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REVISED EDITION

# Little Lambs

An Evangelistic Program for Twos and Threes



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**An Evangelistic Program for Twos and Threes**



Faith Alive Christian Resources  
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560

## Acknowledgments

Faith Alive Christian Resources is grateful to Diane Dykgraaf for contributing substantially to this revised edition of *Little Lambs*. As a small group regional representative for Christian Reformed Home Missions, an agency of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, Diane provides training for Story Hour and Little Lambs program directors and leaders. She has served as leader or codirector of a Little Lambs program at Kelloggsville Christian Reformed Church, Kentwood, Michigan, for over twenty years. Diane has written *Little Ones Need Jesus* and co-authored the revised edition of *Story Hour*; Year One and Year Two, all published by CRC Publications.

We also express appreciation to Diane Metzler, a veteran Little Lambs leader from Alto, Michigan, for critiquing the revised material and giving valuable input during the revision process and to Diana Klungel, Home Missions Small Group Program Director, for her administrative support and encouragement.

We thank all those who have laid the foundation for the Little Lambs program. We especially acknowledge Sheri Triezenberg-Ippel and Susan VerWys who developed the model for the program and authored the first edition, as well as Jacque Bolt, Diane Dykgraaf, Betty Veldman Wieland, and Don McCrory for their review and support for the first edition.

Illustrated by Mike Cressy

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[editors@faithaliveresources.org](mailto:editors@faithaliveresources.org).

ISBN 1-56212-988-0

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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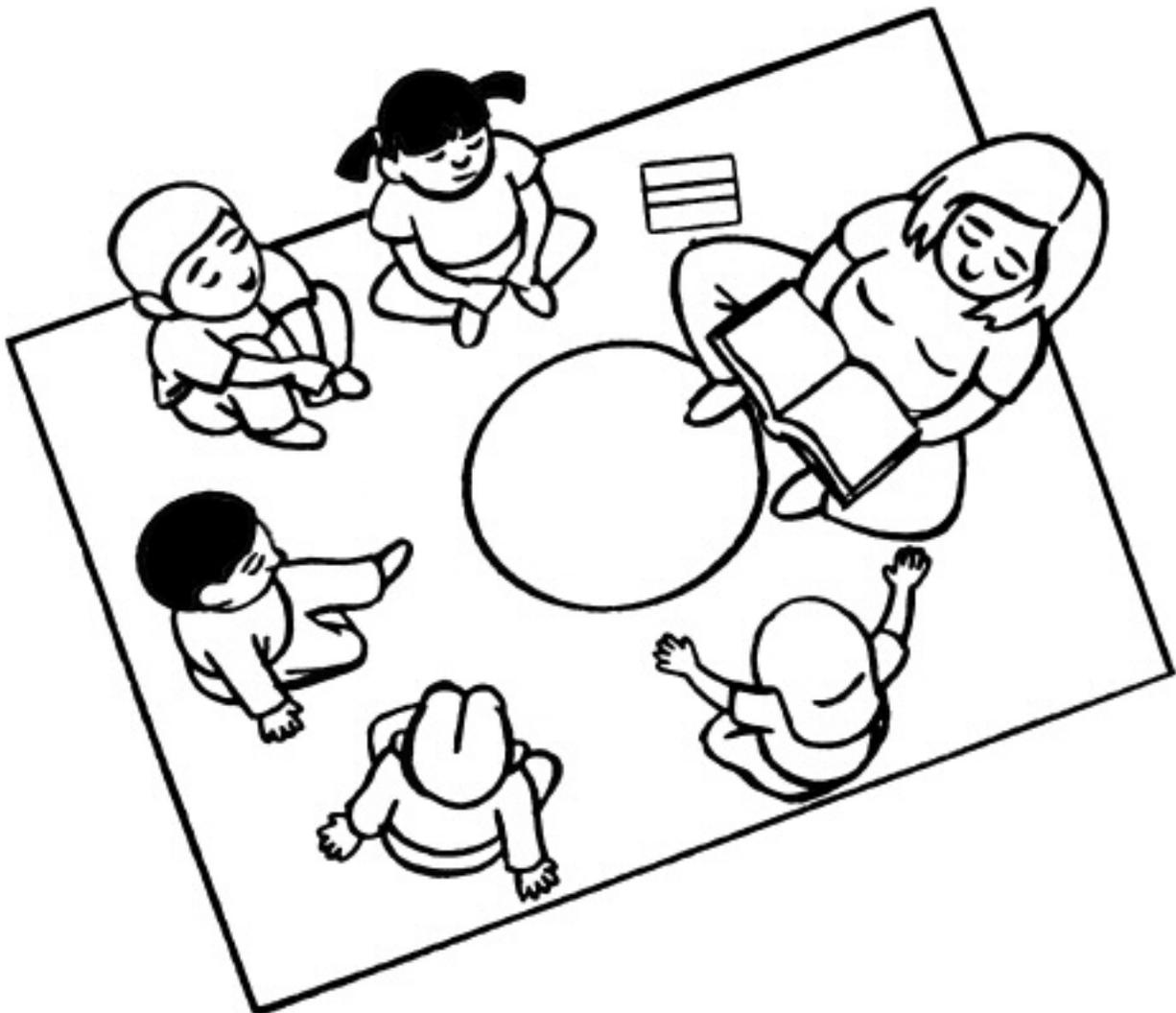
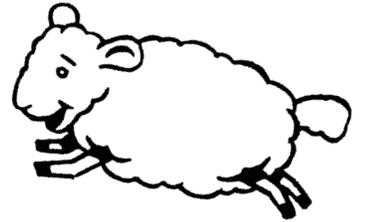
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# Introduction to Little Lambs

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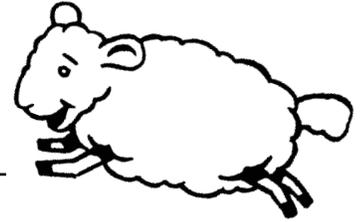


“Let the children come to me. Don’t keep them away.  
God’s kingdom belongs to people like them.”

—Mark 10:14, NIV

# What Is Little Lambs?

---



Little Lambs is an evangelistic program for twos and threes. Its main purpose is to introduce young children to the Bible stories about God and his Son, Jesus. It is our hope that each child will experience God's love in Jesus and begin to respond to that love as the Holy Spirit plants seeds in each heart.

Little Lambs (and Story Hour, a companion program for preschool and kindergarten children) was developed to complement Coffee Break, an evangelistic Bible study program for women. It can also be used as an independent program in a variety of settings, including children's worship programs, Sunday school, and Christian daycare centers.

## Program Materials

Little Lambs program materials, divided into six units as outlined below, are intended to span a period of *one* year. Each *unit* is divided into one or two mini-units or *themes* (see table of contents, pp. 5-7).

- Unit 1: God's World (creation stories from the book of Genesis)
- Unit 2: God's People (stories about Old Testament Bible characters)
- Unit 3: Jesus, God's Son (stories about Christmas and Jesus' early work)
- Unit 4: Jesus' Work (parables and miracles from the New Testament)
- Unit 5: Jesus' Love (Palm Sunday, Good Friday/Easter, and Ascension stories)
- Unit 6: Jesus' Helpers (stories about Peter and Paul from the book of Acts)



If you offer a two-year program, we recommend that you repeat the same sequence of units both years. Twos and threes thrive on repetition and will enjoy the familiar routine.

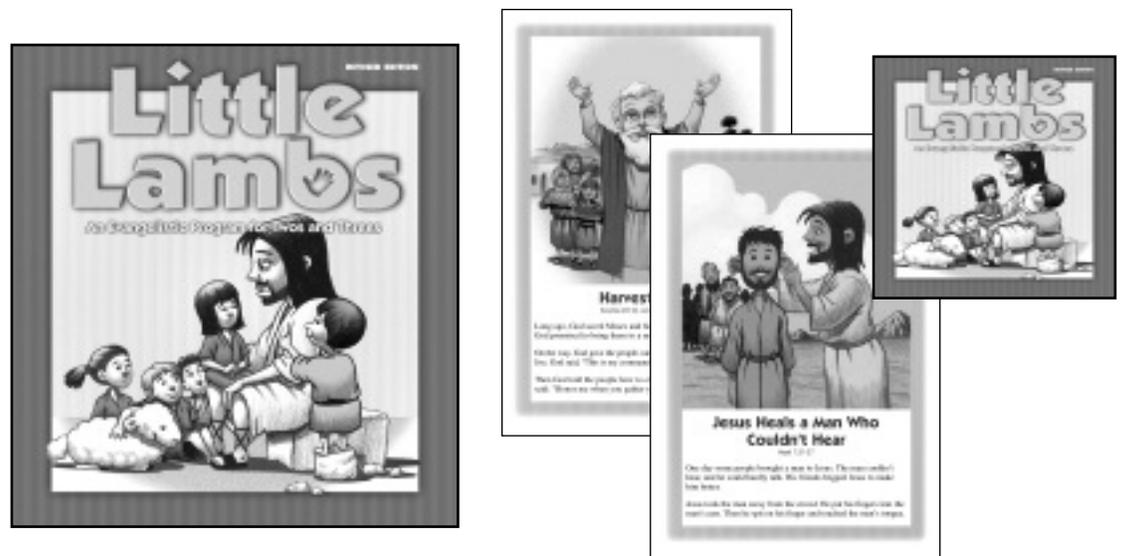
Step-by-step session plans for these units are assembled into this program guide binder. This program guide also includes four Getting Acquainted sessions designed to introduce children to your Little Lamb's routine, to God's love in Jesus, to the Bible as God's book, and to prayer. In addition,

four sessions are planned to help children celebrate secular holidays (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Halloween, Thanksgiving) from a Christian perspective.

Additional resources for the leader are included in the back of this binder. Songs, action rhymes, and patterns referred to in the session plans are also assembled there. *Songs for Little Lambs*, a CD featuring 34 songs by various artists, is included with each program guide.

Take-home story cards, one for each session, present the Bible stories in simple words that twos and threes can understand and offer ideas for families to reinforce the biblical truths at home. The front of each card illustrates one scene from the story with beautiful four-color art.

Program guide binders, CDs, and story card sets are available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560 (800-333-8300; [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org)).



### **Play-Centered Approach**

Because the young child's world is shaped by play, Little Lambs uses a play-centered approach to teach stories and truths from God's Word. The importance of play in the lives of twos and threes cannot be overemphasized. Play activities

- stimulate the development of thought and intelligence.
- build self-esteem.
- encourage imagination and creativity.
- develop problem-solving skills.
- require use of small- and large-motor skills.
- promote socialization.

Each session plan offers a variety of ideas for play center activities. During play time the children are free to play where they wish; some may choose to

try out all the centers while others may prefer to play in only one or two.  
(You may need to steer some children to less crowded centers.)

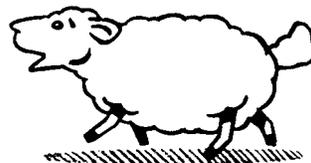
Remember, adults are *facilitators*. As you play along with the children and offer ideas, you'll be amazed at their imagination and creativity. We encourage you to be flexible; listen to the children, and follow their lead. When significant play happens without you, stay back, observe, and delight in your little ones!

# Organizing Little Lambs

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Three aspects of beginning or managing a Little Lambs program are particularly important: **staff**, **space**, and **schedule**. We encourage you to enlist the help of small group ministry representatives who can provide additional advice or conduct leadership training workshops. To obtain the name and telephone number of your regional representative, call 1-888-644-0814, or view the training schedule at [www.smallgroupministries.org](http://www.smallgroupministries.org) or [www.coffeebreakministries.org](http://www.coffeebreakministries.org).



## Staff

---

### Director

Although the director's role calls for leadership and organization skills, the primary requirement is a deep love for young children and for those who serve as leaders. *Leading with Love* (Barbara Brouwer, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 466) is a helpful resource for people in these leadership roles.

The director is responsible for the total Little Lambs program and will

- advertise the program.
- recruit and train leaders.
- order supplies and materials.
- organize the use of space.
- schedule the year's program and weekly sessions.
- facilitate contact with families.
- connect the program to the church.
- develop a cooperative ministry with Coffee Break and Story Hour.
- conduct staff meetings.
- model a welcoming love for the children.

Smaller programs may not have a Little Lambs director at all. In that case, we suggest dividing up these responsibilities among the leaders to prevent leader burnout.

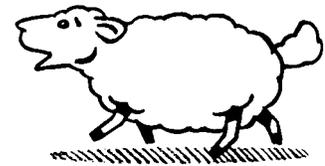
### Leaders

We use the term *leaders* to include teachers and helpers. The leaders' responsibilities may include

- planning weekly sessions in cooperation with the director.
- preparing materials for the Bible story and learning activities.
- telling the Bible story and carrying out the selected activities.
- helping discipline the children.

- maintaining contact with families in cooperation with the director.
- participating in weekly staff support group meetings.
- performing specific tasks such as playing the piano or leading group singing.

Programs for twos and threes should strive to meet adult-to-children ratios developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. “If your group consists mostly of two-year-olds, the NAEYC recommends one leader or caregiver for every four children. If your group is a mix of twos and threes, you can assign five children to one leader. Total group size should be limited to eight to ten children” (Yvonne Van Ee, *God Loves Me Program Guide*, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 466).



## Space

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The NAEYC recommends 35 square feet of usable floor space for each child in your program. While this is ideal, it is even more important to follow the adult-to-child ratios when grouping young children.

### **Group Needs**

It’s possible for two groups of eight to ten children to share the same play center space, but each team of leaders should have a separate place to be with the children, especially for circle time and story time. Every week, each small group should be made up of the same children and leaders. If separate rooms are not available for each group, make sure to define some privacy boundaries.

### **Play Centers**

When deciding how to organize play centers, consider the total space available, the number of staff, the amount of supplies needed, and the setup and cleanup time required. Plan so that at least four or five children can use a particular center at one time with at least one adult participating in the activity. To create a welcoming environment and to make separation from parents easier, keep some materials out and ready for the children to use as they arrive each time.

Following are some suggestions for how you might organize the centers described in each session plan. Note that you will be adding a variety of supplies to the centers to fit the specific focus of each session, but you’ll want to set up the basic supplies and equipment the same way each time.



If you don't have space for all the centers, you will need to focus on certain activities each week. If possible, always set up the Play-Doh, housekeeping, village, and storybook centers; add the art and game centers when you wish to do a specific activity. If you cannot leave the centers up from week to week—or if you need the same table for several activities—consider using a laundry basket, boxes, or stackable plastic storage bins to hold supplies for each center.

## **PLAY-DOH CENTER**

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Twos and threes love Play-Doh! (We've included a recipe for making your own version on p. 460.) Position a child-size table and chairs near the entrance to draw reluctant children into your room. Routinely offer child-size rolling pins and cookie cutters. Make sure your little ones understand this rule: *Play-Doh stays at the table!*

## **ART CENTER**

---

Art activities will encourage young children to experiment with a variety of art materials. Place a low table so children can access it from all sides, and provide child-size chairs. Provide drawing paper, construction paper, and crayons each time. If you have room to store them, you may also wish to have an easel, newsprint, paints, brushes, and paint shirts available.

We'll suggest adding special supplies like stickers, markers, scissors, glue sticks, and so on as appropriate for specific sessions. Most of these supplies can be purchased at craft or teacher supply stores, but we've also included several recipes on pages 460-461 if you prefer to make some of your own.

Keep in mind that young children learn best with their senses and enjoy making messes within the boundaries you set for them. To make cleanup easy, cover the table with a shower curtain liner, and keep a supply of paper towels and wipes handy. Depending on your total space, you may need to use this area for snack time too, so you'll want supplies in containers that can quickly be stowed away.

## **GAME CENTER**

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Set up this area for toys that help little ones develop small-motor skills. Blocks, puzzles, fill-and-pour toys, stacking toys, and things that button, zip, and snap are good choices and can easily be stored in baskets or bins. Depending on your space, you might add wagons, pull toys, large balls and blocks, or small gym sets that encourage large-motor development. We'll give ideas in the session plans for dancing and other movement activities too.

## HOUSEKEEPING CENTER

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This center is a favorite of little ones and encourages much dramatic play. Set up a child's table and chair set; add a stove, sink, and refrigerator. (You can make these from sturdy cardboard boxes, or recruit someone in your community to build a simple set. Or solicit a Little Tikes or Playskool set from a family whose children have outgrown them, or watch for these at garage sales.)

To avoid clutter, start with just a few toy dishes and dolls. You can add utensils, pots and pans, doll beds, blankets, doll clothes, and play food as needed for specific activities. For extra fun, add dress-up clothes and washable hats.



Toy stores and department stores offer plastic food models. A set of eighty-five sturdy cardboard food models are available from the National Dairy Council—see Suggested Supplies, p. 459).

## VILLAGE CENTER

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This center helps young children develop a sense of their community and encourages imagination and small-motor development. You'll want a road map that centers around a church (or the place where your Little Lambs program meets). It should look something like the one below and also include landmarks familiar to your little ones.



You can make your own map from felt or heavy-weight craft Pellon. (Or you can purchase maps at fabric stores or toy stores.) The map will stick to carpeted floor if you attach the hooked side of Velcro strips to the four corners. (Use double-faced tape for hard-surfaced floors.)

Make a church and houses from shoeboxes (see directions in Pattern section, p. 525), and set up other small buildings such as the Fisher Price gas station, airport, and so on. Add cars and other small vehicles that hold little people like those made by Fisher Price.

## STORYBOOK CENTER

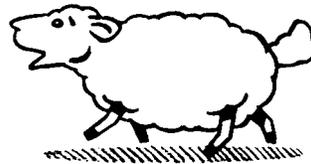
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If possible, pick a quiet corner for this center, away from the main flow of activities. Add large floor pillows, a rocker, and perhaps some stuffed toys. Take advantage of the opportunity to cuddle up with a child and a good book. It's a wonderful way to ease separation anxiety and to build one-on-one relationships.

Choose a variety of simple, colorful, age-appropriate books, and store them in plastic bins or low bookshelves. Board books are great for twos and threes. (We've suggested specific books throughout the session plans and also listed several in the Other Suggested Resources section, p. 466.)



To prevent the spread of contagious "bugs" so common to little ones, all equipment and toys must be kept clean and in good repair. Toys need to be cleaned with soap, hot water, and bleach *every* time they are used. Clothes and hats must also be washed each time they are used.



## Schedule

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This *Little Lambs* program guide provides flexible session plans and includes a variety of play center activities. Use the schedule to give children needed structure and familiar repetition and at the same time accommodate the short attention span of young children. Make sure children are comfortable with any major change in your routine.

We recommend that you plan a sixty- to seventy-five-minute session. (If your group is primarily twos, you may want to shorten the time or schedule more free play.) Below you'll find two different ways to schedule a typical session. The first, in the box on the left, places the Bible story early in the

session and uses play center activities to help children *respond* to the story. The second, in the box on the right, places the Bible story at the end of the session with play center activities designed to help children *anticipate* the story.

- Welcome/Free Play (5-10 minutes)
- Circle Time (5-10 minutes)
- Story Time (5-10 minutes)
- Play Center Activities (25 minutes)
- Pick-up Time (5 minutes)
- Snack Time (10 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

- Welcome/Free Play (5-10 minutes)
- Play Center Activities (25 minutes)
- Pick-up Time (5 minutes)
- Circle Time (5-10 minutes)
- Snack Time (10 minutes)
- Story Time (5-10 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)



The session plans have been written for the schedule on the left. If you prefer to do the story later in the session, you'll need to modify the play center directions to fit.

You'll note that most of the time is spent in the play centers. This is valuable interaction time when leaders model God's love, share spontaneous songs and prayers, and so on. When the Bible story is told early, conversation and activities reinforce what the story teaches. When the Bible story comes later, conversation and activities lead up to the story. The actual order of the activities is not as important as the fact that you do them in the same order every week, establishing a *routine*. Twos and threes find safety and security in knowing what comes next.

Leaders may wish to do some of the planning as a group using the session plan form we've included in the Leader Resources section in the back of this binder (p. 457). It's important to delegate tasks within the schedule as we've suggested below.

### **Welcome/Free Play**

You'll want leaders on hand to welcome each child in their small group.

Make sure the same activities are set up every week in the play centers so that separation from parents is eased.

## Circle Time

Either as one large group or in smaller groups of four or five children, spend time singing, learning the Bible words, and doing action rhymes suggested in the session plans. (If you gather as one large group, you may want to delegate one person to lead circle time the entire year.) You'll want to designate a certain place for this time, and have the children gather around you, either seated on child-size chairs or on the floor. (Carpet squares will help to define a child's own space on the floor.) We've suggested using a puppet—a soft toy lamb—as part of your circle time activities (see *Welcome to Little Lambs*, p. 50). Willie Woollie will soon become everyone's friend.

## Story Time

To help your little ones learn the story time routine, we'll use these three visuals:

### ■ *story quilt*

A quilt placed on the floor will visually outline the space where you want the children to sit with hands and feet tucked close (see illustration on p. \*\*). Any quilt will do, but some leaders prefer a quilt with a different colored border or large squares around the outside to define the space. It must be large enough for the children to sit around the edges and for the story field to fit in the middle. The quilt signals that something special is about to happen and creates a warm and inviting environment.

### ■ *story field*

You'll want a 24" (60 cm) circle or square of felt or plain fabric to serve as the background for story visuals. Place the story field on the story quilt where you can easily reach it as you tell the story. Since twos and threes love to touch, you'll need to remind them that it's your turn to touch while you're telling the story.

### ■ *story box*

To keep everything organized and to arouse the children's curiosity, place all story visuals in a box. (Use a plastic container, a small suitcase, or a gift-wrapped box—the same container each time.) Be sure to place your Bible and your copy of the take-home story card in the box each time. (You can use the story card as your cue card when you tell the story and as a visual summary of the story for the children.)

## Play Center Activities

We've already described the general set-up for the six play centers (see pp. 16-19). Activities scheduled for this time are more directed than during free play time at the beginning of the session and are designed to introduce and reinforce the theme of the Bible story in each session. A materials list for each center will alert leaders to additional supplies that aren't already included in the centers.

Ideally, an adult should be assigned to each center to guide the activity. If that isn't possible, adults should be strategically placed so that they can see what is happening in each center. Although having so many choices is a new experience for most, children should be allowed to choose the play center activities they want to try. Some children will need a bit of coaxing to try a new activity; others will need encouragement to stay at a task a bit longer. It's OK to leave a child in a center if he or she isn't ready to join a group activity.

### **Pick-up Time**

You'll want to make cleanup an important part of the Little Lambs routine. Use the song "This Is the Way" (p. 480) to signal that it's time for everyone to help pick up toys and other supplies.

### **Snack Time**

Snack time is a brief time for sharing, usually with children and leaders seated around a low table. **It's very important that you allow time for hand washing!** (Provide one or two moistened wipes for each child.) Often we'll suggest simple snack ideas that relate to the theme of a session, but animal crackers are always a favorite treat. To avoid messy spills and possible food allergies, water is a good choice for a beverage. We've made prayer a part of each snack time routine too.



Pediatricians recommend that peanut butter should not be given to children under three years old. You'll want to check with parents for other possible food allergies. (It's a good question to ask on your registration form.)

## Closing

Occasionally we may suggest a closing activity, or you can use this time for free play in the centers until parents arrive. Take a few minutes to reassure children of your love and to connect with parents. Make sure parents and leaders know your pick-up policy.



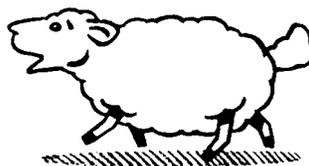
To help leaders identify and greet parents and to assure that an *authorized* person picks up each child, take a picture of each child with *everyone* who will be picking him or her up. Label each photo with the names of everyone pictured. (If you can't do this yourself, ask families to provide this as part of your registration process.)

# Leading Little Lambs

---



In this section, we'll walk you through the theme pages and session plans in this program guide binder and provide some tips to make your task easier. But before we jump right into the role of leading, let's consider what it takes to get off on the right foot.



## Getting Started

---

Maybe you are an experienced leader, eager to tell the story of God's love to one more young child. Perhaps you're just beginning this avenue of ministry and are feeling inadequate, as Moses did when God called him to lead the people of Israel. Either way, you have the assurance that God says to you, as he did to Moses, *"I will help you speak. I will teach you what to say"* (Exodus 4:12).

Your sense of God's presence and your love for children will motivate you to make Little Lambs a high priority. We'd like to add three other essentials for your ministry:

■ **Prayer**

Spend part of your private prayer time remembering each child's specific needs. Join together for staff prayer before the session begins.

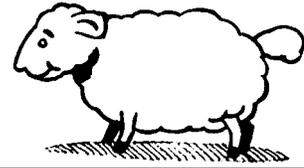
■ **Preparation**

Start preparing for each session early. Reflect on the Bible story. Collect needed supplies; recruit others to help prepare visuals and other materials. Take care of all last-minute details before the children arrive.

■ **Presence**

If possible, leaders should be present to greet children as they arrive with their parents. Smile; speak to each child. Assist with coats and nametags. Help children enter the room for opening activities. Be especially sensitive to the needs of new children and to any parent who may be leaving a child for the first time. Take time to interact with parents. Modeling God's love to children and parents may be the most important thing you do.

Now join us for a brief overview of the tools we've developed for your Little Lambs ministry.



## Themes

Each of the main units in this program guide binder is identified by an indexed division page and a contents page that gives a listing of the themes (mini-units) and session titles. You'll notice that each unit is divided into one or two mini-units or themes—a total of twelve. We've developed a theme page to help you highlight these themes during the related sessions. Theme pages can be identified by a column of lambs along the right-hand side of the page. Each of the eleven theme pages includes these features:

- **Theme Song**
- **Bible Words**
- **Theme Action Rhyme**
- **Big Words**
- **Notes to Leaders**

### ■ Theme Song

Some of the theme songs will be old favorites; others are original songs written and recorded by various artists. Words and music for the theme songs are included in the Songs section in the back of this binder and on the *CD Songs for Little Lambs*. Young children learn through repetition and will quickly develop favorite songs they'll want to sing over and over. We encourage you to limit the number of new songs you introduce in each session and not to be overly concerned if each child cannot sing all the words.

### ■ Bible Words

We've selected short Bible verses that will be easy for little ones to learn—one verse for each unit plus one for the getting acquainted sessions and one for each of the holiday sessions. We've included the verses on the take-home story cards and also on a set of Bible words cards in the Leader Resources section (pp. 464-465). Use every opportunity to reinforce these Bible words throughout the year, but don't worry if your little ones cannot repeat all the words. Teaching the children to love God's Word is more important.

## ■ Theme Action Rhyme

We've selected one action rhyme for each unit plus one for the "Getting Acquainted" sessions and one for the holiday sessions. All these rhymes are also grouped together in the Action Rhymes section in the back of this binder. Generally we suggest using a small number of rhymes so that children can actively respond to the session truths without a weekly emphasis on learning new motions and words.

## ■ Big Words

Key biblical concepts are explained from a young child's perspective. We have included these concepts to help you think through how you will talk about these concepts to twos and threes, not as a vocabulary drill for the children. For example, you may choose not to use the term *parable* as you talk with young children, but you will emphasize that Jesus told these stories to help us learn about God's love.

## ■ Notes to Leaders

These notes will alert you to a special focus in a particular session, give tips on scheduling special activities, or remind you to collect necessary supplies in advance. We've tried to walk in your shoes and anticipate some of the things that take a bit of extra thought and preparation.



## Session Plans

Session plans follow a consistent format and include introductory components, circle time activities, the Bible story section, play center activities, and suggestions for pick-up time and snack time.

## Introductory Components

The introductory portion of the session plan will help you focus your preparation time. It includes these parts:

The image shows a sample session plan page for the theme 'LET THE CHILDREN COME'. The page is titled 'Session 2 Jesus Loves Me' and includes the following sections:

- Theme:** LET THE CHILDREN COME
- Session 2:** Jesus Loves Me
- Scripture:** MARK 10:13-16
- Goals for Today:** CHILDREN WILL BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES
  - realize that Jesus loves little children.
  - sense that Little Lambs is a place where they will be loved.
- Reflection:** If you ever passed on... Jesus made it clear that we don't have to wait until we're grown up to be part of his circle... Little ones are forming a picture of Jesus in their minds...

Arrows from the text 'Scripture', 'Goals for Today', and 'Reflection' point to their respective sections on the page. There is also a small drawing of a sheep in the top right corner of the page.

■ Scripture

■ Goals for Today

■ Reflection

## ■ Scripture

The Bible passage for each session is identified for you. We encourage you to read the passage and the chapter before and after it so that you are familiar with the context of the story. This is another opportunity for you to delve deeper into God's Word.

## ■ Goals for Today

Goals are written from the child's perspective and will help you plan the session to enable the children to accomplish them. It will be important to remember that young children are just beginning their spiritual journey and will be taking small steps at a time, each at his or her own pace.

## ■ Reflection

These brief meditations are meant to focus your thoughts on the Scripture for the session and to give you encouragement in your own spiritual walk and ministry to twos and threes.

## Circle Time

As explained with the Little Lambs schedule (pp. 19-20), this is a time to gather the children as one large group or in smaller groups for these activities (see descriptions on pp. 26-27):

**Circle Time**

Use your circle time today to model Jesus' welcome to the children. Have your puppet, Willie Woollie, call each child by name and help them follow your routine. Children will need to be reminded to get carpet squares, sit in a circle, or follow whatever routine you introduced last time. Make sure any new child is quickly welcomed into the group. Comment about the circle of little friends and how happy you feel to have everyone close around you.

**Theme Song**  
"Here We Are Together" (p. 474, CD, track 1)

**Other Suggested Songs**  
"Jesus Loves Me" (p. 475, CD, track 2)  
"Chop, Chop, Chop" (p. 476, CD, track 3)

**Bible Words**  
"Let the little children come to me."  
—Matt. 23:10

Hold up the picture of Jesus blessing the children from the take-home card for this session; then say the words slowly.

**Theme Action Rhyme**  
"God Loves You" (p. 46)

**Bible Story**

**Materials for Telling the Story**

- Story tape, story field
- Story box, Bible, take-home card (Getting Acquainted, Session 2)
- Story visuals (patterns GA-2A through GA-2C)
- White cardstock
- Scissors, markers
- Laminator or clear contact paper (optional)

**Preparation**

On white cardstock, make one copy of these patterns: GA-2A (Jesus), GA-2B (parents with children), and GA-2C (disciples). Cut out the story figures and color them with markers; laminate them or cover them with clear contact paper if desired.

58 Getting Acquainted, Session 2

■ **Theme Song**

■ **Other Suggested Songs**

■ **Bible Words**

■ **Theme Action Rhyme**

## Bible Story

The Bible story narration is written out to help you prepare to *tell* the story to the children. Become familiar with the story and comfortable with the way you want to tell it—let your own personality come through, and don't hesitate to modify the suggestions for how to tell the story (printed in bold in the story script). To help you prepare and carry out this key part of Little Lambs sessions, we've included these components:

**Bible Story**



**MATERIALS FOR TELLING THE STORY**

- Storytelling cards
- Story box, Bible, take-home card (Unit 2, Session 7)
- Story visuals (pages 2-7A and 2-7B)
- Cardstock
- Scissors, markers
- Dot markers (optional)
- Self-adhesive Velcro
- Toy boat

**Preparation**

Photocopy patterns 2-7A (Jonah) and 2-7B (Big Fish) on cardstock. Prepare the story visuals as directed in the art center activity on page 199. Place the visuals in your story box along with a toy boat.

**Story Time**

After everyone is settled, **invite** the storytellers to the story field in front of you. Congratulate Willie Wishes for setting the scene. **Remember**, you know he's eager to hear another story from God's book, the Bible. Hold out your hands as you invite everyone to do these hand motions:

Open them, close them;  
open them, close them;  
give a little clasp!  
Open them, close them;  
open them, close them;  
fold them in your lap.

Open the Bible to the book of Jonah, and say the title to the children. Explain that you'll tell them a story from God's book about a man named Jonah (have the children say it with you). It's a story about Jonah and about a big fish—just like you promised Willie. Everybody ready?

Shhh! (Bring index finger to lips)  
It's time (point to mouth)  
to hear (cup hand around ear)  
God's story (hold hands open with palms up like a book)

**The story follows:**

**Place the Jonah figure on the story field.** God had a special job for Jonah. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and to tell the people to obey God. But Jonah didn't want to go. **(Shake head.)** "No way! I'll run away." Jonah said.

Unit 2, Session 7 197

- **Materials for Telling the Story**
- **Preparation**
- **Story Time**
- **Prayer**
- **Storytelling Option**

**Storytelling Option**

For a storytelling version of today's story, read the **By Fish Story: The Story of Jonah** from the **Story of Jonah** (CIC Publications) and **Circle Support Resources**, p. 441. The pictures will help you tell one visualizer after another to make the big fish and how he got out of the belly of the fish.

So Jonah got on a big boat and sailed away. **(Place the boat on the story field, and place Jonah on it.)** Soon a big storm came. The rain came down. **(Make spritzing motions with fingers, raising and lowering hands, faster and faster.)** The wind blew the boat about. **(Make handwing motions: toss the boat up and down.)**

Everyone on the boat was afraid. "What have you done?" they asked Jonah. Jonah said, "I am running away from God. Throw me overboard. Then the storm will stop." And that's exactly what happened! Jonah was thrown into the sea. **(Throw Jonah out of the boat.)** Just just like that, **(snap fingers)** the storm stopped.

God sent a BIG fish **(place fish on story field)** to swallow Jonah. **(Place Jonah inside the fish.)** Jonah knew God had kept him safe. Jonah said, "I will praise and thank you, God."

After three days, the fish spit Jonah up on the shore. **(Move fish toward edge of story field; take Jonah out.)** Jonah was happy to be on dry ground again. Jonah said, "God has saved me. I will obey him. Now I will go to Nineveh."

**Prayer**

Dear God,  
Thank you for keeping Jonah safe in the big fish. Thank you for taking care of us too, Jesus.

**Play Center Activities**

Learning through play is the best way! Choose only as many activities as your space and schedule allow, and provide plenty of time for the children to choose their own activities and to play individually.

**Play-Doh Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Various colors of Play-Doh (optional)

**DIRECTIONS**

Show the children how to mold small balls of dough into fish shapes. Notice the difference between big fish and little fish, and enjoy the various colors of fish if you have different colors of dough.

198 Unit 2, Session 7

## ■ Materials for Telling the Story

You will want to use this list to assemble materials for the story time.

## ■ Preparation

Directions are given for preparing visuals and the setting for telling the story. These are things you will want to do in advance.

## ■ Story Time

This section suggests ways to introduce the story as you gather the children around you and set the stage for them. We'd like you to keep your Bible open as you begin to tell the story as scripted so that the children know you are telling God's story.

## ■ Prayer

We've included a brief prayer for you to say at the conclusion of your story time. Feel free to use your own prayer and to involve the children when you feel they are ready.

## ■ Storytelling Option

Perhaps your schedule or space or your own preference doesn't fit with the primary way we've suggested for telling the story. Often we give you one other idea for telling the Bible story, and we encourage you to consider some of these alternative ways to make God's Word come alive for your children.

## Play Center Activities

As explained earlier (see pp. 16-19), play center activities are designed to provide a variety of ways for twos and threes to *respond to* or to *anticipate* the Bible story. Each session plan describes activities for these centers:

**Play Center Activities**

Encourage through play in the home and provide plenty of time for the children to share their own activities and to play independently. You'll want to make taking to God a natural part of every activity today.

**Play-Doh Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Moistened wipes

**DIRECTIONS**

Get each child a large ball of Play-Doh. Help the children flatten the dough until it's no larger than their hands. Help them give one hand into the Play-Doh to make a handprint. Notice how each handprint is exactly one of a kind. Thank God for hands that can play and touch and hold to pray.

**Art Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Pictures of things God gives us
- "I Can Talk to God" option one per child from pages (A-A4)
- Large sheets of construction paper one per child
- Glue sticks

**DIRECTIONS**

Ahead of time, cut pictures of food, children's clothes, homes, people, toys and so on from magazines, catalogs, and news items. Post 12 main animal pictures for each child. Also copy and cut out one "I Can Talk to God" option page (A-A4) for each child.

Give each child a large sheet of construction paper, and show the children how to make a simple drawing of God giving them each day. Let them choose one picture at a time from the strip of pictures you've placed in the middle of the table. Encourage them to draw a variety of things. (If placing individual pictures is difficult for your little ones, "paste" the paper with glue sticks so they can just stick the pictures on. Help the children glue the caption on their paper, and then thank God for specific items pictured.

74 Getting Acquainted, Session 4

Suggest that the children use the pictures for placement at home (or you may want to use them for snack time).

**Game Center**

**MATERIALS**

- "Think You, Jesus" (p. 479, CD, track 5)
- CD player
- 24" (60 cm) strips of lightweight colored cloth or crepe paper (enough to wrap one child)

**DIRECTIONS**

Listen to the song "Think You, Jesus" a time or two, and then invite the children to dance to the rhythm as they sing along. (If you're short of time, just play the chorus.) Provide strips of lightweight colored cloth or crepe paper (enough to wrap one child) to the children every 10 seconds to give them to God.

—Adapted from Betty Bruner, *God, Papa, Jesus!*  
(©1998 Morning Star, Inc./NewHope Christian Arts)

**Housekeeping Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Baby dolls
- Baby blankets, bottles, and so on

**DIRECTIONS**

Encourage your little ones to be meticulous and diligent today. Play alongside the children, and model good parenting skills as you help them care for their babies. Talk about what a precious gift babies are to families. (Be sure to ask if some of your little ones use big bottles or big caps, acknowledging that it's a special job, but sometimes babies use in need a bit of attention from grown-ups.) Thank God for babies and milk and nappies and bottles and cribs.

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**Village Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Color three vehicles
- Color three people
- Color three animals
- Color three buildings
- Color three trees

**DIRECTIONS**

To focus on the idea that we can talk to God anytime and anywhere, ask children to help you find a place to play. Each child has one drive around looking for a place to talk to God. When they find a place, place a picture of a vehicle or a person or an animal or a building or a tree in the place. When the children have finished, ask them to share their places. When the children have finished, ask them to share their places. When the children have finished, ask them to share their places.

**Storybook Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Any Bible picture book—see Other Resources
- Other children's picture books

**DIRECTIONS**

Get out one or two books with pictures for young children. Page through the books, enjoying the illustrations. Read aloud two pictures to the children. If they want to, repeat one simple phrase or verse with the children. Show some of the words. Thank God that you can talk to him anytime.

**Pick-up Time**

To signal that it's time to put things away, begin playing "This Is the Way" (p. 480, CD, track 6). If a child says something like "Let's sing to the Lord" or "Let's sing to God," you can say something like "Let's sing to the Lord" or "Let's sing to God." Thank God that you can talk to him anytime.

Getting Acquainted, Session 4

- Play-Doh Center
- Art Center
- Game Center
- Housekeeping Center
- Village Center
- Storybook Center

## Pick-up Time and Snack Time

We've described these two activities when discussing the Little Lambs schedule (p. 22). Each session plan gives specific ideas for these two important parts of your routine.

**Storybook Center**

**MATERIALS**

- Board books
- Touch-and-feel books
- Teddy bears

**DIRECTIONS**

Lay out enough books so that an adult can read to two or three children. Explain that the storybook center is a quiet place to cuddle up with a book—and frame your leaders want to do that right now. Take time to read at least one book in each smaller group. Leave the books out so that the children can come back to this center during free-play time or if they're having a hard time separating from parents. (Cuddling with a teddy bear can comfort a scared or very shy child.)

**Pick-up Time**

To help your little ones realize that it's almost time to put things away, begin playing and singing "This Is the Way" (p. 480, CD, track 6):

This is the way we pick up toys,  
pick up toys, pick up toys.  
This is the way we pick up toys,  
It's time to work and play.  
—*Samuel, 2002*

Encourage the children to help you, and praise them when they do. Keep singing as you pick up toys so that the children realize that it's time in your schedule. (If you wish, insert the book in place of "toys.")

**Snack Time**

As the children are seated around a table, explain that you will have a snack every time they come to Little Lambs. Introduce this routine, and follow this order each time:

- Give each child a moistened wipe for washing hands. This is a must to prevent the spread of "bugs" in common to little ones.
- Lay a napkin on the table in front of each child.

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- Pick-up Time
- Snack Time

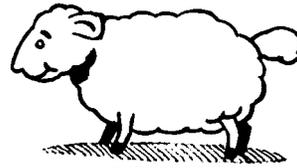
## Closing

Every session plan concludes with this reminder:



Remember to send a Bible story card home with each child.

We encourage you to purchase one set of story cards for every child in Little Lambs. (Cards are available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, 800-333-8300; [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org).) We suggest that you purchase a 6" x 9" (15 cm x 223 cm) three-ring binder for each child so that the children can collect the story cards and make their own story Bible. (You can find this size binder at most office supply stores.) If the cost is prohibitive, perhaps another organization in your church would pay for the binders (and cards too) as a service project, or you might encourage parents to purchase the binders. A less expensive option is to purchase loose-leaf rings and give one to each child. Remember that this may be the only story Bible a child's family has, or it may be the child's first very own Bible storybook.



## Tips to Make Leading Easier

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Experience is often the best teacher in helping to determine what works best for you, but we want to offer a few ideas to save you time and energy.

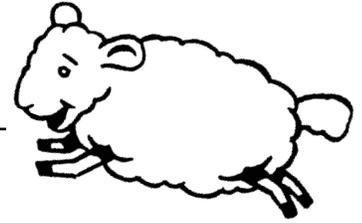
- Use Velcro strips on carpeted floors to mark off play center areas. When not in use, the strips can be rolled up and stored easily.
- Copy patterns onto cardstock rather than construction paper. Cardstock is more durable and much less damaging to copy machines. It's available at most office supply stores. Generally we suggest cardstock rather than construction paper in the materials lists.
- Use bright-colored markers or highlighters to color patterns; laminate patterns or cover with clear Contact paper to make them more durable.
- Recruit seniors or teens in your church to help with cutting and other preparation of session materials. Schedule a time to do this prior to the beginning of the season, and store patterns in labeled shoeboxes or similar containers.
- Cover tables for messy projects with plastic shower curtain liners. The liners are durable, large enough to cover standard-sized tables, and easy to wipe off.
- Glue sticks are best for young children who are just learning the technique. Or pour glue into small shallow containers, and let the children use cotton swabs to paint the glue where needed.
- Use a blow dryer to dry art projects quickly.
- Use a squirt bottle of glass cleaner to clean tables, and fill one with soapy water to quickly clean messy hands.
- Take photos of each child early in the season, and make photocopies to use for art activities throughout the year. (Or use a digital camera and your computer.) You also may want to take some group pictures for bulletin boards.
- Use colored nametags to divide your larger group into smaller groups. (Or if your children don't know all the colors, make nametags in

different shapes.) Add a sticker to each child's nametag to match a sticker on the small group leader's nametag.

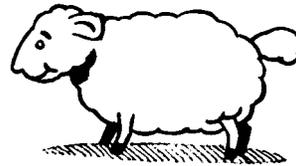
- Develop a system for storing story visuals and other materials you want to use another time. Inexpensive cardboard file boxes are available at most office supply stores. You may want to cut large visuals into sections so that they can be stored in file folders. It might be easiest to organize your file by session titles with one or more folders for each session listed in the table of contents on pages 5-7.

# Building Relationships with Little Lambs Children

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Although Little Lambs is centered on Bible stories and related play center activities, much of what children learn about God’s love will come through their relationship with you. You can build that relationship through understanding, love, and discipline.



## Understanding Twos and Threes

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[We are indebted to Dr. Yvonne Van Ee, professor and early childhood program advisor in the Education Department at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, for information shared in this section. Her summary of the developmental achievements of twos and threes is excerpted from the *God Loves Me Program Guide* (CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 467).]

As the young child matures and is involved in a variety of life experiences, changes occur that reflect development in these four areas or domains: physical, cognitive, social and emotional, moral and spiritual. We will highlight key developmental achievements of twos and threes in each of these four areas and share some observations about the significance of each of these areas of development in terms of working with young children.

### Physical Development

Key areas of physical development in the young child include the brain, motor development, and perception. . . . As you observe your twos and threes move and explore, you will notice a wide range in large- and small-motor achievements. Some children will be more advanced and successful in movement than others. But over a year’s time, you should see movements becoming more refined, more coordinated, and completed with greater smoothness and ease. Eye-hand coordination improves. A preference for using the left or right hand for eating, coloring, cutting, and so forth will become apparent although not well established. Some children will show excellent manipulative skills such as those needed to work large-piece puzzles while others will not. Some may show no interest in using crayons, markers, pencils, and paint brushes while others may have a fairly well developed broad stroking technique. Young children are usually more interested in making color than a product that resembles anything. Cutting skills will most likely range from no interest or ability to simple snipping to a more chopping-like motion.

Running, hopping, skipping, walking, and throwing bring great delight to twos and threes. They are able to trap a ball with their hands and arms and pitch it with both hands as well. They will kick a ball but without aim. Walking, balancing, and moving forward also show great improvement during this stage. This is a wonderful time to encourage movement, dance, and exploration in a child-safe environment.

Learning to use the toilet is a major task for twos and threes and an important step in gaining independence. It is essential that you accept the wide range of achievement in this area—some twos and threes will still be in diapers, and others may have totally accomplished the task. It is extremely important that you support your little ones wherever they are in the process by having appropriate toileting facilities available for them and most of all by encouraging them to accomplish this task.

### **Cognitive Development**

One of the signs of cognitive development in twos and threes is an increasing, though still quite short, attention span. You can also expect to see special intellectual, thinking, language, and literacy achievements. . . .

The minds of twos and threes are as busy as their bodies. The exciting journey to understand the world has begun. One of the most extraordinary evidences of this is the presence of conscious memory and much more intentional use of language.

But the thinking of the two- and three-year-old does not nearly resemble that of a mature adult. They see the world and its events from their own perspective, missing details and focusing usually on one dimension. In general, twos and threes understand the physical reality of things. Much of their activity focuses on learning the characteristics and properties of objects and events. For example, a young child learns that a soft ball bounces, can be thrown and rolled, and is a fun plaything. Little ones do not understand that throwing a ball may hurt someone or that one ball may be hard and another soft—to them, all balls are like that first round, soft one.

Developing language is a major task for the two- and three-year-old. These again are times of rapid development. By two years a child usually has a fifty-word vocabulary. At first, spoken words may be difficult to understand. Sometimes only 25 percent of a two-year-old's language is understandable, but by age three that increases to 75 percent.

This is also the age at which the children understand more words than they speak. It may be that the child simply has not learned or mastered a sound, but it may be more than that. Children who are quiet and less assertive may only use the sounds and words they either know well or speak well and may hesitate to try new or less secure sounds. The more assertive child forges ahead, while the shy child will tend to hold back. It's important to encourage each child and to be a good listener.

At this age children also delight in playing with language. They love action rhymes and poems with repetition and enjoy saying words over and over again. They will take a word such as “look” and put other sounds at the beginning or end to make “mook, dook, pook . . .” and giggle at their inventions. Often language play occurs with dramatic play when little ones feel free to create new words and sounds.

Some children may come to a group setting from homes where English is not the primary language. For these twos and threes, two languages will be developing simultaneously. You may notice some delay in language development and some mixing of words and grammar from one language to another. You can help your bilingual children by pronouncing words and naming objects several times. By age four, these children usually understand that the two languages are separate.

The developing mind and language of twos and threes are stimulated by their environment. Talk with these little ones, read to them, engage them in play, and present and practice new words. Pictures in books and magazines; print on cereal boxes, store fronts, labels; songs; poems; dramatic play—all of these impact the development of the young child’s thought, language, and literacy.

## **Emotional and Social Development**

Emotional and social development are closely tied together. . . . Perhaps it’s in this area of development most of all that your modeling of God’s love is so important to your little ones’ happiness. Positive and social emotional development occurs when there is support, encouragement, and love.

The full range of emotions is present in two- and three-year-old children. They have been smiling and laughing and have shown anger since the first four weeks of life. Surprise and curiosity have also been a delightful part of the emotional repertoire. Now twos and threes are beginning to understand these emotions and can name the basic ones as they see them exhibited in pictures, on their own faces, or on the faces of others. They are also now just beginning to understand the situations in which these emotions occur. Because of this growing emotionalism, you can expect a more intentional use of emotion and emotional outbursts.

A greater understanding of self also occurs during these years. Mobile twos and threes can leave a parent or caregiver and define themselves as separate people. Their growing awareness of their own emotions contributes to their developing sense of self. Young children also begin to define themselves by the response of others around them. Your smiling approval and positive words encourage them. A gentle hug or soft touch surround them with warm acceptance. Your nonjudgmental guidance and correction direct them.

Twos and threes are also beginning to understand that they are able to control their emotions and social behavior. You have the opportunity to

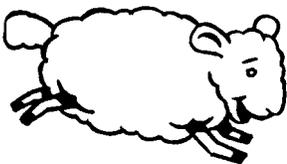
influence and encourage the appropriate display of their range of emotions. Think about how you model the repertoire of emotions and social behavior desirable for young children. Determine and set guidelines for the appropriate display of emotions and for appropriate social behavior. Model and verbalize over and over what it means to be kind, to share, and to take turns. Show your little ones and describe in words what you mean by helping, caring, and being a friend. Two- and three-year-olds are just learning these things and do not fully understand what they mean.

Twos and threes are becoming aware that others also have feelings and emotions. If one child cries, others will cry. If a child is distressed, another will come to comfort. Little ones will make simple attempts to help. Sometimes the help may be rejected or misunderstood. It's important for you to verbalize the feelings and emotions of the children involved so they begin to understand their own emotions and those of the other person.

Rituals and routines contribute to the secure and positive emotional development and self-regulation of young children. Children desire and need a safe, secure, predictable environment. They like to know when it's time to play or time for a snack. They like to have the story read after a song or after some other activity that routinely signals story time. And they even like to sit in the same spot. Young children also need set, secure, predicable limits.

These are the years that some children show a very strong will. For these children, change is difficult, and rituals and routines are even more important. These twos and threes need the structure of established behavior expectations and an almost rigidly consistent enforcement of them. They need the security of knowing that each time they do something right or wrong the consequences will be the same.

Your love and encouragement can contribute positively to a child's social and emotional development and play a major role in cognitive and moral and spiritual development.



### **Moral and Spiritual Development**

This area of development focuses our attention on the very essence of the child. Both moral and spiritual development deal with the young child's responses and relationship to God and to others. . . .

The moral and spiritual dimensions of the child are present at birth. How they develop depends on three key factors. First, the environment in which the child is nurtured shapes what the young child values and what provides the child's spiritual center. Second, the young child's cognitive ability and level of development affect the depth of understanding. (For the two- and three-year-old, this understanding is very simple and factual.) Third, and most importantly, the young child's moral and spiritual development is impacted by the type of relationship the child has with the significant adults

in the child's life. Responsiveness to the child's needs and the love given by these adults are the key to a young child's moral and spiritual development. Only later is it influenced by the child's peers.

Young children begin to develop their ideas about what is good or what is bad initially by the way they are treated by adults. They also learn to define good and bad by what adults say about their behavior. Twos and threes quickly learn that good children eat their food, don't have tantrums, and play nicely with their toys.

Twos and threes are learning and beginning to understand that rules exist that must be followed. And they are beginning to understand that what they do affects others in good and bad ways. They are beginning to learn that they can't just take something when they want it. Sometimes when tears of anger and disappointment flow, an inviting lap and warm hug will do more than words. Other times your loving, caring words and reassuring touch will help your little one learn about right and wrong. Keep a picture in your mind of Jesus gathering the little children to him and loving them.

Spiritually, twos and threes are a delight. They love to hear the simple Bible stories told and read over and over again! They are just beginning to learn some of God's Word from memory and will delight in learning a short Bible verse. They show a beautiful, simple, trusting faith. They will benefit from shared experiences of love and faithfulness, of joy and beauty with their family and the church. These are the years of spiritual formation! It's the time when young children first come to realize in a very simple way who they are in God's love. It's a time of joy.

### **Children with Special Needs**

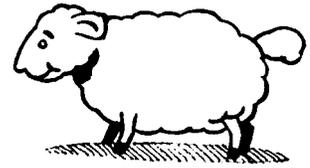
Every young child is a unique person with individually developing gifts and abilities. Some children even at this young age will need special adjustments in their surroundings or particular attention to meet their needs. Together with the child's parents, you can be part of the early intervention that is so crucial to later development.

Children with specific physical challenges need a safe, supportive, and in some cases, adapted physical environment. Space in the work and play areas should be adequate to accept and support special equipment such as a wheelchair or crutches. Ask for suggestions from parents and health professionals in your community.

Children with any type of developmental delay or interruption need a safe, nurturing social and emotional environment. For these children, the environment must be consistent, logical, and predictable. They especially need a warm, caring adult who will support them in developing positive social interaction and as much independent functioning as possible.



The selection and design of learning experiences must encourage the development of all your little ones. Materials and activities should be selected to encourage the child's success. Think of creative ways to involve every child. For example, if a child is visually impaired, use sounds along with pictures to describe things God created. If a child is hearing impaired, use visuals and introduce simple sign language for some of the songs and action rhymes. To include the child who is in a wheelchair in dance and movement, try swaying to the rhythm while everyone sits, or carefully move the wheelchair from left to right. All young children need time and many repeated opportunities to learn, and you can model delight in each one's accomplishments.



## Loving the Little Lambs Child

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The most basic foundation for building a relationship with your Little Lambs children is your love for each one as a special child of God. Your own personality and experience with children will shine through, but we suggest a few simple ways to communicate your love.

- Greet your little ones with a warm smile, gentle touch, and a hug. Those who need loving affection most may not know how to accept it comfortably, so let each child set the pace.
- Call each child by name. This says, "You are important to me. I know who you are."
- Talk directly to your little ones, and get down to their eye level by sitting or kneeling. Respect their thoughts and feelings.
- Look for opportunities to compliment, thank, and encourage each child. Model words like "please," "thank you," and "I'm sorry."
- Respond and be sensitive to each child's needs for a drink, toileting, time alone, and so on.



## Disciplining the Little Lambs Child

---

It is inevitable that you will have to deal with some behavior problems in Little Lambs. Twos and threes present challenges! They feel frustration and anger just as adults do and haven't yet learned socially acceptable ways of dealing with their feelings. They are just learning to share and take turns. Opportunities for conflict abound! We suggest ways to minimize these conflicts and ways to deal with them when they do occur.

### **Encourage Independence**

Young children build a sense of who they are from what they do. Doing things on their own reinforces their sense of independence.

Saying no is a natural part of development; saying yes means to comply and give up new-found independence. To prevent a negative response, avoid asking questions. For example, instead of saying, “Would you like to hear a Bible story now?” say, “It’s time for our Bible story. Let’s find a spot on the story quilt.”

Twos and threes are trying to make sense out of a big, bewildering world. They want to be in control. Their strong wills are part of their developing identity. To avoid conflict, offer them two choices rather than a whole bundle of options. You might say, “It’s time to pick up toys. Would you like to help me pick up the blocks or put the dolls away?”

Recognize that sometimes young children are so caught up in conflicting emotions that they won’t be able to make a choice. A child may be so intent on staying in the housekeeping center that he is unable to choose between putting blocks or dolls away. Don’t be surprised if the child collapses in a tantrum. Tantrums are more emotional overload than seeking attention. Make sure the child is safe; then walk away until the anger subsides. When it does, quickly hug the child and invite him back into the activities.

### **Adapt the Environment**

Realize that twos and threes *need* to touch and will touch *anything* in their reach! Set up your space with plenty of opportunity to touch and manipulate. Remove or place out of reach those things you do not want to be handled.

If some things can’t be set out of reach, establish this rule during your getting acquainted sessions: “These are for leaders. *Only* adults touch them.” Repeating this rule in the early weeks will help your little ones accept your limits.

### **Anticipate Separation Anxiety**

Most little ones—and their parents—will be hesitant to separate at first. To ease the tension, greet children at their eye level, speak gently, and invite them to a fun activity like the Play-Doh center. Don’t push—it’s OK if a child wants to cling to dad or mom the first time or two. Cuddling with a fearful child in the storybook center can also help settle anxious feelings. (This works too for the child who is angry and needs to be separated from the group.)

### **Follow a Routine**

Twos and threes need routine to feel safe and secure. While rigid adherence to a schedule isn’t necessary, predictability is important. Changes (even simple changes like putting on a coat to go out the door) are difficult for little ones. Adults can help by making transitions seem like fun and games. For example, we use the song “This Is the Way” (p. 480; CD, track 6) to help the children recognize that play time is nearly over and that helping is fun. To signal that something new is about to happen, you might say, “When

I count to ten, we'll skip to the story quilt." Or "When Miss Jane plays the piano, it's time to wash our hands."

### **Distract and Redirect**

When children are squabbling over the same toy or misbehaving, call their attention to something else. You can redirect one or both of them to another center or activity. Although twos and threes don't realize how their actions affect others, you can call attention to the way each child feels. You might say, "Thad, I know you really want to play with the truck. Look, Joel is crying. He was playing with the truck first. He feels sad that you took it away!" If need be, you can remove the toy and then redirect both children.

### **Use the Buddy System**

Make a child who regularly exhibits problematic behavior your *helper* or *buddy*. This technique cements your relationship with the child, builds self-esteem, and simply gives the child something to do. You might have a special badge or hat for your helper to wear, but recognize that other children will want this honor too.

### **Set Firm Limits**

Sometimes you will need to say an emphatic *no!* Children need to know that you will not allow hitting or other behavior that hurts another child or adult. Neither will you allow them to do something that is dangerous to their own safety. In these situations, it's best to tell them to do something else rather than saying don't. For example, you might say, "Janie, I'm worried that you will fall when you stand up on your chair. Let's pretend we're riding a bus. Buckle up! Let's go!"

When you experience a chronic problem with a child, establish a plan for how everyone will deal with the offending behavior each time it occurs. Although leaders will add their own nuances to the approach, the children will recognize your consistent response.

Use a "time out" when a child willfully and physically hurts another. (Two to three minutes is appropriate for twos and threes.) Designate a specific place and one leader to deal with the problem. Reassure the child of your love, and then help the child rejoin the group. Be sure to inform parents of this approach and ask for their input.

### **Develop Appropriate Expectations**

Learn all you can about twos and threes—that's why we've included the information on pages 33-37 about how young children grow and develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally, and spiritually. Each child is unique and develops at his or her own rate.

Accept the fact that twos and threes aren't ready for formal teaching. Most of what they learn will be *caught* rather than *taught*. They'll learn about

God and their world through the simple activities you provide; most importantly, they'll learn that they are precious children of God.

Leading little ones to Jesus is a privilege and an awesome responsibility. Jacque Bolt and Diane Dykgraaf, seasoned Little Lambs and Story Hour leaders, compare the task to gardening: “A seed, a flower; a story, a child. The seed can become a flowering plant only if someone plants it. The Bible story will never change the life of a child unless someone tells it” (*Little Ones Need Jesus*, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 466). Never doubt the importance of your ministry to these precious children. May you experience much joy and blessing with your twos and threes!



“Anyone who welcomes a little child like this  
in my name welcomes me.”

—Matthew 18:5, NIV

Please remove this page and insert the **Getting Acquainted** index divider page.

# Getting Acquainted

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<b>Theme: Let the Children Come</b> . . . . .	45
Session 1: Welcome to Little Lambs . . . . .	49
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The purpose of these four sessions is to introduce twos and threes to your Little Lambs program. Young children will learn what to expect during their time with you and will discover that Little Lambs is a warm and welcoming place. They will learn that Jesus, God's Son, loves them very much. They will be introduced to the Bible, God's book, and will be invited to pray to God. God's love, God's Word, and God's presence will become real to your little ones, perhaps for the very first time in their faith walk.

## Theme

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### LET THE CHILDREN COME

## Theme Song

---

“HERE WE ARE TOGETHER” (p. 474; CD, track 1)

(tune: “The More We Get Together”)

Oh, here we are together, together, together.

Oh, here we are together at Little Lambs today! (*clap, clap*)

There’s Willie and Janie and Jesse and Sarah . . .

(*substitute names of children from your group; go all the way around the circle, saying each child’s name twice*)

Oh, we’re so glad to see you at Little Lambs today. (*clap, clap*)

—Traditional, altered

Sing (or say) the names slowly and clearly. Look each child in the eye; lightly touch each child, or point to the child as you say each name.

Words and music for the theme song are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the CD *Songs for Little Lambs*.



We’re using this song as the theme song for the Getting Acquainted sessions, and we’ll list it again in every session. We suggest that you sing it each time to help your little ones transition from free play or center activities to circle time.

## OTHER SUGGESTED SONGS

“Jesus Loves Me” (p. 475; CD, track 2)

“Clap, Clap, Clap” (p. 476; CD, track 3)

“The B-I-B-L-E” (p. 477; CD, track 4)

“Thank You, Jesus” (p. 478; CD, track 5)

“This Is the Way” (p. 480; CD, track 6)

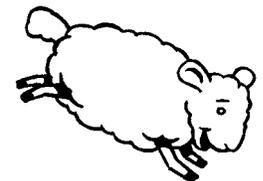
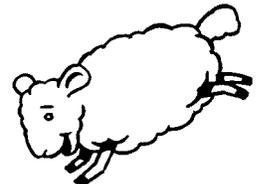
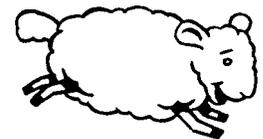
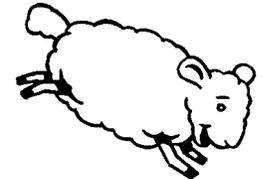
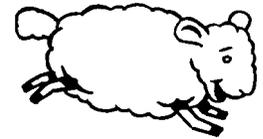
Words and music for these songs are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the CD *Songs for Little Lambs*.

## Bible Words

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“Let the children come to me.”

—Mark 10:14, NIV

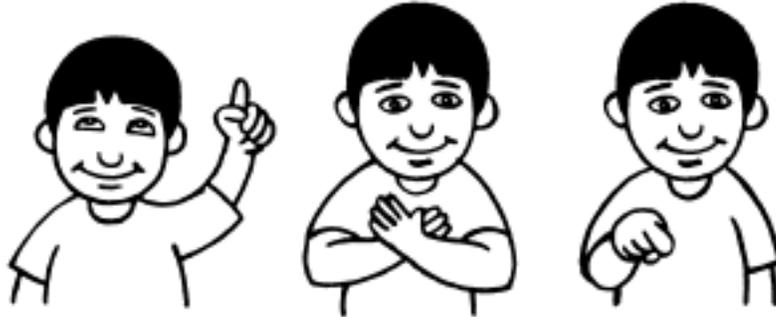


## Theme Action Rhyme

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### ■ "GOD LOVES YOU"

God loves you. (*point up, cross arms across chest, point to each child*)



I love you. (*point to self, cross arms across chest, point to each child*)



Say the words slowly so that the children can mimic each motion. You'll want these words to echo in the hearts of your little ones forever.

## Big Words

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- God
- Jesus

*God* made everything around us; God made us. God loves us.  
*Jesus* is God's Son. Jesus loves us very much.

You'll want to keep these words and simple definitions in the back of your mind. (They're aren't meant as a vocabulary drill for your little ones.)

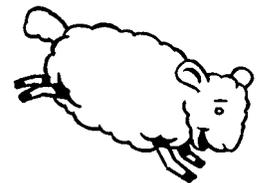
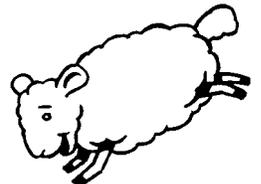
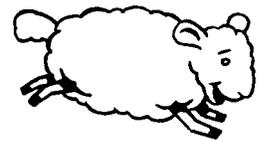
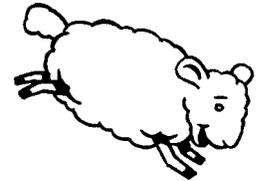
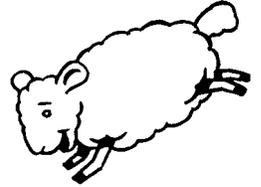
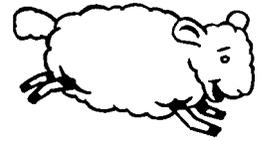
## Notes to Leaders

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- This may be the very first time some of your little ones hear about God and Jesus. Understanding will come as you share stories from the Bible with them and as you model God's love to them.
- The theme song, Bible Words, and theme action rhyme are introduced at circle time during each session (see Introduction, p. 21). Sing as

many of the other suggested songs as you have time for without introducing too many new things at one time.

- You will need pictures of each child for the art center activity in session 2. You'll want to bring a camera to your first session and take at least one picture of each child. (The children may be most comfortable if you casually take their pictures during free-play time.) Get double or triple prints of the pictures for future use. If you have a digital camera, save one picture of each child on your computer and print one for your next session.
- To avoid confusion about who is authorized to pick up a child, request a photo of each child with these people. (Ask parents to do this as part of the registration process, and be sure they write the names of each person on the back of the photo.)



## Theme

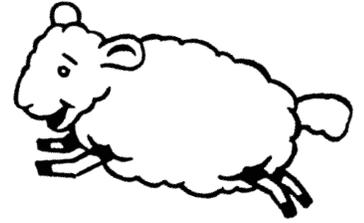
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LET THE CHILDREN COME

## Session 1

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# Welcome to Little Lambs



## Scripture

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MATTHEW 18:5

## Goals for Today

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### CHILDREN WILL BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO

- get acquainted with the room and routine for Little Lambs.
- meet the leaders.
- feel welcomed and safe.

## Reflection

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Imagine driving into New York City or Los Angeles for the first time. New sights. New sounds. Scary choices.

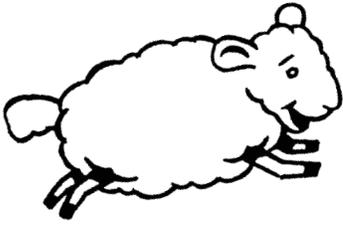
For twos and threes, coming to Little Lambs is a brand-new experience. They may feel overwhelmed and anxious, something like you might feel when visiting a big city for the very first time. To ease their separation anxiety, plan plenty of time for the children to get acquainted with you and with each other, with the room setup, and with the routine.

Although we haven't included a Bible story in this first session, you'll want to keep Jesus' words foremost in your mind: "*Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me*" (Matthew 18:5). Call children by name, dry their tears, play with them, let them know how happy you are that they came. Soon they'll sense that Little Lambs is a safe and welcoming place.

What you do today goes far beyond making a child feel welcomed. You're helping these little ones begin a lifelong journey with God. As they experience God's love through you, our prayer is that you will enjoy the journey with them.



Remember to bring a camera to this session. Next week you will need pictures of each child for the art center activity.



## Circle Time

---

To transition the children from free play or a center activity, begin playing or singing the theme song “Here We Are Together” (p. 474; CD, track 1). Gather the children around you in a designated place, either seated on the floor, on child-size chairs, or on carpet squares. If the centers are set up, try to seat the children facing a wall or corner with their backs to the centers. It’s not so important to make a perfect circle as it is to get everyone seated in an open space where they can see you. Explain that you will have *circle time* in this very same place every time the children come to Little Lambs.

Introduce yourself, using the name and title that you would like the children to use. For example, you might say, “My name is Miss Diane (Ms. Diane, Mrs. Dykgraaf). I will be here every time you come to Little Lambs.” Introduce the other adults in the same way.

Then make a show of introducing your Little Lambs puppet—your very special friend Willie Woollie. Encourage the children to touch him, hug him, or clap to welcome him to Little Lambs. Have Willie express his joy for each child around the circle—new friends he just can’t wait to play with! Agree with Willie that you’re going to have a wonderful time at Little Lambs.

### Theme Song

“Here We Are Together” (p. 474; CD, track 1)

Once everyone is settled in, sing the theme song again. Sing (or say) the names slowly and clearly. Look each child in the eye; lightly touch each child, or point to the child as you say each name.

### Other Suggested Songs

“Jesus Loves Me” (p. 475; CD, track 2)

“Clap, Clap, Clap” (p. 476; CD, track 3)

Little ones may not sing during circle time. That’s OK—they love to listen to others sing and may join in on the clapping. Make sure leaders are ready to hold a child who may be crying or full of wiggles.

### Bible Words

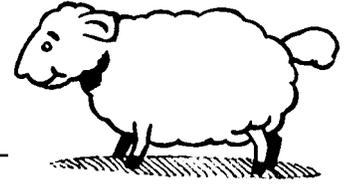
*Note:* We’ll introduce the Bible words from Mark 10:14 during story time in this session only. In all other sessions, the Bible words are part of circle time.

### Theme Action Rhyme

“God Loves You” (p. 46)

Say the words slowly so that the children can mimic each motion (see illustrations on p. 46).

# Bible Story



## Materials for Telling the Story

- Story quilt, story field
- Story box, Bible, take-home card (Getting Acquainted, Session 1)

## Preparation

Ahead of time, select a quilt for story time and prepare the story field and story box. (See directions in the Introduction, p. 21.) Place the take-home card in your Bible at Mark 10:14.

## Story Time

Spread out the story quilt and invite the children to come to this area. Explain that the quilt is a comfy place to sit, and then show them how to sit all around the edge with legs crossed. Make sure the children save a spot for Willie Woollie too. (A shy child might be willing to sit right next to Willie.) Recognize that it will take a few weeks before the children have this routine down pat!

Spread out the story field and tell everyone to “look right here!” Open your story box and take out the Bible; lay it open on the story field. Explain that every time the children come to Little Lambs they will hear a story from God’s book, the Bible.

To make sure everyone is ready to sit still, do this little hand exercise and have the children mimic your actions:

Open them, close them,  
open them, close them;  
give a little clap!  
Open them, close them,  
open them, close them;  
fold them in your lap.

Then say this story call with the motions:

Sshh! (*bring index finger to lips*)  
It’s time (*point to watch*)  
to hear (*cup hand around ear*)  
God’s story. (*hold hands open with palms up like a book*)



Take extra time the first few sessions to practice the “settling down” routine. Repeat the directions about sitting on the edge of the quilt, crossing legs, putting hands in laps, and listening quietly. You’ll also want to emphasize that the children should not touch the story visuals while you’re telling the story. In a few weeks, your little ones will be very pleased that they know exactly what to do even before you tell them.

*The story follows:*

**(Explain to your little ones that today you want to read some very special words from God’s book, the Bible.)** Jesus said,

*“Let the children come to me.”*

—Mark 10:14, NIV

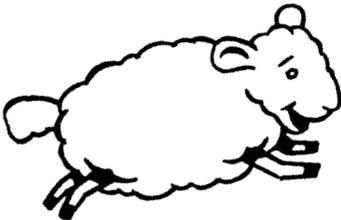
God loves you [name each child] very much!

### **Prayer**

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for these little ones. Amen.

To signal that story time is over, ask the children to help you fold up the quilt and put it away—always in the same place each time.



## **Play Center Activities**

Learning through play is the best way! For this first session, set up the centers as described in the Introduction (pp. 16-19). Plan time early in the session to take the children on a tour of the centers, and show them what happens in each one. Allow time too for free play in the centers. **(If you don’t have space for all the centers, see the Introduction, p. 17, for suggestions about storing supplies and so on.)**



### **Play-Doh Center**

#### **MATERIALS**

- Child-size rolling pins
- Heart-shaped cookie cutters

## DIRECTIONS

Gather the children around the table. Demonstrate how to roll out the Play-Doh and cut out heart shapes. If you have time, let each child make a heart or feel the ones you've made. Say that hearts remind us that God loves us.

Explain that Play-Doh is not food; we don't eat it! And then introduce this rule: *Play-Doh always stays at the table*. Emphasize that it cannot be taken to another place and that everyone must try very hard not to spill it on the floor.



## Art Center

### MATERIALS

- Heart stickers (one per child plus extras)
- Half-sheets of copy paper or construction paper (one per child)

## DIRECTIONS

Gather the children around the table, and explain that this is the place where they will make things with paper, stickers, colors, glue, and so on. Just for fun today while you're touring the centers, place a heart sticker on each child's hand. Tell children that it's to remind them that God loves them. During free-play time, offer half-sheets of paper and more stickers, and encourage the children to make an interesting design with the stickers.



## Game Center

### MATERIALS

- Building blocks

## DIRECTIONS

For this first time, set out a supply of building blocks. As you invite the children to help you make a big high tower, sing "This Is the Way" (p. 480; CD, track 6):

This is the way we stack the blocks,  
stack the blocks, stack the blocks.

This is the way we stack the blocks.

It's fun to sing and play. (*knock the tower down—ker-plunk!*)

—Traditional, altered

You'll note that this same tune is used for pick-up time. You might sing the last line like this: "It's fun to share our toys."



## Housekeeping Center

### MATERIALS

- Dolls
- Stuffed animals
- Willie Woolie puppet

### DIRECTIONS

For this session, place dolls and stuffed animals in beds, on the child-size chairs, and so on. Reintroduce Willie Woollie, and explain that these dolls and animals are Willie's friends. Willie loves to come to Little Lambs to play with his friends.

Encourage your little ones to play with them too, and emphasize that everyone's a friend at Little Lambs. Model care and respect as you gently return some of the friends to their places. Explain that the dolls and animals stay right here in their house, and they'll be waiting for the children when they come again.



## Village Center

### MATERIALS

- Fisher Price cars
- Fisher Price people

### DIRECTIONS

Show the children how to "drive" the cars on the road map. Pretend you are driving to Little Lambs, and ask the children who brought them today. Express your joy that each little one came to Little Lambs. Show the children how you will keep the cars and people inside the house or church when everyone is finished playing. They'll be here next time too!



## Storybook Center

### MATERIALS

- Board books
- Touch-and-feel books
- Teddy bears

### DIRECTIONS

Lay out enough books so that an adult can read to two or three children.

Explain that the storybook corner is a quiet place to cuddle up with a book—and [name your leaders] want to do that right now! Take time to read at least one book in each smaller group. Leave the books out so that the children can come back to this center during free-play time or if they're having a hard time separating from parents. (Cuddling with a teddy bear can comfort a scared or very shy child.)

## Pick-up Time

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To help your little ones realize that it's almost time to put things away, begin playing and singing "This Is the Way" (p. 480; CD, track 6):

This is the way we pick up toys,  
pick up toys, pick up toys.  
This is the way we pick up toys.  
It's fun to work and play.

—Traditional, altered

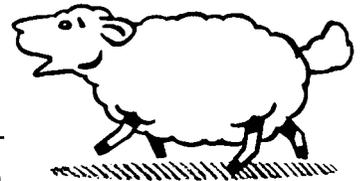
Encourage the children to help you, and praise them when they do. Keep singing as you pick up toys so that the children associate the tune with this time in your schedule. (If you wish, insert other words in place of "toys".)

## Snack Time

---

As the children are seated around a table, explain that you will have a snack every time they come to Little Lambs. Introduce this routine, and follow this order each time:

- Give each child a moistened wipe for washing hands. This is a must to prevent the spread of "bugs" so common to little ones.
- Lay a napkin on the table in front of each child.



- Say a simple prayer like this (we'll stress the prayer routine more in session 4):  
For this good food  
we thank you, God. Amen.
- Give each child three animal crackers.
- Give each child water in a small cup. (Remember, two-year-olds may be used to a cup with a lid. Try using 3- to 4-oz. plastic-coated bathroom cups filled about half way. Keep paper towels handy to wipe up spills.)



Remember to send the first Bible story card  
(Get Acquainted, Session 1) home with each child.  
(See suggestion regarding three-ring binders or loose-leaf  
rings on p. 31 in the Introduction.)

# Unit 1: God's World

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The Bible stories in Unit 1 are taken from the first chapter of the book of Genesis. *“In the beginning, God created . . .”* (Genesis 1:1). Although twos and threes may not understand the concept of God creating something from nothing, young children are curious and ready to explore God’s great big world. They express joy and amazement at everything from ants to zebras. God, *“You have made sure that children and infants will praise you”* (Psalm 8:2).

## Theme

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### GOD MADE OUR GREAT BIG WORLD

## Theme Song

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“HIP, HIP, HOORAY (HIPPOPOTAMUS)” (p. 481; CD, track 7)

In the beginning, God made the sea— (*make waves with one hand*)  
and the forest filled with trees. (*make a large circle with arms extended  
in front of you*)

He made the mountains up so high. (*tent hands together in front of you  
and move them upward*)

On the very top he placed the sky. (*spread raised open hands  
heavenward*)

*Chorus:*

Hip, hip, hip, hippopotamus! (*extend round arms at side, and sway  
from side to side imitating a large animal*)

Hip, hip, hooray, (*turn around*) God made all of us. (*pound fists on  
each other; point to self*)

Hip, hip, hip, hippopotamus, (*extend round arms at side, and sway  
from side to side imitating a large animal*)

hip, hip, hooray, (*turn around*) he made us. (*pound fists on each other;  
point to self*)

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Motions: *Mary Rice Hopkins and Company: Live! In Concert* (video); © 1990, Maranatha! Music (a division of The Corinthian Group, P.O. Box 31050, Laguna Hills, CA 92654). Used by permission.

Words and music for the theme song are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the CD *Songs for Little Lambs*.

## OTHER SUGGESTED SONGS

“Here We Are Together” (p. 474; CD, track 1)

“God Made Me, Every Part You See” (p. 483; CD, track 8)

Words and music for these songs are in the Songs section of this program guide and on the CD *Songs for Little Lambs*.

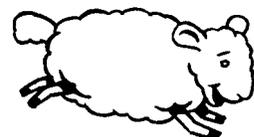
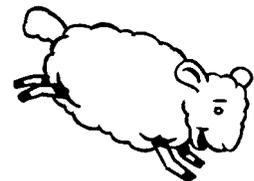
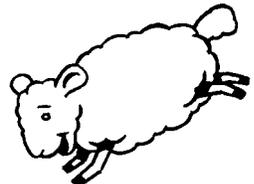
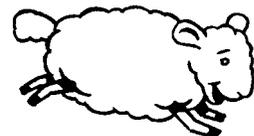
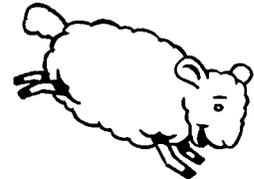
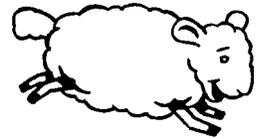
## Bible Words

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*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

—Genesis 1:1, NIV

Say the words while you clap the rhythm; then have the children echo the words and clap like this:



In the beginning, (*clap, clap; echo*)  
God created (*clap, clap; echo*)  
the heavens and the earth. (*clap, clap, clap; echo*)  
Genesis 1:1 (*clap, clap, clap; echo*)

## **Theme Action Rhyme**

---

### **“AND IT WAS GOOD!”**

God made day for work and play. (*run in place*)  
God made night for quiet sleep. (*rest head on hands*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

God made the big blue sky, (*spread arms out to make a huge circle*)  
grass so green, and ocean waves. (*make waving motion*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

God made the sun and moon so round (*make a big circle with hands*)  
and stars that twinkle in the sky. (*make twinkling motion with fingers*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

God made fish that swim (*make swimming motion with hands*)  
and birds that fly so high. (*make flying motion with arms*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

God made the animals—cows that moo (*cup hands around mouth, “moo”*)  
and silly monkeys at the zoo. (*flap arms against sides, chuckle*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

God made people big and small. (*stretch up, crouch down*)  
God made you, and God made me! (*point out, then to self*)  
And it was good! (*clap, clap; echo; clap, clap*)

The six verses of this rhyme correspond with the six creation sessions in Unit 1. Teach the first verse with session 1; then add a verse with each new session. Say a phrase, and have the children mimic your actions and echo the words of the last line.

## **Big Words**

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- Created  
God *created* our great big world. Help your little ones realize that God made everything in our world. And it was good!

## Notes to Leaders

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- We've chosen to focus the creation sessions on *what* God made rather than on *when* God made everything in our world. Keeping track of day one, day two, and so on is difficult for little ones.
- If your schedule doesn't permit devoting six sessions to the creation story, you could combine sessions to correspond with the creation stories in the God Loves Me series of Bible storybooks (Patricia L. Nederveld, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 468).

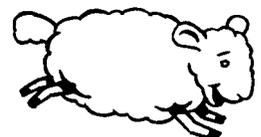
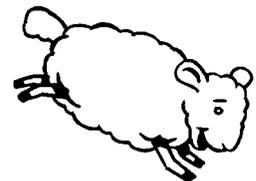
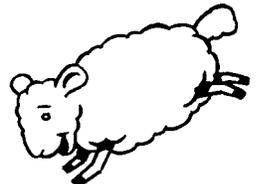
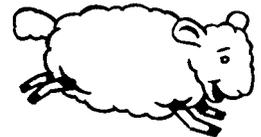
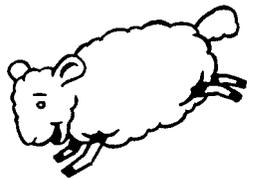
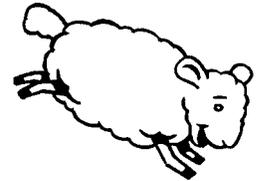
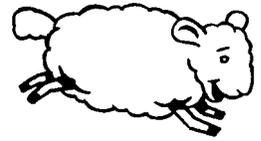
*Blue and Green and Purple Too! The Story of God's Colorful World* combines the stories in sessions 1, 2, and 3.

*It's a Noisy Place! The Story of the First Creatures* tells the stories in sessions 4 and 5.

*Adam and Eve: The Story of the First Man and Woman* tells the story in session 6.

*Take Care of My World! The Story of Adam and Eve in the Garden* tells a bit more about the story in session 6.

- In session 6, we've suggested making a collage of pictures of children and leaders for circle time activities (see p. 130). If you don't already have a set of pictures, plan to take pictures early during this unit.



## Theme

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GOD MADE OUR GREAT BIG WORLD

## Session 1

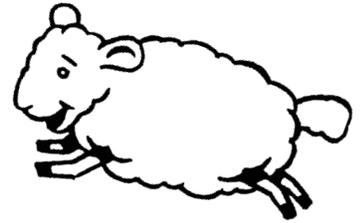
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# God Made Day and Night

## Scripture

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GENESIS 1:3-8



## Goals for Today

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### CHILDREN WILL BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO

- realize that God made day and night.
- thank God for making day and night.

## Reflection

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Night and day. Light and dark. From the beginning, God planned our days to be filled with light for work and play and our nights to be subdued for quiet time and sleep.

Even young children recognize the regularity of God's creation. They soon develop morning and evening routines that define their twenty-four-hour day. Their biological clocks tune in to light and dark as easily as their fingers flick on and off the light switch they can barely reach.

But the wonder for all of us to grasp is that God merely spoke the words "*Let there be light!*" God's first creative word ordered light to come into the darkness, and it came! "*God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day.' He called the darkness 'night.' There was evening, and there was morning. It was day one*" (Genesis 1:3-5).

And for countless numbers of days, it is still evening and morning. God's creation is good! We praise God's name!

## Circle Time

---

Welcome your little ones and Willie Woollie to your big round circle. Note what a beautiful day it is in God's great big world!





Even though we'll introduce a new theme song for each unit, you'll want to use the theme song "Here We Are Together" from the Getting Acquainted sessions to help your little ones transition from free play or center activities to circle time each time.

### **Theme Song**

"Hip, Hip, Hooray (Hippopotamus)" (p. 481; CD, track 7)

### **Other Suggested Songs**

"Here We Are Together" (p. 474; CD, track 1)

"God Made Me, Every Part You See" (p. 483; CD, track 8)

### **Bible Words**

*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

—Genesis 1:1, NIV

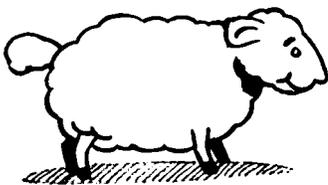
Encourage leaders and children to clap the rhythm and echo the words as described on page 84.

### **Theme Action Rhyme**

"And It Was Good" (p. 84)

Teach just the first verse of the rhyme this time. Repeat it once or twice until the children can echo your words with little prompting.

If you wish to add visuals, use the creation piece you'll use to tell the story (see preparation directions, p. 89). You'll note that we've printed the corresponding rhyme on the back of each pattern.



## **Bible Story**

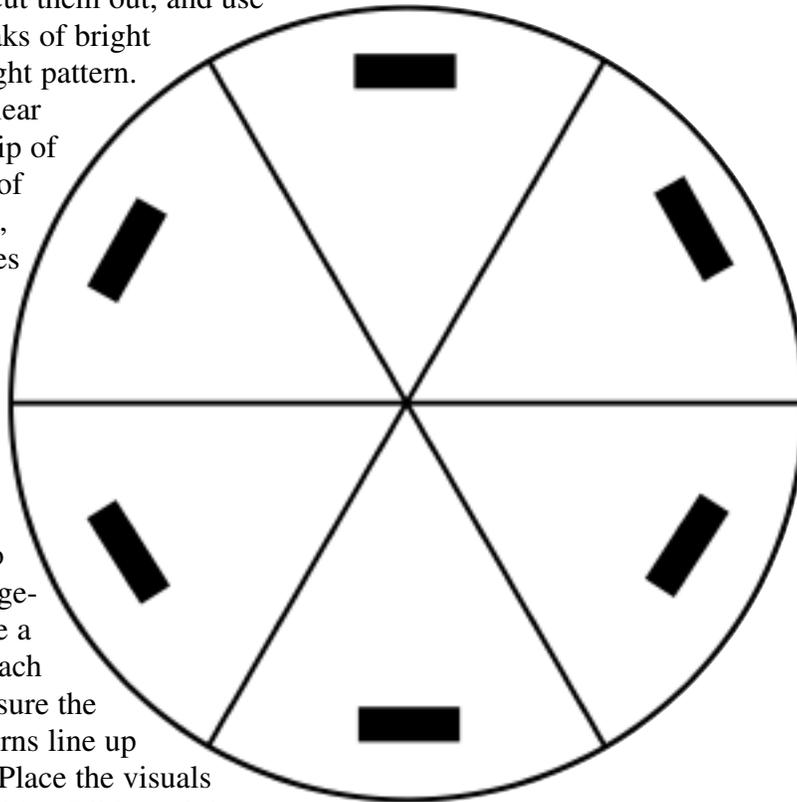
### **MATERIALS**

- Story quilt, story field
- Story box, Bible, take-home card (Unit 1, Session 1)
- Creation puzzle pieces (patterns 1-1A through 1-1B)
- Cardstock
- Scissors, yellow and pink highlighters
- Laminate or clear Contact paper, black Velcro
- Black posterboard

## Preparation

During this and the next five sessions, you'll be assembling a puzzle to depict God's creation. Ahead of time, photocopy patterns 1-1A (light) and 1-1B (dark) on cardstock. Cut them out, and use highlighters to make streaks of bright yellow and pink on the light pattern. Laminate or cover with clear Contact paper; place a strip of black Velcro on the back of each pattern. (If you wish, prepare these puzzle pieces at the same time: 1-2A to 1-2C, 1-3A and 1-3B, 1-4A and 1-4B, 1-5A, 1-6A and 1-6B.)

Cut a circle 15" (38 cm) in diameter from black posterboard; draw lines to divide the circle into wedge-shaped sections, and place a piece of black Velcro in each section as shown. (Make sure the Velcro pieces on the patterns line up with those on the circle.) Place the visuals in your story box along with a Bible and the story card for this session.



## Story Time

Spread out the story quilt as your signal for the children to gather around you. Place the story field in front of you, and invite the children to join you for your hand exercise:

Open them, close them,  
open them, close them;  
give a little clap!  
Open them, close them,  
open them, close them;  
fold them in your lap.

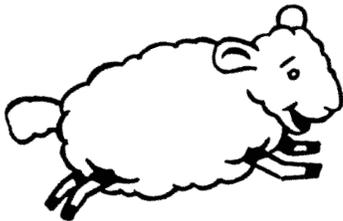
Take your Bible from the story box, and open it to Genesis 1. Show the children that you will tell them the very first story in God's book, the Bible. Then say and do the motions for your story call:

Shhh! (*bring index finger to lips*)  
It's time (*point to watch*)  
to hear (*cup hand around ear*)  
God's story. (*hold hands open with palms up like a book*)



## Storytelling Options

For a storybook version of the first four days of God's creation (from Genesis 1:1-19), read *Blue and Green and Purple Too! The Story of God's Colorful World* (Patricia L. Nederveld, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 468 and Notes to Leaders, p. 85). Young children learn through repetition and will benefit from hearing this story three sessions in a row. Gather them close, and hold the book up so they can enjoy the beautiful pictures too.



### *The story follows:*

A very long time ago, God's world was empty. Everything was dark. **(Lay the black circle on the story field.)**

But our great God was there. And God said, "Let there be light!" And a bright, beautiful light came into the darkness. **(Place the light pattern along one edge of the black circle.)** God called the light "day." God gave us daytime to run and play.

God called the dark "night." **(Place the dark pattern under the light pattern to form a pie-shaped wedge.)** God gave us nighttime to rest our sleepy eyes.

And God said, "Light and dark are very good!" We say, "Thank you, God, for day and night!"

### Prayer Time

Dear God,  
Thank you for making day and night. Thank you for time to play and sleep.  
Amen.

## Play Center Activities

Learning through play is the best way! **Choose only as many activities as your space and schedule allow, and provide plenty of time for the children to choose their own activities and to play individually in the play centers.**



### Play-Doh Center

#### MATERIALS

- White Play-Doh
- Red and green food coloring
- Play-Doh tools (optional)
- Black markers (optional)

#### DIRECTIONS

Ahead of time, make a shade of dark Play-Doh by kneading red and green food coloring into white Play-Doh. You'll need a small ball of dark and white for each child.

As you give each child two balls of Play-Doh, use the words *light* and *dark*. Encourage the children to roll out the dough and cut out shapes from each

color. Or, if you have them, show the children how to squeeze the dough through Play-Doh tools (available in most toy departments). Say, “I’m so glad God made light and dark, day and night!”



If you prefer not to make dark Play-Doh, have the children use black markers to make streaks in the white dough.



### Art Center

#### MATERIALS

- Black construction paper (one sheet per child)
- White, yellow, pink sidewalk chalk
- Hair spray in aerosol can
- Ziploc bags (one per child)

#### DIRECTIONS

Set out black construction paper and sidewalk chalk. Show the children how to rub the chalk over the black paper to make streaks of color. Talk about how beautiful the *light* colors look on the *dark* background—like lights shining on a dark night. To set the colors, spray lightly with hair spray. Send the pictures home in Ziploc bags.



### Game Center

#### MATERIALS

- Sheet of black posterboard
- Poster putty
- Flashlights

#### DIRECTIONS

Hang a sheet of black posterboard in a corner of your room where you can shut off some of the lights. Show the children how to make interesting *light* designs by shining flashlights on the *dark* background. Talk about the light God made and how it’s light during daytime and dark during nighttime.



## Housekeeping Center

### MATERIALS

- Dolls
- Small rocking chairs (optional)
- Doll beds, blankets
- Bottles

### DIRECTIONS

Encourage the children to rock their dolls to sleep and put them to bed for nighttime. Practice being very quiet and restful; shut off some lights if possible. After a time, remind them to wake their babies for daytime and to feed them and play with them. Thank God for day and night.



## Village Center

### MATERIALS

- Houses
- Little people
- Cars, buses

### DIRECTIONS

Set up your village center as usual, but make sure you have some houses, people, cars, and buses. Invite the children to imagine that it is daytime. Daddies and mommies go to work, cook and clean and do laundry at home, go shopping, and so on. Children play or go to school. Then ask them to pretend that it is nighttime. It is dark outside. Everyone is tired and sleepy. Children snuggle in their beds. It's time to say our prayers: "Thank you, God, for making day. Thank you, God, for making night."



## Story Book Center

### MATERIALS

- God Loves Me books
- Other books about God's world

## DIRECTIONS

You'll want to include these beautifully illustrated books from the God Love Me series (Patricia L. Nederveld, CRC Publications—see Other Suggested Resources, p. 468) in your book center during this unit:

- *Blue and Green and Purple Too! The Story of God's Colorful World*
- *It's a Noisy Place! The Story of the First Creatures*
- *Adam and Eve: The Story of the First Man and Woman*
- *Take Good Care of My World! The Story of Adam and Eve in the Garden*

Add other books that talk about the things God made. (Check your church library or your public library.) When you read the stories, ask who made all these wonderful things that we enjoy. Say, "Thank you, God, for making [\_\_\_\_\_]."

## Pick-Up Time

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Begin singing your pick-up song, "This is the way we pick up toys (blocks, books, and so on) . . ." (p. 480; CD, track 6). Take a little one by the hand as you wiggle your way from center to center recruiting helpers.

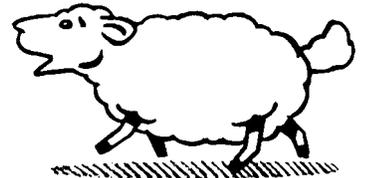
## Snack Time

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Follow your usual hand-washing and napkin routine, and ask your little ones to help you say this prayer:

For this good food  
we thank you, God. Amen.

Even though they are quite sweet, Oreo cookies are a fun way to illustrate light and dark. Serve one or two with water (or milk if you're sure no one is allergic to dairy products). It's extra fun to twist the *dark* cookies apart and lick the sweet *light* filling!



Remember to send a Bible story card  
(Unit 1, Session 1) home with each child.