READY TO USE GAMES

# Holiday games

The summer holidays are almost upon us! If you’re a children’s or youth worker, you might be breathing a sigh of relief at the impending end of term; if you’re a parent, you might be tensing up in anticipation of six weeks of childcare headaches. Here are some games that you can play in the run-up to or across the summer holidays.

If these games are part of an official church event, remember to risk-assess each one and check on your insurance if you’re not playing on church property.

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## Scavenger hunt

**You will need:** list of items for players to find

You can hold a scavenger hunt at a summer event, family day or residential. Parents can also run this activity during a walk or an afternoon at the park. Wherever you’re running the hunt, give the players some basic instructions. Don’t destroy any property or nature to get an item, don’t steal anything and don’t touch anything dangerous. Also, define your playing area so that the players don’t range too far.

Create a list of items for the players to find. What you put on your list will depend on your playing area, but you could choose a feather, a pound coin, an interesting leaf (with extra points for the most interesting one!), a sock (it could be the player’s own, but don’t tell them that yet), a signature and a pine cone.

Put the children into pairs or small groups and give them a time limit, and send them off. At the end of the time, count how many items each small group has gathered, giving bonus points for resourcefulness and lateral thinking.

## Skittles

**You will need:** plastic bottles (such as soft-drink bottles or milk cartons); football or similar; water; chalk or masking tape

There are plenty of garden skittle sets you can buy, including related games such as [Mölkky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%B6lkky). However, it’s very easy to make your own. Gather ten plastic bottles and fill them partway up with water, then screw the tops firmly on. The more water you put in the bottles, the heavier they will be and the more difficult the game.

Set up the bottles in a triangle formation at one end of your playing space (such as a church garden or driveway (without any cars!). At the other end, mark out a line. Players have to stand behind the line and roll the ball at the bottles. The more bottles they knock over, the more points they get. Set a target (say 100 points) and the first player to reach that target wins.

## Scrabble scramble

**You will need:** letter tiles from a game such as Scrabble or Bananagrams; three pieces of paper with ‘Action’ written on the first, ‘Thing’ on the second and ‘Song’ on the third; hat or bag

Put the three pieces of paper into the hat and all your letters into a bag. Explain that you’re going to pull out one of the pieces of paper, followed by a letter. The players have to do an action, find a thing or sing a song that begins with the chosen letter (depending on which piece of paper you pull out). The first person to do any action / find any item / sing any song that starts with the right letter gets a point.

Set a points target or a time limit. The first person to reach the target or the player with the most points within the time limit is the winner.

## Forbidden phrases

This game is ideal for a long car journey. Come up with five phrases that no one in the car can say until you get to your destination. They could be random (“I don’t like mushrooms”) to devious (“I need to go to the toilet”). Players are not allowed to say these phrases while the journey is ongoing, but they can try to make other people in the car say those things by asking questions, distracting them, trying to weave them into a story or any other method (that’s legal in a car, of course).

Try to think of some creative forfeits for anyone who says a forbidden phrase!

## Guess the song

**You will need:** a music streaming service and the means to play it

Another game that is suitable for a car journey, but also for an evening on holiday or residential. Create a playlist of popular songs (this might be different according to the age group for the children or young people playing). Set the playlist to shuffle and start to play it. Players have to shout out the name of the song and the artist. Once someone has got both parts, award them a point and move on to the next song.

If a player can only think of the title or the artist, continue with the song. Other players can ‘steal’ that knowledge to try to win the point for themselves. The player with the most points at the end of the playlist is the winner.

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is an experienced children’s and youth worker living in Milton Keynes.