

TODDLER & PRESCHOOL Classroom Structure Tips

Two to four-year-olds have a wide range of abilities. This is meant to be a guide, not a set of rules. We hope the time in your classroom will be exciting and fruitful for you and each child, as you focus on teaching God's word and how to apply it at their age level.

Each week generally includes time for the following activities. They do not need to be ordered in a specific manner, but there should be enough consistency to give the children a sense of security and predictability. Always strive to include new and interesting activities.

Teaching (2-10 minutes)

The attention span of a preschooler is very short, therefore the teachings need to be short and to the point. A general guide for the length of a teaching is a minute or two per year of age. Although we want to encourage all the children to participate, anticipate that a few of the children cannot sit still for even this length of time, and have one worker in charge of quiet play in a non-distracting area of the room. Very active or visual teaching is more effective at this age, and the more animated the teacher, the better.

Prayer (2-10 minutes)

Children can be taught to pray even at this young age! This activity does not have to be tied directly to the teaching. Try sandwiching prayer, between two other activities instead of timing it immediately before or after a teaching. Or, try activities that teach the kids to pray, such as the "I'm Thankful" game; The teachers says, "Janie is thankful for something ... RED". Janie then gets to shout out something she is grateful for. Use, as many adjectives as you can to help the kids recognize all the good things God gives them. You can do variations on this game, by limiting the kids' thankfulness to body parts, or family and friends, etc. But remember the rule, the method used every week is the most boring...

Music (5-10 minutes)

We are blessed to have a music team that comes into our classrooms each week. You can support them by participating in the songs, learning the motions and leading the children from all sides of the room.

Craft (5-10 minutes)

The craft is another media to reinforce the lesson. Encourage creativity and resist any temptation to encourage perfection. It is special for a child to see his/her own work on the refrigerator not that of the teacher.

Snack (5-10 minutes)

This may not be necessary for your classroom, but feel free to bring animal crackers or graham crackers. Snacks should be simple, steering away from sticky or messy foods. **DO NOT SERVE DAIRY OR NUT PRODUCTS** as these are the two most common childhood allergies. **Check your roster for allergies before serving snacks.**

Giving

Each classroom is supplied with a giving "Globe". Consider creative ways to explain the significance of giving. Have a scavenger hunt with the purpose of finding money to give to God. Encourage the excitement of giving by teaching that God can use their gifts for others who have never heard about Jesus.

Large Motor Games

There are parachutes, rhythm instrument, bubbles, etc. in the storage room for large motor games. Consider games that will incorporate the theme of the week into play, e.g., "Head-Shoulders-Knees and Toes" in the lesson about our fearfully and wonderfully made bodies.

Small Motor Skills

Playing with the kitchen set, playdough, puzzles, etc. develop small motor skills. Create teacher-supervised stations to give the children choices, thus having several activities (small and large motor) going at the same time. This is often a good way to begin and/or end the day.