

Carnival of Life

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ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Start this activity off in the chapel. Have only one set of doors into the building for youth to enter. Have the doors to the cultural hall locked until after opening exercises.

Welcome everyone here and sing "Choose the Right" or "Know This That Every Soul is Free" for the opening song. Have an opening prayer and give each youth 10 talents.

Explain that they are now going to go into a carnival. Have them all stand up, turn around and face the rear of the chapel. Open the overflow doors into the cultural hall where they immediately view a brightly lit, noisy carnival, decorated with balloons and lights. Game people at many of the booths are calling out loudly and gesturing, trying to attract people to their particular game. Dismiss the youth one row at a time. After the youth have entered the cultural hall close the doors nearest the chapel.

Several (10 or more) of the booths will be worldly and several (10 or more) will be spiritual. There will also be a prize booth with all sorts of things that youth can gain by earning points (from worldly booths). There will be a "prophet" and "Satan" mingling throughout the carnival trying to get the youth to do what they think is best.

After about 30-40 minutes some messenger will begin to come in and randomly approach the youth and touch them on the shoulder and say "It's time to go". They will then be escorted to the judges quarters (individually 1 at a time). There, three judges will tell the youth that this is a simulated death. The judges will collect the prize tickets from each youth and ask them what they were working to get. They will then tell her/him that they cannot have these items because they are earthly possessions and cannot be taken with them. He will then tear up the prize tickets and take away any prizes actually redeemed. They will keep their talents, and each one of them will be stamped with a particular symbol. The youth will then be escorted to the chapel and will be seated in the audience where they can view "Man's Search for Happiness" and quietly wait for the others to be escorted in.

Note: Be prepared- some youth may be very angry that they cannot keep their prizes.

Note: Don't drag out the dying part too long, the first to die get very bored and tired of waiting for the rest.

If they had an appropriate symbol previously stamped on their palm they would be escorted to sit up on the stand of the chapel to wait.

After about 1/2 to 2/3 of the youth have "died," there is an earthquake in the cultural hall and everyone else dies all at once. (Flashing Lights and Announcement). You may want to have several rooms of judges to get them through the next process expediently. (After the earthquake, a man dressed in a white robe, Christ, who was the "beggar" or

"carpenter" before, is mingling and talking with the youth who are seated on the stand during the remaining escort time).

After everyone is seated properly in the chapel, two speakers will talk about the parallels of this activity to real life. These speakers should be interactive in their style and presentation so as to involve the youth. (i.e. calling some up from the audience to respond, or answer appropriate questions). The first speaker will address the parallels of the carnival games and prizes with choice and accountability. The final speaker will talk about the parallels of the beggar at the Carnival, the stamp on the palm and the validation stamp on the talents as they related to Christ and the atonement.

Closing Song, Prayer, and Refreshments.

ADVANCE PREPARATION Publicize the event. (but not what it is. Keep Carnival part a secret.) It is just Standards Night, but no parents are invited. Decide a dress category. All youth: 12 and up.

Keep the activity "secret."

Assign a pianist and chorister for opening and closing songs.

Assign someone to conduct Opening Exercises (and prayers)

Assign someone to be over refreshments.

Assign two special speakers. Make sure they fully understand their assignments. 10 minutes each.

Assign someone to produce talent tickets. (Enough for each person to have 10). Cut out and staple these into groups of 10. Put these on one color of paper. Design and produce (half) as many prize tickets as talents that say "Good for---points." Distribute them evenly into boxes (one for each worldly booth) Put these on a DIFFERENT color paper.

Arrange a prize table with prize points on the items such as a camera 400 points, walkman, 250 points, CD 100 points, etc...Assign someone to stay at the prize table throughout the evening to entice them to get more points. The youth may come and redeem their tickets for their actual prize throughout the evening. (but, when they die they do not get to keep it! so they will be returned). try to get a lot of good prizes that will really appeal to kids of this age. I.E. TV, Video's, Books, Guitar, Keyboard, Video Games, CD's, Radio's, Cologne, Bubble Bath, School Supplies, Cassettes, Posters, Etc.

Note: Members "loan" the gifts. Things they have at home that look like new. Tell kids some prizes "look like new" but are used but in good working order. Have some HIGH TICKET ITEMS so they will be tempted to work for more prize tickets. When they do purchase an item, put their name on it and tell them they can pick it up on their way out at the end of the evening. You will keep it reserved for them. This way no one will accidentally slip out and go home early with a members' possession. Give youth a

coupon that they "think" they can redeem for their prize later. (This will be taken away when they die!)

Assign someone to be a prophet. He should wear a plain suit and will be in the cultural hall during the carnival attempting to influence the youth to use their talents in the spiritual booths, and to visit the homeless beggar.

Assign someone to be Satan. He should wear flashy, "cool", worldly clothing and will work in the cultural hall attempting to influence the youth to use their talents in the worldly booths. Pick someone with an outgoing personality that the youth really like. Assign judges and escorts to be dressed in white. Explain their duties.

Assign messengers (of death) to be dressed in normal clothing. Messenger (usually 2) need to be as inconspicuous as possible. They whisper to a youth to come with them, and after they have left the cultural hall, they explain that they have died and take them to be judged.

Assign someone to be the beggar (should be dressed as a homeless person) and who will later be dressed in the chapel, in a white robe as the Savior. Or have them dressed earlier as a carpenter (bib overalls, paint cap, tool belt, working on building something in the corner of the gym.)

Assign 1 or 2 people to be in charge of each booth. Orient them as to their appropriate role and duties. Make sure they understand the purpose of their booth, etc.... Get "enthusiastic" type people!

Assign people to decorate the different booths brightly and festively. With signs, balloons, lights, crepe paper, etc...be creative! Everything should look fun and inviting, like a real carnival!

Have the items needed for each game ready at each booth, as well as treats and tickets or talents to be given away.

BOOTHS - Here are examples of some of the possible booths. The more booths you have the more fun it will be!

WORLDLY BOOTHS To play these, use one talent. (only if they have run out of talents can they redeem a prize ticket.) The worldly booths are loud and those in charge of the booths have one job. To get the youth to participate! They could beg, plead and make promises. They can give DOUBLE rewards (or more candy) if that is what it takes to get the youth to play their game.

Basketball Throw The youth will get 3 foul shots. If the youth make 2 out of 3 foul shots they will be given a treat (candy, cookie, etc)

Prize tickets: 0 baskets--25 points

1 basket---50 points
2 baskets--75 points
3 baskets--100 points Golf Putting The youth will putt 3 times from a fixed discourse.
Prize--If the youth make
1 out of 3 putts they will be given a treat.

Prize tickets: 0 putts--25 points
1 putt---50 points
2 putts--75 points
3 putts--100 points Ring Toss The youth will throw 3 rings at a group of soft drink bottles. Prize--If the youth puts the ring around 1 out of 3 bottles they will be given a treat!

Prize tickets: 0 rings--25 points
1 ring---50 points
2 rings--75 points
3 rings--100 points Donut Booth The youth can buy a donut with one talent. There is also a DRAWING for prize tickets. (Prize tickets should vary from 10-200 points)

Other Possible Booths might include: Balloons Darts, Trivia Questions, Bean Bag Toss, Limbo, Pie Eating Contest, Sponge Throw (at a person), Win Lose or Draw, A Cake Walk, Penny Toss in the Goldfish Bowl, Frisbee or Nerf Football Throw, Etc....

SPIRITUAL BOOTHS These are much quieter. They can invite the youth to play but don't ask more than a few times. They are there for the choice. The booth keepers also give the youth their original talent back when they finish at the booth plus any others earned.

Name That Hymn A pianist will play 3 notes of a church hymn. If the youth can identify the song they write it on their paper and turn it in. If they can't guess it on 3 notes she will play 5 notes and then 7 notes. (Use well known hymns).

Scoring: 3 notes--3 extra talents
5 notes--2 extra talents
7 notes--1 extra talent Name The Prophets On a bulletin board place 8 pictures of latter-day prophets with a number by each one. The youth will write down the numbers and the names of each prophet they can identify. Time limit 1 1/2 minutes.

Scoring: 1 to 2 identified--1 extra talent
3 to 5 identified--2 extra talents
6 to 8 identified--3 extra talents Number The Articles of Faith On a corkboard of blackboard place all 13 articles of faith with the letters A-M by each. The youth will write down the letter and the number of each Article of Faith that matches it. For example, if the 1st Article of Faith was M they would write M-1. Time limit 2 minutes. (Several youth could do this at the same time.)

Scoring: 1 to 4 right--1 extra talent

5 to 8 right--2 extra talents

9 to 13 right-3 extra talents Name The Old Testament Books On a blackboard randomly list six New Testament and six Old Testament books with numbers 1-12 by each. The youth will be asked to write down the numbers of the six Old Testament books. Time limit--one minute.

Scoring: 1 to 2 correct-1 extra talent

3 to 4 correct- 2 extra talents

5 to 6 correct- 3 extra talents Headline Hunters Twelve headlines must be identified according to where their stories can be found. A) Book of Mormon B) Old Testament C) New Testament. Time limit is 3 minutes.

Scoring: 1 to 4 correct- 1 extra talent

5 to 8 correct- 2 extra talents

9 to 12 correct- 3 extra talents Service It would be good to come up with some sort of a service booth. (Actually perform it?) or.....

Moral Decisions Develop a game where the youth are given a challenging situation or scenario and asked to come up with a righteous way to handle it.

THE BEGGAR OR CARPENTER This is an important part of the carnival. It's not really set up as a booth. Somewhere, sort of set back in a corner of the gym, should be a person dressed and looking like they are homeless. The should be sitting on a chair, with an empty chair next to them, and a little stool (or table) that has a clear pitcher of water and some small Dixie cups. The prophet person will be encouraging those at the spiritual booths to go and visit this person. If they come up and sit down next to him or talk to him, he will offer them a cup of water. If they drink it, he then stamps a symbol on their left palm. (It is the same symbol that is stamped on everyone's talents after they have died).

POINTS FOR SPEAKERS TO COVER First Speaker (10-12) minutes:

Talk about the talents they each received: define "talent." The world often defines it as athletic, intellectual, or artistic giftedness. We are more broadly defining it as: What You Came With. (i.e. situations, circumstances, opportunities, blessings). You may like some of it, other parts you may not.

In other words:

- personality traits
- the kind of body you have
- kind of family you have
- spiritual gifts
- religious upbringing
- how you think (learning style)

-opportunities/ or lack of opportunities/ for personal development Whatever you have been given in this life--what are you going to do with it?

"Each is given a bag of tools--a shapeless mass, a book of rules and each must make ere life is flown, a stumbling block or a stepping stone."

What did you use your talents for tonight? To try and earn a Stereo, or a CD, or donuts? Just like at the carnival each of you was given talents to work with here on earth. How will you use your agency? Your time and energy?

For worldly things like:

- fun
- fame (Do you dream of having your name on a magazine cover?)
- popularity (football jock or homecoming queen)
- lots of money (to buy a car, cool clothes, big house, etc)
- beautiful body (dark tan with great muscles or figure)

Or:

- to help others
- build good relationships
- to gain spiritual knowledge and testimony
- to become Christlike (beautiful on the inside)

Recreation and looking nice etc... aren't inherently good or "bad" (it's good to have fun, it's good to look nice, etc...) The question should be "Why do you want them?" and "What do you want the most in life?"

Parallels to discuss:

-worldly booths--bright and loud, enticing media, loss of talents, immediate gratification, but can't take it with you.

-spiritual booths--less "showy" and "exciting" Increased talents. Often delayed gratification required. But you CAN take it with you! Plus even MORE reward added to it in the next life!

- Satan--and his helpers, working hard.
- Prophet--and his leaders their to guide you
- Death--You never know when it will happen! (Life can be long or short)

Second Speaker (8-10 minutes)

Might ask: Who was the homeless person? Why is he dressed so differently now?
(Response)

Talk about the symbolism and meaning of:

- the beggar/man in white robe (serving those in need, helps lead us to Him). Matthew 25.

- his inconspicuous. The Savior isn't out yelling in brightly lit booth like at a carnival. The prophet can point the way. (Like Tonight). but each person must personally seek out the Savior.

- the water in the pitcher (the Living Water, internalizing/drinking it, changing our hearts) Reading the scriptures and attending church are all good things to do, but it doesn't really change you unless you internalize it and make his teachings a part of your life. Allow his Spirit to change your heart.

- the symbol on the palm (representative of you doing the above and taking his name).

- the same symbol stamped on each talent (for every person).

- those on the stand vs. those in the pews None of these talents we developed or good works we did in this life would save us or helps us without the atonement. Our works do not save us. Christ's atonement does--after we have done all that we can do. And it doesn't matter if you have 5 talents or 25. If you have come unto Christ, and done your best He makes up the difference and you are saved.

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