

Book 1



BibleBuds

An early years resource bringing
friendship with God into blossom

Autumn Term

Anna Martin





BOOK 1

AUTUMN TERM



Bible Buds - Book 1

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Good News

Each story will address Bertie and Betsy's misconception, as well as linking to a 'secular' theme and a 'faith' theme. The secular theme will be a calendar event happening around the same time as the session. For example, on November 5th, the secular theme is bonfire night and the faith theme is all about Moses and the burning bush! Each theme will also have a related application – something children (and adults) can remember and apply to their own lives. For the above example, the secular application is that we can be brave when listening to loud, scary fireworks, and we can let others help us to stay safe around bonfires and fireworks. The faith application is that just like Moses, God is with us when we have to do big, brave things, such as learning how to walk or starting nursery or school. Our hope and prayer is that God will be helping each person to blossom in life and in their relationship with God through these applications. Below is a summary of all the themes for the whole year...

Session	Secular theme	Faith Theme & Session Title
<i>Social 1</i>	<i>Start of Term Social</i>	<i>No programme</i>
1.	Welcome back after the Summer Break	Creation (Genesis 1-2) 'Let's say hello'
2.	Autumn	Noah's Ark (Genesis 6-9) 'Let's splash in the rain'
3.	Grandparents' Day	Abraham, Sarah & Family (Genesis 1, 18, 21 & 25) 'Let's shout hooray for grandparents'
4.	National Pyjama Week	Jacob's Dream (Genesis 28) 'Let's go to sleep'
5.	Conflict Resolution Day	Jacob & Esau (Genesis 27, 32-33) 'Let's make peace with each other'
6.	All Saints' Day	Joseph & his Brothers (Genesis 37-41) 'Let's celebrate light'
7.	Bonfire Night	Moses and the Burning Bush (Exodus 3) 'Let's have help being brave'
8.	Children in Need	King Josiah (2 Kings 22) 'Let's be helpful children who do what's right'
9.	Thanksgiving Day	Elizabeth and Zechariah (Luke 1) 'Let's remember to say thank you'
10.	Advent	God's Friends Hear the Good News (Isaiah 9, Matthew 1 & Luke 1) 'Let's listen to good news'
11.	St Lucy's Day	The Journey to Bethlehem (Luke 2, Matthew 2) 'Let's go on a journey'
12.	Christmas Day	The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2, Matthew 2) 'Let's celebrate Christmas'

<i>Social 2</i>	<i>End of Term</i>	<i>No Programme</i>
Christmas		
<i>Social 3</i>	<i>Start of term social</i>	<i>No Programme</i>
13.	New Year's Day	Jesus' Baptism (Matthew 3) 'Let's go on an adventure'
14.	Winter	Jesus Calmed the Storm (Matthew 8) 'Let's keep safe and protected'
15.	Burns Night	Jesus at the Wedding Party (John 2 & Mark 14:26) 'Let's sing and party'
16.	Pancake Day & Lent	Jesus Gave up Food (Matthew 4) 'Let's treasure feasting and fasting'
17.	Valentine's Day	Jesus Loved Everyone (Matthew 8 & 19) 'Let's love each other'
18.	Random Acts of Kindness Day	Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19) 'Let's be kind'
19.	World Book Day and World Poetry Day	Jesus Loved Telling Stories (Luke 15) 'Let's enjoy stories'
20.	Mother's Day	Jesus Healed a Mother (Luke 4) 'Let's shout 'hooray' for mummies'
21.	Red Nose Day/ Sport Relief	Jesus Washed His Friends' Feet (John 13) 'Let's put others first'
22.	Spring and Easter	Jesus has a New Life (John 19-20) 'Let's enjoy new life'
<i>Social 4</i>	<i>End of Term Social</i>	<i>No programme</i>
Easter		
<i>Social 5</i>	<i>Start of Term Social</i>	<i>No programme</i>
23.	Earth Day	Jesus' Final Command (Matthew 28) 'Let's love our world'
24.	International Space Day	Jesus' Ascension (Luke 24 & Acts 1) 'Let's lift up our eyes'
25.	May Day Party and Bank Holiday	Pentecost (Acts 2) 'Let's party together'
26.	International Family Day	Early Church Life (Acts 2 & 3) 'Let's be a family'
27.	Africa Day	Philip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8) 'Let's be different together'



28.	European Neighbours' Day	Paul's Conversion & Welcome (Acts 9) 'Let's be friendly neighbours'
29.	The Queen's Official Birthday	King Jesus & His Kingdom (1 Peter 2) 'Let's be royal children'
30.	Father's Day	Paul, Timothy and our Heavenly Father (Acts 16, Galatians 4) 'Let's shout 'hooray' for daddies'
31.	The Big Toddle	Run the Race (Hebrews 12) 'Let's keep going'
32.	Summer	The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5) 'Let's enjoy summer fruits'
33.	Summer Holiday Season	A Growing Family – as many as the grains of sand (Genesis 22, Psalm 139, Romans 11 & Hebrews 11) 'Let's go to the seaside'
34.	Friendship Day	Heaven & Friendship with God (Revelation 22) 'Let's stay friends'
<i>Social 6</i>	<i>End of Term Social</i>	<i>No programme</i>

NB: Please note that due to some dates changing year to year, the date of the calendar event may not be in the exact week as the session.

» The Big Picture

Bible Buds sessions are written in 5 or 6-week blocks. We are aware that many groups run for longer, but the reason for shorter blocks is to give you flexibility to have socials, parties or trips. Or it might be that you use the first week back to have a drop in, where families can enjoy catching up and playing or making new friends without the pressure of engaging in a programme (handy if you have low attendance in the first week back). Be imaginative with the extra weeks and use them to build relationships, share love and declare love to families.

» Bible Buds Interaction

In each session, we have provided a *short* and *long* interactive Bible story, for groups to use depending on how much time they have, as well as *story prompt sheets* and *PowerPoint slides* to help you! Interaction is a great way to keep children engaged in the story, so whenever you see the *Story Sack Moment* logo appear, you can use a story sack filled with different props to aid the story. Each session's script has a props list, which includes specific Bible Buds posters you can print off. These items will have '[BB prop]' written after them.



NB: All 'BB props', *story prompt sheets*, *PowerPoint slides* and *Bible Buds songs* can be downloaded from www.biblebuds.co.uk



SESSION 1 THEME: LET'S SAY HELLO

Faith Theme: God's Creation (Genesis 1–2)

- * God created the world and welcomed into it the first humans, Adam and Eve.
- * God spent time with Adam and Eve in His special garden, because He created us to be friends with Him.
- * Thank you, God, for creating us and welcoming us.

Secular Theme: The Start of Term (September)

- * Explore how we can say hello after the summer break, welcoming old and new friends.
- * Enjoy greeting each other, spending time together and getting to know each other.

----- Conversation starters for the grown-ups! -----

- » **Testimony:** The team could share a testimony of how God welcomed them to be His friend and how this felt. Perhaps the Church family welcomed them too? Or perhaps team members have examples of when they've spent time with God and have enjoyed His company where otherwise they might have felt lonely.
- » **Questions:** As there might be new attendees at the beginning of term, spend time getting to know each other, e.g., What's your name? Where do you live? What do you normally get up to each week? You could even have a few 'ice breaker' questions to help get to know each other and create conversations, e.g., If you were God and could create anything, what would it be? If you could put any adjective in front of your name to describe you, what would it be and why? What's the most interesting fact about you?
- » **Chat:** For those parents/carers and children who are regulars, encourage them to spend time catching up with each other as well as any new attendees, asking what they've done over the summer holidays.
- » **Activity:** There are lots of practical ways you can make new attendees feel welcome at your group. Encourage the team to be super welcoming – first impressions count! You could also ask everyone to wear name badges, to help learn each other's names. You may already take contact details in an official capacity, but you could also encourage



team members who are parents/carers to keep in touch with new families in an informal way, too, e.g., on social media. You might not want to seem too pushy, but a lot of people need someone else to make the first move and are too shy to be proactive! If in doubt, why not ask new attendees if there is anything else that would help them feel welcome?! Basically, welcome the socks off your group!

CRAFT IDEAS



1. A WARM WELCOME

You will need:

- ✓ Lining paper
- ✓ Different-coloured paint
- ✓ Paint pots
- ✓ Pots of water
- ✓ Paintbrushes
- ✓ Paint rollers
- ✓ Paint scrapers
- ✓ Glitter



1. On a large sheet of paper write the word 'Welcome'. If you have different nationalities represented, encourage parents/carers to write down 'welcome' in their language.
2. Then let children get their creative juices flowing, and go crazy decorating the banner with paint! Children could use paintbrushes, rollers, scrapers and even add glitter to create exciting patterns!
3. Children could also paint a picture of themselves on the banner to welcome new friends (and parents/carers could write their name underneath).
4. Once the banner is dry, hang it up so that everyone feels welcome next time they come!

NB: *If you have a large group, you could make individual banners rather than one big banner.*



Craft Chats

- * Say hello to each other and say what each other's names are.
 - * Chat about how good it is to welcome each other. Chat about how we can do that, e.g., wave hello, smile, hug, talk to each other, play together, etc.
 - * As children paint pictures of themselves, they could chat about their features and how they have all been created differently.
 - * Explain that God created us all, and welcomes us to be friends with Him, which we'll find out more about in the Bible Buds story later.
-

Interaction for babies:

1. Parents/carers can help their baby decorate the banner.
2. Instead of painting a picture of themselves, babies could do a handprint (or parents/carers/older sibling could paint a picture of them).
3. Team members and parents/carers could take the opportunity to give their baby a great big, welcoming hug and tell them that they are a beautiful creation!



Hiya Daddy God! Thank you for our toddler group. Please help us to be welcoming. Amen!



PLAY IDEAS

NB: Throughout this session, emphasise the theme of welcome and saying 'hello' by encouraging children (and parents/carers) to buddy up with new children (and parents/carers). They can play together, eat snacks together, sit together for the story, etc.



1. GARDEN GREETINGS

You will need:

- ✓ Slide/hanging decorations/bubble machine
- ✓ Cuddly toy animals
- ✓ Balls
- ✓ Sun/moon/stars pictures [BB prop]
- ✓ Toy fruit
- ✓ Garden role-play props, e.g., watering cans, fake flowers, flower pots, inflatable trees, sun loungers/garden chairs, lawn mower/garden spades/brooms, etc.

1. Set up a role-play area full of garden features (using the props mentioned above) and let children have fun playing together in your very own toddler group garden!
2. Remind children to welcome each other into the garden, greeting others by saying hello and giving each other a hug or a high five! You could even have a special entrance children have to go through, to make the welcome even more special, e.g., put a slide, hanging decorations or a bubble machine at the entrance to the role-play garden.
3. Children could spend time together pretending to water the flowers; resting on sun loungers as they look up at the sun, moon or stars shining in the 'sky'; playing 'fetch' with the toy animals; looking after the garden by mowing the grass, digging weeds, sweeping leaves, etc.

NB: If you have access to a real garden, you could take this activity outside for children to water real flowers, relax on sun loungers outside, and do some gardening together!

4. You could even link the role-play to this session's Bible story, e.g., children could eat toy fruit together or play 'hide and seek'!
5. Explain that today's Bible story is all about a special garden God created with lots of fruit, animals and a man and woman, because He wanted to welcome His creation into the world and spend time with them!



Interaction for babies:

1. Let babies explore the different garden features. If they are sitting up now, they could sit near some garden props and reach out for them. If they are crawling, they could move to the props they want to explore (make sure props are age-appropriate).
2. Whilst babies explore, parents/carers could talk to them about what they are exploring, so that babies learn the sound of their parents'/carer's voice, as well as any new words. For example, if babies are looking at flowers, parents/carers could say, 'Aren't they lovely flowers! Look – they are bright red and green!'
3. Parents/carers could sing '**Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,**' by Jane Taylor, with their baby, as they look at the star shapes in the garden.



Hiya Daddy God! Thank you for creating gardens where you welcome us and want to spend time with us. Please help us to welcome our new and old friends and spend time with them too. Amen!

**2. CREATION STATION****You will need:**

- ✓ Dark den/play tent/gazebo/trays/feely box
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Baby/toddler cups
- ✓ Torches
- ✓ Ocean and/or animal sounds on a music device
- ✓ Mirrors
- ✓ Sand
- ✓ Sand timers
- ✓ Rainsticks
- ✓ Hanging star mobiles/play gym
- ✓ Special lights, e.g., disco ball, flashing spiky balls, glow in the dark lights/fairy lights, etc.





SNACK-TIME IDEAS

Choose from: Sharing snacks, star-shaped biscuits/chocolates, breadcrumbs, water, sea-salt crisps, salad leaves, carrot sticks, apples, animal-shaped sweets/chocolate biscuits, snake sweets, jelly babies, teeth/lip sweets, gingerbread men, edible eyes/face stickers, and heart-shaped biscuits/sweets.

- * As this session's theme is all about saying hello and welcoming each other, how about putting out some sharing snacks for children to pass round the group and practise being welcoming to newcomers?
- * Prepare one or two different snacks that introduce the creation story, e.g:
 - ◇ **Light:** Star-shaped biscuits or chocolates
 - ◇ **Land:** Breadcrumbs for sand/earth
 - ◇ **Sea:** Cups of water, sea salt crisps
 - ◇ **Plants, trees, fruit:** Salad leaves, carrot sticks, apples (very topical!)
 - ◇ **Animals:** Animal-shaped sweets/chocolate biscuits (you could include snake sweets!)
 - ◇ **Human creation:** Jelly babies, teeth/lip sweets, gingerbread men
- * For a fun alternative, you could buy edible eyes or face stickers to put on fruit and let children have fun making their very own fruity creations!
- * Last but not least, you could have some heart-shaped biscuits or sweets to remind children how God welcomes us and wants to be our friend, because He loves us!

BIBLE BUDS GATHERING SONG

NB: As children are finishing off other activities, play/sing the Bible Buds song each week to remind them to come and sit down, ready for the Bible Buds story time.



*"Bible Buds... it's time for Bible Buds
So come on over 'coz it's time for fun
It's time for Bible Buds
So everyone get zooming, zooming, zooming over here
Bring your buds and give a big cheer
So come and sit down with a thud
It's time for Bible Buds!"*



NB: During this time, you will need to put the puppets into their buggy (a double buggy would work well, but two single buggies would also work), and the puppeteer should push them around the room! At the end of the song, the puppets need to be at the front again, ready for the story. If you're not using puppets, you will need to get out the Bible Buds story sack and put it at the front, on display for all to see.

Mr Bible:



1. Introduce Mr Bible and explain that the Bible is the most special and precious book in the whole wide world, with loads of stories to help us have the best life ever!
2. Mr Bible/Puppeteer says: "Welcome each other, just like God has welcomed you." (Paraphrased from Romans 15:7, CEB translation)

NB: If you have extra time, you could learn the sign language for this and repeat the verse a couple of times.

3. Explain how the verse links to our theme today and reminds you of a story from Mr Bible.
4. Say goodbye to Mr Bible!



Bible Story: (5 – 10 mins)

Interaction for babies: Parents/carers – can you wave at your baby or help them wave?

Interaction for toddlers: Whenever you hear the word 'HELLO', show how welcoming you are by waving and saying 'HELLO'!

Everyone: Let's practise now... 'HELLO'!

1. This year, we are going on a Bible Buds adventure throughout the whole Bible!
[Bible.]
2. We're starting our adventure right at the beginning of the Bible, at the beginning of time itself!
[Clock.]
3. At the start of time, there was God, and absolutely nothing else!



[Three balls of playdough.]





Post-story Puppets: (5 mins)

1. Fetch our Bible Buds friends Bertie Badger and Betsy Bear.

Interaction for babies: Parents/carers – point to Bertie Badger and Betsy Bear so your baby can wave hello.

Interaction for toddlers: After 3, shout ‘Hello’ to Bertie Badger and Betsy Bear! Ready, 1,2,3... Hello!

2. *[Bertie waves at everyone whilst Betsy stands back.]*
3. Hello, Bertie Badger! You look a lot happier now – what’s happened?
4. *[Bertie Badger whispers to you.]* Oh, that’s great news! Bertie Badger says that he listened to the story, and he’s not feeling shy anymore because God has welcomed Bertie to be friends with Him! That’s great news!
5. *[Bertie whispers to you.]* And now you want to say a proper hello to our new friend, Betsy Bear and give her a really good welcome?! That’s a great idea, Bertie!
6. *[Bertie waves at Betsy. Betsy waves back, moving out from where she was hiding. They inch closer and then give each other a big hug!]*
7. Well done Betsy Bear and Bertie Badger for welcoming each other – I think you two are going to be the best of friends!
8. *[Puppets whisper together and then to you.]* That sounds fun! Bertie and Betsy want to go and spend time playing together in the garden, like God spent time with Adam and Eve in the garden. Off you go, then!
9. *[Puppets race out of the room together!]*

Interaction for babies: Parents/carers – can you help your baby wave goodbye?

Interaction for toddlers: Let’s say and wave ‘Goodbye’ to Bertie Badger and Betsy Bear!

10. Well, Bible Buds, I think it’s time to go home *[or insert here whatever is next in your session]*.



NHS Milestones and Early Learning Goals

This session works towards the following NHS Milestones & ELGs	Craft 1	Craft 2	Craft 3	Play 1	Play 2	Play 3
New babies will enjoy looking at faces and start to recognise their parents. (NHS milestone for 1-4 weeks)			😊		😊	😊
Your baby will begin to smile and respond to the sounds around them. (NHS milestone for 4-6 weeks)		😊	😊	😊	😊	😊
Your baby will start to reach out for objects as their muscles develop. (NHS milestone for 3-5 months)	😊	😊		😊	😊	😊
Your baby will learn to pass things from one hand to the other. (NHS milestone for 6 months)		😊			😊	
Your baby is getting stronger and can now sit without assistance. (NHS milestone for 6-8 months)				😊		
Your baby is learning to become more mobile. (NHS milestone for 6-9 months)				😊		
Your baby can now let go of things or hand an object to someone. (NHS milestone for 9-11 months)		😊				
Your child may start to say words and understand them. (NHS milestone for 12-18 months)			😊	😊	😊	😊
Your child will start kicking and throwing balls. (NHS milestone for 1½-2 years)				😊		
Your child will know a range of single words and talk in short sentences. (NHS milestone for 1½-2 years)				😊	😊	😊
Your child will enjoy painting or scribbling with a crayon, paint or pencils. (NHS milestone for 1½-5 years)	😊	😊				
Your child can draw a recognisable person with a face, and maybe arms and legs. (NHS milestone for 3-4 years)	😊		😊			
Children show good control and co-ordination in large movements. (ELG 04 for Physical development)				😊		😊
Children show good control and co-ordination in small movements. (ELG 04 for Physical development)	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊	😊



SESSION 1 - LET'S SAY HELLO

"Welcome each other, just like God's Son, Jesus, has welcomed you."

(Paraphrased from Romans 15:7, CEB translation)



Hello, welcome to Bible Buds! This year, your toddler group is going on an exciting adventure through the whole Bible, and it's going to be so fun! Every week, you will receive a weekly sheet of ideas linked to the session's Bible story and calendar event for you to do in the comfort of your own home! The ideas are fun, interactive, specially designed for young families and are a great way to remember all the helpful topics covered in your toddler group. So, have a read through Session 1's ideas below, and see what tickles your fancy! Have fun!

As today's session is all about welcoming others and saying hello, why not make a welcome sign for your front door or go to a garden centre and choose a 'welcome' doormat to buy? Then invite someone round to say hello to! Perhaps a new resident on your road, an old friend you haven't seen for ages, or a family from your toddler group that you'd like to spend time with and get to know.

Thank you, God, for our welcoming family!

Today's session showed how God created the world, and welcomed Adam and Eve to spend time with Him in His special garden. Spend time together enjoying the world around you in your garden or on a walk. Have fun looking out for God's creation, e.g., the sun, animals, trees, flowers, sea/rivers/ponds, etc. Then look at each other – God's favourite creation. Say 'hello' and give each other a big hug!

Thank you, God, for all you created, including our special family!

Have fun saying hello and welcoming each other in different ways, as well as anyone who enters your home, e.g., wave, shake hands, hug, give high fives or fist pumps, etc. You could even come up with your very own family greeting!

Thank you, God, for the fun we can have saying hello!

Have fun turning your child's bedroom into a creation scene! You could welcome cuddly toy animals into the room, blow up a yellow balloon to make a big sunshine, lay some blue and yellow fabric/mats/towels down on the floor for the sea and land, put a mirror on display so children can see themselves, add glow-in-the-dark stars to the ceiling and a moon night light to your wall... or any other creative ideas you have! Enjoy welcoming all these creations into your room, especially at bedtime, when children can look up at the stars or use torches to create light. Enjoy a quiet song together, e.g., Twinkle, twinkle little star.

Thank you, God, for creating the world and welcoming us into it!

SESSION 1 - LET'S SAY HELLO

"Welcome each other, just like God's Son, Jesus, has welcomed you."

(Paraphrased from Romans 15:7, CEB translation)



Welcome to Bible Buds! We're so excited about how God's going to help you share and declare His love with non-Christian families at your toddler group. You may feel a bit daunted by this, or perhaps you're raring to go! Either way, the Bible Buds Mission Opportunities are here to help you. Each week, you will receive this sheet, which contains activities related to the session's theme. These activities are intended to help you develop relationships with non-Christians, sharing and declaring God's love in fun, easy ways.

Like we found out in today's session, God created us for relationship, and He loves spending time with us. So, the best way to share and declare God's love with others is by spending time with them, showing love, developing relationships, talking about God, sharing testimonies and hopefully bringing families into friendship with God. This is, after all, Jesus' last command on Earth: "Go and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19)

So, let's go for it this year! Let's embrace the great commission, make the most of our opportunities and start this week as we mean to go on! Be bold and courageous, for God is with you.

As it's the start of term, new families might have attended your toddler group today. This is a great opportunity to share God's love and welcome them. If you haven't done so already, try to exchange contact details, so you can keep in touch and spend time getting to know each other. Be on the lookout this week! You might bump into new families that live nearby. Or you might have older children who go to the same school. Or perhaps you both go to other groups. Use these connections to exchange contact details, and then invite the family over for a cuppa whilst the children play, or invite them to other groups you go to, or even church events – all with the aim of welcoming them and spending time with them.

If you haven't been able to connect with new families yet, why not make a welcoming gift to give a family next week at toddler group? As a family, you could bake a gift, encourage children to paint a welcoming picture or make a card to say hello! You could even add your contact details to a gift tag and attach it to your gift.

As well as practical activities, spend time as a family praying for new families. You could do this in a creative way, e.g., every time you walk through your front door (put up a poster or hang something to the door to remind you) say hello to God and ask God to help you say hello to new families. Or sing a worship song about God's love at bedtime, and ask God to help you show His love to new families. Or write the name of a new family on a star, stick it to a wall and thank God for His creation.

As part of your routine each week, you can have lunch with each other after your session and enjoy hanging out together, sharing God's love!

*Lastly, remember to share and declare God's love through your actions and words.
Be bold, share testimonies, offer to pray and invite families into your church community.
Remember, God can do the impossible!*

QUICK GUIDE: SESSION 1 - LET'S SAY HELLO

Calendar Event: The Start of Term (September)

Goals: Explore God's creation and how He loves welcoming us humans into Friendship. Welcome old and new Friends by saying hello and spending time together.

BIBLE STORY: GENESIS 1-2

1. For today's story, when you hear the word **'HELLO'**, wave and say hello to everyone.
2. This year, we're going on an exciting adventure throughout the whole Bible!
3. Starting right at the beginning of the Bible, and right at the beginning of time, where there was nothing but God.
4. Daddy God, Jesus (Daddy God's Son) and the Holy Spirit. They were one special God.
5. Let's say **'HELLO'** to God!
6. God was full of love, so He created our world.
7. First, He created light, including the sun, moon and stars that light up our sky.
8. Wow! Let's say **'HELLO'** to the light!
9. God's creation was looking good! Next, God created the land and sea, and things to grow in the land, like trees and fruit to eat.
10. Let's say **'HELLO'** to the trees and fruit!
11. Wow! God's creation was looking good! Next God created lots of animals for the sea and land.
12. Let's say **'HELLO'** to the animals!
13. Wow! God's creation was looking good, but He saved the best until last! God created the first man and woman.
14. Let's say **'HELLO'** to each other!
15. God was so happy! He welcomed Adam and Eve to be His friend, and spent time together in a special garden.
16. God welcomes us to be His friend, and we can be welcoming too, saying **'HELLO'** to others.

CRAFT: THE WORLD'S BIGGEST WELCOME



You will need: Large sheet of paper, world template, different coloured jumbo paint pads, glue, green and blue collage material, e.g., bottle lids, tissue paper, scrap fabric, pom poms, etc.

Beforehand, draw a world shape on a large sheet of paper.

1. Children can create the land and water by sticking on green and blue collage materials.
2. Then children make handprints to go around the whole world.
3. Explain how we can say and wave **hello** to welcome others.
4. Display the painting and enjoy the world's biggest welcome!
5. We'll find out about a special welcome in our Bible Buds story

PLAY: PUPPET PALS



You will need: Animal/people hand puppets, puppet theatre.

1. Have a selection of different puppets for children to enjoy.
2. Encourage children to use puppets to welcome others. Wave, say **'hello'**, give a handshake, cuddle or high five!
3. Children could even use a puppet theatre to act out a welcoming story with other puppets and puppeteers.
4. Today's Bible Buds story is about how God said **'hello'** to people.



Daddy God, thank you for all the fun today. Thank you for friends, mummies, daddies and carers. Thank you for welcoming us as your friend. Please help us to say hello to new friends. Amen!



Conversation starters for the grown-ups!

- » **Testimony:** Share a time when you've felt God welcoming you into friendship with Him and you've enjoyed spending time together.
- » **Question:** Get to know each other by asking 'What's your name?', 'Where do you live?' Or for a little fun – 'If you were God and could create/un-create anything, what would it be?'
- » **Chat:** Say '**hello**' to new families, and old friends. Spend time catching up about what you've done over the summer break.
- » **Activity:** Encourage the team to be super welcoming – first impressions count! Think of practical ways to welcome new families, e.g., wear name labels, give out cups of tea and encourage Christian families to exchange contact details so they can hang out during the week.



Today, we found out how God created the world, and welcomed Adam and Eve to spend time with Him in His special garden. Spend time together enjoying the world around you, looking out for God's creation, e.g., the sun, animals, trees, flowers, the sea/rivers/ponds, etc. Then look at each other – God's favourite creation. Say '**hello**' and give each other a big hug!

Make a welcome sign for your front door or go to a garden centre and choose a welcome doormat to buy. Then invite someone round to say '**hello**' to!

Mission Opportunities

The start of term is a great opportunity to share God's love and welcome new families into your group. Exchange contact details, so you can keep in touch and spend time getting to know each other. You might even bump into new families this week in and around your neighbourhood. Say '**hello**' and invite them over for a playdate and a cuppa!

You could even make a welcome gift! Have fun baking a cake or making a card to give a family next week at your group.

And finally, pray as a family for all the new families you meet.

Have an open invite for attendees to do lunch after the session. Remember to share and declare God's love!

PROMPT SHEETS - SESSION 1

Pre-story Puppets:

1. Bertie Badger puppet enters, looking shy/hiding.
2. Bertie's shy because it's his first time at toddler group. [Interaction: Wave and say 'hello' to welcome Bertie.]
3. Bertie waves to everyone and whispers 'hello'.
4. Introduce another new friend – Betsy enters looking shy.
5. Bertie doesn't wave or say hello to Betsy, and they both hide away.
6. Link to Bible Buddies in your Buggies/Bible story about God's welcome.
7. 🎵 Song: 'Bible Buddies in their Buggies'

Mr Bible:

1. Mr Bible – special book, stories to help us.
2. "Welcome each other, just like God's Son, Jesus, has welcomed you."
3. Link to story.

Post-story Puppets:

1. Bertie waves whilst Betsy stands back.
2. Bertie's happier now – not feeling shy because God welcomed Bertie to be friends.
3. Bertie wants to welcome/say 'hello' to Betsy.
4. Puppets wave at each other, then have a hug.
5. Bertie and Betsy want to spend time in the garden together, like Adam, Eve and God did in the story.
6. Puppets exit as children wave/say goodbye.

Bible Story:

1. 'HELLO' – Wave and say hello.
 2. This year - Bible Buds adventure throughout Bible. [Story Sack: Bible.]
 3. Start at beginning. [Story Sack: Clock.]
 4. Beginning – God and nothing else. [Story Sack: 3 balls of playdough.]
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