



PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM 2019

SMALL GROUP LEADER'S MANUAL

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2019 PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM

JULY 16-20, 2019 • PURDUE UNIVERSITY

Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America
Cumberland Presbyterian Church
Presbyterian Church (USA)

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WELCOME

Welcome friends to the 2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium!

In the name of Jesus the Christ who offers his heart and seeks us with compassion and love, thank you for what you have done already to prepare for this week and for all that you will do for the young people coming to experience PYT 2019! Thank you for hearing a call and responding, “Yes,” to journeying with young disciples this week.

As a Small Group Leader, you will be accompanying young people as they discover a deeper relationship with God. Accompaniment is a relationship in which a person assists and supports another in making a passage through a life experience. This is the ministry you have been called to as a Small Group Leader. I believe wholeheartedly in the entire PYT experience, and I believe that the small group is central to that experience. It is where a consistent community for the week is formed — young people build relationship with one another, and as their leader, you have the chance to learn alongside and from them. This time is sacred as you provide space for young people to ask questions, voice doubts, share their story, and deepen their faith.

This Small Group Manual has been designed for you, the Small Group Leader, to journey together and explore the theme of this week. It is essential that you **read the entire manual before you arrive at Purdue for PYT**. This manual is your primary tool for bringing the PYT theme to life for young people. As a Small Group Leader, I trust that part of your stewardship of that call will come in the form of preparedness.

I have sought to include a variety of activities and ways of approaching and exploring the theme and scripture. The use of imagination plays a large role in the following lessons. Allow scripture to capture the imagination of your young people. And know that as their Small Group Leader, young people will trust you for guidance and advice. I encourage you to use your best judgment and to ask for help when you need it. The Small Group Ministry Team is here to help you.

Blessings to you as you make preparations for PYT '19. May the God of Grace, Jesus who calls, and the Spirit who leads be with you. On behalf of the Small Group Ministry Team, thank you for being willing to share your heart and go where you have been called.

Blessings,
Theresa

YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WITH YOU TO PYT:



A deck of cards for an activity in Session 1.



Bible or access to Bible App



A copy of your Small Group Manual bound in a 3-ring binder or downloaded on a tablet or laptop



MP3 player or smart device loaded with appropriate music and portable speakers (computer speakers or an iPod/iPhone dock) loud enough for 25 people to hear. A playlist of these songs can be found on [Spotify](#) or [iTunes](#).

Songs needed for sessions are:

“Come Thou Fount” by Chris Tomlin

“Pray” by Sam Smith

Other songs suggested for use during activities:

“I See You” by Idina Menzel

“Head Above Water” by Avril Lavigne

“You Say” by Lauren Daigle

“Till I Found You” by Phil Wickham

“Here’s My Heart” by Lauren Daigle

FAQ'S FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

What are my primary responsibilities as a Small Group Leader?

Your primary responsibility as an Small Group Leader at PYT '19 is to serve Jesus. You will be responsible for being punctual, for leading your small group through the material in the manual, and for facilitating discussion — where we encourage you to listen more than you talk!

What is the purpose of the small group?

The purpose is to create a safe space where young people can grow in their faith and get to know other youth from the conference on a more personal level. It is a time set aside for youth to make connections between each of the PYT activities, to feel safe expressing who they are and what they're going through, and to feel comfortable asking questions and voicing doubts, all while exploring scripture and growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

I've been a Small Group Leader in the past and this manual looks different — why are there only three sessions!?

There will still be around 200 small groups. There will be around 100 Small Group Leaders. Each Small Group Leader will lead two groups. For example, you may lead Group 1A and Group 1B. You'll notice in the event schedule that there is enough time between those Small Group Sessions for you to "re-set" your room for the latter group. You will lead two separate small groups through identical lessons each day — but thanks to the divine imagination of God, both groups will likely be very different from each other. Try not to compare your groups, rather, hold sacred their differences. Don't assume that because an activity or discussion went great in Block A, it will go equally great in Block B. Also, don't assume that because an activity or question fell flat in Block A, it will also fall flat in Block B. Approach each group with equal energy and enthusiasm, trusting that the Holy Spirit is guiding one leader to faithfully facilitate two very different groups.

How should I prepare to lead my small group before and during PYT?

Read the manual before arriving at Purdue. Read the first time to get a sense of the flow. Read the second time for content. Read it a third time to solidify your plan. Pray for your small group. And pray for yourself.

Make sure to collect all of the items you are responsible for bringing with you. While at PYT, you are encouraged to look ahead and be prepared. After each completed session, please go ahead and look over the next session guide to see what supplies you will need, how the theme will be explored, etc.

Will I have help from other adults in my small group?

Maybe. Each small group will have around 30 participants. Of those 30, there may be an adult participant. After your first session, you are encouraged to gather any adults who may be in your small group and ask them to help you when needed. Also, tell them that they are there to support the youth AND you. This means asking them not to monopolize

the group or answer all the questions at first. They should be a support to keep things moving, to encourage, and to lend a hand when needed. Don't be afraid to ask for their help.

Where will I get supplies for my Small Group Sessions?

You will be able to gather the supplies and materials that you need from the Small Group Ministry Office. The office is located in the Stewart Center, room 310.

Who do I go to if I have questions about something in the manual? Stop by the Small Group Office, Stewart 310, and ask for Theresa.

Who do I go to if I have some sort of issue in my small group? Stop by the Small Group Office, Stewart 310, and ask for Samantha or Geoff.

What happens if my group doesn't gel?

Don't blame yourself. Think creatively. And if you think it's necessary, seek out someone from the Small Group Ministry Team for advice. It just happens that some groups gel better than others.

Who do I contact if I have an emergency?

Please dial 911 if you experience a medical emergency; contact the Small Group Office if there is a non-medical emergency.

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH MINISTRY INTENTIONS

As Small Group Leaders, we seek to fulfill these five intentions of Presbyterian Youth Ministry through our ministry of small group leadership.

To call young people into discipleship in Jesus Christ

This may be done in numerous ways so let your creativity flow! Be yourself. Young people have a gift of deciphering whether or not you are being authentic. Encourage them to: ask questions about faith, doubt, and beliefs, experience the Bible in different ways, and trust in God.

To respond to the needs and interests of young people

One thing that we, as adults, can certainly do more of is to simply be with young people. Listening to a young person can be one of the greatest gifts you can give to them. By listening and being with them, you will learn their needs and interests, and they will learn yours.

To work together in partnership with young people and adults

Partnership is the key word. Through partnership, the community is made whole; where all have the opportunity to share the gifts that God has given them. Christ does not call us to work alone. He calls us to work together for the greater good just as he worked with his disciples, both known and unknown.

To be connected to the whole church, community, and world

This is challenging, but through today's technology, the community, nation and world are a much smaller place. Charge them to become connected with other people their age of other races, traditions, and beliefs. By coming together at God's table, only then can we see one another with the eyes of Christ.

To be inclusive of *all* young people (and adults)

God created each of us in a unique and beautiful way. Let's celebrate one another's full and wonderful selves by striving to be inclusive of *all* people.



THEME OVERVIEW

The theme of the 2019 Presbyterian Youth Triennium gets right to the heart of the matter. Drawing from the words of the hymn, Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing, “Here’s My Heart” expresses our deepest desire to be part of something bigger and more beautiful than the tiny flicker of our own candles. It speaks of passion and identity. It speaks of purpose and action.

Interestingly enough it started with shenanigans! The story behind this beloved song by Robert Robinson begins with a group of teenagers showing up at an evangelistic meeting with the sole purpose of heckling the preacher. But a greater purpose and force was at work, and God’s calling haunted Robert until he was able to one day proclaim, “Here’s my heart.”

We invite young people and their adult leaders to come experience God’s love in a way so powerful and compelling that they, too, are moved to say, “Here’s my heart”. And together we will learn what it means to serve Christ with our intelligence, energy, imagination and love.

Wednesday – Session 1

“Jesus Sought Me”

Luke 19
Zacchaeus

1.5 hours

Thursday – Session 2

“Prone to Wander”

Luke 15
Lost and Found

1.5 hours

Friday – Session 3

“Here’s My Heart”

Matthew 14
Peter steps out the boat

1.5 hours

“HOW TO” FOR THIS MANUAL

Each Small Group Session is organized in the following way:

Session Goals

Will highlight the objectives, what you will complete and explore, for each session.

Supply List & Prep Work

Is just that: a list of supplies you will need for a particular session and what you will need to do to set up and prepare for the session. **Make sure you have all needed supplies, and that things are set up according to the session guide PRIOR to your small group arriving.** You will pick up your supplies during Small Group Leader orientation.

Theological Points of Reference

Will offer insight into how the scripture for the session relates to the daily subtheme and the session’s objectives.

Lesson Quick-view

Offers an at-a-glance look of the entire session

Session Guide

You will notice that each session is divided into four sections:

1. COME TO THE FOUNT (time spent gathering and forming community)
2. TUNE IN (scripture exploration)
3. WANDER & PONDER (activities in response to scripture)
4. FOLLOW YOUR HEART (closing activity)

Please note that each session includes:

Prayer – Each session has times that focus on prayer. Please allow space for prayers and silence and be attentive to give anyone who wishes to pray out loud time and respect.

Use of Bibles – The use of Bibles during small group isn’t optional! It is the main source of inspiration for each part of PYT. Please set a good example by bringing your Bible (even in electronic form!) with you to each session. Please encourage youth to bring their Bibles, too.

Use of Recorded Music – It is highly suggested that you bring an MP3 player or smart device, loaded with *appropriate music*, and portable speakers. Music sets the tone and will enhance your group’s experience! (Please see p. 2 for song list suggestions.)

Additionally, your job is to create a safe and welcoming space for your group. Please consider the following:

1. **Know Your Space** – Check it out prior to the first small group session. If you have questions regarding your space, contact the Small Group Office, Stewart 310.
2. **Know Where You Meet** – It is important to know where your small group room is located, particularly if there is an emergency. You must know what building you are in and your room number.
3. **Seating** – Is the placement of your seating welcoming and inclusive? You could have chairs, sofas, or “fixed” seating. Whatever type of seating you have, try and create an environment that is both inclusive and comfortable. Circles are the most inclusive. In a circle, participants can see one another and be heard.
4. **Use of Newsprint** – Are you placing newsprint on a level so all can easily write? Is it too high or too low? Also, when attaching the paper to the wall or door, PLEASE USE THE PROVIDED BLUE TAPE.
5. **Exits & Bathrooms** – Make sure that all your exits are unobstructed, known by all group members, and that you have a plan of exit in the event of an emergency. Also, make sure that you know where the closest bathrooms are and share that information with your group during the first session.



SESSION 1

WEDNESDAY (1.5 hours)

A: 9:00 a -10:30 a

B: 11:00 a -12:30 p

| | **Jesus Sought Me** | |

Luke 19:1-10

Goals

1. To come in as strangers but to leave as friends.
2. To consider different viewpoints and use critical thinking when exploring the story of Zacchaeus.
3. To explore the theme of being lost and being sought through the song "Come Thou Fount."
4. To create their own identity tattoo.

Supply List & Leader Prep

- Bibles or access to a Bible app
- 4 sheets of newsprint

Sheet 1 and 2: Write the "One of a Kind" questions. You need two copies.

Sheet 3: Write instructions for the Tune In session on newsprint:

1. Assign who will do what
2. Read the mission card
3. Read the case report
4. With each question, read the clue and discuss.
5. Write down any answers on the notebook.

Sheet 4: Write on the newsprint:

"Luke 19:10: "The Human One came to seek and save the lost." Below the verse, write the following questions: Who did Jesus seek and find? Given who is in the crowd and who Zacchaeus is, who is lost and who is found?"

- 1 Deck of cards (SGL's provide. Separate the suits beforehand.)
- Pens/pencils
- 5 Detective Kits: a mission card, case report, clue cards, a notebook, and pencils
- Copies of the lyrics to "Come Thou Fount" (one for each participant)
- Blue tape
- Sharpies of different colors
- Way to play the song "Come Thou Fount (I Will Sing)" by Chris Tomlin plus other songs

- Picture of the PYT Logo (have participants find it on their smart phone or on any PYT materials)
- Tattoo paper (each participant receives a 2" x 2" square)
- Scratch paper
- Napkins or paper towel (one for each participant)
- Water in a cup (to adhere the tattoos)
- Copies of blank heart logo (one for each participant)

Theological Points of Reference

The story of Zacchaeus is a story of unexpected happenings. Depending upon the viewpoint from which the story is read, this story is either a classic repentance story or simply a detailed account about an interaction between Jesus and a tax collector. Either way, both have surprising twists. It is hard to believe that a chief tax collector would humiliate himself by climbing a tree to see Jesus; that a rich tax collector can give away half his wealth when "it's very hard for the wealthy to enter God's kingdom" (Luke 18:24); that Jesus would stay at the home of a tax collector; and that Jesus would declare his whole household saved.

Through Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus, readers have an opportunity to explore

- who is lost
- who is forgiven
- who is included as children of God

Lesson Quick View

1. **COME TO THE FOUNT** - One of a Kind game
2. **TUNE IN** – Detective Kit, Group Exploration and Discussion
3. **WANDER & PONDER** – "Come Thou Fount," Make a Tattoo
4. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** – Heart Affirmations, One-Word Blessing Prayer

Session 1 Guide

COME TO THE FOUNT (25 minutes)

Gather your group and take a few moments for some introductions. Divide the group in half. Invite them to circle their group together. Give each group two stacks of 13 playing cards of the same suit to put in the middle of their circle face down. Shuffle each stack and make sure the suits do not get mixed up. One stack will be used for the first round, and the second stack will be used for the second round.

Give each group a newsprint with 13 "One of a Kind" questions. Each person in the group takes a turn picking the top card on the pile and answering the question that corresponds with their card. Just that person answers that question. Then the

next person goes and keeps going until all 13 cards have been used. Have each person say their name first, then answer the question. Encourage them to be brief in their answer. After one round of questions have finished, do a second round with the second stack of cards.

When both groups have done two rounds, gather them together and quickly go through the questions, and ask the young people to share any answers they heard from their group. Since this is the first activity, there may not be that much sharing, and that is okay. Transition into the Tune In activity.

TUNE IN (30 minutes)

In 5 groups of 5-6, give each group a detective kit. In each kit, there is a mission card, a case report, clue cards, a notebook, and pencils. Let participants know that they are detectives solving a case. In their groups, have them divide up who will read the mission card, case report, clue cards, and take notes. Invite them to read the mission card first followed by the case report. As they read the case report, there are questions that the clue cards will help them uncover the mystery.

Give the groups 20 minutes to work through the case.

Gather everyone back together. Draw their attention to the newsprint and read aloud Luke 19:10: "The Human One came to seek and save the lost." Ask the final question on the case report - Who did Jesus seek and find? Given who is in the crowd and who Zacchaeus is, who is lost and who is found?

Take a moment for participants to answer if they would like. This is a time to just freely share thoughts, guesses, and opinions. There is no right or wrong answer. As this is the first small group gathering, you may find that your group isn't quite comfortable yet with large group discussion, and that's okay! Don't force anything; plenty will come out as they discuss in smaller groups.

In conclusion, call the group's attention to notice that this story is packed with impossibilities. Invite them to name some impossibilities in this story. If the group needs prompting, here are some impossibilities you may want to mention:

1. That Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector would want to see someone like Jesus seems improbable.
2. That Jesus would want to stay at Zacchaeus' home, a man who is despised by the crowd because of his status. Rich tax collectors were considered the worst kind of people seems unlikely.
3. That a rich sinner like Zacchaeus would exceed what was required by law by his generosity seems unbelievable.
4. That Jesus would declare Zacchaeus and his entire household saved when Zacchaeus neither confesses nor repents when he approaches Jesus seems implausible.

End this time by sharing that this story embodies the promises that anyone who desires to see Jesus will not only be seen by Jesus but also will be sought after by Jesus. He declares that all - even the chief tax collector, even those who need healing, the children, the families, the disciples, the religious leaders - are children of God, whether we are actively seeking like Zacchaeus or watching from afar like the crowd.

WANDER & PONDER (25 minutes)

Give each participant a copy of the “Come Thou Fount” lyrics. Remind the group that the PYT theme was inspired by this hymn. Invite the group to get comfortable as they listen to “Come Thou Fount” by Chris Tomlin. While they listen, invite them to notice words or phrases that sparkle to them. Take a moment for them to circle those words and phrases on their copy of the lyrics.

Looking at the logo (whether on their smart phone or other PYT printed material), ask participants if they can see what symbols are reflected in the lyrics. You may point out the line “Take and seal it” as though our hearts are being marked by God. They will be creating a tattoo to “take and seal” God’s words.

Reflecting on the imagery and symbols in the lyrics, invite them to sketch a tattoo that represents who they are, an image of something important to them, on a piece of scratch paper. For example, if they like sports, they may want to draw a ball. If they are using words, instruct them to write backwards so that the words will appear correctly when they apply the tattoo.

I LOVE SMALL GROUP

While they sketch and design their tattoo, play “I See You” by Idina Menzel as they work. Tell them they have about 4 minutes.

- Give each participant a 2” x 2” tattoo paper. Have them copy their design onto the paper using a Sharpie marker. Make sure that they draw and write on the GLOSSY SIDE of the paper.
- Once they are done, have them wait 1-2 minutes for the ink to dry.
- Place the adhesive square on the table, floor, or any flat surface with the paper backing facing up. Peel away the paper backing, leaving the adhesive square.
- Assist each participant in applying their design to the adhesive square. Peel away the paper and lay it with the design facing down onto the adhesive square.
- Smooth the adhesive onto the tattoo paper, and rub the adhesive sheet onto the drawn image to make sure there are no bubbles.

To apply the tattoo:

- Peel away the clear plastic layer exposing the adhesive side.

- Apply the tattoo's adhesive side to the skin. Cover it with a wet paper towel for 10-15 seconds, or until the paper backing slides off easily.

The tattoo should last a few days. Now they have a tattoo that represents something important about themselves, and they can show it to others. If, for some reason, they are unhappy with the result of this activity, the tattoo can be removed with hand sanitizer.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART (10 minutes)

Invite the participants to gather in the same 5 groups again. Pass out a blank heart to each participant and have them write their first and last name on it. Invite participants to think of a word of affirmation or blessing for each of the people in their small group. Words of affirmation may be: a good listener; a fun spirit; a wise speaker; a welcoming presence; or a kind heart. Invite them to write those affirmations on each other's "heart." Instruct them to not take up too much space as we will be using these hearts every session. Collect the hearts to use for session 2.

To close, gather in a circle and ask participants to think of a one-word blessing that relates to today's theme, such as hope, light, love, or welcome. Begin the closing by saying, "Jesus, you sought us and you see us. Bless us on our way with . . ." Go around the circle, inviting participants to say their one-word blessing. Thank them for a great first session, and make sure they know where to head next.

“One of a Kind” Questions

- Ace** What instrument do you play or what instrument would you want to play?
- 2** If you could only have one type of food for the rest of the year what would be?
- 3** What’s your favorite movie or a movie you have seen recently?
- 4** If you were to travel in a time machine, where and when would your travel?
- 5** What is your favorite ice cream and the best way to eat ice cream - in a cup? or in a cone?
- 6** If you could have any Super Hero Power – what would you choose?
- 7** In what city do you live? What is a hidden gem or favorite place to go to in your city?
- 8** What pets do you have or what pet have you always wanted to have?
- 9** Tell the farthest place you have traveled to?
- 10** What is your ideal vacation? Where would you go?
- J** Coolest thing (plant, animal, etc) you have ever seen in nature?
- Q** What is something you want to do one day or always wanted to try?
- K** What is your favorite sport to play? OR to watch someone else play?

The information below will be provided in their detective kits.

MISSION

Zacchaeus is lost and Jesus finds him. However, upon further investigation, it is unclear whether it is Zacchaeus who is actually lost. Depending on how this mystery is solved, a greater answer may be found.

Read the case report to find out the WHO, WHAT, WHY, WHERE, and HOW.

CASE REPORT

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd. So Zacchaeus ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today."

QUESTION:

- Where did the incident happen? (Jericho)
- Who was involved in the incident? (Jesus and Zacchaeus) Give a description of Zacchaeus.
- What happened? (Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to see Jesus)
- Who saw who first? (Jesus)

Everyone who saw this interaction between Jesus and this rich tax collector grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." When Zacchaeus came down and approached Jesus, he didn't bother introducing himself. He quickly blurted to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much."

QUESTION:

We know who Zacchaeus is and what he was trying to do, but we need to gather the witnesses. So far, all we know is that everyone in the crowd saw what happened. Who was in the crowd?

CLUE 1:

Luke 18:38 (people who needed healing like the blind man)

Luke 17:16 (outcasts like the Samaritan)

Luke 17:20 (religious leaders like the Pharisees)

Luke 19:15 (families, children, and disciples)

QUESTION:

What was the crowd's response to Jesus? to Zacchaeus? Why would it be wrong for Jesus to stay at Zacchaeus' house?

CLUE 2:

Luke 4:18-19 (good news to the poor)

QUESTION:

Why is Zacchaeus labeled a sinner? According to the evidence, does Zacchaeus fit the label?

CLUE 3:

Luke 18:18-29 (rich man's question to Jesus)

Despite how the crowd reacted, Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. The Human One came to seek and save the lost."

QUESTION:

What did Zacchaeus do to "bring salvation to his household"? When Zacchaeus said he gives away half his wealth, was he mentioning to Jesus what he is ALREADY doing or was he promising Jesus how his behavior will change? In other words, did Jesus forgive because Zacchaeus is already an upstanding guy or because he repented and promised to change?

CLUE 4:

Luke 19:1-19 (glimpse over the story again to see if there are any clues to the answer.)

QUESTION:

Who did Jesus seek and find? Given who is in the crowd and who Zacchaeus is, who is lost and who is found?

CLUE 5:

Luke 19:10 - (gather back into the big group to answer the last question.)

COME THOU FOUNT

Come thou fount of ev'ry blessing,
tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount I'm fixed upon it,
mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise my Ebenezer,
hither by Thy help I'm come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wond'ring from the fold of God
He, to rescue me from danger,
interposed His precious blood

How Your kindness yet pursues me, how Your mercy never fails me
Til the day that day shall lose me, I will sing, oh, I will sing

O to grace, how great a debtor,
daily I'm constrained to be
Let thy goodness like a fetter,
bind my wand'ring heart to Thee
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
seal it for Thy courts above

How Your kindness yet pursues me, how Your mercy never fails me
Til the day that day shall lose me, I will sing, oh, I will sing
Til the day that day shall lose me, I will sing, oh, I will sing

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
seal it for Thy courts above
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it,
seal it for Thy courts above

SESSION 2

THURSDAY (1.5 hours)

A: 9:00 a - 10:30 a

B: 11:00 a -12:30 p

| | **Prone to Wander** | |

Luke 15:11-32

Goals

- To consider different viewpoints and use critical thinking when exploring the parable of the lost sons.
- To explore the theme of being lost and wandering through the story of Robert Robinson.
- To reflect on our prayers of help through the song “Pray” by Sam Smith.
- To create an Ebenezer and a balloon grid that will be used in worship.

Supply List & Prep Work

- 5 Detective Kits: a mission card, incident report, a notebook, and pencils
- Newsprint - *write on the newsprint the question: Who was lost - the younger brother or the older brother?*
- Blue tape
- Sharpies of different colors
- Robert Robinson’s script (6 copies)
- Way to play the song “Pray” by Sam Smith plus other songs
- 144 Balloons (colors will coordinate to the pattern)
- Wire frame (4’ x 4’)
- Wire frame color pattern
- Heart logo (used in session one)

Theological Points of Reference

The story of lost sons is usually focused on the prodigal younger son. Depending upon the viewpoint the story is read, this story is either about a younger son who demands his portion of inheritance and wastes it all away or about the older son who obediently follows his father’s instruction yet never receives any praise. Either way, both receive abundant love from the father but in very different ways.

Through the father’s interaction with both sons, readers have an opportunity to explore

- who is lost
- the abundance of God’s grace and love

Lesson Quick View

1. **COME TO THE FOUNT** - Robert Robinson's Story
2. **TUNE IN** – Detective Kit, Scripture Exploration and Discussion
3. **WANDER & PONDER** – “Pray,” Make an Ebenezer
4. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** – Heart Affirmations, One-Word Blessing Prayer

COME TO THE FOUNT (20 minutes)

As participants arrive, you may have them begin blowing up balloons which will be used for the WANDER & PONDER section.

NOTE: The balloons are latex. There may be participants with a latex allergy. Be sensitive and aware of this need. In the WANDER & PONDER section, there will be instructions for participants with an allergy.

Robert Robinson's Story

Invite seven volunteers to present the story of Robert Robinson, who wrote the hymn, “Come Thou Fount.” They will read the script in front of the group. Assign them to the roles of Narrator, Mother, Robert, Friend, Fortune Teller, George, and Socialite. Invite them to use their voice to bring the text to life. The story is meant to be playful and a little over the top so encourage them to get into character using the suggested prompts in the script.

Thank readers for their fine presentation and ask the following questions for discussion:

- What parallels do you see between Robert Robinson and the lost sons?
- How did Robert Robinson feel lost and how did he find his way back?

TUNE IN (20 minutes)

Divide the group in half so that two groups are the younger son and the other two are the older son. Give each group a detective kit. In each kit, there is a mission card, incident report, a notebook, and pencils. In their groups, invite them to read the mission card first followed by the incident report. As they read the incident report, there are questions that will help them uncover the mystery. Give the groups 15 minutes to read the incident report and work through the questions.

Gather everyone back together. Ask questions for discussion: Who was lost - the younger brother or the older brother? What parallels do you see between Robert Robinson and the lost sons? Take a moment for participants to answer. This is a time to just freely share thoughts, guesses, and opinions. Have them share how each of the sons felt lost. There is no right or wrong answer.

WANDER & PONDER (40 minutes total)

Make an Ebenezer

The lyrics of *Come Thou Fount* say, “Here I raise my Ebenezer” (which means stone of help). Tell them that they will be constructing a PYT version of an Ebenezer. Throughout the Bible, people would construct a stone Ebenezer whenever they encountered God in a time of help or need. Our Ebenezer will be made of balloons.

While they listen to “Pray” by Sam Smith, ask them to think of a prayer about a personal need, perhaps a prayer of confession, or a prayer asking God for help. Their prayer might be about a part of their life that troubles them, anxiety about future plans, a health challenge for themselves, a friend or family member, the stress of moving to a new place, etc.

Give each participant a marker and a balloon. Instruct them to blow the balloon to approximately 6 inches in diameter or the size of a small cantaloupe. (If it is smaller or larger than 6 inches, the balloon will not fit in the wire frame.)

For participants with a latex allergy: Write their prayer on a piece of paper and fold it. The small group leader or another small group participant can insert the folded prayer in a balloon.

After blowing the balloon and knotting it, invite them to write a word representing their personal prayer on the balloon. While they are writing their prayers, play “Head Above Water” by Avril Lavigne and “You Say” by Lauren Daigle. When each participant is done writing their prayer on the balloon, collect the balloons.

Ask for volunteers to blow up the rest of the balloons. If a balloon pops, do not worry. The balloons can be replaced at the worship site.

As the balloons are being blown up, select a couple volunteers to assemble the balloons according to the wire frame color pattern. Each pattern is a portion of a larger Ebenezer that will form the PYT logo, which will be constructed at the worship site for Friday night worship.

Ask for a couple volunteers to deliver the completed balloon Ebenezer (4' x 4') to the loading dock of Elliott Hall of Music immediately following small group time. There will be signs and people from the worship team collecting all the Ebenezers.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART (10 minutes)

Invite the participants to gather in the same 5 groups again. Pass out the hearts used in the previous session to each participant. Invite participants to think of a word of

affirmation or blessing for each of the people in their small group. Invite them to write those affirmations on each other's "heart." Remind them to not take up too much space as we will be using these hearts every session. Collect the hearts to use in session 3.

To close, gather in a circle and ask participants to think of a one-word blessing that relates to today's theme, such as gratitude, courage, celebration. Begin the closing by saying, "Jesus, you welcome us home and celebrate our return. Bless us on our way with . . ." Go around in the circle, inviting participants to say their one word. Thank them for a great session, and make sure they know where to head next.

The information below will be provided in their detective kits.

MISSION

A man has two sons - but it is unclear who is lost. The younger son says it is him but the older son says it is him.

Read the incident report from the younger son and answer the questions.

INCIDENT REPORT

I am so tired of being the youngest. My father never thinks I'm old enough or ready enough to take on responsibility. The only way to show him that I can be just as successful and responsible as my brother is to ask for my inheritance now to make my own living in this world. And that's what I did.

To be honest, I'm kind of surprised my father gave it to me. How exciting it was though to start my own life! I packed up the things I thought I needed - some clothes and snacks for the road. Everything else, I could just buy new once I got to my new place. I had heard that the neighboring country was a good place to make some money and start a new life.

Once I got to town, I figured I needed to present a good image, especially if I wanted people to treat me with respect. So, I bought a whole new wardrobe and rented out a decent one bedroom near the center of the city. I have to admit that I got a little carried away with eating out too much and spending money on my new friends. Plus, my new friends didn't quite give me the best advice on how to spend my money and I lost quite a bit when the economy took a turn for the worse.

I sold what I could. A guy's got to eat. However, even when I did have some change for food, there wasn't much food to go around with the food shortage. I contemplated going back home, but I couldn't think about facing my father and brother and proving to them that they were right. I managed to find a job as a hired hand feeding the pigs. I worked long hours with nothing to eat. I was so hungry. It wasn't until I found myself almost eating handfuls of pig slop that I realized I needed to go home. Even my father's hired hands have more than enough food while I sit here starving to death. I'll do whatever it takes. I don't care if I have to crawl on my knees and ask for forgiveness. I begged my father, "I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me on as one of your hired hands."

When I finally arrived near my father's home, I could see off in the distance a man running towards me. It was my father. Before I could say what I had rehearsed over and over again, my father hugged me and kissed me. I tried to hold it together, but I just cried in his arms. If I had known that my father would receive me so openly with food, joy, and celebration, I would have returned sooner. I was lost but now I'm found.

QUESTIONS:

According to the incident report, make a case for how the younger son was lost.

- How do you think the younger son felt?
- Why do you think he wanted his share of his father's inheritance?
- Why did he return home?
- How do you think he felt when his father received him so extravagantly?
- How do you think the brother felt?
- Who was lost - the younger brother or the older brother?

The information below will be provided in their detective kits.

MISSION

A man has two sons - but it is unclear who is lost. The younger son says it is him but the older son says it is him.

Read the incident report from the older son and answer the questions.

INCIDENT REPORT

It's not easy being the oldest. From the time I can remember, my father has been grooming me to take over the family business. He always said it was my responsibility to take care of the family and that included my irresponsible younger brother. His life is so carefree and easy, yet he had the audacity to ask my father for his share of the inheritance. We all knew that he was just going to waste it away. And can you believe it? My father actually gave it to him. He better not come crawling back to me thinking that I'm gonna bail him out again when the money is gone.

The day my younger brother left, you would have thought that he had died. My father spent days worrying about him and praying for him. We didn't hear a word from him. Not one single letter to tell us where he was or how he was doing. I didn't have much time to worry. I had hired hands to oversee, farmland to harvest, and animals to care for.

I was out in the field when my younger brother finally returned. I had no idea when or how he returned. No one bothered to come out to the fields to tell me. I always seem to be the last one to know. I could just tell as I was coming home that something had happened. There was music playing and I could hear people laughing and dancing. I asked one of the servants what was going on. And that's when I heard that my brother had returned.

Are you kidding me? My brother did just what I knew would happen and he got a party with a fattened calf to eat? When my father came out of the house to tell me the news, I blew up. I was so angry at him. He tried to calm me down and begged me to come inside, but I felt so hurt and betrayed. What's the point in being the responsible and good son when I get nothing for it? I've never gotten even a young goat to share with my friends.

And then my father reminded me: I had everything all along. I was never without my father's attention and love. Unlike my brother who always felt like he was second fiddle, I would not only inherit my share of my father's inheritance but his role as head of the household as well. Could it be that my brother just wanted something of his own that he could be proud of? If I had known that my father had already given me everything, I would have celebrated my brother's return sooner. I was lost but now I'm found.

According to the witness report, make a case for how the younger son was lost.
How do you think the older son felt?

QUESTIONS:

According to the witness report, make a case for how the older son was lost.

- How do you think the older son felt?
- How did he feel when his younger brother left with his share of the inheritance?
- How did the older brother react to his brother returning home?
- How do you think he felt when his father received his brother so extravagantly?
- How do you think the older brother felt?
- Who was lost - the older brother or the younger brother?

ROBERT ROBINSON'S STORY

- Narrator:** Robert Robinson was born on September 27, 1735 to Mary Wilkin and Michael Robinson. At the age of eight, his father passed away. To make circumstances more difficult, his maternal grandfather, Robert Wilkin, a very wealthy man, cut Robert's mother, Mary, out of his life when she married Robert's father because he was a man of low status.
- Mother** (with concern): Robert, now that you are seventeen, you are almost a man now. I've arranged for you to move to London and be an apprentice at a barbershop.
- Robert:** Mother, I know we can't afford it, but I wish I could just stay here and continue with my studies.
- Mother:** I'm a widow and can't afford to keep supporting you. It's time for you to be on your own now.
- Narrator:** While in London, Robert didn't quite live the life his mother sent him there to live. He joined a gang of hoodlums who he would often get drunk with and cause trouble around town.
- Robert** (with his friends): Hey guys, let's go cause some trouble. What should we do?
- Friend:** See that fortune teller over there. How about we get her tell us our fortune?
- Robert:** Hey, tell us our fortune! And you're gonna do it for free!
- Fortune Teller** (pointing her finger): You are going to live a long life. You will not only see your children grow up, but your grandchildren as well.
- Robert** (talking to himself): If I'm going to live to see my children and grandchildren, I'll have to change my way of living. I can't keep on like I'm going now.
- Narrator:** On December 10, 1755, Robert went to hear a famous evangelist preach, George Whitfield. Upon hearing him, Robert's life changed forever.

George (preaching voice): Oh, my hearers! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!

Robert: I better turn my life around and help others to do so as well. I will become a minister and preach the gospel.

Narrator: Robert did become a minister. First, in a Baptist church, then a Methodist church, and later other denominations. Once, his church had 1,000 people in attendance. It was around this time, he wrote the famous hymn, Come Thou Fount. As years went by, Robert's life became unstable and he lost faith. His beliefs and training seemed of little importance to him. He spent many years away from the church. Years later at his lowest point, he met a Parisian socialite one night while sharing a carriage.

Socialite (singing): Come thou Fount of every blessing, Tune my heart to sing thy grace, Streams of mercy never failing, Call for hymns of loudest praise . . .

Sir, what do you think about the lyrics I just sang. Don't you just love this hymn?

Robert (in a broken voice): What do I think of it? Um . . . well, actually, I wrote it.

Socialite: Oh my goodness! You did? I just recently became a Christian and I love the words of this hymn.

Robert (crying): I'm not the same person I was when I wrote it. I've drifted so far away from Jesus and can't find my way back.

Socialite: But don't you see? The way back is written right here in the third line of your hymn: Streams of mercy never ceasing. Those streams are flowing even here in Paris tonight.

Narrator: That night, Robert recommitted his life to Jesus. Somehow Robert had found his way back through the words of a hymn that he wrote so many years ago. He was lost, but now he's found.

SESSION 3

FRIDAY (1.5 hours)

A: 10:00 a - 11:30 a

B: 2:00 p - 3:30 p

| | **Here's My Heart** | |

Matthew 14:22-33

Goals

- To offer gifts of trust to one another.
- To explore Matthew 14 and what it means to take heart.
- To discern where our heart and passions are.
- To leave understanding that Jesus will always lend a hand no matter how big or little our heart is.

Supply List & Prep Work

- 5 Detective Kits: a mission card, witness report, clue cards, a notebook, and pencils
- Bible or access to a Bible app
- Blue tape
- Sharpies in different colors
- Trust game score board: blue poster board, 3 Peters
- Readers' theatre: Peter Walking on Water (3 copies)
- Scratch paper
- 12 pairs of scissors
- Colored paper (one for each participant)
- Scotch Brand double-sided tape (1/2" x 500")
- Heart logo (used in session one and two)

Theological Points of Reference

The story of Peter walking on water comes after Jesus feeding the 5000. Jesus has been journeying with his disciples, healing people along the way. Jesus takes refuge on a mountain across the sea to pray. While he is praying, the disciples wait for him. Even after seeing the miraculous healings and feeding 5000 from a few fishes and loaves, they believe they see a ghost upon seeing Jesus walking on the sea. Jesus immediately responds and tells them to "take heart." The offering of Jesus' heart propels Peter to ask if he too can walk on water. For a moment, he is able to until he feels a gust of wind and loses heart.

Through Jesus' interaction with Peter, readers have an opportunity to explore

- what it means to take heart
- where our heart and passions are

Lesson Quick View

1. **COME TO THE FOUNT** - Trust Game
2. **TUNE IN** – Detective Kit, Scripture Exploration and Discussion
3. **WANDER & PONDER** – Heart Promises
4. **FOLLOW YOUR HEART** – Heart Affirmations, One-Word Blessing Prayer

COME TO THE FOUNT (25 minutes)

To see a version of this game, you can watch an episode of Ellen’s Game of Games (<http://bit.ly/pytgame>)

Choose four judges for the game, and divide the rest of the group into three teams. In each team a person volunteers to answer the first question. The judges announce the question they have chosen or made up.

Together, each team talks and decides how much they trust the volunteer to answer the question, ***with no feedback from the volunteer.***

These are illustrations of the kinds of questions that are asked.

- How many celebrities that go by one name?
- How many books in the old testament?
- How many books in the new testament?
- How many disciples can you name?
- How many types of milk?
- How many ways can you prepare a potato?
- How many bones in the human body?
- How many brands of shampoo?
- How many different types of pies?
- How many breeds of dogs?

Team 1 determines how many answers they trust their volunteer to know. It is best to start low. When the team has determined a number, they announce “We trust that (volunteer’s name) can name . . . 3, 6, 10, etc.” Team 2 then decides whether they want to raise the number by at least one for their volunteer, or challenge the Team 1 volunteer to answer. Team 3 then decides if they want to raise the number for their volunteer or challenge. Whichever team trusts the highest number of answers, their volunteer must try to name that amount of answers within 30 seconds.

For example, the question may be “how many types of cars?” Team 1 says, “We trust that Bob can name 5 cars.” Team 2 says, “We trust that Ann can name 6 cars.” Team 3 decides to challenge, which means that the Team 2 volunteer has to answer the question.

The judges keep time, and as the volunteer gives answers, they decide if the answers are right and count the correct answers.

To keep score, each team is given a “Peter” walking on the water in the poster. If the Team’s volunteer succeeds in giving the correct number of answers, their “Peter” continues to walk on the water, or moves up if it has started to sink. The “Peter” of the two other teams starts to sink.

Then another person from each team volunteers, and the judges announce another question. A round of the game is over when a team’s “Peter” sinks to the bottom. Return all the “Peters” to walking on the water and begin a new round.

After playing the game long enough for every person to be a volunteer at least once, spend time to process the experience:

- For those having to trust a member of their team to answer the question, how did you determine how many answers they could give?
- For those answering the questions: How did you feel trying to answer them? When you didn’t meet the challenge, did you feel like you let your team down? What did it feel to succeed at meeting their level of trust?
- How does this game illustrate (or not) how we trust in God?

TUNE IN (35 minutes)

Invite three volunteers to present the story of Peter walking on water. They will read the script in front of the group. Assign them to the roles of Narrator, Jesus, and Peter. Invite them to use their voice to bring the text to life. Thank readers for their fine presentation

Divide your small group into 5 groups of 5-6. Give each group a detective kit. In each kit, there is a mission card, a witness report, clue cards, a notebook, and pencils. Tell them that they had just witnessed a miraculous event, Jesus walking on water. As witnesses, they have written up a report documenting what they saw. However, it is unclear what Jesus was offering when he said, “Take heart.”

In their groups, have them read the mission card followed by the witness report. As they read the witness report, there are questions that the clue cards will help them uncover the mystery.

After 15 minutes, have the participants stay in their groups, but bring their attention to the larger group. Jesus comes to the disciples walking on the turbulent waters. When the disciples are scared, Jesus says, “Take heart.” After Jesus says, “Take heart,” Peter musters up heart enough to ask Jesus if he can join him on the water. Peter climbs out of the boat and is actually standing on the water, until he feels the strong wind, which causes him to doubt. Jesus reaches out to save him, and then chides him for his “little faith”

The phrase “little faith” carries the sense of “standing in two places” or “being of two minds.” For example, it is “little faith” to believe something and doubt it at the same time.

Gather in their 5 groups again. Pass out the paper hearts used in the previous sessions. Invite them to think of a word of affirmation or blessing related to today’s story for each of the people in their small group, for example, strong, faithful, good listener, brave, team-player. Write those affirmations on each other’s “heart.”

WANDER & PONDER (25 minutes)

Have each participant find their own spot in the room. Each should have their heart of affirmations, a pencil, a piece of white paper, and a piece of colored paper. Invite them to reflect on times they were scared, intimidated, or unsure. Were there moments when something happened and you doubted yourself? Right now, is there something that concerns you in your family, church, school, community, or world? Write those thoughts on your white paper.

Next, invite them to read thoughtfully the affirmations on their heart. Look carefully at the tattoo they made which represents who they are.

Then think about the story of Jesus’ heart, and who Jesus is, that we just explored together. Even in the midst of our “little faith,” Jesus calls us to follow him. What promise of faith do you want to make? You have moments of insecurity and doubt, but like Peter, but Jesus will always reach out his hand to save you and offer you his heart.

Have them draw a heart on their colored paper. The heart can be any size, but it must be big enough to write at least one sentence. Invite them to write one promise on their heart, a promise to do something that means a lot to them, or to someone they love. It may be befriending someone at school, participating in a local food pantry, cleaning up trash in the neighborhood, or helping out your family.

As they go through this activity, play the songs “Till I Found You” by Phil Wickham and “Here’s My Heart” by Lauren Daigle. This will give them about 7 minutes.

Pass out scissors to each two people, so they can cut out their hearts. Collect them, and after the group time, deliver them to the Tunnel of Love at Memorial Mall. There will be two large hearts (approximately 8 ft.) near the entrance and exit of the Tunnel of Love. Using the double-sided tape, put your group’s hearts on the large hearts. If the large hearts are already covered, you may overlap the hearts.

You can ask for volunteer(s) to complete this task with/for you. The hearts must be delivered immediately after small group time.

FOLLOW YOUR HEART (5 minutes)

To close, gather in a circle and ask participants to think of a one-word blessing for the group as they prepare to return home, for example, heart, courage, faith, hope. Begin by saying, "Jesus, you call us out onto the water in moments of faith, and little faith. Just as we are, you reach out your hand and journey with us. Bless us on our way home with . . ." Go around the circle, inviting participants to say their one word.

PETER WALKS ON WATER

Narrator: Immediately after the miraculous feeding of the five thousand, Jesus asked the disciples get into the boat and cross over to the other side of the lake. He stayed behind to dismiss the crowd. After they were gone, he went up the mountaintop alone as he had hoped to do earlier. When evening came, he was still on the mountain, praying.

Meanwhile, the disciples in the boat found themselves far from land, fighting a strong headwind, and battered by the waves.

When the sun was just coming up, Jesus finished his prayers and came out to meet his disciples — walking on the water!

The disciples caught sight of a figure moving towards them on the water, and they were terrified. They cried out:

Peter: It's a ghost!

Narrator: But Jesus spoke to them:

Jesus: Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.

Narrator: Peter replied:

Peter: Lord, if it is really You, then command me to come and meet you on the water.

Jesus: Indeed, Peter – come.

Narrator: So Peter stepped out of the boat, on to the water, and began walking toward Jesus. But when he felt the strong wind, his courage failed, and he began to sink.

Peter: Lord, save me!

Narrator: And immediately, Jesus reached out for Peter,
and caught him.

Jesus: O you of little faith!
Why did you begin to have doubts?

Narrator: Then together they climbed into the boat
and the winds died down.
The disciples in the boat worshipped Jesus, saying:

Peter: Truly, You are the Son of God.

The information below will be provided in their detective kits.

MISSION

Jesus offers his heart to Peter when he gets scared and starts to sink into the water.

Read the case report to find Jesus' heart. What is this heart that Jesus is offering? What does Jesus want us to do with it?

WITNESS REPORT

It was the longest night of my life. I could barely get any sleep with the boat rocking back and forth so much. I surely thought the wind and the waves were going to tip the boat over. I was glad to see the sunlight. I looked out over the railing to see the status of the waves. That's when I saw something or someone walking towards us.

Peter saw it too and yelled, "It's a ghost." We all screamed frantically. But then we soon heard a familiar voice. It was Jesus. It took me a while to hear what Jesus was saying. I finally realized he said to not be afraid and then to "take heart." But there was nothing to take. His hands were empty. What is this heart that Jesus is offering?

The five clues lead to other incidents where Jesus offers his heart. Read the clues to see what Jesus' heart means in each case.

As you read each clue, consider the following questions:

- What was happening? (healing, talking to the Pharisees)
- Who was Jesus talking to or referring? (the one being healed, Jesus' life, love)
- How would you define Jesus' heart? What does "heart" mean? (courage, faith, hope)

GAME OPTIONS

Small group time is limited! However, should you need options or ideas for group building activities, here are a few you may find useful.

Circle Games (*can be name games):

I Sit in the Grass*

Circle the chairs up with one extra chair. Have one person slide into the empty chair and say, "I sit." The next person slides into the empty chair left by the first person and says, "in the grass." The third person slides into the empty chair left by the second person and says, "with my friend," and then names someone in the circle. That person gets up and moves into the empty chair left by the third person. The chair that is left empty is "fought" over by the people sitting on either side of it. The person who gets his/her bum fully in the seat starts the game over by saying, "I sit." The game continues for 7-8 plays. Encourage folks to call new people's names each time.

I Like People Who

Circle the chairs with one less chair than people. Extra person stands in the middle and says, "I like people who like to (fill in the blank)." For example, "I like people who like to eat ice cream." All the people who are sitting down who like to eat ice cream get up and try to find an empty seat. The person who is unable to find an empty seat starts the game over again. You have to move at least two seats over from where you are sitting originally.

I Never

Same set-up as before except person in the middle says, "I have never been white water rafting" or whatever they want to say they have never done. All the people in the middle who HAVE been white water rafting get up and try to find an empty chair. The person left standing starts the game over again.

This is My Thumb

Circle of chairs with one less chair than people. The person in the middle of the circle picks a person sitting in the circle, walks up to them, points to a body part like an elbow, and says, "This is my thumb." then starts rapidly counting 1-10. The person in the chair must point to his thumb and say, "This is my elbow." before the middle person gets to 10. If he/she doesn't make the deadline, the two change places, and the game starts over again with the new person. If the person does succeed, the same person starts the game over again. To switch up who is in the middle, the person can say, "Bodies Move." and everybody has to change places.

Waumpum*

Chairs are circled with one less than the number of the group. The extra person in the middle has a rolled up piece of paper. He goes up to one person in the circle, calls out that person's name, and rapidly counts out loud to 10. The person whose name has been called must call out someone else's name in the group before the person in the middle

gets to 10 and “waumps” her with the rolled up piece of paper. If she makes the deadline, the person whose name is called out is the next waumpum target and must come up with another name. If a name is not called in time, then the two people switch places. Hits should be below the knee only.

Shuffle Your Buns

Chairs are circled with one chair empty. One person is in the middle of the circle and begins by saying, “Go.” All the people sitting in chairs must move clockwise into the empty chair beside them. The person in the middle tries to get into the empty chair. The person in the center can call, “Switch,” changing the direction people are moving in the circle. Make sure the chairs are touching and warn people to watch their fingers/hands as they move between chairs. If the person in the middle calls, “Fruit basket turnover.” all players must move across the circle to another chair.

Zip, Zap, Zoom*

Chairs are circled with one less than the number of the group. The person in the middle, “IT,” attempts to get out of the middle by pointing to someone and saying either “Zip” or “Zap.” For “Zip,” the person pointed to must name the person sitting on her immediate left before “IT” gets to 10. For “Zap,” the person pointed to must name the person sitting on her right before “IT” gets to 10. If “IT” counts to 10 before the player names the “Zip” or “Zap,” OR if the player is incorrect in naming her “Zip/Zap,” then that player becomes the new “IT.” If the person in the circle is correct, play keeps going. Encourage “IT” to keep the “Zip/Zap” request moving rapidly. “IT” can also give the command “ZOOM.” On “ZOOM,” all players must scramble for a new chair while “IT” tries to sit in a chair, leaving a new “IT” to start the game over.

Two Truths and a Lie

Group members think of two truths and one lie about themselves— trying to be creative and sly—so the group won’t know which two are true and which one is a lie. Then one person tells the group the three things about herself, and the group tries to guess which one is the lie. The person who guesses correctly first goes next.

Other Get To Know You Games:

Three on a Couch

Pass out a pen and an index card to each person and have them write their names at the top. They are now to write a brief description of an amusing or unbelievable event that has happened to them. For example, a person could write: “The time I broke my thumb throwing caterpillars off a tree,” or “The time my car broke down at the bank’s drive through window,” or “The time I played golf with Tiger Woods.” These events must be true stories. Have everyone fold his or her paper in half and collect them. You will now look through the stories and pick one that you find interesting. Then call three people up to the front to be on the couch—three chairs pulled together in front of the group. Make sure one of those three people is the one whose story you are using. After you have read the

description to the group, each of the three people on the couch take turns trying to convince the rest of the group that the event actually happened to him or her. The group may ask the people on the couch questions. The group then tries to guess who was telling the truth. After the group votes and the truth is revealed, pick a new story with three new people and keep playing!

Leader's Hints: Put a limit on the amount of time a person on the couch can tell his/her story. Two minutes and no more than three questions per storyteller are the normal rules. Make sure the three people you select to be on the couch don't mind being in front of everyone. Usually after you play once, people are willing to sit on the couch when asked.

All Aboard

Mark off a shape on the floor with masking tape. The size of the shape depends on the number of people, and the outline can be a square, circle, or made-up shape. Ask participants to get both feet within the shape so that no one has their feet outside the lines of the shape. Both feet do not have to be on the floor. You will want the group to know each other pretty well before you try this game.

Line Up

Ask the group to line up in numeric order according to the last digit of their phone number — designate one side of the room 0 and the other side 9. Other Line Up options: birth date (month and day), eye color (lightest to darkest), alphabetically by last name or middle initial. To mix it up, try lining up: without talking, on a line they can't step off of (can put one on the ground with masking tape).

Trust Wave

Divide the group in two and have each group line up facing each other, shoulder to shoulder with their own group members and about three feet apart from the other group. Have each group extend their arms up toward each other at shoulder height; their hands should reach to the wrist of the person opposite them. Each person should be facing someone from the other group. As the group members hold their arms up at shoulder height, one person starts about 10 feet from the group and walks between the two lines. Before he walks through, he asks, "Spotters ready?" The group responds, "Ready!" Then the walker says "Walking?" and the spotters reply "Walk On!" The players in the lines raise their arms just before the walker reaches them and lowers them as soon as the walker has passed through. Walkers need to maintain the same speed throughout their pass through the line. If the walker feels comfortable, he may run through the trust wave.

Hot Potato

The object of the game is to keep the ball off the ground by popping it up amongst the group. Use a beach ball and have the group start hitting it around and trying to keep it off the ground. Then challenge them to keep it in the air for 20 hits, or 30 hits, etc. Encourage them to develop a strategy (such as establishing "zones" or an order, etc.) to try to keep the ball up for as many hits as possible.