



Playtime
for toddler group leaders

Running your toddler Harvest event

Before the event

Advertise your event widely. A poster template has been provided into which you can add details of venue, date, time etc. Running it on a Saturday may allow the whole family to attend, or you might want to run it during your normal group time.

Decide what crafts and activities you want to provide. Try to get extra help (if someone else tells the story you can more easily chat to people). Some people may be willing to get involved by preparing craft activities or serving refreshments.

Setting up

Try to set your room out differently to create a 'special' space at the front where the group can come and sit facing the screen with their backs to the rest of the room – this will also give the leaders a chance to hide items for a Harvest Treasure Hunt.

Alternatively you may be able to go somewhere different, perhaps a church worship area, to make it seem more special for the children.

Whether you do the craft before or after the talk will depend on your own group circumstances.

Welcome

Once everyone has gathered at the front, welcome them.

You could start with a prayer to make use of the fact that they are likely to be quiet and a little in awe of being somewhere special.

You could also start off with a simple action song, like 'Who made the twinkling stars' sung softly as you need to keep them calm until after the talk.

Keep the welcome quiet and not too long.

Harvest talk

This talk is designed to communicate one truth about harvest in a very visual way. The theme is... 'All good things come from God'.

Aim for around two to three minutes as it will almost certainly take longer. Vary your voice and try to draw the children into the story with questions wherever you can.

A suggested script has been provided, together with simple pictures that tell the story. These can be printed and mounted on card, or

downloaded as a screen presentation. If you wish to use props, you'll need a large chocolate chip cookie and a teddy in a carrier bag. You could also have various grocery items to hand, including fruit and vegetables.

Instead of the final prayer you could use the song 'Thank you Lord for this fine day' and ask the children for suggestions for additional verses e.g. 'Thank you Lord for mums and dads... food we eat... clothes we wear'.

End with a couple of songs with actions and musical instruments to make it as noisy as possible. Try 'Jingle Jangle Scarecrow', 'Oats, peas, beans and barley grow' or '10 red apples hanging on a tree'.

Harvest snack-time In addition to your normal squash and biscuits you could have a 'tasting session' with as many different fruit and vegetables as possible. Label each dish clearly and keep one whole or display photographs so that the children can see what it looked like before it was cut up.

Harvest Treasure Hunt Invite the children to go and hunt for harvest items. These could be small chocolates, or grocery items including fruit and vegetables which the children can then exchange for a prize. Make sure that there are enough for each child to have one and keep a few in reserve, just in case someone fails to find one. Once all the items have been collected, thank them for coming and give them a colouring picture to take home. Remind them to take their craft home too!