

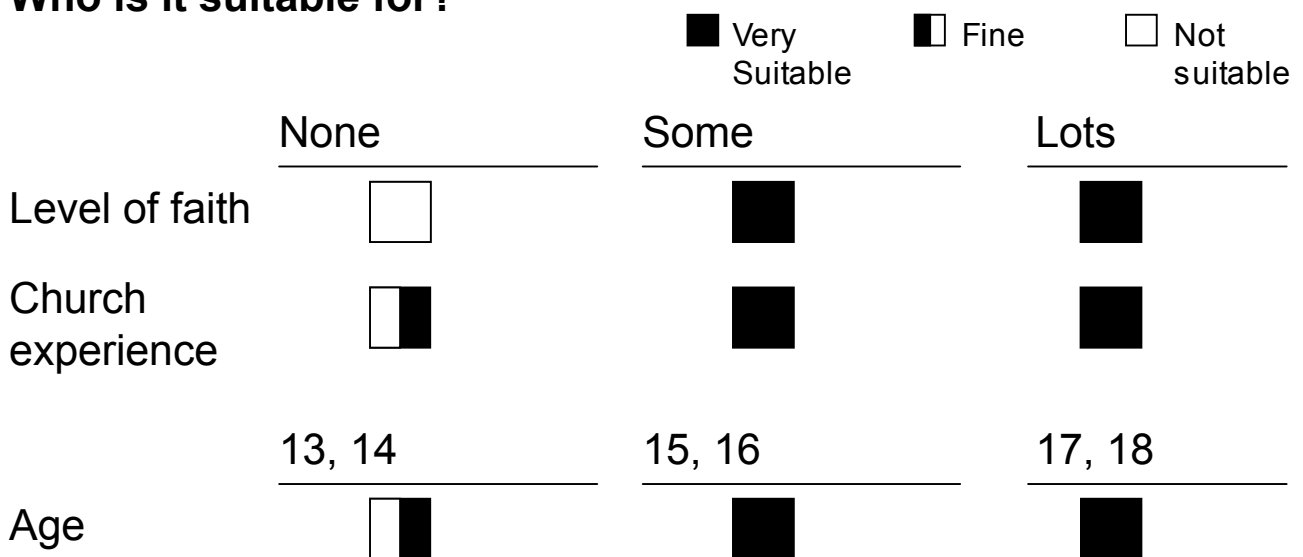
TENT PRAYERS

Sugar and Spice

What is this all about?

Unsurprisingly (as they constitute over half the population) women were instrumental in Jesus' birth, ministry, the early church and the spread of the gospel to the most outcast and the most sophisticated societies of the day. But often we miss out by making these women invisible or oversimplifying their lives. Maybe there was more to Mary than being 'meek and mild', wearing a lot of blue and travelling on a donkey? Maybe it would be a bit fairer to characterise Rahab by her bravery and her intelligence, rather than her profession. This Tent Prayers gives you a chance to find out!

Who is it suitable for?



Overview of the days please!!

- Sunday : Get to know each other
- Monday : Introduction
- Tuesday : Mary
- Wednesday : Mary (continued!)
- Thursday : Priscilla
- Friday : Mary and Martha

TENT PRAYERS

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (1/2)

What is the point of Tent Prayers?

A successful tent prayers provides campers with the opportunity to get to know you and each other, to discuss their faith with each other in a friendly and fun environment and to learn together and from each about God.

Five handy hints

(1) Meet in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)

- *Together*: Find a place where everyone feels part of one single group. I would recommend sitting in one circle so that everyone can see each other. It helps if everyone is sitting on the same level (avoid having some on the floor and some on seats). Try not to have anything in the middle of the group like a table (feel free to rearrange the any of the marquees to make the right space for your group).
- *Out of the tent*: Definitely leave the tent. A tent is a bad place to have tent prayers. Campers can't really see each other very well and they get really distracted with their belongings. They also tend to fall asleep! Even if it's raining, don't be tempted to meet in the tent. Take some chairs out of the chapel or main marquee and put them up in field. Or meet in the chapel, lounge, teaside or main marquee.
- *Private*: Try to find a space not too near another group so that your campers will be able to talk in private and won't be too distracted by each other!

(2) Prepare

Prepare what you are going to do in advance. Decide at the beginning of the week which tent leader is going to take responsibility for leading each day. In preparing, you can use the material in this booklet. Everything marked with an **R** is recommended, everything marked **O** is optional. You will need to think what is most appropriate for your campers. You will not have time to do everything!

(3) Stop talking!

As much as possible get the campers talking. Ask them what *they* think, ask them what *they* think of what each other has said. If you are not leading the session, try not to talk at all!!

(4) Be yourself

Be yourself with the campers. If you want the campers to share their personal stories and views, then you need to lead by example (without talking too much!!)

(5) Have fun and let it flow

You're not at school. And even if you were, people learn better if they're enjoying themselves! Having banter and playing games are a critical part of tent prayers – not a waste of time!! Also don't worry too much about covering all the material you have planned if the campers get into a debate or discussion. It is fine to go where the energy is.

TENT PRAYERS

Advice for leading Tent Prayers (2/2)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do I have to use all the time?

A: No, definitely not. It is much better to have a really good 15 minute session, than a 30 minute session that drags. However, if you find time is dragging I would encourage you to spend the extra time playing games or walking to the beach together as then you are getting to know each other!

Q: How do I get them out of bed?

A: First of all, expect them to get out of bed. Expect them to do what you say. You are their authority figure and they will tend to do what you say, if you make it clear that you expect them to. However if you appear unsure whether they will do what you say, then they will realise that and not do it. On this basis, tell them what you want them to do and then assume they will do it. When it comes to getting out of bed, give them advance notice of what you expect them to do: i.e. when and where you expect them to be. (You can give them a choice about where they want tent prayers to be – but not in the tent!!) Having told them to get up, try not to hover over them. If you hover, they will feel that you don't believe they are going to do what you say. If they are being very slow go back and tell them once – act amazed that they haven't got up. If they continue to take ages get some 1 on 1 time with them afterwards, ask why they were so late and explain that it is important that they are there on time. If you have any problems here, talk to a Cheese

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (1/2)

AIM OF THE SESSION

- Get to know each other a little. Help the campers to feel comfortable with each other and with you by getting them talking (about anything!!)
- Explain what you will be doing in Tent Prayers each morning.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

R Get together

- Get everyone together in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)
- Explain that you have until breakfast at 9am to have a bit of time to get to know each other.

R Get to know each other

- Find out a bit about each other. One way to do this is to 'Go round the circle' (described below)

'Go round the circle:'

- Go round the circle asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Their name
 - Where they come from
 - Their favourite TV show as a kid (alternatively their yuckiest food, best dream, ideal job)
- Go round the circle again asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
 - Whether they've come to camp before
 - How they ended up coming this time
 - What they want to get out of the week

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. It helps to lighten the tone. (I would strongly recommend it – I found it worked with all the boys tents I ever led and girls aren't that different really, are they?!!!!).

Possible games (all explained in more detail in the appendix)

- Yee-ha
- 'Question, Question'
- Monkey Fight
- The 'Yes, No game'
- Call my bluff

TENT PRAYERS

Sunday: Get to know each other (2/2)

R Explain Tent Prayers

- Explain that you'll be meeting every day at 8.30 for Tent Prayers.
- Explain what the point of Tent Prayers is – a chance to get to know our tent and to discuss together some of our thoughts about God.
- Ask them if they would be interested in leading it themselves and say you will be asking one of them later today if they would like to lead it tomorrow. (don't forget to do this!!)

O Read a Bible Verse

- You may want to use a bible verse to illustrate how the aim of tent prayers and camp as a whole is to find out about God

Verses about finding out about God



- Luke 19 v1-4: Zacchaeus was prepared to climb a tree to find out about Jesus. Camp is a great opportunity to 'climb a tree'
- Matthew 7 v7: This passage tells us to you Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. Camp is great chance to have a go at asking, seeking and knocking.

O Find out where you're all at

- You may want to take a moment to find out where you campers are at in their faith. The best way to do this is to use an appropriate analogy which gives everyone an opportunity to say where they are. The football analogy below works well with boys, but there are plenty of others.
 - The Football Analogy: One way to think about faith is think about a football pitch. On a football pitch, you've got your strikers (who are zooming around, everything going well – they might score at any moment). You've got your midfielders (who are doing pretty well too, they're just a bit further back from the strikers but they also might score). You've got your defenders (who are much further back from the action, but they have moments when they get further forward, and they are on the pitch). You've also got the substitutes who are not on the pitch. And then there's the supporters who aren't in a team and aren't likely to get on the pitch. If the strikers are people who feel very strongly about their faith in God, the midfielders less so etc, etc, where would you put yourself?
 - You can also use a train station analogy (are you on the train, thinking of getting on the train, buying a ticket, thinking of buying a ticket, in the car park, at home etc.). There are lots of others – feel free to be imaginative.
- Explain the analogy and give everyone a chance to say where they are at. Make sure you say where you are at. Don't start with the keenest bean otherwise campers will feel that they have to say they are doing brilliantly with God and will be embarrassed to say otherwise. The key thing is to get them opening up about this stuff just a little!

R Close

- One of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: Introduction (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Introduction

- There is an old hymn that begins, 'Gentle Mary, meek and mild'.
 - What words or images come to your mind when you hear the phrase 'women of the Bible' or 'Christian women'?
 - Where have these ideas come from – are they from God? The Bible? Other people?

R Thought-starter

- Split the group into two. One group has a minute to write as many biblical men as they can. The other group does Biblical women.
 - Who has more names?
 - Why might this be?
 - Is it easy to find information about women in the Bible? Why do you think this is?
- Jesus' disciples were men who lived and worked alongside Jesus and were ultimately responsible for spreading the news about Jesus.
 - If you had to pick an all girl team of disciples to do this now, in our time – who would you pick? (they don't need to be Christians currently! When I did this before in a group the list included, bizarrely, Margaret Thatcher and Ginger Spice!)
 - Ask the group if they know any girls or women that they feel God is really present in (it doesn't have to be someone famous – it can be a friend).

R Focus on God

- Explain that this week we're going to look at a few women in the Bible and see how God used them as essential parts of his plan.



Finish by using Psalm 139:13-16 to remind everyone how precious we are in God's sight.

The message translation is:

“Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you, the days of my life all prepared before I'd even

TENT PRAYERS

Monday: Introduction (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Tuesday: Mary (1/2)


R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- Pick two people to compete. You start by saying a word. The two players take it in turns to say other words directly associated with the last word spoken. For example:
 - Player 1: 'sun'
 - Player 2: 'moon'
 - Player 1: 'space'
 - Player 2: 'rocket'
- A player is out if they take too long to think of a word, or say a word that doesn't relate to the last one spoken.

R Introducing Mary

-  Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers

R Who is Mary?







Get campers to read out Matthew 1 v18-19



Ask everybody to brainstorm or write down ten words they associate with Mary (i.e. ten words they could say if 'mary' (as in mother of Jesus) was mentioned in the game they just played)



What does this reveal about the way we think about her and how much we really know of her?

- Look again at Matthew 1:18-19 Explain that Mary was the same age as many campers (probably 14-15). Ask:
 -  How would you feel if you suddenly discovered you were pregnant?
 -  Would Mary have felt the same or differently?
 -  Why was Joseph considering divorcing her as a result of the news?
 -  What do you think it says about the kind of person Mary was that God chose her for this job?

TENT PRAYERS

Tuesday: Mary (2/2)

O What about after the birth?!

- Of course this was quite near the start of Mary's life. She had lots more experiences. Share out the following verses and then discuss as a group how it might have felt for Mary, or what it might show about her.



Matthew 2:11



Discussion starters could include: is this a normal experience for a young mother? Would Mary have usually mixed with people like this?



Matthew 2:13,14



Discussion starters: why did they have to go to Egypt? How would that have felt? Have you or anyone else you know had a similar experience? How different would life in Egypt have been? What sort of things might Mary have found hard?



Matthew 12:46



Discussion starters: Mary came from a pretty traditional, Jewish peasant background with a strong tradition of family. Do you think she had the same ideas about family as her son? Mary had other children apart from Jesus. How would Jesus' unique life have affected her family?



John 19:25-27



Discussion starters: what thoughts might have been running through Mary's head as she stood there? Do you remember anything about how fair the legal processes had been which led to this moment? How would this have left her feeling?



Finally, read Luke 1:30 together.



What would we normally picture as a life 'favoured by God'?



Would it be the sort of life Mary seems to have had?

R Was she like us?

- List the ways girls in the group are different from Mary in background or experience.
- Can her story still be helpful to us?
- In what way?

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Wednesday Tent Prayers do not always happen. If there is no time, then move straight on to Thursday's recommended activities.

TENT PRAYERS

Wednesday: Mary (continued!)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers. Get the group to recap some of the discoveries made about Mary yesterday, in particular the challenges she faced.

R Reflecting

- What does Mary's life tell us about being part of God's Kingdom or plan?
 - If possible, share something about how life as a Christian has challenged you. Invite campers to share if they feel comfortable.
 - Let's look at how Mary kept going through these difficulties:



Luke 2:15-19 - Mary treasured up and thought often about times that she knew were real, meaningful and confirming of God's amazing power and plan



John 19:25-27 – she relied on the support and companionship of other women

- Our challenges are obviously very different to Mary's! But is there anything about her story that can help us to cope, or choose how to react to them?

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Thursday: Priscilla (1/2)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

O Play a game

- Play 'Call my Bluff': where you state three facts, two of which are true, one is false and people have to spot the lie

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers.

R Who was Priscilla

- Today we're looking at a lady called Priscilla. There are only a few verses in the Bible about her so there are many things about her that we can only guess at, a bit like in the game earlier. However some things we can know for sure.
- Get the campers to work in small groups or pairs. Share out the following verses. Each group/pair has to make a list of facts they definitely know about Priscilla and facts they think are likely to be true but can't know for sure. The questions below each passage should help.



Acts 18:2-3

- What had Priscilla experienced just before meeting Paul? How would this have felt?



- What was her job? Does this tell us anything about her?



- What can we tell from the way she treated Paul?

Acts 18:24-26

- How did God use Priscilla?



- What effect do you think this might have had on her?



- What effect might it have had on other people?



- What qualities did Priscilla need to have in order for God to use her like this?

Romans 16:3

- Based on this, what kind of people do you think Priscilla and her husband Aquila were?



- Should we make any guesses about her based on the fact that her name is listed before her husbands...would this have been common at the time?*



1 Corinthians 16:19

- Have you ever been to a church that met at someone's house?



- What do you think it would be like?



- What kind of qualities would you want in the people who hosted it?

- Share as a large group what you have learnt. Is it a problem that some of it is fact and for some of it we must use our imagination or reasoning? Should we treat the two types of information differently or let them affect us in different ways?

TENT PRAYERS

Thursday: Priscilla (2/2)

O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

TENT PRAYERS

Friday: Mary and Martha (1/3)

R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- ? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers

R Looking at a Psalm

 Ask one of the campers to read Luke 10 v.38-41

- ? What sort of preparations do you think Martha was busy with? What would you have been preparing if you'd opened your house to Jesus?
What do you think of Jesus and Martha's conversation?
- ? How would you have felt if you were Martha?
- ? What do you think Jesus was hoping to achieve when he said this?
- ? Who is it easier to identify with, Mary or Martha? Why?

R A monologue!

- Ask one of the leaders or campers who has a vaguely dramatic bent to read the following imaginary monologue by Martha. Afterwards, give people an opportunity to reflect, react and share.

"Mary Mary Quite Contrary..." I wish we had had this nursery rhyme when I was a child! Mary was always the favorite, pretty and curly haired. When we were young, she was allowed to play while I was taught to cook. She was allowed to sew our clothes, while I was the one who washed them. She was always lingering places, day dreaming, wondering aloud, talking about clouds and people and ideas. I do love my sister. But...well...a good example is the scripture you heard today...

We'd known Jesus since we were all children –when our families gathered at Passover, his family often camped out near our house in Bethany. There was something special about him even then. We played together, he always gave you his total attention – he made me feel special even then. And he was mischievous and funny. But there was always an awe, an other-worldly quality, like he was always thinking ahead.

When Jesus' fame began to spread, and he began to wander the countryside, preaching and teaching and healing – loving and encouraging the people – we provided a haven for him, a sort of home for him and his followers. This particular visit, we had only three hours warning. Three hours! Usually I knew a day ahead! And I also realized that his band had grown. There could be as few as 15 or as many as 100! There was Jesus himself, plus the 12 disciples, plus the 70 whom Jesus sent out and who had recently returned to him, plus others who might be tagging along.

Friday: Mary and Martha (2/3)

R	A monologue! (continued)
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In a land of nomads and wilderness, our hospitality code contains definite expectations, from ritual greeting with a kiss, to water and ointments for washing, to the presentation of a large meal. Indeed, a good meal can spell the difference between life and death for desert travelers. I was frantic! All morning long there had been a bustle of excitement ... sweeping, scrubbing, dusting, checking recipes, darting in and out of the kitchen... frantically preparing the food and putting the place in order --Every moment was precious. So many details to cover. Then, Jesus arrived... and suddenly Mary whisked in to take over as hostess. She welcomed Jesus. She settled the large group around tables, all in the courtyard; and then plopped herself down in front of the Rabbi.

Whoa...Wait a minute! I was left to do all the work! Can you imagine? Well – I guess you probably can – it all happened so fast and I was so surprised I couldn't think what to say, apart from inside my head that is, where I was thinking - why doesn't someone else help? Why doesn't someone at least notice! I couldn't help it, I began to feel angry, then mutter to myself, then actively agitate with indignation, resentment, envy ... I got more and more aggravated, more and more frustrated...until I blurted it out: "Where is Mary? Why isn't she in here helping me? Look at this Lord. I'm having to do all the work here. Don't you care that my sister Mary has left me to serve alone? You get on to her now. Tell her to get out here in the kitchen and help me!" But Jesus said, more gently than I appreciated, more unsympathetic than I wanted:

"Martha, Martha, don't be so worried and troubled about so many things. Relax. Lighten up. One thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion which shall not be taken from her." Well! I was stunned. All my work – it was necessary - anything less would have been unacceptable. What should I have done – just slap a ready meal on the table?! WHAT was Jesus saying? In retrospect, I realize that my question was , in fact, one of envy – something like, "Lord am I not the righteous one in our family, the really lovable and admirable one? Look how hard I'm working!" And Jesus' answer was something like, "No, you are no more or less righteous than your sister. You are human, needing love, seeking meaning – But you are trying to earn something that is freely given. Your sister has for the moment stopped such nonsense. So should you."

I was trying too hard. Mary knew instinctively that the good news, something which cannot be taken away, was sitting right in the room with her, just as the good news for us exists right here in this room. I was so busy, caught up in my role of hostess, that I did not see the truth in front of me. Jesus came to our home to do a new thing! That particular night, the new thing, the radical breakthrough, was allowing Mary to sit at the feet of Jesus. Truth to tell, it was unthinkable, in our society, for a woman to be admitted to what we would call a theological discussion. But Jesus was about overturning customs; Mary was welcomed. I would have been as well. Jesus wasn't rejecting my cooking and serving. Goodness knows he appreciated that goat stew! And he didn't complain about the plentiful wine. He wasn't trying to devalue what I did, and his gospel is not about a choice between my approach and Mary's.

But Jesus did remind me that service without understanding, service without joy, is empty activity. I was so caught up in the work of serving, I lost sight of the point of it all. The gift of hospitality had become an obligation, a way of proving myself. Instead of a gift to God, my service had become a wedge between us. I needed to hear what he said to me that day: 'Martha! Slow down! Look at me! Remember the point of all this...remember the wellsprings of your courage and hope.' I thought that I was doing the serving that evening, and that Jesus was being served. I thought that I was the host and Jesus was the guest. Not so. The table is

TENT PRAYERS

Friday: Mary and Martha (3/3)

Take time to pray for each other

- It is great to make time to pray for each other about heading back home. If there is not time to do this on Friday, I would strongly recommend doing this on Saturday morning (you can get up early before set down!)
- There are two obvious ways to do this
 - Give one camper (and leader) the chance to share the things they would like prayer about leaving camp. Then a few of you pray for that person. Then go clockwise to the next person.
 - Get two or three campers/leaders to share the things they would like prayer for. Then the rest of the tent pray for those three people. Then move on to the next three people.
 - Ask everyone to share some things they would like prayer for. After everyone has shared ask the everyone to pray for the person on their left all at the same time. (it is worth telling people before sharing that they will be praying for the person on their left, then they will make the effort to remember what this person has said!!)

Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Appendix: Games

1 Yee-Haw

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask Jonny Hopper or Mikey Walker to explain it to you

2 Question, Question

- Two people play at a time
- Person 1 asks Person 2 a question. Person 2 needs to respond with a question (that makes sense as a response!). Person 1 has to then respond to that with a question, etc.etc.
- The first person not to be able to respond with a question that makes sense as a response without pausing for too long loses!
- Winner stays on!

3 The Yes, No Game

- Everyone plays at once
- One person is selected to be 'on'. That person is then asked questions by everyone else in any order. They must answer every question without saying Yes or No (or any version of these words – e.g. Yep, Nope.) They are also not allowed to shake or nod their head. They are not allowed to ignore questions. Once they say one of these words, their go is over and a new person is 'on'.
- The person who lasts the longest wins. (if anyone lasts 60 seconds, you might want to stop and declare them a winner)

4 Monkey Fight

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask John Tomlinson, Andrew Tomlinson or Jon Yates to explain it to you!

5 Call my bluff

- Everyone plays at once
- Get one person to come up with three (or four) statements about themselves. One of these should be a lie and the rest should be true. They then tell everyone the statements in any order without telling the group which is the lie. The group then has to vote on which they think is the lie.
- You could play this everyday which a different person doing it everyday. However, you will need to give campers advance notice that they need to come up with some statements or the game will take forever!!