

### Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

#### Early Learning Content Standards

Identify matching sounds and recognize rhymes in familiar stories, poems, and songs (*English Language Arts I.1*).

Hear sounds in words by isolating the syllables of a word using snapping, clapping, or rhythmic movement (*Language Arts I.2*).

Differentiate between sounds that are the same and different (e.g. environmental sounds, animal sounds, phonemes) (*Language Arts I.3*).

Recognize when words share phonemes (sounds) and repeat common phoneme (e.g. /b/ as in ball, baby; /t/ as in Matt, kite, boat) (*Language Arts I.4*).

### Letter Sound Scavenger Hunt

Mark a number of LEGO blocks with letters from the alphabet (write the letters on with marker, or stick a small label on them to be removed later). Hide the LEGO blocks all over the play area. The children must try to find as many blocks as they can and place them in bags (like an Easter egg hunt).

Once all the LEGO blocks have been found, assemble the children in a group. One at a time, pull the LEGO bricks from the bags. Highlight each letter. Make the letter sound associated with each LEGO highlight examples of similar sounds in the room.

For example, pull out a LEGO marked with a "B." Say, "We found the LEGO with the letter B (show it). B sounds like this (make the /b/ sound)." Highlight things in the area that begin with that sound. "Here is a ball. /B/ for ball." Ask the children to find items with matching starting sounds. If the children struggle to find items, give your own examples, but be sure to have the children mimic the sounds they hear for each letter. You will not be able to feature every letter sound. Select some that are easily recognized, including letters in the children's names (/b/ like Billy, or /s/ like Susan).

### Music Exploration

Provide musical instruments for the children.

Allow children to use tambourines, bells, shakers, drums, or other home-made instruments to make various sounds.

Help the children use comparison language to discuss the sounds they hear. Which sound is loudest? Which is softest?

It may be helpful to collect the instruments from the children during discussion time. Play an instrument for the children and allow them to compare the sounds.

For example, bang on a drum, then tap a tambourine. Ask the children if the sounds are the same or different. Help them make observations about differences and sameness in sounds.

If desired, allow children to play instruments during music or singing time. Put varying numbers of LEGO blocks into a jar; allow the children to shake the jar and note differences in the sound.

### Simple Rhyming Practice

Read the poems/rhymes to the children and highlight rhyming words. Help the children hear the "sameness" of the rhyming sounds by saying the rhyming words close to each other.

For example, after reading, you can ask the children "Do you hear the lines that sound the same? *Sam I am* and *green eggs and ham*? Ham and Sam rhyme."

Help the children find objects in the room that rhyme. Begin by showing them two objects that rhyme (chair/bear; clock/sock; book/hook). Ask the children to say the rhyming words with you. Ask the children to look around the room and find objects that rhyme. They may have trouble finding objects on their own, so be sure to coach them. Have many rhyming words and pictures in accessible to the children. This will take time and practice.

## **Syllables as Building Blocks**

Help the children recognize “word parts,” or syllables by doing this group exercise. Select one and two syllable words and practice clapping with the syllables.

For example, *Ap-ple* gets 2 claps, *Ball* gets 1 clap, etc. Use many different words and allow the children to practice counting the syllables. Count the syllables in each child’s name.

Select several multi-syllable words that will be familiar to the children. Start with 2 and 3 syllables at first, then build from there. Break down each word by syllable and put them onto LEGO blocks. For example, “Ap” on one block and “-ple” on another. Have the children “build” word by putting the LEGOs together, forming “Apple.” Two blocks will signify two syllables. Include a small picture with each word to help children identify what word is being built.

You can write the syllables onto paper and tape them onto actual LEGO-type blocks (larger blocks if possible) for the children to build. Or, cut colored paper into LEGO shapes and write the word-parts on them. Allow the children to stick the blocks together using tape. If time and interest allow, have the children sort the words by syllables (Take all the LEGO “words” the children built and sort them; all the 2 syllable words together, all the 3 syllable words together, etc.).

### **Materials Needed Today**

You will need

1. A variety of LEGO type blocks
2. Paint and paper; sponges cut in LEGO shapes
3. Labels (if desired) or paper and tape to put letters and words on blocks
4. A variety of noisemakers or musical instruments

## **“LEGO” Paintings**

Provide paper and paint for the children. Cut sponges into small rectangles (about the size of LEGOS). Allow the children to dip their sponges in paint and stamp them on their paper. Show the children how they can “build” with LEGOs on their paper by stamping different colored “bricks” side by side and on top of each other.

Reinforce literacy concepts during this activity by talking with the children and asking questions. For example, “Billy, what color are you using?” As the children work, ask questions and make comments related to the topics of the day. “Billy is using blue. Blue starts with /b/.” Or, “Red. Can anyone think of a word that rhymes with red?” Through simple discussion, this art project can serve as a basis for strengthening skills.

### **Things to Do at Morning Circle Time:**

- Acknowledge the day of the week, date, and weather
- Sing songs, Recite Rhymes
- Read a story
- Acknowledge “Who is here today?”; Help the children introduce themselves and others

### **Circle Time Activity**

#### **Tower Building Relay**

Build a small tower with LEGO bricks. Have the children form a line beside the tower. Place a pile of LEGO bricks across the play area. When you say, “Go!” the first child in line must run across the room, get one brick, bring it back, and add it to the LEGO tower. Then they tag the next player and sit down. One at a time, every child runs and retrieves a LEGO and adds it to the tower. Continue until all the children have had a turn adding a LEGO brick to the tower. Congratulate the children for their teamwork and point out what a great tower they built.

## The Creation: Genesis 1 and 2

### Biblical Concepts

God made all things.

All things made by God are good.

God made people and He loves them.

God made people to be creative like He is.

### Game

Play the water bottle game.

Place 8-10 water bottles in a line on the floor about 2 feet apart. Give the children a stick or tube of some sort and a small ball. Let the children take turns batting the ball in between the water bottles with the stick/tube and weave in between the bottles from one end to the other.

Or, let them kick a small soccer ball in between the bottles, weaving back and forth.

Remind the children how the Spirit of God moved back and forth over the waters when He made all things. Remind them of how good (and fun) God's creation is.

### Memory Verse

Share this verse with the children. Repeat it many times, and help children to recite it after you.

Verse: Genesis 1:1  
"In the beginning, God made all things."

### Story

Read Genesis 1 and 2 to the children. Use a children's Bible or storybook with pictures to tell the story of creation. *The Jesus Storybook* is a great resource; see the chapter called "The Song of Creation."

Allow the children to build with LEGO blocks during or shortly after story time. Draw parallels between God's creation and the children's creative buildings. Point out that God made us to be creative just like He is. Allow each child to share what they built with the group.

### Art

Create sand art to reflect the earth God created.

Review briefly the story of God's creation. Remind the children that God made the earth and everything in it. Remind the children that God formed people using the dust of the ground.

Make designs with glue on paper. Pour various colors of sand onto the paper (use sugar or salt if there is no sand). Shake off the excess sand and let the glue dry. Add more sand or glue as desired to create a desert on a piece of paper.

### Word Recognition

#### Early Learning Content Standards

Identify own name in print (*English Language Arts 1.5*).

Recognize and name some upper and lower case letters in addition to those in first name (*Language Arts 1.6*).

Recognize that words are made up of letters (e.g. c-a-t) (*Language Arts 1.7*).

### Animal Alphabet Game

Play the “Are you my mother?” alphabet game. Print or cut out pictures of corresponding adult and baby animals. For example, you may have a cow and a calf, a dog and a puppy, or a big elephant and a little elephant.

On the “big” animal write a capital letter; on the corresponding “little” animal, write the lower case letter. For example, write the capital “A” on a big anteater, and a lower case “a” on the little anteater.

Distribute the upper case letters to the children (have enough so that each child is holding 2-3 animals). Keep the lower case animals yourself. Tell the children that they are holding “Mommy” letters (upper case), and that you are holding all the baby letters (lower case). Tell them the baby animals need help finding their mommies.

One at a time, hold up a lower case letter for all the children to see. Ask them, “Who has this animal’s mommy?” Have the children look at their animals. The child with the matching animal should say, “Here it is!” Help the children if they get stuck.

When all the animals are matched, show the matched pair to the children with both letters side by side. Give plenty of help and practice.

### Letter Identification Game

Use magnetic letters, plastic letters, or letter cards for this activity. Put the letters into a bag and put it on the other end of the play area. In this game, the children will take turns moving to the bag and pulling out a letter. Then the children, with the help of the teacher, will identify the letter drawn from the bag.

When moving to the bag of letters, the children will act like an animal. For example, “It’s Timmy’s turn. Timmy, can you be a dog?” Then Timmy would move to the bag while pretending to be a dog (crawling, barking, etc). He will choose a letter from the bag and the group will identify it together. Post these letters for the children to see throughout the game. Give every child a turn being an animal/choosing a letter.

### Animal Word Puzzles

Before class, make “word-building” puzzles by printing pictures of various animals (or draw pictures). Under each picture, write or print the name of the item or animal represented.

Cut each picture/word card in half. This will make a series of two piece puzzles. Children can match the two halves of the picture and also match the two halves of the word.

For example, print a picture of a cat with the word “cat” under it. Cut the picture in half so that the picture of the cat is in two pieces and the word “cat” is split up, with the “c” on one side and the “at” on the other. As the children match the animal halves to complete the puzzle, they will also be building words. Create several animal puzzles using animals that will be familiar to the children.

Use these cards to help the children build words. Play a matching game with the children and help them understand the correlation between letters and the words they form.

## **Word Deconstruction Collage**

Before class, cut many words out of newspapers or magazines. Select larger print that will be easy to work with. Provide each child with some cut-out words and a pair of scissors.

Tell them, "We are going to break these words into letters."

Help the children cut the words in pieces, separating the individual letters. Collect the letters as they are cut out.

Once the words have been cut into letters, provide paper and glue/glue sticks for the children to use.

Demonstrate how to make a word on the page by gluing individual letters next to one another. Once the children understand the concept, allow them to make a print collage by gluing letters of their choosing onto the page. Consider adding pictures of animals (cut from newspapers/magazines) and helping the children spell out animal names below them.

(Note: At this stage of development, correct spelling of words is not a priority. This exercise is simply meant to provide children with an opportunity to interact with print, isolate individual letters from words, and put the letters together to form constructs. Exploration of print and text is more important at this stage than actual correctness).

### **Materials Needed Today**

You will need

1. A variety of toy letters, plastic or magnetic letters; various types of print
2. Paint and paper
3. Words cut from newspapers/magazines; scissors; glue; paper
4. A variety of pictures of animals; some with capital and lower case letters, some with words
5. Kick balls (or other balls)

## **Name Painting**

Help each child turn their printed name into a work of art. Provide paper for each child. Write each child's name on their paper in large letters. Help them use their finger to trace the lines, "writing" their name with their finger. Highlight the letters in each child's name. For example, "Billy, your name starts with a B."

After a few minutes of practice tracing, introduce some finger paint. Have the children trace the written name in finger paint.

Consider providing glitter or other art supplies for the children to add to their name.

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### **Circle Time Activity**

#### **Penguin Waddle Race**

Show the children a toy penguin, or a picture of a penguin. Explain to them that in this game, they are going to waddle like a penguin.

Use medium -sized kick balls for this activity. Have the children place a ball between their knees and race to a designated area without dropping the ball.

### A New Beginning: Noah's Ark

#### Biblical Concepts

God loves all His creatures.

God acts mightily to save His creation.

God rescues people from danger.

God give us a new beginning.

#### Game

Emphasize God's salvation in Noah's story. Say, "Let's play a game to help us remember good things about God."

Place one block on the floor. Have each child jump over the block, and as they jump, say one thing about God (He loves us, He is good, etc.). Help children remember things about God from the story (He saved Noah, etc.).

After each child has jumped over the block, repeat the game, but add another block on top. Have the children jump over two blocks, then three, and as many as they can safely jump over.

#### Memory Verse

Share this verse with the children. Repeat it many times, and help children to recite it after you.

Verse: John 3:16

"God loved the world so much, He gave His only Son."

#### Story

Read Genesis 6 to the children, the story of Noah's Ark. Use a children's Bible or storybook with pictures to tell the story of creation. *The Jesus Storybook* is a great resource; see the chapter called "A New Beginning."

Allow the children to play with toy animals during or after the story. Remind them of the beauty and diversity of God's creation, and His love for all His creatures.

#### Art

Help the children create Noah's ark.

Cut paper plates in half. Give one half of a plate to each child. With the rounded side facing down, this will form the basic boat shape.

Help the children paint their paper plate brown. Help them cut a house shape out of brown paper to glue along the flat edge of the plate (the top of the boat). Include various other supplies for the children to add to their ark.

If possible, provide animal pictures or stickers for the children to stick on their ark when they are finished.

### Reading Applications

#### Early Learning Content Standards

Identify characters in favorite books and stories (*English Language Arts V.1*).

Retell or re-enact events from a story through a variety of media and play (e.g. dramatize a favorite story) (*Language Arts V.2*).

Begin to demonstrate an understanding of the differences between fantasy and reality (*Language Arts V.3*).

Participate in shared reading of repetitious or predictable texts (*Language Arts V.4*).

Predict what might happen next during the reading of a text (*Language Arts III.5*).

### Character Artwork

Using a story that has been shared with the children, have the children identify their favorite character.

It may be helpful to discuss what a character is with the children. Ask the children and note their responses. Then tell them, "Characters are the people and animals which stories are about." Give them examples from the story you've chosen (e.g. "In this story, our characters are the 3 little pigs and the big bad wolf, etc.).

When the children have selected the character they like most, have them draw a picture of that character. Provide a variety of art supplies to be included in the pictures. Encourage the children to portray a scene from the story or a particular trait or action of the character they selected. Have them dictate to you what they have created and write their description of the picture at the bottom of the page.

(Remember, the children's pictures may not be recognizable to you, but, at this stage, emphasize exploration and expression over accuracy. Allow the children to create their own picture and document their description verbatim).

### Dramatic Re-enactment

Read a simple story to the children. Choose a familiar story or nursery rhyme that is simple enough for the children to remember (e.g. 3 little pigs, humpty dumpty, little Red Riding Hood). Read or tell the story.

Provide props and costumes for the children. Help the children act out the events of the story using props. The teacher may need to serve as a narrator to help coach the children.

For example, "First, the big bad wolf knocked on the pig's door," (Then the child playing the wolf would act out that action).

Allow different children to play the roles of the story, switching and taking turns as appropriate.

### Book Cover Predictions

Making predictions is an important literacy skill to acquire. Help the children practice with this activity. Choose a book that has a picture on the cover. Before you read, show the children the cover of the book. Ask them to look at the picture and predict what will happen in the book. Highlight the features on the cover and engage the children in conversation.

Ask, "What do you see on the cover of this book?" Allow the children to respond. Ask, "What do you think will happen in the story?" Allow the children to respond. For example, the children may see a bear on the cover of the book and predict that the story will be about a bear.

Help the children to see many features on the cover. For example, if there is a rain cloud on the cover, perhaps the story will be about rain, etc. Finally, tell the children the title of the story. Ask them to make predictions based on the title. Read the story to the children. Revisit their predictions throughout the story.

## Real or Pretend?

Using a story that has been shared with the children, help the children draw parallels between elements in the story and real life.

Select items and characters from the selected story and bring in those items for the children to see. For example, if you choose to read "Jack and the Beanstalk," bring in a handful of beans. Remind the children of the magic beans in the story that grew a magic beanstalk; then let the children touch and explore real beans. Ask them, "If we throw these out the window, will they grow a magic beanstalk? Or is that just pretend?" Note their responses. Allow the children to experiment (perhaps by throwing some beans outside to see if the beanstalk grows).

Whichever story you choose, bring in actual items featured in the story. Facilitate a discussion about similarities and differences between the story version of the item and the real one.

### Materials Needed Today

You will need

1. A familiar story, rhyme, or poem
2. Various art supplies; paper; paper plates; string; scissors
3. Various props/costumes
4. A variety of items featured in familiar stories

## Explore Masks

Provide a paper plate for each child. Cut eye holes out of each plate (and a mouth opening if desired). Provide a variety of art supplies for the children to decorate their masks. Encourage the children to make a mask reflecting a character or creature they would like to be (for example, "This is my monkey mask," or, "This is my firefighter mask.").

When the children have finished decorating their masks, punch holes in either side of the plate. Tie string in the holes and fit it around the child's head, forming a mask.

Encourage the children to role play when wearing their masks, mimicking the traits or actions of their character.

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### Circle Time Activity

#### Role-Play Charades

Write various roles on small slips of paper. Include creatures (dinosaurs, various animals, etc.) and people (firefighter, swimmer, dancer, etc.). Allow the children to take turns pulling a slip of paper from a hat. Read the paper to the children, then have them all act out that role. Help coach the children and give them inspiration when they get stuck. Allow all the children to have a turn selecting a role from the hat.

### Joseph: The Forgiving Prince

#### Biblical Concepts

- God forgives us, so we can forgive others.
- God likes for us to be kind to our family.
- God never leaves us, even when we feel alone.
- What others mean for evil, God can make good.

#### Game

Briefly review the story of Joseph and his brothers.

This game is played like “Pin the tail on the donkey.” Draw a face on large sheet of paper. This will represent Joseph. Cut a crown shape out of paper.

Have each child take turns trying to pin the crown on Joseph’s head. They must close their eyes and try to stick the crown in the correct place without peeking.

Remind the children of how Joseph became a prince in the story. Play as long as time and interest allow.

#### Memory Verse

Share this verse with the children. Repeat it many times, and help children to recite it after you.

Verse: 1 John 1:9  
“Jesus forgives.”

#### Story

Read the story of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37-46) to the children. Use a children’s Bible or storybook with pictures to tell the story of creation. *The Jesus Storybook* is a great resource; see the chapter called “The Forgiving Prince.”

Allow the children to role-play, retell, or re-enact the story as time and interest allow.

#### Art

Tell the children, “Joseph was very happy to be with his brothers again. Let’s make some musical instruments to play when we are happy.”

Give each child 2 paper plates. Have each child decorate their paper plates using various art supplies.

Put the two plates together, one on top of the other with the bottom of each plate facing outward. Put beans in the middle of the two plates and staple along the edges to make “tambourines” for the children to play while singing songs.

### Conceptual Understanding

#### Early Learning Content Standards

Name items in common categories (e.g. animals, food, clothing, transportation) (*English Language Arts II.3*).

Demonstrate or orally communicate position and directional words (e.g. inside, outside, in front of, behind, etc.) (*Language Arts II.4*).

Recognize and demonstrate an understanding of environmental print (e.g. STOP on a stop sign) (*Language Arts II.2*).

### Create Print-Rich Classroom

For this activity, you will need a pad of Post-it Notes, or other small pieces of paper that can be stuck around the classroom.

Explain to the children that you will be labeling various items in the classroom. Tell the children that "labeling" is writing the name of an object and posting it.

Ask the children, "What should we label?" As the children choose things in the classroom, use a permanent marker to write the name of each item on a Post-it Note and then post it in the correct place. For example, write "Door" and allow the children to post it on the door.

Label as many items as possible. By the end of the activity, there should be labels all over the classroom. Be sure to do one label at a time and to declare aloud what each label says as you post it. The point of this activity is to place many printed words around the room that now have meaning to the children. Encourage the children to "read" various labels throughout the day. Ask them questions about words posted in the room.

### Environmental Signs

Tell the children, "I was out walking my dog in the neighborhood, and I saw a lot of signs." Provide examples of signs that might be seen in the neighborhood. These can be photographs taken in town, or images printed from the computer. Include traffic signs (stop sign, railroad crossing, crosswalk, bus stop, etc), local businesses (McDonald's, Pizza Hut, etc.), and other recognizable signs (library, fire station, etc.). Show each sign to the children and ask them if they recognize it; highlight the text on each sign.

Then, using the stop sign, play this game. Make sure all the children are familiar with the stop sign and the meaning of the text on it. This game is played like, "Red Light, Green Light." Have all the children stand in a line, side by side facing forward. Position yourself across the play area. When you say "Go!" all the children begin walking toward you. When you hold up the sign, they must all freeze in place. Continue going and stopping until one child reaches you. Then it is their turn to be the "Stop sign." Play as long as time and interest allow.

### Dog House Position Game

Make a house for a toy dog by turning a box upside down and cutting a door on one side. The more realistic your dog house looks, the more fun it will be. Place the stuffed dog in several locations relative to the house.

As you do this, have the children take turns telling you where the dog is, in relationship to the house. For example, they may say "The dog is in the house," or, "The dog is on top of the house". Other position could be next to, under, over, and behind. Encourage children to verbalize the position of the dog in correct terms as you move it (again, *demonstrating* an understanding of those words).

Finally, let the children take turns placing the dog in various locations while you describe where the dog is. Allow free play with toy dogs and the dog house if possible.

## Categorize Dog Supplies

Bring a variety of dog-related items. Include a variety of dog toys, leashes, dog collars, food dishes, treats, food etc.

The object of this game is to sort the dog items based on common categories. This is an important skill for early literacy, so be sure to give plenty of support and practice. Identify categories and help the children sort the items based on them.

For example, "Let's put all the food items in this area." Then allow the children to gather all food items and put them in one pile together. Repeat this process with different categories. For example, "Let's put all the toys together," or, "Let's put all things together that a dog would wear."

Increase the challenge by changing the categories. For example, "Let's put all the things together that a dog can fetch," or, "Let's gather all the things we will need to take the dog on a walk."

When items are gathered into a category, encourage the children to think of other items that could be included in the group but aren't present. "We have some chew toys here that a dog could play with. What other things could we add that a dog would enjoy?" Acknowledge and document the children's answers on a list.

### **Materials Needed Today**

You will need

1. A variety of community signs, pictures or photos; a STOP sign
2. Post-it Notes
3. Variety of dog items to be categorized
4. Stuffed toy dogs; a dog house made from a box
5. Toy dog bone or bone shape cut from paper

## Obedience School Game

This game is played like Simon Says, only the children pretend to be dogs. As "dog commands" are called out (Simon says sit, lie down, roll over, bark, beg, come, play dead, etc.), the children act them out.

Feature directional and positional words in your commands. The object of this activity is to give the children a chance to demonstrate their understanding of a wide variety of direction and position words. Use commands such as, "Sit on top of the rug," or, "Stand behind me," or, "Go outside the circle." Incorporate language such as, front, behind, above, below, inside, outside, around, under, through, forward, backward, etc.

Increase the challenge by giving more complex commands or giving the commands faster. Play as long as time and interest allow.

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### **Circle Time Activity**

#### **Doggy, Doggy, Where's Your Bone?**

Play this dog-themed game at circle time.

One child is chosen to be the "Doggy." This child must cover his or her eyes and count to ten.

While the "Doggy" is not looking, give one of the children in the circle a bone to sit on (a simple bone shape cut from paper will do).

All the children chant, "Doggy, doggy, where's your bone? Somebody stole it from your home. Guess who?" The child being the "Doggy" then must guess who is sitting on the bone. Give every child a turn to be the "Doggy."

### Moses and the Exodus

#### Biblical Concepts

God is mighty to save.

God works miracles.

God chooses people to help Him.

God delivers us from danger.

#### Game

Seat the children in a circle to play this Bible game, which is similar to "Duck, duck, goose."

The first volunteer will walk around the circle and tap the other children on the head. As they tap each child, they will say, "Jesus loves (Emma), Jesus loves (Billy), etc." They will name each child as they touch their head.

Instead of saying, "Goose," the child will pick someone and shout, "Friend!" The child chosen will get up, run around the circle in the opposite direction. When the volunteer and the chosen child meet, they stop, shake hands, and sit back down in the circle. Repeat as time and interest allows.

#### Memory Verse

Share this verse with the children. Repeat it many times, and help children to recite it after you.

Verse: Psalm 100:5  
"The Lord is good."

#### Story

Read the story of Moses and the Exodus to the children, based on Exodus 3-13. Use a children's Bible or storybook with pictures to tell the story of creation. *The Jesus Storybook* is a great resource; see the chapter called "God to the Rescue."

#### Art

Make heart rubbings. You will need several heart shapes cut out of cardboard, craft foam, or stiff paper.

Place the heart shapes under a piece of white paper. Use the side of some crayons to gently color all over the paper. The outline of the hearts under the paper should be visible as you draw over them.

Remind the children of the story, in which God protects Moses and his friends because He loves them so much. Tell the children that their heart picture can remind them of God's love for them.

### Concepts of Print/ Comprehension Strategies

#### Early Learning Content Standards

Hold books right side up, know people read books front to back, left to right, top to bottom (*English Language Arts III.2*).

Begin to distinguish print from pictures (*Language Arts III.3*).

Connect information or ideas in text to prior knowledge or experience (relating the story to their own life/experience) (*Language Arts III.6*).

Answer literal questions to demonstrate understanding (*Language Arts III.7*).

#### Story Time Interrogations

Read a story to the children. Tell them to keep their eyes and ears open like good detectives so they may answer the important questions that will arise.

Ask both literal questions and questions for reflection about the story. Responding to questions related to a text is an important skill for children to acquire.

Literal questions are questions that pertain to the facts of the story. For example, "What did the frog say to the dog?" or, "Where does the pig live?" etc. Reflection questions allow the children to draw parallels between the story and their own lives. For example, "What would you do if that happened to you?" or, "Has that ever happened to you?" or, "What is your favorite part of this story?" Ask a variety of both types of questions. Allow every child time to respond.

#### Book Detectives

Have every child select a book to hold during this activity. Challenge the children be a book detective and "find" and name the parts of the book correctly.

Begin by holding up a book and naming the various features to the children. Include such parts as the spine, the front cover, back cover, title, author's name, etc.

Play this game, similar to Simon Says. Say something like, "Show me the front cover." Every child must then hold up their book and point to the front cover. Ask the children to point out various features of the book such as the back cover, spine, pages, title, author name, etc.

Once the children are comfortable with the vocabulary, give commands incorporating different parts of the book. For example, "Put your nose on the front cover," or, "Touch your elbow on the spine of the book." To make it more challenging (if needed), give the commands faster. Play as long as time and interest allow.

#### Make a Investigator Notebook

Make a book with the children, featuring a front and back cover. Allow the children to choose a color of construction paper (to serve as the cover for their book). Provide 2-3 sheets of white or lined paper (to serve as the pages). Put the 2-3 pages on top of the colored construction paper. Fold all the sheets in half and staple them in the middle. The construction paper will be facing out, making a cover on the book.

Highlight the various features of the book (cover, pages, etc.). Encourage the children to decorate their front and back covers. Add their name to the book as the author's name. Help them give their book a title. Throughout the day, encourage the children to make notes about things they find, see, or do. Remind them that a good investigator always makes good notes.

## Police Car Reading Game

The purpose of this exercise is to help children recognize that print is read from top to bottom, left to right. On a large sheet of paper, write several lines of text. This can be a simple poem, a nursery rhyme, or some sentences about your class. Leave a large amount of space between each line.

Read the print to the children. Show them (with a pointer or by hand) how you read from top to bottom, left to right.

In between the lines of text, make a "road" by drawing a thick line or putting down a strip of paper. Provide a toy police car. Show the children how to move the car along the "road" just below each line in the correct direction (left to right). Let every child practice moving the car in the right direction. A child should start on the top line, moving the car left to right on the "road," then jump to the beginning of the next line.

Give every child a turn, and give several opportunities to practice.

### Materials Needed Today

You will need

1. A variety of books; a story to read to the children
2. Paper; various art supplies
3. Paper bag; items to hide; clues written on cards
4. Various examples of print and pictures
5. Large paper; toy police car

## Print/Picture Crime Lab

Discern print from pictures. Begin by showing the children print and pictures and explaining the difference. Point out that print is composed of letters and words while pictures are images. Scatter various forms of print and pictures on the floor. There should be many different examples of both print and pictures. Use police and crime scene related words and pictures (police car, officer, handcuffs, etc.). Simply spreading newspapers on the floor will also work.

Have the children stand around the edge of the play area. When you call out "Picture" the children must hurry and stand on a picture; when you say "Print" they must hurry and stand on print. Repeat this numerous times. Vary the commands to make play more fun. For example, "Put your hand on a picture," or "Put your foot on some print." Play as long as time and interest allow.

### Things to Do at Morning Circle Time:

- Acknowledge the day of the week, date, and weather
- Sing songs, Recite Rhymes
- Read a story
- Acknowledge "Who is here today?"; Help the children introduce themselves and others

### Circle Time Activity

#### Search for Clues

Place an item inside a paper bag (without being seen by the children). Tell the children that they are going to use their detective skills to guess what is in the bag. Write a series of clues/hints to help the children guess the item. Hide these cards all over the play area. Have the children hunt for clues; when the children find the clues, collect them. Read them to the group and have the children guess the item.

For example, if there is a toy bear in the bag, clues may include things like, "Something big and hairy," "lives in a cave," "has sharp teeth," etc. Play several times with different items.

## Joshua and the Battle of Jericho

### Biblical Concepts

God helps us be strong and courageous.

God delivers us from fear.

God acts mightily when His people obey in faith.

### Game

Remind them of the children of Israel walking in circles around the city of Jericho.

You will need paper plates, one for each child. On one plate, write "Do not be afraid!" in big letters. Place all the paper plates face down on the floor in a circle (the written phrase should be hidden under one of the plates).

Children will walk around the plates in a circle. After about ten seconds, call out, "Stop." Each child must stop in front of the plate nearest them. Have each child turn over the plate nearest them; one will find the plate with "Do not be afraid" written on it. Have this child show the plate to everyone and lead the children in repeating the words, "Do not be afraid." Put the plates back and repeat the game so other children have a turn finding the written phrase.

### Memory Verse

Share this verse with the children. Repeat it many times, and help children to recite it after you.

Verse: Joshua 1:9

"Do not be afraid; God is with you."

### Story

Read the story of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho (Joshua 3 and 4). Use a children's Bible or storybook with pictures to tell the story of creation. *The Jesus Storybook* is a great resource; see the chapter called "The Warrior Leader."

### Art

Help the children make trumpets like those blown by the children of Israel during the battle of Jericho.

Give each child a sheet of paper. Help the children roll the paper tightly into a tube and widen it slightly at one end. Secure the paper in place with tape. Help the children coat the paper in glue and roll it in glitter for decoration (or decorate the trumpet with paint, markers, or stickers).

When the paper dries, the children can play their trumpets and reenact the story.