

GUARDIANS OF ANCORA



PROGRAM
SMALL GROUP AND
FAMILY EDITION

scriptureunion
HELPING PEOPLE MEET GOD EVERY DAY

Guardians of Ancora

Revised Version

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Thank you for purchasing this book. Any profits from this book support SU in the USA to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to children, young people and families and to enable them to meet God through the Bible and prayer.

About Scripture Union

Scripture Union is an interdenominational mission organization whose mission is to invite children into a relationship with Jesus Christ through imaginative programs and outreaches, and to encourage you, no matter your age, to know Him through Bible reading and prayer, so that you can grow as part of a worldwide community of believers. Scripture Union is funded by charitable donations from individuals and churches.

About Our Children's Ministries

Scripture Union helps bring the Gospel to children and teens. Our ANYWHERE–ANYTIME SuperKids® Missions reach out to children wherever they are—increasingly in cities but also in rural areas and on vacation in resorts and on beaches. SuperKids® is presented as a “missions-to-go” outreach program and provides any church or group prepared to reach out to unreached children with the tools to run an effective program. SuperKids® also provides a unique entry-level opportunity for mature high school and college students to take their first steps in missions on their doorstep as they share their faith with ministry among children. Scripture Union's PrimeTime® provides after school faith-based programs for children. PrimeTime® is a perfect follow-up program for SuperKids®.

To contact Scripture Union or to order the SuperKids® or PrimeTime® curricula, write us at: P.O. Box 215, Valley Forge, PA 19481, call us at: 1-800-621-LAMP, or visit our website at: www.scriptureunion.org.

INTRODUCTION

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many churches will be unable to run the normal VBS program this summer. This program is designed for use at home with the family or with a small group of children. It has been adapted from the Guardians of Ancora curriculum developed for SuperKids®.

Travel to the city of Ancora that used to glow with the light of a thousand stories. Now these tales are gone and the Spire grows dim. Become a Guardian and search for stories to relight the Spire. Through ten stories from the New Testament, the Guardians of Ancora program looks at who Jesus is and demonstrates the power of faith in Christ. Participants are invited to consider the stories they hear about Jesus as treasure-stories that are of immense value and importance. As participants seek the treasure of these stories, they will be encouraged to seek and find their own place in God's big, ongoing, forever story.

This program is based on the award winning Guardians of Ancora app. Encourage children to download and play the game before your program. The app is free and available for download on the App Store, Google play and Amazon Appstore.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Participants will meet Jesus and learn more about him on the following Quests:

- **Quest 1:** Messages from Angels (Luke 1:26–38; Matthew 1:18–25)
- **Quest 2:** Angels and Shepherds (Luke 2:1–21)
- **Quest 3:** Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1–11)
- **Quest 4:** Jesus Heals the Roman Officer's Servant (Luke 7:1–10)
- **Quest 5:** Jesus Heals a Woman and a Girl (Luke 8:40–56)
- **Quest 6:** How to Talk with God (Luke 11:1–4)
- **Quest 7:** Jesus Heals a Man Who Came through a Roof (Luke 5:17–26)
- **Quest 8:** Jesus Feeds 5,000 (John 6:1–15, 25–35)
- **Quest 9:** The Way to the Cross (Luke 23:13–56)
- **Quest 10:** Jesus Is Alive! (John 20:1–18)

GUARDIANS OF ANCORA THEME SONG

"We are the Guardians of Ancora" is the Guardians of Ancora theme song. For a link to the song, go to the Multimedia Links page.



Option - Start and end each day with the theme song.

CRAFTS

You will find instructions for a craft each day that will make the Bible stories more memorable. This is also an excellent time to talk with one another more informally.

OPENING ACTIVITY AND PRAYER

Each day begins with an activity and a prayer that are designed to introduce the topic for the day.

BIBLE READING

There are key Bible texts for each day. A version of the Bible that is easy for all ages to understand should be used such as The Contemporary English Version. The Bible stories are also available on YouTube. You will find links to the stories on the multimedia links page in the Appendix.

TALK ABOUT IT

The discussion questions are designed to help your group or family explore the Bible text.

DIGGING DEEPER

Activity leaflet templates have been provided for younger and older children. The leaflets will help the participants dig deeper into the meaning of the story.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

This time of reflection provides an opportunity to think about what we learn from this story and what it means to us. *Option - a treasure scroll template is provided for each day to record your thoughts. You are encouraged to make a treasure box at the beginning of the program so you can store your scrolls in it and review them at the end of the program.*

PRAY TOGETHER

This is an opportunity to talk to God about your thoughts, reflections, needs, and the things you have been learning. A battery powered tea light passed around as each person prays will add something special to your prayer time.

Option - At the beginning of the program you could build a Spire of Light and add a tea light to it each day, bring light back to the city of Ancora.

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

You will find ideas for games and activities in the Appendix.



APPENDIX

**Multimedia links to
videos, theme song, music**

**How to make a
Spire of Light**

Games





MULTIMEDIA LINKS

Click on the titles below to be redirected to the links

[Guardians of Ancora - Theme Song](#)

[Quest 1 Video - The Birth of Jesus](#)

[Quest 2 Video - The Shepherds](#)

[Quest 2 Song - All the Angels Sing](#)

[Quest 3 Video - Jesus Calls the Fishermen](#)

[Quest 3 Song - Wow!](#)

[Quest 4 Video - Jesus and the Roman Officer](#)

[Quest 4 Song - Never Seen Faith Like This](#)

[Quest 5 Video - The Leader's House](#)

[Quest 5 Song - Don't be Afraid](#)

[Quest 6 Video - Prayer of Jesus](#)

[Quest 6 Song - Prayer is Talking with God](#)

[Quest 7 Video - The Crowded House](#)

[Quest 7 Song - Best Use the Roof](#)

[Quest 8 Video - Fish and Bread](#)

[Quest 8 Song - Might See Miracles](#)

[Quest 9 Video - Jesus Dies and Comes Alive Again](#)

[Quest 10 Video - Dead or Alive](#)

[Quest 10 Song - I Saw Jesus](#)

[Guardians of Ancora Promo Video](#)

Please note that Quest numbers may not match video titles. The video titles are generated by Scripture Union England & Wales - please follow the Quest numbers listed here.



HOW TO MAKE A SPIRE OF LIGHT

SUPPLIES

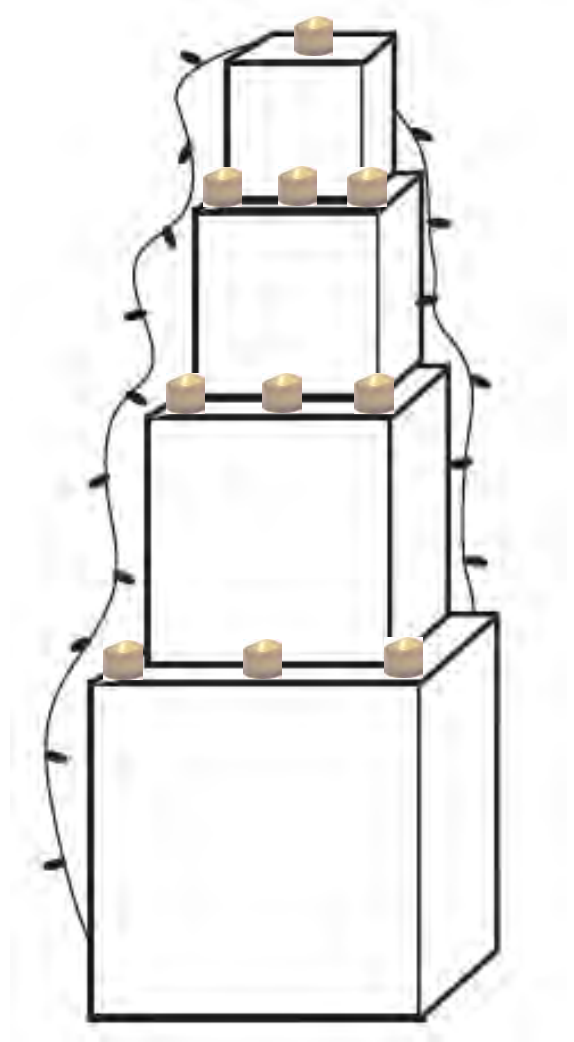
- Boxes of various shapes and sizes
- Fairy lights (battery or electric) or LED wire lights
- White or yellow paint and paintbrushes
- Fabric of various colors
- Scissors
- Colored paper
- Glue
- Tape

DIRECTIONS

Create the body of the Spire by sticking together the boxes in any way you like. You could create a uniform Spire, or go for something a bit more haphazard and organic!

Paint the whole tower and, when it's dry, hang the fairy lights or LED wire lights from the top, taping the strings in place down the body of the tower. Make sure that the battery packs or plugs are accessible at the bottom of the tower so that you can reach them to turn the lights on!

Decorate the tower using the colored paper and fabric, making sure that you can still see the fairy lights. Then position the tower safely in your area. It might be worthwhile weighting the bottom of the tower by putting bags of sand, sugar or rice in the bottom box. You can add tea lights to the tower each day by placing them on the shelves of the boxes.



Other options

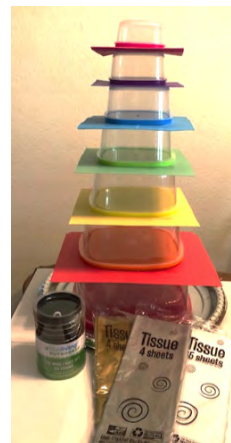
Build a Spire of Light out of LEGO®

Use popular building blocks to create your own Spire of Light and add the tea lights each day.



Build a Spire of Light out of nesting plastic bowls and lids

You can use tissue or colored paper and Outdoor LED wire lights for decoration. You can put card between the layers to create shelves for the tea lights. Lights and bowls available at Dollar General or Dollar Tree.



GAMES

ANCORA ARROWS

SUPPLIES

- A Velcro darts set

DIRECTIONS

Split the participants into teams and enjoy playing darts. You could play a traditional game, setting a fairly low target for the children to reach. Invite the children to take turns in their teams to throw the darts in order to reach that target.

You could also play the game that is sometimes called Killer (though you shouldn't call it that at the program!). Here, every participant chooses a number on the dart board and has three lives. On their turn, the player should try to land the dart in another participant's number. If they do, the participant with that number loses a life.

The winner is the last participant with any lives remaining. If you like, ask some children to be a commentator or a scorer to add some of the darts atmosphere.

ANTIQUA'S SHOP

DIRECTIONS

Sit in a circle. Tell the children that there is a market in Ancora run by a woman called Antiqua. She sells everything a Guardian might need—and plenty of other things too! Start the game by saying: "I went to the market and Antiqua sold me a bucket." The next player adds to the list: "I went to the market and Antiqua sold me a treasure map and a bucket." Continue around the circle, with each player adding to the list and remembering what everyone else has said. Give plenty of prompts as the list gets longer.

ANCORA-WIDE GAME

SUPPLIES

- A list of items that the participant might have on their person or be able to find

DIRECTIONS

Split the participants into teams and send them to different parts of the room. Stand in the middle of the space. Tell the participants that you're going to call out an item that Antiqua wants to have on her stall, and they have to bring it to you. The first person to give you that item wins a point for their team.

Include items such as a sock, a watch or a Bible. You could also have more difficult things such as a parent! Make sure the game doesn't become too over-competitive and that the children are aware of the need to keep each other safe. Accompanying adults should ensure that their teams are playing safely and fairly.



CAPTURE THE TREASURE

SUPPLIES

- Masking tape
- A large screen or room divider
- Large sheets of paper (lining paper)
- Markers
- Shiny card to make two sets of “treasure items” of varying sizes
- Lots of red and blue paper circles

DIRECTIONS

This game will take a while to set up, but it is always popular and is worth doing for the experience the participants will have. It is essentially a giant version of the game Battleships.

In your playing space, place your large screen or room divider across the center of the room. On the floor on either side of the screen, mark out a grid of squares, six squares by six. Also write 1 to 6 down one side of the grid and A to F along the bottom. Draw out the same size grid twice on the large sheets of paper and lay them flat on either side of the screen or divider.

Make your two sets of treasure: make one the same size as one square; one the size of two squares; one three squares; one four squares; and one five squares. You can keep the shapes as long strips or vary the combination; just make sure that both sets are the same.

Position one team on either side of the screen (they can hear but mustn't be able to see the other team) and challenge them to place their treasures on the grid on the floor in front of them.

In turn, each team names a square (say, F2 or B6). The other team has to say whether that square has a treasure on it (or part of a treasure) or is empty. The first team puts a red circle on the corresponding square on the paper grid facing them if they have found part of a treasure or a blue circle if that square is empty. The game continues until one team has found all the locations of the other team's treasures.

TEAM SCRAMBLE

SUPPLIES

- A hula hoop
- A timer

DIRECTIONS

Ask the participants to stand in a long line and hold hands. Meanwhile two adults hold a hula hoop so it is sideways on. The whole group must climb through the hoop, without unlinking hands, as quickly as they can.

Time how long it takes and see if they can beat their own time on a second attempt.



TEAM TRIALS

SUPPLIES

- A variety of obstacles such as hula hoops, nets to scramble under and cones to run around
- Chalk or masking tape

DIRECTIONS

Mark out a start line with the chalk or masking tape, and then set out an obstacle course that would be suitable for those participating in the program. Take into account any participants who have difficulties with movement and ensure that there is a way they can take part in the game. Make sure you risk-assess the course, so that the participants can complete it safely.

Invite the participants to take turns to complete the course. If you like, time how long each team takes for all its members to go around the course, and award points to the teams that do it the quickest.

DRESSING UP

SUPPLIES

- Lots of pieces of fabric
- String, ribbons

DIRECTIONS

Use whatever materials you have available to make Guardian costumes such as capes and cloaks or bags to carry equipment and treasure or to dress like various people in the Bible stories. Tie pieces together rather than sewing or sticking them together so that the costumes can be taken apart afterwards and used another time.

FIREBUG CHUTE-BALL

SUPPLIES

- A play parachute (a king sized flat bed sheet can be used with the corners folded in).
- A foam round ball.

DIRECTIONS

Arrange two teams around opposite halves of the parachute and ask them to hold the edge. Practice making the parachute ripple by wafting the edge up and down.

Place the foam ball in the middle of the chute and challenge the teams to waft the parachute and make the ball fly over the heads of their opponents. If they do this, they have scored a goal. The ball is placed back in the middle and the game starts again.

You can play just for the enjoyment of playing. Or you could play competitively: set a time limit and keep count of how many goals each team has scored. At the end of the time, the team with the most goals is the winner!



FIREBUG DANCE-OFF

SUPPLIES

- Sheets of newspaper
- Live or recorded music

DIRECTIONS

Practice the sort of moves firebugs make: flap wings, wave antennae and wiggle body. Give each participant a sheet of newspaper and ask them to spread it on the floor and stand on it.

Start to play the music while the participants keep standing on the paper. Call out the actions (one at a time to begin with, but call several at once as the game progresses) while the participants stand on the paper and dance like firebugs.

Pause the music. Ask the players to fold their sheet of paper in half and play the game again. If anyone's foot touches the floor, they miss the next round of the game but are then back in again. By four rounds it will be getting difficult!

Have fun!

FIREBUG DRIVE

SUPPLIES

- Pencils and paper
- A copy of the firebug diagram on the next page
- Dice

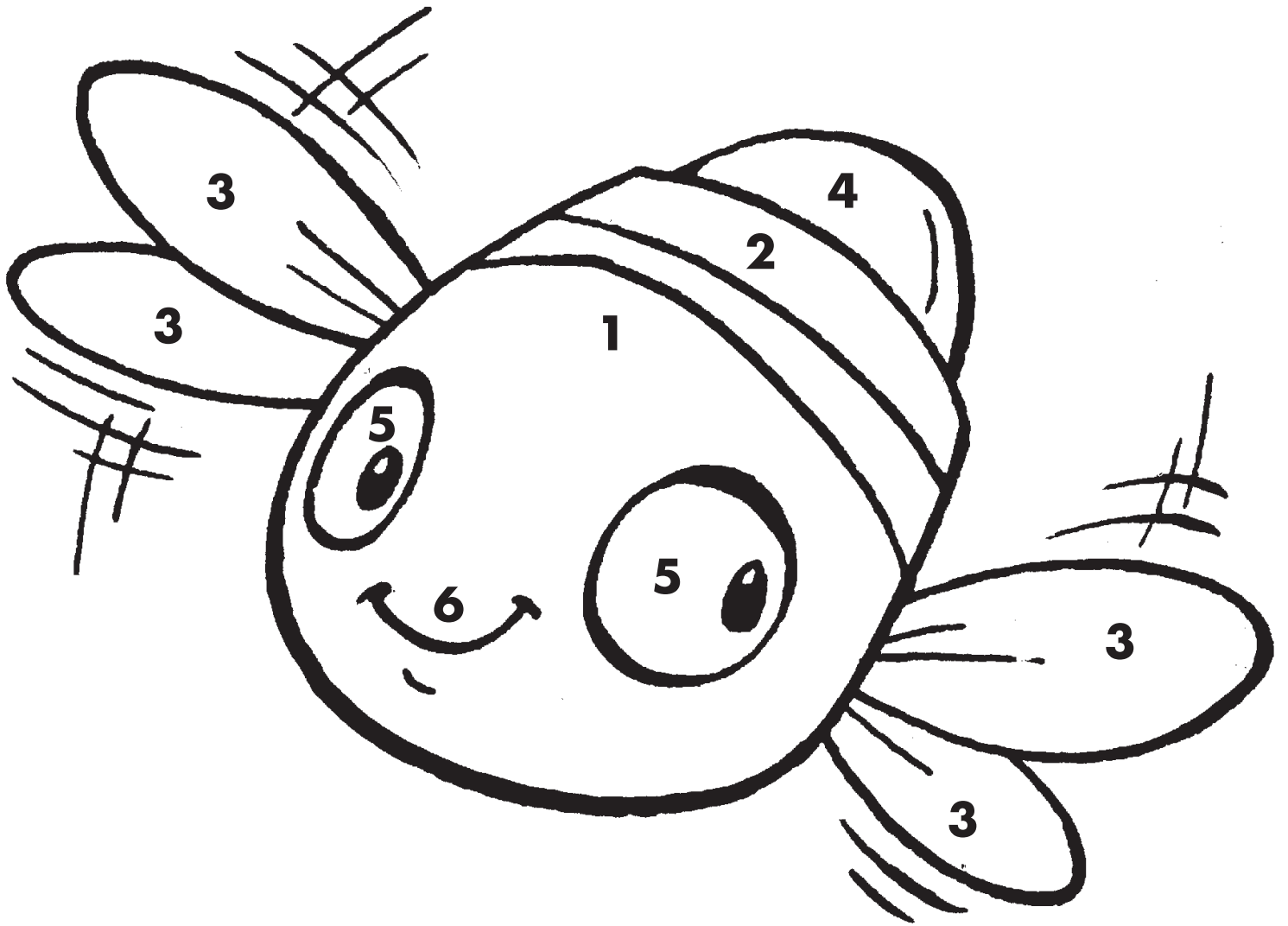
DIRECTIONS

(Played like the traditional game 'Cooti') You can play this with the participants in groups of two to four players; or all play together, with everyone's dice throws helping to complete the firebug.

Each player or team has a pencil and paper and starts by rolling the dice. They must roll a 1 to draw the body which must be completed before any other part of the Firebug can be added. Take turns throwing the dice and, depending on what number they throw, they draw that part of the bug on their paper. Only one part of the body can be added on each throw (for instance you may only add one wing at a time when you roll a 3) The first person or team to complete their Firebug is the winner.

(For participants with shorter attention spans or to speed the game up, draw all the wings on the throw of a 2.





TREASURE HUNT

SUPPLIES

- Lots of coins of different denominations or different colored counters
- Small plastic food bags (one per participant)

DIRECTIONS

Hide coins or counters all over the place where you're meeting.

Split the participants into teams and give each participant a plastic food bag. Tell the participants that they have to hunt for the coins that are hidden. Once they find one, they should put it into their treasure sack and look for more.

Give the participants a set time limit and make sure they know where in the building they can or can't go. (Adults should help children play safely). Set the participants off on their hunt. Once the time is up, gather the participants and have them count up the value of their treasure. (Assign a value to each colored marker eg 5 for blue, 10 for red etc.) The team with the highest total is the winner!

FIREBUG THROWING

SUPPLIES

- Ball-pit or similar small plastic balls
- Containers of different sizes large enough to hold the balls. (you can also make balls with scrunched up scrap paper and masking tape.
- Chalk or masking tape

DIRECTIONS

Mark a throwing line on the floor with masking tape or chalk, and set the containers out at different distances from the line. Assign each container a score, depending on how easy it is to throw a ball into. For example, a trash can placed near the line might score one point, whereas a mixing bowl 2 yards from the line might score 10! (You might need to test this out before the session so that you can assign the right scores.)

Give the participants a set number of firebugs (ball-pit balls) and challenge them to throw the bugs into the containers. The highest score wins! You could play this game individually or in teams, with individual participant's totals being added together to produce a team score.



GRAB THE TREASURE

SUPPLIES

- Lots of pennies or plastic counters
- Small bags

DIRECTIONS

Scatter the coins or counters on the floor, as though a bag of treasure has been dropped, and give each participant a bag. When you give the signal, the participants must kneel on the floor and put as many pennies as they can find into their bags. Stop the game and count up who has found the most treasure.

Make the game harder: players can be blindfolded or only allowed to use one hand.

GUARDIAN, GUARDIAN, ANCORA

DIRECTIONS

This is a version of the traditional “Duck, duck, goose” game.

Invite everyone to sit in a circle facing inwards. Choose one player to walk around the outside of the circle, tapping each player lightly on the head or shoulder and saying “Guardian.”

At random, they should say “Ancora.” When this happens, the first player runs around the circle, chased by the one who has just been tapped. If the first player gets back first, they sit down and the second player takes over saying “Guardian, Guardian, Guardian, Ancora.” If the second player catches the first, the first player carries on as the one tapping.

GUILDMASTER’S COMING

DIRECTIONS

This is an Ancora variation of the game “Captain’s Coming” or “Poop Deck.” Depending on the age and attention-span of the participants, teach them some or all of these instructions:

- Hall of Memory—run to the left-hand wall
- Guild—run to the right-hand wall
- Theater of the Saga—run to the front wall
- Harbor—run to the back wall
- Climb the Spire—mime climbing a ladder
- Firebug lantern—make a flapping bird shape with your hands
- Swift’s training—do push-ups on the floor
- Guildmaster’s coming—stand and salute

Shout out the instructions randomly and encourage the participants to perform that action. After a few practice rounds, say that the last participant to do the action will be out. You could do that for the whole game, so that you’ll eventually have a winner. Alternatively, the player could be out just for one round, and then be invited to rejoin the game.



FILL THE BUCKET

SUPPLIES

- Two buckets
- Plastic cups or ladles
- Water

DIRECTIONS

This is a game to play outside!

Set the buckets out, some distance apart. Challenge the whole team to work together to transfer the contents of one bucket into the other, using the cups and losing as little water as possible. The players can all run at the same time or take it in turns.

HUNT THE FIREBUG

SUPPLIES

- Paper firebugs or other small items to find

DIRECTIONS

Choose one participant to hide the firebug (or other item) while the others are not looking. (It should be hidden without needing to disturb furniture or climb on anything!) Set the participants on the hunt and see who finds it first. That player then hides it and you all play again.

Play the game the other way around. With one participant not looking, hide the firebug and then challenge the participant to find it. All can join in with “warm” and “cold” as the Guardian gets closer to or farther from the treasure.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM

SUPPLIES

- A bunch of keys
- Blindfolds

DIRECTIONS

Blindfold a pair of players, while the rest of the participants form a human maze with the keys at the center.

Invite one player to give directions to the blindfolded pair, who must keep together as they thread their way to the keys (and back again, if you want to extend the game). Swap jobs so that each group member has an opportunity to direct, seek and be the maze.



PARACHUTE PLAY

SUPPLIES

- A play parachute (a king sized flat bed sheet can be used with the corners folded in)

DIRECTIONS

This is a game for a large number of participants with children and adults together.

Spread out the parachute and ask the participants to find a place around the edge. Have adult team members spaced fairly evenly around the circle. Go around the circle and give each person a word to remember. This can be an item of Guardian equipment (spade, bucket, net, torch, rope, hammer) or the name of one of the Ancora characters (The Keeper of the Keys, Kal, Fabula, the Shiner, Guildmaster, Swift).

Ask the participants to pick up the edge of the parachute and practice lifting it up high and pulling it down again. After the participants have gotten the hang of this, lift the chute and shout out "bucket" or "Fabula." All of the participants who were given that word have to run under the parachute and out the other side, before it lands on them.

Keep shouting out different words. Now and then, shout out "Guardians assemble": all the children then run, while the adults keep the chute aloft.

WARNING - Caution should be exercised when playing this game as children can easily bump heads if they do not keep their eyes forward when running under the parachute. You may want to brief the children before playing or not mix older with younger children.

RUN AND RESCUE

SUPPLIES

- A play parachute
- A box of "treasure"

DIRECTIONS

Place your box of "treasure" on the floor, under the parachute.

Encourage everyone to start to waft the parachute, lifting it high and pulling it down again (see Parachute play).

Choose one participant to rescue the treasure: when the chute rises, they must run under, grab one piece of treasure from the box and run out again without the chute touching them. Repeat with other rescuers until all the treasure has been collected. (You may want to play again so that other participants have a turn to run and rescue.)



THE SHINER'S DANCE-OFF

SUPPLIES

- The GUARDIANS OF ANCORA theme song and the means to play it.

DIRECTIONS

Challenge the teams to come up with a short dance routine to perform to the GUARDIANS OF ANCORA theme song. You could give each team a copy of the track and send them away to different parts of the building to put together their dance moves and rehearse. If you don't have that much space, keep the music playing in your main music space—everyone can come up with the routines in the same room.

Once everyone has made up and perfected their routines, hold a dance-off.

Encourage all the teams to perform their dances and ask an adult or group of adults to judge the winners. Judges should give special mention to creativity, timing, best mover, most enthusiastic mover... Make sure that everyone gets some praise.

TREASURE TRIALS

SUPPLIES

- Equipment for creating obstacles such as hula hoops, marker cones, wooden planks, a step stool or aerobics step and a play tunnel

DIRECTIONS

Set out the equipment as an obstacle course, with each item relating to part of the map of Ancora. (To add to the authenticity, label each obstacle with the name of the map location or have labeled direction arrows pointing to the next place or obstacle.) The challenge for the Guardians is to find their way through all the obstacles.

You could play the game as a relay, with a new player setting off as the previous one finishes; or start players off at intervals, so several are on the course at the same time. Position Apprentice Elders around the course to re-set the equipment and to guide players on their way.

OBSTACLES COULD INCLUDE:

- five or six hula hoops laid flat on the ground: players have to jump from one to the next, like crossing a lake on stepping stones
- marker cones set out as a slalom: players have to run between them without touching, like finding a path through the frozen forest
- a wooden plank, laid on the floor: players have to cross it without touching the floor, like a bridge over a stream
- steps: players have to step up and down ten times, like climbing the mountains
- play tunnel (or chairs draped with blankets): players have to crawl through, like going into a cave



SLEEPING FIREBUGS

DIRECTIONS

The Guardians are looking for firebugs but they have all gone to sleep! All but two participants are firebugs and lie down on the floor with eyes closed as if they are sleeping. The remaining players are Guardians, who move around the room trying to get the firebugs to move. The Guardians can't touch the firebugs but they can go close to them, tell jokes and so on to get them to move. (To ensure fair play, have an adult watching carefully.) If a firebug moves, it joins the Guardians and helps them find more firebugs.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

GUARDIANS OF ANCORA APP

SUPPLIES

- Tablets (iPads, etc.)

DIRECTIONS

Before the club, have several leaders (who are willing to let children use their tablet devices) set up the Guardians of Ancora app on their tablet devices (or if your church or organization has tablets of their own, use these devices) so that the game can be demonstrated and played during your program time. (Do not register children via the app, but do let parental adults have the necessary information so they can help their children sign up if they wish.)

During games, pairs or small groups of children could play or watch the Guardians app game being played in order to become more familiar with it.

TRADITIONAL AND BOARD GAMES

SUPPLIES

- Games with a treasure or adventure slant, such as Enchanted Forest (for 6+ by Ravensburger), Labyrinth (for 8+ by Ravensburger), Guess Who? (for 5+ by Hasbro); Traditional games equipment

DIRECTIONS

A games corner can be a positive chill-out space during the liveliness of the program. Provide a selection of games for varying ages and appoint a couple of Apprentice Elders to help organize and play the games.

There are numerous examples of games that were played in Bible times and that are still used today. Provide equipment and someone to help with the rules of games such as checkers, Mancala, solitaire, marbles, hopscotch, throwing and catching a ball, tossing stones into a hole, rattles, whistles, juggling and pull-along wheeled wooden toys. You could try two or three games each day or set them all out in a large space and have the children move from one to the next, in small groups.