

How to Lead Games

- Keep everything fast-paced.
- Students should be involved and engaged from the moment they enter the room. Get rid of any “dead-time.”
- Give every game a spiritual application. These don’t have to be long teaching times, but strong, memorable quick-hits.
- Try to involve as many children in the game as you can. You want them moving, not sitting.
- Give quick and clear instructions. Be specific. Sometimes you may need to show them how to play instead of just telling them.
- Guide the game while your students are playing by being vocal.
- Give praise and encouragement during the game—i.e., “Good job.” “Nice try.” “That was awesome!”
- Help the adult leaders to understand that their role is not to stand in the back and talk but to be a part of what the kids are doing.
- Do everything that you can in advance to be set-up for the game. For example, if you are doing a balloon game with younger children, blow up the balloons before they arrive. Otherwise you might spend half your time blowing and tying balloons and what are the kids supposed to do while you take care of this? I guarantee they will find a way to “entertain” themselves.
- Always be aware of items or objects in your playing area that could be harmful—i.e., a hole in the ground, the corner of a cabinet, a chair off to the side, etc. Point out these dangers to your children. Remove them if possible. If not, put an orange cone near as a reminder or station an adult there to guard against accidents.
- Always have a first aid kit nearby. As with anything where children are active, accidents will occasionally happen no matter how safe the game is.
- Adapt the game to fit your playing area. If you have a lot of kids and not a lot of space, use the following variations to adjust for this: Have the kids play the game by hopping on one leg, by doing a duck walk, or by doing a bear or crab crawl.
- Use a Control Tool to help your kids re-focus. A control tool is where you say a question and your kids shout back a response. For example, if you need to give instructions and get your kids listening, simply shout out, “Who should be number one in your life?” The kids yell back, “Jesus!” Do it a second time but challenge them to be louder, or see if the boys can be louder than the girls. Immediately following this, say, “On the count of three, I want you to…” and give them the instructions in a quick and clear manner.
- Never allow students to choose their own teams. Someone will always be chosen last. Feeling left out or unwanted is not the experience you want students to have at church.