

# Christian Crafts at Playgroup

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Everything we do with families who come to playgroup reflects our faith – our hospitality, our generosity, our interest, our love and care. What we **do** and how we do it has more impact than what we **say**.

If you only provide 'Christian' crafts at playgroup, it feels like a Sunday school and may be a barrier to the very people you'd like to come. Therefore program your crafts carefully, and think about ways to offer a range of creative experiences. Not everything has to have a text on it to be 'Christian'. By sharing our appreciation for creation (planting a seed), our enjoyment of food (a grace cube) or the blessings of families we are sharing our faith.

There are some times of the year when Christian festivals occur that are celebrated by the community, particularly at Christmas and Easter. At these special times it is appropriate and expected that we will share the stories of our faith. Easter usually occurs in the first term and Christmas at the end of the year, and there is a period of preparation which becomes a season. By careful planning you can provide many opportunities for families to share in the Lent period (6 weeks before Easter) beginning with Pancake Day and helping them understand the religious significance of the various Easter symbols. The same applies to Christmas, with a 4 week period of preparation called Advent. Over a period of weeks leading up to the 'Christmas Party', you can find ways of sharing the story of Jesus' birth. Remember that parents often save things children have created at playgroup, and they are brought out every Christmas for many years, so it is worth taking time to consider what you want them to remember.

Sharing our stories is one way of sharing our faith, and each term a Bible story could be featured. In wet winter weather the story of Noah's Ark can be the basis for many crafts. In the third term creation can be celebrated in various ways by focussing on plants or animals, the weather, the stars or the sea. But take opportunities like Mother's Day and Father's Day to celebrate loving families or Book Week to celebrate God's big book – the Bible.

Remember the children at playgroup are very young and you want them to have success with their crafts, so **keep it simple**. Gently discourage parents from helping too much or being too worried about the final product, as the process of learning and creation is what is important for the child's development (encourage parents make their own if they wish). Have enough for everyone to share and encourage cooperation and sharing at the creative tables.

Always pray before playgroup, even as you set out the equipment and resources. Pray for the families that are getting ready to come and that God will provoke conversations that allow you to go deeper and share your faith in ways that are helpful to others. God wants to bless you and the families who come to playgroup.

<http://childrensministry.org.au>

# Planning

Most terms are 10 weeks. Have a plan and keep it simple. Try and provide balance and variety. Avoid photocopied sheets to colour in! Link in stories and songs with the crafts.

Be organised so you have the resources you need. Give parents a program so they can look forward to specific experiences, which also allows them to offer to help.

Keep collage tables tidy and separate crafts like collage/painting/playdough. Try to do food and painting experiences outside to minimise clean up.

Sample term programs:

1. Fish collage
2. Make a boat
3. Plant a seed
4. Make a face
5. Incy wincy spider
6. Wreaths
7. Angels
8. Trees
9. Stars
10. Crowns

1. Pizza collage
2. Painting wild
3. Playdough workshop
4. Noah's ark rainbow
5. Rain makers
6. Animal finger puppets
7. Leaf threading
8. Make a book
9. Butterfly mask
10. Decorate a biscuit