

Ideas for Summer Sunday School Activities and Projects

by Sarah B. Odhner

Many congregations opt to do something different with Sunday School in the summertime. Here are a variety of activities and project ideas that you may want to try.

Show Movies

Look for Bible movies, movies with moral dilemmas or movies that demonstrate virtues. Preview to make sure contents are appropriate for all viewers. Movies using Biblical texts as scripts provide the most accurate depictions of Bible stories.

Play Bible Games

A wide variety of Bible games are available. Look for games that:

- **Suit the ages** of your children. Some games have versions for older and younger children. Use simultaneously for a wide age range.
- **Work for a group your size.** In larger groups waiting quickly leads to boredom and negativity. Look for games that keep everyone involved and having fun.
- **Have cooperative goals** and are not designed for one child's success.

Play games ahead of time to be sure the background knowledge required is a good fit for your group.

Play Group Games

Adapt well-known children's games to review stories children have learned in Sunday School.

- **Charades** Use stories, places or people from the Bible for children to guess.
- **Guess Who?** (Come si Come) The leader (teacher or student) says "Come si Come," signaling that they have thought of a person, preferably a character from the Word. The class says, "Who do you come by?" The class then guesses who the leader has in mind. The leader says only yes or no so questions need to be phrased for this to work, *i.e.* "Is this person a woman?" rather than "Is this a man or a woman?"
- **Hangman** Use names of people in the Word to play this game. The leader writes dashes on the board or piece of paper—each dash representing the letter of a name. When a letter is correctly guessed, the letter is written on the dash where it belongs. When an incorrect guess is made, a piece of a hangman's noose and person is drawn instead.

- **Pictionary or Play It with Clay** Use the game boards in your closet and make up your own clues to review people or events from the Bible. A student in the group who knows the character or story draws or models it from clay. Others to who or what it is within a limited time frame.

Many websites offer great interactive games.

Summer-long Projects

Plan a project large enough to be worked on over the summer. Once the project is planned it can continue weekly with little preparation.

- **Service Projects** Rehab nursery space or toys, maintain gardens, spruce up playground space. Go further afield and contribute to the broader community.
- **Make Movies!** Older children and teens may enjoy acting and film Bible stories or skits illustrating virtues, *etc.* Post to an online video sharing network and share on your website.
- **Create a Power Point Presentation** Choose online pictures to illustrate a Bible story or a spiritual or moral message. Add text. Compile each child's slide into a presentation. Choose music to play as the entire presentation is shown.
- **Decorate the Sunday School Space** Involve teens and older children in creating a fresh look for the coming year. Use themes from the Word, *e.g.* prophets, disciples, tribes, Noah's ark, and paint or decorate chairs, tables and walls.
- **Banners** Choose a theme *e.g.* parables, miracles (prophets or Jesus), disciples, 12 tribes of Israel, patriarchs, days of creation, Daniel, Moses, *etc.* Decide whether the banner will be for temporary or permanent display and choose materials accordingly. Suggested materials: 1) cardboard, paper, markers, pencils and paints. 2) colored felt scraps, other fabrics, yarns, buttons. 3) a combination of felt, paper and markers. 4) corduroy, velvet, wool, gold lame and other special materials.
- **Mosaics** require lots of project time. Create one large mosaic, *e.g.* the woman clothed with the sun, or a series of smaller ones, *e.g.* each of the 10 Commandments or each phrase of the Lord's Prayer. Possible materials include 1) a generous supply of old magazines with pictures to cut up (a paper cutter will speed this up) 2) colored paper (construction paper fades quickly) 3) occasional pieces of shiny paper for special effects (*e.g.* moon or sun) 4) commercial mosaic making products.
- **Decorate an Altar Cloth** Purchase a commercial tablecloth. Choose a simple border design, *e.g.* a grapevine, and turn the tablecloth into an altar cover for a children's altar. Artistically challenged? Look for pictures to use as design guides. Young children's coloring books tend to have simple designs.