

# TREKS

SAMPLE



## A Handbook for Men Guiding Boys vol 4.1

This sample of Treks v4.1 provides you with the first full chapter entitled "God's Providence".



SAMPLE

# TREKS



A Handbook for Men Guiding Boys

vol 4.1



**CSB Ministries**  
Hamburg, NY • Ottawa, Ontario

# Growing Young Men to Serve Jesus Christ

CSB affirms your vision to come alongside boys, impacting a future generation of godly men. Cast a vision for your men to guide boys to Christ for salvation, to God's Word for growth, and to spiritual maturity for service. Follow these steps to get started:

- 1** Look through the introduction of this handbook. Take advantage of every opportunity to motivate boys toward personal development. And please contact CSB with your questions or suggestions.
- 2** Stay focused on a primary goal: "The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others," (2 Timothy 2:2).
- 3** Pray regularly for CSB Ministries. Ask God to equip each leader impacting boys. Support the movement through volunteer service, local area events, summer camping, and financial contributions. Nearly 70% of CSB income is raised through sacrificial donations from generous donors.

*Donations can be made at [www.csbministries.org](http://www.csbministries.org).*

This mentoring handbook is dedicated to the memory of CSB founder, "Uncle Joe" Coughlin (1919-2005), who turned a Sunday School class of sixth-grade boys into a dynamic movement mobilizing thousands of young men who passionately serve Jesus Christ.

## **TREKS**

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# Mentoring Guidebook: Introducing Treks

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# Introducing Treks

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**Treks is a powerful guide for men** that can flex into family devotions or an existing church program, yet is substantial enough to become its own feature.

**The purpose of Treks is to empower men** in their role of discipling their own sons and in being the spiritual fathers of a whole generation.

**Treks uses the power of activity** for the specific purpose of building relationships and discipling boys in God's word. Treks is intentional in connecting activities to Biblical concepts and real-life application of these concepts.

**Treks connects men to one another** in a common mission of intentional discipleship of our next generation, making it an active branch of men's ministry in the church.

**Powerful uses:** Supplement for a current kid's program to encourage men to get involved... Father & son or father & children discipleship group... Boy's Sunday school... A stand alone group of equipped men discipling boys of the church and / or the community... Think men, think possibilities!

## Building young men to serve Christ

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What an exciting time to live for Christ! Do you sense that God is stirring concerned men who are committed to impacting young boys? Many of these men did not receive faithful, biblical discipleship during their youth. They are eager to provide a solid spiritual foundation for today's boys and are looking for tools to help them succeed.

Our prayer is that young men will grow strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1).

We want to help men build discipling relationships with boys. Relationships that help boys grow mentally, physically, socially and spiritually into men of God (Luke 2:52).

That's the excitement of growing young men in Christ. Not only do you see boys accept Christ as Savior, develop new skills, explore new areas in their lives and develop fruitful relationships among themselves and their leaders, but you see men and boys grow in what it means to be men of God and live out those qualities!

## Treks meeting features

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Treks encourages men to build relationships with boys for the purpose of discipleship. Each part of the meeting is designed to assist the discipleship process. *Games* are an important part of getting to know and understand the boys. The *Trek* portion gives men and boys the opportunity to work together- an important catalyst in relationship building for men as well as boys. The *Trek* also allows men to build a strong object lesson into God's word in the *Drive it Home* section. *Story* time backs up the spiritual lesson, and the *Application* section gives opportunity to discuss how the boys can live out the lesson in their own lives.

Boys need adventure and excitement. Treks guides emphasize discovery, seeing and doing, not just hearing. Treks guide men to utilizing activities of discovery to build bridges into God's word. Boys retain far more when they learn by experience, and understand God's word much better when they can connect it to the world around them. With this in mind, the focus of each lesson isn't on how much information a boy gets, but on how much each boy is able to retain and actively apply what he has learned from God's word.

# Treks Features

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The elements of Treks work together to keep you organized and help you communicate with your boys. Each element is designed to facilitate an intentional discipleship process.

## Games (25 min.)

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Boys love games. You may only have time for one game, but there are two suggestions; one for larger areas, and one for smaller. Introduce new games for variety, while allowing for favorites. Adapt as needed for small groups of less than ten. Games build relationships among men and boys, and allow men to encourage boys in their strengths, as well as assess the needs of boys and help them.

## Trek Activity (25 min.) –\*CORE–

This is the hands-on activity of the lesson. If possible, divide the boys into smaller groups by grade. A 5:1 or 6:1 boy to leader ration is optimal. Activities involve a craft, science experiment, or another activity. Exploring together is fun and helps build friendships with boys, and will build a great object lesson into God's word.

## Drive it Home (5 min.) –

**\*CORE—**This object lesson ties to the activity. It uses the activity to help boys grasp the Biblical theme of the meeting. Using the activity to create a bridge into a spiritual lesson creates a learning moment that allows boys to grasp abstract ideas and creates lessons which are easily remembered.

## Story (10 min.)

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Boys love a good story. Tell a story at the end of the meeting to grab boys' attention. Use the suggested story, or tell your own that will illustrate how the boys can apply the spiritual lesson of the evening. Encourage spiritual growth and Christian character development. Share your faith often. Boys enjoy listening to men they've come to admire and respect.

## Application (5 min.) –\*CORE—

Leave boys with concrete ways to apply the spiritual theme of the evening to their own lives. There is a suggested path of discussion, but the important aspect is for the boys to grasp ways to work out God's word in their everyday lives. *In Father & Son groups, it works great to have the fathers and sons break away to discuss life application together.*

## Leaders' Huddle

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After each meeting, briefly discuss the meeting and pray for any needs. Build leadership, teamwork and communication. Always look for ways to improve your process of meeting the needs of the boys and leaders. Note any special preparations for next week.

## Core Features

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\*Features marked – **CORE–** represent vital elements of the activity-driven discipleship process. These are the core elements that should be worked into any context that Treks is used. These features are designed to work within a group discipleship process, but may very well be used in a one-on-one process such as a father and his son/s or even his daughter/s.

# We Want to Hear from You

If you have questions or ideas to share, CSB Ministries wants to hear from you! Please don't hesitate to reach out to us, either at the main office in Hamburg, New York, or by contacting one of our Regional Field Directors listed below.

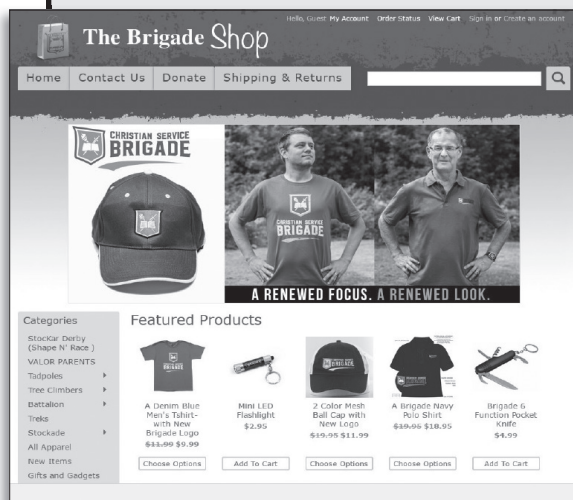
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## CSB Regional Field Directors

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## Visit the CSB Online Store



For churches currently registered with Battalion, Stockade, Tree Climbers, and/or Treks, we offer our "Member Store," featuring discounted rates plus additional core resources for both leaders and boys. The online store offers a convenient way to purchase a variety of items that support your ministry with boys.

If you have any questions, comments, or need help in placing your order, **please call us, toll free, 800.815.5573.**

Shop at [store.csbministries.org](http://store.csbministries.org)



# TREK 1: God's Providence

## *Preview*

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**1**

### **GOD'S UNSEEN PROVISION**

Help boys notice God's unseen works. Demonstrations of airflow will help illustrate this concept.

**2**

### **GOD'S PLANS FOR YOUR LIFE**

Help boys realize that life works best when we live our life according to God's plan. Making and throwing cardboard boomerangs illustrates the practical application of properly following a plan.

**3**

### **GOD IS IN CONTROL**

Help boys view their lives as God's and not their own while accepting God's plan for their lives. A brain teaser "4 is the Providential Number" will help illustrate this concept.



# 1 God's Unseen Provision

## Target

Help boys notice God's unseen works. Demonstrations of airflow will help illustrate this concept.

## Scripture

"You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples." (Psalm 77:14)

## Prep

You will need enough small dishes, dimes, ping pong balls, balloons, small-necked bottles (such as a pop bottle), index cards, funnels, thumb tacks and thread spools to keep all of the boys busy experimenting. Practice these experiments before the meeting.

## Looking Ahead

Plan now for meeting 6. Invite a law enforcement officer, fireman, city council member, or other community servant that is a Christ-follower to speak at your meeting, or set an appointment to meet them at their workplace. Ask him to explain his job and to focus on how his Christian view of good citizenship benefits all citizens and the entire community. Be sure the guest knows his timeframe, and allow time for questions.

## Games

### Touchdown Tag

Outside, mark two goal lines and sidelines of the playing area. Split the boys into two teams. Station each team on its own goal line. Give one team a small object – something small enough to be concealed in a fist.

The team with the object decides who will carry it. Their aim is to get the object over their opponents' goal line.

The defensive team tries to stop the offense from scoring by pushing or dragging the offense's players over either sideline. If any part of an offensive player's body is over the sideline, he's eliminated. No carrying or throwing of players is allowed. The offense can block but not tackle the defense.

If the ball carrier gets his hand with the object in it over the goal line, he scores six points. The defense scores six points if they get the ball carrier over a sideline. When either team scores, they switch roles. The team with the most points wins. If you can't play this game outside, substitute the following games.

## Over the Line

Form two teams and line them up by height at opposite ends of the room. The boys stand a couple of feet away from the wall facing the center. Each team counts off consecutively from tallest to shortest. Place a kickball midway between the teams.

Call out one or more numbers. Each player whose number is called races to the center and tries to kick the ball back toward his teammates and over the line they are standing on. Score two points when this happens. The first team compiling ten points wins.

## Trek

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### Scripture

Use rhythm to learn Psalm 77:14. Display the verse on a board. Read, "You are the God who performs miracles"; clap-clap, clap-clap, clap-clap, clap. Single clap on "miracles". Then, "you display your power among the peoples"; clap-clap, clap-clap, clap-clap, clap. Single clap on "the peoples". You can say the reference without claps, but add two quick ones after it.

### Air Flow Experiments

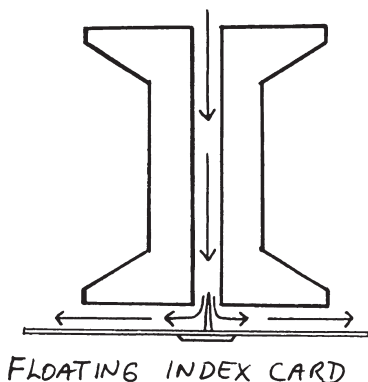
Tell your boys that you will be conducting some experiments with air flow. As you set up each experiment, ask them to predict what will happen. Discuss the results when you are done.



#### Floating index card

Push a thumb tack through the center of a 3" x 5" index card. Hold the card against the bottom of a spool, with the tack pointing up through the hole. Then, blow steadily through the center of the spool. When you remove your hand, the card will stick to the spool rather than blow away. (The tack merely keeps the card from sliding to one side.)

The result of this activity is caused by Bernoulli's principle, a scientific rule first described by Daniel Bernoulli in the 1700s. A flowing fluid or gas lowers the barometric pressure of the area it occupies. The faster it flows, the lower the pressure. Anything next to the flowing stream of fluid or air gets sucked into the stream. The air comes down the hole in the spool, hits the card and is deflected to the sides. The card gets sucked into the flowing stream of air.



#### Trapped ball

Place a ping pong ball or small balloon in the mouth of a funnel. Try to blow the ball out of the funnel. It cannot be done. If you point the funnel down while blowing, the ball will stay in the funnel as long as you are blowing.

This is basically the same result that occurred with the spool and card above. We see Bernoulli's principle at



work again.

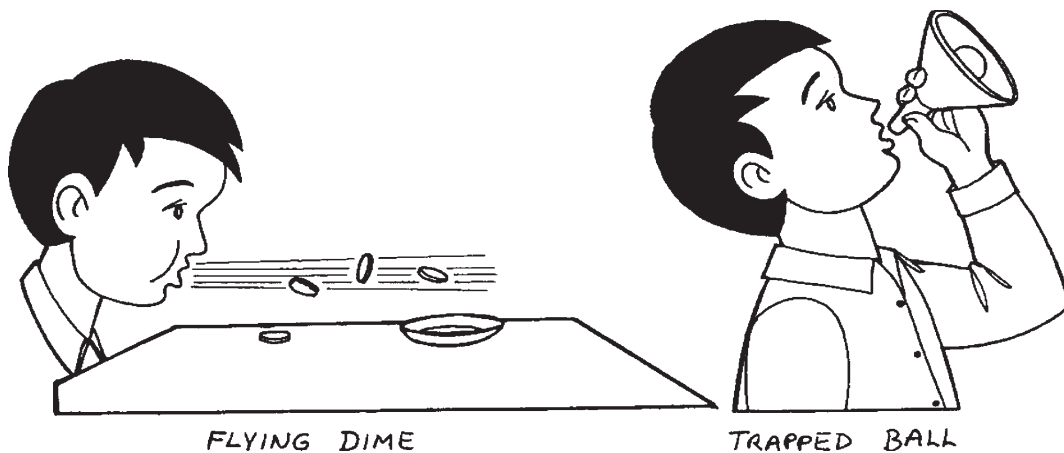
### **Shooting backwards**

Hold an empty small-necked bottle (such as a pop bottle) horizontally without a lid. Place a small wad of paper just inside the neck and try to blow it into the bottle. Instead of the wad going in, it flies out and hits you in the face.

Before you blow, the air pressure inside and outside the bottle are the same. When you blow into the bottle, you are causing the air pressure inside the bottle to increase. This forces the wad out.

### **Flying dime**

Place a dime on a table, 2-3" from the edge. Place a small dish several inches away, toward the center of the table. Try to blow the dime into the dish. You cannot do it if you try to blow underneath the dime. The trick is to get your mouth level with the table and give a sharp quick blow just above the dime. The dime will rise up and flip into the dish.



The air pressure above the dime decreases when you blow. The surrounding air flows in from all directions and lifts the coin into the air stream, flipping it into the dish.

## *Drive It Home*

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### **God's in control**

God created our world and he created the way it works, including cards that stick to spools and flying dimes. These things respond according to his created power of physics. Since He is the creator, God can also perform miracles that are beyond any physical explanation.

Sometimes, the ways in which God works surprises us, just as what happened with these air flow experiments surprised us. We may think that God will do things in ways we are already familiar with, but the Lord is not limited by our expectations.

We always can be confident that God is in control and that nothing surprises him. No matter what happens, the results will be just as he intends.

### **Review Verse**

Repeat Psalm 77:14 together.

# Story

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## “The Great Locust Invasion”

*This story illustrates how God is able to work in ways we do not expect.*

If you had lived in the state of Minnesota on April 26, 1877, you probably would have been praying.

Why would you have been praying? The previous summer, millions of locusts had attacked wheat fields across the entire state.

These insects are one of a farmer’s worst nightmares. Gigantic clouds of locusts eat their way through crops and they leave almost nothing behind.

Farmers who lost their crops to the locusts did not make much money that year. And people who used that wheat to make flour for bread and other products did not have as much to eat.

That is not the worst of what happened in the summer of 1876, though. The locust army left another army behind them. By the time spring came around in 1877, farmers expected another invasion. Billions of locust larvae would be hatching into another gnawing, deadly and even bigger army than the one that had wiped out the crops the year before!

The people of Minnesota felt hopeless. Then Governor Pillsbury declared that April 26 would be a day of fasting and prayer. Governor Pillsbury urged everyone to pray earnestly that God would help them during this tough time.

On April 26, all the schools, shops, offices and other business places were closed. People were not shopping or studying. They were praying. They were asking God to do something to get rid of the locusts.

The next day, it did not look like they were getting the answer they expected when they prayed. Just the opposite seemed to be happening!

On April 27, the weather suddenly warmed up. It was almost hot. The summer-like weather lasted for several days. Because it was so hot, the locust larvae started hatching – much earlier than usual.

What kind of answer was this? The locust army was already on the march to devour the crops before they had even grown!

But God does not make mistakes.

After four days of summer temperatures, the weather suddenly changed again. During the night, the temperatures plummeted. When the farmers walked out to their fields that morning, a heavy frost covered everything – including the army of locusts. The insects were almost all dead. They could not survive the cold weather. The wheat fields were saved!

God answers prayer. He does not always answer in ways we think he should, though. Sometimes his answers seem almost the opposite of what we expect.

But the Lord knows what he is doing. We can be sure God hears our prayers – and he answers when his people pray!



## *Application*

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Was there anything that the people of Minnesota could have done themselves to rid themselves of the locust and save their crops? [There is no insecticide or anything that could have stopped this locust cloud.]

Discuss some examples in the Bible where God worked through miracles to accomplish His plan. [Some examples might be Noah – the flood, Moses – the plagues, Jesus – His many miracles plus His resurrection]

Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans of a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”

Are you relying on God or yourself in life and death?

## **Review Verse**

Repeat Psalm 77:14 together.

## *Leaders’ Huddle*

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Spend time with any boy who wants to ask Jesus to become his Savior. Any leaders not talking with a boy can pray for those who are and for those boys who still need to accept Christ. Ask the Lord to make Scripture important and precious to your boys.

Talk about how the meeting went. Review plans for next week. Pray that your boys will appreciate God’s interest in them as unique individuals.

## 2

## God's Plans For Your Life

### Target

Help boys realize that life works best when we live our life according to God's plan. Making and throwing cardboard boomerangs illustrates the practical application of properly following a plan.

### Scripture

"...For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

### Prep

Provide each Boy with an 8 1/2" square of thin cardboard (department store gift boxes work well), a pencil, a ruler, scissors, and markers.

## Games

### Swat Mosquito

Everyone stands in a circle. One boy stands in the middle. Blindfold him and give him a rolled-up newspaper. He's the "swatter."

With everyone silent, the rest of the boys point to one boy, who will be the "mosquito." He walks close to the swatter and begins to buzz. He buzzes all the way back to his seat. The swatter tries to hit him with the newspaper. If he swats the mosquito before that boy reaches his chair, they switch places. Otherwise, another boy becomes the mosquito.

### My Father's Store

The boys sit in a rough circle. Some may sit in chairs and others on the floor. It helps if a few boys already know the game.

Start the game by turning to a boy next to you and saying, "My father owns a store. He sells \_\_\_\_\_. Name something you are touching. That player turns to the other person next to him and says, "My father owns a store. He sells \_\_\_\_\_. and he names something he is touching. If he does not, tell him there's a mistake. His father cannot sell that object.

Go around the circle until everyone catches on if possible.

Note: If you have played this game before, change the reason an item is acceptable. For example, it starts with the same letter as the player's last name or is something in the room.



# Trek

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## Scripture

Recite Jeremiah 29:11 once. Then give the boys nine pages on which you have printed one key word from the verse: “plans”, “declares”, “Lord”, “plans”, “prosper”, “harm”, “plans”, “hope”, “future”. On a wall, tape pages with phrases of the verse with space for each key word.

Read the verse together. When you get to a missing word, one boy chooses a key word and tapes it in that blank. When you are done with the verse, see if all the words are in the right places. Let the boys move any words that are not in the right spots. Repeat the verse together a few times. Then begin to remove the key words as you repeat the verse.

## Cardboard boomerang

Boomerangs are really specially designed clubs. Most are designed so they will return to the person who throws them. Good throwers can make them bounce once or twice before rising to return, or do figure eights in flight. Boomerangs were originally used for hunting.

## Demonstration

Display the sample cardboard boomerang you have made. Throw it a couple of times if there is space to demonstrate how it moves around its circular path. Explain that the key to a successful boomerang is to carefully follow the plans for constructing and throwing the boomerang. After you explain the plan below, give your boys the materials to make their own and guide them through the steps:

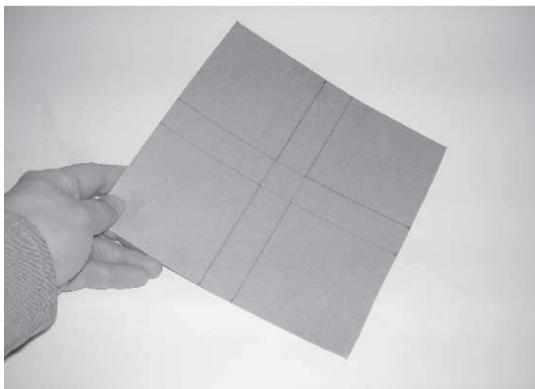


Figure 2.1

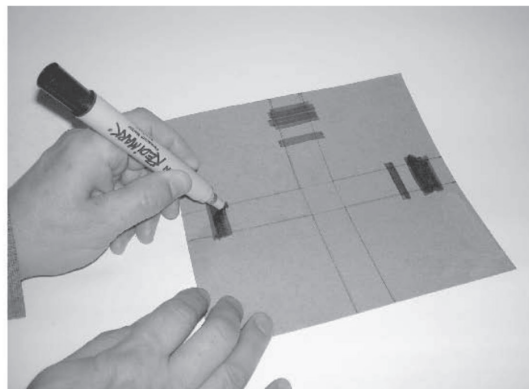


Figure 2.2

Draw the plan out for them on the board or flipchart:

- Begin with an  $8\frac{1}{2}$ " square of cardboard. Measure in  $3\frac{3}{4}$ " and  $4\frac{3}{4}$ " from the left edge of the card on each side, making a mark in each location.
- Using a ruler, draw a line between the marks opposite each other, creating a cross with 1" wide arms. *Figure 2.1*
- Decorate the boomerang with markers, if desired. *Figure 2.2*
- Cut out the cross with scissors. **Do not cut through the center!** *Figure 2.3*
- Curve (not twist) each arm of the boomerang slightly up by sliding them between your thumb and forefinger. *Figure 2.4*

## How to throw a boomerang

Hold the boomerang (in your dominant hand) vertically over the shoulder with the arms of the boomerang curved toward the side of your face (or toward your non-dominant hand). Throw it straight forward at eye level. Snap the wrist as the boomerang is released. The key to a proper throw is the proper balance of arm speed, snap of the wrist, and point of release.

## Test the boomerangs

When all the boomerangs are finished, let your boys test their boomerangs for longest flying time and accuracy. Move to a room with a high ceiling because the boomerangs will rise about 6' in their circular paths. In a room with a lower ceiling, throw it while kneeling. Note: These are indoor toys that will not work well in a wind.

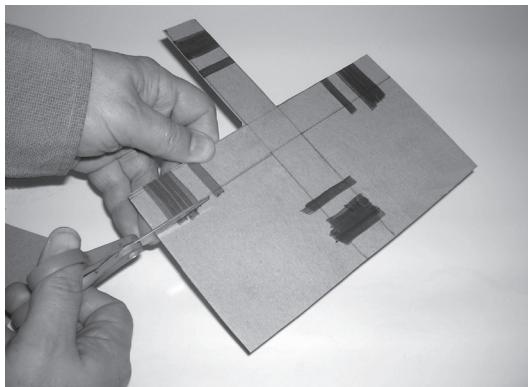


Figure 2.3

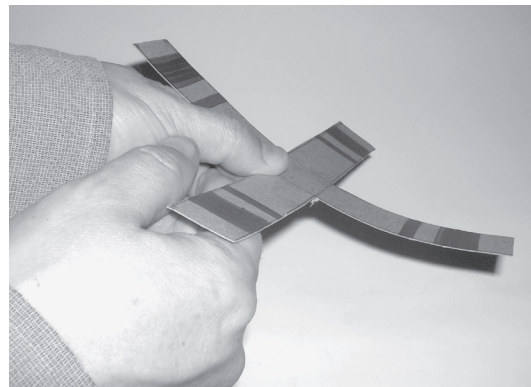


Figure 2.4

## *Drive It Home*

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### Doing it God's way

A boomerang works because of its special design. If a boomerang is not made or thrown according to the design plan, it will not work correctly.

God has a plan for our lives. When we live according to God's plan, our lives are significant. When we do things God forbids or fail to do what he wants, when we wander away from His plan, our lives lose value and we lose hope in our future.

### Review Verse

Repeat Jeremiah 29:11 together.



# Story

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## “A Man Changed by God”

*This story will help boys recognize God’s plan to give them direction and help them become men of integrity.*

The young leader of the Harlem Lords had his gang ready. He knew the Imperials, a rival gang, had more than his 120 men, but if they were going to invade his turf, they would have to pay the price.

The Lords were ready along 150th Street when the Imperials arrived. Several fired pellet guns from rooftops. The Imperials ran into basements on both sides of the street, looking for cover, but angry Harlem Lords awaited them with chains, broken bottles and clubs.

The Imperials fled the basements and ran back down the street, defeated. It was the young man’s first battle as the leader of his gang, and he’d won decisively.

Tom Skinner, a young black evangelist, told this story many times in the early 1970s as he showed people the power of God and the difference God can make in your life.

Tom lived in Harlem. His father was a minister. In high school, Tom had gotten very good grades, played on the baseball and football teams and had been president of the student body. At church, he had been president of the young people’s group.

Tom was also that young leader of the Harlem Lords.

How could a minister’s kid be so involved in church and be so successful in school yet be the leader of a violent gang? It started with an invitation.

“How would you like to become a member of the Lords?” The gang member warned that Tom would have to prove that he was tough enough. Later that evening, Tom met the Harlem Lords. The leader, Joseph, told him they would be nice and give him a choice.

One – they would lash his back 20 times with a whip. Two – Gang members would beat him up until he was unconscious. If Tom cried out on either of these choices, he was not tough enough. Three – He would have to stand against a wall and one blindfolded gang member would throw a knife at him. If he missed, Tom could join the gang.

Now, Tom did not really have three choices. He did not want to die, so choice number three was out. He would have a tough time explaining to his parents how he got the cuts, bruises and swellings from a beating. So he chose to be whipped.

The pain was sharp and he lost count as the whip tore into his back again and again.

When it was over, the gang accepted him as a Harlem Lord. For six weeks, he loyally fought in several rumbles and helped break into a few stores.

Soon, Tom thought he could be the leader. All he had to do was beat Joseph in a fight, which he did.

Over the next two years, Tom led the Lords to win 15 gang fights. Because of this, he was selected to plan the strategy for a gang war. Five gangs from the area would fight five gangs from across town. Over 3,000 gang members would be involved.

As Tom planned his strategy one night, he was listening to his favorite radio station. At 9 o’clock, instead of the program returning after the commercials, an unscheduled gospel program started.

Tom was irritated but he listened. The radio preacher quoted 2 Corinthians 5:17: “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away and behold all things are become new” (KJV). He said Christ came to earth to pay the price for every sin you

have ever committed. He explained that we all have a factory within us that produces evil and causes us to sin. It's not the bad things we do that makes us sinners. We have a sinful nature that makes us sin.

"Jesus Christ is your answer," the preacher said. "He's the only one who can change that factory so that it produces good things instead of evil."

Tom had heard his father talk about this before, but he had never believed it. He started listing the reasons why he did not believe in God. First, he could not touch or see God. Second, it was not logical to believe in God. Third, the Bible was written by men, and how could you trust them? And fourth, he did not understand God.

As Tom made his list, God answered his questions. First, a science teacher said that no one has ever seen an atom. Yet when he explained that the atom, which is too small to be seen, is made up of even smaller parts, Tom had believed him – without glimpsing an atom or its parts. So why couldn't he believe in God?

Second, that teacher said the universe has movements that are more accurate than a watch. Tom knew that someone had made his watch. Wasn't it logical to think that something or someone had created the universe?

Third, Tom loved history. Almost everything he knew about history, he had read in books. He believed what the authors had written about history. Why shouldn't he believe what was written in the Bible?

And what about understanding God? Tom thought about his car. He did not completely understand how it worked, but he drove it. He did not know exactly how his radio worked either, but he listened to it. Couldn't he trust God without understanding him completely?

Tom bowed his head and prayed. "God, I don't understand all of this. I don't understand how you are going to change my life. I don't even understand why I am praying to you, but if these things are true, if what this preacher says is true, if what the Bible says is true, if you can transform my life and make me a new person, if you can forgive me of every sin that I have ever committed, then I'm asking you to do it. I'm asking you to come into my life and take it over and live in me."

When Tom finished, God gave him a feeling of assurance that he had forgiven the leader of the Harlem Lords. Tom knew that Jesus had come into his life.

Starting a new life as a Christian was not going to be easy. Tom had to tell his gang that because of Jesus Christ he could not be a part of the Harlem Lords.

But no one quits a gang. Once you're in, you're in for life. Other gang members would kill you before letting you out. As Tom walked to the gang-war meeting, he had only the promise that God would never leave him or forsake him. All the gang members had weapons and most would not think twice before using them on him.

Tom walked to the front of the room. Everyone expected him to explain his plan for the gang war. Instead, Tom explained how he had given his life to God and believed that Christ had forgiven his sins. "Christ now lives in my life and because of this, I can no longer be in the gang."

No one moved. No one spoke. As Tom walked toward the door, he expected to feel a knife or a bullet tear into his back. But nothing happened. Outside, Tom gave thanks.

Two nights later, Tom met "The Mop," the gang member who had been his second in command. "You know, the other night when you got up and walked out of the meeting, I was all set to put my knife right into your back."

"And why didn't you?" Tom asked.



"I couldn't move," The Mop said, his eyes growing wider. "It was like somebody was holding me back – like I was glued to my seat. And it wasn't just me. Some of the other guys said the same thing. What do you make of it, Tom?"

Tom answered that God had stopped everyone from hurting him. "Christ is alive and I know he is in my life." Tom could see the toughness drain out of his friend. "Would you like to have Jesus in your life and have your sins forgiven?" Standing on a street corner just three blocks from where he led his first gang fight, Tom led The Mop to Christ.

For years, Tom Skinner continued telling his story of how Jesus forgave him and changed his life. He encouraged people to give their lives to Christ and be like new, following and serving God.

Story adapted from *Black and Free* by Tom Skinner. Used by permission of Skinner Leadership Institute. [www.skinnerleadership.org](http://www.skinnerleadership.org).

## Application

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Tom Skinner was following his own plan in life, and was actually successful in his plan as a gang leader. Where do you think his plan would have ended? [In death and destruction]

Can you figure out what God did with Tom's life after he chose to follow God's plan? [In the story you can see that Tom speaks to people about following God's plan. Tom Skinner was actually the founder and leader of an organization whose mission is to produce morally and technically excellent leaders. Tom is deceased, but his wife carries on the ministry.

God has a plan for a relationship with Him. He has a plan for how we treat others, how we treat our own bodies, how we are to honor Him with our work ethics, etc.

Discuss the plans God has for each of these areas of life. [God's plan for salvation- John. 3:16, treating others with respect- Philippians 2:4, good diet and exercise, not putting harmful substances in our bodies- 1 Corinthians 6:19 and Ephesians 5:18, working as unto the Lord- Colossians. 3:23]

Discuss the results of living according to God's plan and NOT living according to God's plan. [Eternity in heaven, better relationships with others, a healthier body, a productive a respectful life]

Note: If time allows you can go into the rest of Jeremiah 29 which explains what happens to Israel when they follow God and when they step away from following God. This concept can be discussed from an individual basis as well as from a cultural basis.

Remember that following God's plan is not necessarily an easier life. There are plenty of examples of men in the Bible, like Paul, who suffered while following God's plan. There is a culture around us that does not follow or understand God's plan – it can make following God's ways tough. However, these godly men also testify to the satisfaction they have in living their lives for Christ. In the end, it is God's plan that leads to a satisfying life despite the circumstances around you.

## Leaders' Huddle

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Talk over any highlights or problems. Encourage each other. Pray that every one of your boys will know God more deeply because he is in your Treks group.

## God Is In Control

### (His Plans Are Final)

### Target

Help boys view their lives as God's and not their own while accepting God's plan for their lives. A brain teaser "4 is the Providential Number" will help illustrate this concept.

### Scripture

"Many are the plans of a man's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."  
(Proverbs 19:21)

### Prep

Read over and mentally practice the "Four is the Providential Number" brain teaser.

## Games

### Centipede

Make several teams of three to six players. Mark a starting line and another one 30' away. All players remove their shoes and get down on their hands and knees. Each boy holds the ankles of the boy in front of him, one with each hand. The first boy in line places his hands just behind the starting line. Keep a distance of about 4' between each team.

On the start signal, each team races to the second line without the players breaking their holds. If a player lets go of his teammate's ankle, the whole line stops until they get reconnected. Then, they continue the race.

The winning team is the one that crosses the starting line entirely or the one whose first player touches the start line. You choose the criterion.

### Find the Leader

All the boys stand in one large circle. Choose a volunteer to be "it" and to go out of the room. After he leaves, select another boy as the leader. He begins some motion such as hopping on one foot, scratching his ear, making a funny face or throwing a ball. The other boys must copy his action. Continue this action while the boy who is "it" comes back in and stands in the middle of the circle. He tries to figure out who the leader is.

Now the leader must occasionally change what action he is doing, and the others follow his lead as quickly as possible. The boy guessing gets four tries or two minutes to find the leader. If he guesses the leader, the leader becomes "it". If he does not guess the leader in time, he should go back out. Choose a new leader and try again. Be sure the leader is changing actions enough to move the game along.

# Trek

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## Scripture

Write Proverbs 19:21 on the board or flipchart, and repeat it together. Then, with the first phrase, “Many are the plans of a man’s heart”, have the boys put their fist over their heart. Then have them repeat the second phrase, “but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”, while pointing to the sky, recognizing the victor.

## Brain Teasers

Come up with a collection of your favorite riddles and brain teasers. You can find them at the library or do a search online. One of my favorites:

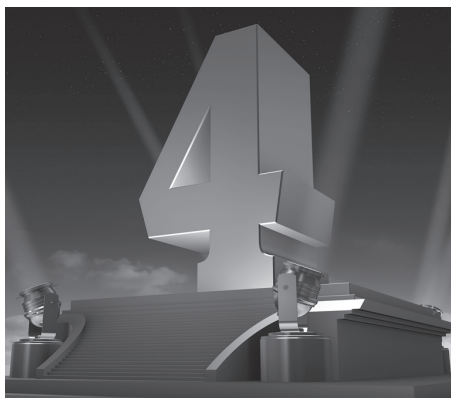
Question: There were 21 dogs and 28 (twenty ate) chickens. How many didn’t?

Answer: One

Let the boys struggle a bit with each one. Not to the point of frustration, but enough to give their brains a “workout”.

Find out if the boys have any brain teasers to share.

Be sure to leave enough time to work out the following brain teaser as the finale.



### Four is the “Providential Number”

Your efficiency in being able to run through the figures will help in the success of this teaser.

#### Background:

Starting with any number, mentally count the letters in that number spelled out. Use the number of letters counted as your new number, and use the new number to repeat the process. Repeat this until you reach the number four. Whatever number you begin with, you will always end at the number four. Four is the “Magic” or “Providential Number”.

#### Process:

Tell everyone that four is the “magic” or “providential number”. Ask them if they can figure out why. Then ask anyone to give you any number (you may want to limit the numbers to smaller ones at the beginning so the boys do not see you “mentally” counting). As quickly as possible, say each number in the progression until you reach four, then say “and four is the “magic” or “providential number” (your preference).

#### Examples:

*Twelve*- 12 (t-w-e-l-v-e) is 6, 6 (s-i-x) is 3, 3 is 5, 5 is 4 and 4 is the providential number. *Nine*- 9 is 4, and four is the providential number. *Twenty-eight*- 28 is 11, 11 is 6, 6 is 3, 3 is 5, 5 is 4 and 4 is the providential number. *One hundred*- 100 is 10, 10 is 3...

## Drive It Home

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### Providence

God’s divine providence means that, in the end, God will have His way. He works all things to accomplish His plans. Just like the brain teaser always ends up four, God’s plan always



ends where he wants it. There are examples of this in the lives of individuals and nations. There are examples both in the Bible and in modern history. (Squanto's aid to the Pilgrims, 1620; George Washington and the Battle of Monongahela, 1755; The American victory at the Battle of Midway, 1942; the many providences associate with Flight 93 on 9/11)

We will follow God's way either now or when we die. There is no escaping His plan. When we die we will follow His plan of eternal punishment or His plan of eternal life with Him. (This is a great place to share the gospel with your boys, especially if you do not make it a regular practice.)

## **Review Verse**

Repeat Proverbs 19:21 together.

# **Story**

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## **"God's Way or No Way"**

*Now, we will explore the Bible to find out about a man who resisted God's control. You can find his story in Numbers 22–24.*

### **Background on Balaam**

Have everyone find the 22nd chapter of Numbers in his Bible. Show boys the table of contents and let them find the page where Numbers starts. When they find chapter 22, introduce the situation: the people of Israel were on their way to the land that God had promised them – Canaan. They had one region to cross – the land of Moab.

Why did king Balak and his people fear the Israelites? Look in verses 2-4. Who did Balak call on for help? Find out in verses 5-7.

How did Balaam respond to Balak's first request? Read verses 8-13. The second request? See verses 14-19. What is Balaam doing that seems right?

After the boys read Numbers 22:20-34, ask someone to tell the story in his own words. Who made the donkey talk? Who was controlling the situation?

### **Balaam experiences providence**

Although Balaam was involved in the events, he was subject to God's control (22:35 – 23:10). What happened when Balaam finally did what he was hired for? Find how Balak responded in Numbers 23:11. The same thing happened two more times. The nation of Israel was God's chosen people. He loved them and cared for them. Neither Balaam nor anyone else was going to do anything to harm them if God did not allow them.

### **A false prophet**

There are several times when Balaam appears to be a godly man. He consults God. He claims he can only do and say what God tells him. But there is something suspicious about Balaam. He knew why Balak had sent for him. Read Numbers 22:6 aloud. Would Balaam have gone with the king's messengers if he did not intend to do what he was hired to do? How important was God's first answer to Balaam? Look in Numbers 22:12.

### **Balaam's true colors**

Although Balaam pronounced blessings on Israel, later chapters tell us that he advised Israel's enemies about how to defeat them. Following his advice, they almost succeeded.

To learn what happened to Balaam, read Numbers 31:7-8. God is still in control!

### *Application* ---

Balaam's story shows us that God is in control. We may try to resist him for a while, but God always wins. We could say, "Since things always turn out the way God intends them to, I can do what I please and God will still get what he wants." But Balaam's experiences show us how sorrowful that can be. How different would Balaam's life have been if he had obeyed Deuteronomy 5:32?

Discuss how we should then live our lives. [Following God's ways to the end of our days]

### *Leaders' Huddle* ---

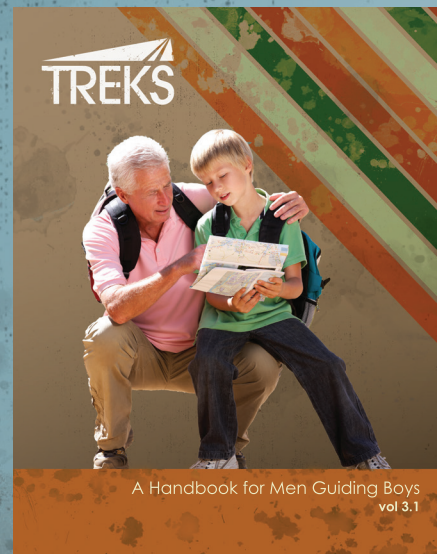
Briefly review the meeting and pray for your boys. Ask the Lord to help them keep their focus by obeying Him and learning more about what He expects of them.



# SAMPLE

**Treks** is a collection of powerful guides for men. **Treks** fully develops the core processes of **CSB Ministries** activity-driven group discipleship without our traditional programmatic features. **Treks** can flex into family devotions or an existing church program, yet is substantial enough to become its own feature.

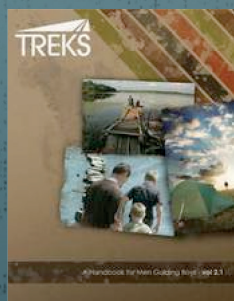
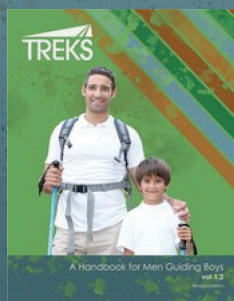
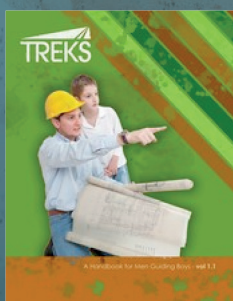
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\*Designed to use with boys in elementary and middle school. There are eight **Treks** Guides available with twelve distinct lessons in each. The complete **Treks** collection contains 288 unique lesson - four years of weekly lessons for the average school year.

For further information about **Treks: A Handbook for Men Guiding Boys**, please visit [csbministries.org/treks](http://csbministries.org/treks).

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