

MYSTERY

MEETING PLAN

AGES: 5-6

Goal: To introduce them to the thrill of mysteries.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

OPENING

- Ask the group if they've ever read a mystery/if they know what a mystery is about.
- Books like *Encyclopaedia Brown*, *Harriet the Spy*, *The Eleventh Hour: A Curious Mystery* by Graeme Base, the *Nancy Drew* series, the *Hardy Boys* series, or even the *Boxcar Children* series are good mystery books for young children and ones you can suggest to the group if they want to explore the thrill of mysteries further.
- Read a mystery story to them—either the whole thing or split it into two parts and read the ending at closing time. *Encyclopaedia Brown* books are usually split in several shorter stories that would be ideal in length for your meeting.
- If there are a lot of kids, break up the activities into 3 stations.

ACTIVITIES

SECRET MESSAGE MAKING/ INVISIBLE INK

Materials:

- Lemons/Lemon juice
- Sunlight, lightbulb, or other suitable heat source
- Paper
- Paintbrush or cotton swabs

1 If using lemons, squeeze them to collect their juice. Otherwise, simply pour lemon juice into bowl or other container that a paintbrush or cotton swab can be dipped into.

2 Have the kids dip paintbrushes or cotton swabs into lemon juice and use it to write their message onto the paper.

3 Allow paper to dry for several minutes. Once dry, have them hold the paper up to the lightbulb or other heat source. The heat will dry the ink into a pale brown and voila, your invisible message becomes visible!

MYSTERY BOX ACTIVITY

Materials:

- Boxes
- Seashells
- Rocks
- Jello/jelly
- Cold spaghetti
- Other items with distinctive textures

1 Cut hand-sized holds out into the boxes.

2 Place various items into each box.

3 Have the kids reach into the box and try and determine what's inside by touch alone.

CRAFTS

YOUR OWN DETECTIVE BADGE

Materials:

- Slips of paper
- Pens/Pencils/Pencil Crayons/Markers
- Plastic Badge Sleeves
- Hole punch (optional)
- Lanyards (optional)

1 Before the meeting, trim the slips of paper so that they will be able to fit snugly inside the plastic badge sleeves.

2 Have each child write or help them write their detective name (ie. Detective Chris, Detective Inspector Erin, etc) on the paper and decorate as they see fit.

3 When the group is done decorating, help them slide their badge into the badge sleeve.

4 Optional: if including lanyards, use the hole punch to punch a hole into the plastic badge sleeve where the lanyard can be attached.

CLOSING

- Finish the mystery story.
- Enjoy your usual closing!