

Holiday club



To mark the 30th anniversary of the United Nations Year of the Child, we offer these *Holiday club* suggestions to celebrate all that children and young people can bring to the life of your community.

Introduction

There are four sessions that can be used with a range of ages. It is aimed at primary school age children though you could easily take the themes and extend them for slightly older or younger ones. The focus of each session is designed to reflect a different aspect of what it means to be young.

The four themes of: *We can ...*, *We find it difficult ...*, *We wish ...* and *We celebrate ...* offer a range of opportunities to look at the lives of the children and young people in your group. In *ROOTS Adult and All Age* magazine you can find a great service to use when all ages worship together, which might be a fitting end to the holiday club festivities.

Planning

Paperwork

You will need to ensure the promotion, recruitment of volunteers, registration and management processes all follow the guidelines of your local church or denomination. Contact your regional or denominational children's or youth officer for up-to-date guidelines and paperwork. This can be a time-consuming part of your planning but it is essential and needs to be a task that one person takes on to ensure everything is done correctly.

Young people

You may involve young people as junior leaders. Try to include them in decision-making and not simply tell them what to do. They might be willing to take photographs during each of the sessions to create artwork for the final gathering and possibly as a summary of the week. There are more suggestions for engaging young people offered later in this material.

Suggested timetable

We offer suggestions for a holiday club lasting four days.

You could meet on the Monday to plan the week, ensure everyone knows what they are doing and all the resources are ready, then run the programme from Tuesday to Friday. Or you could run the programme from the Monday and have Friday to clear up and evaluate how it has gone.

Alternatively you could offer the sessions on the same day of the week for four weeks. Use the resources in the best way for your situation but whichever pattern you follow, make sure children, helpers and parents are all clear about what is being offered.

We suggest that each day follows a similar pattern to encourage the participants to become familiar with the structure and the flow of active and quiet time.

Suggested structure

Gather

Welcome

Make the children feel welcome and set the event in a fun context. You might like to have two people up front leading – this allows for comical banter between the two. On the first day tell the children what they can expect to happen. Introduce all the people who will be helping so they are familiar to the children. Point out exits and toilets and any other areas they need to be familiar with. All sorts of announcements can be mentioned here.

Rules

Have a clear set of rules so that the children know the guidelines. They cannot be reprimanded for not obeying rules that they have never heard! Children feel safer and more secure in a disciplined atmosphere. Don't forget any general rules that reflect health and safety issues and add any others that are needed for your particular circumstances. Try to be clear without being authoritarian – keep a sense of fun. Set all the expectations clearly at the start of the programme and encourage all helpers and children to follow them. You might consider agreeing the rules at the start of the club and asking all the children and leaders to sign them as a contract of behaviour.

Teams

At the start of the Holiday Club ask the children to play a game all together. Watch how they interact and divide the children into groups (or teams) of roughly the same numbers – these can include a spread of ages or same-age groups. Try to balance extravert and introvert children across the groups.

- Designate an area of your space as a home-space for each group and ask them to gather in those places each day.
- Invite the children to decorate their space and think up a team chant or phrase.
- Invite groups to decide on a team name and colour. They might decide to dress in their colour on subsequent days or you could provide fabric for them to make their own team bands.
- Start each session with the children gathering in their team space, perhaps with a young person as a leader of each team setting activities with them.

Warm up activities

Begin each session with a time for the group to do something together. You could use a simple exercise routine (think of an aerobics class!) or a musical game to get everyone moving.

Prayer

Have a regular pattern to your prayer time so that the children feel comfortable with it. Suggestions are given in each session or use the other pages of ROOTS or the [WEB](http://www.rootsontheweb.com) www.rootsontheweb.com for additional ideas.

Open the Word

Story

You might include a Bible reading, illustrations or a story. Suggestions are offered in the session outlines. Don't be tempted to simply talk at the children in this slot. You might present the story by:

- Dressing some of the children as characters in the story.
- Using film clips.
- Hollywood style – asking the children to dramatise it.
- Using puppets.

Bible memory verse

Each session outline includes a memory verse which you might display from the start of the story or you may prefer to encourage the children to memorise the text. There are many ways to teach a Bible text – be creative!

- Write the text on balloons and burst a balloon as each word is read.
- Write the text on separate pieces of paper which are hidden in blown up balloons; the balloons need to be burst to reveal the text.
- Make the verse into a jigsaw puzzle.
- Write the text on slips of paper which are rolled up and pushed into the end of drinking straws. Children have to unroll the paper to discover the words.

Respond to

Games

Children of all ages love games, and contrary to popular belief, they love team games too! Try to organise the teams in family groups and of equal numbers so that the same team doesn't win every time. A selection of ideas can be found on pp. 7-8.

Craft activities

Each session outline includes suggestions for craft activities. Ensure you have the appropriate resources and prepare your space. Allow time for setting up and clearing up – wet wipes and plastic table cloth covers will prove invaluable!

Send out

- At the end of the session gather the children together.
- Ask the children if they can remember the theme and the memory verse.
- Recap on the new song of the day and perhaps include another song. This can lead into a short time of worship which may also be an opportunity to share with parents and carers who may be arriving to collect their children. There are prayer suggestions for each session.

Tomorrow

Highlight the next day's programme making sure you encourage the children to come back. Keep it exciting!

Young leaders

The involvement of young people as leaders for your holiday club will not just bring richness and flavour to the club days but will also encourage and develop the young people. Young people have so much to give. Following the themes of the four sessions, here are four ways of actively involving young people in the holiday club. More specific ways to involve young people will be offered in each session.

Day one We can ...

The young people that you invite to be involved in running the club days will have a spectrum of gifts. It is important to recognise these and work creatively to find ways of using them.

Remember that not all young people like being at the front in a drama or running games. Some will have gifts of administration; encourage them to get involved with the registration and paperwork that is necessary in running the Holiday Club. Others will have artistic skills which could be channelled in the publicity and some may have relational skills; encourage these young people both to talk to the children they know to encourage them to attend and then, at the club, to get beside and support those that may feel nervous, afraid or alone in a group.



Day two We find it difficult when ...

Talk to the young people about the topics of the sessions and the intended message of the day. Invite the young people to think and discuss times in their own lives, real stories from their journey where these relate to the topic. You might, for example, ask them to share how have they achieved some of their hopes and dreams. Who was there to help, what did they do? Or ask them about their own gifts and how they use them.

Day three We wish ...

At the planning stage, gather the young people together and ask them to describe any holiday clubs that they attended in the past, noting the range of experiences they had. Allow the young people to talk freely about these times: they may have seen the holiday clubs in a very different light from the leaders. Use this experience to form the style of club you offer.

Day four We celebrate ...

After it is all over, reward the young people that have been a part of the holiday club, as well as any adult leaders, with a social treat or party. This could be a trip to a local pizza restaurant or cinema, or you might offer something at the venue after the last session of the club. This might also be undertaken along with an evaluation of the event so that the young people will not only be encouraged but have a valuable opportunity for feedback and building relationships with the other leaders.



Holiday club sessions

Day one We can ...

You will find a suggested structure for each session on pages 1–2.

Focus

1 Corinthians 12.8–13

This session celebrates all that children can do and encourages them to realise that the Holy Spirit gives them the gifts to achieve amazing things.

God knows that we need help to lead a good life which is why the gifts of the Spirit are so useful.

Gather

Set the scene by explaining the focus of the session. Children will bring the gifts of enthusiasm and excitement with them (if a little nervous on the first day) so make the most of this.

Gathering prayer

Include a couple of songs that may be familiar to your group and teach the children a new song, e.g. How good of Father God to give us gifts we don't deserve (KS); The Spirit lives to set us free; I'm a pow pow powerpack (KS); When the Holy Spirit comes upon you (KS); The Holy Hokey (KS).

Lord of colour, we greet you, Lord of pattern, we rejoice in you,
Lord of variety, we delight in you, Lord of life, we adore you.

Amen.

Open the Word

Story

- Set the session in the context of 1 Corinthians 12.8–13.
- Ask the children if they know the hokey cokey and go through it with them.
- Ask the children to think about what would happen if you were doing the hokey cokey and their left hand refused to do it because it wanted to be the right foot? And what if their left foot refused to do it because it wanted to be the right hand?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12.8–13 and invite them to re-do the hokey cokey to fit the gifts mentioned in the reading.
- Explain that just as we have different parts of our body so God has given the Church people with different gifts to meet the needs of the whole Church. And just like the song says, 'That's what it's all about!'
- Explain that the session is thinking about what gifts they can offer. Choose a verse of the reading as a memory verse.

Bible verse

For just as the body is one ... so it is with Christ.
(1 Corinthians 12.12)

Games

Decide on five or six games which you are going to play today (from pp. 7–8). Ensure that there are enough adults to help with games, especially on the first day.

Young people

On the ROOTS website **WEB** you will find a drama script that the young people might like to work on to present to the children during the session.

Respond to

Magnets

Make a magnet to represent ourselves and our willingness to offer our gifts.

You will need: fun foam in a range of colours, cookie cutters, scissors, small wooden pegs (you can get very small ones from craft shops or with Christmas card hangers), PVA glue, hole punch, self sticking magnets.

- Invite the children to choose a cookie cutter that they like.
- Give each child a sheet of the fun foam and ask them to press the cutter into the foam.
- This should leave an imprint which they can then use to cut the shape out. Older children or leaders may need to help younger ones with cutting shapes.
- Foam can be layered to create multicoloured shapes.
- Glue the peg to the back of the shape and stick the magnet to the back of the peg.

Sunshine

To use with younger children

Make paper suns as a reminder of the gifts we can offer.

You will need: large white paper plates; yellow tissue paper cut into circles twice the diameter of the plate; glue, white paper, felt tip pens, pencils and marker pens.

- Give each child a sheet of white paper and invite them to draw a picture of themselves. They should show themselves looking as happy as they have ever been.
- Ask a leader or older child to take a paper plate and a circle of tissue paper. They should glue the tissue onto the plate.
- Cut the tissue paper from the edge into the rim of the plate to create strips about 4cm wide. The plate should begin to look like the sun with rays coming off it.
- Once the child has drawn their picture they should be helped to glue it to the centre of the now yellow plate.
- Ask the child what they are good at and write this on the plate or simply add a title: 'I bring sunshine to the world'.

Back together

This could be the opportunity to have an *X Factor* or *Britain's Got Talent* session! Perhaps one or more of the helpers might like to demonstrate a particular talent.

What's happening tomorrow?

Explain that tomorrow you are going to share stories and talk about how you can help each other, play lots of games and have some fun.

Day two We find it difficult when ...

You will find a suggested structure for each session on pages 1–2.

Focus

Psalm 23

We all face times when we find things a little difficult. This session invites the children to share this, but offers them the hope of God being alongside them. The session focuses on some of the issues children might face – be prepared with back-up plans if things arise that need more time.

Gather

- Tell the children that today you are going to be looking at a psalm which is a favourite with a lot of people.
- Explain that we all have lots of hopes and dreams and travel in hope but everyone gets a little bit frightened sometimes.
- Ask the children what colours they associate with happiness, with sadness, with hope and with fear.

Gathering prayer

Include a familiar song and the song learnt yesterday; you can be adventurous and learn another new song!

Be bold, be strong (KS); Be bold, be strong and sing (KS); I'm putting my trust in you (KS); My God is so big (KS); When you're feeling good (KS); I need faith (KS).

Loving Lord,
you understand me.

When I am frightened, help me to turn to you.

When others are frightened, help me to remind them of you.

Amen.

Open the Word

Story

- Explain to the children that Psalm 23 is loved by many people and read it to the children. Invite them to discuss the images and share their ideas.
- Play the 'Who do you trust?' game by setting up an obstacle course of a few boxes and chairs to be negotiated. Ask for a volunteer who is prepared to be blindfolded and someone they trust to guide them through the course. Blindfold the volunteer and ask the chosen guide to lead them through the obstacles, either by touch or by using verbal instructions.
- Playing the 'Who do you trust?' game can be a lot of fun, but in real life, it is very important to know whom we can trust. Ask the children how they work this out.
- Explain that each day we find ourselves facing difficult situations and we have difficult choices to make. Remind the children that God is the one in whom they can trust and invite them to think of ways of reminding themselves of this.

Bible verse

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. (Psalm 23.4)

Games

Decide on which games you are going to play today. You can use the same games as in session one and add one or two new ones for variety.

Young people

Ask the young people to think about a film that could be used to support the theme of this session or bring a selection of films for them to choose from, e.g. *Madagascar* (1 or 2) or *Ice Age*.

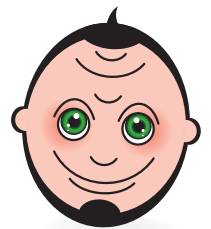
- Ask them to think about how they cope in difficult times.
- Ask them to choose a suitable clip from the film and prepare a series of discussion points to lead a discussion about the clip with the children.

Respond to

Happy or sad?

You will need: a large face that looks happy one way up and sad the other way up, paper plates and felt tip pens; copy of the face template [WEB](#).

- Invite the children to make their own face plate – that looks happy one way and sad the other.
- Show the happy face first and ask what events have made people happy during the last week and make a list of them.
- Then turn the face upside down and ask if anything sad or worrying has happened in the past week and make a list of them too.
- Finish by thanking God for knowing how we feel, whether we are happy or sad, and thanking him for being just as close to us in the good times as in the bad.



God with us

A craft activity to make a reminder of how we cope in difficult situations.

You will need: table covers; foil or paper trays; paints and water or fabrics and papers of a range of textures and colours; glue, felt tip pens; craft items including flowers, leaves, pipe cleaners, etc.

- Cover each table with a protective covering cloth (plastic ones are probably the best).
- Set out a range of craft materials on each table. You might offer different materials on each table or have each the same. Think about the range of colours you offer and include dark as well as bright ones.
- Invite the children to think about what they heard in the reading.
- Invite the children to create their own representation of the psalm to show how they might cope in difficult situations.
- You might play some music as the children are doing this.

Back together

Gather the children together again with an inclusive activity – perhaps another game to music. Ask the groups if they have had time to think of a team chant yet.

What's happening tomorrow?

Tell the children that tomorrow the focus will be on turning to God when we're afraid or in difficulty and that there will be lots more fun and games.

Day three We wish ...

You will find a suggested structure for each session on pages 1–2.

Focus

Genesis 6.9–8.22

We all have things we wish for. God promises to be with us and the rainbow is a sign of the hope that God gives.

Gather

- Set the scene by introducing the story of Noah and how it led to the rainbow. You might tell the story by using a children’s Bible version. At the end of the story God stretches a rainbow across the sky as a promise that the whole world will never be flooded again.
- Explain that people didn’t understand how a rainbow was made. They only knew it was a beautiful thing and that only God could have stretched it across the sky. Today we know how it happens because a man called Isaac Newton conducted a series of experiments, but it is still a reminder of God’s promise.
- Ask the children if they know the seven colours of the rainbow. There is a way of remembering the colours using these words: Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain (Red Orange Yellow Green Blue Indigo Violet).
- Ask the children if they can remember how many gifts of the Holy Spirit there were in session one. Yes, seven!

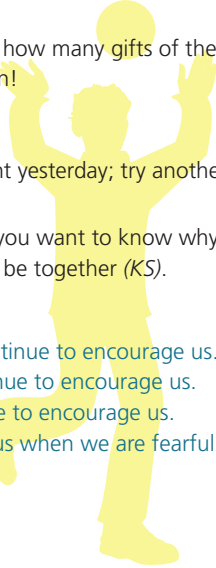
Gathering prayer

Include a familiar song and the song learnt yesterday; try another new song!

Rise and shine and give God the glory; If you want to know why (KS); Mister Noah built an ark (KS); It’s good to be together (KS).

God our loving Father,
 you know our hopes and dreams and continue to encourage us.
 You know what holds us back, and continue to encourage us.
 You know we need to grow, and continue to encourage us.
 Support us as we look forward, reassure us when we are fearful
 and inspire us for our future.

Amen.



Open the Word

Story

Ask the children if they remember the story of Noah’s Ark. You may like to retell it to the children – there are many different versions in picture books that could be used.

Here is a story about someone who found a rainbow in a very unusual place.

“It was the Arkenstone, the Heart of the Mountain. So Bilbo guessed from Thorin’s description; but indeed there could not be two such gems, even in so marvellous a hoard, even in all the world. Even as he climbed, the same white gleam had shone before him and drawn his feet towards it. Slowly it grew to a little globe of pallid light. Now as he came near, it was tinged with a flickering sparkle of many colours at the surface, reflected and splintered from the wavering light of his torch. At last he

looked down upon it and he caught his breath. The great jewel shone before his feet of its own inner light, and yet, cut and fashioned by the dwarves, who had dug it from the heart of the mountain long ago, it took all light that fell upon it and changed it into ten thousand sparks of white radiance shot with glints of the rainbow.”

The Hobbit, J R R Tolkien.

Bible verse

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease. (Genesis 8.22)

Games

Decide on five or six games which you are going to play today. You can use the same games as in session one, but one or two new games will add variety.

Young people

The words of the song ‘I Hope You Dance’ which has been most recently released by Ronan Keating could be offered to the young people as the soundtrack of a dance or mime that they could create and perform to illustrate the words and phrases of the track. If the young people feel it is necessary, they could give explanation of the movements after the performance.

Respond to

Make a rainbow!

You will need: a bowl, jug of water, some cooking oil and a sunny day!

- Half fill the bowl with water and carefully pour the oil onto the surface of the water and stand the bowl in the sunshine.
- A rainbow will appear, floating on the water.

Rainbow chains

You will need: paper in range of colours cut into strips of an even width (around 4 cm); glue or a stapler.

- Make a chain using the strips of paper, interlocking a random selection of the colours.
- You could make paper chains of all the colours of the rainbow and use it to decorate your space for the fourth session.

Back together

Play *Wonderful World* by Louis Armstrong and pray the gathering prayer again.

God our loving Father,
 you know our hopes and dreams and continue to encourage us.
 You know what holds us back, and continue to encourage us.
 You know we need to grow, and continue to encourage us.
 Support us as we look forward, reassure us when we are fearful
 and inspire us for our future.

Amen.

What’s happening tomorrow?

Tomorrow the focus will be on celebrating all that we’re thankful for and there will be lots more fun and games.

Day four We celebrate ...

You will find a suggested structure for each session on pages 1–2.

Focus

Luke 2.1–20; John 20.1–18; Acts 2.1–13; Luke 15.1–32.

The theme for this session is that we should both celebrate our children and young people, and celebrate with them. Today's session could be a wonderful Praise Party (see page 9) to celebrate that we are all special.

Gather

- Explain that there are lots of days when the churches celebrate festivals. Ask the children which ones they have been to. Ask which is their favourite.
- Ask the children what colour happy days are, and what colour grumpy days are. Explain that the colours that many churches use for festivals are white and gold.

Songs and opening prayer

Include as many of the songs from the previous three sessions as possible. Yes, there's still time to try another new song!

Come on and celebrate! (KS); Hey, hey, celebrate (KS); We dance to praise the Lord (KS); Lord, I lift your name on high; Let's celebrate (KS); Sing a song, sing a joyful song (KS); This is a catchy song (KS).

Most wonderful and loving God,
we praise you, we worship you, we thank you,
for everything you have given us.

Amen.

Open the Word

Story

You will need: small bells (that ring) for each child to have one and thread them on to a length of yarn or ribbon if possible.

- Ask the children if they know where bells can be seen and heard.
- Give each child a bell but ask them to make sure they don't make any sound.
- Once everyone has their bells, invite the children to ring them. (You could sing Jingle Bells or Joy to the World here.)
- The joyful sound that the bells make reminds us of Christmas which is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Bells can also be heard ringing from church towers at Easter to celebrate Jesus' resurrection.
- Read Luke 2.1–20.
- Ask the children to look closely at their bell. Do they know what gives a bell its joyful sound? Explain that there is a tiny ball inside which makes the ringing sound as it bounces around against the inside of the bell. Our joy and happiness comes from inside too.
- When we hold the bell tightly and ring the bell it doesn't make a sound because our hand has dampened the sound of the bell, making it dull and lifeless. We must be careful not to let things

dampen our happiness, especially at parties and times of celebration.

- End by ringing the bells and making a joyful sound!

Bible verse

Let us celebrate! (Luke 15.23)

Games

You could play party games such as Pass the Parcel, Musical Chairs, Musical Statues, Blind Man's Bluff. It could be an opportunity to get a parachute out or look at pp. 7-8 for additional ideas.

Young people

The young people may have been taking photos during the previous sessions. Invite them to create a PowerPoint™ or piece of art with the photos, e.g. photos could be joined together in the shape of a person or a row of people to illustrate the theme.

Respond to

Party craft

You could make party hats, or streamers by sticking strips of crepe paper onto the ends of drinking straws. Bells can be made from sections of egg boxes and a clapper made by tying a bead onto a piece of yarn and threading it through the top. These can be painted gold.

Flame prayers

You will need: yellow, orange and red paper, flame-shape template.

- Cut the coloured paper into flame shapes.
- Give each person a shape and explain to them that when God's Holy Spirit first came, it was as if tongues of fire were reaching out and touching all the people. It was a flame that filled people with the warmth and love of God.
- Encourage everyone to write a prayer. Their flame shapes thanking God for his wonderful gift.
- Fix the finished prayers onto a dark background to look like one big flame. Explain that as the Holy Spirit helps us, more and more people can be fired up with the love of God.

Back together

Invite the young people to present their PowerPoint™ or artistic presentation to the rest of the group.

You might like to end with an awards ceremony, celebrating the achievements of the children, young people and helpers. If you are going to do this, ensure everyone receives acknowledgement for something they have brought to the experience, from best game player to someone who has been kind, This is a good time to remind the children about the special things that happened in your gathering. Celebrate all that each person has brought to the club ending with a final prayer:

We praise you, we bless you, we thank you.

P.S. We don't like to mention this but you'll need to allow plenty of time for cleaning up and evaluating! It is worth trying to get leaders together a few days later so that they can objectively evaluate what happened and what you need to learn for the future.

Game selection

A collection of indoor and outdoor games to use during a holiday club or at any time.

Parachute games

Revolving

Everyone holds on to the edge of the parachute with one hand, facing the same way. Run around as fast as possible, then on a signal they must change hands and go back the other way.

Popping balls

Everyone moves the parachute up and down together. Throw on several small light-weight balls and see if they can roll them around by moving the chute.

Football

Everyone holds on to the edge of the parachute with both hands. Children on one half of the parachute play against the other. Using a large soft ball, each team must try to make the ball go off the chute on the other team's side. You score if the ball touches the floor. No-one can touch the ball except by moving it with the chute.

Swapping

Everyone moves the chute up and down as high as possible, when it is up, call out a category (e.g. anyone under five years old). The children who are in that category swap places by running under the parachute before it comes down again. Categories could be ages, wearing different colours, having different pets, wearing different sorts of shoes, etc.

Cat and mouse

Everyone holds the chute down low. One child crawls around under the parachute (the mouse), another takes off their shoes and prowls around on top of the chute (the cat). When you say 'GO' everyone keeps the parachute moving to attempt to hide the mouse. The cat tries to catch the mouse by touching it through the parachute. Repeat until everyone who wants to has had a turn.

Team games

Most of these games require little or no equipment. A bat, ball, football and whistle will do for most. Any other equipment needed is listed.

Over and under

Divide the group into equal teams and line them up with a ball each. When you say 'GO', the child at the front passes the ball between their feet to the next person, and so on, down the line. The last child runs to the front and starts the process again. The team sit down when the first child comes to the front again. Repeat the game, but pass the ball over their heads. Repeat the game but alternating, i.e. the first child passes the ball overhead, the next child between their feet and so on.

A variation of the above would be to use balloons: the first team member blows it up and then sends it over or under, each team member running to the front to start the process again. When it gets

back to the first person they have to pop the balloon, the first team to pop the balloon being the winner.

Mat ball

You will need: two mats or hoops.

- Divide into two teams. Each team chooses a goalie who stands on a mat or in a hoop, one at each at each end of the playing space. They are not allowed to leave the mat / hoop.

- The teams have to get the ball to their goalie but every team member must have handled the ball before it reaches the goalie. No one can run with the ball.

Flat fish

You will need: a fish shape cut out of strong paper or card and a magazine or newspaper for each team.

- Divide into teams and line up.

- The first child has to wave the paper to waft the fish down to a given point, e.g. a chair, and back to their team. The next child then does the same and so on until everyone has had a turn.

Crocker or non-stop cricket

You will need: a light football, a rounders or baseball bat and four stumps.

- Set up the wicket with two stumps about 1 metre apart (this is like a football goal).

- The third stump is set about 6 to 7 metres away to the left, the fourth stump is where the bowler bowls from – about 6 metres in front of the wicket.

- The bowler must bowl the ball underarm and full toss. If the batter hits the ball they must run, regardless of where the ball has gone, running around the stump to the left and back to score one run.

- The bowler bowls as soon as s/he has the ball back. The person batting is out if it goes through the wicket, or the ball is caught, or if it is hit twice.

- Any age can play and if the teams are small everyone can field and take turns to bat.

Musical games

Musical games are especially suitable for indoors during bad weather. For these games you need good contemporary music for the children to move around to. When the music stops they have to do something, the last one to do so is out.

Musical bumps

When the music stops the children sit down.

Musical statues

When the music stops the children have to freeze and stay still; if they move they are out.

Musical chairs

Set out a row of chairs facing alternate ways, one less than the total number of children playing. The children move around and have to sit down when the music stops. Take a chair away each time, until one child is left.

Musical mats

You will need: non-slip play mats.

Spread the mats around the floor, one less than the number of children. When the music stops, the children have to stand on a mat, the child without a mat is out. Take a mat away each time.

Musical stations

You need about five or six leaders standing around the room; when the music plays you tell them a number. When the music stops the children gather around the leaders who can only have the number of children you have told them, the rest have to go to another station. Any surplus children are out. Each time give the leaders a different number.

Hall or outdoor games

Traffic lights

The children move around the hall doing different things according to the colour you call out:

RED means stop, GREEN means run, AMBER means walk. If you call TRAFFIC LIGHTS the children line up in front of you and the last to arrive is out.

Beans

The children move around the hall doing different things according to the title of the bean you call out:

JUMPING beans means jump,

RUNNER beans means run,

DWARF beans means make yourself small and move close to the floor,

BROAD beans means make yourself wide and move like a giant,

FROZEN beans means stand still.

FRENCH beans means go around holding hands together in front of you saying, 'un, deux, trois'.

CHILLI beans means moving around as fast as you can, pretending to be really cold.

If you call BAKED BEANS the children have to sit down, and the last to do so is out.

Fruit and veg

Line the children up in the middle of the room. Name one side of the room 'fruit', one side 'vegetable'. Call out different fruit and vegetables and the children run to whichever side of the room is appropriate, the last there being out.

Airports

You will need: 10 cards around the room each showing the name of an airport.

■ The children move around the room and when you call out the name of one of the airports the children have to line up at that airport.

■ The last to arrive is out. You can make up a story as you go, bringing in the different places.

Cops and robbers

■ Select a cop and robber from the children and the rest form lines and hold hands, these are the streets and alleyways. The cop chases the robbers up and down the streets. Every so often the leader calls CHANGE at which point the street players make a quarter turn and

hold hands again, changing the direction of the streets. The two chasing each other are not allowed to break through the lines and have to adjust to running in different directions. When the robber is caught two more volunteers become the cop and the robber.

Ladders

■ Divide into two teams.

■ Ask each team to sit in a line, opposite a member of the other team. You need about one metre between the lines.

■ The children should put their legs straight out in front of them, touching feet with a person opposite.

■ Give each child a number down each line. When you call a number those children have to race each other down the centre, around the outside of the ladder, back down the middle to their own place.

■ Establish which direction to run first and tell the children to jump over the legs and not on them!!

■ The first person back scores a point. Repeat until all have had a go. This can be done as a relay with the pair at one end starting and when sitting back down the next pair runs and so on.

If you have a large group, set out two ladders, or more, according to the space available.





Praise party

Jane Whitcombe offers a Praise party outline

Introduction

The key to an exciting party is to ensure that the children feel completely satisfied when they leave, instead of feeling that there wasn't enough to do at the party! Success doesn't necessarily lie in overwhelming the children with oodles of options, but in keeping things moving quickly from one activity to the next. This is a simple guide for planning a memorable party that your children will want to attend year after year – a couple of hours is an ideal time span. This outline provides a suggestion for the organisation of your session.

What you need

- A room the children can feel comfortable in
- Lively music (*CD is fine*)
- Equipment for any games
- Craft resources
- Food serving area (*and anti-bacterial cleanser for surfaces and hands*) and food
- Advertising – ensure that posters are well displayed and target your clientele where they are. Some schools are happy to send out flyers or put a note in the newsletter. If you don't tell children about it, they won't be there!

The team

Choose your team – for success, and avoidance of unnecessary stress, be sure to have plenty of helpers, and allow plenty of time for setting up and packing away! Roles include

- Registration co-ordinator
- Welcomer
- Leader
- Games leader
- Craft leader
- Time keeper
- Food team
- First aider

Content

Theme: could be seasonal, topical or just something you want to celebrate, but you may find it easier to start with a Bible passage rather than choosing a theme and trying to find a biblical reference to fit it.

Music: choose carefully – a mixture of good Christian songs and choruses and perhaps an instrumental piece for a quieter time.

Story: this provides a 'down time'. Decide how you're going to incorporate a time of prayer.

Age: decide on the age group you want to attract.

Food: it's a good idea to make the food fit the theme (sandwiches for a beach theme for example). It's easy to cut food using shaped cutters.

Welcome

Appoint someone on the door to register children and someone to welcome them and help them feel at ease. As the children are arriving, provide plenty of things for them to get involved in immediately. These activities can vary greatly – board games, indoor games, a scavenger hunt, a quiz, colouring or activity sheets. The games should all be ones that can be played either individually or with just a few people, and can easily be stopped or started. Be sure to set the tone for the event by playing contemporary Christian children's music in the background.

Once everyone has arrived, do a brief, upbeat, fun introduction and welcome. You may wish to include a PowerPoint™ presentation featuring the name of the event, fun graphics, and music. Or, opening with some comedy props or illusions always adds to the level of excitement! When you have their attention, immediately give instructions and guidelines for the party.

Warm up

Begin the first activity. Remember, the children are just starting the party and might be a bit shy, so provide an activity that involves a lot of movement. If you're in a large room, group games are a good choice here. Or you could try some praise aerobics to an upbeat song. Invite the children to shout out words of praise, wave their hands in the air and do aerobic exercises.

All together

Large group games might include parachute games, team activities or some of the games suggested in ROOTS that you have not had time to do in previous weeks.

Crafts

After the large group games, move into small group activities. Divide the children into smaller groups to do crafts and activities that are adapted to the theme you have chosen. Children can move on to the next activity at a given time or, alternatively, just move on as they finish what they're doing. Once you know your theme you can find lots of

craft ideas in back copies of ROOTS or on the ROOTS website [www](#).

Back together

At the end of the craft time, gather the children together for a lively time of games before washing hands and settling down for food. You can try lots of games and you will have your own favourites. You might like to play games that the group has enjoyed over the previous year.

Food

The simplest way of serving food is by providing a selection for each child in a food bag, party bag or box; this will enable everyone to eat together without having to get up to collect more. (Be aware of allergies.) At the end produce the dessert, bringing out a large cake or the world's largest sundae!

As the children are finishing eating, make available some activities that they can do in small groups, or you could tell a story at this point too. Don't make an issue of some children taking longer to eat than others, just have something ready to engage them as they finish. Once everyone is involved in an activity, allow things to settle for a few minutes. Then offer something like a story or short film clip.

Prayer

As this is a praise party you will need to tie up the readings, activities and music with a time of prayer. Why not invite the children to think of their own ways of creating praise prayers?

Finale

After the story and a few minutes of reflection and prayer, end with a bang up, exhilarating group game or dance time.

As parents begin to arrive, allow the children to return to activities similar to those they were doing when they arrived. If you're sending a treat home, give it to them as they are on their way out of the door. Nominate someone to prepare drinks for the leaders during this final time. As soon as all the children have left you can all sit down and relax together as you reflect on what you'll do differently next time!

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