

Playgroup Ideas

Term 4, 2010

Compiled by the Resource Centre for Children and Family Ministry
with Heidi Jane Harding, Children's Mission Planner

Uniting Church **Playgroup**



mission resourcing network



Playgroup Ideas — Term 4, 2010

Dear reader or browser,

We are happy that you have opened this resource; and we hope it will be a help to you in planning a program for your church-based playgroup.

In order to continue producing this kind of resource, we need to hear from you. So please take the time to let us know how you are using the resource and to give us your suggestions for future editions. Send your response — you can use this feedback form if you wish — to hharding@sa.uca.org.au

Thanks, and God's blessings to you and the families you support,

Heidi

Heidi Jane Harding, Children's Mission Planner, Uniting Church in South Australia.

FEED BACK FORM

Name and location of **your playgroup**

Your name and your role in the playgroup.....

Number and ages of children attending your playgroup

Special features of your playgroup

.....

.....

How many **Playgroup Ideas** documents have you looked at before this?.....

What have you found useful in **Playgroup Ideas**?.....

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What improvements can you suggest for **Playgroup Ideas**?

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Any other comments?.....

.....

Term 1, 2011 Here are the themes we expect to be featuring. We'd love your contribution of ideas and suggestions.

- Water
- Tortoise & Hare
- Doctor/nurse
- Feet
- Easter
- Dogs
- Cars
- Seashore
- My Kitchen (nutrition)
- Australia Day

Introduction

Term 4, 2010, Playgroup Ideas

This resource is designed to help leaders of church-based playgroups in planning their program.

This resource is not a set curriculum; it provides ideas that you may pick and choose from or adapt to your own situation. The themes and activity ideas can fit into whatever format you have established for your playgroup.

This **Playgroup Ideas Resource** often ties in with the **Family Planner** which is a free gift from the Uniting Church to families. Churches can download the planner from:

<http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/helps/childrens-ministry/family-planner.html>

A **Playgroup Handbook**, which provides information about starting and running a playgroup is available on the same web site.

Faith Enrichment Ideas

Many parents have tried to attend Sunday church services with their toddlers but have stopped attending because the service didn't cater for children, was not at a convenient time for their family or because they left feeling uninspired. Other parents have never made attending traditional church worship a part of their family lifestyle. A playgroup can be an alternative 'church' experience *if* the playgroup provides opportunities for the family to explore the Christian faith.

Playgroups organised by churches and staffed by Christians serve young families in many ways. Their Christian character is shown through the development of caring relationships. Some church-based playgroups also introduce Christian concepts into their program through activities, songs and stories.

We respect the view of some churches that playgroup is only pre-evangelical, with a policy not to mention anything 'Christian' unless the topic is brought up by the parent or carer. However the greatest gift we have to offer people is Jesus. Let's not hide him from those that we care about simply because we are afraid to offend.

The parents and carers who come into the church for playgroup know that the organisers are Christian, so they would find it reasonable to have some appropriate faith discussion or activity. It's important to state in your playgroup information posters and brochures that you do have some Christian content in your playgroup program.

This **Playgroup Ideas Resource** provides a range of Faith Enrichment Ideas. Playgroup leaders can use one or more of these suggestions to introduce a faith dimension into the playgroup session in a natural way. You know the families who attend your playgroup, so you can best decide what is appropriate for their situation.

Theme Ideas This Term

Week 1	Mud
Week 2	Fish
Week 3	Pumpkins
Week 4	The story of Queen Esther
Week 5	Our pageant
Week 6	Noses
Week 7	Guitars
Week 8	Gardens
Week 9	My Family
Week 10	Christmas Shepherds

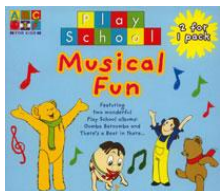
Note: Throughout this resource the term 'parent' is used for the parent, relative or other carer who brings a child to playgroup.

Additional Resources

Music

The songs we suggest are mostly from Playschool. Many parents are already familiar with them and this helps with the sing-a-long! Playschool CD's are available at the ABC stores and often at department stores such as Target.

Here are a few that we have specifically mentioned in this resource. You won't need all of these resources as you don't need to do every song listed each week, and chances are you will know many of them anyway!



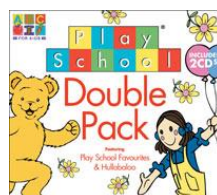
Musical Fun

This pack includes **Oomba Baroomba** and **There's a Bear in There**.
Price \$14.95 ABC Shop



Sing-A-Long Songs

Price: \$9.95 ABC Shop



This pack includes **Playschool Favourites** and **Hullabaloo**.
Price: \$14.95 ABC Shop



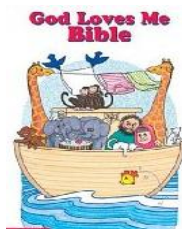
The New Useful Book has the sheet music to many popular songs and activities that suit the theme of the songs, it is 'a very useful book'!

Price: \$19.95 ABC Shop

Story Books

We have suggested a variety of story books to fit with the theme of each week. These are simply suggestions and you can use whatever best suits your group and that are available on your bookshelf or from the local library.

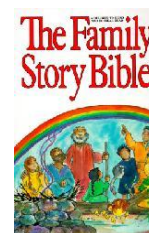
Bible Story Books



We recommend that you have a children's story Bible.

We really like the Candle story Bibles; the *God Loves Me Bible* is especially good for a young group.

The *Ralph Milton Family Story Bible* (available from Media Com) is also quite good.



MediaCom

Website: <http://www.mediacom.org.au> Online orders & browsing available!

Visit: 14 Eton Rd. Keswick 5035, South Australia

Phone toll free: 1-800-811-311

Email: admin@mediacom.org.au

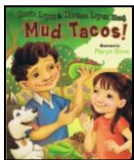
MUD

Mud, here refers to the natural stuff beneath our feet, whatever you call it — mud or earth, or soil, or dirt.

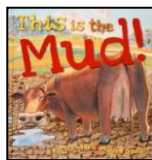
ACTIVITY IDEAS

- ☺ **Good mud:** *Mud is good for growing plants.* If possible go outside and find things that grow in the ground: trees, plants, grass.
You may prepare ahead of time for this activity by pulling a plant out of the mud and letting it dry, so children can discover that plants can't grow and thrive out of the mud.
Mud is also good for holding things up. Children may discover things (many man-made) that rest on the earth/ground, but do not grow: houses, cement paths, light poles, etc.
- ☺ **Mud samples:** Child and parent dig up several spoonfuls of mud/earth/dirt/soil and put it on a plastic plate. *What does it feel like (hot/cold, wet/dry, smooth/lumpy)? What does it smell like? What do you see? What colour is it? Is it all one colour? Is it stuck together or in small bits? Are the bits all the same?*
- ☺ **Mud painting:** parent helps child mix water with their mud sample to the consistency of finger paint. Child uses their hands/fingers to create a painting. Be sure to wash hands after this activity. (See the following activity.)
- ☺ **Bad mud:** *Mud is not good for people to eat.* [That's why we avoid making mud pies!] *There are things in the mud that can make people sick. That's why we wash hands when they are dirty.* Have a basin, soap, warm water, soft nailbrush and paper towels. Parents help children wash their hands — very thoroughly, rubbing up and down each finger and the palm and the back of the hand, brushing around fingernails; then drying just as thoroughly.
- **Different kinds of mud:** Have some clear plastic containers with different kinds of mud: two each of, eg sand, rocky soil, clay, potting mixture, dust. Children and parents sort the different types; find the ones that are the same and different.

BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about mud or the earth, eg



Mud tacos
by Mario Lopez
and Marissa Lopez
Wong



This is the mud
by Kathryn Apel



Big earth, little me
by Thom Wiley
and Kate Endle

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Oh, I wish I were a little hunk of mud, hunk of mud X2 (Tune: If you're happy and you know it)
I'd ooey and I'd gooey under everybody's shoe.
Oh, I wish I were a little hunk of mud, hunk of mud.
- Mud is very nice to feel, all squishy-squash between the toes!
I'd rather wade in wiggly mud, than smell a yellow rose.
Nobody else but the rosebush knows how nice mud feels between the toes. By Polly Chase Boyden
- Both boots stuck in the mud on Hullabaloo in the Playschool Double pack
- Wash your dirty hands on Hullabaloo in the Playschool Double pack

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- ☺ **Key faith concept:** God made the world.
An adult can write 'God made mud.' on the child's mud painting.
- **Bible story:** Tell the story of the farmer planting seeds in various kinds of soil. (Mark 4:3-8). Connect this with the different kinds of mud in containers.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God made mud.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for giving us mud. Amen
- **Bible verse:** The earth and everything on it belong to God. (Psalm 24:1)

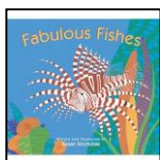
FISH

Invite someone who has goldfish to bring along a bowl of goldfish for the children to see. Or if someone has a collection of fish figures from *Finding Nemo*, they could bring these to show.

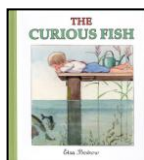
ACTIVITY IDEAS

- **Visitor:** Invite someone who knows about fish — either as pets or fish in the natural environment. The visitor may talk briefly about fish — possibly emphasising how they move and what they eat. Be sure to emphasise that fish live in water. People can swim in water, but we can't live in water.
- ☺ **Fish faces:** Have a mirror available where children can see themselves pursing and releasing their mouths to make fish faces.
- **Fish snack:** Make blue jelly according to directions on the packet. Pour into clear plastic cups. Let them cool in the refrigerator until partially set (about an hour) add a few gummy fish to each cup. Refrigerate until completely set.
- **Many kinds of fish:** Make up two sets of fish cards (enlarge and colour the sheet in the appendix). Parents look at the pictures with their child. Use words that describe the different fish. Play a game of 'Memory' with the cards. Begin with two pairs of matching cards lying face down. Child tries to pick up matching pairs. Play again adding another pair of matching cards. Continue adding while child's interest holds.
- ☺ **Move like a fish:** Play some water sounding background music. Parents and children wiggle like fish. They can do this laying on the ground. Alternatively parents hold their child laying on his or her tummy and 'swims' them around like a fish in water.
- ☺ **Play dough fish:** Parents help children make a basic fish shape with playdough. Help kids make it a different shape: round, skinny, long short . . .
- **Sun catcher fish:** This takes a bit of preparation, but the result is worth it.
Prepare: Cut a fish shape out of the centre of a piece of black or dark blue construction paper. Stick a sheet of clear contact, just larger than the fish shape, onto the construction paper so that the fish shape is covered. This will leave a sticky, fish-shaped surface onto which children can stick small pieces of tissue paper in a variety of colours. Trim excess tissue paper.

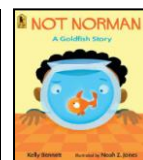
BOOKS TO SHARE Find stories in your local library or in parents' collections about fish, eg



Fabulous Fishes
by Susan Stockdale



The Curious Fish
by Elsa Beskow



Not Norman
by Kelly Bennett

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- One, two, three, for five; once I caught a fish alive
Six, seven, eight, nine ten, then I let him go again.
Why did you let him go? Because he bit my finger so.
Which finger did he bite? This little finger on the right.
- Swim like a fish on Hullabaloo in the playschool double pack

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God made fish.
An adult can write this with white crayon (or correction pen) on the edge of the child's sun catcher.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God made fish.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for making fish. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God made . . . the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.
(Psalm 8:8, modified)

PUMPKINS

Although this theme may be linked with Halloween (31st October), do not make a big thing about Halloween itself or the occult activities that are associated with it.

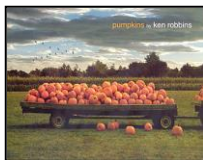
ACTIVITIES

- **Pumpkin line-up:** Purchase pumpkins of various shapes and sizes from a greengrocer. Display the pumpkins. Parents and children talk about the features that make the pumpkins different: size, colour, shape.
- **What's in the pumpkin:** Children guess/predict what's inside the pumpkin. Ask how they think you can find out for sure. Cut open the pumpkin (You'll need a cutting board and big sharp knife. Be careful of little hands). *Do you see what you thought you would see?*
Let children feel the seeds, membranes and flesh of the pumpkin.
- **Pumpkin snack:** Serve pumpkin scones made from Flo Bjelke-Peterson's famous recipe (see www.southburnett.net). Alternatively serve pumpkin soup or cubes of roasted pumpkin. Pumpkin seeds are edible and very nutritious. They should be roasted before eating, about 75°C for at least 15-20 minutes. Check with parents before giving them to young children.
- ☺ **Dotty pumpkins:** Give the child a pumpkin shape cut out of white card. Child chooses a pumpkin colour of paint. (Older children can mix red and yellow paint to make the orange paint.) Child uses a sponge (or a finger) dipped in paint to cover the pumpkin shape with coloured dots.
- **Find the pumpkins:** Visit a pumpkin patch or show a picture of a pumpkin patch with pumpkins hiding under leaves. Hide some small pumpkins (or balls) under mats (or blankets or soft toys) that are ordinarily in your play area. Challenge children to find the pumpkins and bring them to you. You may surreptitiously re-hide the pumpkins so more children can find more pumpkins.
- **Pumpkin head hats:** Set out a large pumpkin with a face drawn on it. Have a variety of hats available. As you sing the 'Mr Pumpkin Head' song, Children can place the different hats on and take them off of the pumpkin.

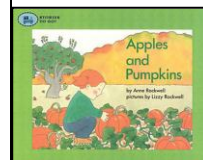
BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about pumpkins, eg



**Pumpkin
Pumpkin**
by Jeanne
Titherington



Pumpkins
by Ken
Robbins



**Apples and
Pumpkins**
by Anne
Rockwell

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Peter, Peter pumpkin eater
- Come and meet Mr. Pumpkin Head, (tune: 'The Muffin Man')
Mr. Pumpkin Head, Mr. Pumpkin Head,
Come and meet Mr. Pumpkin Head.
With a red hat (or whatever color it is) on his head.
- Rumbly Tummy in the New Useful Book or Oomba Baroomba
- Aiken Drum in the New Useful Book, make up extra verse with pumpkin foods!

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God loves us and provides our food.
- **Read or tell:** the story of the origin of American Thanksgiving, briefly: American Indians taught pilgrims from England to plant foods that grew in the new country. After their first harvest the pilgrims invited the Indians to a feast and thanked God for the new friends and the food they had provided.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gives us pumpkins.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for pumpkins. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant . . . They will be yours for food'.
(Genesis 1:29)

THE STORY OF QUEEN ESTHER

The story of Esther, the young girl who became a queen and saved her people is from the Old Testament of the Bible. It is celebrated annually in the Jewish festival of Purim.

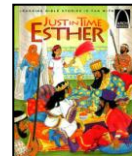
- **Visitor:** Invite a person familiar with the Jewish festival of Purim to come and tell the children about the celebration, particularly children's participation.
- ☺ **Bible story:** Share the story of Queen Esther with the children. Read it from a good, age appropriate children's Bible storybook or tell the story. A good technique is to use the illustrations in the children's Bible and use them as a prompt for telling the story in your own words. Traditionally in the telling of this story the 'audience' boos when the name Haman is mentioned and cheers when the name Esther is mentioned. And/or watch Veggie Tales' *Esther, the girl who became queen*.
- **Play the story:** Children use dolls to act out the story. This can be either free play, or they can play it as someone retells the story.
- ☺ **Dress up like queens**
- ☺ **Paint or decorate a cut out crown** with shiny glitter paint, foil or paper.
- **Esther crowns:** Children make a crown. Choose a strip of card that will go around the child's head. Choose a plastic biscuit cutter shape. Dip it in craft glue (a layer in a plastic take-away container lid). Carefully press the glue-dipped cutter onto the card band. Shake glitter (if you're game) or sequins over the glue. When the glue is dry, shake off excess sequins and staple the ends of the strip together to form the crown. [Cover the backs of staples with masking tape for safety.] Children can wear the crowns for the rest of the session. and
- **Haman's hat biscuits:** According to tradition Haman wore a three-cornered hat. *Hamantaschen* — bikkies shaped like his hat are a popular Purim treat. Parents can help children make hamantaschen: Roll out sugar cookie dough and cut into circles. Place a dollop of jam in the centre of the circle. Fold up three sides of the circle to form a triangle. Bake according to your recipe and, when cooled, serve for a snack.



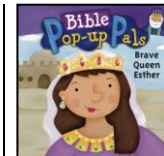
BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about Queen Esther or the Jewish festival of Purim



Queen Esther helps God's people
Zondervan Kids
Beginners Bible



Just in time Esther
Arch Book



Brave Queen Esther
by Rondi DeBoer

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Purim song (Tune: If you're happy and you know it.)
If you hear the name of Haman stomp your feet (stomp feet twice)
If you hear the name of Esther, clap your hands
If you hear the name of Ahasuerus, turn around.
If you hear the name of Mordecai, shout hooray.
- **Action rhyme:** Esther Loved God. (Raise arms upward)
She loved others, too. (Spread hands, palms up.)
I love God (Raise arms upward.)
And I love you. (Hugs for everyone.)
- I'm not afraid, The New Useful Book pg 38

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God loves us and helps us.
- **Wonder:** God had a job for Esther. I wonder what he wants me to do.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for loving us and helping us. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** The LORD your God loves you. (Deuteronomy 23:5)
An adult can write the verse on the children's crowns.

OUR PAGEANT

May be linked with the Credit Union Christmas Pageant in Adelaide (Saturday 13 November)
or with a local Christmas pageant

BIG PLAN: some of the options you might consider:

- Visit the Adelaide Christmas pageant as a group.
- Participate in a local Christmas parade as a group — just for fun or to let your community know about your playgroup. Or join with other local playgroups to participate in the parade.
- Make your own playgroup mini-parade (the following ideas relate to this plan).

ACTIVITY IDEAS

Invite children and parents to come dressed in their favourite dress-ups and to bring their own wheels (pram, wagon, tricycle, etc) for the parade. Or collect dress ups and have them available at Playgroup.

- **Dress ups:** As people arrive, greet them and talk about their dress-up costumes. *What are you wearing? Why did you choose it? Where have you worn it before?* Provide a full-length mirror so children can see themselves and know what they look like in the costume.
- ☺ **Music station:** Create a space with Christmas festive music. Provide some instruments like shakers etc. For her to play along with the music.
- ☺ **Play dough table:** With either Christmas shapes or people shapes.
- **Marching music:** Play some recorded 'marching music'. Encourage children to listen to the beat of the music and move to the music: first roll their head back and forth, then hunch their shoulders, swing their arms, clap their hands, stamp their feet, march around.
- **Playgroup parade:** parade around your yard or indoor space (or around the block, if your situation permits). If possible make a video of the parade to show later at playgroup and make copies for families. Encourage the kids to wave and act out their character.
Alternatively children put together a toy parade or pageant with floats and 'marchers' of dolls, teddies and other items that are regularly available in your playgroup.
- **Video:** Show a video of your own playgroup parade or of a previous Adelaide or local Christmas pageant.
- ☺ **Story books:** Have a number of picture books with the stories that are depicted in the pageant. Encourage children to look at pictures in the books and tell (or make up) a story about the pictures.

BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about parades or Christmas, eg

Disney's **Christmas parade annuals**



Wombat Divine
by Mem Fox



Dora's Christmas Parade
by Leslie Valdes and
Dave Aikins

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Use nursery rhymes with characters depicted in the Christmas Pageant.

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** Rejoice in the Lord! God wants us to be happy.
- **Bible story:** If you are involved in a Christmas parade that includes a nativity float, tell the story behind that float — why the coming of Jesus is a time to rejoice.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God wants us to be happy. I wonder what God does to make us happy.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for good times. Amen.
- **Bible Verse:** God always leads us in the winner's parade because we belong to Christ.
(2 Corinthians 2:14 NIRV)

NOSES

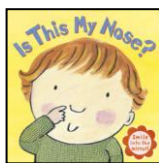
For fun, leaders and volunteers could wear red clown noses, or animal noses (usually available from discount stores), encouraging parents and children to talk about: *Who is that? Why does she look different? What kind of nose is that?*

- **All kinds of noses:** Have pictures of various animals. Children with parents look at the pictures, name the animal, find the nose, and describe the nose
- **My nose knows:** Have a number of items with distinctive smells that the children are familiar with (eg baby powder or soap, smelly nappy, orange). Have each item hidden under a cloth. Children attempt to identify the item without seeing it.
- ☺ **My nose, your nose:** Parent and child together look into a mirror. They touch 'My nose/your nose' in person and what they see in the mirror. Talk about how the noses are the same and how they are different. Experiment with wiggling the tip of the nose, pushing it up and down and sidewise.
- ☺ **Stick the nose on the clown:** Have a poster of a clown face with no nose. Give child a paper nose with blue tack on the back. Child puts the nose on the clown where they think it looks best. Could also try putting the nose where it looks funniest. You could give every child a different colour or shape nose.
- **Sorting pictures of nose:** Have a pile of cut out noses from magazines. Let the children sort them. Small children love anything that has multiples.
- **Breathing and sneezing:** Child can hold a strip of tissue paper under the parent's nose. Note what happens when the parent breathes in and out. Parent talks with the child about breathing: how important it is for air to go into the body. Child can try to breathe deeply and feel the air going into and coming out of their nose. Parent can demonstrate unusual things that sometimes happen with noses, eg sneezing and snuffing.
- **Nose safety:** Talk about taking care of noses. Sunscreen outside, don't put anything in your nose because it can hurt and can stop you from breathing, wipe it when you sneeze.
- **Scratch and Sniff Paint:** To ordinary poster paint add a small amount of craft glue and a few drops of cooking essence (eg orange essence with orange paint, lemon with yellow, mint with green, strawberry with red). Children paint thick stripes of each colour on paper. When the paint has dried, they can scratch the different colours (use a pop stick) and smell the different aromas.

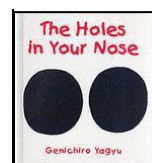
BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about noses and the sense of smell, eg



My nose, your nose
by Melanie Walsh



Is this my nose?
illustrated by
Georgie Birkett



The holes in your nose
by Genichiro Yagyu

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose
- Head and shoulders, knees and toes
- I use my nose to smell, I use my nose to smell, (TUNE: The Farmer in the Dell)
and when I want to smell a flower, I use my nose to smell.
- Put your finger on your nose, on your nose (x4)

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us life and breath.
- **Read or tell:** briefly a Bible story of God creating the first person (Genesis 2:4-7)
- **Talk about:** How important it is to breathe and how we need noses to breathe.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gave us noses.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for noses that help us breathe. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God formed the first person out of dirt from the ground and blew into his nostrils the breath of life. (Genesis 2:7)

GUITARS

May be linked with the Adelaide international Guitar Festival (25 to 28 November 2010)

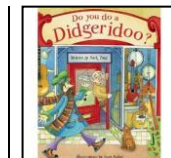
ACTIVITY IDEAS

- ☺ **Guest guitarist:** Invite a guitarist (professional or amateur) to visit playgroup and play for the children, talk about their playing (how they got started and what they do), and show children how the guitar works. If they have an old/inexpensive instrument they might help children to make music by strumming while the guitarist holds the guitar and changes the chords.
- **Air guitar:** As your guitarist guest (or a record) plays some familiar music on guitar, children (and parents) play along on air guitars. Encourage them to be as active as possible and really express themselves through movement.
- ☺ **I'm a guitar:** Parents hold little children as if they were guitars. Strum their tummies and sing a song. Alternatively, parents might ask children to make a particular sound when they touch their nose, ear, shoulder, elbow, etc.
- **Rubber band guitar:** Parents help children make box guitars. You'll need empty tissue boxes (that have ready-made holes in them) and a variety of rubber bands. Choose several rubber bands of different thicknesses and loop them around the box, going over the hole. Pluck the bands and note the different sounds made by the different rubber bands. Optional, use masking tape to attach a paper towel roll (or a length of cardboard) to form the neck of the guitar. Caution: avoid stretching rubber bands to the breaking point.
- **Pitch:** A parent — with help from a volunteer with some musical ability — uses a guitar (or a keyboard or any other instrument) to help their child discover pitch.
 - > Play three different tones: one high (g), one low (c), one in-between (e).
Help the child indicate high, low, in-between with their hands as they hear the tones.
 - > Play pairs of notes, ask child to identify the second one as higher, lower, same.
 - > Play a simple tune, eg 'Mary had a little lamb'. See if children can identify the song by the tune and sing along.
- ☺ **Music station:** Create a music station

BOOKS TO SHARE Find music books in your local library or parents' collections —

Beginners books for playing guitar or other instruments.

Look at illustrations of how to hold the instrument and how to make sounds with it.



Do you Do a Didgeridoo?
by Nick Page

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- If you're happy and you know it . . . play guitar
- Hear me playing my guitar, tar (big strum on 'tar') TUNE: I'll take you riding in my car.
- On the ning nang nong on Playschool favourites
- Any songs that a guitar could accompany.

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us music.
- **Sing** a children's Gospel song, eg 'Jesus loves me, this I know' and play air or rubber band guitar.
- **Bible story:** Tell or read the story of King Saul (when he was ill) sending for David to play music to make him feel better. (1 Samuel 16:14-23)
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God made music.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for music. Amen.
- **Bible Verse:** Make a joyful noise unto the LORD. (Psalm 100:1)
An adult can write this verse on the child's rubber-band guitar.

GARDENS

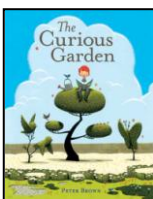
Visit a nearby home garden. Plan your activities around the type of garden you visit — primarily a flower garden or a vegetable garden. With a large playgroup, you may want to take the children in groups of no more than six at a time for short visits.

Alternatively, visit a civic garden and possibly spend the whole session in the garden.

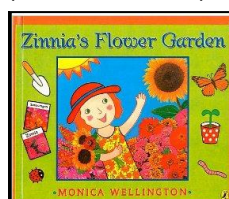
ACTIVITY IDEAS

- **Meet the gardener:** The owner of the garden shows the children around, points out what is growing and how they take care of it. They may let children try some activity associated with the garden.
- **Paper plate flowers:** Children make flowers from paper plates. Have different flower components pre-cut from coloured paper or crepe paper (see appendix).
First, children name the green leaves (or sepals) and paste them on the plate. These protect the flower before it blooms.
Second, children name and paste on several petals.
Finally they paste on crunched up crepe paper in the centre, naming it the pollen holder.
- **Thank you card:** Children make plate flower (similar to the one above) for the gardener they visited. Have one paper petal for each child. Parents help them write their name on the petal. An adult can glue the petals on carefully with glue on only the half towards the centre of the flower so petals can overlap and bend up. Write 'Thank you' and the name of the gardener on the round centre piece.
- **A garden of children:** Children hold the paper plate flowers in front of their faces (or parents can hang the paper plates around children's necks with string or ribbon. Leader describes various movements of the flowers and children mime the actions. *Flowers stems stay in one place in the ground, so try not to move your feet. When the wind blows, the flowers bend this way. When the sun is shining over here, the flowers reach out to the sun.*
- **Seeds and flowers:** Carefully cut the top off of several seed packets. Parents and children look at the picture of the blooming flower (or fruit or vegetable). They name the plant. Then examine a seed from which the plant will grow.
- **Make a garden:** Give children a block of florist foam. Parent help children stick on bits and pieces they collected (with permission from the gardener) during their garden visit. They may add some small artificial flowers.
- ☺ **Play dough:** use flower and garden shaped cutters.
- ☺ **Stamps:** Create 'gardens' using flower shaped stamps. If you don't have any you could cut up a sponge, potatoe or corrugated cardboard into garden shapes.

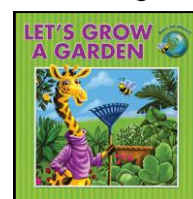
BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about gardens, eg



The Curious Garden
by Peter Brown



Zinnia's Flower Garden
by Monica Wellington



Let's grow a garden
by Alison Reynolds

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow
- Oats, peas, beans and barley grow
- Dingle, dangle scarecrow on Playschool favourites
- I'm a slug on Oombaroomba
- Funny Caterpillar on Oombaroomba

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us gardens.

- **Bible story:** Read or tell the story of God's people going into exile and Jeremiah's letter to them (Jeremiah 29:1-9).
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gives us gardens.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for gardens with beautiful flowers to enjoy and good food to eat. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** Plant gardens and eat what they produce. (Jeremiah 29:5)

MY FAMILY

Leaders and volunteers, please remember, you have a legal duty of care for the families who come to your playgroup. If anything occurs in this (or any other session) that leads you to suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, you must record and report what you observed to the Child Abuse Report Line: 13 14 78.

Invite families to bring family photos or family photo albums to share.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- ☺ **Look through photo's of their family.**

Family circles: Parent or carer works with their own child to complete a family circle page.

Have available: blank sheets (see appendix), rubber stamp pads, thin textas, and wet wipes.

Parents help children put a fingerprint (or a stamp) in the centre (me) circle. Say name of child and write it on the chart. Talk with child about their brothers, sisters and close cousins (and other children in the household). Put a fingerprint in the second circle for each family member of this generation, and name them. Do the same for parents' generation, grandparents' and great-grandparents' generations. Add close family friends around the outside of the circle. Parents can decide how they want to deal with individuals who do not fit in with this pattern. When the fingerprints are dry, draw on eyes and mouth to turn each one into a smiling face. Use wet wipes to clean children's printing finger. Make a time for each child to tell someone (a leader or another family) about their family circle. If families with different cultural background have different words for family relationships, children will hear some of these words.

- **Playing family/home corner:** In a free play setting provide dolls, a dollhouse and dress ups. Encourage children to play families. Talk with children as they play, eg *Who is this in the family? (Daddy) What do daddies do?*

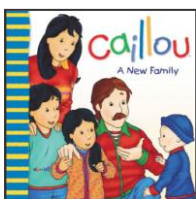
- ☺ **All kinds of families:** Have pictures of various configurations of families, include large, small, in-between, different races, etc. Parents and children look at the pictures, count the number of people in the family and find the family that is most like their own.

- **Family portrait:** Children paint a portrait of their family; or the people who live in their house. Alternatively, provide cut out triangle and circle shapes in various sizes and colours. Children glue circle and triangle figures onto paper to create their family portrait.



- **Together:** Stand or sit in a circle, parents with their children. Ask a family: *What does your family do together?* (eg eat). Mime the action, as you say *'Claire's family eat together'*. Repeat for another family. You may make this cumulative, repeating all the previous family activities.

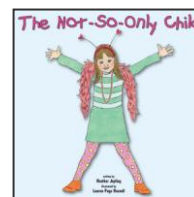
STORIES TO SHARE Find stories in your local library or parents' collections about families, eg



Caillou. A new family
by Christine I'Heureux



My Family
A play and tote book



The not-so-only child
by Heather Jopling

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

Traditional rhymes and songs often assume 'traditional' families. Be careful with your selection.

- **Finger play:** This is a family (hold up one hand, fingers spread); let's count them and see, how many there are, and who they can be (count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
- **Yucky mucky Nappy** on Oombaroomba
- **Family Dance** on Hullabaloo

FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us families.
- **Bible story:** Read or tell the story of Hannah praying for a child (1 Samuel 1:1-20).
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gives us families.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for families. Amen.

- **Bible Verse:** God put the lonely in families. (Psalm 68:6)
An adult can write the verse on the child's family circle chart or family portrait.

2010 — Term 4 — Week 10

CHRISTMAS SHEPHERDS

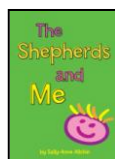
The Bible story of the birth of Jesus is the basis for our celebration of Christmas.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

- ☺ **The story:** Tell or read the Bible story of the shepherds on the first Christmas. A good technique is to use a children's picture book, show the pictures to the children and use the pictures as cues for telling the story in your own words. An alternative would be to have a shepherd puppet tell the story.
- **Shepherd canes:** Shepherds in the story had special long canes (sometimes called crooks). Have some walking sticks (the kind with curved handles) that children can use to mime some of the things a shepherd had to do, eg: hold the cane upright, hold the straight part to support walking; hold the straight end and use the curved handle to reach something you can't reach with your hand, pull it to you.
- **Story figures:** Children make figures from the story from plastic cups.
 - Shepherd:** use coffee-coloured cups, draw on a face with texta. Adult makes two slits with a large needle or a nail. Insert a pipe cleaner through the holes; curve one end as a crook.
 - Angel:** use white cups, draw on a face with texta. Glue on paper wings.
 - Sheep:** Use white or coffee-coloured cups. Adult cuts them to half size. Draw on a face with texta. Glue on a small pompom for a tail.
- **Act out the story:** Children use figures they have made themselves (see above) or figures supplied and act out the story. They can do this as free play or they can act it as an adult re-tells the story.
- ☺ **Sorting cards:** Provide a large selection of cover pictures from used Christmas cards. Encourage children to sort through the pictures and find the ones with pictures of shepherds. They may also sort the cards by size, background colour or picture (eg, bells, people, candles . . .)
- **Make a card:** Children make a Christmas card to give to a friend. Provide A-5 card and printed cover and insert (see appendix). Parents and children can talk about the picture and the message. Fold the card in half. Children colour the cover picture and glue it to the front of the card, glue the message inside. If children can write their name, they sign the card. Parent and child decide who they want the send the card to, put it in an envelope (C6). Parent addresses the envelope.

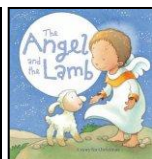


BOOKS TO SHARE Find books in your local library or parents' collections about shepherds at Christmas, eg



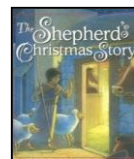
The Shepherds and me
by Sally-Anne Allchin.
This brand-new Australian book is written especially for playgroup aged children.

At only \$2.20, it's a great gift for your families.
Order from www.salvationarmy.org.au/women



The Angel and the Lamb (A Story for Christmas)
by Sophie Piper

by Sophie Piper



The Shepherd's Christmas Story

by Dominic Catalano

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS: <http://www.kiddles.com/lyrics/christmas.html>

- Away in a manger
- Silent Night
- In a little stable, far across the sea
- We wish you a merry Christmas

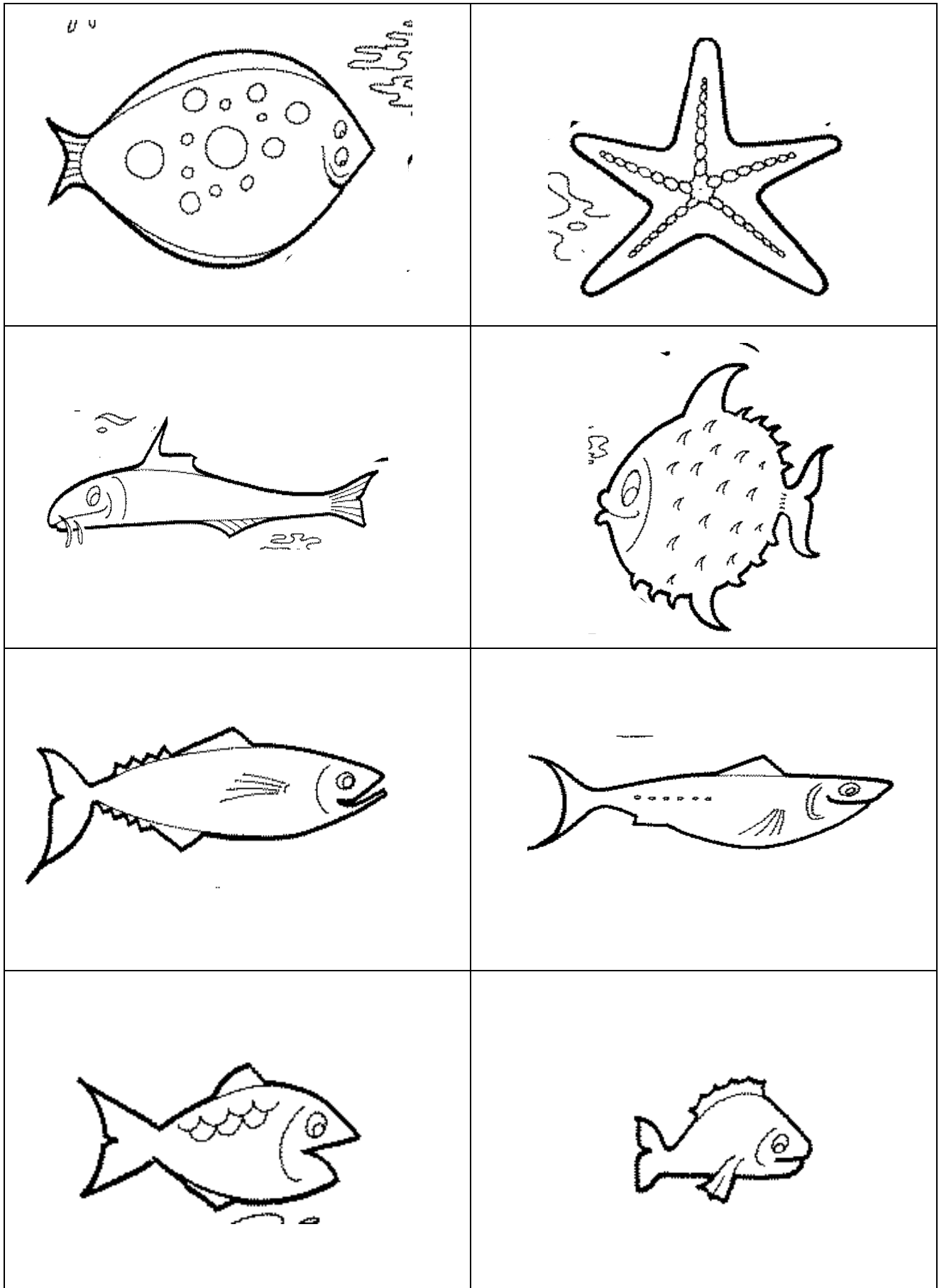
FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** At Christmas we celebrate the birthday of God's Son, Jesus.
- **Wonder:** I wonder what Christmas is about.
- **Prayer:** Happy Birthday, Jesus. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God loved us so much he sent us his Son. (John 3:16)

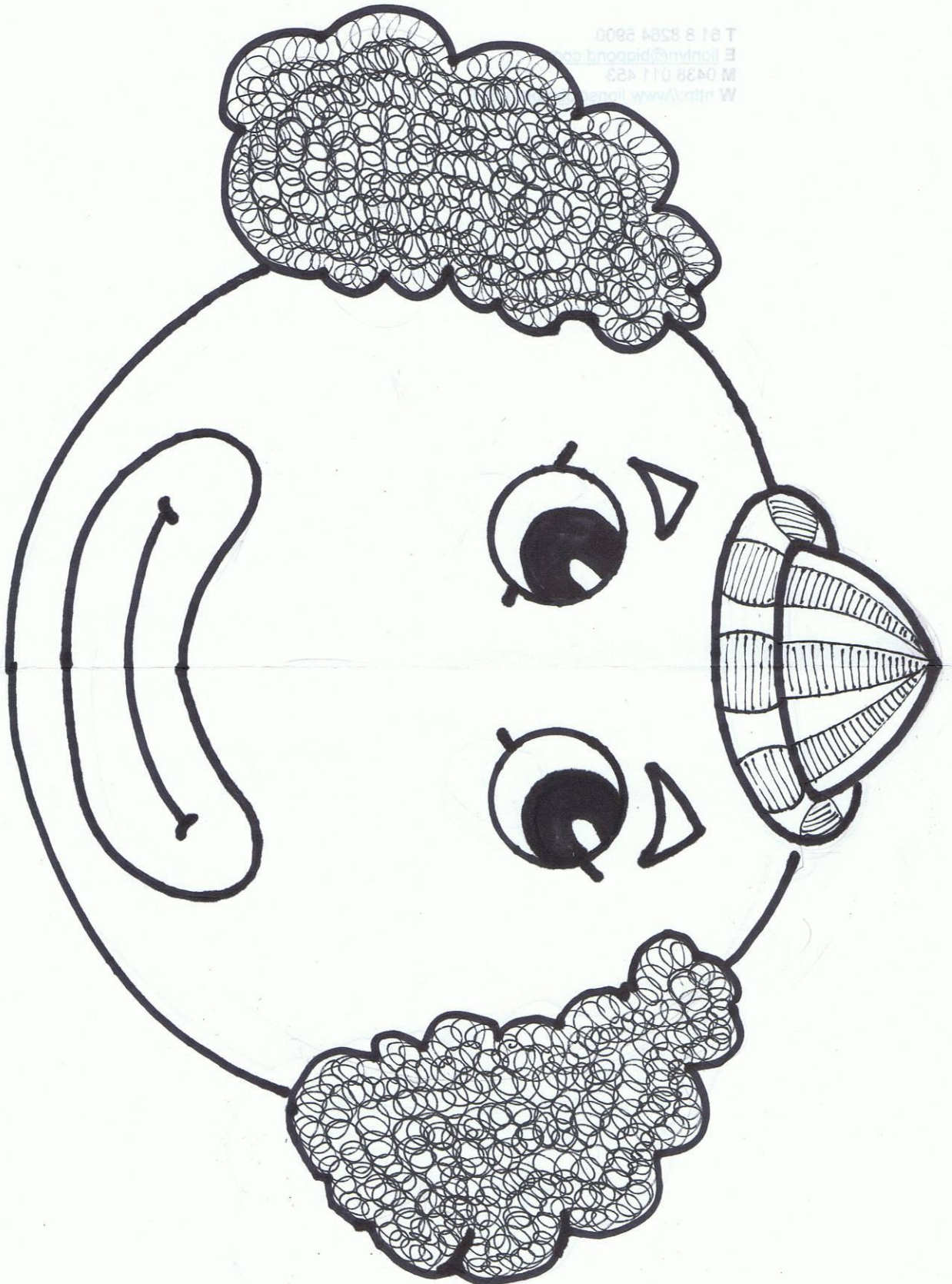
If this is your last playgroup session for the year:

- You may want to give special recognition to children who will be 'graduating' from playgroup and moving on to preschool (or another stage of life) next year. Thank them for being part of playgroup.
- Give each family a card with the Bible story of Christmas and/or an invitation to any family-friendly Christmas events planned by the congregation.
- As families leave, give each one a Christmas blessing: God bless you and keep you at Christmas time.

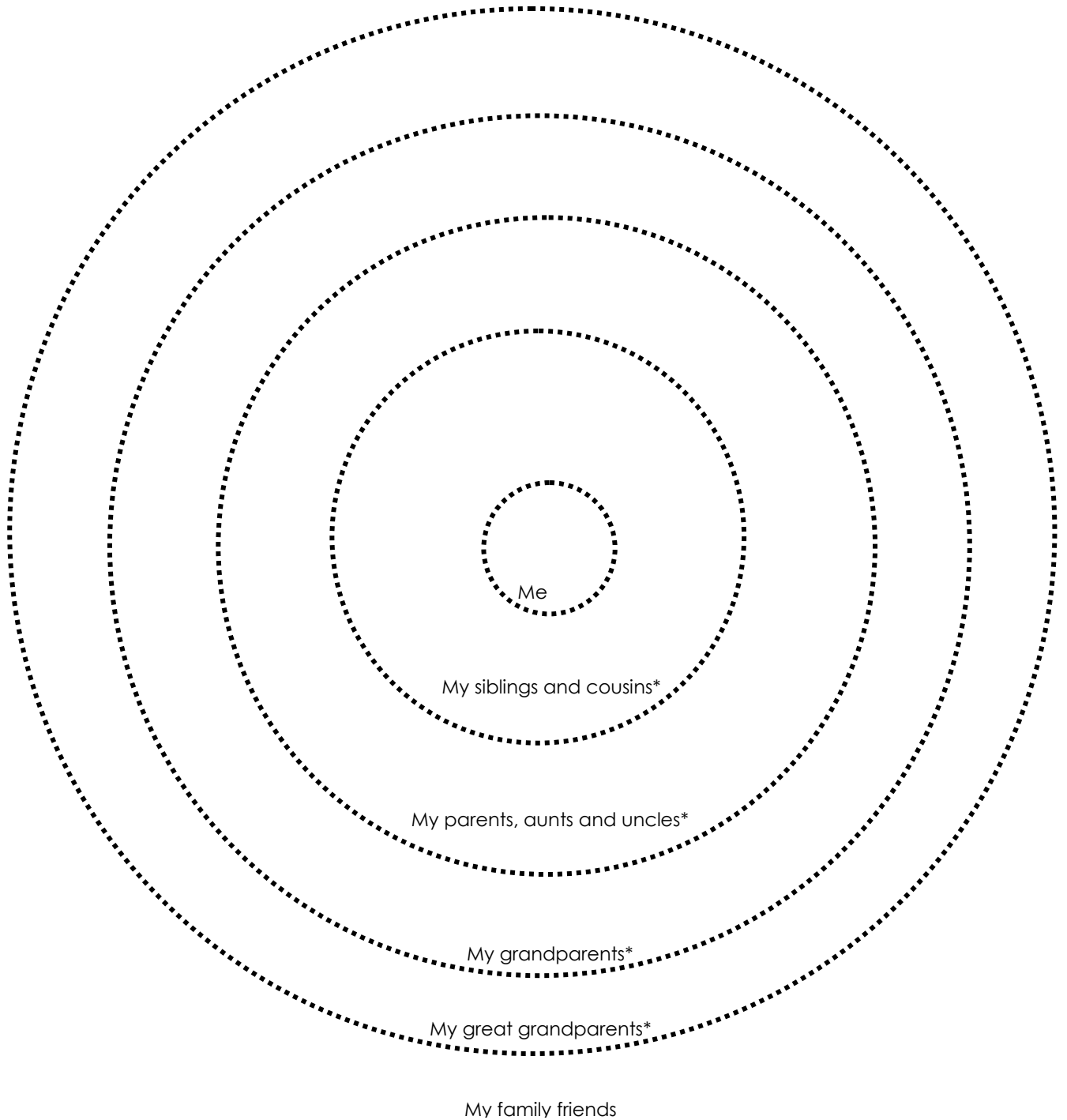
APPENDIX



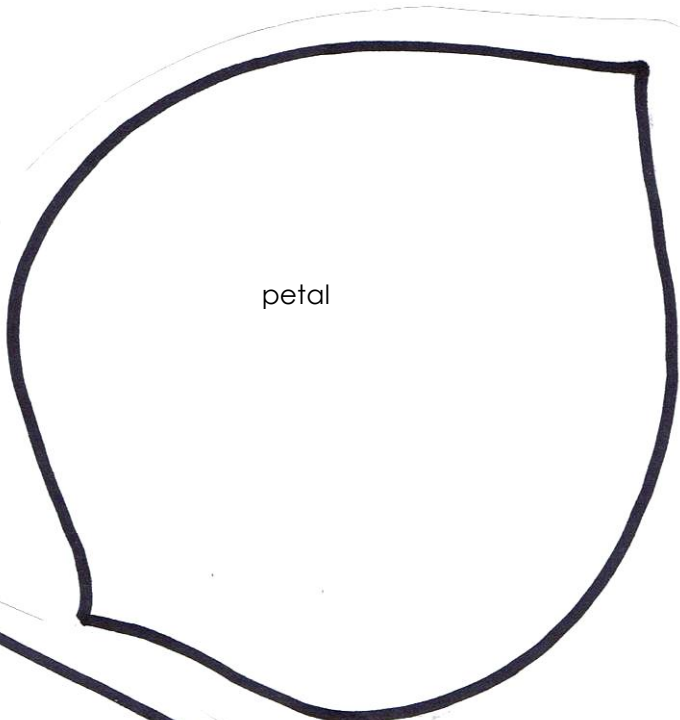
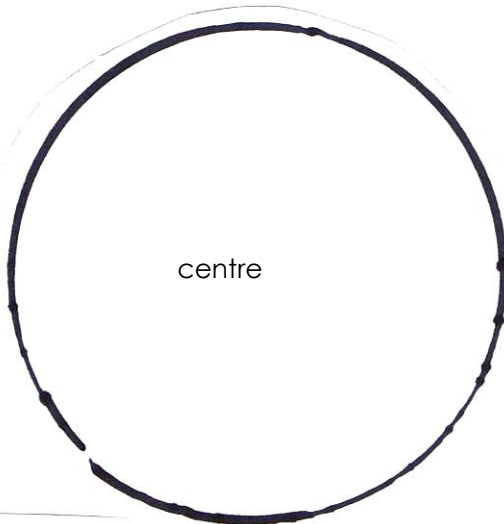
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My Family Circle



* Add others of this generation that you consider to be family.



Copyright © In Touch Ministries

**On the first Christmas
the shepherds
hurried to Bethlehem
and found baby Jesus.**

**Have a very happy
Christmas,
with love from**

