

## Ideas for Bible-based carnival games

By Shirley Davis

**Suggestions:** #1 - You can either give candy/prize at each game or you can give "points" on a scorecard worn around the child's neck. Then at the end of the day, they can go to a special prize booth and cash in their points for special prizes.

#2 – Prepare a short paragraph telling the Bible story for each game, which can be read at the beginning of each session by those who are running the game.

#3 - To encourage kids to visit ALL the games (and so hear all the stories and not just keep winning prizes at a simpler game!) give each child a name-tag worn around the neck (this can be combined with the scorecard) and each game is given a number, which has a hole punched next to it when the child plays the game. Each child cannot return to a game until he/she has played them all.

#4 – It is a good idea to sound a bell every 10 minutes or so, at which point everyone moves on to a new game. In this way you avoid congested lines waiting at any one game. (This works well if you have more than 100 kids, and especially if many are visitors.)

**1) Jonah and the whale** – Using black trash bags you can make a large container to look like the mouth of a whale in the sea. Kids throw beanbags with cutout picture of Jonah on front into the "mouth". (Or maybe you could use old "Ken" dolls!)

**2) Goliath sling shot** - Using small pieces of soft dough (NOT stones!) kids use a sling shot to shoot "Goliath" in the head. (Use 4x8 sheet of board painted like Goliath)

**3) John the Baptist's head** - Paint the picture of a large plate onto a 4x8 sheet of board, then cut out a hole "on" the plate so that someone can put their face through. Contestants throw water-filled sponges to hit the head.

**4) Field with hidden treasure (Mt 13:44)** - Fence off a section of land (about 20 x 20 feet or more if possible) and let each kid write his name on a marker stick and then stick it in the ground where he thinks the treasure is buried. Before the start, someone "chooses" a spot and records how many feet it is from the corners and seals the envelope until the end when it is opened and whichever marker is closest gets the prize.

**5) Jail** - Roman soldier goes around putting people in jail for being Christians. Periodically an angel comes to the prison to let them all out!

**6) Fishing for a golden coin** – Using an inflatable pool with water and small bamboo fishing poles with a magnet on the end, kids can try to catch fish. Each fish can be a cut-out with a paper clip on the top, but one can have a small "coin" picture glued or drawn on it underneath – if caught it denotes a special prize or more points.

**7) Lost sheep** – If you have a large area of field, you can make up small cut-outs of sheep that are then hidden around the area. The kids are each given a paper with a map-type layout of the area, showing "landmarks" like trees and bushes, fence, driveway etc. They are given a certain time limit to search for the hidden sheep and mark on the map where each sheep is located (thus not disturbing it to be found again by others). If all sheep are found the kid receives a prize.

**8) Plague of frogs** – Make cut-outs of sitting frogs from poster board, then attach them to the front of empty soda bottles. Practice beforehand to see how much sand or dirt is needed inside each bottle so that when a beanbag is thrown to knock over the frog, it is not too easy but not too hard! Prize if all are knocked over with certain number of beanbags or points according to number knocked over.

**9) Rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:15)** – Using a stop watch, each child is given 52 seconds to build up a wall as high as they can next to a yardstick stuck in the ground. The results are recorded and the one who has built the highest at the end of the day wins. You can use bricks, blocks of wood or children's building blocks - as long as they are all about the same size.

**10) Ruth gleaning in the field** – Each kid is given a sandwich bag and 60 seconds to run down a course and pick up as many kernels of corn as they can (which are scattered on the ground). Points or prizes awarded for # of kernels in bag.

### Special events during the day

**1) "Water to wine" race** - Competing teams must carry ladles filled with water down the course to fill up a gallon jar which has a package of red Koolaid in the bottom. Team that fills up their jar first all get prizes

**2) "Armor of God" race** – Individuals race around course putting on items of clothing – winner must have on all items.

**3) Nativity Story race** - Joseph, Mary, donkey, Baby Jesus, wrapped boxes of gifts must all get around the course going from Nazareth to Bethlehem stable, then house (visited by Magi) then finish in Egypt according to the story.