

A Teacher's Guide

Search and Rescue Scavenger Hunt Program





Materials Needed:

- Doll or stuffed animal (the “missing person”)
- Clue items (sock, hat, toy, snack wrapper, etc.)
- Map of the playground or classroom (simplified, labeled: forest, lake, mountain, cave, etc.)
- Kid-friendly compasses
- Lanyards or Rescue Badges
- Radios or toy walkie-talkies (optional)
- Rescue journals/logbooks
- Clipboards, crayons/markers

Pre-Activity Prep:

- Set the Scene:
- Explain that a child has gone missing and SAR teams (the students) must use a map and clues to find them.
- Create the Map:
 - Use landmarks in your environment (sandbox = “desert,” swing set = “bridge,” tree area = “forest”).
 - Print simple maps with compass labeled (N, S, E, W).
- Clue Setup:
 - Hide themed clues in “locations” on the map.

- Each clue should include a small image of the next location plus a compass direction (e.g., “Go north from the forest to find the teddy bear in the cave”).



Game Flow Stages:

Stage 1:

Briefing & Training

- Gather the class at “basecamp.”
- Show them the map and explain how a compass works.
- Demonstrate how to use the map and compass together:
- “If the clue says ‘go east to the treehouse,’ you look at your compass, find east, and walk in that direction using your map.”
- Divide students into small SAR teams (3–4 per group).

Stage 2:

Search Operation

- Give each team a different first clue and a compass.
- As they follow clues, they use both map and compass directions to navigate.
- Each clue includes:
 - An item left behind

- A short riddle or note
- A new direction (N, S, E, W)

Example Clue:

“A sock was found in the forest. Go EAST from here to the playground bridge. You might find something furry!”

Stage 3:

Rescue & Return

- Final clue leads to the “missing child.”
- Teams regroup at basecamp and celebrate the successful mission.

Post Activity Reflection:

- Journaling: Students draw or write about the clues they found, what tools they used, and how they worked as a team.
- Discussion Prompts:
 - How did the compass help us?
 - What was the trickiest clue?
 - What would you do in real life if someone was lost?

Optional extensions

- Map Skills Station: Practice reading other simple maps (zoo, town, pirate treasure map).
- Build a Compass: DIY paper plate compass with arrows and directions.
- Guest Speaker: Invite a firefighter, park ranger, or rescue volunteer.
- Badge Ceremony: Give out “Junior Rescuer” certificates or stickers.
- Art Activity: Students design their own rescue vest or team flag.