

## **Buns Charades v. Acts 2:42-47**

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When I was new to youth ministry I was desperate for guidance. Clueless as to how to fill up a two-hour program with 12 rowdy teens I went to my local Christian bookstore for help. It was there I found a book of games that would change my life. It was full of activities designed to attract a crowd and excite teenagers. Perfect. The next few weeks were full of games, games and more games. We smacked each other with newspapers, spat water into a bucket and stomped balloons tied to each other's feet. Suddenly we hit week six- this was when the wheels came off. This was the week we played 'buns charades'.

Please tell me that you don't know this game. I am fairly sure its illegal in several states. This game is based on charades. The "twist" however, is that instead of acting out the word you wiggle your backside to spell the word. To my naïve and simple mind this seemed like a smashing idea. Unfortunately, soon after we started the game one of the wigglers" was an attractive 16-year-old girl trying to spell the word 'boat'. It became apparent to me that most of the boys in the group had cottoned on to the word she was spelling. However, they were enjoying the show so much that they were shouting out, 'elephant, automobile, bicycle' (anything to keep the show going). To them this was the perfect Friday night. Go and hang out with the opposite sex while the youth leader runs some activities that gets them up on the stage wiggling their butts. I stood there in utter dismay. It was as if my youth ministry world had completely collapsed all around me.

It was around this time that I decided I needed to completely revise where I was going and the content in my youth program. It was also at this time that I started to seriously consider what the Word of God said about meeting together and how I could direct that towards my youth group.

### **A brief look at Acts 2:42-47**

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 (NIV)

Here we find a snapshot of some things that characterized the early church. And what a picture it is. Let's take a quick look at what Luke tells us about them. (While there is probably too much in this passage to go through here and now I need to point out a few key thoughts.)

- *They were devoted to the pursuit of spiritual disciplines*
- *They studied the Apostle's teachings together*
- *They were committed to prayer.*
- *They were committed to each other (fellowship)*
- *They were marked by an overwhelming generosity*
- *They had a real impact in their local community*
- *God blessed this with numerical growth*

Wow! What a picture. When I read this I hang my head in shame to think of all the weeks I wasted in silly activities and pointless games. I realize that in Acts 2 I have a nice template for effective youth ministry. Here are the things I've put into practice from this chapter: Don't be ashamed of gearing your meeting around Bible study, prayer and fellowship. These are the things that 'work'.

Spend lots of time together as a group. The early church met together all the time. This means I must remove any thoughts of a 'every other week' gathering or a 'drop in center' approach to ministry. We now have small groups, meals each week and lots of time away together (Retreats & overnights). In addition to these, we have worked at developing a generosity among our youth. We have done away with fundraisers. I mean c'mon- a carwash?! You're kidding! Instead, we have said to the group that we are going to learn to give generously- even if it hurts. The results have been fantastic. Each time we take on a new cause (i.e. a compassion child or giving money to the poor) we have reached our target with money left over. This has then allowed us to take on a new cause.

In the end, when I through the games book away I found that my youth group actually increased in size and quality. It was as if the kids themselves could see that buns charades paled into insignificance compared to reading the Bible and prayer. If you are looking for guidance, the book of Acts is the place to start!