



# **Training Ground Leaders Guide**

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# **Spy Academy Training Ground Leaders Guide**

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## Introduction

Welcome Training Ground leader! Games are such a fun time for kids and leaders. Gather your supplies and equipment ahead of time as some of the supplies needed are recyclable materials that people can start collecting or items borrowed from the congregation. Supply lists (daily and alphabetical) are available in the supplementary resources folder. My greatest advice for those leading games is this: include as many of the kids as much of the time as possible.

## Week at a Glance

**Theme Verse** - Here is a saying that you can trust. It should be accepted completely. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

1 Timothy 1:15 NIV

	<b>Training Focus</b>	<b>Game</b>
<b>Day One</b>	Spy Identity	Station #1 - Reaction Time Challenge Station #2 - Losing the Tail Station #3 - Nerves of Steel Station #4 - Total Recall Station #5 - Laser Beam Security
<b>Day Two</b>	Disguises	Double Agent; Disguise Relay; Disguise Yourself
<b>Day Three</b>	Trailing and Surveillance	Training Course; Kick the Can
<b>Day Four</b>	Secret Messages	Code Cans; Secret Message Drop (AKA Steal the Bacon)
<b>Day Five</b>	Gadgets	Collecting Gadgets; Borrow It

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### **Tips**

**1. Find quick ways to split kids into teams/groups.** This can be one of the most time consuming parts of game time. Consider giving the kids stickers at registration. If you rotate through four different stickers, you will have four teams ready to go for game time.

**2. Use an attention-getting signal.** Choose a signal. Tell the kids what it is and how they are to respond to it (this type of thing is not new to kids; think of the school bell). Then use the same signal in the same way every time. Consistency is really important. Don't start until you have their attention. Any time wasted here is time they are not playing games so it is in their interest to respond quickly. Choose a simple signal: raise your hand – the kids respond by raising their hand, looking at you, and stopping any chatter; clap a short sequence – the kids respond by repeating the sequence, looking at you, and stopping any chatter; speak a phrase clearly (but don't yell) – kids either do what the phrase says or respond with the agreed upon phrase ("Hands on top; everybody stop." Response = hands on head and freeze) ("Message from Mission Control." Response = "Ready to receive.")

**3. If the leader giving instructions has a quiet voice give them a megaphone.**

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## Day 1 – Spy Identity

**Daily Theme** – Jesus is both God and human

**Bible Passage** - In the beginning, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. John 1:1&14a NIV

**Connection to Theme** – The games today highlight the skills needed to be a good spy. Having these skills add to your spy identity. A good spy needs specific skills into order to complete their missions. Jesus needed something specific to complete His mission as well; something that no one else had. Jesus had to be 100% God and 100% human at the same time. And He is. He is totally God and totally human at the same time. There is no one like Jesus.

**Introduction** – The first day at Spy Academy is all about gauging the trainee’s skills. There are five different stations. Each station tests a different spy skill.

Split your games area into five stations. Four of the stations are for challenges that do not take up a lot of space. The fifth station is the Laser Beam Security Station and works best in a hallway. This station also requires the most set-up. Consider setting it up for the first day and then leaving it up throughout the week. It is a very popular activity and the kids will enjoy doing it over and over again.

Number each station and make some signs. Find a leader for each station (if you do not have enough volunteers for one leader per station make instruction sheets for each station and hand out to the team leaders and/or post at each station. Station instruction sheets are available in the supplementary resources folder).

Split the kids into five teams. Assign each team one station to start at. They will rotate through the rest of the stations in order.

### **Station 1 – Reaction Time Challenge**

This station tests your reaction time. Do you have lightning fast reflexes?

Materials: 5-10 copies of the Reaction Time Tester (available in accompanying games resource folder); Reaction Time Record (one per participant) (available in accompanying games resource folder); pencils

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Prep: Copy the Reaction Time Tester onto cardstock and cut out. Make enough copies so that each team has enough for one per pair of trainees. Make enough copies of the Reaction Time Record so that each participant has one and then cut out.

Instructions: Pair trainees up and give each pair a Reaction Time Tester. Give each pair a pencil and two Reaction Time Records. One holds the time tester at the arrow, above the other trainee's stronger hand. That trainee lines up their fingers with the bottom edge of the tester. Without giving any warning, the tester is dropped. As it drops, the trainee will grab it as fast as they can. Their thumb and index fingers should grip on or near one of the numbers listed. After each attempt, the trainee can record their speed on the Reaction Time Record. Every trainee should do the reaction time challenge 5 times to get an average reaction time. When one trainee is done, have the pair switch places so the other one can do the challenge.

### Reaction Time Rating

- 0-40 milliseconds = Ultra-fast
- 41-100 milliseconds = Fast
- 101-120 millisecond = Good speed
- 121-160 milliseconds = Not slow, but not fast
- 161-180 milliseconds = Slow
- 181-200 milliseconds = Slow motion

### **Station 2 – Losing the Tail**

This station tests your evasion tactics. How fast can you lose a tail?

Materials: Chalk or painters tape

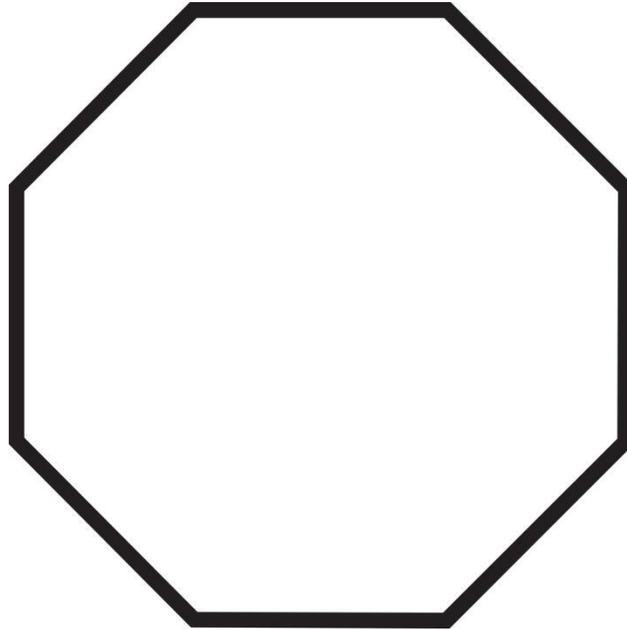
Prep: Use the chalk to draw 2 – 4 octagons (8 sides). If you are doing this activity inside use the painters tape. Try and keep the sides even, but it's not vital for them to be exact. Each side should measure about 24 inches.

Instructions: The trainee starts by standing, both feet together, in the middle of the octagon facing out, toes pointing to one of the 8 sides. The leader will yell "Go" and everybody else will start counting (1 one thousand, 2 one thousand, etc.) At this command, the trainee will jump over the line, out of the octagon. Then immediately back in. The trainee will quickly turn to face the line beside them (left or right) and repeat the jumps. Continue jumping until the trainee has jumped across all 8 sides. The rest of the trainees will stop counting.

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Variation: Use all the octagons at once and have multiple trainees doing the challenge at once and see who is the fastest.



### **Station 3 – Nerves of steel**

This station tests your nerves and the steadiness of your hands. Are you cool under pressure? Can you remove an item without setting alarms off? Do you have nerves of steel or sh-sh-shaky fingers?

Materials: Nerves of Steel tester

Prep: Build a Nerves of Steel tester. The instructions are available in the supplementary resources folder.

Instructions: Move the loop along the curved path, from one end to the other, without making the buzzer ring. Only one trainee can do the challenge at a time, but the other trainees will enjoy watching!

Note: Disconnect the wire from the battery when not in use. The battery will last longer.

### **Station 4 – Total Recall**

This station tests observation & memory skills

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Materials: tray; various spy-related items, no less than 10 (cell phone, binoculars, notebook, disguise glasses, magnifying glass, etc); a towel to cover it; and paper & pencils for the trainees.

Prep: Choose no less than 10 spy-related items (you can probably borrow most of them from the gadgets needed for day five) and set them out on a tray. The tray should be large enough that the items are not squished together. Cover the tray with a towel.

Instructions: The leader will show the trainees the tray for 1-3 minutes and then cover it up. The kids need to write down as many items as they can remember. If the leader has a few extra items hidden away they can secretly make some changes on the tray and play the game again.

### **Station 5 – Laser Beam Security**

This station tests your ability to get in and out of a location without being caught. How stealthy are you?

Materials: red yarn, jingle bells, painters tape, Warning sign

Prep: Set up this game in an unused hallway or room. Tape lengths of yarn from one side of the space to the other simulating laser beams. Thread a jingle bell onto one end of each yarn length before taping. Put the yarn at all levels and angles in order to make the station more challenging to complete. Put up a large sign saying, "Warning: Security laser beams. Don't touch or an alarm will sound" (available in supplementary resource folder).

Instructions: Trainees carefully navigate their way through the room or hallway, stepping over or ducking under yarn 'beams.'

Note: Kids love this game!! You might consider leaving it up for the entire week and letting kids run through it during free time.

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## Day Two – Disguises

**Daily Theme** – Jesus Came to Take Our Sins Away

**Bible Passage** - But you know that Christ came to take our sins away. And there is no sin in Him. 1 John 3:5

**Connection to Theme** – To disguise ourselves is to conceal our identity by changing our dress or look. Disguises are often clothes, but we can disguise ourselves by changing our hair color, wearing wigs or fake beards. We also disguise ourselves by changing how we walk. It's all about hiding who we really are – concealing our identity. Today we are going to play some games that require us to use disguises. Yesterday we learned that Jesus is totally God and totally human at the same time. Jesus didn't use disguises. People who didn't understand who Jesus was may have thought that he was disguising the fact that He was God by appearing as a man. But Jesus isn't one or the other. He is both God and human and He came to take our sins away.

### **Double Agent**

Materials: No materials required

Prep: No preparation required

Instructions: Choose one leader or child to be the double agent. The double agent stands in the middle of the play area.

All other players stand against one wall or on one side. One side will be headquarters and the other side will be the mission.

A leader calls out "headquarters" or "mission" and the players run to the proper side. At any time, "double agent" can be called and the players must lie down or sit down on the ground and be touching another player.

Any player caught by the double agent not lying down and touching another player becomes another double agent. The double agent cannot move until "double agent" is called.

Continue until most players are double agents and then choose a new double agent and play again.

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### **Disguise Relay**

Materials: 2 suitcases filled with disguises: hats, glasses, scarves, shoes, play cameras, shirts, fake mustaches, etc. Cones, tape, or rope for start and finish lines.

Prep: Gather a variety of disguise items: tops, hats, sunglasses, scarves, shoes, play cameras (enough that you will have multiples in each suitcase). Set up a start and finish line at least 25 feet apart. Divide the disguises into the two suitcases and place both at the finish line a little way apart from each other.

Instructions: Divide players into two teams and have them line up (you can easily make this three or four teams if you have a large group). On the go signal, one player from each team must race to his suitcase and put on a shirt and two other items. Then they must race back to their team and take off all of the items, passing them to the next player. That player then puts on all the items and races back to the suitcase to switch them out for a new disguise combination. This cycle continues until the last player has changed disguises and made it back to the team. The first team to make it through all of its players wins.

### **Disguise Yourself**

Materials: lots of disguise pieces; mission cards

Prep: Print and cut out the mission cards (available in the supplementary resources folder); gather a large number of disguise items (hats, scarves, glasses, sunglasses, toques, earmuffs, shirts, pants, scrubs, lab coats, fake mustaches, wigs, shoes, etc.) making sure to include disguises that would suit each of the mission cards.

Instructions: Make a huge pile of disguise pieces in the middle of the play area. Split the players into four teams and situate them in each corner of the play area. Place a basket full of mission cards in each corner. The mission cards contain settings where a spy might need a disguise to fit in. The object is to find a disguise that would fit the setting on the mission card. There are two ways you could play this game. First, run it like a relay. The first child from each team grabs a mission card from the basket and runs to the disguise pile. When they find a disguise that would work, they put it on and

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run back to their team. They read their mission card out loud and the team votes on the disguise. The next player takes their turn. The first player removes their disguise and places it by the basket for the next player to return to the pile on their turn. The first team to complete successfully wins. Second, if you have a smaller group, you can have all children play at the same time. Hand out the mission cards and on "go" all the players race to the disguise pile at the same time. The first kid to get into their disguise and return to the start line wins.

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## Day Three – Trailing & Surveillance

**Daily Theme** – God Sent Jesus Because He Loves Us

**Bible Passage** - God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son. Anyone who believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life. John 3:16 NIrV

**Connection to Theme** – In our Bible story today we hear/heard about Nicodemus who went to see Jesus at night. That kind of seems like a covert operation. Maybe he had been trailing and surveilling Jesus for a while. We do know that he had questions. Jesus didn't need to trail or surveil Nicodemus to know what Nic needed to hear – God send Jesus because He loves us.

### **Training Course**

Materials: large appliance box; pool noodles; skipping rope; large coffee cans; newspapers; pylons/cones; hula hoops; balls/bean bags; 2x4's;

Prep: Set up the obstacle course in a large open area. The final training course will depend upon the materials you have gathered.

Here are some ideas:

- Give each player a gadget that they will have to hold onto for the entire training course. This adds a fun challenge to the game.
- Crawl through a large box or a series of boxes
- Jump over pool noodles without touching them
- Tightrope walking using a skipping rope
- Crazy Can Walking – Make the crazy cans by boring two holes on either side of a large coffee can near the bottom. Turn them upside down and lace a length of rope through. Player will stand on top of the can holding onto the rope.
- Practice surveillance by sitting on a chair and pretending to read a newspaper with eye-holes cut out.
- Place construction cones/bowling pins in a straight line and have the spies zig-zag in and out as quickly as possible between the cones.
- Hang a hula hoop from a tree or other object (or have a leader hold it) and players have to throw a ball or bean bag through it from a certain distance.
- Make a balance beam from a 2x4. Players have to spin around 5 times and try to walk/run across it without falling off.

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- Skip 10 times with a skipping rope.
- Starting at one end, jump zigzag over pool noodle until you reach the other end

Instructions: Set up an obstacle course in a large open space. Split kids into two teams, one at each end of the obstacle course. Each team will send one player through at a time from each end. Alternately, the first player can start the obstacle course with subsequent players entering after the first player is through the second or third obstacle.

### **Kick the Can**

This game is a classic, but also fits really well with the trailing and surveillance theme. You need a big space with some open areas and lots of hiding places.

Materials: something to act as a base like a Frisbee; a can or bucket

Prep: Find a central, open area for the base. Put the can on top of it. Designate a jail area close by but not blocking the base.

Instructions: Choose one player to be "It" and one player to be the designated kicker. Players start the game at base. The designated kicker kicks the can as far as they can. "It" runs after the can and returns the can to base. All other players (including the kicker) run and hide. Once "It" has returned the can to base, he/she will start looking for hidden players. When "It" finds a player, he/she must call out that player's name and location. If "It" is wrong, the Hider stays hidden and "It" continues looking for hidden players. If "It" is right, both players race to the can. If "It" gets to the can first, "It" jumps over the can and the Hider must go to jail. If the Hider gets to the can first, the Hider kicks the can. "It" must go get the can and bring the can back to base and all players in jail are freed and can hide again.

Note: If at any point in the game a Hider (who has been seen or not) kicks the can, all players are free. This makes the game more interesting because the Hiders may choose to come out of hiding to get a change to kick the can and free their fellow Hiders. If "It" notices a Hider racing for the can, "It" can try and get there first. If "It" jumps over the can before the Hider gets there, the Hider goes to jail.

There two possible ways to end the game:

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1. The game or round ends when all Hiders are caught. The first one to be caught then becomes "It".
2. The game or round ends when all but one Hider are caught. The last Hider is the winner and becomes "It" if play continues.

How to Explain Roles to Players:

If You're "It":

- Stand by while another player kicks the can as far as possible.
- Retrieve and put the can back on the base.
- Start looking for hidden players.
- Capture Hiders by calling out their names and their hiding places.
- Race Hiders back to the can.
- Jump over the can if you get back first. That Hider goes to jail.
- Run after the can and put back on base if Hider kicks the can away.
- Start looking for another hidden player.
- Be aware of "uncaptured" Hiders trying to kick the can and free players from jail. If you see one, race them to the can.
- Continue until you have all the players in jail.

If You're Not "It":

- Select someone to kick the can as far as possible.
- Hide.
- Watch for an opportunity to race back and kick the can before "It" gets there, freeing other players from jail.
- If "It" calls your name and location, race to the can and kick the can before It get there.
- Go to jail if "It" jumps over the can before you get there.
- Wait in jail until you are rescued - that is, until someone kicks the can.
- Run away and hide again when the can is kicked and you are released from jail.
- Be "It" for the next game if you were captured first

Tips for Game Play:

- "It" must retrieve the can and bring it back to base whenever it is kicked (regardless of what is happening in the game.)
- Hiders don't have to stay in one location. They can move around from one location to another and even run back to base to kick the can in order to free their fellow players from jail.
- Honesty is assumed. When "It" calls out a Hiders name and location correctly, Hider must run. Hider can't pretend they didn't hear, or were in a different location or that "It" was wrong. When "It" calls out a

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Hiders name and location and the Hider does not run back to base, it is because "It" was wrong, not because the Hider is cheating.

- When "It" calls out a location, "It" must be sufficiently descriptive. For example, "John behind the really big pine tree." Leaders can help here by giving kids examples of descriptive statements. "John behind the tree" is an example of a location that is not descriptive enough. Also, "It" needs only be close enough in their location, rather than exactly right.

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## Day Four – Secret Messages

**Daily Theme** – The Gift of Salvation is Offered to Anyone Who Puts Their Faith in Jesus

**Bible Passage** - God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it.  
Ephesians 2:8&9 NIV

**Connection to Theme** – In today's Bible story the father welcomes home the son and forgives him. The son didn't deserve it. All the son could do was accept this gift of forgiveness his father offered him. This story that Jesus told is called a parable. Parables are stories with a deeper meaning; kind of like a secret message.

### **Code Cans**

Materials: large cans; letters (available in supplementary resources folder); index cards; balls or beanbags

Prep: You will need 16 large cans per team (coffee cans are great, but anything about the same size will work). Print off the letters in the supplementary resources file called "Letters for Code Cans". Tape one letter to one can. Print seven secret messages, one per index card (spy, drop, meet, abort, safe, double, run). Set up the cans in a single line or to make it more difficult a staggered line. The cans can be on the ground or on a table or bench.

Instructions: If you have enough cans, divide the trainees into two teams. If not, play as one team. Each team selects a code-maker. Everybody else is a code-breaker. The code-maker is given a secret message. The code-maker has to throw a ball or beanbag and hit the cans that have letters matching their secret message (suggest that they don't hit the cans in order, this will make it harder for the code-breakers to figure out the secret message.) The code-breakers have to watch carefully and unscramble the letters to solve the message. The code-maker then becomes a code-breaker and a new code-maker is chosen.

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### **Secret Message Drop** (AKA Steal the Bacon)

Materials: something that could contain a secret message (book with pages cut out; pen with ink removed to make room for rolled up message; envelope, etc.); sidewalk chalk/painters tape/pylons

Prep: Draw two boundary lines about 20 feet apart with sidewalk chalk or painters tape or outline with pylons. Place the "secret message" in the middle of the space in between.

Instructions: Divide the players into two equal teams. Count off so that each player has a number. The players can stand directly opposite their matching number or one line can be standing 1-10 and the other 10-1. The leader will call a number. The two players with that number must now race to the middle and try to steal the secret message. The one who grabs it first must make it back to their line without being tagged by the other player.

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## Day Five – Gadgets

**Daily Theme** – The Holy Spirit Helps Us Grow to Be More Like Jesus

**Bible Passage** - But the Father will send the Friend in My name to help you. The Friend is the Holy Spirit. He will teach you all things. He will remind you of everything I have said to you. John 14:26 NIrV

**Connection to Theme** – Sometimes spies need help. They use gadgets to get them out of sticky situations. We need help too to obey Jesus and live the way He wants us to. Jesus promised to give us a Friend to help us. This friend is the Holy Spirit.

### **Collecting Gadgets**

**Materials:** a large variety of gadget and spy-related items and other unrelated things – cellphones, cameras, goofy glasses, sunglasses, magnifying glasses, flashlights, listening device, remote, spy gear, binoculars, rulers, walkie talkies, balls, paint brushes, straws, toy cars, stuffed animals, disguises, hats, envelopes, newspapers, balls of yarn, blocks, coffee cans, bean bags, balls.

**Prep:** Complete the “Collect as many of these items as you can” document found in the supplementary resources folder with the gadgets you have collected. Once completed, this becomes your “gadget” list. Make sure each one is a little different. Make a list of the gadgets you have as well as the number of each. Use this list to help you make the Collect Gadgets team lists. Pile gadgets and other non-related items in the center of the play area.

**Instructions:** Split the players into two-four teams. Give each team a “gadget” list. Start with 7 items in 1 minute; then 16 items in two minutes. On “Go” each team needs to try to find the items on their list in the time frame given. Each player can only get one item at a time. They can’t have duplicates; any duplicates need to be returned to the pile. Each team can send as many players as they want to the pile at a time. The leader will call “time” when the allotted time is up. Any team who has collected all of the gadgets on their list without duplicates wins.

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### **Borrow It**

Materials: Use the items from the collecting gadgets game; 2-4 hula hoops

Prep: Make a pile of gadgets in the center of the play area and set out the same number of hula hoops as teams that will be playing. Place the hula hoops in the four corners of the play area.

Instructions: Split the trainees into teams. Tell the teams that the hula hoops are their base. Give each team a couple of minutes to choose four or five gadgets from the pile to put inside their hula hoop. Then each trainee needs to put one foot inside their base. On "go" trainees need to run to the other teams bases and "borrow" gadgets and bring it back to their base. After one minute the leader will blow the whistle and stop play. The team with the most items in their base wins. Reorganize and play again. Players cannot block their bases and they can't obstruct other players.