

Activity Guide

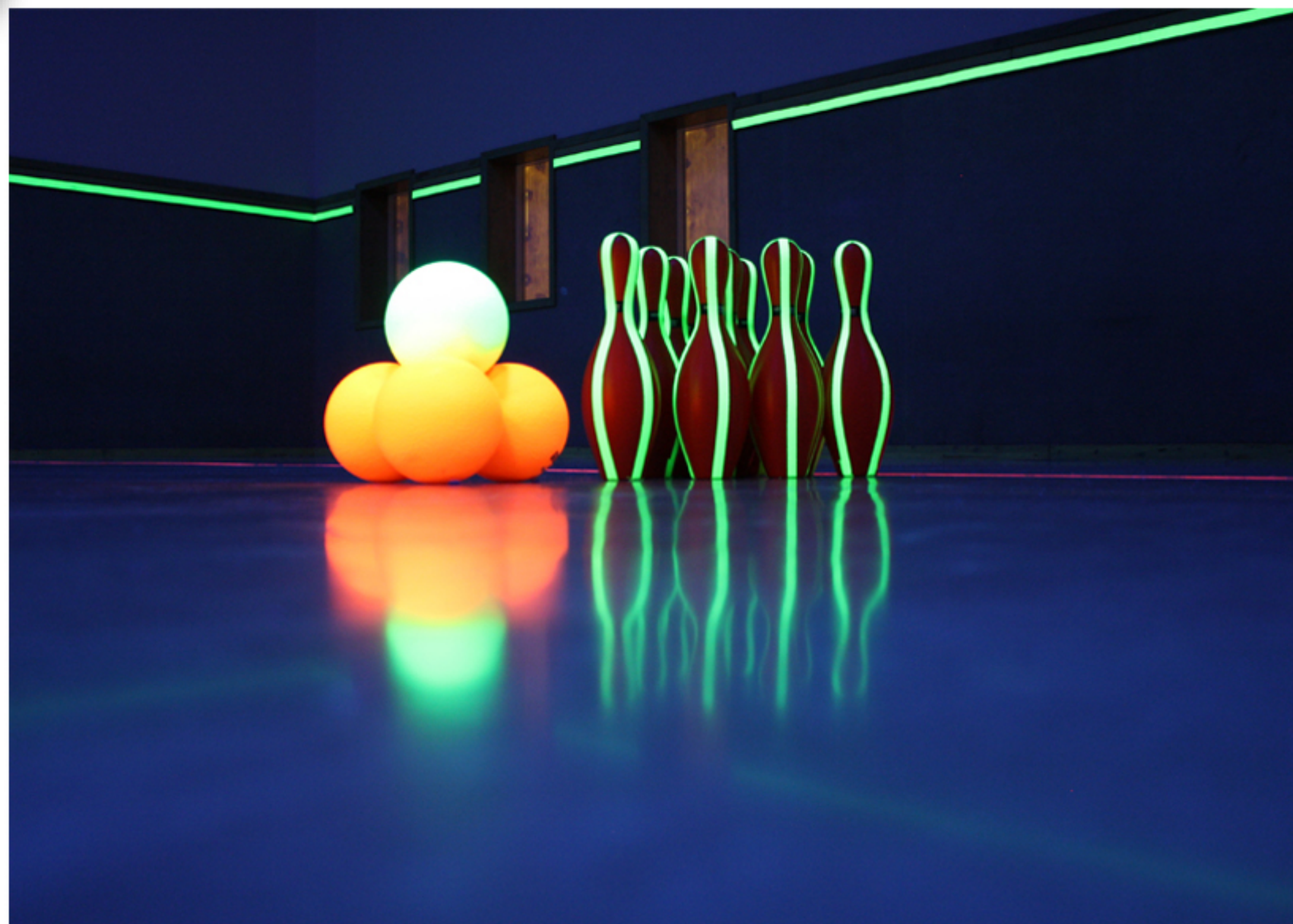
and the value of recreation



Christian Retreats Network

Your Partner in Effective Off-site Ministry

The Importance of Support Staff
Large Group Activities
Rainy Day Games
The Value of Team Building
Classics and Out of the Box Ideas



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A CRN Resource

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Expertise When You Need It!

Would you like help planning activities for your next event? Contact our retreat planning team at 877-833-2272. We'd be glad to point you in the right direction, coach your planning team, and explain how to use our downloadable resources.

The Value of Recreation



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One of the best parts of going on a retreat is recreation time. When a planner is looking at a jam-packed schedule, generally the first item to be removed is free time. Think about it. It's not likely any of us has ever told someone, "I can't make the meeting because I scheduled some free time." But on a retreat, there is time purposely set aside for recreation activities. And it is time well spent!

For many, attending a retreat is one of the few chances to get away from the everyday routine. Attendees, students and adults alike, have high expectations for events.

During the recreation time, groups build on their interpersonal relationships. These friendships, and more so the trust that is established or built, will be essential when a keynote speaker delivers a message that brings up deep, spiritual questions or a need for prayer. Most people turn to friends when they need answers or prayers.

One of the best parts of a retreat or event is recreation. No one likes being stuck inside when they could be out enjoying recreation and fellowship.

Benefits of having recreation:

- I. **It's a good way to break the ice.** Everyone has heard of icebreaker games, especially when planning a youth conference. When you get several youth groups together from different areas, it is hard to split up and start talking to other groups. Having recreation allows an easier transition into having to work as a group. Recreation also allows time to fellowship, which is an essential part of a retreat.
- II. **Build stronger relationships.** Recreation can help build relationships, whether between youth or leaders. Getting a group together for a basketball or volleyball game can help teach the value of working together to accomplish a goal.
- III. **Reduce stress and relax.** Everyone experiences some sort of stress in his or her life. Including recreation in a retreat can help to reduce that stress. This works great with marriage or family retreats. Allowing time to relax and have some fun can really strengthen a marriage or family bond. Recreation allows your group to not focus on everything going on in their lives, but instead on clearing the mind and allowing their bodies to relax.
- IV. **Build self-esteem.** When young people feel good about themselves, they operate more effectively and productively in the community, family and school. Adventure recreation is a great way to help with this. Adventure recreation will push your group to their limits and allow them to learn to trust other people while creating valuable life-long memories.
(Adventure recreation is not included in our retreat packages, but can be added on.)



Retreat Packages



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Planning an event with the Christian Retreats Network is easy! We have eight properties throughout the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions that would love to partner with you and your ministry. All of our properties offer all-inclusive packages that bundle everything your guests need at one affordable per-person price. We bundle lodging, buffet dining, meeting space with complimentary A/V equipment, and basic recreation.

Here are just a few examples of activities included in packages:

Indoor

- Basketball
- Volleyball
- Racquetball
- Wallyball
- Dodgeball
- 9 Square
- Black Light Sports
- Pool
- Billiards
- Table Tennis
- Board Games
- Fitness Center (for guests 18+)

Outdoor

- Sand Volleyball
- Tennis
- Gaga Ball
- Recreation Fields
- Obstacle Course
- Beachfront
- Mini Golf
- Disc Golf
- Horse Shoes
- Hiking Trails
- Hayrides
- Bonfire Sites



**Basic recreation availability varies between properties. Please contact a Retreat Planner at 877-833-2272 to learn which options are available at each location.*

Team Building



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Six of our eight properties offer team building and adventure recreation programs. Adding a program to your retreat package can allow your group members the opportunity for self-discovery and group development, as well as having fun along the way.

High Ropes Course



Zip Line



Low Ropes Course



Climbing Tower



Swing by Choice



Escape Room



**Team building and adventure recreation availability varies between properties. Please contact a Retreat Planner at 877-833-2272 to learn which options are available at each location.*

Classic & Out of the Box Ideas



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Classics

- Full group tug of war
- Obstacle course
- Team relays (three-leg or sack races too!)
- Water balloon piñatas or water balloon toss
- Ring toss (at night, try glow in the dark ring toss!)
- Food eating contests
- Tag (freeze, elbow, or everybody's it)
- Scavenger Hunt
- Capture the Flag



Out of the Box

- Larger than life Twister
- Full scale Angry Birds
- Slip-n-Slide kickball
- Sponge relay with a bowling twist
- Stomp the yard
- Kan Jam
- Archery Tag
- Foam Noodle Games (softball, hockey, quidditch, jousting, tower building, limbo, boats)
- Hose head tag
- Try recreating games from popular movies!



Outdoor Ideas



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Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate is an exciting, non-contact team sport that mixes the best features of popular sports such as soccer, basketball, and football into an elegantly simple yet fascinating and demanding game.

- 2 teams have goals they are defending
- A point is scored every time a team gets a caught Frisbee past the goal line
- Anyone holding a Frisbee may not walk or move from their location
- Defenders must remain 5 feet away from someone trying to throw a Frisbee
- Defenders may block or intercept thrown Frisbees, but may not come into physical contact with an opponent
- If a Frisbee is dropped, intercepted, or hits the ground uncaught, the defending team gets it at that point
- After a point, the scoring team will throw down field to the other team to begin play
- This game is even better with a rubber chicken!



Scavenger Hunt

There are several variations to this classic. You can have participants split into teams to find and collect objects. You can also have participants grab their camera or cell phone to snap their picture in front of a list of items.

Foam Noodle Fun

The sky is the limit with foam noodles, and we're not talking about pool games. Armed with Internet search and an abundance of foam noodles, you can create unique games that will keep your participants engaged in the activity & creating lasting memories.

- With noodles, duct tape, and black electrical tape allow participants to design their own light saber
- Use a noodle as a horse, and another as a jousting pole to have the tournament of the century
- Noodle horses, balancing noodle poles, or noodle swords are great extras to use in relay races
- Harry Potter Quidditch tournament using noodles, hula hoops, and foam balls
- Torchbearer relay – balance beanbags on top of noodles / great for smaller children
- Noodle Limbo
- Noodle Building – have timed fort/tower building contests
- Noodle Boats – using noodles & duct tape have teams build a boat then test them out at the lake



Rainy Day Games

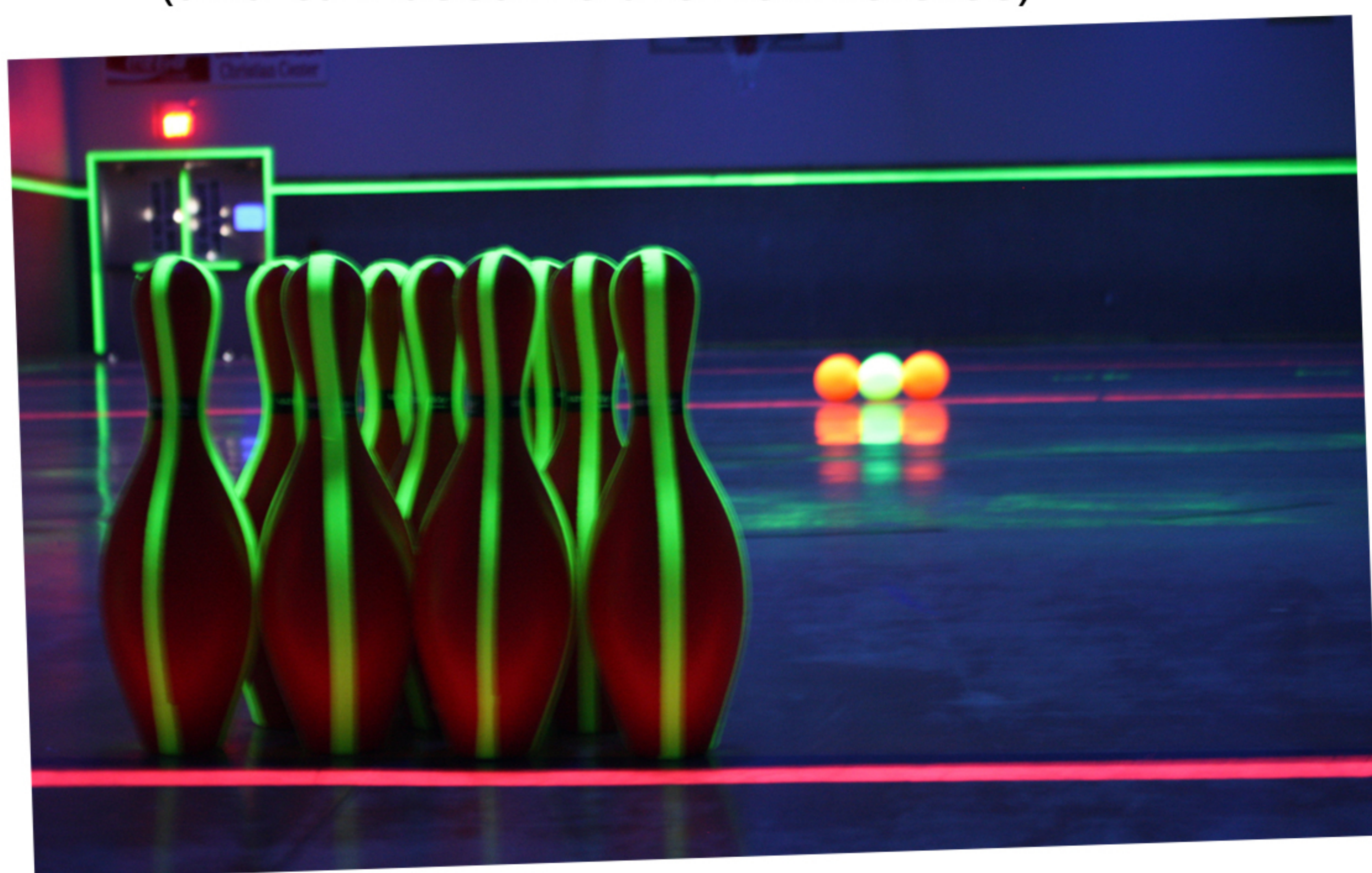


A CRN Resource

Army, Navy, Hit the Deck

This simple game can be played with large groups in the outdoor fields, or with smaller groups in the gymnasium. With simple instructions, anyone can participate in this activity! This game can be a great time filler if you're running ahead of schedule and need to keep your participants active and engaged.

- Designate an 'Army' side and a 'Navy' side; using cones or an imaginary line
- All players start by lining up on the 'Army' side
- Referee calls out either 'Army' or 'Navy' and all players run to that side, and the last player to cross the line is out
- Referee may call 'Hit the Deck' at any time and the last player to drop to the ground is out
- Referee may call a change in direction at any time (this keeps slower runners in the game and can be a lot of fun to watch as players have to listen for the next direction)
- If referee calls the side the group is already on, any player stepping out across the line is out
- The last player remaining on the field wins (and can become the new referee)



Hula Hoop Relay

This game can be played with a group, no matter the size. Line up two teams face-to-face with teammates holding hands. Start at one end with a hula hoop and teams race to get the hoop to the other end, without releasing hands.

- Large groups will see the 2 teams lined around rooms, parking lots, gyms, etc
- Play some upbeat music to get participants excited
- Add some challenges: if participants break hands then they have to start over or maybe blind fold some participants



Blacklight Sports

- Dodgeball
- Bombardment
- Bowling
- Capture the Pin or Steal the Bacon
- Human Ring Toss
- Twister
- Relay Race or Obstacle Course (using glow-in-the dark or blacklight materials)

Rainy Day Games cont.



A CRN Resource

Potholder Assault

This reboot of a classic game is quick, easy, and will get your group moving. Potholder Assault is basically Dodgeball, but instead of using playground balls that will destroy drywall, lights, lamps, and Jr. Higher's glasses, you just use good ol' fashioned potholders. The daintier the better. The magic of Potholder Assault is that it's generally safe to play in any room, and because it's relatively close quarters, the game moves quickly. It's a ton of fun, and the necessary equipment can fit in a plastic sack.

Pro Tip: Number your potholders so you know if you're missing any at the end of the game. You'd be surprised how quickly you lose these things when you're flinging them all over the room.



Reverse Charades

We've all played charades a time or two, but if you've got a group of students that don't know each other well, this is a great way to make everyone feel like a part of the group. Instead of having one person act out a clue for the team, the entire team acts out the clue for one guesser. This gets everyone on their feet and acting silly without anyone feeling singled out or on-display.

Pro Tip: It's much more fun when the group works together to act out the clue rather than 10 individuals acting the clue out simultaneously. Choose clues that force everyone to work as a team (e.g.: School Bus, Synchronized Swimming, Football Team)

Noodles of Destiny

The last person standing wins in this pool noodle melee. Cut up foam noodles into 1-inch discs and give one to each player along with a 3-foot noodle. Players place the disc on the back of their hand and use their noodle to knock the discs off other players' hands. When a player's disc is knocked off, they're dead and sit right where their disc fell. The last person with their disc balanced on the back of their hand wins. Depending on the size of your group, this could require a lot of pool noodles. And if you're going to play this in the dead of winter, you might have a hard time finding them in stores, so plan ahead.

Pro Tip: To up the ante, give players 30 seconds before the start of the game to make alliances. This will spice up the game play and introduce an element of strategy (and betrayal).



Toe Tag

This game can be played with 2-200 players, as long as it's an even number of players. Two players stand back to back and on the count of 3, both players turn face to face. They will then engage in a dance-like combat where each person attempts to tag a toe of their partner before one of their toes is tagged.

- Remember you are to tag a toe, NOT stomp
- You can play the best of 3 or 5 rounds
- This activity is by Project Adventure

Support Staff



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We have all heard the saying “It’s all fun and games until someone gets hurt.” That is why it is important to have enough recreation support staff at your event. The worst thing you can do is only have two people assigned to recreation when you have 10 different activities and are planning on having 200 attendees. Obviously, two people alone will not be able to coordinate that many people with that many activities.

Depending on the types of recreation you have, you may need more than one person at each recreation spot. For example, if you have a volleyball tournament, you may want to have two support staffers. One can help keep the game going and the other can help keep score. It also depends on the number of people interested in that particular activity. If you have a gym saved for basketball and only five people show up to play, one support staff person should be enough.

Make sure your staff is the right fit. You don’t want someone who knows everything about football and very little about volleyball keeping score for a volleyball tournament. If one of your staff loves miniature golf, make sure you allow them to assist with that activity. If they enjoy their assigned activity, they will have a good time at the event as well. In return, they will be able to assist your attendees better if they are enjoying themselves. The event staff can do a lot to determine the overall mood or tone. There is nothing worse than an attendee asking a support staff person a question and getting a negative response. If your support staff has negative attitudes, they could actually ruin your guest’s event experience. One negative attitude can lead to a whole retreat being a bad experience.



Recreation is more than just going out and playing some games. It is a chance for your group to build relationships, challenge themselves and make memories.

