchor stage. This question asks for real life examples. This connects the participant to the game and actual events that will help process the learning.

- Where do you see that in life?
- Who do you know that feels that way?
- When have you experienced that? And so on.

5

What will you do differently in your life from today?

The responsibility comes with using the newly found information in their life. The experience should be used to create new ways to change attitudes, perspectives and behaviour.

- Where, specifically, will that be useful?
- What will you do now? Now that you know ...?

If there is silence:

Allow for silence – give them time – wait – repeat – rephrase – be specific.



How to adapt games

Games can be adjusted to the number of players, gender or age range. Be strategic. Be careful!

If you do not have the equipment that is required, replace it with other objects. Be creative! For



example, if you do not have a Frisbee, replace it with a large plastic lid or something else that can be thrown around.

Shorten the game if it becomes boring and stop the game to reset players and rules if it becomes dangerous.

Any game can be a discovery opportunity. As you lead games you will realize there are many opportunities to connect games with the Bible. Only some are listed in this guide. You may need to make only a small change to a game to make it connect better with the Bible principle. Try it. It's fun!

How to adapt games for people of all abilities

A crucial outcome of experiential learning is transferring game discoveries to real life. Realising and adapting to differing abilities is a normal part of that life. Therefore, helping to include all ability people in experiential games makes practical sense.

With some thoughtfulness and understanding, almost any game can be adapted to include people of differing abilities.

Disabilities fall into four general categories:

1. Learning Disabilities	Developmental speech and language disorders Dyslexia Attention deficit disorder
2. Sensory Impairments	Partial or total blindness Partial or total deafness
3. Physical Disabilities	Cerebral palsy Muscular dystrophy Multiple sclerosis Amputations Paralysis
4. Developmental Disabilities	Mental/intellectual disability Autism Down syndrome Epilepsy Fetal alcohol syndrome

Sometimes adaptations are made to level the playing field for all players or simply team inclusion.

Examples of adapting games for all abilities:

1. If someone is blind, use noisemakers to guide players.
2. If one team has one blind player, blindfold one player on every team.
3. If one player only has one arm, make everyone play with only one arm.
4. With deaf players, demonstrate the action, and give time for clarifying questions from players.
5. If you are playing balloon volleyball and some kids are in wheelchairs, make everyone sit down.

Tips for extra inclusion:

- Think of ways, based on ability, to make all ability players an asset to the team.
- Be aware of giving equal attention to players and teams.
- With some players with developmental disabilities, have a leader play one on one.

How to create new games

To find a game to fit your lesson, combine ideas from different games and make a new game.

- Brainstorm new ideas with a team.
- Gather ideas and practise playing the game.
- Develop the concept for the lesson theme and Bible passage.
- Write the explanation, rules, materials needed, and name of the game so everyone is clear.
- Ask someone who has not played the game to review what you have written to make sure the game can be understood.
- Try the game with participants and evaluate it afterwards to make it better.



Other Great Games Guides

1. Icebreakers and Energizers
2. Good News Discovery Games
3. All Age Together Games (Intergenerational)
4. No Equipment Games
5. Games for Big Groups
6. Surprising Games and Challenges
7. Team Building Discovery Challenges
8. Short Games (under 5 minutes)
9. Value Games