

Back-to-Back – Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- *Discussion: Helping Others; Not being alone*
- Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12
- YOU WILL NEED: Several pencils and a phone book

Have students get in pairs and sit back to back. Tell them to lock arms (at the elbow), push against each other's backs, and see if they can both stand up.

Have them find different partners and try it again several times.

SAY: In the game you and your partner had to work together to succeed. In life God has given you brothers and sisters in Christ to help you succeed in your Christian life.

*Ask the students: **Who is your brother or sister in Christ?*** (Everyone who has given their lives to Jesus is part of God's family are all brothers and sisters in Christ.)

*Ask the students: **How can you help others to grow in their relationship with Jesus?*** (You can encourage them, be an example to them, correct them when they do something wrong, take them to church, etc.)

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Illustration – Pencil Break

Choose a volunteer—have him break a pencil.

Choose another volunteer—to try to break three or more pencils. Give a couple of students who have been listening and participating well a chance to try.

SAY: Just like the Bible said, two or three is stronger than just one. That's one reason God gave us each other—to help each other stand strong for Jesus.

Illustration – Phone Book Tear

Choose a volunteer—Ask him to try to tear a phone book in half. He can't do it because there are so many pages. Then tear out one page and ask him to tear it. It's easy because it's by itself.

SAY: When it comes to living for Jesus, you're not by yourself. Not only do you have Christian brothers and sisters to help you stand and live for Christ, but Jesus is with you also. You're never alone.

Balloon Circle Chase – Matthew 6:33

- Discussion: **Seeking God, God is our Guide, Pursuing the things of God**
- Scripture : **Matthew 6:33, Psalm 48:14, 2 Timothy 2:22**
- YOU WILL NEED: *Two balloons for each team or small group.*

NOTE: The following three games are great together or they can also be used individually to introduce the different topics that they address.

Game: Balloon Circle Chase, part 1

On the count of three, have every group sit down in a circle— 1-2-3-Go!

Part 1—Give each team a balloon and tell them that when you say go, they are going to pass the balloon around the circle one time as fast as they can. Ready Go! (*Do this several times to see which team is the fastest.*)

Part 2—Now they are going to pass the balloon around the circle two times.

KEY: The balloon just keeps going around the circle—some people lives are like this. They are going and going but they're not getting anywhere because they are living for the wrong things. Everyone is living for something—Most people live for themselves but God wants you to live for Him.

Read Matthew 6:33 from your Bible

Game: Balloon Circle Chase, part 2

Play the game again. This time add a second balloon.

Part 1—Using two balloons, have the teams pass them around the circle ONE time as fast as they can in opposite directions. At some point the balloons will pass each other.

Part 2— Using two balloons, have the teams pass them around the circle TWO times as fast as they can in opposite directions.

KEY: The circle guided the balloons, and if you keep God first, He'll guide you every step of your life.

Read Psalm 48:14 from your Bible

ASK: What else guides you in life? (God's Word, the Bible, is your instruction book on how to live.)

ASK: How can you learn what the Bible says about how to live? (By reading, studying and memorizing it.)

Game: Balloon Circle Chase, part 3

In this last variation, have the balloons start on opposite sides of the circle. Teams will pass them the same direction as fast as they can to see if one of the balloons can catch up to the other one.

ASK: In the game the balloons were chasing, or pursuing, each other. What does the Bible say that God wants you to pursue and chase after? (pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace.)

SAY: Remember the verse we read earlier, Matthew 6:33, that God wants you to seek, or follow after Him and His things. Listen to another verse:

Read 2 Timothy 2:22 from your Bible

REPEAT AFTER ME: “Righteousness!” —A righteous person is someone who lives in a right way—doing what is right and following Jesus.

REPEAT AFTER ME: “Faith!” —Faith means to trust. Even if you don’t see or understand everything, you can still trust God.

REPEAT AFTER ME: “Love and peace!” —God wants you to love each other and to live at peace with one another.

Band-Aid Tag – Galatians 6:7-8

- Discussion: **Sins hurts**
- Scripture: **Galatians 6:7-8**
- YOU WILL NEED: *One Band-Aid for each student for each time you plan to play the game.*

Put a Band-Aid on each student's back. When you say "Go" they will try to pull off everyone else's Band-Aid without theirs being pulled. Once their Band-Aid is pulled, they *can* continue to play. The last person with a Band-Aid on their back is the winner. *Rules:* They cannot grab people or shirts. Set a two minute time limit and have fun with them. *(If you have a small group, you may want to play this twice or to create variety, have them play it while hopping on one leg.)*

When the game is over: (1) throw away all the Band-Aids and (2) sit down in a circle

CONTROL TOOL

SAY: Every time I say, "Is Jesus perfect," I want you to say, "Absolutely!" *Leader:* Is Jesus perfect?—*Students:* Absolutely!

SAY: A person gets a Band-Aid when they get hurt.

Ask the students: **Can anyone guess what hurts people the most?** (Sin.) SAY: Sin will always bring hurt. Listen to what the Bible says:

Read from your Bible: Galatians 6:7-8

SAY: "Sowing" means planting and "reaping" means growing or getting what you've planted. Let's read this verse that way. (Read it substituting "planting" for "sowing" and "growing" for "reaping.")

Ask the students: **If you plant an apple seed, what will grow?** (An apple tree.) *Ask the students:* **If you plant a watermelon seed, what will grow?** (A watermelon.)

SAY: What you plant is what will grow. What you plant in your life is what will grow in your life. "Don't be deceived," the Bible says—Don't be tricked: If you plant sin and the things of this world in your life, then that is what will grow in your life—the things of this world that will bring sin and hurt and destruction. But if you plant the things of God in your life, the good things of God will grow in your life.

Ask the students: **What is sin?** (Anything we do that's wrong) *Leader:* Is Jesus perfect?—*Students:* Absolutely!

CHALLENGE: Agree or Disagree:

- *Sin will always hurt you*—If you agree, stand up. If you disagree, stay sitting down. Correct Answer: **Agree**
- *None of us are perfect*— If you agree, go to the wall on my left. If you disagree, go to the wall on my right. Correct Answer: **Agree**

- *You should always eat mayonnaise on bologna and cheese sandwiches*— If you agree, go to the wall on my right. If you disagree, go to the wall on my left. Correct Answer: **I don't know.**
- *Jesus made a way to take your sins away*— If you agree, go to the wall on my left. If you disagree, go to the wall on my right. Correct Answer: **Agree**
- *You should always pick your nose at school*—If you agree, sit down. If you disagree, raise your hands in the air. Correct Answer: **Ask your mama!**
- *The way to avoid the hurt of sin is to do what God wants you to do*— — If you agree, go to the wall on my right. If you disagree, go to the wall on my left. Correct Answer: **Agree**
- *Everyone should like pickle juice*—If you agree, go to the wall on my left. If you disagree, go to the wall on my right. Correct Answer: **Who cares?**
- *If you plant an apple seed, a pear tree will grow*—If you agree, go to the wall on my left. If you disagree, go to the wall on my right. Correct Answer: **Disagree**
- *If you plant sin in your life, bad things will grow*—If you agree, go to the wall on my left. If you disagree, go to the wall on my right. Correct Answer: **Agree**
- *The best choice you can make is to give your life to Jesus*— If you agree, give someone a high-five. If you disagree, sit on your hands. Correct Answer: **Agree**

Play the game again and ask the kids questions such as the following:

- *Who remembers what the point behind this game is?*
- *Who remembers what today's Bible verse is about?*
- *What else could you learn from this game?*
- *How does this game/lesson fit into other things you've been learning at church?*
- *What is God doing in your life?*
- *What can you do this week to...(i.e., follow Jesus, show God's love, tell others about Jesus, grow closer to Jesus, etc.)*

Extra Time

If you have extra time, try other variations to the game—i.e., hopping on one foot, locking elbows with a partner, etc.

Body Spellers – Courage & Love

- Discussion: **Courage and Love**
- YOU WILL NEED: *No items needed.*

This is a team competition. Let each team who is a part of your recreation time, sit in a circle on the floor somewhere in your room. Tell them that you are going to call out a letter and you want their team to use their bodies to spell the letter. Be watching to see which team is the fastest. Team Leaders can help in positioning their team members to create the letters of the alphabet. *(NOTE: Younger children will need help with this. Explain that you will write the letter on your marker boards so that they know what it looks like and then ask them to make the shape of the letter using their arms and legs.)*

Spell each of the following letters one-at-a-time: C / O / U / R / A / G / E

After spelling each of the letters once, tell the students that you are going to time them to see how fast they can use all the letters they just created to spell a word. Call all of the same letters, but more quickly, and as soon as everyone is in place for the previous letter, move to the next.

Discussion

SAY: We just spelled the word “Courage.”

*Ask the students—***What is courage?** (Courage does not mean that you’re not afraid; it means that something is more important to you than your fear—For example, if someone is afraid to do what’s right because everyone else is doing what’s wrong, courage would help them to follow Jesus and trust Him even though kids might tease them. Living for Jesus is more important than the fear of what people will say.)

Spell each of the following letters one-at-a-time: L / O / V / E

*Ask the students—***Does it take courage to love people who treat you wrong?** (Yes.) SAY: But because Jesus loves us we can also love others, even when they treat us badly.

Read and discuss Matthew 5:43-45.

Caterpillar Races – Romans 12:1-2

- Scripture: Romans 12:1-2
- Discussion: How Jesus changes lives
- YOU WILL NEED: *No items needed.*

Divide your group into teams of 4 to 10 students. Have each team stand in a straight line. All of the team members need to stand with their legs far enough apart for another student to crawl beneath them. On “go” the last person in line will crawl beneath the legs of all the other team members and stand up at the front with his/her legs spread apart. As soon as there is room the second person at the end of the line will begin following them and crawling through as well and so forth until every team members has crawled through everyone else’s legs. The first team to complete this wins. If you have real small groups, you may want to have them crawl through two or three times.

(NOTE: Girls in dresses do not need to participate in this game.)

Discussion

Ask the students: **How many of you have every caught a caterpillar.** (It’s really not that hard to catch them—it’s not like they can fly away!)

Ask the students: **What does a caterpillar change into?** (A butterfly.)

SAY: An incredible transformation happens to the caterpillar when he changes into a butterfly and an incredible transformation (or change) happens when a person gives their life to Jesus and begins to follow Him. Listen to the following verses and when you hear the word “transformed” I want you to stand up and sit down.

Read Romans 12:1-2

Continue with a discussion of these verses—i.e., What does it mean to be conformed? In what ways are some people conformed to this world? How can you avoid being conformed to this world? What does it mean to be transformed? Share stories of people’s lives who have been “transformed” and completely changed by Jesus, etc.