

CHRISTMAS CLUE

BRAIN VITALS	
Group Size	10-60
Props	Many
Cost	\$\$
Type	Mystery/ Adventure
Time	2-3 hours
Referee	2 refs 10-14 staff

This activity grew out of a brainstorm meeting with our youth sponsors. We created the clues after developing the story. Taking some ideas from a game (Crack the Case) got us started, but a book or a newspaper might provide a great mystery. Our parents and youth sponsors loved creating and being involved in this. The digital pictures on the teens' clue sheet handout were taken by a teenager on his digital camera. (See Examples 1-3 for the clue sheet and brochure.) Much of the fun grew out of what we had available. The best clues came from the leaders, which made it very personal. We made sure to include parents, so that important adult-teen relationships could be built. The adults enjoyed this activity as much as the teens. Some of the hosts were unsaved, and we had a great opportunity to share the Gospel with them, as well as the visiting teens.

Object: Solve the mystery. We gave the teens a short statement of what happened and told them they must uncover what the crime was, how it was done, and other pertinent facts.

People: We recruited 16 leaders—adult sponsors, college students, and parents—for characters. The character names we took from the hobbies and occupations of the people who were characters. (Our mute was a parent who had to have his jaw wired shut from a surgery.) We gave each of them a name, name badge (made by an engineer who volunteered to make the badges with his own equipment), and clues which they could reveal when they were asked a question which pertained to the clue. They would not just give a clue because they were asked for it.

Place: We used three homes of church families who live next to each other. Clues were planted in each house, and characters could mingle in the three houses. A church or a large residence with multiple rooms would work also.

How It Was Played: After dinner, we divided into teams of five or six people. We grouped the teens much like they were seated during the meal and tried to even out the younger and older teens. We did not give any free clues, for we felt this group might quickly solve the puzzle. The teens could get information from the 16 characters about the mystery and about where clues might be found. We announced that one of the characters would be giving out bad information and that the teens should avoid that character. We also told the teens to ask direct questions seeking information and to not just ask, "Do you have a clue?" One leader during the game would tell them if their answer were right or wrong. You may want to limit the times they may check their answers; our group did not abuse this.

The groups had to find a videotape card that allowed them to hear a video message by our mute character (the only time he spoke for the evening), a phone number that had a coded message, a phone (we only allowed one to be working), a key to a room with a clue, a book in a library with a clue, a clown mask hidden in a toolbox, and a password for a clue on a computer. They discovered the importance of these things from the characters.

Case: Harold reads the morning paper, looks in the phone book, and drives to a residence. He rings the bell, pulls a gun on the man who answer the door, and says, "I want \$100,000—NOW—or you're dead!" Two police officers suddenly appear from the next room and arrest Harold. You must discover the following:

1. What did Harold read in the newspaper?
2. How and in what manner did he commit the crime?
3. Why the gun and the demand?
4. What crime did Harold commit?
5. Whose house did Harold visit?
6. How was he caught?

Objects: Locked toolbox with mask in it, Scrabble board with word clues, phone number written by a word, video clue, backwards clue, key to find, phone to find

Answer: Harold robbed a bank and stole \$50,000. He then reads in the newspaper that \$150,000 had been stolen from the bank during a bank robbery. Harold assumes that the bank teller stole the other \$100,000. He looked up the teller's name in the phone book and drove to the address to get the rest of the money. The

police had used the newspaper article as a trap to lure him based on his greed. When he came to the bank teller's house, they arrested him for the theft.

We stopped the game after two hours, and the teens submit their answers to the six questions. We had one team that was correct on five of the questions. We awarded each of the members of the winning team with a Clue game. (Wal-Mart had donated a few games to us.)

Message: We ended with a message. The mystery of the Gospel is a great topic on which to preach.

CHARACTERS AND CLUES

Bus Driver: Rolin Out

1st and 2nd clues: Do you know why banks have drive-thru tellers? So the real owner of the car can get a look at it now and then.

3rd clue: Jokes often have important meanings. (This was intended to give clues to a bank and a teller.)

Carpenter: O.N. Level

1st: Harold was a forceful type of guy.
2nd: Harold took what he wanted.

Computer Nerd: PC Pocket

Unlimited bogus clues

Contractor: T. Builder

1st: This tape is interesting; it has helped me measure my patio.
2nd: One thing it can't do is measure rain or control flow. (Video tape card was hidden in a storm drain out back)

Craft Lady: C. Anne Paste

Phone books have addresses in them.

Editor: Paige Maker

1st: There were two editions to the newspaper.
2nd: The second edition was a set up.

Electrician: Sparky Watts

For Sparky to answer, a group member had to play a game with him. If no one would play, he had no clue for the group.

1st: Harold was a two-faced kind of guy
2nd: It sounds kinda funny, but I think Harold stashed something in the tool chest.

(A clown mask, which was clue to the bank robbery and related to how he held up the bank, was hidden in a tool-box placed in a noticeable corner.)

Engineer: Pie R. Squared

1st: He is a Darwin Award winner for gullibility
2nd: His greed sprung the trap.

Home Cook: Betty Crocker

When breaking computer passwords, remember that people use things easy for them to remember. Like kids' names, birth dates, initials—easy things. Remember easy is the key.

(We had a clue on a computer with the password EASY.)

Hostess: W. L. Come

1st: Yes, there is a working phone upstairs in the guest room.

2nd: Yes, I have a key right here.

Legal Secretary: Noel Itall

Today's date is an interesting key to the night. (This was a clue to a combination lock on Sparky's tool-box with the date as the combination.)

Librarian: Ube Quiet

1st: Libraries are a place of good information.

2nd: Deposit slip for \$50,000 in a book

3rd: W. Harold's Swiss bank account (We had a book in the library with a deposit slip.)

Mute: Sylent Knight

1st: Notes are great motivators

2nd: It was a written crime.

(He communicates by hand signals or written notes.)

***Mystery 1—Botanist: Jenetik Code**

1st: Give coded message

2nd: It must be decoded by a pad.

(This character gave a message that could be decoded by a telephone keypad. The message was a telephone number that they could call if they found the one working phone, which was located in an upstairs apartment in one of the houses.)

***Mystery 2—Teacher: Giv N. Grades,**

1st: Some occupations have name placards, especially where you have to stand in line

2nd: Name placards have full names.

(This character just sat around and was kind to those who addressed her, not giving any hints that she was a part of the game.)

Shopper: Koo Pon

The news article was 100,000 too high.

Sports Nut: Si Young

This character gave sports trivia unless he was called on the phone. When someone called, he told them the newspaper article reported \$150,000 begin stolen.

**Not pictured, see Examples 3.*