



Buried Treasure?

Unearth God's riches this Bible Sunday

YOUTH RESOURCES FOR AGE 15+

These materials include a main meeting and an outside activity that could be done the previous week or even during the first half of the evening. The aim is to show how God has buried his Word full of treasure for us to plunder and discover for ourselves.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITY: VIDEO TREASURE HUNT

Even though this is the UK, it's still worth trying to get outside for a session and this is the perfect opportunity.

Get your young people into small groups, between four and ten people per group, and make sure each group has a mobile phone with digital video capabilities or a digital camera with this functionality. You may also wish to edit these videos later. This is not essential, you could just view them raw through a computer. Prepare a sheet beforehand of items the group will need to film. Make it clear that the winners will be the ones who manage to capture the *most* things on the list but extra points will be awarded if it's done in exciting or stupid ways!

You will need to look around the town and find some specific things in your area worth filming – is there some hidden treasure locally? Add these to the list. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- One of the team dancing with a policeman
- The cheapest chicken burger in town
- The whole team busking
- Some members of the team pretending to be statues with people walking past
- Someone telling a bad joke in a crowded area
- The team at the most interesting place in the town – their choice but they must say why it's the most interesting place on the video
- A take-away menu with a spelling mistake or very bad English
- The cheapest place to buy an X-box 360 (only applicable if daytime)
- The whole team on the platform as a train comes in
- The whole team in a phone box
- A member of your team getting directions from a member of the public
- Your team in a library or other quiet public place.

Feel free to improve on these ideas and include some specific to where you live. Let the groups come back together and share their funny stories. Then compare the videos and make sure there is a good prize for the winning team. Groups will need to ask permission to film private locations, e.g. a shop. You may need to keep an adult leader with each team to ensure safety.

After this activity, all of the treasure hunters will now have an idea of what it means to try and find some things that are not obvious. This will feed perfectly into the next session below.

BURIED TREASURE

Background preparation: Read Psalm 119. 9–16 and print out enough copies to give an individual verse to each young person. Paper and pens for group and individual work. DVD player, TV, DVDs.

This would work best as a follow up from the Video Treasure Hunt feedback but it can also stand on its own.

1. DVD CLIP 1: *Pirates of the Caribbean 2 – Dead man’s chest* (Cert 12, Walt Disney Studios, 2006)

Watch the clip that starts at 1.15:02 on the DVD and lasts for 2 minutes 10 seconds until 1.17:12. It starts just after Jack says ‘You smell funny’.

Here Jack has finally revealed that his ‘special’ compass doesn’t point north or at a specific place, it points at whatever you want most. It points at your heart’s desire.

In small groups of two or more, get the young people to say what they think the compass would point to if they had it in their hands – what would their heart’s desire be? Feed back some answers as there are bound to be some funny ones!

2. WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS ... BIBLE PLUNDER PART 1

Get someone to read out the following verses. After each verse, ask the young people what they think it means.

VERSE	KEY POINT
Luke 12.33–34 Proverbs 4.23	Your heart will be where your treasure lies. Our hearts are Important, we need to guard them well – but why?
Luke 6.43–45	What we store up in our hearts will come out of our mouths and into our lives.
James 3.9–12	We are to guard our hearts so that the stream stays fresh and we can stay pure.

3. HOW CAN WE KEEP PURE? BIBLE PLUNDER PART 2

Print out and individually cut the Bible verses from Psalm 119.9–16. If there are more than 8 young people in your group, print multiple copies so that everyone has a verse each. Put all the verses in a bag or hat and get the group to pick one out each. Then explain that they are going to look at this one verse on their own for 10 minutes. Encourage them to let the verse speak, to let their thoughts from the verse go anywhere and to write down all that comes to mind.

Find some music without lyrics to put on while they do this – this will help them to keep focused. There are many chilled albums such as the recent Ministry Of Sound – *Chilled 1991 – 2008* album. However the best I have found for many years now is the album *Chilled Euphoria*, Disc 1 from track 2 or 3 onwards. This may be more difficult to come by now.

Give group members a piece of paper and a pencil or pen and get going. (Ten peaceful minutes!) Ensure you and your leaders all take part too.

After the ten minutes – or as much time as you can spare – are up, get all the people that had verse 9 to sit together, and the ones with verse 10, etc. Get them to share some of their thoughts about the verse and to write down or draw on a big sheet of paper all of their thoughts.

Nominate a spokesperson to go through the paper and explain what each person got out of their verse.

As you go through this, you will slowly build a far bigger picture of the whole passage than if you simply read it out in one chunk or focused on the individual verses. Some things may fit together perfectly, others may raise some great questions to unpack as a group.

4. TALK

Briefly explain that the Psalmist here stresses the strong link between purity, our hearts, and God's Word. His commands, words, instructions, and teachings are key elements to staying pure. Purity can have negative connotations, but here and particularly through the readings in Bible Plunder part 1, it is about living a fuller life. It's a picture of a life of freedom, peace and joy that we can receive by filling our lives with good things and then letting those leak out of us to the rest of the world.

How can we keep clean, on track, heading the right way, fulfilled, secure? By getting deeply into God's Words to us – getting deeply into the Bible. Pick out some of the phrases – 'teach me', 'I will repeat aloud', 'I delight in', 'I study', 'I examine', 'I take pleasure in ...', 'I will not forget'.

The Psalmist wants to follow God, he wants to win the race and spend his whole life serving God well. He knows the only way to do that is to get God's

Words into him. On one level this is about delighting in or enjoying God's Words. On another level, it's about studying and examining them. It would be good to make the distinction between engaging with the Bible for study – i.e. to get deeper understanding – and for pleasure – to encourage and nurture our faith and to enjoy knowing God.

There is this sense that the Psalmist is sifting away everything to truly get to the heart of Scripture, which is God's heart for us. The deeper we can get into God's Word, the more we understand all that God wants for us. This treasure can remain buried if we only ever glance at Scripture in a verse by verse way or at a basic level. You may also want to touch on the encouragement to 'repeat aloud all the laws you have given' and look ways of memorising Scripture.

To close, throw out a challenge. There is so much in Scripture that God has placed for us to find. Some of it lies on the surface, but a great deal of it lies deep down. For example, if you only ever read Jesus' words to the Pharisees in Matthew 9.12–13 without understanding some background – how their complicated rule keeping was meant to please God but often led them to miss the point, how they were often trying to find fault with Jesus, then you might think Jesus enjoyed nothing more than giving people an earbashing. It takes a bit of effort to unearth the treasure, but where our treasure is, there is our heart.

So where is your heart? Do you spend more time on the Xbox than you do looking through the Bible for God's treasure? Is it time to let your heart drive harder for the things of God and all he has for you?

5. DVD CLIP 2: *Mr Magorium's Wonder Emporium* (Cert U, Icon films, 2008)

Watch the clip that starts at 1.19:58 on the DVD and lasts for just under 3 minutes until 1.22:44. It starts just after Molly Mahoney says 'I don't think you'd understand'.

Mr Magorium has gone away and so has all the magic from his shop. His assistant Molly is left with this decision of whether or not to sell the shop that is now dark and tired and old. The magic has gone. He was the magic.

Mr Magorium left Molly a block of wood. A pretty but plain block of wood. Molly has walked around with the block but never really believed or engaged with it. In this clip, the block comes to life and things start to change.

How many Christians walk around with this nice block of wood (the Bible) which was a gift from someone who seemed to bring life, joy and 'magic' wherever he went? But they never really believe that anything can come out of it, they don't believe in the treasure found within it. The Bible's treasure allows us to understand God's heart for us. It helps us to know him though Jesus and live his way by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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When we unearth the full treasure of the Bible, it can change us, change our circumstances and change the world around us. Are you ready to bring it on? Bible plunder part 3 – will depend on how much you dig.

Close in prayer or worship.

These materials are written by Jamie Hill. Jamie is Bible Society's youth development officer, a songwriter and worship leader.