

THE AMAZING RACE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This game takes a lot of time to put together. If you know some other youth pastors in the area, it's a great game to join together in creating and playing. If you are doing it with just your church, make sure to let someone else help you with the planning at some point.

You will need to have teams with 3-4 students and one adult to drive a vehicle. Keeping teams smaller increases the likelihood that everyone will get involved.

Our event usually lasts for five hours (9am-2pm on a Saturday). This gives me time for people who show up late, to explain the rules and to award prizes at the end. The actual race takes about four hours to run. You can play a shorter version if you want, but over the years, this format has seemed to maximize our event.

Some of the basic rules I share with teams:

- No Cell Phone except when stated
- No Internet unless otherwise stated
- Need 1 Team Members Phone # for Texting
- Respectful, Quiet & Calm when Necessary
- Drivers need to respect Rules of the Road

For the Leader(s):

- Place Clues in Yellow Envelopes, unless the clue is on an item they are taking with them. Make sure to number each clue so that you, and teams know that they are going in the correct order.
- Have at least one extra driver in case more people show up
- Have some alternate clues near the end in case people finish more quickly than you anticipate (this can be done through texts or by giving teams an additional task when they arrive as the finish)
- Run through **EVERYTHING** in the course beforehand. It's even better if someone else, who wasn't involved, can run through it so you can see any modifications you might need to make. It's very easy to miss one small detail that derails the entire flow of the game.
- If possible, have a secondary leader who can help you in case teams get to spread out. One year I had a team so far behind that it threatened to throw off our timing near the end.
- Involve lots of people! Get parents and leaders to participate. Let them know when they *should* be expecting teams and explain what you're doing. Most people love to be a part of it once they find out what you're doing.
- Have back-up plans. One year we got kicked out of the mall so I had to think quickly. Thankfully we were able to text teams the next clue. Make sure you carry a master list of all the clues and order of events so you can keep a close eye on what's going on.
- Communicate with drivers throughout. I have them text me at certain intervals in the race. This gives me a gauge on where I need to be and what I need to be thinking of next.

Listed below are examples of a Road Block & Detour clue. Each clue does not need to incorporate a task- most clues will simply lead them from one location to the next. I recommend having between three to six tasks for an afternoon, depending on how difficult they are.

EXAMPLE OF A ROAD BLOCK TASK

ROAD BLOCK! – Select one person from your team

HOOK ME UP! Go to INSERT LAUNDRY MAT HERE. Once you arrive, find, remove, match & fold 30 pairs of socks to receive your next clue.

- Remove from dryer to match & fold 30 (or more!) sets of socks at a laundry mat
 - Find 30 pairs of different socks (have some that look similar) and have one participant match & fold all 30 sets before their team receives their next clue
 - Have a parent or youth leader stationed at the laundry mat to direct, confirm completion and hand their next clue
 - I recommend having a minimum of two dryers in operation to ensure that teams can continue to move- as a rule of thumb, have one dryer full of socks for every three teams
- **WITH A TWIST-** Remove one sock and make the student find one sock that does not have a match. Once they hand you the correct sock, give them their clue in the matching sock so that they can move on (you can even write the clue on the sock!)

EXAMPLE OF A DETOUR

DETOUR: SAY CHEESE OR CHEEZ ITS

SAY CHEESE- Using the camera provided (or use a camera phone), your group must take pictures with 25 people at or near find a busy location. Once you have completed the task, your team will receive their next clue.

CHEEZ ITS- Your team must eat an entire box of CHEEZ ITS. Once you are finished your team will receive their next clue.

- For SAY CHEESE, provide them with a camera or make sure that someone on the team has a phone that can take pictures to verify
 - Teams must find 25 people willing to take a picture with their team. This usually isn't that hard and it's kind of fun to connect with other people in the community- trust me, you'll get lots of questions as to what is going on!
 - Have a parent or youth leader stationed at a busy location (a street corner or store front work great) to direct, confirm completion and hand their next clue
- For CHEEZ ITS, provide a box of CHEEZ ITS for every team
 - This is a simple eating challenge, but you can make the game more difficult by buying larger bags
- **REMEMBER-** If a team can't complete one end of the detour, they are free to switch at any time. This is not good strategy in most cases, but they do have the option.

CLUES, ROAD BLOCKS OR DETOURS MIGHT INVOLVE:

- **Libraries**- Find a book with an envelope inside (or a sentence that leads them to a clue, like an encyclopedia with a destination)
- **Malls**- Use a locker or a store in a mall to hide a clue (be careful here, I've been kicked out of malls a few times!)
- **Bus Stops**- Place the envelopes in a quart size Ziploc bag and tape the bag under a bench (make sure it's secure) for teams to find
- **Gyms/Athletic Clubs**- These can be great for tasks as well. Have them hit tennis balls, make a half-court shot or run on a half-mile on a treadmill!
- **Starting Destination**- Use your starting point to create a clue. Have them count parking spaces, write out a clue in chalk on the parking lot, put a clue on a screen inside.
- **Food**- Incorporate a meal into your game. Have an encrypted clue leading them to an address where a meal will be waiting. (I use Costco since the meals are cheap and easy)
- **Land Marks**- Tall buildings (how many stairs to the top), corn mazes, junkyards, state parks, etc.
- **Phone Booths**- They aren't just for Superman. They can be great since no one really uses them anymore. Tape a clue somewhere that's not easily seen or inside the phone book that's attached.
- **Glass**- Use glass markers to write a clue. Things like glass doors, car windows, etc. Just make sure to wash it off when you're done!
- **Houses**- Think of people you know who would let you use their house. Here's just a few ideas you could use:
 - Write a clue at the bottom of a cup and then fill it up with a root-beer float. Have someone on the team drink it to reveal their next clue.
 - Unroll some toilet paper and write a clue on it before rerolling it. Put it somewhere in the house for students to find (you'll need to have a roll for each team to take with them).
 - Wrap a gift for someone.
 - Dig, plant & water a flower in the yard.
- **Football Fields**- Have teams throw a football from one end zone to the other without dropping the ball.

- **Tracks**- Have teams run a 4x100m (4 people running a 100 meters each to complete one lap around) in under 90 seconds (don't make it too hard).
- **Driving Range**- Have someone on the team drive a golf ball past a certain point, or have them outdrive you!
- **Sell Lemonade**- Teams must make and sell lemonade to people on the street. Once they've made a pre-determined amount of money or sold enough cups, they receive their next clue.
- **Sing a Song**- Have teams sing a song in a populated area (pick one that's current or funny).
- **Count things**- Chairs in a giant auditorium, water fountains at a park, stained glass windows at a church, whatever- just make sure you count correctly!
- **YouTube**- Put a clue on YouTube beforehand that they must find. You can use this in a variety of ways.
- **Fast Food Restaurants**- I find it better to use the outside of these places unless you are having teams purchase something from them. It's easy to hide clues on signs if you go the outside route. If you happen to know someone who works there, you can write clues on wrappers, buckets, cups, etc.- just make sure your teams get the right items.
- **Clean a Car**- Have teams wash and/or vacuum a car out. It's a great way to get a free car wash for you and your leaders!
- **Price Items**- Go to a Supermarket (like Walmart) and have students find a list of items and their prices. If they add them up correctly, give them their next clue.
 - It may take some work, but you can use this to lead them to an address that corresponds to the total they gave you. Use addition, subtraction, multiplication or division to get you to the correct total.
- **Riddles**- I use riddles all the time in events like this. I don't make them too hard, but I also make it hard enough that it will take them a minute to think it through.
- **Frisbee Golf**- If you have a Frisbee golf course near you, have them finish a few holes as a team (just one Frisbee per team) or have them finish a hole with a limited amount of throws.

- **Pictures or Signs**- Incorporate pictures on your clues or use signs as clues. Parks, bridges & buildings that are named after people are great for working in pictures and signs, but make sure people will know who or what the pictures are.
- **Hide Things**- Place weird and random things in discrete locations with clues inside. You can find lots of these things at the Dollar Store, in your home or at your church.
- **Farms**- I don't live in a farm area, but if you do, see if you can milk a cow, feed a horse or buck some hay. Give them an opportunity to do something they'll be talking about afterwards.
- **Schools**- Use unique mascots to direct teams to their next clue. Most schools also have flag poles, parking lots and fields that you can incorporate as well.
- **Be Creative**- Clues are everywhere if you look for them. Use numbers and letter to make things say what you want. Walk or drive through your city in search of unique things for your area.

I know that this is a ton of information. While it is a complex game, you want to make it as simple as possible for the teams. That's why having someone read through the clues and doing a dry run is crucial.

The other thing about the Amazing Race is that it's tailored for the location they are at. The same will be true for you. Each city has unique features that you get to include in your race.

Remember, as with all events, take pictures and give out a good prize- maybe even a trophy! Have fun and let the race begin!!