

Saturday Night Church Time

NEEDS PROVIDED:

- Paper bag
- Scissors
- Bad Habits papers

GAME

1. Have children form a circle around the paper bag.
2. Choose one child to go first.
3. They will then stand on one foot and bend down to try and pick up the bag with their mouth.
4. They may not use their hands or any other body part to pick up the bag.
5. To make the game harder, children can also keep their hands behind their backs.
6. Once everyone has successfully picked up the bag, cut an inch (or more!) off of the entire top of the bag.
7. If a child falls or cannot pick up the bag, then they are out.
8. Keep cutting the bag until the last child is standing.

ASK

What made this game so difficult? Wouldn't our game have been so much easier if we could stand on both feet and then bend down to pick up the bag with both hands? We were so restricted that many of us found it really hard to get the bag! We needed the freedom to pick up the bag how we wanted to!

What do you think it means to "live free"?

Do you think we need freedom *from* anything?

LOOK IT UP

Have children use their Bibles to look up verse and have a volunteer read it aloud

John 8:31a-32 "Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Trapping Sin: Use an adult volunteer to come to the middle of the group and sit in a chair (or on the floor). Explain that you are going to show that sinful habits can become traps in their lives.

Say, "A habit is something you do over-and-over and it becomes hard to stop. It's an action or thought you repeat many times and it becomes a pattern. Some habits are good and some are bad." Have children share some examples of habits they can think of – both good and bad.

Show them the black trash bag strips and say that each one will represent those type of habits. Offer the following examples and carefully use the bag strips to tie around the

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volunteer's feet, legs, arms and hands. (You'll want this to inhibit the adult to make the lesson make sense!)

- Making mean jokes about other children at school
- Telling made up stories so other kids will like you better
- Keeping secrets from your parents

Say, *"These are not just bad things. They are habits that get easier each time you do them. Soon they become traps and you find it hard to not do those things. This is how sin becomes more powerful and takes charge of your life. The Bible says this is like becoming a slave with sin as your master."*

Allow the children to suggest other habits that do the same thing. For each, add another tie to the volunteer. Use these extra examples if they are confused:

- Arguing or yelling at your parents / Stealing from a friend's house / Eating more food than you need / Doing lazy work for chores or school / Playing video games without a time limit / etc

SET YOU FREE: Explain to the children that you need their help to set this person free. Ask for volunteers who can say/read the verse from John 8. Allow each child to say the verse and cut off one strip of the black plastic tie.

- Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31a-32

ANOTHER WAY TO SAY: Direct the children to the phrases you underlined. Ask them to think of other words that could get across the same meaning as those phrases. This exercise is about clarifying vocabulary more than precise definitions. Here are some examples:

- hold to my teaching = do what I say = obey
- disciples = followers = learners = friends
- know the truth = understand = learn =
- set you free = break you out = untie you = off the chain

HABIT SHEETS: Display the following phrases with the given sheets of paper. Explain that some of these are good habits that follow Jesus teaching and some are sinful patterns that will trap them. Ask for volunteers to come up and point to the habits that will bring lead to sin. After

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they point, allow them to crumple that piece of paper as they say the verse. Leave the good habits on display.

- Lies / Stealing / Mean Talk / Anger / Prayer / Helping Others / Forgiveness / Sharing

After a child removes these signs lead the group to repeat, "*Jesus can set us free from _____*" for each habit they've removed.

APPLY IT: Say in a whisper voice, "I have done each of those bad habits and sometimes still have to fight them now. Even the good habits are hard sometimes. I am not strong enough to set myself free. I need Jesus to save me everyday. When he died on the cross, he defeated sin forever and lives to set me free."

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to show us how to live in freedom!