

MYSTERY

INSTANT MEETING

AGES: 12-14

Goal: To encourage youth to delve deeper into mysteries and what they really are/how they're solved and to encourage them to apply mystery-solving techniques to real life.

Program Areas Covered:

Exploring A Theme

Prep Time: 20 mins

OPENING

- Enjoy your usual opening

DISCUSSION IDEAS

- Talk about mysteries and find out what the group already knows about mystery—whether they enjoy mysteries or find mysteries to be too challenging or too easy or even too boring or scary.
- Mention mystery greats like *Sherlock Holmes* or *Nancy Drew* or *Hardy Boys* and ask if they know of or enjoy other mystery stories/series/books
- Discuss what makes mysteries interesting or challenging; why or why aren't they interested in mysteries, be it reading them or solving them.
- Discuss how mysteries are solved—what methods detectives (amateur and professional) use; how these methods might have changed with changes in technology (for example, Sherlock Holmes had only his mind and the most basic of tools compared to the detectives of today who have the ability to extract an entire story from just a tiny bit of fabric left at a crime scene).
- Ask the group if there are mysteries in their daily lives; if they would want mysteries to be part of their day-to-day life; would any of them consider being detectives, why or why not?
- Open the floor up to the group to discuss whatever they want to about mysteries for a bit.

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 everyone 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!

NAMELESS NOTE

Materials per person:

- Pen
- Paper

1 Each person's handwriting is unique. Have each member of the group pen a sentence or two on paper and then have them each look over everyone's writing. Then have one member leave the area and have another member write another note (don't tell the member who has left who wrote it!).

2 Bring the other youth back and see if they can figure out who wrote the note. Do this with each group member, if you wish.

3 Discuss with the group how detectives can potentially use handwriting analysis to solve mysteries (ie. helps them identify who wrote a note that may have been left at a crime scene by the guilty party).

Idea!

Clue is a great board game to illustrate the intrigue and thrill of mysteries. Play a round or two with the group. If you have more members than the game is meant for, split them into teams and encourage them to work together to figure out the mystery.

FOOTPRINT HUNT

Materials:

- Drop cloth (to protect floors)
- Paper
- Washable paint
- Paint tray
- Pen/Pencil

1 Have each member paint the bottom of one of their shoes (it might be a good idea to get permission from their parents for this, just in case) and press it to the paper so it leaves a clear footprint.

2 Write a number on each print and line them up in a row on the ground.

3 Give each member a numbered sheet of paper and a pen.

4 Have them go down the line of prints to try and figure out which shoe they think belongs to which print. They can ask other members to look at the bottoms of their shoes to help themselves along.

5 For a more challenging version, have them do this with bare feet instead of shoes.

WHO AM I? GAME:

Materials:

- Index Cards
- Pens/Pencils
- Tape

1 Have the group write the names of popular actors, pop stars, cartoon characters, and famous people, etc on the index cards.

2 Shuffle the index cards and tape one to the back of each member with the name facing out so other group members can read it. Make sure they don't know what name is on their back!

3 Have the group walk around asking yes or no questions about their name to each other. The first player to figure out the name on their back wins. Keep playing until they all figure out their names.

CRAFTS

MAKE YOUR OWN MAGNIFYING GLASS

Materials:

- Plastic bag (one per group member)
- Water
- Small embroidery hoop (one or two per group member)
- Wooden dowels (one per group member)
- Hot glue
- Scissors
- (Optional) Paint to color the embroidery hoop and dowel

1 If using paint, paint the embroidery hoop and dowel first. Might be preferable to do this right at the beginning of the meeting and then come back to it after giving it a bit of time to dry.

2 Fill the plastic bags with about 10% water and make sure to seal fully.

3 Hold each of the four corners of the water bag together to center the water.

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Idea!

Challenge the group to write their own mystery stories. Have them work in teams and see who can finish their story faster to add a bit of spice to the challenge. When they're done, have them share their stories with the rest of the group and discuss the mysteries that were written.

Make Your Own Magnifying Glass continued...

4 Lay the bag center down inside the bottom embroidery hoop circle.

5 Top with the outer circle and tighten the hoop together for security.

6 Turn the hoop over and cut around the bag along the back of the hoop. Make sure the bag being left behind is pulled tight before cutting.

7 Seal off the bag and the hoop closer with hot glue.

8 Glue on dowel for hand hold.

9 Voila! Your very own magnifying glass!

STEP 3:



STEP 5:



STEP 7:



FINAL PRODUCT!



Photos courtesy of:

<http://www.justmommies.com/gradeschool-kids/kids-crafts-and-activities/kiddies-diy-make-your-own-magnifying-glass>

CLOSING

- Challenge group to find mysteries in their everyday lives!
- Enjoy your usual closing!