



Uniting Church **Playgroup**

# Playgroup Ideas

## Term 1, 2011

Compiled by the Children, Youth & Young Adults Team of the Mission Resourcing Network

# Playgroup Ideas — Term 1, 2011

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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](mailto:hharding@sa.uca.org.au)

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

*Heidi*

Heidi Jane Harding, on behalf of the CYYA team

## FEEDBACK 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**?.....

.....

.....

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

.....

.....

Any other comments?.....

.....

**Term 2, 2011** Here are the themes we expect to be featuring. We'd love your contribution of ideas and suggestions.

- |                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Purple                       | Butterflies     |
| Jesus heals Jairus' daughter | Airplanes       |
| Farmers                      | Restaurants     |
| Eyes                         | Shoes and boots |
|                              | Mothers Day     |

# Introduction

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## Term 1, 2011, 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. <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au/helps/playgroups.html>

☺ = **Activities for under twos!** These activities often involve sticking and pasting, collage type materials. This is something that is an under two crowd pleaser and something they can be 'successful' at without causing too much stress for their carers!

## 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	Water
Week 2	The story of the tortoise and the hare
Week 3	Valentines
Week 4	Doctors and nurses
Week 5	Feet
Week 6	My kitchen
Week 7	Dogs
Week 8	Cars
Week 9	Beach
Week 10	Easter

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

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PAGE

## HOW TO USE THE FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS IN THIS RESOURCE

### FAITH CONCEPTS THAT CHILDREN AGE 0-4 CAN RELATE TO

- God exists
- God is very important
- God made everything
- God made you
- God loves you (and all people)
- God wants to take care of you (and all people)
- Jesus is a special person — God's Son
- You can talk to God in prayer
- You can learn about God from his book — the Bible
- God wants you to love him back
- God wants you to love and obey your parents
- God wants you to be kind to other people
- God still loves you when you don't do what he wants you to do

As a church-based playgroup, most of your leaders and volunteers are Christians. As Christians, you want to share the good news with people you meet.

In your playgroup you will meet people who are Christians and people who are not Christians, people of other faiths and people who claim they have no faith, people who have had no connection with Christian churches and people who have had bad experiences with Christians and Christian churches.

How do you relate to all these people and remain true to your own beliefs and values? We have no better guideline than this from 1 Peter 3:15,16a

*"Make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect."*

Be ready. Our faith enrichment ideas are designed help playgroup leaders to be ready to expand on the faith dimension of the themes treated in playgroup. They are designed to create an atmosphere that encourages both children and parents to ask about your faith — the hope you have.

Our Faith Enrichment sections generally include:

- **Key faith concept:** Many of these are similar to the faith concepts listed at the left. Keep the faith concept in mind as you plan your session. You might:
  1. write it on a poster that people see as they enter your meeting area,
  2. use the concept or a variation of it in your conversation with parents and children,
  3. write it on artwork children create in playgroup.
- **Talk about and Wonder:** These are generally more specific examples of the faith concept as it relates to the day's theme. You might talk about them with the whole group, but will more likely find times to talk about them with individual children and parents.
- **Prayer:** You might use this simple one-sentence prayer as part of your end of session routine. Introduce it by asking children to sit quietly, fold hands and close eyes (the old-fashioned formula) while you talk to God. You can say a few words and invite children to echo your words. If there are people that want to pray you could also suggest that they say the prayer in their head or out loud and then blow a bubble with a large wand, you may need to demonstrate each week.
- **Bible verse:** It is good if children become aware that some of the things you are saying come from God's book. You might introduce the Bible verse in a 'together time' or as part of your closing routine.
  - Use a real Bible and make a practice of saying something like: 'Let's see what God says about \_\_\_\_ in God's book.' Open the Bible, read the verse, repeat the verse, ask children to say it with you.
  - Give families cards with the Bible verses printed on them. Consider providing a few study suggestions for parents relating to the verse.
  - Include the Bible verses in notices you distribute.
  - The Family Planner also has suggestions for each week, this may be something you could use as it is already done for you and the parents may already be use to receiving it.

Be aware that some parents might object to rote prayers and Bible verses. Provide an opt-out for them and their children, (e.g. give the family a clean-up assignment while you are praying), but do not allow one person's objections to deter you from including these things in your program if the majority of the participants are happy with it.

### GOD and JESUS

You'll note that in our notes we try to use the name 'God' in almost all cases. We use 'Jesus' only when we are telling a story about the man Jesus. This is done deliberately to avoid confusion for playgroup-age children.

**BIBLE STORIES**

Bible stories form the theme for two sessions each year plus Easter and Christmas. Other Bible stories are suggested from time to time in the faith enrichment section. In these cases, books with the Bible story can be among the books you make available for parents to look at with their children.

# Additional Resources

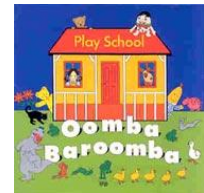
## Music

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.

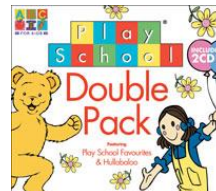
Here are a few that we have specifically mentioned in this resource. You won't need all of these resources as you don't need to do every song listed each week, and chances are you will know many of them anyway!



**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

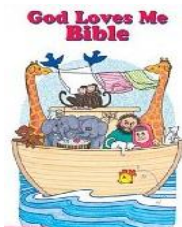


**The New Useful Book** has the sheet music to many popular songs and activities that suit the theme of the songs, it is 'a very useful book'!  
Price: \$19.95 ABC Shop

## 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.

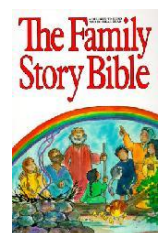
### Bible Story Books



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](mailto:admin@mediacom.org.au)

# WATER

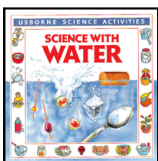
You may link this topic with the Brighton Jetty Classic held each year on the first Sunday in February.

If it is appropriate for your playgroup, have a wading pool and invite kids to come in gear they can wear in the water. Families bring their own towels. Provide plastic containers that children can use to scoop and pour water. Alternatively, similar activities can be done with large basins of water.

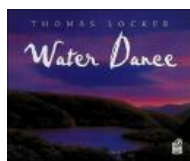
## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- **Water words:** As children sit in a wading pool help them use words that describe their experience, eg: cold, warm, wet, pour, splash (for some children there may be emotional words, eg afraid, brave).
- ☺ **Sinking and floating:** Provide items that will sink in water (a stone, a spoon), items that will float (a light ball, a leaf) and items that will float or sink under different conditions (a sponge that will float unless it is full of water, a plastic bowl that will float as an empty boat, but will sink if put in the water sideways). Children play with these items. They may predict what will float and what will sink. You may use this activity to introduce some talk about water safety. Children will sink in water, so they need to stay away from pools unless there is an adult with them. Children can float if they learn how to do so. Holding on to (or wearing) something that floats can help children to float.
- **Drying off:** Talk about getting dry: air/sun dry and towelling off. Children decide which they prefer. If the weather is suitable, they can lay for a few minutes on their towel in the sun. If they prefer to towel dry, parents towel off the child carefully, naming body parts as they rub them, if appropriate for their culture.
- ☺ **Water paint #1:** Children dip large brushes in a bucket of plain water and 'paint' concrete paths or brick walls. Watch to see how long their painting lasts. Talk about why it disappears.
- ☺ **Water paint #2:** Use a printed water painting book in which children paint over a picture with water which releases embedded colours. Cut up the book, each child selects a picture and paints it.
- **Snack:** At the start of the session, children can help carefully mix jelly crystals and boiling water. They watch the crystals dissolve in the water. Place the mixed jelly as a thin layer on a baking sheet and refrigerate. Cut into squares to serve with water to drink. Please be aware that some children may be allergic to gelatine, ask parents if their child has been exposed to gelatine before! Jelly is not suitable for under 2's.
- ☺ **Water and ice:** Help children see that ice is a very cold form of water. At the start of the session, children can see, hold, and describe ice cubes, a more exciting approach is large blocks of ice frozen in icecream containers. Let the cubes melt in a bowl during the session. Children then see, feel and describe what they find. Many small children love to play with ice!  
AND/OR at the beginning of the session, children observe some tap water. Pour water into ice cube trays place in a freezer. At the end of the session children see, feel and talk about what they find.
- **Water from the tap:** Have a tap apparatus from your friendly local plumber. Children examine the tap and experiment with how it works. They talk about where there are taps in their own home.

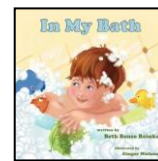
**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about water, eg



**Science with Water**  
(Usborne Science Activities series)



**Water Dance**  
by Thomas Locker



**In my Bath**  
by Beth Bence Reinke

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.  
Christian verse: God who made the water, God who made the sand, made the mighty ocean and the pleasant land.
- "Rain, Rain Go Away"
- 'It's Raining, It's Pouring,'
- Splish! Splash! Splosh! - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 18
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## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God made water / God gives us water.

- **Talk about Baptism:** If it is appropriate in your situation, you might invite children to see a baptismal font and talk briefly about people baptised with water in your church. Or invite your pastor to chat with the kids and families about baptism.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God made water.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for giving us water. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God sends rain on the earth. He sends water on the countryside. (Job 5:10)

# THE STORY OF THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

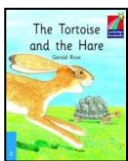
*The Tortoise (or turtle) and the Hare (or rabbit)* is a very old folk story: a fable attributed to the Greek story-teller Aesop (c. 620-564 BC). The enduring moral of the story is 'slow and steady wins the race.'

As the story features two animals, it would be great if you could have a rabbit and a turtle for the children to observe and perhaps hold.

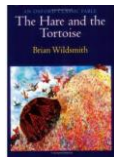
- **Visitor:** Invite someone who can briefly share personal experiences of a race or some other experience that reflects the moral of the story.
- 😊 **Story:** Share the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare* with the children. Read it from a good, age appropriate storybook or tell the story.  
One simple technique is to use the illustrations in the book as a prompt for telling the story in your own words. Another idea is to divide children into 'turtle' and 'rabbit' groups and encourage each group to cheer for their character.  
You may tell the story to the whole group, have a story teller tell it to small groups or help parents read the story to their own children. And/or watch an online animated version, e.g.: <http://us.penguingroup.com/static/packages/us/yreaders/aesop/index.html>
- **Fast and slow:** Show pairs of pictures (eg racing car and jalopy, jet plane and paper plane, running athlete and running child). Parents and children talk about the pictures. Which is faster? Which is slower? Which could win a race? Why? Children can 'race' different toys and talk about fast and slow.
- 😊 **Make turtle and rabbit puppets:** Copy the pattern sheet (see Appendix) onto light card. Children colour (😊 paint or stick 'fur' or 'shell'- shiny paper works well) the two animals. Parents' help children cut out the large oval shapes. Parents reinforce the back of the area of the finger holes with masking tape; then carefully cut out the finger holes. Children put one finger (as a head) through the hole on the turtle; two fingers (as legs) through the holes in the rabbit.
- **Play the story:** Children use rabbit and turtle puppets they have made to act out the story. This can be either free play, or they can play it as someone retells the story. Alternatively, children dress up as rabbits (ears on a headband and tied-on pompom tail) and turtles (cardboard carton tied on their back) and act out the story.
- 😊 **Hop like a rabbit; crawl like a turtle:** Help children crawl like turtles and leap like rabbits. You may make a game of calling 'turtle' as a clue for all children to crawl like turtles; calling 'rabbit' as a clue for children to hop like rabbits. For extra interest use music (fast and slow) as clues. You might throw in some other animals, eg 'bird', 'fish', 'horse' and see what happens.



**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about *The Tortoise and the Hare*



**The Tortoise and the Hare**  
by Gerald Rose



**The Hare and the Tortoise**  
by Brian Wildsmith



**The Hare and the Tortoise**  
by Mairi Mackinnon

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Little Peter Rabbit had a fly upon his nose
- Mr. Turtle round and low, I know why you move so slow.  
You carry such a heavy load, moving your house down the road.
- See the little bunnies sleeping till it's nearly noon  
Come and let us gently wake them with a merry tune  
Oh how still, are they ill, wake up soon  
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop  
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop  
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop  
Hop little bunnies, hop, hop, hop

- Little Peter Rabbit - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 57

#### **FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS**

- **Key faith concept:** God helps us to keep going.
- **Talk about:** God made us the way we are: fast/slow, big/little. He loves us the way we are.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why the turtle won the race.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for loving us and helping us. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** Races aren't always won by those who run fast. . . God controls how things turn out. (Ecclesiastes 9:11)

# VALENTINES

You may connect this theme with St Valentine's Day, 14<sup>th</sup> February. Use it as a time to affirm the love between parents and children; the love of your playgroup leaders and volunteers for the children and parents, and God's love for all of us.

Prepare a 'valentine' card for each child or each family. (See Appendix). At the end of the session, sing the song 'God loves you and I love you and that's the way it should be' or a similar song. From a basket of your 'valentines', select one card, call the name of the child named on the envelope, ask them to come to the front: give them a hug (if appropriate) and a card. Do this for each child.

## ACTIVITIES

- **What's a heart?** Have cards or cardboard cut outs of several body parts (head, foot, hand, heart). Show the cards and ask children to point to the part of their body you are showing. They can see and touch some things. Some parts of the body are inside, we can't see them. *Our hearts are inside. We can't see them. Sometimes if we are very quiet we can hear them beating.* Encourage parents and children to see if they can feel one another's heartbeat. If you can borrow a stethoscope, give children an opportunity to listen to their own heartbeat.
- **Heart means 'love'.** Wear a t-shirt or show another object with a message like 'I ♥ SA'. Help children 'read' the message. Talk about how the symbol ♥ means love. Ask children and parents to tell you some things they love. Use a whiteboard to record their messages in simple pictures, and help children read one another's pictograms: eg



- **Heart flowers:** Parents help children make one or more heart flowers to give to someone they love. Use the picture as a guide. Fold a square of flower-coloured paper in quarters both diagonally and across. Cut half a heart in the folded triangle. Open. Draw on a face. Cut out two more hearts as leaves. Glue the flower and leaves onto a tongue depressor. On the back of the tongue depressor write the message 'I ♥ [name of person who will be given the flower]'.

- **Strawberry snack:** Strawberries have a heart-like appearance. If children do not have allergies, consider strawberry snacks. Parents can slice strawberries nearly in

half, slide the halves apart and help the children see the heart shape. For a special treat, consider dipping in chocolate.

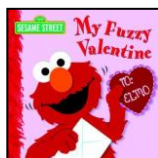
- **Valentine dance/game:** Give each child (or each child and parent) a heart shape cut out of coloured card. Use several cards, but have at least two of each colour. Sing: *Won't you be a friend to me? Won't you be — a friend to me? Won't you be a friend to me? And I'll be your friend, too!* (tune: 'London Bridge')  
Players walk or skip around as you sing. When the song is finished with a loud 'too!' players find someone else with the same colour heart as theirs and then sit down together quickly. Repeat as long as the children stay interested.
- ☺ **Heart collage** using heart shaped table scatters or a bulk pad of stickers and a piece of heart shaped paper let the children decorate the paper with the hearts.
- **Playing love** provide some dolls to play with that show each other love. You may set up a scene like a birthday party, or an anniversary.

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



**Where Is Baby's Valentine ?**

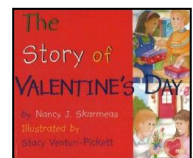
by Karen Katz



**My Fuzzy Valentine**

by Naomi

Kleinberg <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0375833927?ie=UTF8&tag=babboogi-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=0375833927>



**The Story of Valentine's Day**

by Nancy Skarmeas

### **NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS**

- Jesus loves me, this I know
- I love the flowers . . . boom-di-a-da, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/8965862/Song-I-Like-the-Flowers-I-Love-the-Mountains-Addon-Pack>

### **FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS**

- **Key faith concept:** God loves us and helps us love other people.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God loves us.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for loving us. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** Let us love one another, because love comes from God. (1 John 4:7)

# DOCTORS AND NURSES

You may choose to concentrate on just doctors, just nurses, or combine the two. If a health professional is involved in the session, they may want to include some health information (a presentation or leaflets) for the parents or some basic health checks of the children.

## ACTIVITIES

- **Guest:** Invite a doctor (or nurse) to visit playgroup and talk to children about what they do to help children. They may bring along some medical equipment and show how they use it.
- **When I went to the nurse/doctor:** Parents talk with their own children about a visit to a nurse/ doctor. *Why did you go? What happened? How did you feel?* Children can paint pictures of their visit to a doctor/nurse. 😊 They may have fun using cotton swabs rather than brushes for painting.
- **Playing doctor/nurse:** Have dolls (and some toy doctoring instruments, tongue depressors, bandages, etc) available to be the patients as children pretend to be doctors/nurses who take care of them.
- **Doctor Day chant:** Read the Doctor Day chant very rhythmically. Read each two lines at a time. Second time pause, and encourage children to provide the last word (the rhyming word). Third time, encourage children to say it with you.
- **Tongue depressor dominoes:** Prepare a set of ten tongue depressors. Using four colours, paint the ends of the depressors, both red, both blue, both green, both yellow; red/blue, red/green, red/yellow, blue/green, blue/yellow, green/yellow.  
Child and parent play a game like dominoes. Divide up the sticks evenly. Put out a stick with a double colour. Take turns adding sticks with matching colours. 😊 Young children love playing with multiples of the same things. Giving them a pile of depressors could keep them entertained for a long time!
- **Growth Chart:** Prepare a height and weight chart on poster paper. Use bathroom scales and a tape measure attached to the wall to measure children's height and weight. Explain that doctors and nurses look at how children are growing to help determine if they are healthy. Record each child's height and weight on the chart. You might repeat this throughout the year and have the children observe their growth.

My father said, 'It's doctor day',  
then he and I we're on our way.

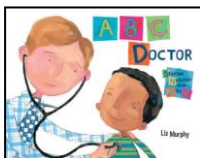
To see our friend the doctor who  
would check me out as doctors do.

She had more things than I can tell  
to help her keep the people well.

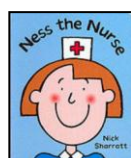
She checked me up and all the while,  
she wore a big and friendly smile.

So now I hope that someday you  
may go to see the doctor too!

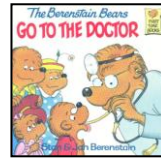
**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about doctors or nurses, eg



**ABC Doctor**  
by Liz Murphy



**Ness the Nurse**  
by Nick Sharratt



**The Berenstain Bears  
Go to the Doctor**  
by Jan and Stan  
Berenstain

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- The *Sesame Street* song 'Who are the people in my neighbourhood'; add 'the doctor' or 'the nurse' verse and other verses suggested by children.
- Miss Polly had a dolly who was sick, sick, sick.

## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us life and health.
- **Bible story:** briefly read or tell the Bible story of Jesus healing ten men with leprosy (Luke 17:11-19)
- **Talk about:** People God gives us to help us stay healthy.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gives us doctors/nurses.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for my doctor/nurse who helps me stay healthy. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** Dear friend, I pray that you also may enjoy good health. (3 John 1:2, modified)

# FEET and TOES

If someone in your group or in their families is wheelchair bound, or on crutches, in callipers or has a prosthetic leg, talk about how people manage when they don't have feet and toes that function like other people's.

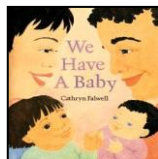
- **All kinds of feet:** Have pictures of various animals. Children with parents look at the pictures, name the animal, find the feet, and describe the toes.
- **Guest:** If you know someone who can track animals by their footprints, invite them to come and show children how they identify the prints of some common animals.
- ☺ **Big toes, little toes:** Parent and child take off their shoes and socks. You may use this rhyme: *Where are your piggy toes? / Where are your piggy toes? / Oh no, where have they gone? (Pull off socks) / I see your piggy toes.* (tune: The Farmer in the Dell)  
They examine their feet, particularly their toes. Talk about how their feet are the same and how they are different. Count toes. Identify the big toe and the little toe. Experiment with wiggling toes, spreading them apart and perhaps picking up things with the toes.
- ☺ **This little piggy:** With child's feet bare, parents play the traditional nursery game: (Squeeze big toe) *This little piggy went to market / (second toe) this little piggy stayed home / (middle toe) this little piggy had roast beef / (fourth toe) this little piggy had none / (squeeze and shake little toe) and this little piggy cried all the way home.*
- **These feet were made for walking:** With bare feet, children walk on different surfaces and talk about what each surface feels like. Use surfaces like: wood (polished and bare), tiles, bubble-wrap, sand, concrete, etc.
- **A pair of piggies picture:** With children's feet bare, parents mark the outline of the children's feet on paper. For children who can't stand on their own, you may need another adult to hold them up. Part of the fun is the tickling that happens while drawing around feet and toes. Turn the feet outlines into a pair of piggies. Children can colour the feet to look like pigs. Adult helps draw on features.
- ☺ **Pedicure:** Parents can give their children a mini-pedicure. Soak the child's feet in warm soapy water. Trim toenails. Dry feet and toes individually and carefully. You might consider toe-nail polish or stick-on toenail decorations.
- **Put on socks and shoes:** In groups or two or three families, make a heap of all the footwear. Children find which ones are for big feet and which are for little feet. Children find their own shoes and socks. With parents help they put them on.



**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about feet and toes, eg



**Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes**  
by Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury



**Wriggle Piggy Toes** by John Agard and Jenny Bent



**Toes**  
by David Bedford and Leoni Worthington

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Head and shoulders, knees and toes (Playgroup parents who speak a language other than English, may teach children to sing and act the song in their language.)
- Put your finger on your toes, on your toes (x4)
- If you're happy and you know it stamp your feet, (wiggle your toes, jump up and down . . . )
- Hokey Pokey - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 10
- Can you walk on two legs? - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 11
- Follow me to stamping land - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 41
- I can run as fast as you - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 51

## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God made our bodies.

- **Talk about:** How important our feet and toes are.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gave us feet.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for feet that help us stand and walk. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God set my feet on a rock. He gave me a firm place to stand on. (Psalm 40:2)

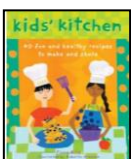
# MY KITCHEN

You may link this topic with Pancake Day (8 March) and make pancakes in your playgroup kitchen

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- **Other ways of cooking:** Many of us take for granted homes with kitchens and appliances. You may want to invite someone who has experienced cooking under different conditions (e.g. other cultures, refugee camp, bush camping) to tell of their experiences. Photos or demonstrations may help.
- **What's in a house:** Have a doll's house. Parents and children look at the house and identify the rooms. Talk about 'do we have a [kitchen] in our house? Is it like this one? What do we do there?'
- **What happens in the kitchen:** Have a collection of items (cooking, eating, cleaning and actual food) commonly found in a kitchen. Parents and children examine the collection and talk about it. What is this? Do we have it in our kitchen? What do we do with it?
- **Build a kitchen:** Have a number of cartons available. Talk with children about what they have in their kitchen at home. When they mention an item of furniture, use a texta to quickly transform a carton into a stove, a fridge, a wash basin, cupboard/bench. Children can play in the kitchen you have built. You may want to supply them with some (non-breakable) plates, cutlery, pots and pans.
- ☺ **Cutlery Play:** supply lots of children's plastic cutlery, plates and bowls. Children love playing with multiples. There are some fantastic utensils from IKEA.
- ☺ **Kitchen band:** (If your ears and nerves can take it) have a collection of pots, pans and spoons available. Let children experiment with making music, banging one thing with another. You might challenge them to bang to a specific rhythm, eg 'Mary had a little lamb'. Demonstrate by clapping hands or knocking on a table. Children and parents can talk about which sounds they like and why they like them. Be sure to have a signal (eg hands in the air) to end the music.
- **Making pancakes in the kitchen:** Encourage parents and children to make (and then eat) pancakes. The easiest way is to use prepared pancake mix in a bottle, add water, shake it and cook on a griddle or pan. Consider the advantage of helping children understand the actual ingredients by working from scratch. (See recipe in Appendix). Use caution if children are working in the kitchen and near a hot stove. Remember to ask about allergies, especially egg!
- **Safety in the kitchen:** Talk with children and parents about things in the kitchen that can be dangerous (knives, stoves, detergents) and the need to be especially careful in the kitchen. Parents can talk with their own children about the kitchen safety rules they have in their own kitchens.

**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find illustrated cookbooks in your local library or parents' collections. Give children a chance to browse through the books and discuss them with their parents. Compare what they see in the book with what happens in their own kitchen.



**Kids' Kitchen**  
by Fiona Bird



**Once Upon a Kitchen** by Carol Odell



**Mix & Mash**  
(eebees)

## SONGS TO SING

- *This is the way we . . . mix our pancakes (use the steps used in making pancakes. End with 'eat our pancakes' — or mime other kitchen activities)*
- *Pat a cake*
- Singin' in the Kitchen – Oomba & The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 53

## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us homes (and kitchens).
- **Talk about:** things that happen in our homes.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God gives us homes to live in.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for my home, for my [... name rooms in house, ending with kitchen]. Amen
- **Bible verse:** The Lord he blesses the home of every good person. (Proverbs 3:33, modified)

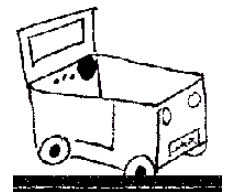
# CARS

May be linked with the Adelaide Clipsal 500 (17–20 March 2011)

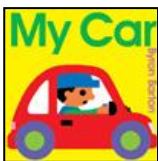
**SOMETHING TO BRING:** Ask families to bring toy automobiles. Understand that there is always a possibility that they will not be returned in pristine condition. Or if you have lots, supply them yourself.

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

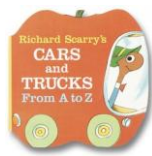
- **Visitor:** Invite a driving instructor to come along and give the children some basic information about road safety.
- **Car display:** Set up a display of the automobiles the children have brought. Children and their parents examine the collection. They can group cars that are similar in colour, size or shape. They can arrange cars largest to smallest. Use words like (big, bigger, biggest, small, smaller, smallest). Please think about where you place them as cars are known for small parts.
- ☺ **Safety seats:** Have some children's car seats (either real or doll size). Children play at putting a doll or teddy in the car seat. Parents talk with children about why it is important that they sit in the proper seats.
- **Team work box car:** Work in a group of several adults and several children to create a car out of a cardboard carton. The point is to work together and respect everyone's ideas and abilities. The final product may or may not be road worthy. If it is, children can take turns 'driving' around in the car.
- ☺ **Driving cars:** If you have access to a floor mat with roads marked on it, use the mat. Alternatively mark out roads with texta on brown paper or chalk outside. Children drive toy cars on the roads.
- ☺ **Wheel track art:** Children dip the wheels of their toy cars onto a sponge full of paint. They drive their car in any random pattern across a piece of paper. This can be done by one child, or several children can work together using different cars and different colours to create a larger piece of artwork. On a large piece of paper. You may want to conclude this activity with a carwash (and dry).
- **Make a car from a cardboard tube:** Parents use a safety razor or knife to cut a paper towel roll into six pieces (1 long, 1 medium, four equal short pieces), alternatively you could pre-cut them. Parents help children tape the pieces together to form a car:



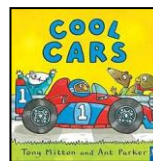
**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about automobiles, eg



**My Car**  
by Byron  
Barton



**Cars and Trucks  
from A to Z** by  
Richard Scarry



**Cool Cars  
(Amazing Machines)**  
by Tony Mitton  
and Ant Parker

## SONGS TO SING

- *The wheels on the car go round and round* TUNE: 'The wheels of the bus'.
- *I'll take you riding in my car, car*

## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God loves us and keeps us safe.
- **Talk about:** The many places we go and how God keeps us safe.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God wants us to be safe.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for cars that take us places and for keeping us safe in our cars. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God says: I will be with you wherever you go (Joshua 1:9)

**Talk with parents** about the practice of saying a short prayer when you strap your child in (God, please keep us safe) and a short prayer when you have arrived and are taking your child out of the car (Dear God, thanks for keeping us safe.) It's amazing how God can use that short prayer before a trip to calm us and keep us focused as we drive — in spite of the special challenges of driving with young children.

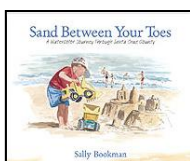
# AT A BEACH

Consider organising an outing to a nearby beach. Think also of alternatives, e.g. a park that has a sand pit. At the least, try to have a sand pit that children can play in.

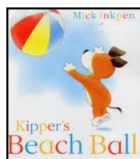
## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- 😊 **Playing in the sand:** Provide a safe space where children can play in the sand either at a beach or in a sand pit. Provide containers they can use to move sand from one place to another. Have some sand that is dry and other sand that is moist so they can create piles/castles or other shapes.
- 😊 **Sand drawings:** Children work at a table covered with newspaper. They draw a design on paper with a brush dipped in slightly diluted craft glue. Parents' help children scoop some sand from a bucket into a sieve and shake the sand from the sieve onto their paper. When the glue has dried. Shake off excess sand onto the newspaper so that it can be gathered up and returned to your sand pit or wherever you found it. Children will have a textured drawing.
- **Examine the sand:** Children put a spoonful of sand on a plastic plate. They work with their parents to spread apart the grains and see how many different tiny things they can find in a spoonful of sand. 😊 *Alternatively you could fill up a drink bottle with sand and place random small objects for them to find as they turn it.*
- **Sorting shells:** Display a collection of shells. Children sort the shells by colour, size and shape. They can use descriptive words talking about the shells with their parent. Children may count shells.
- **Watch the shell:** Children practice observation skills. A leader places a shell on the table. Cover the shell with a plastic cup. Ask children to tell where the shell is. Place an identical plastic cup beside it. Ask a child to tell you where the shell is. Repeat several times. Move one of the cups before asking where the shell is. As children are successful, make more complex moves.
- **Listen to the ocean:** If you can find a large conch shell, let parents hold it to children's ears and ask children to tell what they hear, what it sounds like? Does it sound different when you hold it away from their ear? There's an old story that the shell holds the sound of the ocean from which it came, and will always 'replay' that sound for you. That story is much more fun than the acoustic explanation of the shell shape amplifying the ambient sound around you.
- **Five little shells finger play:** Give a child five shells at the start of the play. They can act out the story — sweeping away one shell at a time — as a leader (or parent) reads the story:  
5 little shells lying on the shore; crash went a wave and then there were 4.  
4 little shells down by the sea; crash went a wave and then there were 3.  
3 little shells, smooth as new; crash went a wave and then there were 2.  
2 little shells, sparkling in the sun, crash went a wave and then there was 1.  
1 little shell, left by itself; I took it home, and put it on my shelf.

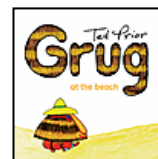
**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about beaches, eg



**Sand between your toes**  
by Sally Bookman



**Kipper's Beach Ball**  
by Mike Inkpen



**Grug at the Beach**  
by Ted Prior

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean and the glorious land.
- The waves on the beach go up and down (tune: The wheels of the bus)
- Scoop up sand and put it in your bucket X3 How much do you have? (tune: Ten little Indians)
- Care for our world - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 72
- Australia is a big - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 59

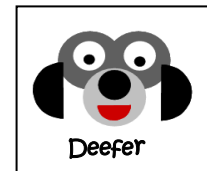
## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God gives us beaches.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God made beaches.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for sand and beaches, and for the oceans and rivers beyond them. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God made the sand to hold the ocean back (Jeremiah 5:22)

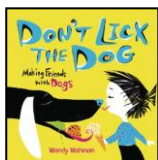
# DOGS

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

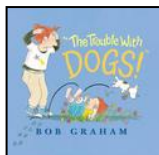
- **Visitor:** Invite someone to visit with a pet dog. The visitor may talk briefly about dogs — possibly emphasising how people take care of dogs and dogs take care of people. If the dog (and children) can cope have the dog and owner stay around for the entire session to interact with the children. It's a good idea to keep the dog in a specific area so that people with allergies or strong fears can still enjoy the rest of the playgroup space.
- **Many kinds of dogs:** Make up two identical sets of 5-8 cards with pictures of different kinds of dogs. Parents look at the pictures with their child and use words that describe the different dogs. 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.
- **Puppy Obedience School:** Children pretend to be dogs and do appropriate dog tricks as the trainer calls out: 'Puppies, lie down. Good puppies', 'Puppies, sit up. Good puppies'. . . beg, roll over, speak (woof), scratch your ear, wag your tail, show your tongue, and pant.
- **Dog puppet:** Children make puppets by sticking cut out paper (or craft foam or felt) shapes onto paper sandwich bags. You'll want to have the shapes pre-cut for youngest children: 4 large (5 cm) circles (one cut in half), 4 medium (2.5 cm) circles and 2 tiny (1 cm) circles. You may use realistic shades of brown/black or a range of colours. Parents help children describe cut-outs by shape, colour and size. Then they follow a pre-made sample to form a dog head on their bag. Children name their dogs; parents write the names on the bag. Children put their hands in the bags and take them for a walk.
- **Dog stories:** Children sit in a circle each one holding their dog puppet. Leader begins a story: 'Once upon a time there was a dog named \_\_\_\_\_'.  
Point to a child to say the name of their puppet dog. Leader continues 'The dog went to the \_\_\_\_\_.'  
The child or their parent can name a place where the dog might go.  
Leader then tells the complete story:  
'Once upon a time [Deefer] dog went to [the park]. All the dogs at the [park] went \_\_\_\_\_.  
Children/puppets say 'woof, woof, woof' or 'bow-wow-wow'.  
Repeat with more children and more stories.
- **Dog print trail:** If you have a real dog at playgroup, children can examine their paws and note that there are four pads (sort of like fingers) and one large pad (like the palm of your hand). Children paste five paper circles onto paper in the shape of dog paws. Collect all the paw print papers. Lay them out as a trail on the floor. Parents help their children hop (jump) from one paw print to the next.
- ☺ **Dog printing:** Using a potato carve a few different dog paws into it to make a stamp. Let the children stamp their dog print onto black paper with white paint or a bright colour with matching glitter.



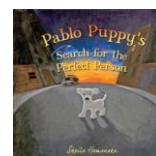
**BOOKS TO SHARE** Find stories in your local library or in parents' collections about dogs, eg



**Don't Lick the Dog**  
(Making Friends with Dogs) by  
Wendy Wahman



**The Trouble with Dogs** by  
Bob Graham



**Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person** by  
Sheila Hamanaka

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

- Bingo - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 59
- My dog Bill - The NEW Very Useful Book Pg. 59
- How much is that doggy in the window
- Bow, wow, wow! Whose dog art thou? "I'm little Tom Tinker's dog, Bow, wow, wow!" (Beatrix Potter)

With either of these rhymes, you can substitute names of children and their puppet dogs.

### FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** God takes care of people and animals.
- **Wonder:** I wonder why God wants us to look after dogs/pets.
- **Pray:** Thank you, God, for giving us dogs to love and take care of. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** All people and animals are in God's care. (Psalm 36:6, modified)

2011 — Term 1 — Week 10

# EASTER

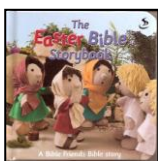
The Bible story of the death and coming back to life of Jesus is the basis for our celebration of Easter. We are reluctant to talk about death and suffering with young children; but there would be no Easter joy without the pain and suffering that went before it. Or would there? *Life* itself — a gift from God — is something to celebrate. We concentrate on new life and the joy of a returning friend.

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

- **Guest:** A guest can talk to children about 'why Easter makes me happy'. This can lead to discussion with children and parents: what makes us happy? (and perhaps also what makes us sad). OR a guest can talk about (and show pictures objects related to) Easter customs in their culture.
- ☺ **Easter egg hunt:** Prepare a simple Easter basket for each child made of one section of an egg carton with a pipe cleaner handle. Have a number of Easter eggs hidden around your meeting area. On a given signal (e.g. start music) children hunt for an egg. When they have found their egg, they put it in their basket and sit in a designated meeting area. They can talk with parents about their egg: what colour it is, where they found it, what they want to do with it. You may use wrapped chocolate eggs or coloured hard-boiled eggs for this activity. You could use a 4-compartment basket so that children can find several eggs (but no one more than four) and count them.
- ☺ **The story of Easter:** Tell or read the Bible story of the first Easter. Emphasise that people felt sad when they thought they would never see their good friend Jesus again; and that they felt very happy when Jesus came back to them. 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.
- **Act out the story:** Children use dolls or puppets and act out the story. They can do this as free play or they can act it as an adult re-tells the story.
- **Easter egg garden:** In the week/s before this session. Wash and save the egg shells with tops removed, i.e. from soft boiled eggs. Paint the eggshells with acrylic paints prior to the session or children can colour them by placing the shells in a cup of very hot water to which you add a teaspoon of vinegar and a few drops of food colouring. When the shell is coloured, remove from the water with a spoon and put in an egg carton to dry. Children spoon potting soil into the egg shell and plant quick germinating edible herb seeds (e.g. chives). They use a spray bottle to moisten the soil. Each child will need an egg-cup for their egg garden. See Appendix for a pattern.
- **Easter egg roll:** Provide several hardboiled eggs or plastic eggs and a piece of wood or sturdy cardboard (about 1 metre by 30 cm). Children and parents experiment with rolling an egg along the board from one end to the other. How can they make the egg roll? What happens if they prop up one end of the board and roll the egg from top to bottom? Roll the egg from bottom to top? What happens if they prop up the end to make a steeper incline?



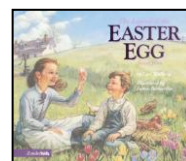
**BOOKS TO SHARE:** Find books in your local library or parents' collections about Easter, eg



**The Easter Bible Storybook**  
(Scripture Union)



**The Easter Day Surprise**  
by Jane L. Fryar



**The Legend of the Easter Egg**  
by Lori Walburg

## NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS

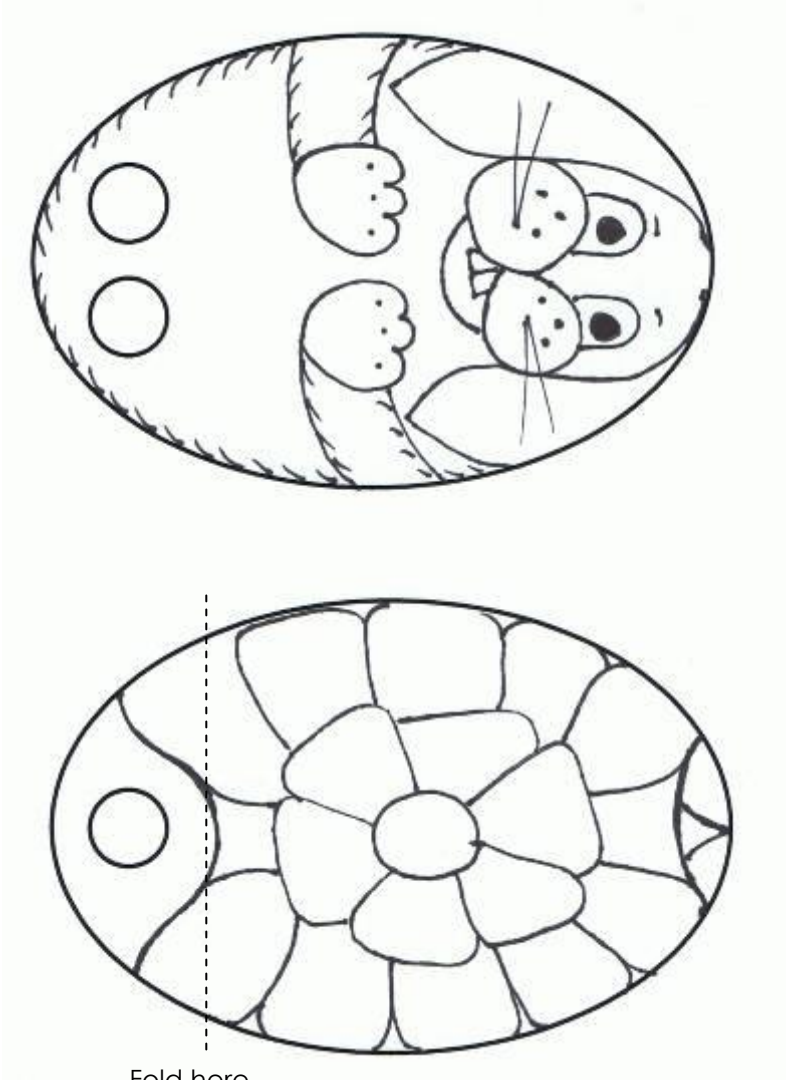
- I'm happy on the inside; I'm happy on the out
- Easter eggs, Easter eggs, hidden all around. Come my children look about and see where they are found. Easter eggs, Easter eggs, they're a sight to see. One for Tom and one for Ann and one for you and me. (tune: Jingle Bells)
- Jesus died, but rose again, rose again, rose again. Jesus died, but rose again on Easter Sunday morning. (Tune: Mary had a little lamb)

## FAITH ENRICHMENT IDEAS

- **Key faith concept:** At Easter we celebrate that Jesus, God's Son, lives forever.
- **Wonder:** I wonder what Easter is about.
- **Prayer:** Thank you, God, for life. Amen.
- **Bible verse:** God gives you the gift of [eternal] life because of what Jesus has done. (Romans 6:23)

# APPENDIX

## Item 1: Tortoise and hare puppets



**Item 2: Valentine's card**



Valentine's card from playgroup to child.  
 Consider making your own old-fashioned cards.  
 Begin with a paper doily.  
 Glue on a red heart.  
 Glue on a white heart on which you write your message.  
 Add some flowers or a bow if you wish.  
 Check sizes, you'll need envelopes large enough for your doilies.

**Item 3: Pancake recipe**

**Ingredients**


PORTIONS	2	4	6	8	10
cups sifted <b>flour</b>	2/3	1 1/3	2	2 2/3	3 1/3
teaspoons <b>baking powder</b>	1 1/2	3	4 1/2	6	7 1/2
teaspoons <b>sugar</b>	1 1/2	3	4 1/2	6	7 1/2
teaspoons <b>salt</b>	1/4	1/2	3/4	1	1 1/4
<b>eggs</b>	1	2	3	4	5
cups <b>milk</b>	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2
tablespoons <b>salad oil</b>	1	2	3	4	5

**Method**

1. Sift dry ingredients together.
2. Combine wet ingredients.
3. Add wet to dry ingredients, stirring till just moistened (Don't over stir).
4. Cook on hot, lightly greased griddle.

**Item 4: Easter egg garden egg cup**

Insert child's name, kind of seeds and date.  
 Check measurements needed, overlap ends and staple ends together.



\_\_\_\_\_ planted \_\_\_\_\_ seeds in this Easter Egg on \_\_\_\_\_  
 God made the earth and everything that grows on it. (Isaiah 42:5)