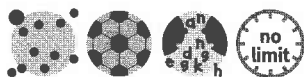


2 What's inside God's big book?

Friends of God!



Play time



Sharing books

You will need: several colourful picture books for pre-school children.

Let the children help you unpack the bag or box in which you have brought the books. Make an attractive display. Talk about the pictures and try to guess what the stories will be about. If the children show interest in the books, read one or two to small groups. Try to help them see that the books are all about different topics and are written by different authors with different illustrators.

Tent play

You will need: sheets, blankets, bath towels or curtains; if available, play tents or pop-up tents.

Work together with the children to make tents by draping the sheets etc, over tables and chairs or other large equipment. Make sure that this activity is perfectly safe, eg use single chairs rather than stacks of chairs, which could topple over. As you work, you could tell everyone that the Bible story today is about someone who lived all the time in tents. Once the tents are made, let the children play freely. If you are able to play outdoors, pitch small tents on the ground with ground sheets for the children to sit or lie on.

Soft ball

You will need: soft balls, plastic bottles (optional).

Show the children how to roll soft balls along the ground to one another. Encourage them to play together like this rather than throwing the ball about. The activity will help them to develop friendships as well as developing their hand and eye coordination. Alternatively, provide some empty plastic bottles to line up as skittles. The children could take turns rolling a ball along the ground to try and knock them over.

Game time



Find a friend

You will need: some lively music and sound system.

Have everyone sitting down. Ask the children to listen to the music carefully and clap to it. Explain that when the music stops, they should put their hands on their heads. Do this three or four times until they can do it easily. Now they can stand up and dance to the music, still listening carefully. When the music stops they should find a friend and hold hands. (This could be a child or an adult.) At first, only have a few seconds of music before stopping it. As the music stops, call out, 'Find a friend!' When everyone has done this, start again. Be sure to congratulate the group when they manage to play the game correctly (or almost correctly).

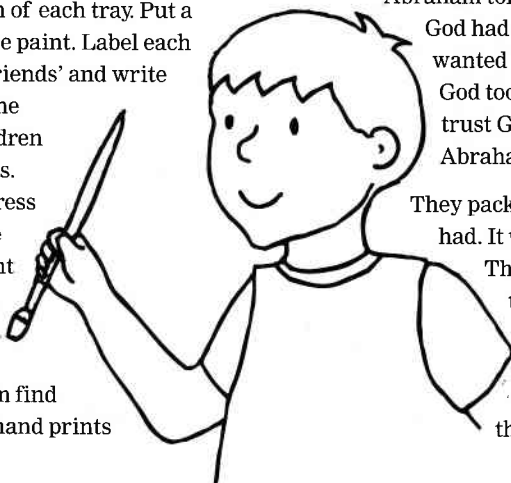
Making time



Hand prints

You will need: large piece of card or paper for each child, coloured if possible; paints; trays; thin pieces of sponge; cover-up for furniture and children.

Cover tables with newspaper. Pour a little paint into the bottom of each tray. Put a damp sponge over the paint. Label each piece of paper 'My friends' and write the child's name at the bottom. Tell the children what the writing says. Show them how to press their hands on to the sponge until the paint covers their hands, then make their own hand prints on their own paper. Help them find friends to add their hand prints



so that everyone ends up with a picture containing lots of hand prints. (Some may not want to have other children mark their paper: don't insist or make them feel that they have not done the activity properly.) The picture can be taken home and displayed as a reminder of lots of friends! Wash and dry hands thoroughly as soon as the children finish.

Story time



Friends of God

You will need: illustrated Bible with a book mark and a picture of Abraham and Sarah (photocopy page 19) at Genesis 12, bag or box containing wooden bricks, folded card 'tents'.

Say, 'This book is the Bible. It's a special book because it tells us a lot about God. I wonder what we can find in it today.' Teach everyone to say, 'What's in the Bible today?' Open it up and find the picture of Abraham and Sarah. Say, 'There are lots of stories in the Bible about people who became friends of God. I'll tell you about these two people - Abraham and Sarah.'

(Begin building the bricks as you speak.) Abraham and Sarah lived in a busy city. They had a comfortable house and lots of people to look after them. They had a good life.

One day, God spoke to Abraham. 'I want you to leave this city,' God said. 'I want you to be my friend and do as I tell you because I love you and Sarah.'

'Oh,' said Abraham, 'I see. Where do you want us to go?'

'I want you to trust me,' God said. 'Leave home and take your tents. I'll show you where to go.'

Abraham told Sarah what God had said. Sarah wanted to be a friend of God too. She decided to trust God, just like Abraham did.

They packed up all they had. It took a long time. They took with them all the people who helped them, their sheep, their goats and

