

# THE ULTIMATE HANGTIME GUIDE



## ELIMINATE DISTRACTIONS

Cultivate a culture in your group where you all put your phones away for hangtime.

Teach your kids to be present and respect whoever is doing the study. You might want to turn it into a challenge where you put all your phones in the middle and whoever grabs their phone has to eat something gross. Encourage them to bring paper bibles or have some on hand for them to use. Try to eliminate distractions as much as you can.

Hangtimes are the best, and we want to make them as awesome as they can be!

## SEATING

It's totally up to you whether you want to do chairs or cushions or just carpet, but try to keep everyone on the same level. Especially if your group is younger, having one or two kids on chairs can make them feel more important than the others. Make sure that leaders are elevated during the study to maintain authority and if any kids are sitting far away, tell them to move in.

## MUSIC



Music makes those awkward silences during the study a little less awkward and adds to the whole atmosphere. At the start, play upbeat praise music and then once the study starts, you can change it to softer worship music. It's also a great opportunity to start to build up leadership in a key kid: giving them that responsibility of creating a playlist and bringing a speaker makes them feel that they have some ownership of hangtime and is a great way for the younger kids to get involved without the big responsibility of running a game or doing the study. Just check to make sure it's appropriate.

## FOOD & DRINK



Everyone loves food! The important thing about this is you shouldn't be forking out \$50 every hangtime on food- you could make something or get one of your kids to make something. Or if their cooking sucks, ask them nicely to bring a snack. Buy no-name cheap chocolate, lollies and chips and put them in bowls so no one knows that they were 99c. Maybe you want to come up with a budget with the other leaders in your group so that one person doesn't feel like they're having to spend too much on food. It's also good to provide a jug of water if you can. Food's great but it shouldn't make you broke.

## LIGHTING

The right lighting creates a really cool atmosphere and can encourage openness in a discussion. Fairy lights or coloured LEDS work well but another small lamp may also be needed so it's not too dark either. People should be able to see each other but not feel like they're being interrogated under super bright lighting.



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## WORSHIP

Having worship sessions in your hangtime can be really valuable if you have time. At first it will probably be super awkward, but don't be discouraged; act like it's the most normal thing in the world. You might want to worship and pray at the same time, you might get them to journal. Whatever you think works for your group.

## PRAYER

Try to have prayer time in your group before worship. It's not ideal to do it after because parents are waiting to pick their kids up at 9.30. Try different ways of praying: in a large group, pairs, smaller groups etc.

## STUDY



Everyone's group is different so cater the study to the kids in your group. Think about your own experience and how you can use that in the study, but also don't fill it with too many examples; it's important to leave time for discussion. Pick one or two stories that are most relevant. Don't be afraid if it goes a little off topic (I mean if a kid's asking about the holy spirit during a study on inviting your friends, not if they start talking about Justin Bieber or cats). Try to answer their question, then you can work it back into the study. Don't be afraid to pick out people for their opinion: sometimes they'll be thinking about sharing but are just waiting to be picked out, but sometimes they just don't have anything to share and tell them that's okay. Even if one person answers a question, ask others for their opinion; let your kids know that there isn't one correct answer. Make sure you reinforce to your kids that they're in a safe environment.



## GAMES/ACTIVITIES

Games play a really important role- they're not just there to fill time. Games are a great opportunity to encourage teamwork and build relationships in a fun way. They don't have to be super elaborate, but it's important to have at least 10-15 minutes of games just to break the ice. Where you can, choose team games where they have to work together and try to split them into random teams. Don't give them a choice to play or not, just put them on a team. Especially in the older groups, it's all about making memories.

## WORKING TOGETHER

You and the other leaders in your group are a team so make the effort to communicate well and get to know each other. Know what's going on in each others' lives and encourage one another. Have a common vision for your group and work towards that goal. The better you communicate with your co-hangtime leaders, the easier it makes things. Share the load between leaders evenly and make sure everyone has a go at doing the study. At the end of the night, talk about what went well and what didn't. Talk about potential problems and how you might prevent them.