



WOW! Treasure Hunts and Cool Contests

Wow! Hopefully, that's what everyone will be saying as we discover thoughts to treasure about God in our daily treasure hunts. This is an important component in this year's VBS. The treasure hunts are a must! The kids at the test churches loved them and really got into it!

Every day, throughout the day, groups will be on the lookout for hidden treasure chests that have mind-blowing God facts in them. For each treasure chest a group finds, the group earns an extra 1,000 points for the group contests (described on the next page).

Director's TO DO List for the Treasure Hunts:

- A comprehensive list of the [WOW! Treasure Hunt Cards](#) can be found on the Digital Resources.
- Communicate to your volunteers how the treasure hunts work.
- Decide who will be in charge of preparing and hiding the treasure chests each day—the director, the assembly leader, or someone else designated by the director. The assembly leader will be responsible for explaining how it works to the kids, as is written in the daily assembly scripts. (See *Assembly Guide*.) Here are the details.
- Before VBS, make or buy treasure chests (11-8-079). If you have a large VBS, it helps to have three different colors of treasure chests for the different age groups—one color for Juniors, another for Primaries, and another for Pre-Primaries. (Toddlers do not officially participate in the treasure hunts.) If you have a small VBS, everyone can use the same color. Check [YouTube.com/AnswersVBS](#) for how to make treasure chests.
- The number of treasure chests needed depends on the number of classes in your VBS. Small VBS programs that plan to have all kids use the same treasure chests need four. Larger VBS programs who are dividing each age group into a different color will need 12 (4 per age group times 3 age groups). Very large VBS programs may want to divide it even more so no more than 6 groups are using any one treasure chest.
- Print, cut in half, fold, and put the treasure hunt cards in the treasure chests so there's enough for each group to have their own card. For example, if you have two Junior groups, two Primary, and two Pre-Primary, making six groups total, then print three copies of the Day 1 WOW! Treasure Hunt Card 1, cut the copies in half so there are now six (for the six groups), fold them, and put them in a treasure chest. Do the same to fill the second treasure chest with Day 1 WOW! Treasure Hunt Card 2, the third chest with Card 3, and the fourth with Card 4.
- Hide the treasure chests around the inside and outside of the building. Make sure they are in spots where children pass by. Hide the Junior treasure chests in more challenging spots than the Pre-Primary ones, but don't make any of them too challenging since the islanders don't have lots of time in between rotations to find them.
- Each day, all the groups try to find their four treasure chests while moving from rotation to rotation.
- Upon finding a treasure chest, the group opens it and takes out the treasured thought. They put the lid back on the treasure chest and move away from it so other groups can get theirs.
- The group guide tells the kids they must be quiet, listening, and participating at each spot to receive the 1,000 points each time. Group guides may want to have them sit down briefly.
- Group guides read the treasured thought (conveying awe and excitement about God as they do) and then briefly comment/discuss.
- Group guides then mark 1,000 points on their [Team Roster](#) for each one completed. (For instance, if they find all four, they will get 4,000 points that day.)
- The treasure chests will be hidden in different spots each day, so someone needs to collect them at the end of the day, throw away any old treasure hunts, put in the new ones for the next day, and rehide. The test churches hid them each morning since some needed to be hidden outside and they didn't want them sitting out all night in case of bad weather.
- It's important to instruct group guides to be enthusiastic about the treasured thoughts in the treasure chests. Their attitude toward God will be contagious!
- These treasure hunts are part of the bigger group contests suggested every year where the kids get points for learning their memory verses and bonus memory verses (Psalm 145:1–10), doing their Go and Do section of the student guides, and participating in the daily fun contest. More details follow.

Other Group Contests

The goal for the other contests is to help teams work together to learn memory verses—let's hide God's Word in our hearts!—and to complete the Go and Do sections on the back of the student guides. The student guides are loaded with great practical ideas and are a valuable component of the VBS program. If you're not able to purchase them, however, you can still do the Group Contests. Just take out that aspect of the Group Contests and it'll still work!

Groups (Hawaii, Bora Bora, Easter Island, etc.) that are kindergarten and older will keep track of their completed daily contests on the team roster. Younger islanders will have fun participating in some of the contests as well, but there will not be a scoring element involved in theirs because it's difficult for them to understand that part of it. All the kids greatly enjoyed participating in group contests at the test churches.

Group guides need to turn in the team roster by the last rotation each day, or whatever time works for your administrative team to have enough time to figure out the winning team, which is the one with the highest average point total per child. To figure this out, add all the points earned for the group and divide that number by the number of children in that group. For example, if the group earned 50,000 points and there were 10 kids, the average point total per child would be 5,000.

Announce the winning group at the end of each day's closing assembly. Dismiss the younger children (PreK and younger) before the winners are announced if they are picked up from another area. You may want to give each winning group member a small prize, make a donation in honor of that group to a mission of some kind, or just announce it for the fun of it.

- Being here (attendance counts!) 1,000 pts
- Learning the Daily Memory Verse 2,000 pts
- Learning the Bonus Memory Verses 2,000 pts
- Completing the Daily Go & Do Section up to 4,000 pts
(1,000 points for each one completed)
- WOW! Treasure Hunts up to 4,000 pts
(1,000 points for each one that is found)
- Participating in the Daily Cool Contests 1,000 pts

DAY 1 COOL CONTEST—SWEDISH FISH® GUESSING GAME

Prepare a see-through jar with Swedish Fish®. Count how many are in it and write the number on a piece of masking tape. Put the tape on the inside of the lid and put the lid on the jar. Place the jar, some slips of paper for kids to write their guesses on, some pens, and a small sand pail somewhere near your assembly area. At any point in the day when they are passing by, each child can write their guess on a slip of paper, with their name, and put it in the sand pail. Have an adult figure out who is closest, and

award the jar to that person during the closing assembly or at the next day's opening assembly.

DAY 2—TEAM CHEERS

To excite team spirit, each team comes up with a team cheer, song, motion, or sign. Or, they can each wear something depicting their group. For example, if a group's name is Christmas Island, everyone wears red and green on Day 2. Or for the Florida Keys, each person hangs a key somewhere on himself.

DAY 3—DRESS-UP DAY

Today, islanders dress up in any tropical island or beachy attire. No swimsuits please.

DAY 4—GOD OF WONDER CHALLENGE

Print copies of the [God of Wonder Challenge](#), and pass one out to each child to be completed at home. This is an important and fun exercise that led to great conversations with kids at our test churches.

DAY 5—MISSION MONEY MANIA

Bring in your final mission money today. Double points for anyone who brings in any amount.

Director's TO DO List for the Group Contests:

- Ahead of time, communicate to your volunteers how these contests work.
- Figure out any details for the Daily Cool Contests, such as preparing the Swedish Fish® Guessing Game.
- Organize the WOW! Treasure Hunts as described above.
- Print a copy of the [Team Roster](#) for each group guide each day and get it to them.
- Have someone tally up the day's average point totals per child and determine which group (or groups) won.
- Decide on the prizes or mission donations you want to give to the winning teams and get them organized. If you have a large VBS, you may want to award two or three winning groups—maybe a K-1 grade winner, a 2-3 winner, and a 4-6 winner.
- Announce the daily winners and prizes.
- During the Closing Assembly, communicate to the kids what the next day's group contests are.

Other Contest Info

- Send home the student guide daily and encourage the kids to do the Go and Do sections. Each Go and Do a person does is worth 1,000 points. They do not have to bring these back. Just take their word for it.
- Our test churches include the Pre-Primaries in the contests, but they don't keep score for younger than Kindergarten because they don't really understand or care about the points, but just enjoy the fun of everything.