

MYSTERY



Blessed Are Who?

Games Guide

Overall Learning Objective: The kids will learn that even while playing and having fun they can learn about others and live out God's mission for us.

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Day One: Blindfold Bedtime

These games are intended to be played at home by a family or with a small group of neighbors or friends. During this time of the Covid-19 Pandemic, these games are not intended for large groups or public spaces. Please remind the kids to wash their hands frequently and to wear masks when needed.

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the merciful**, for they will receive mercy.

Character Story: Esther the Courageous Queen

Game Overview: Today the kids will simply get ready for bed while wearing a blindfold. We've given you some other fun challenges to do while blindfolded as well.

Learning Objective: What is it like to move around differently? We often assume that being differently-abled is a bad thing. Being different is not bad. With practice someone who is blind, deaf, in a wheelchair, or is different in other ways can do just about anything you can do. They can even do some things that you can't. Being different is good.

Supplies Needed:

- A blindfold (lab goggles that are covered in something make the best blindfolds; bandanas also work well)

Questions to ask the kids while you're playing together:

- What's the easiest thing you do during the day?
- Could you do that thing if you were blind?
- What's the hardest thing you do during the day?
- Could you do that thing if you were blind?
- Could a blind person do anything with enough creativity and practice?
- What are things that a blind person is better at doing than people who can see?

**Game Instructions:**

1. Explain to the kids that this evening they will be getting ready for bedtime as if they are blind. Assure them that while it will be tough, you will be there to guide them.
2. Decide whether you want each child to do this one at a time or all at once before proceeding.
3. Give the child a blindfold and make sure it is secure over their eyes.
4. Help the kids through whatever bedtime routine is normal. Here are some example tasks to complete:
 - A. Put on pajamas
 - B. Brush teeth
 - C. Climb into bed and pull up the covers
 - D. Read a bedtime story
 - E. Pray

Moving between the bedroom and bathroom or any other necessary space should also be completed with a blindfold and guidance.

5. Take off the blindfold so the child can go to sleep.

Other fun challenges to take on while blindfolded:

- Challenge each kid to write their name.
- Challenge each kid to draw a smiley face.
- Challenge each kid to make a pb&j sandwich (be prepared for a mess!).
- Challenge each kid to change the batteries in the TV remote.
- Challenge each kid to find something of your choice in the fridge.

Lesson Reflection: We take for granted how easy these tasks are when we can see. Yet, these tasks are also relatively simple for someone who has been blind for some time. Practice is what makes the tasks easy. Whether



you can see or you are blind, you are capable of doing simple things and great things. When someone has different life experiences from you it might be difficult to understand or appreciate the challenges that they face. We should take the time to understand and appreciate other people's experiences. Esther lived in a time when the people in charge didn't try to understand people who were different. Because of this, Esther had to fight for her people to be safe. She showed great courage in doing this. Today we are much better at understanding differences and even celebrate people who are different from us. Being blindfolded has helped us to understand how coordinated and careful someone who is blind needs to be. Jesus' beatitudes also teach us to live so that others are not just treated fairly but also loved.

Extra/Alternative Game: Second Chance Tag

You will need to designate a playing area with clear boundaries and divide that area in half. Each half will have one "it" person. When a child is tagged she simply goes to the other half of the play area until she is tagged again. This game continues on forever so you will need to pause periodically and change the "it" people. You can also have older kids attempt to tag the "it" person from behind in order to win the game. Esther understood what it was like to be treated differently. She did not have a safe place to go if things went wrong, except that she could always trust in God. Jesus has taught us to be welcoming and to celebrate differences. In Second Chance Tag you always have a safe place to go.



Day Two: Not Dodge Ball

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Key Beatitude: Blessed are the **pure in heart**, for they will see God.

Character Story: Mary Magdalene the Blessed Believer

Game Overview: Not Dodge Ball is pretty much the reverse of dodge ball. Instead of dodging as many balls that are thrown at them as they can, the kids will catch as many pillows that are tossed to them as they can. The object of the game is to have as many pillows off the floor on your side as possible. You can do this by holding them and earning points for your team. You can also do this by putting them on the other side and giving the other team negative points, unless they pick them up!

Learning Objective: Can we play a sport where the last to be picked is best? Jesus liked to pick and lift up the people that everyone else ignored or underestimated. When he gave those people a chance, they proved to be incredible! Who will you give a chance to shine?

Questions to ask the kids while you're playing together:

- Have you ever been picked last for something?
- What did it feel like?
- Has Jesus picked you to be on his team? *Yes he has!*
- Who did Jesus pick to first share his good news? *Mary Magdalene*
- Do you think Mary was someone who usually got picked last for things?
- Why did Jesus choose to pick Mary first?



Supplies Needed:

- Pillows (as many as you can spare)
- Balls (optional)

Game Instructions:

1. Mark off a rectangular play area with clear boundaries and then divide that area in half. Not Dodge Ball can be played inside, in fact you may prefer to play it inside. A living room is a pretty good size for this game.
2. Divide the kids into two teams and give each team a side. You can play too!
3. Explain to the kids that the object of the game is to have as many pillows off the floor on your side as possible. You can do this by holding them and earning points for your team. You can also do this by putting them on the other side and giving the other team negative points. The kids will have to figure out creative ways to hold as many pillows as they can without them touching the ground before time runs out.
 - a. Kids are not allowed to cross to the other team's side but can kick or toss pillows across the line. Any pillows they're not able to hold should be tossed to the other side.
 - b. If a pillow gets tossed out of bounds, it should go back to the side that tossed it. If any pillows get dropped they need to be picked up or tossed before the timer runs out.
 - c. **Hint:** Older kids might figure out that one person can lie on the ground and act as a pillow platform. This is totally allowed. Just make sure the pile doesn't fall over or get knocked over by an opposing team's toss!
 - d. **Scoring:** Any pillow you are holding earns two points for your team. Any pillow on the ground on your side is worth one negative point for your team.



4. Divide the pillows in half and give each team half. (You can also play the game with balls but pillows seem to be more fun.)
5. Set a timer and begin the game. 5-10 minutes is a good amount of time for a round. When the timer goes off you may count up the pillows on and off the floor on each side. Do not make a big deal of the points. Instead, emphasize having fun and playing again.

Lesson Reflection: It can be hard to be picked last for a team. Often the people who get picked first are the most competitive. Not Dodge Ball is competitive but the best competitors are kids who are patient and plan ahead. These kids might typically get picked last, even though they might have the best chance of winning! Today we have been learning about people who are ignored or forgotten like Mary Magdalene. But once you dig a little deeper and find out the whole story you realize just how important Mary was. It doesn't matter if you are the strongest or fastest; in Not Dodge Ball being careful and smart is what helps you win. And even if you don't win you should still be happy for whoever did. Like Jesus teaches us, having a pure heart means having a full heart. Win or lose you are filled with the excitement of playing and having fun with your friends.

Extra/Alternative Game: Elbow Tag

You will need to mark off a rectangular play area with clear boundaries. In this game, everyone gets a partner and links arms. Anyone who is linked with a partner cannot move from their spot. Two people are chosen to split up. One will be "it" and the other will be chased. Whenever the person being chased links with a pair of players, the person on the opposite end must break off. They will now become chased. If the person being chased gets tagged, they become "it." The good news about Jesus that Mary shared was incredible. When people heard it, they literally went running to tell others.



Day Three: Plant Power

These games are intended to be played at home by a family or with a small group of neighbors or friends. During this time of the Covid-19 Pandemic, these games are not intended for large groups or public spaces. Please remind the kids to wash their hands frequently and to wear masks when needed.

Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the meek**, for they will inherit the earth.

Story Character: Deborah the Heroic Judge

Game Overview: Today is water day in games. The kids will take part in a water relay that will help them learn about how plants grow and about what made Deborah so great. First they will make rain by popping suspended water balloons, while also collecting that water in buckets. The bucket water will then be used to help find “seeds” amidst plant matter. The “seeds” will then take part in a physical reaction, shooting water into the air, as tall as a palm tree.

Learning Objective: Can we match the amazing power of a growing plant? We can learn a lot from plants and water just like we’re learning a lot from Deborah. Plants use the gifts of water to grow in amazing ways and to produce amazing fruits and vegetables. Deborah used the gifts that God gave her to do amazing things in the world. God calls us to use our gifts in amazing ways too.

Questions to ask the kids while you’re playing together:

- Do you like getting wet?
- What sorts of things do you need water for?
- What do plants and animals need water for?
- Do we also need God to live and grow?
- What can we do to make sure all people, plants, and animals have the water that they need?



- How would the world be better if there were more plants and animals and less thirsty people?
- What did Deborah do to try to make the world better?

Supplies Needed:

- Clothesline or Rope
- Water Balloons or regular balloons (at least 3 per kid)
- String
- Buckets (1-3)
- Grass clipping, mulch, twigs
- Mentos (at least 7)
- Aluminum foil or cling wrap
- Permanent marker
- Fork
- Masking Tape
- Baseball Cap
- Lemon-lime or orange flavored seltzer water

Preparing for the game:

1. Fill up the water balloons. We recommend at least 3-5 balloons per kid.
Water balloons are a choking hazard for young kids and wildlife. Make sure that you take special care to pick up every little piece of balloon after they have been popped.
2. Tie a clothes line within the play area and hang the balloons from the line using string. You want the balloons to end up at the eye-line of the kids.
3. Tape a fork to the brim of a baseball cap so that it is pointing away from the cap.
4. Wrap seven mentos in aluminum foil or cling wrap so that they are air tight. On each wrapped mentos, write one of these letters: B L E S S E D. We recommend using a permanent marker. These lettered and wrapped mentos will be pretend "seeds." Mix the "seeds" together with the grass clippings, mulch, and twigs in a bucket. The "seeds" should be completely concealed.



Game Instructions:

1. Explain to the kids that they will be simulating the growth of a plant using water. Explain the following steps and demonstrate if needed:
2. **Making Rain** – The kids will take turns wearing the fork hat to pop a water balloon. They can close their eyes or take the hat off if they'd prefer. Have each kid pop at least one balloon, or two depending upon how many balloons you have filled and the number of kids.



3. **Capturing Rainwater** – While one kid pops a balloon, another should be holding a "seed" and plant matter filled bucket to catch the water as it falls.
4. **Enriching the Soil** – Have the kids place the bucket on the ground so that they can all gather around it. In turns they should each reach into the bucket and try to find one "seed" amidst the water and plant matter. This is supposed to be a bit gross and messy. After all the "seeds" are found have the kids spell out the word "blessed."





5. **Explosive Plant Growth** – Reveal that each “seed” has a protective outer shell and a center packed with potential, just like a real seed. Have the kids unwrap each “seed.” Carefully help the kids to quickly place at least one of the mentos inside of a lemon-lime or orange flavored seltzer water bottle*. Quickly recap the bottle and set it upright on the ground. Make sure everyone is standing back. The bottle cap should fly off as the water creates a geyser into the sky.

***The seltzer water must be fruit flavored or the geyser will be anticlimactic. Diet Coke also works really well for this but is a bit stickier and looks less like water.**

6. After the kids have completed the entire relay at least once, have them repeat whatever steps they found most fun.

Lesson Reflection: The kids made rain; they collected that rain among the plant matter that you can find in the forest; they mixed up that plant matter in water to make soil; they found seeds in that soil; they propelled water up from that seed like an imaginary plant. It takes a lot for a plant or tree to grow. You need water, soil, a seed, sunlight, and carbon dioxide. A lot goes into growing a strong person too. Deborah had many gifts that made her a prophet, warrior, musician, and judge. She was as strong as the great palm tree that she sat under each day, but that strength came from listening to God and finding and nurturing the gifts God gave her. As Jesus teaches us, we should be meek like Deborah and humbly use our gifts to lift up others.



Extra/Alternative Game: Blob Tag

You will need to mark off a rectangular play area with clear boundaries. This game begins with one person who is "it." When that person catches someone they link elbows with the "it" person and become part of the blob. The entire blob is "it" and can tag more people. The last person left without being tagged, is "it" as the game starts again. Deborah's strength was drawn from the many gifts that God gave her as well as the people around her. She is a great representation of the Body of Christ, like blob tag.



Day Four: Mapping the Minefield

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Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Story Character: Tabitha the Beloved Servant

Game Overview: The kids will try to navigate a difficult “minefield” map and learn how to rely on each other.

Learning Objective: Where can you find help while trying to walk through the world in the right way? You can always look to God for help! How can you be of help to others? There are always ways to help those in need; you just have to be ready and willing. That’s how Tabitha lived her amazing life.

Questions to ask the kids while you’re playing together:

- When you’re out walking someplace new or exploring, do you always know which direction to go?
- How do you figure out the right way to go?
- Do you ever ask for help or rely on other people?
- Has anyone ever asked you for help in knowing which way to go?
- Do you think you can ask for God’s help?

Supplies Needed:

- Map Tiles (provided in a separate printable pdf, two per page)
- Computer Printer
- Sidewalk chalk, string and pegs, cones, carpet squares, foam tiles, large construction paper, or some other way to mark off a grid.



Preparing for the Game (complete these steps first):

1. If you are working on a cement or stone surface, use the sidewalk chalk to draw out a grid that it at least 6 spaces long and 5 spaces tall. The squares of the grid should be about 18 inches per side. The cones or string and pegs are good for playing outside in the grass. The cones or carpet squares are good for playing inside.
2. Print off and organize the map tiles into a map. You can use the recommended grids shown below or make up your own. Be sure that the tiles end up facing down so that they are hidden at first. The compass tile is the starting point and the treasure tile is the goal.



Recommended Grids (with safe in green and dangerous and impassable in red)

Preschool			
Trees	Goat	Monkey	Treasure
House	Mountain	Lake	Rabbit
Panda	Tiger	Mountain	Mountain
Compass	Trees	Trees	Dog



Kindergarten-1 st Grades				
Trees	Panda	Rabbit	Treasure	Grass
Bridge	River	Waterfall	River	Bridge
House	Goat	Trees	Tiger	Grass
Mountain	Dragon	House	Mountain	Monkey
Compass	Trees	Trees	Dog	Horse

2 nd -5 th Grades					
Trees	Panda	Rabbit	Monkey	Trees	Horse
Bridge	River	Waterfall	River	Dragon	Bridge
House	Goat	Trees	Dog	Trees	Trees
Mountain	Mountain	House	Waterfall	Tiger	Monkey
Compass	Panda	Trees	Mountain	Lake	Treasure

Game Instructions:

1. Show the kids the grid of tiles that you have laid out and explain that the grid represents a new and mysterious land that they are about to explore. Somewhere hidden in that grid is a wondrous treasure but there are also many hidden dangers to avoid. Flip over the compass tile so that they know where to start.
2. Line the kids up along one side of the grid with the front of the line closest to the starting compass tile.
3. Explain that the kids will take turns entering the grid and searching for the treasure. Starting from the compass tile the kids can move in any



direction except diagonal. Any tile that a child steps on is “discovered” and flipped over to reveal what’s hidden. If it is a safe (green) tile they can move forward by selecting another tile. If it is a dangerous (red) tile or an impassable (red) tile they must go to the end of the line.

Discovered tiles remain discovered and are not flipped back over.

Taking turns, the kids continue along the expanding safe path until they discover the treasure. (For added difficulty that older kids could be able to handle, do not keep red impassable or dangerous tiles discovered.

Only keep green safe tiles flipped over. This way the kids will have to work together to remember which tiles they have already discovered as impassable or dangerous.)

4. If you have extra time, create another map for the kids to explore. If the kids moved too quickly through the first map, create a larger map or use the hidden red tile method explained in the previous step.

Lesson Reflection: The grid of the map with all of its various tiles is like one of the quilts that Tabitha made. The kids had to explore their way through the map, running into obstacles and into safe places. The kids also had to work together to find their way to the end. If one kid had to go to the end of the line, there was another ready to keep going. Tabitha was a beloved member of her community. The community didn’t love Tabitha because she was the smartest or the wealthiest but because she was the most helpful. Tabitha always helped those who needed her. Everyone in the community knew that there would always be at least one other person ready to step in and help them out—Tabitha.



Extra/Alternative Game: Resurrection Tag

You will need to designate a play area with clear boundaries. One or two kids are chosen to be "it." They are "death" and anyone who they tag dramatically dies on the spot. However, those who are left untagged may gather around a victim in a group of at least two-three and shout "(victim's name) wake up!" The kids are safe while they do this. The victim is then resurrected until tagged again. Tabitha was beloved by her community and resurrected by Peter through God's power because of that. The kids will have to help each other in this game to know that resurrection power.



Day Five: Topple Time

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Key Beatitude: Blessed are **the peacemakers**, for they will be called children of God.

Story Character: Miriam the Fearless Prophet

Game Overview: Toppling is a game in which kids set up objects, like dominos, in sequence before knocking the first one over and watching the whole line topple. The world record book topple included 10,200 books in Frankfurt, Germany, in 2016. Your kids probably won't be able to set up that many books but they should be challenged to make their own amazing book topple.

Learning Objective: How many books does it take to make a difference? Giving a kid in need even just one book to read is like setting off a bunch of dominos. When we read and learn it opens up so many possibilities for us and the awesome story that God is telling through us. What Miriam did a thousand years ago also set off a series of dominos that are still changing the world.

Questions to ask the kids while you're playing together:

- Does it take any patience to work with the dominos or books?
- Do you think Miriam had to have patience?
- How does it feel to work hard on this and then to watch all the dominos fall down?
- Are there other ways that hard work can pay off in the end?
- What goal did Miriam work hard towards completing?
- What does God want us to work hard towards completing?

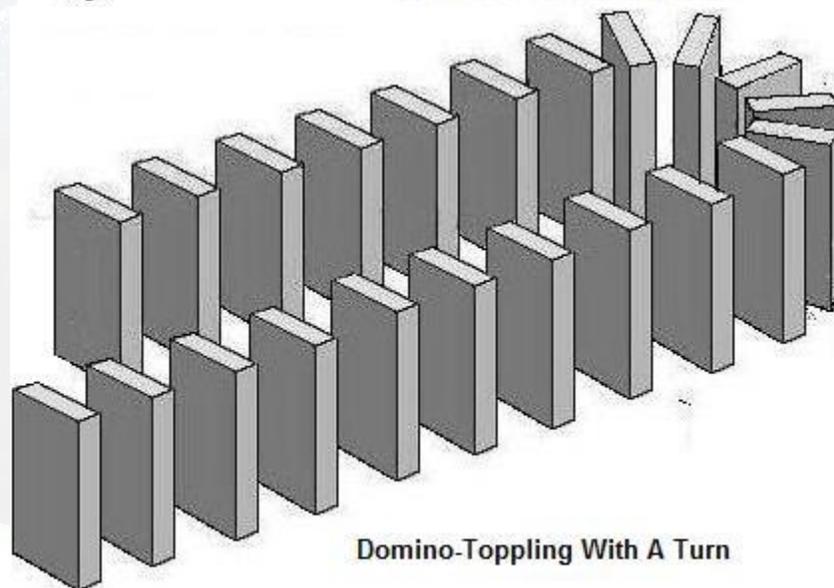
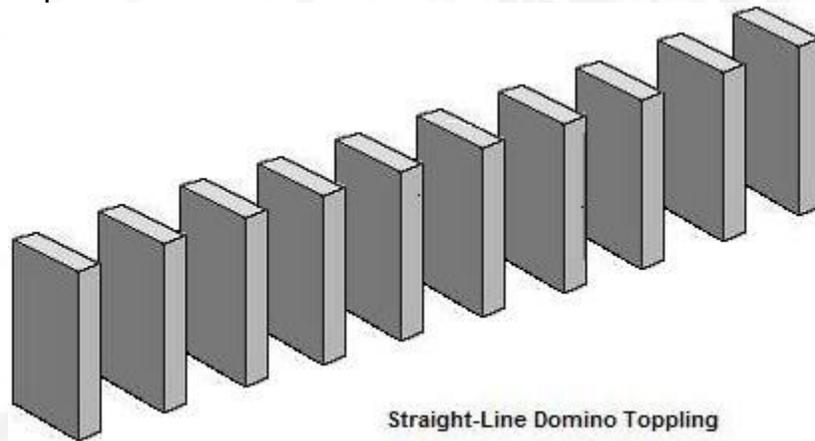


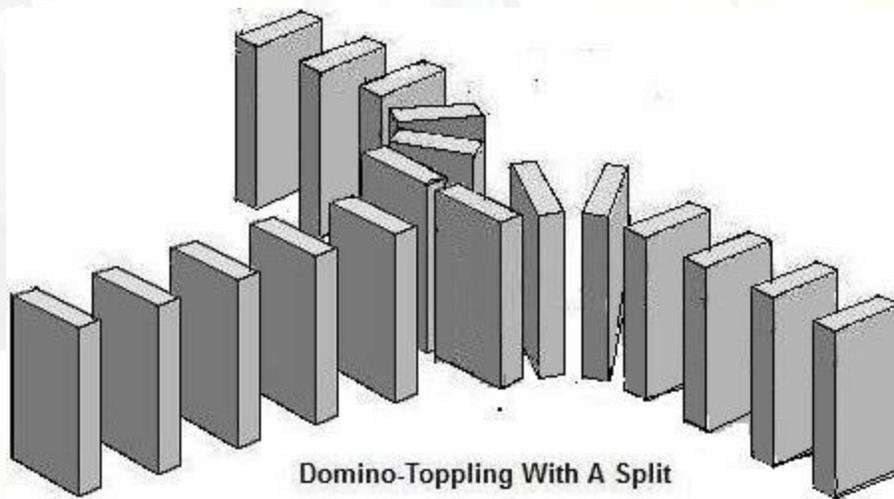
Supplies Needed:

- Dominos
- Books (a large assortment)

Game Instructions:

1. Help the kids to set up a basic domino toppling and show them how to set it off.
2. Give the kids 5-10 minutes to work with dominos, experimenting with different set ups. There are lots of different techniques to use. You can look them up online but here are a few of the basics:





3. Give the kids 5-10 more minutes to experiment toppling with books. This is a little bit more challenging as the books are not a uniform size or shape like the dominos. Opening the books slightly helps.
4. Challenge the kids to create a topple of the word read. The younger the kids are the more direct help they will need arranging the books and practicing patience until all of the books are in place.



5. Set off your final topple of the word read. You may even want to record a video of your efforts and the final result.



Lesson Reflection: The more everybody reads, the better we all are! It's like a domino effect. One person effects the next, and they effect someone, and on and on. Miriam started a domino effect many many years ago. As a fearless little girl she helped to save her brother and together they led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and into a promised land. People have been following in her example ever sense. Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. This means that we join in the effort to find peace and justice for everyone, an effort that has been going on for thousands of years and will continue until we finally have heaven here on earth.

Extra/Alternative Game: Clothes-pin Tag

You will need to mark off a play area with clear boundaries and gather together 20-30 clothes-pins. Hand any number of clothes-pins to all the kids (the more clothes-pins everyone starts with, the longer the game lasts). Have them pin the pins to their shirt sleeves, hems, pockets, etc. Then have all the kids scatter on the playing field. On your signal, everyone runs around snatching clothes-pins from one another, while also attaching their newly acquired clothes-pins to themselves. Any pins that drop to the ground no longer count. Any pins that are held in a kid's hands or pockets also don't count. At the end of the game (usually a time-limit), the one with the most clothespins wins. Clothes-pin Tag requires a fearless spirit. Like Miriam you have to stand your ground or dive right in. You can also team up with others and work together.