

KINDOM CRAFTERS

IMAGINE.
BUILD.
DISCOVER!



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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Kindom Crafters, a weeklong experience based on the themes of our 2023 General Assembly. The word, “kindom” refers to God’s beloved community and the prophetic vision of a world united in God’s love echoed through scripture. “Kindom” reminds us that we are all connected as a family in God’s love, rather than traditional language that refers to imperial patriarchy.

This is written as a weeklong Vacation Bible School, but we know every church setting is unique. Feel free to adapt and rearrange these resources to fit your space and your community.

The Director’s job is divided between preparation and execution. The more you do on the front end, and the more you delegate to others, the better things will go when it’s time to welcome children. In the end, children will remember how they were welcomed, treated, and loved more than any theme or Bible lesson.

Suggestions:

Boxes! Get lots of boxes and let children stack them, push them, decorate them, or whatever else they can come up with this week. Decorations can become game resources or storytelling tools as you go.

Look through the curriculum, including the study resources for “Building Crews” and make sure you have all the supplies needed. Volunteers are wonderful but they can only work with what you give them. Make sure they have copies of directions, all their supplies, and extra hands for cleaning up.

Take lots of pictures! If you can include a photo release in your registration form, you have even more flexibility in how to share them.

Safety is sacred. We encourage every person who works with young people in a church to have a background check.

Worship:

The worship resources focus on parables that echo each day’s themes and include three storytelling options. Along with Children’s Worship and Wonder stories, and Disciples Home Missions “Faith at Home” materials there are story recaps and reflections to accompany a traditional scripture reading. Worship could be a rotation in your schedule, a last activity with everyone together, or you could provide the “Faith at Home” resources for families to use together on their own time.

Decorations:

Boxes! Did we mention boxes? Many popular games have an “8-bit” or “pixelated” look to them. From Minecraft to Roblox, children are often familiar with boxy-looking characters and landscapes. Look at some images from Minecraft for inspiration.

Donations:

If you can get your plans in place ahead of time, asking the Church for donations is a great way to involve everyone. Those who cannot volunteer can drop off supplies for crafts, snacks, or even more boxes.

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- **Children Worship and Wonder:** Based on Young Children and Worship by Jerome Berryman and Sonya Stewart, and Following Jesus by Sonya Stewart.
 - **DHM’s Faith at Home Resources:** Written by Olivia Bryan Updegrave and edited by Lisa Engelken; artwork by Lauren Knipper and Nicole Lapointe.

DAILY OVERVIEW FOR KINDOM CRAFTERS

DAY	STORY	THEME	PARABLE FOR WORSHIP	DAILY DISCOVERIES
Day 1	Abraham and Sarah's Hospitality	Welcoming is Building	Great Banquet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God welcomes us all to this week and is thankful we are here. • We are all invited to join God in building the Kindom. • Jesus taught us about the Kindom and invited us to use our imagination to see it.
Day 2	Joseph and Family Reconnect	Fixing is Building	Good Shepherd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God always finds us, even when we feel like a missing piece. • We need everyone's voice and vision to really see and build the Kindom of God. • Sometimes we can pause for repairs rather than just building new things.
Day 3	Ruth and Naomi's Chosen Family	Choosing to Build Together	Good Samaritan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God sends people into our lives to help us build the Kindom of God. • Building families, friendships, and communities is part of creating with God. • The people we build with are as important as what we build in the Kindom of God.
Day 4	Jesus Calls Disciples	Build Everywhere	Prodigal Son	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God calls us to learn as we build, and never stop trying. • Things don't have to be perfect to be important or special. • Building the Kindom of God requires us to have hope in what might happen.
Day 5	Pentecost Starts Building the Church	Keep Building	Sower and Seed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God invites everyone to be part of building the Kindom. • We need to keep building bigger and with more people as we expand the Kindom of God. Everywhere we go and everyone we meet can be a kindom-building moment.

BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE SCHEDULE

Opening Session – Gathering time where children are welcomed and the theme of the day is introduced.

Building Crews - Small Group time where children will explore the story and share their own experiences as they imagine and reimagine the kingdom of God.

Games, Crafts, and Snacks – These stations provide interactive experiences for children to explore the kingdom of God and learn more about the day's theme.

Worship – This is an optional resource with resources for exploring a parable that centers on daily themes. If you do not use it during your time together, it can also be sent home for families to follow up on the message and learnings from each day.

Closing Session – Final session of the day for celebration, sharing reminders for the next day, and sending children out with a sense of excitement for how they might be building God's kingdom.

OPENING SESSION

Laying the Foundation for Each Day

This portion of the schedule has two primary purposes. The first is very functional. Children will not all show up on time. Eventually, you must start, and it might as well be in a format they can join in as they arrive. You might also consider having a structured play space where children can join in as they arrive for the first 5-10 minutes before moving into an opening session, just to try and include everyone you can and make sure the wiggles don't get the best of anyone.

The second purpose is to introduce the stories and themes of the day. This includes the scripture and primary learning goals. This is a time when children will gather with their "building crew" (small group), hear the scripture story, sing some songs, and build community.

DAILY CALL AND RESPONSE

Each day we invite you to introduce the theme of the day. Throughout the day whenever anyone says the “theme” the kids will respond with a noise and motion. Sometimes the call is said intentionally. Examples would include during the opening and closing times as kids gather. It could also be said when moving from one area to another, or even by “accident” to see who is listening.

Day 1 Call: “Welcoming is building!”
Response: “Bonk! Bonk!”
(Make a hammer motion.)

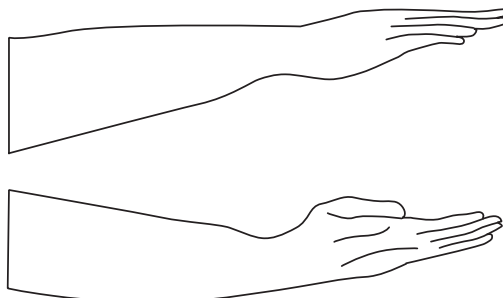
Day 2 Call: “Fixing is building!”
Response: “Squeak! Squeak!”
(Twist one hand into the other.)

Day 3 Call: “Choosing to build together!”
Response: “To-gether!”
(Gator clap.)

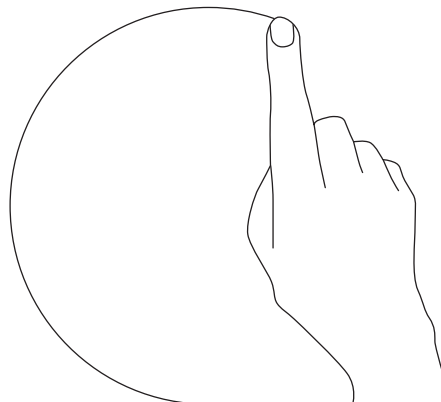
Day 4 Call: “Build everywhere!”
Response: “Whoosh!”
(Point and draw an arch.)

Day 5 Call: “Keep building!”
Response: “We will!”
(Beat fists on chest.)

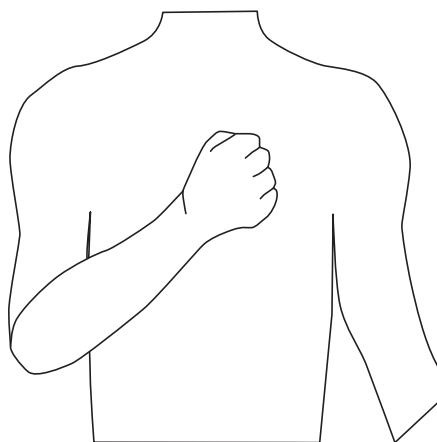
Day 3



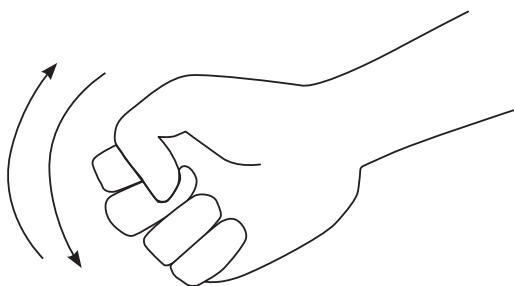
Day 4



Day 5



Day 1



Day 2



Recommended Outline

Welcome and Prayer

Daily Call and Response

Songs

Finding the Kindom of God.

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "It's right here! In us! We are building the Kindom of God!"

Song: "Children Welcome"

Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.

Children welcome, in the name of Love.

All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.

All are welcome, in the name of Love.

Scripture / Story Telling

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

Song: "We are Builders" (Tune of "Jesus Loves Me")

We are builders, yes we are.

Sharing God's love - near and far.

God is with us, every day;

When we learn, sing, dream, and play!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

What might we make today?!

Descriptions of Outline Activities

Welcome and Prayer

Bring some energy and make sure to introduce yourself every day. Do not assume everyone knows you, even if they all do. Keep this practice with anyone who speaks to the children. Introduce them as if everyone in the crowd is a newcomer. This will help visitors to feel informed and keep you from making assumptions about who children have or have not made relationships with within the Church community. Once you have welcomed everyone and done any important introductions, open with a brief prayer. Remember who you are praying for and with and keep the language and length appropriate. A short prayer is provided each day if you want to use it.

Daily Call and Response

These are simple responses based on the daily theme that includes motions. The leader calls out the daily theme and everyone responds with the daily sound and motions.

Songs

Music helps connect people, and even those who do not love to sing can enjoy hearing others. Songs with motions allow everyone to engage the songs in the way they are most comfortable. Having a song leader makes your job easier. Youth can also be wonderful helpers in this area. Don't be afraid to pull children up to help lead as well. As you teach songs and sing them again through the week, this is a great way for those who came as visitors to find a place as leaders.

Finding the Kindom

This is a short litany you can use each day, based on Luke 17:20-21.

Invite the children to repeat this litany each day as part of your opening and again in the closing.

A leader can read the prompts and let the children repeat the parts in quotations.

This is an easy piece to add motions to, letting the children respond with their words and bodies.

Song: "Children Welcome"

This is a simple song, often used to set the stage for hearing the story in "Children Worship and Wonder." This is a great way to get everyone focused and listening and provides a connective element from day to day. Here is a link to the song to help you learn it. [CHILDREN WELCOME VIDEO](#)

Scripture / Storytelling

This is where you will introduce the story for each day. Since each scripture is unique, each day will have different resources for sharing the story. This is a great place to draw in volunteers from the Church or broader community to share their gifts of acting or storytelling.

Songs

Music helps connect people, and... yes, we said all this before. This is a good spot to do a little more singing, even if it's just one more song. This will help children who might have drifted during the story to reconnect and break up their experience of grown-ups talking.

Announcements and Prayer

Logistics are a real part of any big event. Make sure to only tell the children what they need to know. Hold notices that are just for adult leaders till the end of this section. A short prayer is provided each day if you want to use it, or you can use your own words.

Song: "We are Builders"

This is a simple song to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." Children can sing it as they leave and are walking to their next event.

Day 1: Welcoming is Building

Welcome and Prayer

Hello! Welcome to all you builders, crafters, and beautiful children of God! Today we are going to be building a community as we welcome each other and get to know each other. We are also going to learn how God is building something we cannot always see. We call it the Kingdom of God. It is like a family that includes the whole world! And we get to be part of building it!

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. You can hold your arms up, fold your hands together, or whatever feels right to you. You can open your eyes and look up, close your eyes, or whatever feels right to you. However we do it, prayer is a time to pause and connect with God. Let's pray:

"God, thank you for bringing us to this place, and helping us to learn and grow together today. Amen."

Daily Call and Response

Today's theme is "Welcoming is Building!" Every time you hear someone say that phrase, I want you to pretend you have a hammer and go, "Bonk! Bonk!" Let's practice. "Welcoming is building!" (Hammer motion, "Bonk! Bonk!")

Leader: Welcoming is building!

Response: Bonk! Bonk! (Make a hammer motion.)

Great job! We hear more about welcoming and building in our scripture and activities today.

Songs

Finding the Kingdom of God.

*Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"
Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."
Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"
Jesus said, "It's right here! In us! We are building the Kingdom of God!"*

Song: "Children Welcome"

*Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.
Children welcome, in the name of Love.
All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.
All are welcome, in the name of Love.*

Scripture / Story Telling

See the Day 1 Handout

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

As you get ready to head out into an exciting time of playing, crafting, building, and learning, here are some things to remember: ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Let's pray: "God, craft us as a community, making something special happen this day. Amen."

Song: "We are Builders"

*We are builders, yes we are.
Sharing God's love – near and far.
God is with us, every day;
When we learn, sing, dream, and play!
Yes, we are builders!
Yes, we are builders!
Yes, we are builders!
What might we make today?!*

Day 2: Fixing is Building

Welcome and Prayer

Hello! Welcome builders! We are glad you are here today. Today we are going to keep building that Kingdom of God and we will talk about fixing things. Sometimes things break, but by fixing them we make them better than ever! God wants us to help fix and heal problems in the world. When we do this, we are building the Kingdom with God. Now, we know there are some things that cannot be fixed, but we can see what might make things better, and work on that.

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. You can hold your arms up, fold your hands together, or whatever feels right to you. You can open your eyes and look up, close your eyes, or whatever feels right to you. However we do it, prayer is a time to pause and connect with God. Let's pray:

"God, help us have fun and dream up new ways to fix old problems. Amen."

Daily Call and Response

Today's theme is "Fixing is building!" Every time you hear someone say that phrase, I want you to pretend you are screwing one hand into the other and say, "Squeak! Squeak!"

Let's practice. "Fixing is building!"
(Twisting motion with hands, "Squeak! Squeak!")

Let's review yesterday's: "Welcoming is building!"
(Hammer motion, "Bonk! Bonk!")

Leader: Fixing is building!

Response: *Squeak! Squeak!*

(Twisting motion with hands.)

Great job! We hear more about fixing and building in our scripture and activities today.

Songs

Finding the Kingdom of God.

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus said, "It's right here! In us! We are building the Kingdom of God!"

Song: "Children Welcome"

Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.

Children welcome, in the name of Love.

All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.

All are welcome, in the name of Love.

Scripture / Story Telling

See the Day 2 Handout

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

As you get ready to head out into an exciting time of playing, crafting, building, and learning, here are some things to remember: ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Let's pray: "God, help us create and recreate today, and have fun together on the journey. Amen."

Song: "We are Builders"

We are builders, yes we are.

Sharing God's love – near and far.

God is with us, every day;

When we learn, sing, dream, and play!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

What might we make today?!

Day 3: Choosing to Build Together

Welcome and Prayer

Hello! Welcome everyone. We are glad to have all you Kindom crafters with us today. The more we get to know each other, the more this feels like a big family. That is what we will be talking about today. God puts special people in our lives. Some are there from the beginning, and others are people we choose – a chosen family. When we grow as a community, we are building the Kindom of God! This is a project that takes all our ideas, dreams, and special gifts. We are so glad you are here today to share yours!

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. You can hold your arms up, fold your hands together, or whatever feels right to you. You can open your eyes and look up, close your eyes, or whatever feels right to you. However we do it, prayer is a time to pause and connect with God. Let's pray:

"God, thank you for friends and those who may become like family. Amen."

Daily Call and Response

Today's theme is "Choosing to build together!" Every time you hear someone say that phrase, I want you to place one hand out in front of you, then use the other hand to clap it in a big "gator" motion and say, "To-gether!"

Let's practice. "Choosing to build together!" (Gator clap, "To-gether!")

Let's review the past couple days:

"Welcoming is building!" (Hammer motion, "Bonk! Bonk!")

"Fixing is building!" (Twisting motion, "Squeak, Squeak.")

Leader: Choosing to build together!"

Response: To-gether (gator clap).

Great job! We hear more about choosing and building in our scripture and activities today.

Songs

Finding the Kindom of God.

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "Its right here! In us! We are building the Kindom of God!"

Song: "Children Welcome"

Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.

Children welcome, in the name of Love.

All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.

All are welcome, in the name of Love.

Scripture / Story Telling

See the Day 3 Handout

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

As you get ready to head out into an exciting time of playing, crafting, building, and learning, here are some things to remember: ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Let's pray: "God, help each of us share our vice and be heard and loved by others. Amen."

Song: "We are Builders"

We are builders, yes we are.

Sharing God's love – near and far.

God is with us, every day;

When we learn, sing, dream, and play!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

What might we make today?!

Day 4: Build Everywhere!

Welcome and Prayer

Hello! Welcome to another day of building and crafting the Kingdom of God. We know that our time together and with God is very special, and that God helps us grow and do amazing things. We also know that we will not always do things perfectly. The important thing is to keep trying and keep dreaming of how things could be. That is one way we help build the Kingdom with God.

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. You can hold your arms up, fold your hands together, or whatever feels right to you. You can open your eyes and look up, close your eyes, or whatever feels right to you. However we do it, prayer is a time to pause and connect with God. Let's pray:

"God, help us keep hoping and trying, and trying again, so we can learn and grow. Amen."

Daily Call and Response

Today's theme is "Build Everywhere!" Every time you hear someone say that phrase, I want you to stick out your pointer finger and draw a big arch like a rainbow from left to right, then say "Whoosh!"

Let's practice. "Build Everywhere!"
(Draw arch, "Woosh!")

Let's review the past couple days:
"Welcoming is building!"

(Hammer motion, "Bonk! Bonk!")

"Fixing is building!"

(Twisting motion, "Squeak, Squeak.")

"Choosing to build together!"

(Gator clap, "To-Gether!")

Leader: "Build Everywhere!"

Response: "Whoosh!" (Draw arch).

Great job! We hear more about choosing and building in our scripture and activities today.

Songs

Finding the Kingdom of God.

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kingdom of God?"

Jesus said, "It's right here! In us! We are building the Kingdom of God!"

Song: "Children Welcome"

Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.

Children welcome, in the name of Love.

All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.

All are welcome, in the name of Love.

Scripture / Story Telling

See the Day 4 Handout

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

As you get ready to head out into an exciting time of playing, crafting, building, and learning, here are some things to remember: ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Let's pray: "God, thank you for the new things that might happen today, and all the fun along the way. Amen."

Song: "We are Builders"

We are builders, yes we are.

Sharing God's love - near and far.

God is with us, every day;

When we learn, sing, dream, and play!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

What might we make today?!

Day 5: Keep Building!

Welcome and Prayer

Hello! Welcome to all you builders, crafters, and beautiful children of God! Today is not the last time we will be building the Kindom of God, but it is the last time we will all do it as part of this event. We know that the work of building God's Kindom has been going on for a long time and tonight we are going to talk about how the Church is called to be Kindom builders, now and till, well... forever! The Church is supposed to be like a family that includes everyone we get to be part of growing it!

I would like to invite you to join me in prayer. You can hold your arms up, fold your hands together, or whatever feels right to you. You can open your eyes and look up, close your eyes, or whatever feels right to you. However we do it, prayer is a time to pause and connect with God. Let's pray:

"God, thank you for this time to be the Church and grow together today. Amen."

Daily Call and Response

Today's theme is "Keep Building!" Every time you hear someone say that phrase, I want you to ball your hands into fists and beat your chest and say, "We will!"

Let's practice. "Keep Building!"

(Beat chest, "We will!")

Let's review the past couple days:

"Welcoming is building!"

(Hammer motion, "Bonk! Bonk!")

"Fixing is building!"

(Twisting motion, "Squeak, Squeak")

"Choosing to build together!"

(Gator clap, "To-Gether!")

"Build Everywhere!"

(Draw arch, "Woosh!")

Leader: "Keep Building!"

Response: "We Will" (Beat Chest)

Great job! We hear more about choosing and building in our scripture and activities today.

Songs

Finding the Kindom of God.

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "You can't see it. You can't point to it."

Someone asked Jesus, "Where is the Kindom of God?"

Jesus said, "Its right here! In us! We are building the Kindom of God!"

Song: "Children Welcome"

Children welcome, in the name of Jesus.

Children welcome, in the name of Love.

All are welcome, in the name of Jesus.

All are welcome, in the name of Love.

Scripture / Story Telling

See the Day 5 Handout

Songs

Announcements and Prayer

As you get ready to head out into an exciting time of playing, crafting, building, and learning, here are some things to remember: ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Let's pray: "God, help us discover how much bigger your Kindom might be. Amen."

Song: "We are Builders"

We are builders, yes we are.

Sharing God's love – near and far.

God is with us, every day;

When we learn, sing, dream, and play!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

Yes, we are builders!

What might we make today?!

BUILDING CREW

SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM



Day 1: Abraham and Sarah

Building Supplies:

Copy Paper
Scissors
Markers
Large paper
String
Cardboard Boxes
Tape or Glue

Logging In (Welcome)

Today's welcome needs to be extravagant! Be mindful of nervous children who may be overwhelmed, and make sure you have some volunteers ready to welcome them personally and gently.

Here are some different words you might put on big signs, our use to greet children.

Welcome (English)

- Bienvenido (Spanish)
- Huanying (Chinese)
- Eoseo Wa (Korean) 어서와
- Karibu (Swahili)
- Assalaam (Arabic) – literally translated as “peace.”
- Shalom (Hebrew) - literally translated as “peace.”
- Aloha (Hawaii) – used as greeting and good-bye.
- American Sign Language (ASL) – hold hand, palm up, in front of you and draw it towards your chest.

Crafting Community

Sitting in a circle, invite the children to share their names and how they like to greet others. Greetings might include “hello,” “what’s up,” or other words, or maybe a high-five, fist-bump, or other common gestures of greeting.

After everyone has shared, explain that you will be playing a game that is all about welcoming others. Explain that each gesture will be followed by a word of welcome. You and the children can choose your own or use these:

- Handshake: “Hello!”
- Fist-Bump: “Hi!”
- Wave: “Hey!”

For younger children, go around the circle and greet each child with one of the motions and ask them to respond with the corresponding word. Others can take turns greeting each other with the motions and responses. You can do this in a circle or let them mill around in your group space practicing.

Your oldest children can be challenged by having everyone face outward in the circle. One child begins by stepping out of the circle and greeting the person to their left with a motion. If the child in the circle responds correctly, the one greeting continues to the next person. If the response is incorrect, they trade places. The one outside the circle keeps going around till they take someone’s place or get to the end of the circle. If they get to the end, rejoin and prepare to be greeted by others. Once the first person has greeted a couple of people, the next child in the circle can step out and start greeting others. This way, the circle is constantly moving and reforming as children greet one another, trade places, or rejoin the end of the circle.

Remember, this is not a time to be competitive. No one is “out” for making a mistake.

Story Quest Genesis 18:1-8

Place the following phrases from the story on blocks or boxes and see if the children can put them in the right order before hearing the story. After a few minutes, read the story, then let them correct any boxes that are out of order. For pre-readers, you can draw pictures on the boxes they will be working with.

Abraham was spending time with God.
 Travelers came by Abraham and Sarah's home.
 Abraham went out to greet the travelers.
 The Travelers are invited to stay a while and rest.
 Sarah makes special food for the guests.
 Everyone sat together and shared a meal.

Story Crafting

Give each child three pieces of paper and ask them to cut them all in half (8.5 x 5.5), or you can have the paper cut in advance. On one of the pieces, ask them to draw a picture of a special meal they have eaten. This might be a birthday, Christmas, Thanksgiving, or a favorite lunch meal at school. On the other five pieces of paper, invite them to write or draw things that happen around that meal. For example:

- Grandparents come to visit.
- We sit at a table.
- Someone says a prayer.
- We eat.
- We open presents!

Those who write theirs can also illustrate it with pictures if they want.

After they have created their stories, children can trade pictures and try to put them in the correct order. Once they have tried, the creator can tell them the story and invite them to rearrange the pages.

Story Mining:

After stories have been created and shared, invite the children to gather in a circle and think about their stories a little bit more. Here are some wondering questions:

I wonder how people were welcomed or greeted in your story.
 I wonder what the space in your story smelled like.
 I wonder what other people in the story remember most.
 I wonder where God might have been in your story.

Prayer Craft

Ask the children to pick a word to welcome God:

Ask the children to pick a motion to welcome God:

For older children, you can ask them to brainstorm some more lines for the prayer.

For younger children, you can ask them to repeat these words after you.

*Thank you, God,
 for welcoming us
 to this space
 and every place!
 You are always with us!
 You always love us!
 Thank you, God.
 Amen.*

Logging Out (Leaving)

You can repeat the game from Logging In but with words for good-bye, or simply use some of the words that mean welcome and good-bye to bless children as they leave.

- Audios (Spanish)
- Annyeong (Korean)
- Kwheri (Swahili)