

GROW kids



Welcome to Grow Kids!

Thank you for your commitment to sharing the love of Jesus with children in your congregation. As you lead each session, you are helping to **Grow Kids** in knowing Jesus and to respond to his love through worship and service.

We understand that often groups of children that gather for a children's ministry program are small and that the ages vary. This resource provides opportunities for you to tailor the sessions to suit your audience. The creative response is a suggestion, if you have a better idea, please feel free to make whatever tweaks and changes you need to meet the needs of the children in your group.

Grow Kids has a menu for each session. From it you are encouraged to select the items which best suit your situation. Thoughtful selection of menu items will help to provide the best experience for your group.

Consider the following:

- What priorities has the congregation set for its children's ministry program (e.g. encouraging Biblical literacy, learning the catechism or about what is happening in worship or with service projects)?
- What are the ages and interests of the children?
- What are your skills and interests?
- What time, physical resources, people resources, space and equipment, are available?

Arrangement of the session from the menu items is also vital for the effectiveness of the **Grow Kids** curriculum. Menu items are always listed in this resource in the same order; they need not be used in the order listed. Think of these menu items as a starting point. Select them, use them, adapt them to provide a session that helps to grow your children.



Spending time at the beginning of your session, by inviting the children and adults present to share about their week through highs and lows, provides an opportunity to build relationships within the group. It is these strong connections that will enhance your session and encourage participation. It helps the group feel more relaxed and therefore more open to listen and learn. It has long-term benefits too, by providing intergenerational interaction and care. We have also provided a question you might like to ask to guide the conversation and introduce the focus of the session.



Children love stories. Stories form a major part of the Bible. Some stories are historical narratives which tell us what actually happened. Others are picture stories, such as the parables of Jesus. From both we learn about God and his dealings with people.

It is likely that you will select **Story telling** regularly as a basic menu item. When you tell the Bible stories clearly and simply, you are helping children to hear God speak to them. In this menu item suggestions are given for telling the Bible story and may include a visual focus and some form of participation by the children.

Generally, the suggestions for what the teacher says are printed in **bold** and suggestions of what the children might answer or do are printed in *italics*.

An alternate way to tell the story might be to read a book. This works well with small groups. Invite parents and grandparents to find out what Bible story books they have available, or you might have some in your church library. A children's Bible is a good resource to have on hand.

For each story we have provided some **Background story notes**. These notes are to help you, as the leader and teacher, understand some of the background to help you in your preparation and understanding of the story.



One response to hearing God's story is through prayer and blessing. Children need the opportunity to express their love, awe, and gratitude to Jesus in words of praise and thanks. These two menu items provide a format to encourage this.

Prayer:

Two types of prayer are appropriate.

1. Use the set prayer provided - relating to the story or focus of the session.
2. Use the participants' concerns - as reflected in the sharing of highs and lows at the beginning of the session. Say a spontaneous prayer reflection on any blessings or problems that have become apparent. Please, also invite the children to pray.

Blessing:

This is a nice way to finish your session and encourage interaction between the children. We suggest that participants bless each other using the words provided or you could simply say the words: '*God bless you*'.

Creative response

Most children like to make things. It gives them a sense of satisfaction and provides interaction. Creative items the children make and take home are reminders of the story. They help link their home with the children's ministry.

In this menu item there are suggestions for things children can make, using a variety of easily obtained materials. It is a good idea to have a few things on hand. We suggest the following:

- Markers
- Lightweight cardboard
- Craft glue
- Stapler/staples
- Scissors
- Sticky tape
- Hole punch
- String
- Coloured paper

Other items can be collected as required. There is a **You will need** list to help with your planning.

If at times your group varies widely in age, consider a more open craft. Rather than making a particular project, encourage the creative use of a particular craft idea and invite the children to make a piece of art that reflects what they heard in the story. You could ask a question like:

- I wonder what part of the story you liked best?
- I wonder where you are in the story, or which part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what stood out to you in this story?

Activities could include any of the following ideas:

1. Collage – provide coloured paper, popsticks, sequins, feathers, cake liners etc.
2. Sculpting – provide play dough, plasticine. Mats or baking paper for them to work on.
Or you could provide pipe cleaners for a different kind of sculpting.
3. Drawing – provide some different drawing tools like crayons, water colour paint or perhaps chalk for pavement drawing.
4. Building – provide Lego, wooden blocks, Duplo etc.
5. Natural collage – provide things from nature like gumnuts, bark, sand stick foliage etc.
6. Wire – different thickness wires and pliers (and maybe some adults to help out!)





Catechism spotlight

Children can be introduced gradually to the basic teachings of the Christian faith. Some churches have catechisms for this purpose. The Lutheran church uses the Small Catechism of Martin Luther, which is based on the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the sacraments of baptism and holy communion.

In this menu item, a specific portion of Christian teaching that relates to the **Story** and the **Focus of the week**, is briefly discussed. This can be covered more thoroughly by reference to other books.

Children will benefit from hearing the actual wording of church teaching. A sample text chart of the Lord's Prayer or Apostles' Creed or Ten Commandments can be printed for each session as needed. You may like to copy them onto large wall charts. Perhaps you have an artist who could design them.



Liturgical significance

An important part of this resource is to link it to what happens in church. We want children to become fully involved in the congregation's worship. In this menu item this happens through helping children understand the church year season through visits to the church and explanations of the liturgy, referring to the church calendar and Christian rituals and traditions. Sometimes children could provide an item or artwork which is used in worship. E.g. an Advent Wreath.

