

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Youth Ministry Christmas Party – Kadela Home

Definition of a “White Elephant”

1. A costly possession requiring so much upkeep that it becomes a burden.
2. Something no longer wanted by its owner.

History of the “White Elephant”

In the old kingdom of Siam, the rare albino elephant was sacred, and each new one born belonged to the king. Moreover, it was forbidden to kill such an elephant or to use it for work. Therefore, the story goes, whenever the king wished to punish an obnoxious courtier, he'd make him a present of one of these pale pachyderms. However, it was a gift to be dreaded; recipients could neither use the elephant nor get rid of it -- and inevitably went broke trying to keep it fed. Nowadays, the expression white elephant is used to apply more generally to any burdensome possession.

The Gift

1. The gift should be valued as close to \$15.00 as is reasonable.
2. The gift should be something someone could actually want or use (although the tackier and more “bizarre” the better). It should be in new or good condition.
3. The gift should be wrapped or in an envelope before arriving to the party. Gift bags are OK only if a wrapped item is inside.
4. Gift certificates are OK only if it is accompanied by some other item as part of the gift. For instance, a \$XX Starbucks gift certificate, by itself, is not OK, but a \$XX Starbucks gift certificate together with a coffee mug is OK.
5. As guests arrive to the party, the gifts should be placed in an area where few people can see who brought which gift. All efforts should be made to hide who brought which gift.

The Game

1. Each guest who wishes to participate must contribute a gift. Everyone sits or stands in roughly a circle around the pile of gifts.
2. Each participating guest draws a number and holds onto that slip of paper.
3. On the first turn, the guest with paper slip #1 chooses a gift, opens it, and all admire it.
4. On the second turn, the guest with paper slip #2 gets the choice of "stealing" any unwrapped gift (#1's) or choosing a wrapped one. If #2 steals #1's gift, then #1 must open a wrapped gift.
5. On the third turn, the guest with paper slip #3 gets the choice of "stealing" any unwrapped gift (#1's or #2's) or choosing a wrapped one.
6. The game continues based on the following:
 - a. If a gift is stolen from you, you can steal a gift (within limits, described below), or open a wrapped one.
 - b. The turn proceeds until a wrapped gift is chosen.
 - c. A gift cannot be immediately stolen back from the guest who just stole it.
 - d. The fourth "owner" of a gift gets to keep it. The gift is "dead" after it has been stolen three times. "Owners" of "live" gifts must keep them visible and hold them up when requested.
 - e. The gift exchange ends when the last wrapped gift is opened. Usually, guests are encouraged to perpetuate the gift stealing as long as there are "live" gifts, but no one is obligated to do this.

Please RSVP so we know how much food to prepare.