

The Quest for True Treasure

Small Groups rotate through seven stations discovering together, God's true treasure:

1. God's Love: John 3:16
2. God's Fruit: Galatians 5:22-23
3. God's Joy: Psalm 16:11, John 15:10-11
4. God's Living Water: John 4:13-14
5. God's Friend: John 15:13-15
6. God's Family: Revelation 2:17, John 1:12
7. God's Home: Revelation 21:21

Explanations for the Stations

Stations are scattered throughout the playground or teaching area. They are structured for small groups to gather around a station leader for a brief 5-minute interaction conversation and with something to give or do with the children as follows:

Station 1: God's Love: John 3:16

Station leader asks the children a "WHY" question. "Why did Jesus come, live a perfect life, help so many people, die on a cross, and come back to life with promise to come again?" Briefly recognize answers. The station leader has a visual of John 3:16 and opens it up for the children to say the verse slowly together and discover the answer. "Because of God's great love for everyone in the whole world, Jesus did this." The "WHY" question is repeated. The visual of John 14:3 is shown to the children and is read together. The answer? "**Because He wants to be with us forever**, starting now for those who believe and receive Him as their Savior from sin." The leader asks the children, "Would you agree that this is amazing love and true love? God the Father, through God the Son always loves us and always keeps His promise to save us when we believe in Him." Refer back to John 3:16 pointing out the word "believe." Give the children who want to remember God's love, a heart candy and a heart sticker for their name tag. If the 5 minutes are not expired, ask the children if they have discovered evidences of God's love. If no answer, the station leader supplies some words of testimony from his or her life.

Station 2: God's Fruit: Galatians 5:22-23

Station leader asks the children: "What is your favorite fruit? What makes it your favorite?" Then asks, "Do you know that there are two kinds of fruit? There is physical fruit and there is what the Bible calls, spiritual fruit. The Bible says this is the fruit of God the Holy Spirit. Does that mean God turns us into fruit trees? No, here is the kind of fruit He is talking about." The leader shows the verse visual from Galatians 5:22-23. "Some people sing the words to a little tune to help them remember all the spiritual fruit. Let's count the fruit: (one through nine, count with the students.) Wait, why do we say fruit instead of 9 fruits?"

Let's look at verse 22 again and discover what it says together: 'The fruit of the Spirit is love....' The spiritual fruit all come from love. We could say, love comes first. If someone doesn't have God's love, it's really hard to have love's fruit. So how do we have God's love? God says that when we believe and receive Jesus as our Savior, we are born again. He then gives us His Holy Spirit to live in us forever. The Holy Spirit pours His love out into our hearts. (Romans 5:5) And what does God's love produce?" Read the list of spiritual fruit from the verse visual. For those children who would like to remember the fruit of the Spirit, give them the gummy packet of fruit of the Spirit. Talk about the meaning of the listed spiritual fruit until it's time to rotate.

Station 3: God's Joy Psalm 16:11

The station leader asks the children: "What makes you the happiest you have ever been?" Next question: "Do you know the difference between happiness and joy? Happiness depends on something happening like winning a race or getting something that you really want. Joy doesn't depend on anything that we could lose or something that happens and then, it's all over. Let me tell you about an Olympic Gold Metal Runner named **Eric Liddell**. (show his picture) He said, 'God made me fast and when I run, I feel God's pleasure.' He told people everywhere he went that life is like a race. When we live our lives for God fully, like running a race, we are going to be what we were made to be. We will know the fullness of His joy. Jesus said in John 15:10-11 that if we keep His commands we will abide in His love. Why did He tell his followers that? Because he wanted His **joy** to be in them that their joy would be made full. That's what keeping God's commands does as we stay in His love. Who would like to run fast like Eric Liddell?" Leader has sheets of brown packing paper to give each runner with "Run with joy" written on them. Question: "Can you run so fast like Eric Liddell with his arms reaching out that the paper stays in front of you by the power of the wind?" Give out the verse bookmark, Acts 20:24 "...that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." Let the children run, catching the wind until it's time to rotate. Return the brown paper to the leader for the next group.

Station 4: God's Living Water John 4:13-14

The station leader has a bottle of water and a pipet or water dropper to give each child one drop of water to hold in their hand while they explore the properties of their water drop as follows: "What color is it? How much does it weigh? Is it clear? Can it become dirty? Does it move? What causes it to move? What is happening to it that is invisible? (evaporating) Can it spread to cover more of the palm of the hand? **Who made the water** drop in your hand? How important is water? We cannot live without water. Jesus talked about a different kind of water in John, chapter 4 with a woman who came to draw water from a well. This is what He said..." (read from John 4:13-14) "What did He mean when He said could give water that springs up to eternal life? This is spiritual water. It is the truth, the Word of God because we also read in I Peter, chapter one (1:23) that we are born again (for eternal life) through the living and abiding Word of God." Hold up the little book of John that says, "Living Water." Ask if the children would like to see for themselves. Give one to each child that wants to discover what God says in the book of John. They can read

together the first 4 verses of the first chapter. Then, verse 14. Talk about what it means. The conversation with the woman at the well happens in chapter 4. See if they can locate Jesus' words in verses 13-14. Ask them if they want to have this living water. They can have the little Books of John, but how will they read it? (It is available in English and Spanish.) If they cannot read, who can read it to them? What plan can they make to take in this Living Water every day? Instead of having it be like their drop of water that is now gone, what can they do to keep "drinking" from God's Word?

Station 5: God's Friend: John 15:13-15

Leader asks the children these questions: "What makes a friend a good friend? What is a good friend like? Someone that you can trust? Someone that is on your side? Someone that always tells you the truth? Did you know that Jesus said that there is no greater love than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends? He said that His true followers, ones that obeys His commands are His true friends. He calls them His friends. He is the one who lays down his life for them and for us. He came to save the world, yes, all of us."

(The leader has on a wordless book bracelet with the colored beads on a red ribbon. Holding up his/her wrist for the children to see, share:) "The red color reminds me of Jesus' words here in John 15." (The children who have just come from station 4 will have a book of John with them. They can find the words in the 15th chapter, verses 13 and 15.) "When Jesus talks about laying down his life, what does that mean? Yes, He would die on the cross, shedding His blood. The red color reminds us of the blood of Jesus. But what about the other colors?"

(The leader then reviews the message of salvation with the bead colors. Then ask the children if they would like to have this kind of friendship bracelet to help them remember the One who calls them His friend when they listen to, believe and follow Him? After they have the bracelets tied on, then help them review the message so they can share it with others.) Now, back to the first question: "What makes a good friend? Can Jesus be trusted? Does Jesus defend us? Does Jesus always tell us the truth? Do you want Him to call you His friend?"

Station 6: God' Family: Revelation 2:17, John 1:12

Leader asks a question: "Does anyone know what happened to the first man and woman, Adam and Eve in God's perfect garden? They disobeyed God, didn't they? (Use flashcards from Wordless Book Visualized.) Then, they felt guilty, shameful and afraid. That's because their sin separated them from God. Ever since then, all the people born including you and I are born with sin nature. No one has to teach us how to do wrong things. So, we too, are separated from God. But God loves us so much He has fulfilled a great **rescue plan** to bring us back to Himself and make us a part of His family. That is through Jesus Christ, His Son. When we believe that Jesus died and came back to life again and receive Jesus, we become children of God." (show John 1:12) "God gives us a new nature, one that wants to know Him, love Him and serve Him. In the last book of God's Word, the Bible He says that someday He will give to all those who belong to Him, a white stone with a new name on it, reminding us that when we are born into His family, we are brand new creations. (I Cor. 5:17) That is a way of welcoming His children into His Forever-Home, like a personal

invitation.” (The Leader has some smooth shiny stones or pretend jewels to share with the children who want to remember God’s welcome into His Forever-Home. This is a good time to thank Him for God’s invitation for those who have trusted Jesus. Pray a simple thank-you prayer with them.) For those who are still thinking about all this good news, it is appropriate to say, “Is this the right time for you to say “Yes” to God’s invitation to receive forgiveness for your sins and become His child?” If a child answers yes, then direct the child or children to talk with the counselor waiting to the side who can help them understand the plan of salvation and pray with them. (Afterward the child returns to his/her group.)

Station 7: God’s Home: Revelation 21:21

“Have you ever wondered what Heaven is like? What do you think is **not** in heaven? What **is** in heaven? The Bible says these things **are not** in heaven...” (show the flash card from the Wordless Book Visualized) death, tears, darkness, sin....)

“The Bible says these things **are in** heaven: Jesus, light, children of God, angels, God’s throne, the tree of life... and streets paved with gold! What would that look like? Let’s discover the answer in Revelation 21:21...” (show the verse, read together)

“Have you ever seen gold shine? (Hold up something gold that reflects the light.) Have you ever seen something so shiny that you could see your face reflected in it? God’s home will be like Him, with shining brightness and beauty. Therefore, we cannot take sin into God’s Home.

“Since we all have sin, how can we go to God’s Home? Get in an airplane and fly so high, we go right into heaven? (Leader has a gospel plane assembled in his/her hand, holds it up, like they will fly it through the air.) No. What have we been learning about the way to God’s Forever-Home? Yes, let’s read John 3:16 together. Now, John 14:6 together. Jesus is the only way to God’s Home with streets paved with gold. However, God says that there is something **FAR GREATER than gold!** I Peter 1:7 says that our faith in Jesus that keeps us true to follow Him is much greater than gold. This plane is called a Gospel plane because it has the message of saving faith on it. Let’s review it together.” (Point out the symbols and what they mean.) “When we have faith in God’s message to be saved from our sin and become His child, this is **more valuable than gold**. Would you like to have this kind of faith?”

(If a child responds for the first time, direct them to a counselor at the side who can help them understand the message and pray with them. For the children who want to remember God’s way to heaven, they can have a Gospel plane. Help them assemble them or if there is not time, pre-assemble them or have them partially assembled.)