

Just-For-Fun Activities

The following are activities that you can incorporate into your free play time. While the activities, themselves, are just-for-fun, you can make them rich times of relationship building, and even use it as an opportunity to discuss what is being taught during Circle Time. Don't over do it, but you can use the Hide 'n' Seek Kids Discussion Sheet for question ideas.

Gluing and Sticking

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

Teacher cuts out or draws a basic shape or shapes related to concept or story on cardstock or construction paper for children to stick stickers on or glue fabric or paper scraps (tissue, Gift wrap paper, construction paper, etc), beans, popcorn, buttons, cotton balls, foam shapes etc. onto. Use glue sticks rather than craft glue for these crafts. Cut fabric/paper scraps fairly large—about 1" or so.

Print-Making

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

Children will make designs on a plain piece of construction paper or one with a simple shape drawn on it, using tempera paint (with a little dish soap added to it to make clean up easier) and any number of objects. Objects suggested in this curriculum: marbles, duplos, sponge shapes, empty thread spools, blocks with rick-rack glue-gunned to the bottom of them, cars and trucks, bubble wrap and cork.

Necklaces

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

These are made with hollow pasta shapes and hole-punched shapes related to the story/concept. Children can string these onto a piece of yarn or string and have you tie the ends together when they are done.

Coloring (Really Scribbling)

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

Children will use crayons or washable markers to draw on construction paper. If desired, the teacher can draw a picture or shapes related to the story on the paper for children to scribble on.

Puzzles

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

A simple picture related to the story or concept is printed out onto cardstock and cut into a puzzle of 4 to 10 pieces. This can be done by enlarging one or a number of the people/objects from the story, in a Word, Power point or other program to the desired size, then printing out onto cardstock. Children can "color" in the picture, then you can cut it out for them into as many pieces as is fitting for the child.

Craft Dough

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

Provide purchased or homemade play dough (recipe provided) along with various “tools” such as plastic knives (without teeth), small jar lids, keys, garlic presses, little rolling pins, plastic cookie cutters, etc.

Homemade Play Dough Recipe

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
4 tsp cream of tartar
2 tbsp oil
2 cups water

Combine the flour, salt and cream of tartar. Mix well. In a large pot, combine the oil and the water. Add food coloring, if desired. Add flour mixture to the pot, stirring as you add. Heat mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly. Continue to stir until mixture forms ball and pulls away from the sides of the pot. Remove ball and knead on plain surface (not floured) until the texture becomes like play dough. Store dough in an airtight plastic container. Keeps about 3 months. Makes about 5 cups. Allow at least a ½ cup per child.

Sandpaper Shapes and Patterns

Just for Fun Arts and Crafts

Directions

Use a glue gun to glue full 8 ½” by 11” sheets of sandpaper to foamboard or sturdy cardboard cut the same size. Give the children yarn pieces of various lengths, 4” to 12” long. Let them stick the yarn onto the sandpaper and make designs and pictures with them.

Dance Ribbons

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

3 4’ ribbons per child
1 plastic shower curtain ring per child
CD player
CD of music

Preparing the Activity

1. Tie three 4’ ribbons to a plastic shower curtain ring.

Directions

1. Give them to the children to run around with. Have music for them to dance to as they twirl their ribbons. If desired, you could have them sing the Big Question/Bible verse song.

Match the Shape with Objects

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

Common objects such as keys, cookie cutters, spoons, unsharpened pencils, etc.

Cardstock

Permanent marker

Shoe box

Preparing the Activity

1. Trace around common objects such as keys, cookie cutters, spoons, unsharpened pencils, etc., each on a separate piece of cardstock.

2. Put these and the objects in a shoe box.

Directions

Have the children take out the cardstock outlines and the shapes and match them up.

Match the Shape with Blocks

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

Shoe box

Different shape blocks

Duct tape

Preparing the Game

1. Cut the outline of different blocks from a child's building block set in the top of a sturdy shoe box.

2. Use duct tape to tape down one long side, making a hinge for the lid.

Directions

1. Have the children put the right shape block into the box through the hole of the same shape.

Ball 'n' Tube

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

Have the children match the block shapes and insert them into the shoe box.

Materials

4-6' length of PVC pipe with a 2"-3" diameter opening, found very inexpensively at home improvement stores

Various sizes of balls that will fit through the diameter of the PVC pipe

Playing the Game

1. Have the children take turns putting the ball down one end and watching it roll out the other.

Bowling

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

6 or so empty 2-liter soda bottles
A soft, foam ball
Optional: sand or beans, packing/duct tape

Preparing the Game

If desired, put sand or beans in all/some of the bottles. Seal with tape.

Directions

Line up empty 2 liter soda bottles and have the children try to knock them down by rolling a ball into them.

Color Sort

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

Various single colored objects, such as pom-poms, foam shapes, beads, etc. (Be careful to choose objects of a non-swallowable size)
1 Large container that fits all the objects in it at once
Smaller containers, one per color
Construction paper or markers

Preparing the Activity

1. Put all the objects in the large container. Mix up.
2. Put a piece of construction paper/paper colored with marker on the outside of each of the small containers that matches the color object to go in it.

Directions

Have the children separate out all the colored items into their proper container.

Pattern Post Office

Just for Fun Games

Supplies

Various scraps of Gift wrap paper or other colorful paper
Glue stick
Cardstock or cereal box
Shoe Box

Preparing the Activity

1. Cut out envelope-sized pieces of Gift wrap paper (or scrap booking paper) and glue them onto cardstock of the same size.
2. Have a shoe box with a letter slit cut in the top for each of the different paper types.
3. Glue a piece of the designated Gift wrap paper for each particular box on top of the box.

Directions

Have the children sort through the "mail" and put them in their right mail slot.

More Ideas for Activity Centers

Dress-up Clothes
Hats and Crowns
Simple Wooden Puzzles
Duplos
Blocks and Cardboard bricks
Peg Sets*
Magnet Sets (especially "Tall Stacks")*
(Large) Beads and Threading Laces
Small plastic people, animals, and vehicles*
Lacing cards
Housekeeping sets
Doctor's and nurse's sets
Tool sets
Simple Matching games
Dolls
Train sets
Sand or Rice Center with containers
Magnifying glasses and objects*
Shape and Color Sorters
Ring Stackers
Pull toys
Hammer and Peg sets
Tap a Tune pianos
Balls, everything from nerf balls to beach balls*

Great Idea Books

for homemade activity centers

The Wiggle & Giggle Busy Book: 365 Fun, Physical Activities for Your Toddler and Preschooler, Trish Kuffner and Megan McGinnis
The Toddler's Busy Book, Trish Kuffner
Arts and Crafts Busy Book
The First Three Years of Life, Burton L. White
Creative Resources for Infants and Toddlers, Judy Herr and Terri Swim

Websites

Just for Fun Games for ordering activity centers activities and materials

christianbook.com
amazon.com
toysrus.com
growingtreetoys.com
orientaltrading.com