



C Christian Playgroup Network

Issue 1, 2010

**WINTER PLAYGROUP
IDEAS.
FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS.
WHAT MAKES A
PLAYGROUP CHRISTIAN?
CHANGE.**

TERM DATES

"Stories of Childhood"

Playgroup and PreSchool Conference
May 29, 2010

Centre for Theology & Ministry
Register Online <http://stories2010.goregister.com.au>
(see pg 10 for details)

Regional Training Dates

June 19, Warnambool
August 28, Horsham
October 23, Warrigul
9am-1pm, \$20 or \$15 for Early Birds
Discuss strategies, grow skills, browse resources, share stories and chew over ideas. For those involved in church, community & school based teams serving pre-school, playgroup and primary aged children and their families.
(see pg 9 for details)

Annual General Meeting

Christian Playgroup Network
October 9

School Term Dates

TERM 2: 12th April - 25th June
TERM 3: 12th July - 17th September
TERM 4: 4th October - 17th December

A note from the President

Where is God leading you in your playgroup ministry in 2010? Do you have a sense that your playgroup is the place where the Lord has called you to be the light of Christ and that, through your faithful witness of loving service and compassionate care, the playgroup families are seeing God at work among them?

CPN's purpose is to stand beside you in your playgroup ministry, to encourage you to keep going when you are tired and overwhelmed by the demands, to remind you that this is a strategic and God-given opportunity for your church to connect with the families of your local community, to inspire you to sustain and expand your vision and to provide you with resources for the best possible playgroup ministry.

The great strength of CPN is that we are a network – we are there to help each other, challenge each other and cheer each other on – so get involved! Getting to a CPN training event is a great way to tap into the invaluable encouragement and refreshment that comes from learning, talking and praying with others that share your passion and interest in walking alongside families. Make contact with your denominational representative or any other member of the executive committee for a chat, to ask for assistance or to have your say.

God bless,

Dorothy Hughes

FOR THE UNDER SIXES

WINTER PLAYGROUP IDEAS

with Judyth Roberts

As cooler weather brings people inside at playgroup, have a good look at your collage table, playdough table and books. Inside activities will be more important in the coming months, so make sure you have some new things to stimulate children's imagination.

Former TAFE Lecturer in Play
Community Development
Facilitator Communities for Children
Seaton Central
Family and Children's
Ministry Coordinator
at Port Adelaide UCA, SA

Collage

Use fallen autumn leaves, twigs, paperbark strips, seed pods or ferny leaves to intrigue children and encourage exploration of the garden.

I also use gumnuts and pinecones with glue or paint and a different surface to decorate.

Try some different paper textures like patty pans, paper plates, cardboard cylinders, corrugated cardboard or cellophane – but not all at the same time! Add something new each week for children to try and to talk about.

Did you keep the coloured foil from your Easter eggs?

For Easter we used lots of cotton balls, crushed eggshells and foil

pieces which led to quite different collage being created.

Playdough

Always a favourite with children, and so easy to change with a few simple tricks.

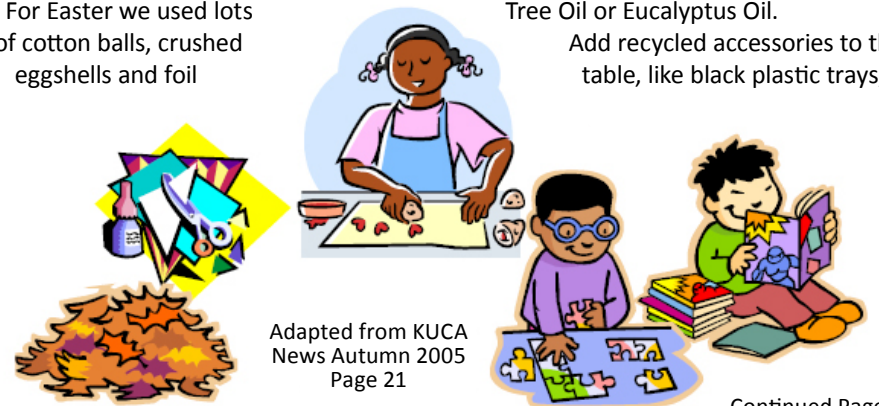
Try different colours using food dye or for fluoro colours try using poster paint as the colouring.

Make two lots of playdough of different colours and roll together like a ribbon sandwich and give each child a thick slice to play with.

Add a few drops of cented oil like lavender or rose. In winter when there are lots of sniffles around I often add Tea

Tree Oil or Eucalyptus Oil.

Add recycled accessories to the table, like black plastic trays,



Adapted from KUCA
News Autumn 2005
Page 21

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moulded chocolate box trays, moulded plastic cake trays and the moulded plastic egg crates that Easter eggs come in.

Book Corner

As playgroup can be over-stimulating for some children, a quiet book corner is helpful to cool off and calm down.

Set up a corner with a small bookshelf and a pile of soft cushions.

Parents can read a story to their child, or a child can choose to curl up and spend a few minutes looking at picture books.

Start with a small but hardy collection of card books, plastic books, touch and feel type books and favourites like Spot and Thomas the Tank Engine. Add a few good quality Christian board books about the five senses, God's love and a couple of Bible stories like Noah's Ark and Jesus' birth.

Ruthlessly discard damaged books and keep the area clean and welcoming.

Have a look at a good Christian bookshop for some suitable titles but you can also pick up some good books on special from Coles, Big W and newsagents.

Enjoy the winter months at playgroup, but make sure you are ready for children to spend more time indoors.

Adapted from KUCA News Autumn 2005 page 21.

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Frequently asked questions :

I have a child that bites other children at Playgroup. What can I do for the biter, the child bitten, and the parents ?

It's a horrible moment ... a child screams, and you see another child's jaw clamped shut like a pit bull's on the screamer ! Babies and toddlers bite for a number of reasons.

Common causes are :

- Toddler is teething
- Toddler is unable to express him/herself verbally
- Attention seeking
- Frustration or anger
- Boredom
- Exploring affection

First Things first –

- Until all is calm, separate the biter from the rest of the group
- One adult should care for the bitten child, while another adult deals with the biter – preferably the child's parent.

Help the biter –

- The biter may not have any idea that the biting caused the screams and excitement that followed !

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- What is needed is information such as " Timmy. Your teeth hurt Jasmine. Teeth are for eating. I can't let you bite Jasmine.

After the bite –

- Adults need to closely supervise the biter, intervening before a bite if necessary.
- If biting happens repeatedly, try to identify a pattern of circumstances that may lead to biting.

An incident report should be made of the bite, and the parent to be informed of this.

Biting is painful, but it is not the end of the world. Remember that adult calmness and kindness to both children and the parents is the key to quickly setting everyone at ease again!

Sources – Playgroup Victoria – Training Module 'Guiding Children's Behaviour' 'Nursery Smart Pages ' – Gospel Lights Little Blessings pg 99



SESSION #2: WHAT MAKES A PLAYGROUP 'CHRISTIAN'?

Playgroups with Purpose Heather Karrasch 2006

What makes a playgroup Christian?

- There is a tendency to define a playgroup by the shape and content of its program
- But a truly Christian playgroup will convey a real sense of God's

Presence

- This reality will be expressed through every aspect of the functioning of the playgroup

Program and environment – which one is important?

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- Both!
- A Christian playgroup always endeavours to offer a high quality program
- This may include specifically faith related activities – songs and stories
- But what makes the playgroup truly Christian is the environment – the emphasis given to caring, loving relationships between all ages
- A warm acceptance and openness between people is the best way to impart God's love and grace

Our focus – on young and old alike

- One view of playgroup is that it functions specifically for the benefit of the children participating – it is children focussed
- But a Christian playgroup functions for parents and children since both have needs
- Yet, there is another essential resource – adults who do not have their own children participating since they are free to give full attention to everyone

Time to talk!

What makes a playgroup Christian? Spend time talking over the matters raised above then consider....



God's Presence:

- In what ways is our playgroup conveying a sense of the Presence of God?
- If we are not too sure that it is, what might we need to be doing?

Environment and program:

- Where are our energies focussed – on our program or on the building of loving relationships between all ages?
- How well do we know the names of all participants?
- Are we spending enough time really getting to know people as people?

Our focus on young and old alike:

- In what ways are we being sensitive to the needs of both adults and children?
- And how are we going in addressing some of these?
- What are we doing to involve those who are child free to help us?

change

Louisa Raggatt

How do you feel about change? If you've ever completed one of those personality analysis courses then you'll know that some personality types are more comfortable with change than others. Of course, you don't need to have done Myers Briggs to have figured this out, you can just look around you. I am comfortable with change and in fact I get quite excited about it. Purposeful change, that is. But not everyone feels the same way. You'll see all sorts of people, yourself included, reacting in very different ways to the same events. Generations play a part in this too. My colleague at the BUV, Beth, likes to joke that I am very "Gen Y" in the way I use my mobile to sms a last minute change of plans – time, location etc... out of a sense of (perhaps perceived) convenience for all. In fact Gen Y is often being called the "last minute" generation which doesn't sit well for everyone, including some Gen Y-ers!



them as being impacted by change? Of course we do! We're Playgroup leaders! When something "big" occurs in their life – moving house, the arrival of a new sibling or at the other end of the life cycle, the death of a family member we think about how to help coach, and support a child. What about the smaller (perhaps perceived) changes? Coming to Playgroup for the first time, or the sudden addition of new families to an existing Playgroup perhaps? What about on the micro level - a sudden change to the Playgroup routine, different location or unexpected visitors etc... These are much smaller events

What about children? Do we think of

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and yet can really impact a child's sense of security.

If adults with language skills and life experience can find change stressful, imagine what it feels like for a child who may not have either of those things.

So, how can we help kids with change?

- Don't change things unnecessarily.
- Recognise when changes occur, however small, and think about the kids who might be impacted.
- Always take the time to explain what's happening and invite questions.

- Kids generally like to know what's coming next, so tell them.
- If you are dealing with infants, the fact they can't yet speak means it's even MORE, not less, important to tell them what's happening.
- Invite kids to be part of the change not just recipients of it.

I personally love purposeful change, and sometimes even just some fun change, so go forth and change the world, just don't forget the kids.



Regional Training Events 2010

Benalla Mar 27 ... Warrnambool Jun 19

Horsham Aug 28 ... Warragul Oct 23

Saturdays ... 9am to 1pm ... \$20/\$15^{early bird}

Villages raise children - faith communities make disciples

Learning together in communities

Discuss strategies, grow skills, browse resources, share stories and chew over ideas. For those involved in church, community & school based teams serving pre-school, playgroup and primary aged children and their families.



Brought to you by a Children and Families Ministry Training Partnership

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Please diarise this event and promote it to others. Thank you!

For further information or enquiries, please contact your denominational/organisational representative



Playgroup & Preschool Conference

Stories of childhood

Saturday 29th May 2010
9.30am - 3pm
Centre for Theology & Ministry, Parkville

A joint activity of Christian Playgroup Network and the Centre for Theology & Ministry, Children & Families Ministry
Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania



Electives

** Subject to numbers, each elective will run in both sessions**

(A) Connecting your Playgroup/Pre-school ministries with the whole church

Dorothy Hughes - Children & Families Ministry for the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

(B) Conversations that communicate care

Jan Bangay - Brethren representative on the Christian Playgroup Network

(C) Play and Playgroup/Pre-school ministries - fun, learning and spirituality

Carolyne Chandler - Uniting Church Christian Education Reference Committee

(D) Playdough with a purpose?

Liz Ansley - Author of "The Gospels in Playdough"

(E) Practical Ideas for Worship with Families with 0-5s

Beth Barnett - Resource creator, musician and experienced worship leader

(F) Songs, Stretches and Storytelling

Shaz deWacht - Ringwood Salvation Army Corps

(G) Making a difference, Tools for leadership

Louisa Raggatt - Baptist Union Early Childhood Coordinator

Keynote Speaker

Our guest presenter, Beth Barnett, will draw on her experience as a parent, playgroup mum, playgroup coordinator, pastor, teacher and theological educator to help us engage with the theme "Sharing stories, shaping families". Focusing on ministry with families with children 0-5 in both the community and congregational settings, Beth will bring experience, wisdom, practical application and much grace to "Stories of Childhood - 2010".



Well known throughout Victoria as a teacher, trainer, musician, curriculum writer, resource generator and worship leader, Beth has worked in both the state school and Christian school environments and served a variety of denominations. Currently, Beth is the Children and Families Facilitator for the Baptist Union of Victoria.

Program:

9.30am	Registration & Resource Viewing
9.45am	"Sharing Stories, Shaping Families" - engaging together, listening to Beth
10.45am	Morning Tea
11.15am	Electives
12.15	"Sharing stories, Shaping Families"- listening to one another, facilitated by Beth
1pm	Lunch
1.45pm	Electives
2.45pm	Wrap-Up
3pm	Finish



Please forward your registration to:
Playgroup & Preschool Conference
Centre for Theology & Ministry
1 Morrison Close, Parkville, 3052
Fax: 03 93408805

Date:
Saturday 29th May 2010

Time: 9:30am - 3pm

Place:
Centre for Theology & Ministry,
1 Morrison Close, Parkville, 3052

Cost: (includes lunch)
\$30 per person if registered by 17 May 2010
\$35 per person if registered after 17 May 2010
(\$5 discount for CPN members)

Register at:
<http://stories2010.goregister.com.au>

Your registration by 17th May 2010 is appreciated

Playgroup & Preschool Conference Registration Form

Your registration by 17th May 2010 is appreciated

Congregation / Group Name:

Name:

Address:

..... P/Code:

Phone: (AH).....(BH).....

Email:

Dietary Requirements: (eg vegetarian, gluten free).....

Choose two electives Elective [] Elective []

** Subject to numbers, each elective will run in both sessions**

TAX INVOICE

The Uniting Church in Australia ABN 39 703 442 583

Upon completion and payment this document becomes a tax invoice for GST purposes. Please photocopy and retain for your records.

If not registering online, I enclose \$

\$30 per person if registered by 17 May 2010
\$35 per person if registered after 17 May 2010
\$5 discount for CPN members



I am paying by:

cheque or money order

(Please make cheque payable to: Uniting Church in Australia)

credit card (Visa/Mastercard)

Credit card number Expiry Date

Credit card name Signature



For registration & more information:

Children and Families Ministry
Centre for Theology & Ministry 1 Morrison Close, Parkville, 3052

Online registration preferred <http://stories2010.goregister.com.au>

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FEEDBACK

We would appreciate your feedback on the webs ite, and suggestions for helpful links and material . You are invited to email these suggestions to
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CPN WEBSITE

Don' t forget to visit us at
<http://www.cpn.org.au>.

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