



## **EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER GUIDE**

### **Surprise! Stories of Discovering Jesus Early Childhood Leader Guide**

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## INTRODUCTION

Jesus surprised the people he met! People in the temple were amazed by the conversations and questions they had with a boy named Jesus. Hungry people in a crowd had more than enough food to eat when Jesus provided plenty of food. Two travelers were sad that Jesus died, but then they were surprised when Jesus started walking alongside them! With each surprise, people discovered more about Jesus.

Are you ready to be surprised by Jesus? Are you ready to ask questions and discover more about him? Then come along on the journey, open your eyes, and see what you will find!

The five sessions in the curriculum match the interests and developmental levels of children ages 4–5. You will worship together, learn about God, play games, and sing songs. You will eat snacks, move around, hear stories, and be surprised as you discover Jesus!

Allow for flexibility as you set up the area and organize the time. While some children can engage in stories and activities for a longer period of time, others have shorter attention spans and will need to move their active bodies. Wherever possible, provide opportunities for the children to move around between activities. Organize the space to accommodate the different needs and interests of children. Invite youth or other adults to help you with the children, especially during snack, craft, and game times.

**Young children:**

- enjoy repetition and routine,
- are energetic and need change in activities,
- have short attention spans,
- thrive on positive reinforcement, and
- like to attempt things they know they can do successfully.

## SCHEDULE

The K–5 VBS program is structured for a 2-hour-and-15-minute period of time, but some programs may be longer or shorter depending on the amount of time available. Check with the VBS Director to see how long each day will be.

The Early Childhood curriculum has plenty of ideas for a 2-hour-and-15-minute program, but you may need to be flexible when planning, should the length be different. Choose activities best suited for your schedule, space, and the children in your Bible school.

## WORSHIP OPTIONS

The *Surprise!* K–5 VBS program includes a time of worship and drama. Though worship and dramas are intended for older children, they are also appropriate for this age group. If you choose to attend with the larger group, you may want to shorten other parts of the session. Talk about the worship experiences and dramas to be sure the children understand them.

## ROOM ARRANGEMENT

Prepare different spaces for activities to allow for movement. If the meeting area is small, however, the same space may be used for all of the activities.

- Include a table so that there is an area for activities, crafts, and snacks.
- Create a story area large enough to accommodate children.
- Have a space devoted to quiet items such as books, puzzles, and coloring sheets. Children may pursue these activities as they finish group activities.
- Have a large space designated to play games and do movements together. Some active ideas are appropriate for the outdoors if there is a suitable area.

## STORYTELLING

Practice the Bible stories before presenting them to the children. Each session uses props to tell the story. Bring these supplies to the storytelling area in a backpack or bundled in a cloth tied to a walking stick. As the children watch, take out the story cloth and set up the props. Stay silent and focused on the props. When ready to begin the story, make eye contact with each of the children, and begin.

If there are sufficient volunteers for VBS, invite someone to play the role of the storyteller. The storyteller will dress as a traveler, carrying the bag of props, and leave after the story.

Keep the props available so that the children can use them to retell the story on their own.

Wooden craft sticks with faces drawn on them represent characters in the stories. Create them for Day 1, then keep them in a safe place so that they can be reused. In addition, a story cloth is also used each day. Other props are set on top of it as the story is told. Any piece of cloth will do, such as a bandana, towel, sheet, and so forth.

## Storytelling props

- **Day 1:** story cloth, wooden blocks, 15 to 20 wooden craft sticks, fine tipped marker, block of Styrofoam or play dough, backpack
- **Day 2:** story cloth, craft stick people, fine tipped marker, two pipe cleaners, play dough, backpack
- **Day 3:** green cloth or paper, blue cloth or paper, play dough, craft stick people, paper bread and fish, baskets, backpack
- **Day 4:** story cloth, wooden blocks, two battery-operated tealights, backpack
- **Day 5:** story cloth, craft stick people, bread, wooden blocks, backpack

After the story, allow time for children to think about it. You may ask some of the questions that are offered, and children may share their responses or think quietly. You do not need to ask all of the questions; simply choose ones according to your group's interests.

## ACTIVITIES

Children are invited to respond to the Bible story through *Surprise!* activities that include snacks, crafts, games, and activities in *My Book of Stories*. Choose activities according to the time and space available. Adapt them to meet the needs of the leaders, children, and space. Do activities as one large group or in smaller groups. Be sure to have several youth and adults on hand to help. If you choose crafts, create a sample ahead of time so that children can see what they will make.

A book list is included with each session. Books have been chosen because they go along with the theme of the day, and you may want to read to the children if you have time. Choose from the book list or find others that go along with the theme.

**Tip:** Keep play dough, drawing supplies, building blocks and other items on hand to pull out if children arrive early or have extra time while waiting for others to finish activities.

## MUSIC

The *Surprise!* CD includes music that goes along with each daily theme. Some songs are especially appropriate for young children, and they are mentioned in the session. Play music as children gather in the room, and also for children to sing along with while working on projects or playing.

The following are suggestions for leading preschoolers in music:

- Sing songs from the CD.
- Sing other familiar songs.
- Invite a guest to sing a song to the children.
- Listen quietly to the CD.
- Incorporate movement along with music.
- Create hand motions to act out the songs.
- Have children use rhythm or other instruments.
- Chant song lyrics rather than singing them.
- Record the children singing, and play it back for them.

Be sure to practice songs ahead of time so that you know how to lead them.

## BIBLE MEMORY

The same memory verse will be used each day so that by the end of the week the children will know the verse.

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. —Mark 10:14b

Help the children learn the verse by teaching it to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (p. 6).

Let the little children come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 let the little children come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 do not stop them (*shake your head and waggle your finger “no”*).

For it is to such as these (*stretch out your right arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 such as these (*stretch out your left arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 such as these (*stretch out your right arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 for it is to such as these (*stretch out your left arm with a broad gesture to the children*)  
 that the kingdom of God belongs (*raise both hands up high*)!

Be sure to sing the Bible memory verse several times to practice putting all of the syllables with the notes. Some will be sung fast, while others will be sung slowly.

# LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME



1 Let the lit - tle chil - dren come to me, come to me, come to me.  
 2 For it is to such as these, such as these, such as these,



Let the lit - tle chil - dren come to me. Do not stop them.  
 for it is to such as these the King - dom of God be - longs.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

## REST TIME AND SNACK

Snack suggestions are included with each session plan and you may use the suggestions or plan your own snacks. Invite adults and youth who are not directly working with the children to prepare the snacks and to clean up afterward. Have napkins or small plates on hand, as well as cups for water or juice. Make sure children either wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before eating.

As you begin snack time, offer a prayer of thanks to God. You may wish to say a simple prayer such as: *Thank you, Jesus, for this good food and the strength it gives us. Amen.* Or maybe your church has a favorite spoken or sung prayer the children can repeat together. You may also wish to let the children lead out in prayer, saying prayers they have learned at home or making up their own prayers.

Snack suggestions (more explanation given in each session)

- **Day 1:** (*choose one*) 1. trail mix or 2. unleavened bread (or matzo); water or juice
- **Day 2:** gingerbread cookies shaped like children; assorted frosting, candies, sprinkles, dried fruit for decoration; water or juice
- **Day 3:** (*choose one*) 1. mini pitas or crackers with tuna salad or goldfish crackers or 2. fruit kabobs; water or juice
- **Day 4:** popcorn; water or juice
- **Day 5:** (*choose one*) 1. monkey bread (*also known as pluck-it*) or 2. bread or biscuits; water or juice

Be aware of children with gluten intolerance or nut or other allergies. Have alternative foods on hand if necessary.

Include a quiet time after the snack for children to rest. Be sure to provide blankets, pillows, or towels for resting on the floor.

## PLAN AHEAD

Read through this guide and the sessions, including the Bible backgrounds, stories, and activities. Plan what you will do and gather the materials you will need. Open yourself to God's Spirit as you prepare to teach the children. The children will learn and develop through your interactions with them.



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## OFFERING PROJECT

We have teamed up with Catholic Charities USA, the official domestic relief agency of the U.S. Catholic Church, to include an offering project suggestion. You may alternately or in addition choose to promote another service organization.

To collect the offering, place a big basket on a stool or table at the entrance to the room, and invite children to place their offering in the basket as they enter for worship each day. Near the end of the worship time, a leader will take the basket to the front of the room and make connections to the day's theme. The basket will then be raised as the leader says a simple prayer: *Bless these gifts, O God.* This ritual is similar to the one Jesus used to break and share bread in the stories presented on both Day 3 and Day 5.

The offering basket will be used during the drama in Day 3 to gather the leftover loaves and fish.

### A Message from Catholic Charities USA

Over the last 10 years, the Catholic Charities ministry has helped more than 6.5 million people affected by all kinds of disasters: floods, hurricanes, mudslides, tornadoes, ice storms, droughts, wildfires, explosions, violence, and environmental damage. But the need has only increased. Now, more than ever, we need to support our brothers and sisters through these challenges.

CCUSA provides training in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. In particular, agencies anticipate and respond to the elevated risks and challenges of vulnerable populations impacted by disasters. With a national reach through a local presence, Catholic Charities helps people through both the immediate and the long-term process of recovery and restoration.

### What Can Our Vacation Bible School Do?

**1. Pray.** Pray for health and well-being of those impacted by disasters, as well as those who are working hard to help them. You may choose to use or adapt one of the prayers found at <http://bit.ly/disaster-prayers> and <http://bit.ly/ccusa-disaster-prayer>.

**2. Inform teachers, children, and parents.** The more you learn about disaster relief, the more you'll understand how to help. Many of us are not aware of the impact natural disasters on the poorest of the poor and in parts of the U.S. far from the mainland (e.g. the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico). Learn more at <http://bit.ly/ccusa-disasters> and elsewhere.

**3. Donate.** One of the best ways to help is through donating to accredited nonprofit organizations that are responding to the need. Learn how to donate at [CatholicCharitiesUSA.org](http://CatholicCharitiesUSA.org).

**4. Advocate.** Speak out to make sure our government is using our resources wisely to help those in need. For example, see: <http://bit.ly/ccusa-advocacy>.

**5. Use Social Media.** Follow and retweet @CCharitiesUSA on Twitter for the latest updates and spread the word about the need to your friends and family.

### **Offering visuals**

Plan a visual way to recognize the amount of money contributed for the project. Because bread is featured in two of the VBS stories, use a basket and loaves of bread or rolls as the offering visual. Place the bread or rolls into the basket depending on how much money is contributed. For example, one loaf or roll could indicate \$5 or \$10. The basket and bread or rolls could be real, or created from cardboard cutouts and hung on the wall. Review the amount each day and be sure to thank children for their generosity!

Also consider posting a large map (preferably one including the Caribbean) to highlight where disasters have taken place in the last year or two. You could position color coded stickers for different types, perhaps adding some each day as you tell the group about them. For lists by year, see: <http://bit.ly/2017-disasters>.

SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

## Day 1

# DISCOVERING JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

### *Biblical background*

The Bible shares just this one story about Jesus' boyhood. It is an important one for children, helping them to understand that Jesus was young once, too.

At age 12, Jesus travels with his parents to Jerusalem to observe the Passover festival. We know from Mary and Joseph's presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple that they observed traditional religious events and rituals. It is no surprise that they make the journey to Jerusalem for Passover. Their faith is a natural part of their life and part of their identity.

Most of the story takes place after the event, as the family travels home. After a full day of walking, Mary and Joseph discover that Jesus is not with them. They are traveling with a group—a community of family and friends—and assumed Jesus was walking with others.

When they realize Jesus is missing, they return to Jerusalem and search for three days until they find him in the temple. Jesus is with the teachers, talking, listening, and asking questions. The teachers are surprised and amazed at his understanding!

When Mary tells Jesus how worried they were, he responds, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (v. 49). Neither Mary nor Joseph fully understands, but Mary treasures the experience.

This story reminds us to take children and their faith experiences seriously, as the teachers did with the young Jesus. Young children are capable of reflecting about God, so embrace their enthusiasm and allow their faith to grow.

Hearing a story about Jesus as a boy allows children to see him as someone who understands them. When Jesus was in the temple, he asked questions as many children do. As a result, he grew in wisdom. Children will learn that they can ask questions, too, and learn and grow in their faith.

### *Today's Bible experience*

Luke 2:41-52

### *Summary*

Jesus' parents travel home to Nazareth after observing Passover in Jerusalem, and discover that 12-year-old Jesus is not with them. They return to Jerusalem and find Jesus in the temple, asking questions and talking with the teachers.

### *Bible memory*

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. —Mark 10:14b

### *Faith focus*

We can ask questions and grow in wisdom.

## Advance preparation

### Supplies

- Bible
- Name tags (copy from p. 60); safety pins or tape
- *Surprise!* CD, songbook, and CD player
- *My Book of Stories* student book (one per child)
- Markers or crayons, and stickers for name tags
- Storytelling props: story cloth, wooden blocks, 15 to 20 wooden craft sticks, fine tipped marker, block of Styrofoam or play dough, and backpack
- Snack (p. 17)
- Materials for chosen *Surprise!* activities (pp. 17–19)

### Preparation

1. **Pray for the leaders and the children** who will participate in Bible school today.
2. **Prepare items for snack** (p. 17).
3. **Choose activities** from pages 17–19 and gather necessary materials and supplies. Some of the activities require advance preparation.
4. **Create name tags** that can be pinned or taped to children's shirts, or punch a hole through the name tag and string with yarn to create a necklace. Copy them from page 60.
5. **Draw faces on the wooden craft sticks** to use as characters for the Bible story. Use 10 to 15 craft sticks for the group traveling to Nazareth, and another 5 for the teachers at the temple. Save the craft sticks to use throughout VBS.
6. **Practice telling the Bible story** with the props (pp. 13–14). Keep all of the Bible story props in a backpack.
7. **Practice singing the Bible memory verse** to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" (p. 15).
8. **Practice the "We Have Come to Bible School" rhythm** (p. 16).

# GROUP EXPERIENCE

## Gathering

1. **Play the *Surprise!* CD** as background music as the children arrive.
2. **Greet the children** and welcome them to Bible school.
3. **Give name tags to the children** and help them print their names on the tags. Invite the children to decorate their name tags by adding drawings or stickers. Pin or tape the name tags to their clothing, or place them around their necks if name tags are strung with yarn. Make sure adults wear name tags too.
4. **Invite the children to sit in a circle** on the floor in the story area. Say to the child on your right, *(Child's name), I'm so glad you're here today.* Invite that child to turn to the next child and repeat the phrase, saying the correct name. Be ready to offer help with names.
5. **Sing together from the *Surprise!* CD** and songbook.
  - “The Temple”
  - “Bless the Lord”
  - “Just Like You”
6. **Introduce the offering project** and collect the offering (pp. 8–9). Let the children know that an offering will be collected each day of Bible school, and be sure they understand the offering project so that they know what they are contributing toward.

## Bible story

1. **Ask the children what celebrations they look forward to** every year. Be sure to share your favorites too.
2. **Explain that Passover is a special festival** to help remember something amazing that God did. Tell the children that each year Jesus' family walked for at least three days from their home in Nazareth to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate Passover!
3. **Open the Bible to Luke 2** and show children where the story is found. Explain that there are stories in the Bible about Jesus when he was a baby, and Jesus when he was an adult, but this is the only Bible story about Jesus when he was a child.
4. **Say:** *Every year, Jesus and his family traveled from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the special Passover celebration. The year Jesus was 12, something different happened.*
5. **Bible story:** Luke 2:41-52

(Open the backpack and set out the story props. Lay out the story cloth. Put a group of wooden blocks, representing the city of Jerusalem, at one end of the cloth. Put several people/craft sticks together at the “temple” and more scattered throughout the city.)

When the Passover celebration was finished, Jesus' family and friends packed up their bags and began the long walk home together. (*Set the block of Styrofoam or play dough just outside Jerusalem and stick many of the people from Jerusalem into it. Move the block away from Jerusalem, to the other end of the story cloth.*) After a whole day of traveling, Jesus' parents, Mary and Joseph, looked for him among their friends and family. (*Take two of the people out and move them around to the others as they ask questions.*)

“Have you seen Jesus?” they asked their brothers and sisters.

“Is Jesus with you?” they asked their friends.

No one had seen Jesus. Mary and Joseph hurried back to Jerusalem. (*Walk the Mary and Joseph characters back to Jerusalem and move them about the city as they search.*) They went to the places they stayed. Jesus wasn't there. They looked in the markets. No one had seen him. They searched the streets and alleyways, but there was no sign of Jesus. They tried for three days to find Jesus.

Finally, they went to the temple. (*Move Mary and Joseph to the temple area.*) Jesus was there! (*Pick up the Jesus character and point to the teachers as you mention them.*) He was sitting with the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. The others in the temple were amazed by the things Jesus said.

Jesus' mother ran to him and asked, “Oh, Jesus, we have been so worried! Why did you run off like this?”

Jesus said, “Why have you been searching for me? Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?”

Mary and Joseph did not understand, but Mary treasured this memory and kept it in her heart.

The family returned to their home in Nazareth. (*Walk the Mary, Joseph, and Jesus sticks to the rest of the people and add them to the Styrofoam/play dough group.*) As Jesus grew (*touch the Jesus stick*), he became wiser and stronger, bringing joy to both God and people.

## Respond to the Bible story

1. **Give children time to think about the story** by asking some of the following questions. The children may share their responses or think quietly.
  - I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt when they found out Jesus was not with them.
  - I wonder if Mary and Joseph were tired from all of their walking.
  - I wonder what Jesus and the teachers talked about.
  - What would you like to talk with Jesus about?
2. **Ask the children if they have any questions** about this story. You may want to answer, discuss, or wonder about their questions. Let the children know that vacation Bible school is a good place to ask questions.
3. **Pray.** Explain to the children that when people talk to God, it is called praying. Demonstrate that sometimes when people pray, they sometimes fold their hands and close their eyes.
 

Pray: *Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us so many stories in the Bible! Please help us know you better when we hear them and talk about them. Amen.*
4. **Introduce the Bible memory verse**, Mark 10:14b. Tell the children that Jesus said these words: “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” Show children where the verse is found in the Bible.

5. **Sing the verse** to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb” (p. 6). If your group is able, sing the whole passage. If this is too much for the children, end after “Do not stop them.”

Let the little children come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 let the little children come to me (*make a “come” motion*),  
 do not stop them (*shake your head and waggle your finger “no”*).

For it is to such as these (*stretch out your right arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 such as these (*stretch out your left arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 such as these (*stretch out your right arm with a broad gesture to the children*),  
 for it is to such as these (*stretch out your left arm with a broad gesture to the children*)  
 that the kingdom of God belongs (*raise both hands up high*)!

Be sure to sing the Bible memory verse several times to practice putting all of the syllables with the notes. Some will be sung fast, while others will be sung slowly.

### ***Surprise! activities***

1. **Choose several activities** from pages 17–19. Be sure to include a snack during this time, and consider other activities that best suit your group, space, and schedule. Prepare for the activities in advance and have youth or adults ready to help. If a craft will be made, be sure to make a sample one so that the children can see what they are creating.
2. **When it is time to clean up**, chant or sing to the tune of “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.”

Do an Internet search if you are not familiar with “Here We Go ‘Round the Mulberry Bush.”

This is the way we clean the room,  
 clean the room, clean the room,  
 this is the way we clean the room, after Bible school.

Demonstrate your expectations of putting away supplies and cleaning the area. Make sure names are on projects and put them in a safe place so they can be taken home.

## Sending

1. **Gather in the story area.** Invite children to sit in a circle to do the “We Have Come to Bible School” rhythm. As leader, rhythmically speak a line (think along the lines of “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt”), keeping the beat by tapping knees. The children will echo the line. Each day a verse about that day’s Bible story will be added.

Do an Internet search if you are not familiar with “We’re Going on a Bear Hunt.”

We have come to Bible school (*children echo*),  
we are meeting Jesus (*children echo*).

When Jesus was just 12 years old (*children echo*),  
he stayed in the temple (*children echo*),  
he asked lots of questions (*children echo*).  
I can ask things, too (*children echo*)!

We have come to Bible school (*children echo*),  
we are meeting Jesus (*children echo*)!

2. **Look at each child and say the following blessing:**

*(Child’s name), God bless you and help you grow wiser and stronger.*

As you bless the children, you may wish to gently touch their heads or shoulders, or make the sign of the cross on the back of their hands.

3. **Collect name tags** to use in the next session.
4. **As children leave,** let them know you enjoyed having them in your group and look forward to seeing them again.

# **SURPRISE! ACTIVITIES**

## ***My Book of Stories student book***

Turn to page 3 of *My Book of Stories*. Children will use a pencil or crayon to follow the path that Mary and Joseph took as they searched for Jesus.

### **Snack (choose one option)**

1. **Trail mix**

Jesus, his friends, and his family were on a long journey. Offer children a snack of trail mix in individual plastic bags. Either purchase prepared trail mix or make your own from dried fruits, crackers, cereal, and seeds. Children may wish to take home their leftovers, so label bags. Serve with water or juice.

2. **Unleavened bread (or matzo)**

Tell children that at Passover, Jesus ate some very special foods, including unleavened bread. Serve with water or juice.

## **Crafts**

### **1. Play Dough Scenes**

**Materials:**

- Play dough

Give children play dough and invite them to recreate scenes from the story. They can make the temple, Jesus, and other characters and locations in the story. Invite children to use their creations to retell the story.

**To make play dough:**

- In a bowl mix 2 cups / 500 ml flour and 2 tablespoons / 15 ml alum.
- Heat to boiling 1½ cups / 375 ml water, ½ cup / 125 ml salt, 1 tablespoon / 15 ml oil, and food coloring.
- Stir liquids into dry ingredients.
- Knead until smooth.
- Store in airtight container.

### **2. Question Tree**

**Materials:**

- Bare tree branch stabilized in a flowerpot with plaster or rocks
- Template from page 61
- Green paper, pencils, and paper clips

Tell children that Jesus and his family took many steps as they walked to the temple. Add that we sometimes have questions when we go places, too. Ask children to think of questions they have had, and use them in this activity.

In preparation, copy the foot template from page 61 onto green paper and cut out at least one per child. Have the children draw (or write) their questions on one side of the footprints. Talk about the questions as a group. See what answers the children come

up with and write these ideas on the reverse of the footprints. Paper-clip the footprints to branches and watch the tree grow!

Add to the question tree through the week if children have additional questions to add.

### **3. Watch Seeds Grow!**

#### **Materials:**

- Small pie tin for each child
- Paper towels, seeds
- Plastic bags to cover pie tins
- Twist ties

Write a child's name on each pie tin. Help children line the bottom of their pie tin with damp paper towels. Demonstrate how to sprinkle several fast-growing seeds into their pan. Place each pie tin into a plastic bag and close it with a twist tie.

Talk about what seeds need to grow (light, moisture, warmth). Talk about what children need to grow (food, water, smiles). Keep the seed pans in a sunny place and have the children check their progress each day.

## **Games and movements**

### **1. Search Walk**

#### **Materials:**

- Magnifying glass for each child

If outdoor space is available, go on a search walk. Encourage the children to notice little things, such as the joys of looking carefully at a stick or a blade of grass. Do the children have questions about the things they see? Give each child a magnifying glass so that they can look closely at the objects. Give each child an opportunity to share something they discovered. Give thanks to God for the many things the children have seen!

### **2. Ask, Ask, Grow**

Play this game like "Duck, Duck, Goose." Have the children sit on the floor in a circle with one child as It. It walks around the outside of the circle and gently taps the top of each child's head, saying, "Ask" with each tap. After a number of "Asks," It taps one child and says, "Grow!" The sitting child jumps up and races It around the outside of the circle. The player who first arrives at the empty spot sits down, and the other player becomes It. Be sure everyone has the chance to be It.

### 3. Play Church

#### Materials:

- Props such as Bibles, songbooks, instruments, offering basket

Jesus and his family went to the temple to worship God. Let the children explore worship by creating their own informal worship service. Give guidance by asking questions about what they would like to include and who would like to play the roles, but let the children be in charge. Offer props similar to what might be used in your church: Bibles, songbooks, musical instruments, offering baskets, and other supplies.

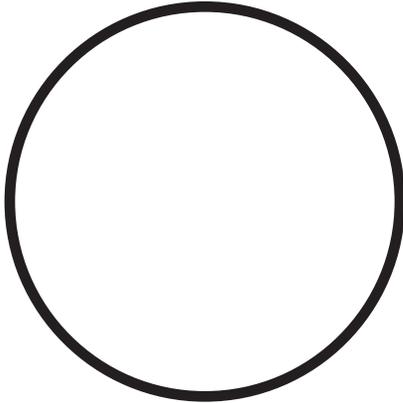
You may also wish to take your group on a tour of the church building to talk about what happens in each space. If there is time, allow children to take turns trying different things such as speaking at the front or into a microphone, playing the piano, washing a few dishes, or collecting garbage.

## BOOK LIST

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- Willems, Mo. *Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale*. New York, NY: Hyperion Books for Children, 2004.

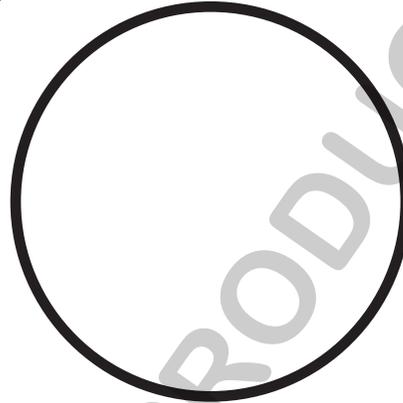
\* Available for purchase from [PastoralCenter.com](http://PastoralCenter.com).





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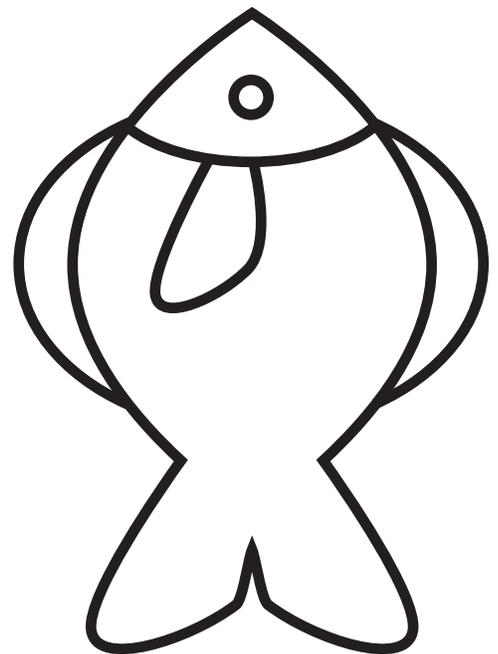
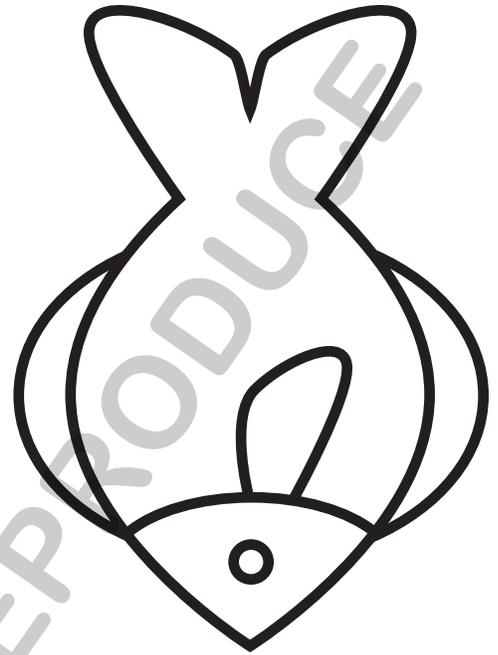
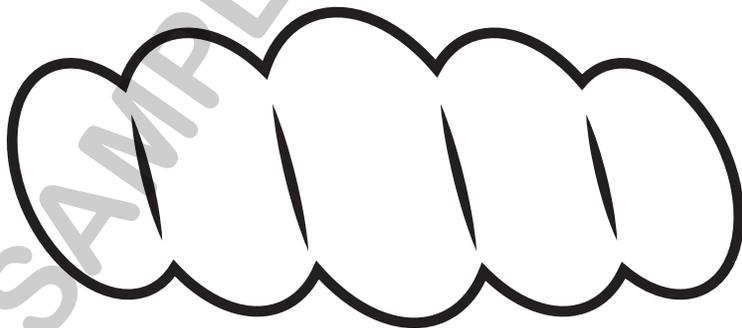
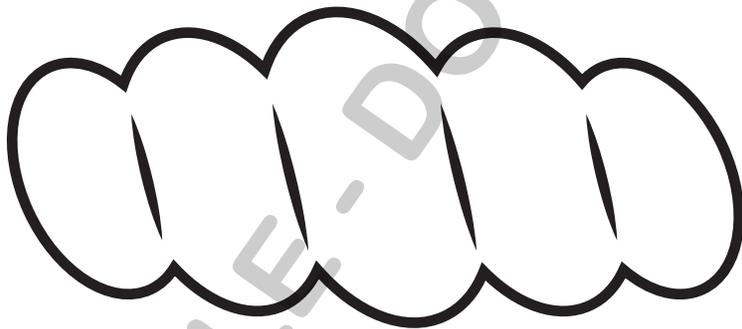
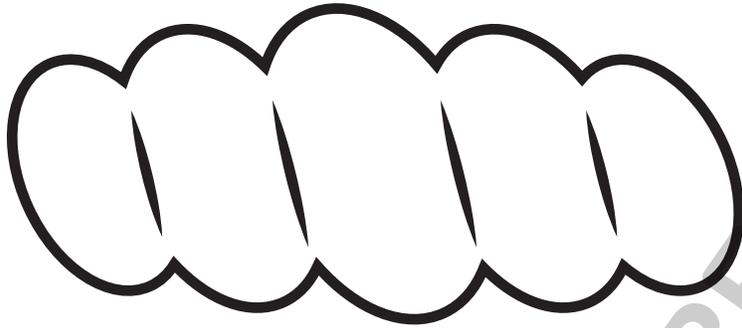
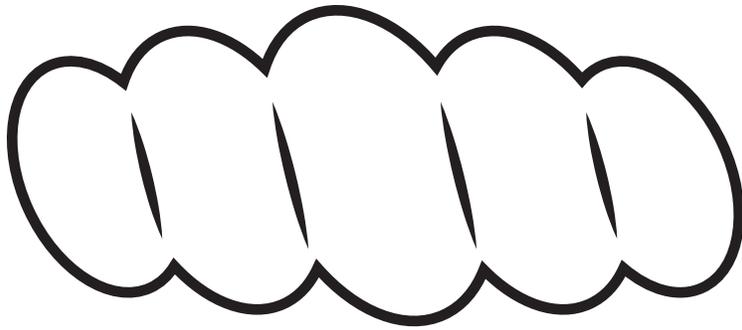
*is a beloved  
child of God.*



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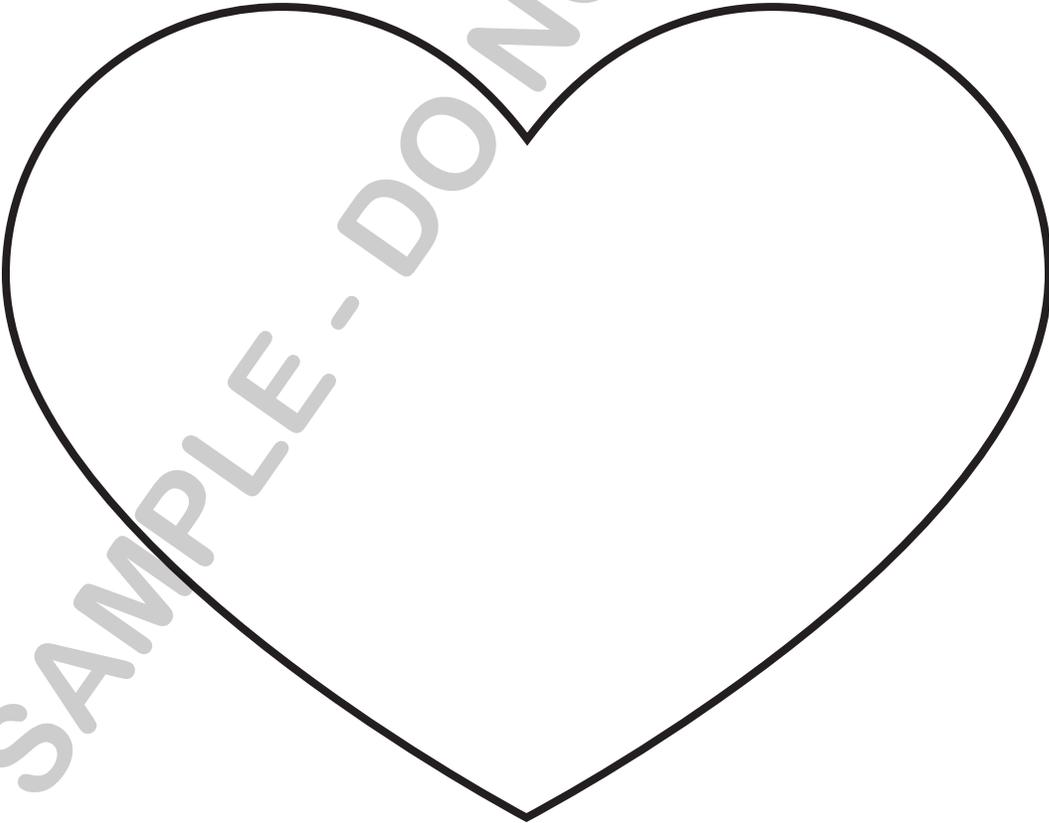
*is a beloved  
child of God.*





The LORD bless you  
and keep you; the LORD  
make his face to shine  
upon you . . . and give  
you peace.  
(Numbers 6:24-26)

The LORD bless you  
and keep you; the LORD  
make his face to shine  
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