

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE



CLOSE ENCOUNTER'S CLUB!

WOW!

Kids—bunches of them! All of them want to come to our church to learn about living the Christian life.

OH-OH!

Parents—bunches of them!
All of them want to send their kids to the CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB.

CALM DOWN!

You are in charge. (Say that three times-slowly.)

WHEW!

Here's what to do...let us answer your questions.

WHAT IS CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB?

Close Encounters Club is a midweek Kids' Club where kindergarten through grade six students learn how to live the Christian life in a casual, fun atmosphere. For ninety minutes, students enter a world where stories from the Bible come alive. Music, stories, activities, games, crafts and snacks make this unique Biblical encounter the highlight of their week. They develop a sense of "belonging" to a remarkable society, making new friends while bringing personal friends into a safe and exciting environment.

How many kids are enrolled in Cub Scouts, Brownies, sport activities, cheerleading? You name it, we put our kids in it! Let's not miss the opportunity for a great outreach to our community and our church. Imagine if all the kids in your church and the churches around you became involved in Close Encounters Club! Think of the positive impact on children, adults and families and ask yourself, "Why not?" A church can change the world by loving its' children. It is one of the most powerful changes any church can make.

Change "I'm bored," into "Ooh, Aah, What are we doing next week?" This is a program designed for elementary learning styles. Instead of lectures and quiet times adults enjoy, this curriculum features interaction and laughter, silliness mixed with serious subjects and short spurts of high energy activity balanced by faith moments spent with leaders. Throw away student workbooks! They live Bible experiences. They will never forget it!



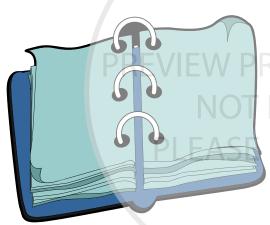
GIVE ME BASICS-WHAT HAPPENS?

Students arrive at the church and begin their adventure with a snack, table games and announcements. Divided into groups, they travel to the inspiring *Learning Center* or *Surprise Shoppe*. The learning activity could be a craft, meeting someone from a Bible story, bumping into a community leader or developing a theme room based on the Scripture focus.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

:00-4:20	SNACK AND YAK
4:20-4:40	THE LEARNING CENTER
4:40-5:00	THE SURPRISE SHOPPE
5:00-5:30	CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS

WHAT IS THE YEARLY PLAN?



Close Encounters Club is divided into trimesters. Each trimester is twelve weeks long beginning with a Family Night Dinner and ending with Show Off Night. In between are ten weeks of Bible fun and facts. Close Encounters Club runs with the school year with ample vacation time between sessions to recharge the staff.

Adapt the sessions as desired. Some churches prefer to use two sessions per year, leaving the third twelve week curriculum for the next year. Moving the third session to September does not hurt the

program at all! This may depend upon spring community activities. It may be difficult to function if students must choose between their school sport and **Close Encounters Club**. Some churches choose to open the school year with a *Family Night Dinner* and close the year with another family function. *Show Off Night* is always popular and should remain at the end of each curriculum session to bring families together.

Build in church calendar dates for Family Night Dinner, ten weeks of class time and Show Off Night. Block out the weeks when Close Encounters Club will not be in session due to holidays, school breaks and church events. Once the calendar is complete, communicate the plan to church staff, leaders, parents and students. A good rule to follow: If school is not in session, neither is Close Encounters Club. This assures the safety of students in case of inclement weather and eliminates transportation problems during school vacation days.



I AM A PARENT, WHAT DO I DO?

We need you! If your child is a member of Close Encounters Club, involve yourself on a weekly basis. If your work schedule interferes with volunteering, be aware of snack and financial needs. Offer to help when you can and support the leaders with prayer and encouragement. Question your children about their club activities. Help them learn about Jesus at home. Show videos, read stories, keep up with what they are learning at church.

I AM A LEADER, WHAT DO I DO?

Lots!—But it's all fun! Once you commit yourself to the students of Close Encounters Club, read all the materials for the session. When assigned a leadership position, do it with a sense of responsibility and joy! Put your faith on your face! It communicates volumes. Your cheerful attitude will be caught by leaders and students. Spend time with students and not other adult leaders. This is their time. They need your attention. Gather supplies and decorate your activity center appropriately. Individual lesson preparation is fast and easy. Allow student groups to interact with the decoration, chat, ask questions and participate during class time. This is a more loosely organized atmosphere than the disciplined school experience.

EXPLAIN THE WEEKLY SCHEDULE ...WILL I ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE?

Sure you will! Part of the fun is the fellowship that develops between the leaders and assistants. Choose a day and time that accommodates the majority of teachers and students. Consider school dismissal time and travel time. Some clubs are successful when scheduled in the evening, others work well when planned after school. Once a weekday and time is established, try not to change it. Families begin to think of Wednesday (or whatever day you choose) as **Close Encounters Club** day. Do not confuse them.

The group meets ninety minutes each week during the ten weeks of classes. Begin and end on time. Stress the importance of picking up children on time. Attend Close Encounters Club for the full ninety minutes. Come early to greet students as they arrive. Eat and play games with them at *Snack and Yak*. Sing during *Closencountersingers* and stay until the last students have gone home.



Each of the twenty minute activity centers is fun and meaningful for students and leaders. Enter into the activities with enthusiasm and watch your Close Encounters Club grow!

SNACK AND YAK

Students enter the snack area and get their food immediately. If students come after school, snacks keep tummies from grumbling. It is also a great way to tempt everyone to become involved from the moment they arrive. If your **Close Encounters Club** is held in the evening, a snack is also advised. Kids love to eat anytime and it is a fantastic people mixer.

Tables and chairs provide a spot to eat, talk and play a game. Scatter a variety of small table games and puzzles throughout the room. These should be fun, attractive and in good shape. Throw away the frayed leftovers of days gone by. Replace missing pieces and broken parts immediately. Use the last minute or two to give instructions, make announcements and divide into separate groups.

Table Games: Mazes, puzzles, play doh, building blocks (legos), board games—chess, checkers, Perfection, pick up sticks, dominoes, and other games available through stores.

Large Muscle Games: Consider some large group activities like basketball, bingo, tag, dodge ball, parachute (sheet) tosses, obstacle course races, balloon games, relay races. Purchase a game book and play games that your local kids enjoy. Choose one activity for each week.

Offer all table games every week. Students delight in moving from table to table and changing players as they go. Some kids may simply enjoy eating their snack while talking with friends. Still others are ready to let off steam and need to run, jump and play. Offer all of these options every week and let them choose. The happy chaos that results is a delight to the children and an opportunity to talk, play and laugh for the adults.

A formal listing of names, addresses, grades/ages, parents, church, etc. is helpful in the planning process. A neat way to take attendance informally is to ask the pastor to be the **Keeper of the Book**, moving from table to table, checking off each name and making small talk. It is a wonderful way for the pastor to make an appearance and for the students to feel that they have a personal relationship with their minister. "The pastor knows MY name," is an important part of growing up in the church.



THE LEARNING CENTER

After Snack and Yak, students move into the Bible learning portion of the day. They may hear a Bible story, meet characters from the Holy Land, play roles, eat appropriate foods, discuss *hot* issues kids face every day or participate in activities that make the specific Bible theme come to life. Each twelve week session deals with a different theme coming from the Old Testament, New Testament or Relationships. The entire curriculum hits highlights of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

The students play games, make crafts or grow a theme room. Students build their own Garden of Eden, SS Ark and Church chapel. They even go to prison with Paul. Who knows what will be happening from week to week? Decorate an empty space to reflect the theme from items found in homes and attics. Teachers involved in this area must keep the element of surprise involved each week. No amount of begging, bribing or threat will pry the surprise from the lips of those involved.

CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS

The music program is built around songs that fit the theme. CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES suggests music books and audio tapes which may be purchased as an accessory to the curriculum. *Closencountersingers* includes all students AND all leaders. Asking the leaders and assistants to participate in the music program adds voice to the choir and a helping hand with controlling discipline.

APPROVALS

For the convenience of the purchaser, permission is granted by CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES to copy any and all materials needed for the local church involved in this program. Make as many copies as needed to present the program effectively. Craft patterns should be copied onto card stock or heavy paper. When sharing the great time your group has had, pass along the following information:

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES Call Toll Free: 1-888-CEM-LIFE Ask for: Ellen Bunnell

This courtesy allows us to continue to provide curriculum at a low cost to churches across the country. A variety of child friendly Bible translations have been used in the curriculum. Materials utilized from other authors are acknowledged and permission has been gained when possible.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS SPECIAL EVENTS

THE FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

Build in an evening to begin each twelve week session when parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and friends come to eat dinner with their favorite child. Plan a covered dish dinner with families including their favorite casserole, salad or dessert to the buffet table. Add beverages, paper plates, cups, napkins and silverware from the church and you have—instant dinner! Plan the starting time so that working parents have time to get home, pick up the food and children and hurry back to church for dinner.

Publicize the Family Night Dinner through church communications, notes sent home with Sunday School students and a special mailing to neighborhood families. Invite every child in the area. Think of families who have no church connections. Consider combining forces with other churches in your local area to add leadership and numbers to the club.

After dinner, present the upcoming events to the parents while students meet with Closencountersinger leaders. New songs are introduced while the adults plan the rest of the program. Many leaders will come from this meeting. Parents need to be informed of future events, discipline problems, fund raisers, calendar scheduling, etc. The parents become an active volunteer group. Pass the COUNT ON ME sign up sheets around the room for volunteers willing to provide snacks, help with crafts, teach or drive when necessary. Always ask them to volunteer for a specific date. It will make weekly planning much easier.

	SAMPLE SCHEDULE
6:00-6:40	DINNER AND CLEAN UP
6:40-7:00	GROWN UP PLANNING
	CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS
7:00	DISMISS

SHOW OFF NIGHT

Show Off Night is Week #12 in each curriculum session. This is an opportunity for the Close Encounters Club Kids to show their families and friends what they have learned.

	SAMPLE SCHEDULE
6:30	WELCOME AND THEME SONG
6:35	SONGS OF CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS
6:45	THE THINGS WE HAVE BEEN LEARNING
6:55	INTRODUCE AND THANK LEADERS
7:00	DISMISS FOR A SNACK AND FELLOWSHIP



COUNT ON ME

VOLUNTEER LIST

We need YOU!

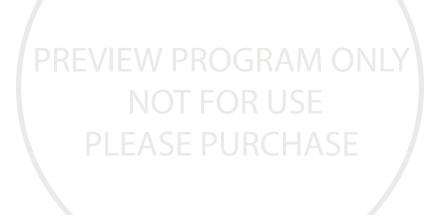
Sign your name and telephone number beside the job you are willing to do.

	HELP NEEDED	NAME	TELEPHONE
NUMBER			
WEEK #2:			
WEEK #3:			
WEEK #4:			
WEEK #5:			
MEEK #0			
WEEK #6:			
WEEK #7:			
WEEK #8:			
WEEK #9:			
WEEK #10:			
\\\\CEI\ #44.			
WEEK #11:			



WEEK #12:

SHOW OFF NIGHT! COME AND ENJOY THE SHOW!





CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB SIX YEAR PLAN

YEAR #1

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH CREATION...God's Book of Beginnings CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MESSIAH...Who Is Jesus? CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH ME...Learning to Like and Build UP Me!

YFAR #2

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE GENESIS PEOPLE...The Real Old Timers CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE...People Who Knew Jesus CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MY PEOPLE...How To Live In A Family

YEAR #3

WALK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN...Moses and The Forty Year Trek
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE CHURCH...Adventures in Acts
WALK LIKE A CHRISTIAN...Basics Of the Faith

PLEASEYEAR #4HASE

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE ARK ON A LARK...Noah's Great Adventure
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MAILMAN...New Testament Letters
CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MY WORLD...Growing In Maturity

YEAR #5

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE BOOK...What's The Bible All About?

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH TOMORROW...All About Heaven

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH FRIENDS...Good friends, Bad Friends, Picking Friends

YEAR #6

ADVENTURES WITH HEROES...Old Testament Heroes

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE DREAM TEAM...The Disciples of Jesus

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH MONSTERS UNDER THE BED.. Kids' Scary Issues



LET'S GET READY!



all young students can understand the spiritual message communicated while keeping the interest of the oldest club members.

The material is broadly graded so students can be grouped together.

THE LEARNING CENTER and THE SURPRISE SHOPPE may be divided into several smaller groups using separate teams of teachers who carry out specific activities. If your club is reaching a small number of children (20 or less), keep everyone together for the entire program.

When dividing into small groups, consider how much leadership is required. A large church may be able to divide into separate groups for each grade. Medium sized churches may want to group Kindergarten-Grade 1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-6. These groups rotate to the various centers. Some time changes will be necessary with this type of organization. Clubs of less than fifty member may be divided into two groups. They switch centers after twenty minutes. The same teaching team teaches their material twice.

RECRUITING LEADERSHIP

The Close Encounters Club committee must be functioning before the school year begins. This committee will make all decisions concerning the organization of the club year. Choose people who have a heart for children's ministry and the cheerful soul of a child. Because this program depends upon enthusiasm, it is important to have people who appreciate fun and games and who will commit themselves to success.

CHAIRPERSON: A committed Christian adult who is willing to organize all committee meetings and make final decisions for Close Encounters Club. The chairperson ideally is someone other than the Pastor who is already busy in the life of the church.



SECRETARY/TREASURER: A committed Christian adult who attends all meetings, take notes, handle correspondence, keep files, order materials and handle the checkbook.

ALL TEACHERS: Committed Christians who are willing to attend committee meetings, plan the year and fulfill their various teaching roles on a weekly basis.

PARENTS: Moms and Dads who are willing to share leadership as needed. Involve them to the point of coming when they can as assistants, attending Family Night Dinners, Show Off Nights and providing snacks once in awhile.

New leaders are appointed before each school year begins. Communicate that these positions do not mean lifetime service. Stick to it and develop new leadership where needed each year.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR RECRUITING LEADERS

- **1.** There is nothing like face to face contact when asking a leader for a serious commitment. Do not rely on a note posted in the weekly bulletin or newsletter stating, "We need teachers." You may be disappointed. Ask personally.
- **2. Describe the job.** Be truthful and complete in your explanation. No sugar coating allowed! It isn't fair to say, "You won't have to do much. Just show up."
- 3. Tell leaders who they will be working with and what kind of support they can expect from the church and from club leadership. It is important to support the team with prayer, resources and teaching tips.
- **4.** Tell leaders the length of their commitment. All existing leaders are given the first chance to take the same position for the next year but are free to say no or to move into another spot.
- **5. Take your time when asking a person to become a leader.** Go to their home or sit in a quiet place to talk. If they say yes, terrific. If they want time to think about it, call in 24-48 hours to ask again. If the person says no, ask why and see if their doubts can be alleviated. If you sense a definite no, thank them for considering your request and let them go without guilt.
- **6. Ask all leaders to sign a teacher's covenant.** This includes a job description of what is expected of them through the year. Attach the appropriate explanations the specific areas from this information to the covenant.



RECRUITMENT TIME LINE

MARCH AND APRIL

Present midweek program to church for Board approval

MAY

Interest meeting with parents. Discuss leaders and funding.

JUNE AND JULY

Recruit leaders. Publicize!

AUGUST

Register students

SEPTEMBER

Close Encounters Club begins!

WHAT ARE WE DOING? IS EACH LEADER IMPORTANT? AM I PUTTING MY EFFORTS IN THE RIGHT PLACE?

Marlene LeFever, Christian education specialist, wrote this insightful story in "A Teacher's Touch":

Forty years ago a Philadelphia congregation watched as three nine year olds were baptized and joined the church. Not long after, unable to continue with dwindling membership, the church sold the building and disbanded. One of those boys was Dr. Tony Campolo, Christian sociologist at Eastern College, Pennsylvania and pastor to U.S. Presidents. 'Years later when I was doing research in the archive of our denomination,' Tony said, 'I decided to look up the church report for the year of my baptism. There was my name and Dick White's. He is now a missionary. Bert Newman, now a professor of theology at an African seminary, was also there. Then I read the church report for my year: "It has not been a good year for our church. We have lost 27 members. Three joined and they were only children.'



CARE AND FEEDING OF CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB LEADERS

It is important to take care of the leaders God has provided.

The best method of care taking is to communicate important information, offer support and initiate training.

- **1. PRAY.** God knows the best way to get things done at your church with your people. He will show you the most effective way to reach the children of your church and community through your midweek program. Ask Him!
- **2. ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS AND COMMUNICATE ANSWERS.** Give leaders the sense that what they do is important for God's kingdom. "Why are we doing what we are doing?" "What is our purpose?" "Where is God working?"
- **3. ADAPT THE MIDWEEK PROGRAM TO FIT YOUR NEEDS.** Is the major purpose outreach and evangelism? Choose leaders who are called to evangelism. Consider selecting a musical with a good message and spend time perfecting a presentation. Music leaders who devote themselves to practice make a difference. Plan a series of trips to places of interest in your area. Parents are great trip counselors. If your group meets only a few times a year, concentrate on kids bringing friends and making contacts for other church programs. Use charismatic leaders who motivate the crowd.
- **4. LOOK FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE TEACHABLE, FLEXIBLE, DEPENDABLE AND ARE TEAM PLAYERS.** Don't wait for volunteers to come to you. Potential leaders often think they are not good at teaching and some simply have never been asked! The personal approach works best with eye to eye contact and a warm smile and a promise of relationship building.
- **5. PRESENT EACH TASK AS AN OPPORTUNITY NOT A PREDICAMENT.** The assignment should be a ministry not a crisis. Ask specific people for a specific job. Avoid appearing out of nowhere with a help request. Let them observe before making a decision.
- **6. TRAIN LEADERS FOR SUCCESS.** It takes time, energy and patience to prepare leaders. One Christian educator says, "It is a sin to give lay people a job and not tell them how to do it!"
- **7. SAY THANK YOU!** Recognize volunteer leaders by finding personal and surprising ways to say thank you publically and privately. Small gifts, thank you notes, applause and other small expressions of appreciation are taken seriously by the leaders who are looking for confirmation of a successful program. Do not be stingy with praise! Lavish it upon every leader early and often.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB LEADER'S COVENANT

<i>I</i> _			, the undersigned, promise to take
seriously	the	CLOSE	ENCOUNTERS CLUB position
of			I will perform this job faithfully as a
committed C			
	e CLO	SE ENCOU	nnot attend, I will arrange a substitute and NTERS CLUB Director as soon as I know I tion.
			respect due him or her. I will encourage ch child when they want my attention.
program tha	t is with	hin my abilit	e me each week in order to present the best by so that children will most likely come to a sist.
			le and exhibiting a pleasant attitude toward in contact. I plan to have a very good time!
-			to live a Christian testimony that will most to be like me because I am Christ filled.
-			ren I work with on a regular basis. If it is ill, I will do my best to help.
-	be pe	erfect. I ar	or any mistakes I might make. It is not not on God's child and He will make up the
		Sig	ned



FINANCING CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB



Money grows on trees, right? Plant, water, weed, harvest a few ripe green bills and the problem is solved! Well...not quite.

Touch the lives of the church congregation and reach into the local community to children from other churches and even unchurched neighborhood children. There are a variety of ways to finance this special outreach effort of the local church. Choose the option that appeals to your local congregation.

CHURCH BUDGET

Ask to be considered a budget item on the church books. Depending upon the number of children involved, ask for \$500-\$750 per year. This should cover the cost of curriculum, craft and office supplies and some of the snacks. More money may be needed if the leaders decide to provide a club shirt for each leader and club member.

REGISTRATION FEE

A registration fee is an easy way to cover some of the costs for each child. No child should be refused for lack of a registration fee. A \$5.00 fee for one twelve week session will help pay the bills. Discuss this with the leaders.

WEEKLY DUES

Ask each child to bring \$1.00 per week for the cost of the snack and craft supplies. No child should be refused for lack of weekly dues.

CHURCH SPONSORS

Ask members of the congregation to sponsor Close Encounters Club by giving gifts of \$10-\$20-\$50-\$100. They become Honorary **Close Encounters Club** members and receive membership cards and open invitations to all club activities. The children should learn the names of these special families and write thank you notes during a *Snack and Yak* session.



ADOPT A CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB KID

Church families may consider adopting one child as their own. This family pays all registration fees and weekly dues for that child. These families attend all dinners as part of the family. This is a opportunity for leaders to suggest children who may not be able to participate because of difficult situations in the home. They also take the responsibility of praying for this child every week during the months of Close Encounters Club.

FUND RAISING

Be sensitive to the desires of your local church and the needs of the families involved when fund raising. Sell inexpensive items like candy bars, submarine sandwiches or pizzas. Consider sponsoring a church family spaghetti or chicken and biscuit dinner. All donations are donated to Close Encounters Club expenses.

Never sponsor a fund raising activity which requires children to sell items door to door. Our communities are no longer safe havens and we must protect our children by keeping them in family settings.

DENOMINATION SUPPORT

Some Christian denominations reserve funds for churches in their districts, regions or conferences specifically to assist in mission efforts. Ask about special memorials or grants available for children's ministries. You may be pleasantly surprised to find the help you need!

ANOTHER FINANCIAL ISSUE: CHECK THE CHURCH INSURANCE PLAN!

Many churches build protection for all groups meeting in the building into the basic insurance coverage they carry. Be sure your church covers all children and leaders in the building while they are participating in any Close Encounters Club event.

Be certain your group is covered if you take them away from the church property? Will everyone be insured if there is a car or bus accident? Even if you think you know the answers to these questions, as the church finance committee to check and be absolutely certain before the program begins.

If there is no insurance coverage or limited coverage, provide what you need through the church or by charging each member a token fee to cover the added premium to the church's existing policy. No one wants to think about injury or death to anyone involved in Close Encounters Club activities, but the times to find out and be prepared is BEFORE such an accident occurs.



THE SNACK AND YAK PACK

Open a can, tear open a package of cookies or design a gourmet meal, you choose!

This is a popular stop for every kid!

SNACK AND YAK is a group of adults who take their responsibility for the first twenty minutes of Close Encounters Club seriously. They provide a snack for each child. They prepare table games and sport activities. These adults supervise all action for this portion of club time.

Greet each Close Encounters Club member cheerfully. Store coats, boots, school books, musical instruments and back packs in an out of the way, easy access area. Use the same area each week so young club members learn where to find their belongings.

CASUAL, CASUAL: Folks enter the SNACK AND YAK area where a variety of activities are prepared. Place weekly dues in a basket (Do not worry if some do not pay.). Delicious foods tempt students and leaders at the kitchen window and they carry their snack to a game table where they eat, talk and play a game. Students may move from table to table. Reserve one end of the area for a large muscle activity. Those who want to play a more active game gather in that area with a leader.

SNACKS: Make simple tasty snacks or complicated snacks or full meals, as desired.

Some parents prefer nutritious foods but slip in some fun foods once in awhile for the "Wow!" factor. Often students are drawn to your program because you feed them. Make it a surprise.

A GENTLE SUGGESTION

Do not be held hostage to students who dislike the treat.

Resist the temptation to provide alternative snacks.

If someone does not like what is served, say, "Oh, I'm sorry.

Maybe you will enjoy next week's snack. Would you like a glass of ice water?"



Never announce what next week's snack will be. Some students base their attendance on whether or not they like that food. Surprise is best! The only alternative snacks should be for students who have health or allergy issues.

NEVER—force anyone to eat ANYTHING. Learn from the drastic mistake of a preschool teacher who forced young student to eat a peanut butter cookie after his mother had informed the school of his peanut allergy and he tried to decline. He ate the cookie, had a major allergic reaction and nearly died. It just isn't worth it. Students won't starve if they refuse food offered.

Churches find that a simple meal shared once a week, brings everyone closer together. Foods can be simple and served on paper plates. Students should help with clean up. An expanded time must be considered if a meal is served.

YAK: Give students and leaders plenty of opportunity for casual talk. All *yakking* is done while seated at the game tables. If conversation is slow, start the gabfest by posing a fun discussion question (one each week):

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WERE GIVEN ONE MILLION DOLLARS?

IF YOUR HOUSE BURNED DOWN, WHAT ONE ITEM WOULD YOU GRAB? WHY?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF SCHOOL WAS CANCELED FOREVER?

WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF YOUR PARENTS SAID

YOU COULD TRAVEL ANYWHERE?

TELL US ALL THE FOODS IN YOUR FAVORITE MEAL.

IF YOU COULD PLAY ANY SPORT (AND BE THE BEST),

WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

WHO WOULD YOU BE IF YOU COULD BE ANYONE IN THE WORLD?

ANOTHER GENTLE SUGGESTION

Make a special effort during SNACK AND YAK to sit with a table of kids and enter into the YAK conversation.

Club members should see leaders who genuinely enjoy being with kids even during time when they could cluster in one corner of the room, drinking coffee.



TABLE GAMES: Playing games is a relaxing way to ease everyone into the day's activities. Place games, building blocks, puzzles and other fun activities on the tables. Older students may enjoy a large puzzle that remains in place until it is completed. Young students like quick and easy building games with a lot of color. Adult and teen leaders should enter into the fun of table games. Teach chess or checkers. Young students learn to count or keep score.

YET ANOTHER GENTLE SUGGESTION

Do not keep old, beaten games with missing parts.

Purchase games and puzzles that are in good condition. Replace games as necessary. The SNACK AND YAK crew decides when it is time to retire an old game and select a new one.

RECREATION: Include some recreation styled action games. Some students need transition time between school and **Close Encounters Club**. Use some of the suggested games but consider purchasing a good game book and use it often. Rotate the games to avoid boredom. Revive old favorites like marbles that can be taught by an older generation to a new generation!

If the weather is nice, take SNACK AND YAK outdoors!

Games become more active.

Spread picnic ground cloths for casual conversation and quiet game playing.

ANNOUNCE AND ORGANIZE: Use the last few minutes to gather the group, make announcements for the day's activities and upcoming events. Introduce new club members, give them a round of applause and be sure that every student has a leader to follow to their first activity center.



SNACK AND YAK FOOD SUGGESTIONS



Prepare snacks as simple or complicated as the people providing them desire.

Keep the "healthy" factor in mind and consider diabetics and special allergies.

Design menus that are fun for everyone involved.

APPLE SLICES AND CHEESE CURLS CELERY STICKS/CREAM CHEESE, PEANUT BUTTER AND RAISINS PEANUT BUTTER AND BANANA SANDWICHES VANILLA ICE CREAM WITH FRUIT COCKTAIL AND JUICE ON TOP PEACH/CHERRY/APPLE COBBLER WATERMELON SLICES ORANGE SLICES CANTALOUPE AND POTATO CHIPS CAKE AND ICE CREAM **BANANA SPLITS** - A SPIZZA SLICES A S -SOUP AND CRACKERS HOT DOGS, FRITOS AND PEPSI COOKIES-ALL KINDS/HOMEMADE OF COURSE! CUPCAKES THEY CAN FROST AND DECORATE BALOGNA SANDWICHES POPSICLES/FUDGESICLES/SHERBET CUPS

BEVERAGES: Offer a drink with each snack. If you give it a really gross name, they love it! *Bug Juice, Suicide Soda* (A combination of every kind of juice available. Mix it in front of the group so everyone can see the awful combination. Hopefully it will remain zingy and tasteful.) *Slurp 'N Burp, Green Grasshopper Squish, Snake Soup* (ice water that you explain had a big rattler dragged through it to give it flavor.) Put the drink of the week in a large thermos or cooler labeled with the name to elicit wonderful reactions and great YAK starters.



DINNER SUGGESTIONS: If desired, plan a small dinner each week. These foods can be simply made and simply served family style or buffet style. Use these suggestions or create your own luscious meals.

HOT DOGS, CHIPS, FRUIT AND BEVERAGE
SPAGHETTI, TOSSED SALAD AND ICE CREAM
HAMBURGERS, JELLO AND CHIPS, DESSERT
CHICKEN AND MACARONI AND CHEESE, PEAS AND DESSERT
SUBMARINE SANDWICHES, FRUIT SALAD AND DESSERT
TURKEY, FRENCH FRIES AND FRESH FRUIT
TOASTED CHEESE SANDWICH, TOMATO SOUP AND DESSERT
VEGETABLE SOUP, CRACKERS/BREAD AND BUTTER AND
DESSERT

LASAGNE AND TOSSED SALAD AND DESSERT
TACOS, CHIPS AND DESSERT
CHILI, CRACKERS AND DESSERT
PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES/
HOMEMADE BREAD, CHIPS, DESSERT
MC DONALD'S HAPPY MEAL NIGHT!

When providing a weekly dinner, organize a cooking crew and allow the students to help with clean up. More time will be needed so plan accordingly. Consider the cost. Plan the food into the budget or request donations. Set up the menus before the series begins and ask for help on a weekly basis.



SNACK RECIPES

ICE CREAM CAKE

1 (12 OZ.) Pkg. Oreos 1/3 C. butter

1 can Hershey Fudge Topping 1 large container Cool Whip

Mix crushed Oreos with the melted butter. Put 2 cups of the mixture into a cake pan and press down. Spoon softened ice cream over the mixture and smooth. Put the fudge topping over the ice cream. If fudge is too thick, thin with milk. Spread Cool Whip over the top and sprinkle with remaining Oreo mixture. Keep frozen.

GOB CAKE

1 Box devil's food (with pudding) cake mix 1 recipe Gob Cake Icing

Make cake exactly as directed on box. Line 2 cookie sheets with waxed paper. Spread ½ of batter on each sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 5-10 minutes. Spread God Icing between layers.

GOB ICING -

10 T. flour

10 T. flour 2 c. confectioners sugar 2 C. milk 5 E 2 t. vanilla 2 sticks oleo ½ t. salt

Cook flour and milk until thick. Cool mixture. Cream together oleo, shortening, sugar, vanilla and salt. Mix with cooled flour mixture and spread between layers of Gob Cake.

PUMPKIN LOG

3 eggs 1 t. soda 1 C. sugar ½ t. cinnamon 2/3 C. pumpkin 3/4 C. flour

Filling: 1 (8 oz.) Cream cheese 1 t. vanilla 2 T. butter 1 C. powdered sugar

Grease flour and line with waxed paper a jelly roll pan or cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. Flip out cake on a towel dusted with powdered sugar. Roll up in towel and let cool. Spread on cake leaving about an inch on the end exposed. Roll up toward the exposed end. Can be frozen.



DUMP CAKE

1 pkg. Yellow cake mix 1 C. chopped pecans 1 can (20 oz.) Crushed pineapple in syrup (undrained) 1 can (21 oz.) Cherry Pie Filling ½ C. butter or margarine Apple cut in thin slices

Preheat oven to 350 degrees: 9 x 13 pan. Dump undrained pineapple into pan; spread evenly. Dump in pie filing and spread into even layer. Dump dry cake mix onto cherry layer; spread evenly. Sprinkle pecans over cake mix. Put butter over top. Bake at 350 for 48 to 53 minutes. Serve warm or cool.

PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH FUNNEL CAKES

1/4 t. salt 1/4 t. baking powder 2 eggs 2 T. sugar ½ C. milk

Sift dry ingredients. Beat eggs, add sugar and milk. Stir. Add ½ to 3/4 cups milk until it makes the batter runny. Use a funnel with a ½ inch hole. Drop in a circle in hot oil. Be generous in the serving. If desired, sprinkle with powdered sugar.

FIVE CUP FRUIT SALAD

1 C. crushed pineapple (drained) 1 C. coconut 1 C. mini marshmallows 1 C. sour cream

1 C. mandarin oranges (drained) Add maraschino cherries

Mix together and put in refrigerator overnight.

TWENTY FOUR HOUR SALAD

3 ½ oz. Pkg. Instant vanilla pudding mix 11 oz. Mandarin orange sections 1 C. whipped cream 6 oz. Mini marshmallows

14 oz. Can fruit cocktail 2 sliced bananas

Mix well and chill.



CHEERIOS NUGGETS

1 C. packed brown sugar ½ t. baking soda ½ C. margarine or butter 6 C. Cheerios cereal 1/4 C. light corn syrup

1 C. peanuts

1 C. Raisins ½ t. salt

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Grease 2 9 x 13 pans. Heat sugar, margarine, corn syrup and salt in a two quart saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly until bubbly around edges. Cook uncovered stirring occasionally two minutes longer. Remove from heat. Stir in baking soda until foamy and light colored. Pour over cereal, peanuts and raisins in greased four quart bowl. Stir until mixture is coated. Spread evenly in pans. Bake 15 minutes. Stir. Let stand just until cool-about 10 minutes. Loosen mixture with metal spatula. Let stand until firm-about 30 minutes. Break into bite sized pieces. Makes about 10 cups.

MONKEY BREAD

3 Cans buttermilk biscuits 1 Stick margarine

1 C. white sugar

Boil margarine and brown sugar for five minutes. Cut the biscuits into fours. Place in plastic bag with white sugar and cinnamon. Shake. Layer into greased angel food cake pan. Pour the brown sugar mix over all. Bake at 350 degrees for 30-35 minutes

NOTE: Remove from pan immediately!

NACHOS

1 bag tortilla chips, PLAIN not flavored 1-8 oz. Pkg. Shredded cheddar cheese

1 envelope Hidden Valley Ranch Dressing, prepared as directed

Put enough in to cover the bottom of the pan. Pour Place tortilla chips in microwave dish. some of the dressing over, enough to coat well. Sprinkle cheese on top, about one handful. Microwave until cheese is melted, about 30 seconds. These ingredients make three batches.



PUPPY CHOW

8 C. rice chex cereal 1 stick margarine 1-12 oz. bag chocolate chips ½ C. peanut butter 2 C. powdered sugar

Melt chocolate chips, peanut butter and margarine in microwave on high until smooth. Put chex cereal in a large bowl. Pour melted chocolate over all. Cover the bowl and shake to coat the cereal. Remove seal, pour in powdered sugar. Reseal bowl and shake again. (A Tupperware bowl with a seal is ideal for this snack.)

PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

1 C. brown sugar
1 stick margarine
1-16 oz. can crushed pineapple...drained
2-10 oz. packs buttermilk biscuits
Cinnamon

Mix brown sugar, melted margarine and cinnamon. Add the drained pineapple to it. In the bottom of the pan spread the pineapple evenly. Spread brown sugar mix on top. Place whole biscuits on top...4 across and 5 down the sides. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes until well browned. As soon as it comes out of the oven, flip on platter. Spread topping evenly if needed.

GOOD GRIEF, IT'S GOULASH!

This sounds like a full meal but it is a great hot snack on a cold day. Give each person a small serving in a cup. Serve with crackers and a cold drink.

1 lb. Ground beef
2 t. sugar
1/4 C. chopped onions
1/4 t. oregano
1 C. water
1 t. salt
15 oz. tomato sauce
1 C. elbow macaroni

Put all ingredients in a large pan. Let the mixture come to a boil. Simmer 25-30 minutes stirring often. Very quick, very easy!



JELLO AND PRETZEL SALAD

Crush 20 pretzels (2 2/3 C.). Add to 3/4 C. melted butter and 3 T. sugar. Mix well. Press into a 9 x 13 pan and bake 8 minutes at 400 degrees. Let cool.

Combine 3/4 C. sugar or 1 C. confectioner's sugar, 1 (8 oz.) Cream cheese and 1 (9 oz.) Small Cool Whip. Mix and spread on top of cooled pretzels.

Combine 2 pkg. Strawberry or raspberry Jello, 2 C. boiling water, 1 pint frozen strawberries or raspberries. Let set and put on top of cream cheese. Cool in refrigerator.

TACO SALAD

1 lb. Ground beef ½ C. pitted ripe olives, drained ½ c. taco sauce 2 C. shredded cheddar cheese

1 chopped head lettuce 1 pkg. Taco tortilla corn chips (crumbled)

1 med. Green pepper, chopped ½ C. Thousand Island salad dressing

1 med. Tomato, cut into wedges

Cook and stir ground beef over medium heat until light brown. Drain. Stir in taco sauce and heat. Toss lettuce, green pepper, tomato wedges, olives, cheese and chips. Spoon hot beef mixture and salad dressing over lettuce. Toss. Serve immediately.

WALDORF SALAD

4 or 5 cut apples ½ c. chopped walnuts ½ pint whipped whipping cream ½ c. chopped celery Combine all ingredients; sweeten to taste with powdered sugar.

HOT COCOA

Make this dry mix and keep on hand for a choice of drink on a cold afternoon.

8 qt. pkg. Dry milk6 oz. jar Coffeemate1 C. confectioners sugar2 lb can of Nestle's Quik



GAMES FOR SNACK AND YAK

Provide a variety of table games like Checkers, Chess, Candyland, Old Maid, Trivial Pursuit or Bible Trivia. These classic favorites are placed on the tables each week. Purchase sets of Legos or similar block building sets popular with elementary age children. Place one or more sets on separate tables each week. Kids also enjoy games like pick up sticks, marbles, Perfection and Jenga.

Do not over organize this time period. Remember the students are arriving a few at a time. They may be tired from school activities and need a transition period to refresh themselves for the Close Encounters Club program. The snack should be ready to serve when the first people come in the door. Serve as they come and urge them to find a table where they can eat and begin to play a game.

Leaders should be scattered around the room at game tables. This is the perfect opportunity for leaders to mingle with the students as they arrive and become friends. It cannot be stressed enough that the adults use this Snack and Yak time in a positive way. Make it a policy to talk only to the students and not to the other adult or teen helpers.

There are times when the leaders may want to organize the group into formal game activities. Consider basketball, dodge ball, four square, relay races, parachute games or other competitions. If shy or tired students refuse to participate, allow them to rest and watch. They may play later or on another afternoon. Older elementary girls are especially "clannish" and prefer to talk among themselves or watch the game.



Establish a HOMEWORK CORNER. Students may receive help with spelling words or math problems. Station one or two leaders in this corner.

Use the group game resources available in your local book store or library. Purchase several game books and use them to play a variety of old and new games appropriate for each age group. The games should be quick, exciting and fun. Equipment must be on hand before the activity begins.

A Gentle Game Suggestion

It is nice to have games donated. The donations save money in the budget which can be used for other things. However, be sure the games are new. Puzzles must have all pieces and art supplies must not be dried or used up. Old or damaged games must be discarded at regular intervals. Insert new games when the students have played most of the old ones and need new challenges. Check out sales after the holidays and stock up on games before they are needed.

PLAY DOH AT THE TABLE

One popular table activity is designing shapes with Play Doh. The clay may be purchased or homemade. Use this excellent recipe. It is soft and when stored properly in zip lock bags and sealed containers, lasts a long time. Younger students head for this table every time. Add a few cookie cutters, rulers, shape cutters and small toys and time flies!

1 C. Flour ASE 2 T. Cream of Tartar 1/2 C. salt 1 C. water 2 T. vegetable oil Food coloring

Heat oil in saucepan. Add other ingredients to oil. Cook three minutes stirring constantly. Drop ball of dough on waxed paper and cool. Knead and separate as desired. Add food coloring while kneading.

PUPPETS AT THE TABLE

Sometimes puppets can help a shy person make the transition of becoming acquainted with new people. Let each person make a sack puppet of themselves. When they are finished, start around the room letting each puppet introduce himself. The attention is drawn to the puppet and not to the shy student.



DO-IT-YOURSELF

Equipment: Each table is supplied with all sorts of materials such as construction paper, tinfoil, scotch tape, pip cleaners, ribbon, crepe paper, decorative, scraps, scissors, glue, crayons, pencils, rulers and buttons.

Design individual creations or table creations designed by the entire group.

- 1. Decorate a hat
- 2. Table Centerpiece
- 3. Create a Scene (pick a theme)
 - 4. Paper Bag Mask
 - 5. Holiday Decorations
 - **6. Fantasy Animals**

NAME BINGO

Equipment: One piece of white paper at each table. Crayons or markers.

As each person arrives, ask them to sign a slip of paper and place it in the container provided. Pass out bingo forms. Give everyone five minutes to circulate around the room getting signatures in each box. Return to the tables and begin to play bingo using the slips of paper they signed. Call names.

Game Ideas: Letter X Bingo, Vertical Bingo, Horizontal Bingo, Double Bingo, Coverall

BALLOON BASKETBALL

Use an inflated balloon for the ball and boxes or wastepaper baskets for the goals. Score as in basketball except that a broken balloon counts five points off for the offending side. Be sure to have plenty of replacement "balls".

BALLOON BATTLE ROYAL

Arrange the players in a large circle, each with an inflated balloon hanging from a string tied to the ankle. One signal, each player must try to break all other balloons by stamping on them. When a balloon breaks, it's owner leaves the circle and the game continues until only one player is left. This can be wild and a little dangerous for younger students.

RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT



Play this game outdoors or in a large room. "It" turns his back on the rest of the group who are lined up 30-50 feet away from him. The object is for the group to walk or run toward "It" while his back is turned as he counts to five. At "five" he shouts, "Red Light!" as he turns around quickly. Any player who is moving when "It" turns must go back to the starting line. The first player to get to "It" and tag him wins the game and becomes "It".

DUTCH SHOE RELAY

Give each team two shoe boxes. On signal, each student in turn places his feet in the boxes and shuffles to a goal line and back to the starting point where the next player repeats the action.

THREE LEGGED RACE

Run this contest on an individual or team basis. Tie a student's left leg to an adult's right leg. On signal, they make their way to the turning line and back again. The first team to complete the course wins.

PEOPLE ON A STRING

Equipment: Ball of string with a spoon tied on the end for each team. Each team lines up side by side. The first player passes the spoon down the front of his shirt and lets it come out his pant leg below and then passes the spoon on to the next player. After the whole team is connected, reverse the process. The team that finishes first with the string all wound up on the ball and sitting down is the winner!

MAKE A FACE

Equipment: *One piece of white paper at each table. Crayons or markers.*

Pass the paper from one person to the next around the table. Each person must add part of a person's face to the picture. The end result will be a hilarious looking "human" face. Take time to show each table's efforts when done. Award prizes to the funniest, scariest, most beautiful, most colorful, booby prize.

More Face Game Ideas: Draw a fantasy animal, vacation home, car, boat, perfect school, perfect mom or the perfect church.

JUICE RACE



Equipment: Large bowl filled with juice. Each table should have the same amount of juice. One tablespoon for each person at the table.

The object of the game is to finish your bowl of juice before any other table. You must drink it one tablespoon at a time. Pass the bowl carefully around the table or lean into the center to take a spoonful. Repeat until the bowl is empty. The winning table is the first to place their spoons in the empty bowl and shout "Done!".

More Food Game Ideas: Use Cheerios or mini crackers. Blindfold the table groups and ask them to spoon out their snack sight unseen. Use a variety of small snacks that are placed in the bowl secretly. Try items like olives, pickles, licorice, soft chocolate candies, m&m's, bread cubes, potato chips and other odd foods mixed together.

BUILD THE TALLEST BUILDING

Using whatever equipment is available, each table must build a tall building within a one minute time limit (longer if desired). They must work together carefully so the building does not topple before it is measured. Make the task challenging by providing odd building materials. Include items such as tin cans, pencils, paper towels, pillows, hats, water, paper which they can fold in any manner to make the building taller. When the buildings are complete, make a big deal of measuring each structure with a measuring tape.

PASS THE RING

Equipment: *One ring from anyone's finger.*

All students place their hands face down and flat out on the table. One person is chosen "It" and turns around. While "It" counts to ten the ring is passed from one person to another around the table. When "It" turns around, he must find the ring in two guesses. If caught with the ring, that person becomes "It".

HOT POTATO INFO

Prepare a sack with questions written on cards such as: What is your favorite song? What is your favorite sport? What is your favorite Bible story? What is your favorite ice cream, etc. Have the players sit in a circle. Play music and start the sack around the circle. When the music stops, the player holding the sack must take a question and answer it. Start the music again. Proceed until everyone has had a chance to answer a question.



GET THOSE ANIMALS IN THE ARK

Float several small margarine tubs in a tub of water. Throw small rubber or plastic animals into the "boats" without sinking them.

CROSSING THE RED SEA

Make a circular path from large cards printed with number 1-20 on them. Place small cards numbered 1-20 in a bowl. Players must follow the path through the "Red Sea". When the music stops, the adult leader draws a number from the bowl. The player standing on that number can either win a prize or be eliminated. Or, win a prize before they are eliminated! The game continues until only one player remains.

MUSICAL HATS

Pick six players to stand in a circle, each facing the back of the person in front. Five of the players put on hats (buckets, paper hats, baskets) and when the music starts each players grabs the hat on the person's head in front of him and puts it on his own head. The hats are moving around the circle from head to head until the music stops. Whoever is left without a hat is out of the game. Remove one hat and continue until there are only two players left. They stand back to back grabbing the hat off of each other's head and when the music stops, the one wearing the hat is the winner.

GOOFY GOLF

Set up a miniature golf course all over your playing area. If you are using a church building, make your course travel down hallways, in and out of rooms, down staircases and other interesting spots. For golf balls, use real balls, balloons with a marble inside (they take unusual rolls), old stale marshmallows, ping-pong balls or whiffle golf balls. For clubs, use golf clubs, broom handles, rolled up newspapers, etc.

Each hole should be marked with a flag as in regular golf and tees should also be designated. Set par for each hole, print up some scorecards and have a GOOFY GOLF TOURNAMENT.

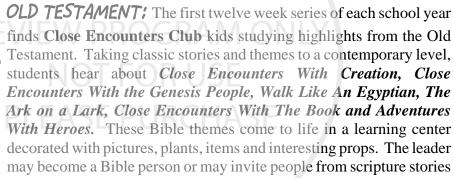


THE LEARNING CENTER

THE LEARNING CENTER changes themes for each twelve week series.

This is a twenty minute Bible lesson where students learn about God's Word in a casual, contemporary atmosphere.

Close Encounters Club offers a six year plan to guarantee that students from kindergarten through grade six cover Biblical highlights from Genesis through Revelation. They study issues that relate to living a Christian life in a sometimes harsh world.



to visit and tell their stories to the group. Bringing Old Testament stories to life makes a difference!

NEW TESTAMENT: The focus of the second twelve week series shifts to studies in the New Testament. Learning about the life of Jesus and how He changed the lives of those around Him, bring personal faith in Christ to life for the club members. The series includes: Close Encounters With The Messiah, Close Encounters With the Jesus People, Close Encounters With the Church, Close Encounters With the Mailman, Close Encounters With Tomorrow and Close Encounters With the Dream Team.







RELATIONSHIPS: In the third twelve week series, attention in THE LEARNING CENTER shifts to modern issues that concern children in elementary school. In a gentle, straight forward manner, children talk about themselves, their families, their friends and other stuff that no one ever discusses about their faith and every day problems. All issues are discussed from a Biblical point of view. Titles are: Close Encounters With Me, Close Encounters With My People, Walk Like a Christian, Close Encounters With My World, Close Encounters With Friends and Close Encounters With Monsters Under the Bed.

The task of THE LEARNING CENTER team is to follow curriculum instructions in presenting the current theme. Quiet learning activities may include story telling, scripture memorization, crafting, decorating the activity area and role playing. Each week, the teaching method changes. Have fun while presenting serious materials. Present the lessons on an elementary school level.

Close Encounters Club teaching is much different from a public school atmosphere. Present spiritual concepts in short spurts. Allow students to interact with the activity, laugh, chat and ask questions. Avoid long lectures and choose child friendly versions of scripture that communicate Bible truth on their level. If the King James Version of scripture is important to your church, use it for memorization and story telling.



THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

This is a twenty minute "hands-on" adventure.

Students become involved in an active way with the Biblical theme.

They make a craft, play a game, work in a theme room

or meet a Bible person.

THE SURPRISE SHOPPE sparks the imagination and appeal to the hands on learner. The variety of projects keeps students guessing from week to week about the happening awaiting them. Churches across the country say that this is the favorite spot for many of their energetic students.



If your church is on a tight budget and cannot afford expensive crafts every week, you will enjoy the sessions which feature less materials and more imagination. If budget is not a problem, there are plenty of suggestions for crafts which become cherished keepsakes. Adapt THE SURPRISE SHOPPE to fit your personal taste.

Reserve one classroom as the area where craft and play is focused for the entire twelve week session. Use an adult classroom where the props may be left in place and Sunday School is held with the decoration making their class exciting while saving space. There is nothing like having Sunday School in the middle of the Garden of Eden or in Paul's prison cell to make adults sit up and take notice of children's ministries.

If saving space is an issue, consider making this area mobile. Set up one corner of a room or hallway and decorate using cardboard backgrounds and moveable items. Hide them away in a storeroom or closet between club sessions.

The element of surprise is important. Even though the students may beg for information, keep them guessing. They enjoy the journey even though they may say they want to know everything that is going to happen. One unique aspect of this area is that every once in awhile, students enter a different world. They may build a garden in Eden, go to jail with Paul, visit a home where Jesus grew up, design their own chapel, learn about earth's environment or play a variety of games and make enjoyable craft projects.



CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS

This thirty minute music session is a favorite for young and old.

Not only do club kids and leaders sing together for fun

but they get to perform at church and community events!

Lead the music in such a way as to sponsor enthusiasm and encourage



memorization of lyrics. The curriculum suggests songs for each theme and song books which can be purchased separately. There may be favorite choruses and chorus books already at your local church. Music leaders may choose songs as desired.

CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS is open to students AND adult leaders. There is an important message communicated in mixing adult and child voices in the same group. The adults see music from the child's perspective and are a support system for discipline. Students see how much the leaders care about them. As they perform, the congregation sees a mixture of generations reaching the community for Christ. To see a singing group function like this is an inspiring experience. Try it!

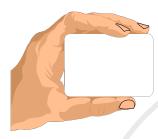
Assign a music leader who is responsible for the weekly gatherings as well as performances. Add a second person as a pianist. Small churches may combine the director and pianist. Audio tapes may help provide instrumental music for practice and performance. Tapes are available through CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES. The piano is the main musical instrument but try a song with a guitar, keyboard or taped background. Use homemade instruments just for fun. Bells create a nice effect and can be added using even the smallest children.

It would be great to have a perfectly tuned group singing every syllable correctly but let's face it, the charm of a casual singing group is the energetic experience. Mix music knowledge with just plain fun when learning the songs. Avoid the temptation to become a formal choir. Be sensitive to copyright laws. Purchase a CCLI license or use the existing license for your church. If you choose to teach using song charts, use black marker only. Light colors and tiny lettering frustrate people who cannot see. Consider music sheets, overhead projector and other teaching aids.



ABOVE AND BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTYDELIGHTFUL OPTIONS

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB is a special place to be. Make each member feel part of a wonderful adventure!



MEMBERSHIP CARD: When a student attends CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB three times in a row, that student becomes a formal club member and is entitled to a membership card. Design small cards that look official. Cover them in protective plastic. Attach a long cord appropriate to hang around the neck. The card is good for entrance into other events (movie night, holiday parties, Sunday night sings) without cost and may entitle the bearer to a free gift.

UNIFORM: CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES offers an official club shirt for students and leaders. Many popular colors are available in t-shirts or sweatshirts at a low cost.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB STORE: To encourage attendance and performance, establish a store. Club members are issued a ticket each week for attendance and other accomplishments. They save their tickets to "spend" at the store when it is open once a month. Assume each ticket is worth between ten and twenty five cents and gauge the prices of items according to the number of tickets earned.

All store items should have Christian significance. Pencils, bookmarks, plastic toys with Bible phrases, faith bracelets, books, puzzles, t shirts, etc. make great choices. Provide less expensive items and items that take a few weeks of savings to obtain. The philosophy behind the store is that those who may be tempted to skip a week or two will think twice if they are losing a shopping ticket.

Arrange a safe place to keep tickets so they will not be lost or stolen. Consider using an envelope system. Each child has an envelope with their name printed on it. When they receive a ticket, they print their name in ink on the ticket and put it in the envelope. They can spend or save at their own discretion. Keep all ticket envelopes together in a safe place.

GIFT GIVING: Provide a small gift for each student to be given at the end of each meeting. These items should be very small but colorful. Elementary students love getting gifts and will begin to look forward to their surprise each week.



LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT OUR STUDENTS!

Think about the characteristics of the students in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB. Each age group has God given, unique behaviors. Tap into their interests and their abilities to accomplish as much as possible in the time they are with the group.

EARLY ELEMENTARY ...KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST GRADE

PHYSICAL: These restless children love high activity and work hard to please, often becoming overtired. They try new motor skills and are unconcerned about danger. Small muscle and eye-hand coordination is developing so they enjoy coloring, cutting, pasting, painting and building. They look everywhere at once and touch everything within reach.

MENTAL: With an increasing attention span, these youngsters can enjoy at least twenty minutes of activity. They can tell the difference between fantasy and reality to some extent. Their reasoning ability is just beginning to develop. They have a good memory and love to listen to stories. They learn best when they are active.

EMOTIONAL: Familiar routines in familiar surroundings are important. New feelings are emerging and they become angry easily. Sometimes these students cry, throw tantrums and sulk. They may be ashamed of their mistakes. It is at this stage that the students may be defiant or rude as they try to become independent. They need reminders and verbal guidance.

SOCIAL: These children are loyal, self centered, tattle tales, friend seekers. They may be bossy, jealous, proud or protective. They want friends but do not make a good friend because of their selfishness. They thrive on praise and approval and dislike criticism.

SPIRITUAL: The students can understand God as Creator and may ask appropriate spiritual questions. They may fear God since He can see everything they do. They see Jesus as a real person but need more knowledge of His life and purpose. They can grasp simple explanations about Jesus dying and raising from the dead to return to earth. Beginning to understand sin, they know Jesus took the blame for our wrong actions. They know Bible story characters are real. They begin to pray.



MIDDLE ELEMENTARY ...SECOND AND THIRD GRADE

PHYSICAL: These children love activity and are interested in organized games. They enjoy stunts and rough play. There are frequent accidents as they learn how to move their bodies. They become more controlled and graceful in their movement. They practice skills until they can succeed. Girls are usually ahead of boys at this stage.

MENTAL: Concentration and long periods of mental focus begin to appear. They like to plan ahead and are good at memorizing short sentences. They love to read and are doing so independently. They do not like failure but enjoy challenges and risks. They begin to think logically but may use the trial and error approach.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

EMOTIONAL: These students can be shy or bold, morbid or cheerful, lazy to excitable. They are likely to overdo and may not complete their tasks. Their feelings are easily hurt and they do not like criticism from adults. They may have many fears—dark, fights, injury, failing, not being liked. They may worry. Friendships with adults become important.

SOCIAL: Best friends are the order of the day. They may not want to go on family outings if friends are available. They are able to function in a group by allowing others' opinions to be part of decision making. They enjoy belonging to a club and look for friendship with older children. They are learning politeness. They often have no use for the opposite sex and are beginning to have consciousness of their own racial, ethnic heritage.

SPIRITUAL: These students want to be good and see the difference between good and bad. They are starting to feel the pull of right actions and try to be good. There is an active interest in God and they enjoy stories about Jesus, God's Son. They understand sin and can study the Bible as their reading and reasoning skills increase.



UPPER ELEMENTARY ...FOURTH AND FIFTH GRADE

PHYSICAL: Older students still love high energy activity. They have some self control and can budget their time as well as share successes with athletic peers. Boys begin to gain a more positive self concept while girls begin a growth spurt becoming taller, heavier and stronger than boys. Sometimes girls are better than boys athletically.

MENTAL: These students are alert and eager to learn. They begin to use abstract thinking. They like to memorize, read and hear stories. They have a great interest in history, people, current events, science, nature, geography. They are independent, critical thinkers. They are problem solvers.

EMOTIONAL: Usually these students are cheerful, content and relaxed. As they grow into their minds and bodies they exhibit more moods. They like and dislike strongly and are sensitive to criticism. Sometimes they have outbursts of anger. These students often burst into laughter.

SOCIAL: Lots of friends make these kids happy, usually they want a friend of the same sex. They share personal information with friends and like gangs and clubs. They are great team players and often respect their teachers. They love to tease, chase, push, hit, nudge and poke.

SPIRITUAL: It is time to begin teaching about Who God is. They follow their own convictions about Jesus and are ready to accept Him as Savior. They pray and come up with their own prayer issues. They focus on Bible facts. They want to join the church group. This group often has a strict moral code and make moral judgments. They sometimes agonize over right and wrong.



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES ...OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

OUR HISTORY...

In 1980, leaders in a small United Methodist Church along the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania sounded off at a Vacation Bible School planning meeting. "If we have to do VBS like we've always done it, we quit!" After the shock wore off, the group spent two hours brainstorming their idea of a perfect summer children's ministry event. The result was a meaningful yet fun and easy five day Vacation Bible School (*Close Encounters of a Biblical Kind*) that caught on throughout Western Pennsylvania and eventually the United States. It proved to be only the beginning.

WHO WE ARE...

Ellen Bunnell has been a church educator since graduating from Edinboro University in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary English. Teaching children, youth and adults the basics of the Christian faith has always been Ellen's joyful priority. Mix the desire for teaching about Jesus with the urge to make the Bible come to life and seeds for a lifelong ministry were planted. Ellen possessed a perfect laboratory to test new Christian Education when her three children were born and eagerly took part in experimental activity centers as every level of their childhood.

David Bunnell is a United Methodist pastor who graduated from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL in 1979 with a Master of Divinity degree from the School of Christian Education. He contributes his expertise in computers, advertising and printing.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES moves with the Bunnells as church assignments change. Each parsonage serves as offices filled with equipment for publishing. Vacations and late nights provide the opportunity to publish materials for churches across the nation.

We are a personal ministry devoted to churches who want something unique for their church and community. Leaders telephone Ellen and David any time of the day or night and find someone to answer questions and motivate hesitant leaders to establish amazing ministries to children in their local church.

The materials are printed in a simple, easy to use notebook format and are researched, written and produced by Ellen and David.

OUR MISSION...



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES is a Christ centered ministry dedicated to making children, youth and adult programming exciting and fun! We translate the message of God's love through Jesus Christ into action packed, visual experiences.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH...

We believe there is one God and Creator of heaven and earth, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His death at calvary, in His physical resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father and in His personal return. We believe the work of the Holy Spirit is a gift given at the moment of salvation and allows God to work within and through the lives of Christians all over the world. We believe the Bible is the inspired, authoritative Word of God.

We believe that the purpose in life is to know and glorify God and to gain eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. The only way to God is through His Son, Jesus. Each human is confronted with the claims of Christ. To accept or reject Him as Savior and Lord is a personal decision. Accepting Jesus is God's only requirement to avoid judgment of sin and gain entrance to heaven for eternity. It is our responsibility to reach out to as many people as possible with the Good News of the gospel of Christ.

We believe that children are a heritage from the Lord and a true blessing. We are accountable to Him for raising, fashioning and preparing our children for a life of service to His Kingdom and to people of the world.

We believe that all human life is God given and sacred. Whether a person is unborn or old, in a family or single or widowed, physically or mentally handicapped makes no difference to God and must not affect the way we deal with any person from the cradle to the grave.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION...

Since students learn in a variety of ways, we believe we must present the gospel using an assortment of methods. Our programs focus on the value of interaction and personal attention from the teaching staff. Building in chat time provides an opportunity for friendship and casual questioning of serious issues. Bringing the Bible to life is central to our goal of teaching students about real people and real events from long ago. Our "Live It" themes capture the imaginations of the youngest students and challenge the older students to think about today's life in terms of their faith in Christ. Quick, hard hitting learning/activity centers make learning God's Word relevant as well as fun. Part of the job of teaching children is teaching and encouraging the adult staff. Making each Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, Close Encounters Club, camping program and holiday presentation enjoyable for volunteer teachers is vital to the success of a local Christian Education program. Happy, fulfilled teachers make happy,



fulfilled students.

CONTACT US...

We work with a small staff and try to be personally available to all our Close Encounters churches. Help us to continue providing resources useful to your ministry by contacting us at our web site or by calling us toll free. We are so thankful for you!

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES WWW.CEMLIFE.COM

1-888-CEM-LIFE

ellen@cemlife.com

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SNACK AND YAK SNACK SPECIALS FOR CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE

SNACK IDEA FOR WEEK #2:

John the Baptist is the friend of Jesus discussed in Week #2's LEARNING CENTER. John was somewhat of a nonconformist. He lived in the desert wearing camel's hair clothing and a leather girdle. He spent all his time preaching in the country so his food was dried locusts and wild honey. Try this fun snack to remind the students that John's diet may have been different but he survived and led a full life in spite of it.

"LOCUSTS" AND HONEY

Place small bowls of honey in the middle of the serving tables. One jar of honey goes a long way! Purchase tubes of bread sticks from the grocery store dairy section. Follow the package directions but top with Parmesan cheese before baking to give the "locusts" a little roughness. Cut the bread sticks into short, narrow sections before baking and add eyes by placing small bits of black olive in eye positions. Use your imagination when creating the bread locusts. There is no wrong way to do this. Once baked, place the "locusts" in large baskets. Students may dip their bugs into the honey and receive a delicious Bible time treat.

Option: Add small bowls of strawberry jelly, peanut butter, melted cheese and melted butter. Students may dip their "locust" into any bowl. Let them name the other bowls of dips. (Can you imagine what they will come up with?) Give each student a gummy bug or worm for dessert. Serve the beverage of your choice. However, it must be called "Bug Juice"!

HOLY LAND JESUS SNACKS!

Many foods eaten when Jesus lived in Nazareth would have been simply grown and simply made in humble kitchens over open fires. Use fresh fruits, nuts, breads, vegetables and soups.

PUMPKIN SEEDS

Melt 2 T butter in an electric skillet or shallow pan. Add dried pumpkin seeds to the butter. Lightly salt the seeds. Cover. Bake at 325 degrees until lightly brown. Serve in small cups.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Melt 6 T oleo in a saucepan. Stir in 4 T Worcestershire sauce and 2 T seasoned salt. Add 3/4 C nuts, 2 C Wheat Chex, 2 C Rice Chex, 2 C Corn Chex and pretzel sticks. Stir over low heat until well coated. Bake 250 degrees for one hour. Spread on paper towels to cool.



SNACK AND YAK GAME SPECIALS FOR CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE

AMOEBA

Divide the group into teams of any size. Tie a long, stout rope around each entire team at their waists. Have the team bunch up together as closely as they can and hold their arms up while the rope is tied. After they are tied together, their task is to race to a goal and back. Unless they work together as a team, they will fall down or go nowhere. It is a riot to watch!

MARSHMALLOW TOSS

Divide the group into equal teams. Each team stands in a circle with one member chosen as the marshmallow tosser. He gets a bag of miniature marshmallows and stands in the center of the circle. When the signal is given, he tosses a marshmallow to each team member. Each person must catch it in his/her mouth before the tosser can go on to the next person. The first team to go all the way around the circle, wins!

PLEASE PURCHASE MAD HATTER

Here's a *free for all* game that is really wild! Everybody should have a hat. Make triangular newspaper hats or bring a variety of hats from home. Give everybody a sock stuffed with cloth or something soft. The aim of the game is to knock off other hats while keeping your own hat. No hands may be used to protect your hat or yourself. When your hat is gone, you are out of the game. See who can last the longest!



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE AT A GLANCE

AI A GLANCE				
WEEK 2	LEARNING CENTER John The Baptist- One Head Is Better Than None Verse: John 1:29	SURPRISE SHOPPE Jesus People Pinwheel	SNACK N YAK Locusts 'n Honey Snack	
3	Nicodemus–Nick At Night Verse: John 3:16	Circle Games	Amoeba Game	
4	Samaritan Woman "Well, Well, Well!" Verse: Romans 3:23	Jesus People T-Shirts	Marshmallow Pass	
5	Man Blind From Birth "Now I Can See!" Verse: John 14:6	Blind Man Games	Mad Hatter	
6	Lazarus, Mary, Martha Bethany Friends Verse: Revelation 3:20	Friendship Frames		
7	Simon Peter "Jesus Who?" Verse: Matthew 16:18	Peter's Fish Craft Project PURCHASE		
8	Crook On A Cross It Only Takes A Spark Verse: Ephesians 2:8, 9	Gales Of Laughter Jokes and Games		
9	Joseph Of Arimathea Secret Follower Verse: Matthew 28:19, 20	Afternoon At the Movies SPECIAL EVENT!		
10	Mary Magdalene "Master!" Verse: Psalm 100:2	Jesus People Paper Weight		
11	Isaiah Goes Back To the Future	The Way of the Cross Craft Project		
12	SHOW OFF NIGHT!	SHOW OFF NIC	GHT!	



THE LEARNING CENTER

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS CLUB is going to focus on New Testament Jesus People! Students hear their stories and discover how to become one of the Jesus People.

Throughout the new Testament, we are told the stories of real life people who knew and loved Jesus personally. Some knew Him as a boy in the hills around Nazareth. Some people met Him and then followed Him as their Messiah and some people had a *close encounter* with the Christ as He healed them and talked to them about the Kingdom of God. Whatever level their personal relationship, real life people eagerly responded to Jesus The Man while He lived and ministered on earth.

THE LEARNING CENTER activities are designed to benefit the student and teacher by providing a "hook" upon which to hang a memory. There are puzzles, games, skits, memorization, laughter and stories that draw in students of all ages. Feature short time slots and allow God's Word to fill everyone in a most enjoyable way.

TWELVE WEEK SCHEDULE

WEEK #1: FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

WEEK #2: JOHN THE BAPTIST-ONE HEAD IS BETTER THAN NONE!

WEEK #3: NICODEMUS-NICK AT NIGHT

WEEK #4: THE SAMARITAN WOMAN–"WELL, WELL,"

WEEK #5: THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH—"NOW I CAN SEE!"

WEEK #6: LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA-BETHANY FRIENDS

WEEK #7: SIMON PETER- "JESUS WHO?"

WEEK #8: CROOK ON A CROSS-IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

WEEK #9: JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA-SECRET FOLLOWER

WEEK #10: MARY MAGDALENE-"MASTER!"

WEEK #11: THOMAS-BELIEVE IT OR NOT

WEEK #12: SHOW OFF NIGHT



WEEK #1: FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

This is the kickoff event for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE. Parents and family members join leaders and students for a delicious dinner and then parents are informed about lesson activities and goals. They are asked to participate by signing the COUNT ON ME sheet in areas where they are willing to help. Dads as well as Moms should be encouraged to volunteer.

THE FAMILY NIGHT DINNER provides a way to keep communications open between parents and church staff. The parents appreciate the involvement and the staff needs the support of the family. This is a wonderful opportunity to reach families in the community who are unchurched and timid about entering the church facility. Once inside the building, these families experience non threatening activities, begin to feel comfortable and often begin to attend church on a regular basis.

THE LEARNING CENTER BASIC GOALS FOR CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE

- 1. Each student will hear the real life stories of twelve people who met and knew Jesus personally. These stories focus on the person's relationship with Jesus.
- 2. Each student will memorize at least six of the ten scripture verses presented.
- 3. Each student will have an opportunity to become one of the Jesus People. This will be a clear, nonaggressive presentation of the steps involved in becoming a Christian and growing as a disciple of Jesus.



COUNT ON ME! Let me help....



Learning Center

Surprise Shoppe

Closencountersingers

WEEK #2

WEEK #3

WEEK #4

WEEK #5

WEEK #6

WEEK #7

WEEK #8

WEEK #9

WEEK #10

WEEK #11



WEEK #2: THE LEARNING CENTER

JOHN THE BAPTIST ONE HEAD IS BETTER THAN NONE!

TEACHER PREPARATION

Decorate THE LEARNING CENTER to reflect a Holy Land theme. Prepare the room before Week #2. Leave everything in place for the duration of the series. The room changes as appropriate items are added week to week. Read each lesson and gather as many supplies as possible before the series begins. This saves time as weekly preparations are completed.

STORY SPOT Props: Green plants, old benches, large pottery crocks, wicker baskets, large pillows and colorful blankets. Make a large palm tree from construction paper and attach to one wall or place a real or silk tree in one corner. Each time a Jesus People story is told, students gather near the tree. The larger the tree, the more impressive it will be to the students.

PUZZLE Props: Print the name of each Jesus People character and lesson title on colorful poster board that has been divided into puzzle pieces. Cut out the puzzle pieces and place them out of order on one wall. Cut enough blank puzzle pieces to include the names of each student during the first session. During Week #11 fit all the pieces together during a final review. This creates one huge puzzle that includes all the names together. Do not mention that this will be a completed puzzle. See if they figure that out as the weeks pass.

HEARTS AND FLOWERS Props: See Week #3 lesson plan for instructions to present the gospel and discipleship introductions each week.

Add visual details as desired.

Any prop or picture may be the very detail that sparks understanding. Since students learn in different ways, use the basic technique of decorating as a silent teaching method.



hear about some people who knew Jesus personally. They are folks who knew Him as a child and were friends when He was an adult. Some believed He was their Messiah. Sick people came to Him to be healed. There is no doubt about it, Jesus changed the people He met. They couldn't help it. Jesus was so different from the others around them. He encouraged anyone He met to be different too.

Are YOU one of the Jesus People? Let's learn how to become one of the Jesus People. Don't miss even one week. We will print our names on the JESUS PEOPLE wall. This shows everyone that we want to be counted as a person who loves Jesus.

Ask each student to print their name on a puzzle piece.

Tape their piece to the wall around the Jesus People Bible names already in place.

These names remain scattered on the wall through the entire series.

STORY SPOT

Come and sit with me under our STORY SPOT palm tree. We are going to hear about some wonderful people as we sit near our tree. Jesus told many stories as people followed Him around the hills and deserts of Palestine. I'm sure they enjoyed coolness under palm trees as they rested and listened to Jesus speak.

How many of you have cousins? They are the children of your mom and dad's sisters and brothers. What do you enjoy doing with your cousins? (Allow a short discussion.) The first person's story we are going to hear is a man from Jesus' family. He was a cousin named John.

OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Read John 1:14-18 aloud. Students may take turns reading. This is what John's message was to the people who came to hear him preach. Let's back up to many years before John became JOHN THE BAPTIST.

Even though the Bible doesn't give us every day family details, I'd like to think that Jesus and John spent lots of time together when they were kids. I wonder if they ran through the woods, went swimming and did chores when they were together. Sometimes they may have stayed overnight at each other's houses and slept next to each other on the floor. I wonder if Joseph and Mary had to call out late in the night: "Jesus! John! Now, now, you must be quiet. You are keeping the babies awake. Stop that laughing right now. No more talking until the morning. Go to sleep!"

Through the years Jesus and John became close friends. John heard all the stories about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the special way God visited Mary and Joseph. John loved Jesus as his cousin and along the way he learned to believe Jesus was his Messiah. Jesus was the savior God promised to save the world from sin. Jesus loved John as His cousin and as an intelligent person who could teach people about God. They were close friends.



All too soon the cousins grew up. Jesus worked as a carpenter with Joseph and John became a preacher. John went throughout the hill country of Judea saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He avoided the cities and stayed in the country near the Jordan River. When people gathered to hear him speak, they saw a man dressed in camel's hair clothing and a leather belt. He spent his time preaching from place to place and eating dried locusts and wild honey. Many who heard John's preaching repented of their sins and were baptized in the Jordan River.

John and Jesus agreed on what God said. It would have been fun to listen to their private talks about God. Jesus began to travel with His friends telling everyone about God's love. When Jesus heard John preach, He remained quiet. John pointed people to Jesus. People began to follow Jesus instead of John. You know, I don't think John minded at all.

John could not allow people to sin without warning them. The leader of the country was sinning and John told him so. Herod was very angry and placed John in prison. Jesus continued preaching and John remained in prison. John became discouraged and sent a message to Jesus through some friends. John wanted to know if Jesus was really the Messiah after all. Maybe John decided he didn't want to die if Jesus was a fake. When Jesus got John's message, he smiled and sent word to His cousin.

OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Read aloud Matthew 11:4-6

Jesus said, "Go back to John and tell him about the miracles you've seen me do, the blind people I've healed, and the lame people now walking without help and the cured lepers and the deaf who hear and the dead raised to life; and tell him about my preaching the Good News to the poor. Then give him this message, 'Blessed are those who don't doubt me.'" I imagine when John got the message he knew Jesus was saying, "Of course I'm the Messiah. We have talked about this."

John died in that prison because of Herod's evil family. He died believing in Jesus. Nobody wants to die and neither did John. He wanted to live and serve Jesus. Jesus went away alone for a long time to cry and grieve for His friend and cousin. Jesus had no choice but to return to the people and continue preaching and teaching without John. God's mission was going to be completed soon, very soon.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

Give each student a preprinted (see sample) hand with today's verse printed on it. If time allows, let them cut it out and color it. Say the verse aloud as a group. Place one paper hand on the Jesus People wall pointing to the name JOHN THE BAPTIST.

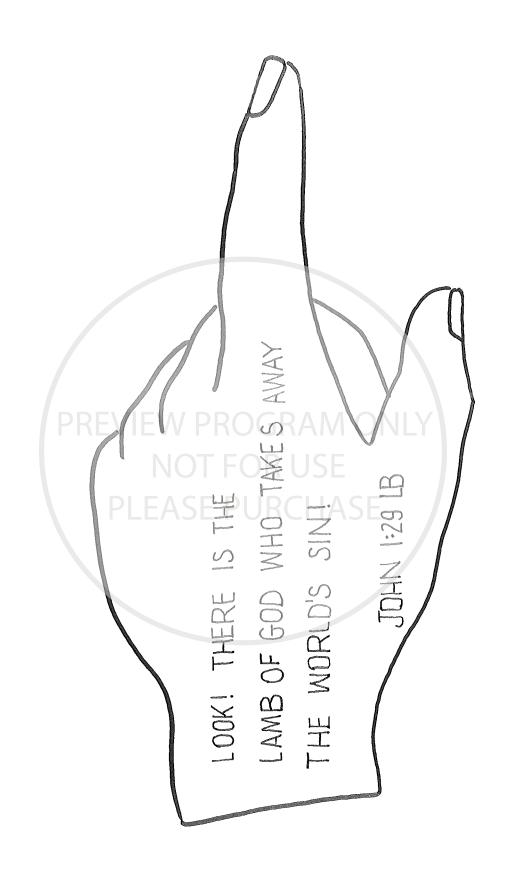
YOUNGER STUDENT OPTION: Ask students to trace their own hands on paper that has the verse preprinted on it.



OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Older student groups may trace their hands on posterboard and print the verse in the middle of the sheet. Allow them to print their name inside their hand print. Talk about the Lamb of God, given as a sacrifice to the people of earth. His presence makes the Old Testament sacrifices in the temple unnecessary. Jesus became the *once for all* sacrifice to pay the price for our sin. Ask: What does it mean "takes away the world's sin"?

"Look! There is the Lamb of God Who takes away the world's sin!" John 1:29 TLB

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WEEK #3: THE LEARNING CENTER

NICODEMUS NICK AT NIGHT!

TEACHER PREPARATION

HEARTS AND FLOWERS: Try this gradual way to present the gospel to young students. Beginning with this lesson and continuing through the rest of the sessions, offer clues about how to become one of the Jesus People. Place one large colorful heart/question mark in a central location. Place each small heart clue in a hidden spot. Add pieces as directed in each lesson. Attach the small hearts to the large heart using colorful yarn and strong tape. Later lessons involve adding one paper flower (or silk flower) each week with a printed tip about how to grow as a follower of Jesus. Review each week.

SEE SAMPLE SKETCHES OR DESIGN YOUR OWN!

INTRODUCTION

Today we are going to begin to solve a mystery. There is one clue on the wall. It's a small heart with a question mark. Turn it over and see what it says.

GOD LOVES ME! We must know this first step in order to become Jesus People. Even if no one else loves me, Jesus does. Let's attach the first clue to the big heart. This Bible verse explains how much I am loved by God.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son so whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Instead of looking for clues, ask them to read aloud John 3:16. Ask: How could God give up His only Son? Can you feel God's pain? Is there any other reason God could have done this? When you think about loving someone, who is that person and what do you do to show them how you feel? Do you believe God loves you personally? How do you know?



STORY SPOT

Last week we heard the Jesus People story of John the Baptist who loved Jesus as a cousin and friend. (Review last week's verse.) Today we are going to talk about a person who barely knew Jesus. In fact, he was not sure Jesus was telling the truth about being the Messiah (Savior of the World)...so, he asked Him!

NICK AT NIGHT: John 3:1-21. Nicodemus talked to Jesus late one night when no one could see them sitting on a rooftop. Nick may have been afraid because he was a wealthy Jewish Pharisee. (Pharisees were considered the best people in Israel. He was one of 6000 men who spent all their lives observing every detail of Jewish Law.) If folks saw him with Jesus, a crazy person claiming to be God, they might lose respect for him and think he was crazy too! Or, night could have been the best quiet time to talk to this miracle worker who was mobbed by people every day.

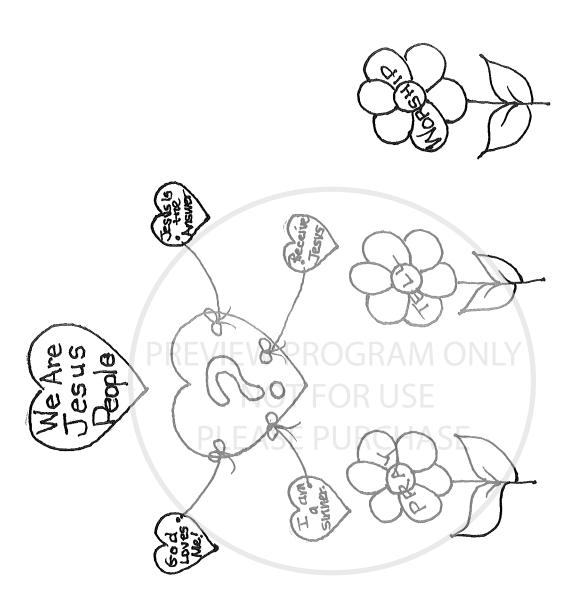
Nick had some very important questions about statements Jesus was teaching. He came to Jesus so that in the darkness of night he might find God's light. Jesus said, "You must be born again." Nick asked, "How can that be? I am an old man. I can't get back inside my mother." Jesus explained a new kind of spiritual birth, a new beginning with God. Jesus said we must clean out old sins in our lives and begin trusting God. Nick must have looked puzzled when Jesus told him, "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

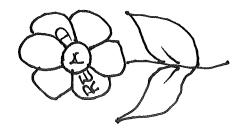
We don't know what Nick thought about his "Nick At Night" conversation. We do know what happened after Jesus died on the cross. There he was, old Nicodemus, standing before the dangerous leader of Israel asking for the body of Jesus for burial. He followed the women friends of Jesus to the tomb and placed expensive spices as an act of love. It appears that Nick quietly became one of the Jesus People. In spite of the danger to his job and his life, there was something about Jesus that Nicodemus could not ignore. Jesus changed his life. Jesus can change your life too because He loves you!

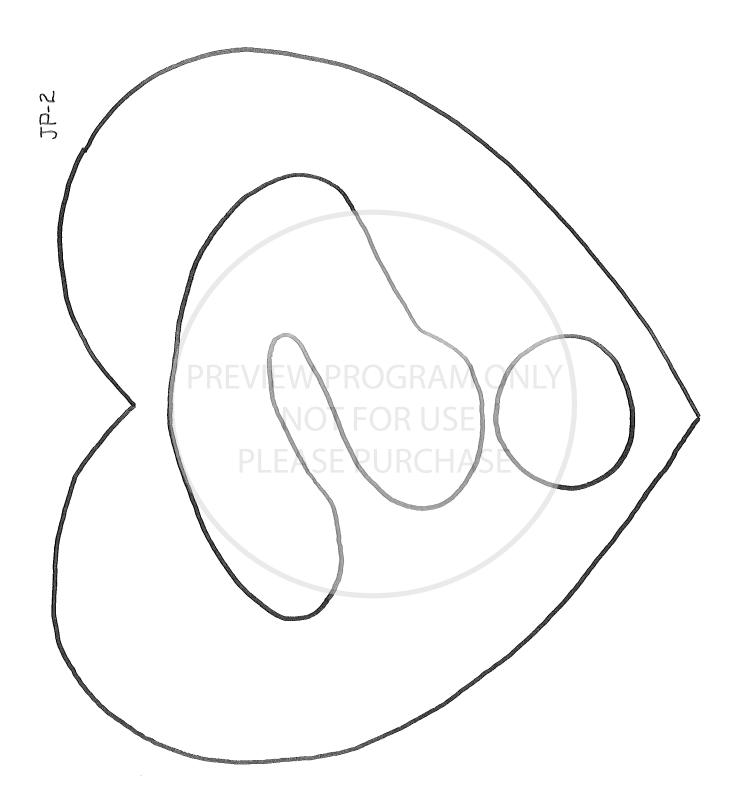
SCRIPTURE VERSE

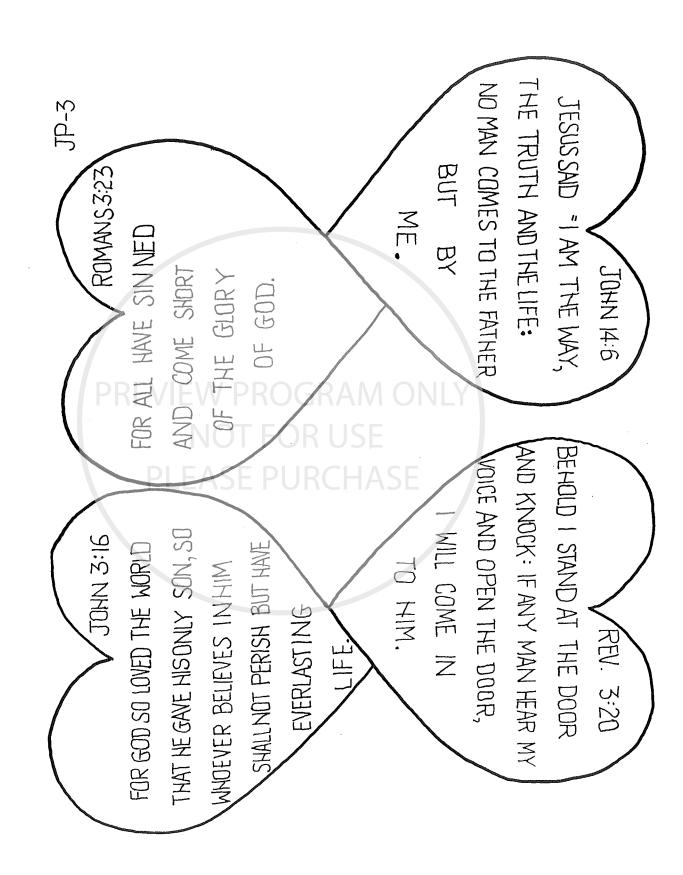
If time remains, say John 3:16 together. Say the verse by putting student names in the blanks to make it personal.

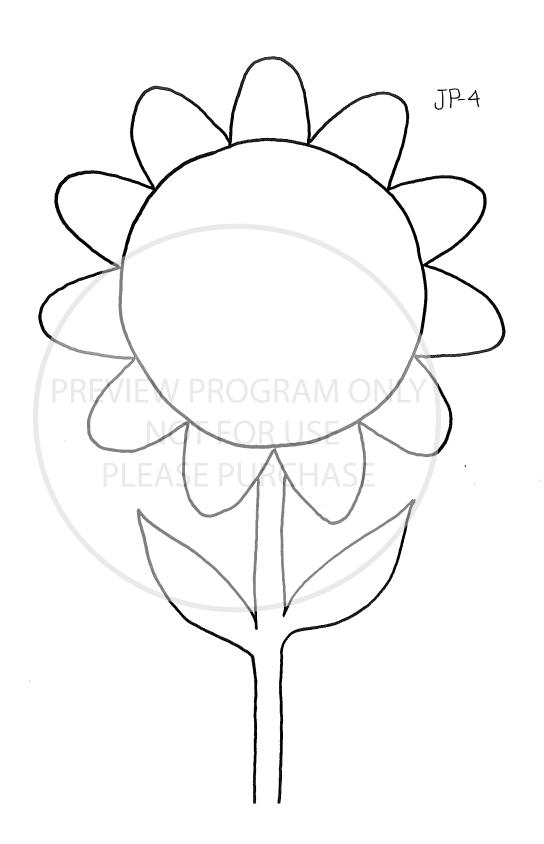
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if _	beli	eves in Him,	shall not perish
	but	will have ev	verlasting life.













WEEK #4: THE LEARNING CENTER

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN "WELL, WELL, WELL!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Ask a young woman to portray the Samaritan woman at the well. Interview this woman and find out why she became one of the Jesus People. Appropriate costuming may be a long, loose dress with a long head shawl, sandals or bare feet. She carries a large water pot.

Her appearance should be a surprise. Her visit is secret. Keep her well hidden in another room while you handle the preliminaries. The element of surprise keeps the students on their toes throughout the Learning Center session.

INTRODUCTION

There is another clue hidden in this Learning Center. Let's discover the next step in becoming one of the Jesus People.

I AM A SINNER. Sin is anything that separates me from God. It could be something I **do** that I know is wrong. Maybe I sin when I **think** thoughts that hurt me or other people. Perhaps I sin when I **don't do** something I know I should. I do not like hearing that I am a sinner. I think I am a pretty good person. The Bible says:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

All of us do things that separate us from God. It is good to know that God Loves Me because it is His great love that keeps me from sinning. How can I disappoint Him? I must be aware of the situations in my life that separate me from the Lord. I must admit that I am indeed a sinner. Next week we'll find out what to do about our sin.



STORY SPOT

Today a special visitor is waiting to meet you. Please give her a kind and enthusiastic Close Encounters Club welcome. (Applause!)

A costumed woman enters, carrying a full water jug of icy cold water. She pours cold drinks into small paper cups for each student. The first few minutes are spent getting acquainted informally as the woman serves cold water and greets the students with "Shalom".

TEACHER: Come and sit with me near our cool palm tree, dear friend. You look hot and tired. Tell us about your talk with Jesus, the Messiah.

WOMAN: Oh, are you a believer too? He is the Messiah. I am sure of it now. I was not certain at first. I am not the type of person who believes everything I hear at Jacob's Well.

TEACHER: It is a good thing to be cautious about gossip. Tell us how you met Jesus.

WOMAN: It was a hot day. In fact the day was so hot that I did not want to walk to the well. All my pots were empty and I found myself on the hot, dusty road at midday. The women of my town hated me because I had so many husbands. I had five husbands and was living at that time with a man who was not my husband. I found it easier to go alone in the heat of the day than enduring their mean stares and total silence.

TEACHER: How did Jesus get in on this? PURCHASE

WOMAN: When I got to Jacob's Well, Jesus was there. I did not know him, of course. He was alone, sitting at the well...just a dusty, tired looking man who said He was thirsty. He noticed I had a long rope and a water pot so He asked me to draw water. I was surprised He talked to me.

TEACHER: Why?

WOMAN: I am a Samaritan from the town of Sychar and I am also a woman. Men in my country do not talk to women in public. It is the custom. He was Jewish and I know that Jews hate Samaritans. Even though we are related, we have differences in our faith. We worship God on a mountain and the Jews worship God in Jerusalem. For some reason, that makes a big difference and our people have not spoken to each other in generations.





TEACHER: (Excited) Tell us what He was like! We have been talking about Jesus and would love to know what He looked like and how He talked.

WOMAN: He wore a long white tunic and a loose overcoat to keep sand and dirt off Him. He wore leather sandals that were ripped and looked so worn on His dusty feet. I remember he wore a loose shawl over His head. It was so hot that He even put a little of the water on the shawl to keep His head cooler. He had a typical Jewish man's beard. It was short and divided in the middle. His skin was dark, olive colored, and He had dark brown hair like all of our Jewish brothers. What I remember most were His eyes. He looked at me as if He was really interested in me...like I was His friend. He listened when I spoke and did not treat me like a stupid woman. I appreciated that. It had been a long time since anyone looked at me like they cared.

TEACHER: What did He say? Did you know He was the Messiah right away?

WOMAN: He started teasing me about the kind of water I was giving Him. He wished I knew that God's gift to me was "living water". I did not understand and I was more confused when He said He was someone special sent from God.

TEACHER: Living water! He must have been talking about believing in God. Once we become believers we never get thirsty again. God's life is always satisfying.

WOMAN: That's it! You understand! He said He was the Messiah. Of course I knew that the ancient scriptures teach about a Messiah—a Savior—who was to come and save people from their sin. I truly believe I met my Messiah that day.

TEACHER: Did you keep it a secret?

WOMAN: I could not be quiet. He told me all about my life...things no one could know. I had to face the sinfulness of my life. Once I realized who He was, I needed to beg everyone from Sychar to come to the well to meet him. Our wise religious people would be able to tell if He was not the promised Messiah. I had to know!

TEACHER: Did the people actually follow you back to Jacob's Well? I thought they did not like you. I thought no one was speaking to you.

WOMAN: I must have been very persuasive because they followed me like little lambs. And guess what? They believed Jesus too! When they met him, they knew He was their Messiah.

TEACHER: I suppose it was hard to say goodbye and go home.

WOMAN: Are you kidding? We begged Him and his friends to stay with us so we could hear His teaching. We wanted to touch Him, to feed him, to hear all about Him. We especially wanted to hear him talk about God.

TEACHER: It sounds wonderful. How long did He stay in Sychar?



WOMAN: He stayed for two wonderful days. We could have kept Him forever but He said there were many people who needed to hear that their Messiah had finally arrived. He had to go. He left a strong band of Samaritan Jesus People. Everyone in Sychar believed in Him and our lives were changed because of those two days.

TEACHER: Help us understand how to become Jesus People. Should we sign a paper or go to a special building?

WOMAN: No! Just believe in Jesus. He is your Savior. It is so easy that many people miss God's plan. I prayed for Jesus to change my sorry life and He did.

TEACHER: Well, well! We are so glad that you came to tell us your story. I am proud to know one of the Jesus People personally. Let us give you a true Holy Land farewell, "Shalom"!

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN LEAVES THE ROOM QUIETLY.

Just believe. That sounds like another clue on our way to becoming Jesus People. The woman who met Jesus at Jacob's Well had her life changed by Him. She did not know His family, she never saw His hometown and she was not smart like Nicodemus. She just believed.

Like Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman took Jesus' words about living water literally, not spiritually. Nick thought being born again meant becoming a baby again. She thought Jesus was talking about streams of running water. Jesus was talking about being thirsty for God. Eventually both Nick and the Samaritan Woman understood and it changed their lives.

Becoming a Christian (Jesus People) begins with a sense of sin. It begins with the sudden realization that life as we are living it will not do. Jesus wakes us up and awakens our need for God. That's just what Jesus did for the dear Samaritan Woman.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

If time remains, teach today's scripture verse. Say it together and individually.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23



WEEK #5: THE LEARNING CENTER

THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH "I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Bring blindfolds. Students pair off and go on a Trust Walk. There must be one blindfold for each team of two students.

There are several blind men in the New Testament that Jesus healed. Sometimes the healed person was told to keep their healing a secret. Other times they were permitted to shout the good news to everyone they met. Tell the story of this blind man with enthusiasm.

We are on a search for Jesus People clues. So far we know GOD LOVES ME and I AM A SINNER. Let's find clue #3 to continue discovering how to become a Jesus People.

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANSWER. The message is clear. There is no other way to become one of the Jesus People than to believe that Jesus is the answer to all our problems. He alone is able to lead us to heaven. Jesus is the answer to last week's dilemma-I AM A SINNER. I do not like hearing about my sin but I want to be sure I am not separated from God because of it. Today's heart says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; No man comes to the Father but by Me." John 14:6

STORY SPOT

John 9:1-41. Today's Jesus People is a man who did not know Jesus at all. He did not see what Jesus looked like. He did not know His name. He was not familiar with the sound of His voice. The man was born blind. He was a beggar in the streets of Jerusalem. Everyone in Jerusalem knew him. He was in their way everyday begging for a few cents to buy bread. Jesus passed by and spit on the ground. He made a small mud pack and placed it on the eyes of the man. Jesus told him to wash off the mud in the Pool of Siloam.



Now, the strange part of the story is that the man actually followed instructions. The man went where he was sent and washed and came back seeing! He did not argue. He did not scratch off the mud. He simply trusted Jesus–a man he did not know and could not see!

When the man returned healed, people he knew could not believe this miracle. They took him to the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders were angry because the man had been healed of his blindness on the Jewish Sabbath, a day of rest when no one was permitted to work. "Come on, tell us how your really regained your sight," they said. He replied, "It was a man called Jesus. He made mud and told me to go wash. I did and now I can see."

They even questioned his parents to be sure he was not an imposter lying about his blindness. "Yes, that is our son," said the parents. "He used to be blind." The Jewish leaders became so angry at the man's insistence that it was Jesus who healed him that they kicked him out of the temple. If they could not change his mind, they would get rid of him. The man knew what he knew. He could not change his story. The biggest event in his life had just taken place and he told everyone he saw, "I don't know if He is good or bad, but I know this: I was blind, and now I see!"

Jesus found the man and said, "Do you believe in the Messiah?" The man answered, "Who is he, sir, for I want to." Jesus said, "You have seen Him and He is speaking to you." The man worshiped Jesus saying, "Yes Lord! I believe!"

TRUST WALK

Let's take a Trust Walk! Choose a partner and one person will wear a blindfold while the other leads. Then switch! When you are blind you must trust the other person not to lead you into danger. When you lead, take the responsibility seriously and take care of your partner.

Set up a simple course. Place obstacles on the course. After 2-3 minutes, partners change positions. If time remains, set the group and ask how they like being blind and how they felt being a leader.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

"Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.
No man comes to the Father but by Me."
John 14:6



WEEK #6: THE LEARNING CENTER

LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA BETHANY FRIENDS

TEACHER PREPARATION

Enlarge, cut out and color the Lazarus, Mary and Martha figures. Tape a dowel rod to the back of each figure. They are stick puppets for the STORY SPOT. Set up a small table with a long cloth covering the front.

Tell the story using puppets for the younger students. Older students do it themselves. Choose three people to work the puppets and three people to read the parts of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. A few older students or teen leaders can dress in costume and present the skit.

INTRODUCTION

It's time for Clue #4. So far we have learned GOD LOVES ME, I AM A SINNER and JESUS IS THE ANSWER. Today we continue our journey to becoming Jesus People.

RECEIVE JESUS. Up until now our clues have explained what we need to know. Today's clue says we must DO something. Let's take a look at the scripture heart. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him." Revelation 3:20. I think I am beginning to understand God's messages to us. We must admit our need by admitting our sin. Turn from our sins. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for us and rose from the grave and invite Jesus to control our lives. Each of us must do this for ourselves. I cannot do it for you and you cannot do it for me. If you want to become one of the Jesus People and have never done this, pray this prayer with me:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and need your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust You as Savior and follow You as my Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Everyone who prays that prayer becomes one of the Jesus People forever. The Bible says no one can snatch you out of the Father's hand. You are in the family! You are a child of the King! A Christian! A believer! A Jesus People!



STORY SPOT

Today's Jesus People are two sisters and a brother from a small town near **Jerusalem called Bethany.** That small town exists today. People point to the place where they think the house of Lazarus, Mary and Martha stood. These dear friends of Jesus offered their small home as a resting place whenever Jesus and His friends were in the area. Many happy hours were spent there as Lazarus and Jesus talked about the things of God. Let's hear their story in an interesting way.

MARY: Shalom. I am Mary of Bethany. I live with my sister Martha and our brother, Lazarus. It works well for us because we are not married. I love our small town. It is a friendly place. I am able to walk quietly in the fruit orchards and think about God. I know Jesus very well. He is my friend. He used to come to our home for dinner. While He visited, He talked to us of strange and wonderful things. He said He was God's promised Messiah. He told us a new kingdom was coming and God's peace would come with it.

I could listen to Him talk all night. I sat in my favorite corner on my little blue rug. It was cozy and comforting knowing that Jesus had answers to my questions. My sister got angry with me one evening because I was not helping her in the kitchen. Many people were listening to Jesus that day. They filled our little house and leaned in every open window. Hospitality is important and every visitor expected a delicious meal. Jesus calmed Martha and wanted me to hear what He had to say. He wanted Martha to hear too. Supper could wait.

Later Lazarus became sick and died. I cried and could not move. Jesus never came to see Lazarus once he got sick. I was disappointed. Martha searched for Jesus. When she found Him, He said I should come to Him. I ran! I just knew Jesus would help. Here comes Martha! She can tell you the rest of our story.

MARTHA: Mary, I have been looking for you. There are dishes to be done and you are, as usual, nowhere to be found. Please get your chores finished quickly.

I admit I was angry at Jesus. I knew that if He had been there Lazarus would not have died. I saw Jesus heal other people. I know He could have looked into my brother's eyes, tell him to get up and be well. Jesus did not come and Lazarus died. He was buried in our family tomb. When I heard Jesus was preaching nearby, I grabbed my shawl and ran to him. "Where were you," I cried. "If only you had been there, my brother would not have died!" I could not understand His lack of concern for His best friend.

Jesus came to the tomb. He looked around and told a few men to roll away the huge cover stone. I thought my brother's dead body would smell but Jesus said, "I told you that you would see a miracle from God." Here comes Lazarus! He can tell you the rest of his story.

LAZARUS: Shalom, Mary and Martha. Yes, I can tell you that I really enjoyed the visits of Jesus and all the friends who accompanied Him. We had some fine evenings sitting by the fire, talking about the things of God. Jesus put His arm around my shoulder and said, "Thank you, Lazarus, for being such a good friend to Me. I don't know what I would do without you."

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One day my stomach started hurting. Soon I could not stand up. I could not eat. I did not even know who the people were who were taking care of me. I guess it was my sisters but I was too sick to care or know. The next thing I remember is not being able to move. It was cold and dark. I heard an incredible voice. The voice shouted my name. "Lazarus, come out!" And I did!

I hurried as fast as I could. The grave clothes kept me from running. I had to hop but I was determined to get out of that cold, dark cave. I know Jesus performed a miracle. I was dead, no doubt about it. Jesus loved me enough to come and work in a special way. My sisters were happy and so was I. I got to spend more time enjoying our little house and the village at Bethany. I am grateful to my friend Jesus. I am proud to be counted as one of the Jesus People.

TEACHER: Jesus loved his Bethany friends. He took care of them. What do you think Mary and Martha would say if Jesus had not raised Lazarus from the grave? (Discuss) I hope that they would love and believe in Jesus just as they had before. Many Christians get sick and die without having a miracle save them. Understand that Jesus loves us no matter what our circumstances. He will take care us and comfort us when we trust Him.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

Learn today's verse by having the students act it out as they say it. Consider having the students do this for SHOW OFF NIGHT.

Behold !(Raise fist in air) **I** (point to eye)

stand (place arms at side like soldiers)

at the door (knock on an imaginary door) and knock (keep knocking).

If any man (tap top of head as if tapping a hat)

hear (cup both ears with hands)

My voice (touch mouth with hand) and open (open the imaginary door) the door.

I (point to eye)

will come in (beckon to come with hand) to Him.

Revelation 3:20







WEEK #7: THE LEARNING CENTER

SIMON PETER "JESUS WHO?"

TEACHER PREPARATION

This lesson begins the INTRODUCTION sessions for growing in Jesus. Make paper flowers or use silk flowers to place on the wall near the hearts. Print one word in the center of each flower (READ-PRAY-TELL-WORSHIP). Concentrate on one concept each week. Follow the directions in each lesson plan.

Bring Bibles for each student. Offer several different versions to hear the differences in wording.

INTRODUCTION

It is not enough to accept Jesus as our Savior and go our merry way for the rest of our lives. For the next few weeks we will discover how to grow in Jesus. There are some things we can do to get to know Jesus better. As we learn, we become better Christians. The flowers on our wall represent four ways we can grow. READ, PRAY, TELL, WORSHIP.

Let's talk about Reading God's Word. I have brought my Bible to show you. If I have a Bible, does that make me a Christian? If I read my Bible, does that make me a Christian? If the answer is no, why should I read my Bible? (To get to know Jesus better.) If you cannot read yet, how can you read God's Word? (Mom and Dad, listen to tapes, go to Sunday School, listen to Bible stories.)

YOUNGER STUDENT OPTION: *Touch the Bibles, turn pages and look at the pictures and maps.* Sometimes people who can read, still have a hard time understanding the words. How can you read it and understand it? (Read a little at a time, listen to people talk about the Bible, go to church.) Today's Jesus People is Simon Peter. He was a big, burly fisherman who often stuck his foot in his mouth. He really loved Jesus so much that he left his fishing business and followed Him as one of His disciples. Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter which means "Rock". Jesus said, "*Upon this rock I will build my church.*" Because his given name was Simon, let's play a wild game of SIMON SAYS.

OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Bring several Bible translations to class. Read the same verse out of each version and ask which one they understand the best. Show them the listing of books. Talk about some stores. Turn to the concordance and maps to help explain hard words and show places.

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Play a game of SIMON SAYS very fast. Have students move around the room and pick on one or two students individually to wear them down. The fast you give instructions, the more likely they will be to "goof up". Laughter will be rampant.

Reward all players with small candy bars and a giant "Hip, Hip Hooray!"

STORY SPOT

Peter was a leader in the band of disciples who followed Jesus. He always had something to say. He talked easily with people and enjoyed being in crowds. He was a big, strong fisherman. Many times Peter made mistakes. He made those mistakes because of his deep love for Jesus. For example, Jesus was traveling around the countryside doing great things. Peter saw him feed 5000 people one day. It was impossible. It was a miracle!

That night while the disciples were boating on the Sea of Galilee, a huge storm nearly blew the boat over and everyone was frightened. About 4:00 A.M. Jesus came to them walking on the water. They screamed in terror because they thought they were seeing a ghost. Jesus shouted over the wind, "Don't be afraid!" Peter recognized Jesus. "If it is really You, tell me to come over to You, walking on the water."

"All right, come along," the Lord said. Peter jumped over the side of the boat and walked on water toward Jesus. When he looked around at the high waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me Lord!" he shouted. Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and rescued Peter. "O man of little faith," Jesus said, "Why did you doubt Me?" When they got back into the boat, the wind stopped. The others were awestruck. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Peter probably felt terrible but there were more mistakes to come. He is known for denying Jesus three times the night Jesus was arrested. Peter was scared when there was so much hatred all around him. Jesus predicted that Peter would fail but Peter wouldn't believe Him. "I can be brave," he thought. What happened? Before the rooster crowed in the morning. Peter did deny Jesus three times. He failed his Lord. He was devastated. Poor Peter. He loved Jesus yet he couldn't get himself to do things right. He wanted to please Jesus but he found himself in trouble all the time.

I like the story of Peter. Jesus did not love Peter less because of his weaknesses. In fact after Jesus rose from the grave, Peter was still leading the disciples. He WAS brave after all. He spoke to thousands of people. He healed sick people and preached the gospel as he traveled. Peter could have gone back to fishing after Jesus left but he had a message. The Messiah had come! Peter died on a cross. Historians say that Peter felt he was not good enough to be crucified like Jesus. He asked to be placed upside down. How sad but so wonderful too because on that day Peter entered heaven to be with Jesus forever.



SCRIPTURE VERSE

Say this verse together several times:

Upon this rock I will build My church; And all the powers of Hell shall not prevail against it. **Matthew 16:18**

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WEEK #8: THE LEARNING CENTER

A CROOK ON A CROSS IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

TEACHER PREPARATION

Today's STORY SPOT is the story of the repentant thief on the cross. Found in Luke 23:39-43, it gives insight into forgiveness. The thief was a corrupt person. He deserved to die. When he asked Jesus to remember him, there was no opportunity for him to make things right. Yet the forgiveness Jesus gave was instant and complete. When we ask for forgiveness in prayer, we too are forgiven of our sins.

SUPPLIES: Craft sticks (10 per student), masking tape, crayons, plastic sandwich bags.

INTRODUCTION

PRAYER: This week our GROW FLOWERS have another message about becoming stronger Jesus People. Prayer is talking to God. Everyone and anyone can talk to God. We can do it in a group or we can do it alone. God never goes to sleep. He listens all the time. The words you say can never be wrong words. Say what you think. God understands.

God always answers prayer. He may answer "yes", "no", "wait" or "yes and here's more!" Never feel as if you are bothering God when you pray. Pray as much as you want to about anything. Let's see what God's Word says about prayer. Paul wrote this to the people who lived in the city of Philippi.

Don't worry about anything; Instead, pray about everything; Tell God your needs and don't forget to thank Him for His answers. If you do this you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand.

His peace will keep your thoughts and your hearts quiet and at rest as you trust in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6-7 TLB

PRACTICING PRAYER: Seat students in a circle. Begin the prayer by saying, "Dear Lord, thank You



for....."(allow one student to fill in the blank). Go around the circle saying the beginning phrase each time. Switch to "Dear Lord, we want You to know.... "and then "Dear Lord, we need..." At the end of the prayer practice ask everyone to say in unison, "In Jesus Name, Amen."

STORY SPOT

Luke 23:39-43: The day Jesus died for our sins, two other men were being crucified beside Him. They were dishonest men who stole from innocent people. They deserved to die. They knew it and so did everyone else. And there was Jesus, in the middle of the two thieves. *We* know that Jesus was the Messiah and our Savior but the people who were killing Jesus did not believe in Him. Even the two dying thieves were being nasty to Jesus.

Suddenly the men saw that Jesus was different. Jesus was not spitting and swearing and trying to get off the cross. One thief said, "So you are the Messiah. Prove it by saving Yourself—and us too, while you are at it!" The other thief noticed how different Jesus was facing death and said to his fellow thief, "Don't you even fear God when you are dying? We deserve to die for our evil deeds but this man hasn't done one thing wrong." He turned to Jesus and said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

Jesus replied, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise. This is a solemn promise." Do you think Jesus broke that promise? No, Jesus never breaks promises. The man Jesus forgave did not have an opportunity to change his life or make things better for the people he wronged. He was not rescued in a mysterious way from death on a cross. He died soon after he spoke to Jesus. We never hear what the man's name was. He became one of the Jesus people for just a little while. It teaches us that it is never too late to ask forgiveness for our sins. We will get to meet this man one day in heaven.

STORY SPOT ACTIVITY: Prepare individual kits containing ten craft sticks in a plastic sandwich bag. Place masking tape and crayons or markers on a work table. Students line up their sticks side by side with even edges. Tape one piece of masking tape across the back to hold the sticks together. Students draw a picture of three crosses on a hill. When the tape is taken off, mix up the pieces and put the puzzle together. If time remains, trade puzzles and let students try to put someone else's puzzle together.

Sometimes the stories we hear are puzzling as we try to understand the things God wants us to know about being one of the Jesus People. Let's make a puzzle to help us remember the story we just heard.



SCRIPTURE VERSE

Memorize today's scripture verse while the students are making their puzzles. Use this shortened version for younger students. Older students may learn the entire passage, Ephesians 2:8, 9.

For by grace are you saved through faith.... Ephesians 2:8

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, Not of works lest any man should boast.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

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WEEK #9: THE LEARNING CENTER

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA SECRET FOLLOWER

TEACHER PREPARATION

Joseph of Arimathea was a gentleman and the kind of man who would enter the scene when Jesus died. He did not agree with his fellow members of the Sanhedrin. In a great act of courage, he faced Pilate and asked for permission to bury the body of Jesus in his new tomb. Emphasize that Joseph of Arimathea was a secret follower. The short story of Joseph of Amimathea is told in the gospels: Matthew 27:57-60, Mark 15:43, Luke 23:50-53, John 19:38. The small town of Arimathea is only mentioned in connection with Joseph. No one knows the exact site but it is thought to be near to where the prophet Samuel lived.

INTRODUCTION

We are almost experts as we learn how to be Jesus People from our HEARTS AND FLOWERS. Many people live their entire lives and never understand how easy it is to become one of the Jesus People. Maybe nobody cares about them. Perhaps there are Christians who are afraid to tell these people how to become a Christian. When people hear how easy it is to be a believer they say, "How come no one ever told me this?"

TELL: Today's GROW FLOWER explains that we should tell other people about Jesus. A song we sing in church says, "Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born." (OPTION: Sing this melody with the students.)

We have the best news in the world! Jesus loves me and Jesus loves you! We go to heaven if we believe that Jesus is our Savior and Lord. People are waiting to hear about His love. Sometimes we are afraid to talk about Jesus because we think friends or family will laugh at us. Most of the time no one laughs. In fact, people respect us for our faith in Jesus.

Use simple words. Tell them what you know about Jesus. Let Him do the work of convincing them to believe the things of God. If you are faithful to speak about Jesus, He will give you strength and courage for the sake of those you love.



STORY SPOT

(Whispering...) Let me tell you a big secret! The man we are going to talk about is Joseph of Arimathea. It could be dangerous if anyone knew he was one of the Jesus People. He was most afraid that angry men might kill him. He kept his belief a secret!

Joseph was a rich, levelheaded, older man, a respected member of the Sanhedrin AND a disciple of Jesus! Seventy wise, respected Jewish men led the nation of Israel in matters of religion. The Sanhedrin was the group that finally gave permission to the civil government to kill Jesus. Joseph did not agree with their positions. He did not tell anyone he believed that Jesus was the real Messiah sent from God to save the Jewish people.

When Jesus died on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea was there. He saw the friends of Jesus take His body from the cross. He must have heard them talking. No one had any money to find a spot to bury Jesus. "Maybe we could take a collection," they said.

Joseph went the Pilate, the government leader. He asked for permission to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission so Joseph took His body and wrapped it in a long, linen cloth and laid Him in a new, unused tomb cut into the rock at the side of a hill. Joseph was so well thought of in Jerusalem that he was a good choice to have Jesus' body. Once Jesus rose from the dead, Joseph would have told the truth if the resurrection had been faked. He was honest and upstanding. He knew that Jesus rose from the dead.

Some people who wrote later books said that they saw Joseph of Arimathea at the church in Lyppa, a nearby town. He was a leader there. I think the life and death of Jesus made a change in the life of Joseph. He may have kept it a secret but there is no doubt about it, Joseph was one of the Jesus People!

SCRIPTURE VERSE

Today's scripture reminds us to tell the good news of Jesus to everyone we know. These are Jesus' last words to His disciples before He went back to Heaven. It is called The Great Commission. (Memorize a portion of this verse or instead, discuss each phrase.)

"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

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WEEK #10: THE LEARNING CENTER

MARY MAGDALENE "MASTER!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Mary Magdalene was one of the women who enabled Jesus to minister by taking care of His daily needs, especially financial needs. Scripture and custom say that she was a leader among the women closest to Jesus. She was healed of seven demons and was eternally grateful. She must have been wealthy because she was able to devote herself to Jesus. She was not a prostitute or social derelict as is often thought. Nowhere in scripture or historical records is it written that she married Jesus.

Today's lesson centers on friendship. Consider making Friendship Pins. They may trade them in class or keep them to give away later. Supplies may be purchased at local craft stores. S&S arts and crafts catalog offers an inexpensive supply of small safety pins and tiny glass beads. Order the materials early!

INTRODUCTION SE PURCHASE

WORSHIP: Today's Grow Flower tells us about worship. Worship begins with an attitude in our hearts. If we love God, we will want to worship Him at home, at school, in our hearts and at church. We become stronger Jesus People when we spend time with others who love the Lord and can teach us more about Him.

Another part of worshiping God is serving Him. Serving means helping. What are some ways we can serve God? (Visit, smile, shovel snow, sweep a sidewalk, bake cookies, telephone a lonely person, invite a friend to Close Encounters Club, obey parents, clean bedroom).

WORSHIP THE LORD WITH PSALM 100

"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness, come before His presence with singing. Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name. For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations."



STORY SPOT

Today's Jesus People is a woman. Her name is Mary Magdalene. She came from the town of Magdala on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. Mary met Jesus during a time in her life when she was desperate. She was very ill and needed someone to care about her and heal her. We know that one of Jesus' specialties was healing people from all kinds of diseases. Jesus healed Mary and she was so grateful she began to tell others about Jesus the Messiah.

Mary noticed that Jesus spent much of His time traveling to tell everyone He could find that He was the Son of God. Jesus did not have time to work in the carpenter shop in Nazareth anymore. He did not have a full time job to earn money for food and clothing. Jesus and His disciples may have begun looking a little thin from being hungry. It could be that Mary noticed their clothing and sandals were wearing out.

At this point most people would say, "Tsk, tsk, too bad! My friend only has a little bit to eat tonight. His clothing has a rip in the sleeve. He ought to look into getting a new coat." Not Mary Magdalene! She brought dinner with her. She measured Jesus' size and got Him a new coat. She was a friend who did what she could to help financially.

Mary believed she could help Jesus reach other people by supplying His daily needs. I know Jesus appreciated her help. When a list of Christian women are given in scripture, Mary Magdalene's name is mentioned first. That is a sign of respect by the writers. She was a leader among the women. Let's read what happened at the tomb when Mary went to grieve over the death of her good friend, Jesus.

PLEASE DURCHASE READ ALOUD JOHN 20:11-18

What excitement! Mary was there. She saw the angels and the empty tomb. She turned around and there was Jesus Himself. I don't know about you, but I think that experience would change my life! Jesus called her by name, "Mary". Her tears turned to joy and laughter. Her friend who was really and truly dead was now alive. How could it be? Mary did not care how it happened. She was thrilled to see His face and hear His voice.

Mary Magdalene is an excellent example of a "Best Friend". She was there in good times when it was fun to listen to Jesus teach. She met needs when times were hard. She cried when her friend hurt. She grieved when her friend died because she would miss him. She was happy when her friend returned from the dead.



OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: FRIENDSHIP PINS

Let's make some Friendship Pins to give to our friends as a symbol of our friendship. You may want to trade your pins today or pin them to your shoe laces or shirt to give to special friends.

SCRIPTURE VERSE

We can worship and serve the Lord with all our hearts just like Mary Magdalene did. In fact, that is what pleases the Lord. Learn today's verse and carry it in your heart every day.

"Serve the Lord with gladness, come into His presence with singing." Psalm 100:2

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WEEK #11: THE LEARNING CENTER

ISAIAH GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE!

TEACHER PREPARATION

This final lesson tells the predictions of Isaiah the Old Testament prophet. Using the puzzle pieces on the wall, review the stories of all the Jesus People. Emphasize the personal relationship that each student can have with Jesus once they become one of the Jesus People too!

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Learning Center for a final story time. Let's look one more time at our HEARTS AND FLOWERS. Do you see God's plan? He wants us to know He loves us. Even though we have sinned, Jesus came to earth to forgive us. All we have to do is receive Him as our Savior and Lord. We do this by praying a simple prayer that tells God how much we want to be His child. We can pray at home, outdoors or in church. God will answer our prayer wherever we are.

Once we accept Jesus as our Savior, we become followers who should keep growing in Him. How do we do it? We Read God's Word, Pray, Tell Others and Worship Him. No one is too young or to old to accept this wonderful truth. You can do it right now!

STORY SPOT

Through the centuries, millions upon millions of people just like us have heard the story of Jesus the Messiah and have believed for themselves. We could never tell all the stories of the wonderful people of God. The stories we did hear were some of the first Jesus People in the history of man.

JOHN THE BAPTIST NICODEMUS
THE SAMARITAN WOMAN THE BLIND MAN
LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA SIMON PETER
CROOK ON A CROSS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA
MARY MAGDALENE

We left one amazing story for our last time together. Did you know that before the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, people believed that God would send His Son? Over five hundred years before the birth of Jesus a prophet named Isaiah wrote:



"We despised Him and rejected Him, a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way when He went by. He was despised and we didn't care. Yet it was our grief He bore, our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God for His own sins. But He was wounded and bruised for our sins. He was chastised that we might have peace; He was lashed and we were healed."

Isaiah 53:3-5

Isaiah told the story of Jesus' death long before Jesus was born. Amazing! Isaiah was one of the Jesus People too. He did not understand everything he was writing. God used Isaiah to show a nation of people what to watch for as they searched through every generation for the Messiah who would save Israel.

When Jesus finally appeared on the scene, Israel did not believe Him. "How could this be? Isn't He Mary's kid? Doesn't He fix our wooden doors and make our ox carts with His father Joseph the carpenter? The Messiah? He's just plain crazy. Whatever will His family do with Him?" They were looking for a military leader who would provide safety and food and medicine and peace in the land. They were not looking for a baby in a manger. Here's more of Isaiah's story. Does any of it sound familiar?

"The Lord Himself will choose the sign—a child shall be born to a virgin and she shall call Him Immanuel (meaning 'God With Us')."

— Isajah 7:14

For unto us a child is born; Unto us a son is given and the government shall be upon His shoulder. These will be His royal titles; Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end.

He will rule with perfect fairness and justice from the throne of His father David.

He will bring true justice from the throne of His father David.

He will bring true justice and peace to all the nations of the world.

Isaiah 9:6, 7

From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people of that day realized it was their sins that He was dying for, that He was suffering their punishment? He was buried like a criminal in a rich man's grave but He had done no wrong and had never spoken an evil word.

Isaiah 53:8, 9



We could go on hearing words that Isaiah said before Jesus was born but let's think for a moment about how this could be. How could Isaiah know about Jesus before He was born? Did you see the movie "Back To the Future"? If you did, you know the people in the movie had a car that could take them into the future. They could see all the future events happening. Doc and Marty McFly could travel to the past and appear to be geniuses by foretelling the future. Isaiah did not have a fancy car to take him to the future. Isaiah had something better. God, the Mighty Lord God of Israel, told him the wonderful events of the future. Looking back on Isaiah's stories and on the life and death of Jesus, we see how it fits like a puzzle. When the puzzle is put together, it includes the lives of all the Jesus People who have ever lived or who ever will live.

ACTIVITY: Let's fit the pieces of our wall puzzle together. The first week we met we discovered the name of the Bible Jesus People already on our wall. We added our own names and then learned how to become one of the Jesus People. Maybe you have already guessed this huge puzzle fits together. Let's get busy.

Put the huge wall puzzle together as you review each story.

Allow students to help fit the pieces correctly.

Bible names and student and teacher names should be interspersed.

Keep the completed puzzle on the wall for Show Off Night.

PLEASE PURCHASE



WEEK #12: SPECIAL EVENT

SHOW OFF NIGHT

The Learning Center and The Surprise Shoppe will not be in operation. Set up both areas for families to pop in and look around after the formal presentation. Place all pictures and props used during the session in the room. Stay in the area to answer questions and meet the families.

Most of this time will be spent in the sanctuary as a large group. Attend the formal activities, sing with the group and be available to anyone who may want to speak to you.

If asked to participate individually, choose the best event of the sessions and recreate it for the audience. You may stage a return visit with the Samaritan woman at the well. Ask a few students to recite some of the scripture verses or ask the entire group to say the verses in unison with your help.

Because a lot of time was spent learning how to become one of the Jesus People, this is a good time to go over the steps to becoming a Christian. There may be people to whom this will be "Good News" told to them for the first time! Give them an opportunity to respond in prayer and then talk to you or to the pastor later.

Tell the audience the goals of The Learning Center.





THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE is a twelve week midweek club study featuring the stories of the people who first believed in Jesus of Nazareth as God's promised Messiah. During the Surprise Shoppe, the students will complete crafts and participate in games and activities to support the theme as presented in The Learning Center.

WEEK #1: FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

WEEK #2: JOHN THE BAPTIST: ONE HEAD IS BETTER THAN NONE

WEEK #3: NICODEMUS: NICK AT NIGHT

WEEK #4: THE SAMARITAN WOMAN: "WELL, WELL, WELL!"

WEEK #5: THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH: "NOW I CAN SEE!"

WEEK #6: LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA: BETHANY FRIENDS

WEEK #7: SIMON PETER: "JESUS WHO?"

WEEK #8: A CROOK ON A CROSS: IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

WEEK #9: JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: SECRET FOLLOWER

WEEK #10: MARY MAGDALENE: "MASTER!"

WEEK #11: ISAIAH GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE

WEEK #12: SHOW OFF NIGHT

Follow the instructions for each lesson plan and enjoy the students as they work their way through the activities. Maintain a cheerful spirit with light control. There should be a lot of laughter and chatter in The Surprise Shoppe.



LEADING THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

Twenty minutes may seem like a long time to spend in an activity with children. However, time flies when kids are having fun. Being well prepared is the key to a successful Surprise Shoppe. Planning ensures that the activity runs smoothly and gives the teacher and helpers a calm attitude. Getting the students seated, quieted and involved in Surprise Shoppe activities is of utmost importance. Do it cheerfully and efficiently.

SET UP! Choose a large room for Surprise Shoppe activities to accommodate a mixture of crafts and games. Long tables and chairs are needed. Before students arrive, place the supplies at each seat. When markers, scissors, tape, glue or other basic materials are needed, place the materials in the center of the table. Plan for supplies to be shared by three to four students.

DECORATE! The Surprise Shoppe should be an exciting, bright, festive place to be. Make a large banner stating-CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE-SURPRISE SHOPPE. Trail colorful crepe paper streamers from every corner and bunch balloons in the middle of the ceiling.

BE CREATIVE! Craft projects and game suggestions are included to nudge the creativity already inside you. Build on the recommendations and add activities to the Surprise Shoppe to inspire fun while learning important Bible truths. Have fun while learning and the results will last a life time!

DISCIPLINE! It's a dirty word but someone has to say it and worse yet, someone has to do it. You will be in charge of absolute chaos or controlled chatter with respect being offered and learning taking place. Judge when the imaginary line has been crossed. Notice the word is DISCIPLINE and not PUNISHMENT. Involve problem students in the activity. Seat them close to you. If necessary, raise your voice to show displeasure.

Avoid: Swearing, verbal abuse, spanking, slapping, embarrassment

A suggested line of discipline is to first ask the student to stop the behavior, then involve that student personally in the activity. If that does not work, talk to them outside the door and ask for their cooperation. If all else fails, send the student to the Close Encounters Club Director who may want to involve parents in difficult cases.



Sometimes a particularly rebellious student must be sent home. Don't be concerned! Rarely is any discipline needed beyond asking for cooperation. Keep the Surprise Shoppe quick and hard hitting and there will not be time for misbehavior.

BE DEPENDABLE! It is frustrating to the Close Encounters Club Director when a leader promises to participate and then cancels shortly before the event. There are times when illness interferes with responsibility. If you cannot be there, arrange for someone to cover the area and try to give enough time to be prepared.

ENJOY YOURSELF! Have a wonderful time with each child. Enjoy the material. Prepare with prayer and study. Smile! Laugh out loud! What a communication tactic! Much of what is learned is caught and not taught. Be the kind of person you would like to see each child become. Be a role model that will have an effect in your church and community for years.

PREPARE FOR FUN! Make a list of supplies and shop for everything at the same time. If ordering from the S&S arts and crafts catalog, order early. If there are craft projects or games you don't want to do, plan another activity.

Consider asking visitors to sing, play an instrument, bring an animal or perform in some other way. Check with the special guest the day before to be sure they remember to come! Replace the listed activity with your attraction.

If one or more project takes more than one week, label each project with the student's name and store safely. When playing games, take time and enjoy the experience. Explain the rules. Play the game more than once.



WEEK #1: SPECIAL EVENT

FAMILY NIGHT DINNER

When dinner is done, be prepared to explain what will be happening in the Surprise Shoppe during CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE.

BASIC GOALS:

By the end of the sessions, students will have made a variety of craft projects to remind them of the Jesus People.

By the end of the sessions, the students will have played games that define Jesus People behavior.

By the end of the sessions, the students will have interacted with teachers who display the characteristics of Jesus People.

It may be helpful to have a few volunteers. Ask parents to sign up on the "Count On Me" sheet.



WEEK #2: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

JOHN THE BAPTIST ONE HEAD IS BETTER THAN NONE

TEACHER PREPARATION

The suggested craft project is a colorful pinwheel. Order pinwheel kits from S&S arts and crafts catalog by calling CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES toll free at 1-888-CEM-LIFE. Order early! Instructions for a homemade option are included with this lesson plan.

Make several pinwheels before class. Stick the ends of the pinwheels into a blob of clay on a firm base (piece of wood, plate). Bring a small room fan from home. Place it in one corner of the Surprise Shoppe with the finished pinwheels spinning in front of it. As the students finish their own pinwheels, allow them to test them in front of the fan.

S&S Twirly Pinwheels. Easy to make with magic results. Make a pinwheel from a vinyl sheet and a dowel. Paint with transparent colors. Amazing and fun results! Includes vinyl sheets, permanent black marker, non toxic glass stains, brushes, pins, balsa wood dowels, beads, wire and instructions. 14". RMB-GP420 \$19.99 Per pack of 24. (Prices may change.) This project may require two weeks.

HOMEMADE PINWHEEL PROJECT

SUPPLIES: See visual instructions. White paper, one new pencil with eraser for each student, straight pins with small ball on the end, markers, crayons, scissors.

- 1. Cut a piece of paper six inches square. Mark the center of the square.
- 2. Lay a ruler diagonally from corner to corner. Draw a line three inches long from each corner toward the center. Do the same at the other corners.
- 3. Mark dots near the corners.
- 4. Color pictures or designs on both sides of your paper. Cut along the lines.
- 5. Bring together the corners with the dots at the middle. Stick the tack through the dots and into the eraser end of the pencil.



INTRODUCTION

Today's Jesus People person is John the Baptist. He and Jesus were cousins and played together as friends. They ran in the hills and felt the wind blow against their cheek. When these cousins grew up, they had serious things to do. Both of them served God in ways that made our faith possible. Make a pinwheel to remind you of the days that Jesus and John sat on the windy hills of Palestine and talked about God.

YOUNGER STUDENT OPTION: Make copies of the pinwheel pattern before class. For the youngest students, it may be necessary to precut the pinwheels. Emphasize that once the small brass tacks are in place, they must not be removed.

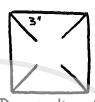
OLDER STUDENT OPTION: Even though a pattern is included for easy use, older students may enjoy making their own pinwheel by following the printed directions. Allow them to measure and mark and color on plain paper.

HEADS UP! Week #4 is Jesus People t-shirt project. Purchase inexpensive white t-shirts for each student or ask for them to bring a shirt from home. Send a note home so parents will know what kind of shirt is needed and when it should arrive.

SURPRISE SHOPPE Week #2



1. Cut a piece of paper 6"square. Mark the center of the square.



2. Draw a line 3" long from corners toward center.



3. Mark dots near corners as shown.

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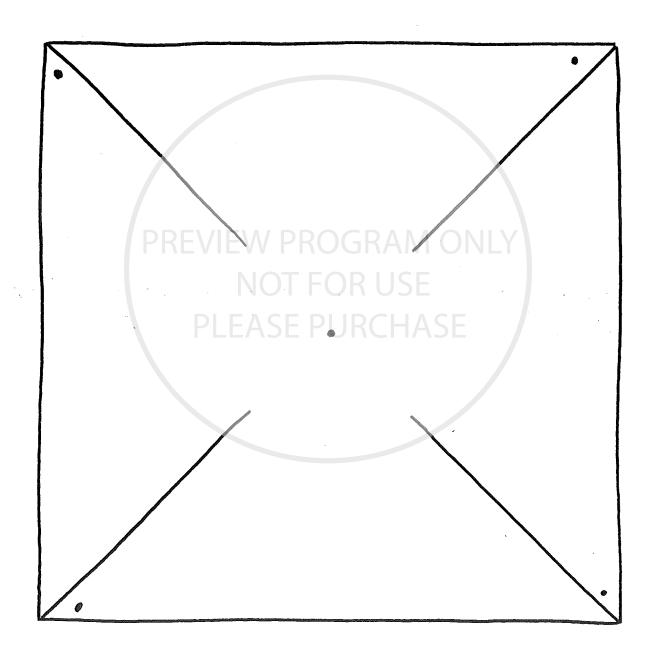


4. Color pictures or designs on both sides of paper. Cut along the lines.



5. Bring together the corners with the dots at the middle. Stick the straight pin through the dots and into the eraser end of the pencil.

6. Use the pinwheel outside on a windy day or make your own wind by blowing into the pinwheel or by using a fan.





WEEK #3: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

NICODEMUS NICK AT NIGHT

TEACHER PREPARATION

If you chose to make pinwheels for Week #2, there is a good chance that more time is needed to complete the project. Take this time to complete all pinwheels. Permit the students time to make a great take home memory.

When the project has been completed, move on to CIRCLE GAME DAY. It may be possible to save these activities for another week when activities are needed. Adjust the schedule according to your needs. Prepare several circle games that students will enjoy. Play in a large indoor or outdoor area. W PROGRAM ONLY

INTRODUCTION: CIRCLE GAME DAY

Hey kids! I heard that today's theme is NICK AT NIGHT. Good old Nicodemus would not rest until he asked Jesus the questions that had been nagging him. Nick became one of the Jesus People. He could not let a lot of people know about it. Nick was supposed to be the wise man of the group. He probably thought that he would not have a job if he told folks he believed in Jesus and if he believed in Jesus, his sense of honesty would not allow him to keep his job and his friends. Talk about going in circles!!! Nick showed up at night hoping to make a decision about Jesus in private.

Today we are going in circles! Every game we play in the Surprise Shoppe will be played in a circle. Some are relaxing and some get you moving quickly. Ready to start? Let's go!

CIRCLE GAME #1: CIRCLE SOCCER

SUPPLIES: One large ball

Two teams get into one circle, half on one side and half on the other. A ball is thrown into the circle and the players try to kick it out through the other team's side. If the ball is kicked out over the heads of the players, the point goes to the non kicking team. If the ball is kicked out below the heads of the players, the kicking team gets the point. Hands may not be used at all, only feet and bodies. (OPTION: Allow younger students to use hands.)



No one may move out of position except one player per team who may kick the ball to his team mates if the ball gets stuck in the center. He may not score or cross into the other team's territory. If the roaming player gets hit with the ball (when kicked by the other team), the kicking team gets a point.

CIRCLE GAME #2: LAP SIT

This is one of the best cooperative games. It requires that everyone do a part or the game flops. It is best with large groups from fifty to five hundred—even more if you have the room and the people. Do it with smaller groups too. It is lots of fun.

Have the group form a large circle with everyone facing clockwise or counterclockwise. Make sure the spacing between each player is about the same. Usually about twelve to eighteen inches is ideal. Then at a signal, everyone holds his arms out to the sides and sits down in the lap of the person immediately behind them. Everyone holds everyone else up. If one person is out of place, then the whole group will most likely fall down.

The fun of this game is to succeed on the first try. If you are not successful, try again until the group finally makes it. After you have succeeded, have the group walk while in the seated position. This really takes coordination on everyone's part. TAKE PICTURES!!!

CIRCLE GAME #3: BACK RUB TRAIN

Sit or stand in a circle. Everyone should turn sideways in the same direction. Rub the back of the person in front of you. Think happy thoughts about the person whose back you are rubbing. Then turn around the rub another person's back. Relax and enjoy!

Circle Soccer will probably take the longest to play. Arrange Surprise Shoppe time accordingly so that all three games can be played. If there is a short time period available because of craft project completion, play Circle Games #2 and/or #3 only. Save Circle Game #1 for another week. Add your own favorite Circle games if desired.

Make an announcement to bring a white t-shirt next week. We will be painting a Jesus People shirt. Send a not home so parents know what kind of shirt is needed. See Week #4 instructions.



WEEK #4: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN "WELL, WELL, WELL!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Today the students will be coloring their own Jesus People t-shirts. Be sure each student has a shirt to paint. Purchase some inexpensive white shirts in case a few students forget or parents do not cooperate. It may be easier to purchase a variety of white shirts and charge a small fee to cover the costs. Close Encounters Club may agree to purchase the shirts without a fee. Discuss it with your leadership team. This project may take two weeks. If so, delay the games from Week #5 until another time.

SUPPLIES: One shirt per student, newspaper to cover tables, pencils, paint brushes, fabric acrylic paints in a variety of bright colors, small pieces of cardboard to slide inside each shirt, small cups of water, paper towels.

OPTION #1: Look for colorful, colorfast crayons/markers instead of using acrylic paints. This may be a faster and cleaner method. S&S arts and crafts offers Crayola Fabric Crayons. Transfer drawings from tracing paper onto any fabric made of 50% or more polyester or draw directly on the fabric itself. For group or individual fun and creativity. CHB-SC423 \$2.29 per box of 8. (Price may change.) S&S also offers Fabric Markers and Fabric Paint.

OPTION #2: S&S arts and crafts catalog offers a T-Shirt Decorating Pack. Accent a t-shirt with spectacular inspirational designs using our assortment of easy-to-apply iron on transfers and permanent fabric crayons. Messages on the delightful picture designs: GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES, TOGETHER IN PEACE, JESUS LOVES EVERYBUNNY, LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS. Designs are machine washable and leave fabric feeling soft. Includes iron ons, non toxic fabric crayons and instructions. Adult assistance required to iron on designs. 8½" x 11". CHB-RE272 \$10.99 per pack of 24. 46 cents per project. (Price may change.)



BEFORE CLASS: Cover the work tables with newspaper. Place small cups of water, one paint brush, one pencil, one paper towel and one piece of cardboard at each place. It will be helpful if each teacher has their own completed shirt made before class so the students have examples to copy. It is also fun for leaders to wear their Jesus People shirts while in the Surprise Shoppe.

DURING CLASS: Seat the students and explain that they will paint one shirt. Once they complete their painting, they must leave the shirt to dry.

- 1. Slide the piece of cardboard inside the shirt to keep the paint from bleeding through the back.
- 2. Smooth the shirt front to it forms a flat painting surface.
- 3. Each student chooses what they want to put on their shirts. Pencil printing must be done first. Some suggestions: JESUS PEOPLE HAVE SPIRIT, I AM A JESUS PEOPLE, JESUS PEOPLE ARE HEAVENLY, JESUS PEOPLE, I (HEART) JESUS PEOPLE.

Print some small cards with all the words printed on them so young students can copy the lettering themselves. If students are too young to print, let them paint whatever they want on their shirt.

- 4. Once the lettering is in place, students choose a symbol or picture to paint on the shirt. Example: Flame, clouds, music notes, smiley faces, one huge smiling mouth under the printed words. Let students think of their own symbols.
- 5. Pin a small piece of paper with the student's name on it to the shirt for identification later. Keep the shirt decoration simple so most or all of the work can be completed in one session. If necessary, reserve Week #5 to complete the projects.

AFTER CLASS: The shirts must remain in place until dry. Overnight will do. Collect the shirts once they are dry, remove cardboard and iron each shirt with a hot, dry iron. Cover the work with a small cotton towel to iron safely. Heat set by ironing the design for fifteen seconds. This makes it possible to wash the shirt without damage to the design or other clothing in the laundry.



INTRODUCTION: Jesus People T-Shirt

We are going to work on a great craft project today. When it is done, you will have a great shirt to wear. Be very careful with the paint. We want to keep it on the shirts and not on ourselves or on the floor.

Today's Jesus People theme features the story of the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well. This person met Jesus one, hot dusty day and her life was changed forever. Did she keep this good news to herself? No way! She ran back to her hometown and told everyone about Jesus. We are going to make a shirt that will tell everyone how we feel about Jesus. Maybe there will be words, maybe there will be symbols or maybe just a smiley face. You choose the best way to tell everyone who sees you how you feel about Jesus.

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WEEK #5: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH "NOW I CAN SEE!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

If the students need more time to complete their Jesus People t-shirts from Week #4, do that first. Remaining time may be used to play a few Blind Man games. Follow the game directions. Judge the time carefully so both games can be played. No time? Save the games for another week.

Gather the students in a large indoor or outdoor area. Explain the rules of each game before playing. Be sure to bring necessary supplies.

INTRODUCTION: BLIND MAN GAMES

Today's Jesus People theme is about a man who was born blind. Can you imagine what life would be like without eyesight? He never saw anything so he did not know what a sunset looked like and never saw the face of his mother or held an important job. He had to beg for coins on the streets of Jerusalem. People may have brushed past him with a disgusted look as he said, "Please sir, just a few coins for some bread." When Jesus healed this young man, it must have been exciting. Everything was brand new. He was thrilled to tell everyone he knew that he was healed by Jesus. The negative response from the religious leaders must have been disappointing. They were more concerned about Jesus breaking Sabbath Day work rules than in being happy that a man born blind now could see. Let's see what it would be like to be blind.

BLIND SARDINES

SUPPLIES: One blindfold for each student.

One person is the Sardine. The sardine may or may not wear a blindfold. (Your choice.) All the other players wear blindfolds. The objective is to come into contact with the sardine. As players mill around the floor, when one player touches or bumps into another, he grabs the other player and asks, "Are you the sardine?" The sardine must answer "yes" if asked. Once a person finds the sardine, he must hang onto the sardine for the rest of the game and becomes a sardine. Eventually more and more players are bumping into the line of sardines and adding themselves to the chain. The game is over when everyone has become part of the sardine chain. Do this as many times as desired with a different person being the sardine each time.



BLINDMAN BACON

SUPPLIES: blindfolds, two squirt guns

This game plays best in a circle. Two teams of equal size number off so there is a player on each team with each number. When a number is called each team member with that number puts on a blindfold. After hearing the signal, both players go to the middle of the circle and with guidance of screams from team mates, they both try to locate squirt guns laying in the middle of the circle. Once the squirt gun is found, each player then tries to squirt the other player before that player can escape out of the circle behind his team mates. If the player with the squirt gun squirts the other player, a point is awarded to his team. If the other player escapes, his team is awarded the point. The game is more exciting if, after the blindfolds go on, the leader moves the squirt gun, making it more difficult to locate.



WEEK #6: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

LAZARUS, MARY AND MARTHA **BETHANY FRIENDS**

TEACHER PREPARATION

Students make Friendship Frames to mirror The Learning Center theme of Bethany Friends. Gather supplies before the week if making the homemade version. Order puzzle supplies early from S&S to ensure timely arrival.

PUZZLE PIECE FRAMES. Here's an interesting collage activity for framing favorite pictures or photos from S&S arts and crafts catalog. Use the non toxic washable markers to color the 28 puzzle pieces and then glue them to the cardboard frame in a unique pattern. 5 ½" square frame. Inside: 2 1/4" x 3 1/4". RMB-GP1028 \$6.99 PER PACK OF 12. 58 cents per project. (Price may change.)

HOMEMADE VERSION: Saving money in a tight craft budget? Try a homemade puzzle frame project. Purchase old puzzles at yard sales. Use the puzzle pieces as framing material. Make small frames from posterboard or cardboard. Draw and cut a frame template and use it to cut out as many sturdy frames as needed. Supply white glue and acrylic paint with brushes. Students may glue pieces in any arrangement and when the glue is dry, may paint their frame. The puzzle colors may be pretty enough to leave without paint!

OPTION: Take pictures of the group posing with their arms around each other. Keep the frames until the pictures are developed and place one group picture into each frame so students have a keepsake of the friends they made at Close Encounters Club.

INTRODUCTION: FRIENDSHIP FRAMES

Today's Jesus People are two sisters and a brother from Bethany, a town near Jerusalem. Jesus was a close personal friend to Mary, Martha and their brother Lazarus. It is fun to have a friend who knows all about you and likes you anyway! Friends stay with you in good times, bad times and sad times. Jesus did that with His Bethany Friends. When Lazarus died, Jesus came to call him back to life. Mary and Martha needed their brother and Jesus' heart went out to them.

Let's make a Friendship Frame where you can place pictures of your best friends!



WEEK #7: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

SIMON PETER "JESUS WHO?"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Because Simon Peter was a fisherman, let's honor that part of his life by making a fish as a take home keepsake. There are many ways fish can be made. Choose a fish project that suits your group and your budget.

Allow the students to take their time while completing this project. If it takes more than one week, store the partially finished projects with student names attached.

BIG BAG GIANT TROPICAL FISH: S&S arts and crafts catalog says: Use the pattern included to trace fish onto the large specialty bags, paint and stuff them into shape with newspaper. Complete with non toxic paint, markers, crayons, brushes, printing materials, bags and a special glaze that will make your fish glisten as if they just jumped out of the water. Includes instructions. Measures up to 22" long. CHB-GP1211 \$38.99 per pack of 36. \$1.08 per project. (Price may change.)

CATCH THE FISH TAIL. From S&S arts and crafts catalog: Brilliantly colored fish make excellent wind socks or wall hangings. This fun pack includes kite cord, non toxic glue and paint, glitter, assorted colored bags, tissue paper, brushes and instructions. CHB-GP1363\$14.99 per pack of 28. 54 cents per project. (Price may change.)

HOMEMADE--PETER'S FISH: Saving your shekels? Follow the homemade version instructions carefully. Place project supplies on the table before class to save time. Copy two patterns on paper for each student.

- 1. Color and cut your two fish patterns. **Paper Option:** Use colorful wrapping paper glued to plain paper instead of coloring. Cut out after the wrapping paper has been glued in place.
- 2. Punch holes all the way around the two fish sides. Use the dots on the pattern as guides.

YOUNGER STUDENT OPTION: Teachers may want to cut and punch holes before class.



- 3. Sew the edges of the fish together by winding yarn around the edges. Stop halfway around to stuff the fish with tissue paper or facial tissues.
- 4. Finish winding the yarn through the holes. Cut off excess yarn.
- 5. Tie one long piece of yarn to the hole near the fish nose.
- 6. Tie the other end of the long yarn to a fishing pole (dowel rod or tree twig).

INTRODUCTION: PETER'S FISH

Simon Peter was a fisherman. He fished in the Sea of Galilee to earn money to live. Most of the time Peter fished with a large net that gathered many fish at one time. He and his fishermen friends hauled their catch over the side of the boat and pulled the flapping fish from the nets. They took their catch to the open air markets in small Galilean towns. When Jesus called him to be a disciple, Simon Peter left his fishing boat and fished for men.

Today we are going to make a fish to remind us of Peter's Fish. When you take your fish home, hang it in your bedroom to remind you of a wonderful Jesus People disciple, Peter.

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WEEK #8: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

A CROOK ON A CROSS IT ONLY TAKES A SPARK

TEACHER PREPARATION

Here are some action activities that will delight the students. Take your time and allow all students to participate. If time is needed to complete craft projects from previous weeks, eliminate these activities or delay them until another week. Adapt the activities to meed the needs of your group. Add more laughing games if necessary. If games from previous weeks were popular, play them again. If they had to be delayed, this is the week to catch up!

INTRODUCTION: GALES OF LAUGHTER

There just has not been enough time at Close Encounters Club for laughter. You know the kind of laughter I mean, the loud, deep inside your belly kind of laughing that makes everyone else laugh too. So...today you will get to laugh. Later on, you will get to be a pretzel-no kidding!

THE BEST JOKES IN THE WORLD (WELL, MAYBE) **HOW DO WE KNOW THAT ADAM COULD RUN FAST?**

He was the first in the human race.

WHAT IS THE FIRST MENTION OF FREEWAYS IN THE BIBLE?

The Lord made every creeping thing. Genesis 1:24

HOW DID ADAM AND EVE FEEL WHEN THEY WERE EXPELLED FROM THE GARDEN OF EDEN?

They were really put out.

HOW DID ADAM AND EVE REACT WHEN THEY WERE KICKED OUT OF THE GARDEN? They raised Cain.

WHAT EXCUSE DID ADAM GIVE TO HIS CHILDREN



AS TO WHY HE NO LONGER LIVED IN EDEN?

Your mother ate us out of house and home.

WHY WAS THERE NO CARD PLAYING ON THE ARK?

Because Noah sat on the deck.

WHAT KIND OF LIGHTS DID NOAH HAVE ON THE ARK?

Floodlights.

WHAT DO YOU CALL THE STUDY OF THE ARK?

Ark-eology

WHERE IS BASKETBALL MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE?

Blessed shall be your basket. Deuteronomy 28:5

HERE'S A BIBLE VERSE FOR YOUR DENTIST

Open wide your mouth and I wi8ll fill it. Psalm 81:10

HERE'S A GREAT VERSE FOR YOUR EYE DOCTOR....

I will...make you a spectacle. Nahum 3:6

HERE ARE ALL THE BASEBALL VERSES I KNOW OF IN THE BIBLE...

In the beginning (big inning)...Genesis 1:1 Eve took first. Genesis 3:6 Adam stole second. Genesis 3:6 Gideon rattled the pitchers. Judges 7:16 The prodigal son made a home run. Luke 15:20

WHY DID PEOPLE STOP ASKING ZACCHAEUS FOR A LOAN?

Because he was always a little short. Luke 19:1-4

HERE'S A GOOD VERSE FOR YOUR WAITRESS WHEN SHE ASKS HOW YOU WANT YOUR STEAK....

Well done, good and faithful servant. Matthew 25:21

HOW COME WE SAY AMEN INSTEAD OF AWOMEN?

Because we sing hymns, not hers.

HA-HA-HA GAME



This is a crazy game that is good for a lot of laughs (literally). One person lies down on the floor on his back. The next person lies down with his head on the first person's stomach and the next person lies down with he head on the second person's stomach and so on. After everyone is down on the floor, the first person says, "Ha", the second says, "Ha-Ha", and the third says, "Ha-Ha-Ha", and so on. It is to be played seriously and if anyone goofs it and laughs, the group must start over. It is hilarious!

THE HUMAN PRETZEL

Ask two students to wait outside the room. The rest of the students hold hands—never let go! They twist themselves over and under without dropping hands. The two students return and try to untangle the human pretzel. If you have a large group, make several pretzels (6-7 students in each group). Play this enough times to give everyone who wants to untwist the pretzel an opportunity to do so.

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WEEK #9: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA SECRET FOLLOWER

TEACHER PREPARATION

This is a great week for a SUPER SURPRISE! Each week a craft project or a few games have been the activities. Today, break the pattern and sponsor an AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES. Rent a video that everyone has been wanting to see. Make large bowls of popcorn to eat while watching the movie or cartoon. Darken the room, sit back, relax and enjoy the show.

Choose from many Christian videos available. It may be fun to rent a large screen television which can be delivered to the church. Think about the length of the video. You may have to ask cooperation from some of the other areas to gain extra time for the Surprise Shoppe event. Ask the Snack and Yak crew, The Learning Center crew and the Closencountersingers crew if they would be willing to give you time from their areas. Perhaps Snack and Yak can be incorporated into the Surprise Shoppe for this special treat.

If you choose not to have AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES, plan an appropriate craft project or game time. This may be a good week to catch up on projects or games that could not be played.

THIS SPECIAL EVENT IS AN ATTENTION GRABBING BREAK IN THE NORMAL ACTIVITIES.

BE SURE TO KEEP IT A SURPRISE!



WEEK #10: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

MARY MAGDALENE "MASTER!"

TEACHER PREPARATION

Here's a great idea that does not cost a lot of money and yet becomes a take home keepsake that students will save on their book shelves for many years. Gather the supplies and ask for help from others in the church. Even a novice crafter can complete the preparations for this paper weight and the youngest students can be proud of their completed project!

SUPPLIES: One piece of wood for each student, pencils, sandpaper, wood stain, small scraps of cloth for applying stain, large nails, hammers, newspaper for table covering, cans of acrylic fixative spray.

Ask someone with power tools to cut scrap wood into small pieces. Sizes may vary. Follow the directions and the project can be completed in one session. However, if spraying a fixative, do so after students leave and let them take their project home next week. (Safety precaution because of fumes.)

- 1. Students sand any sharp edges from their piece of wood. All surfaces should be as smooth as possible.
- 2. Using a pencil print your first name lightly on the best side of the wood. Do not press hard. No one else should be able to see your pencil marks. Print as big as possible.
- 3. Using a hammer and one nail, make indentations along the pencil lines of your name. This will make small holes along the lines.
- 4. Choose a small scrap of fabric and dip it into the wood stain. Stain the entire block of wood-front, back, sides and top and bottom. Cover all the holes in your name. Wipe in one direction so that the stain looks nice on the project.
- 5. Let dry. Spray a fixative to give it a finished look.
- 6. Put your name block on your favorite book shelf!



INTRODUCTION: JESUS PEOPLE PAPER WEIGHT

Once we accept Jesus as our Savior, we become a Jesus People. God loves each of us and we should be proud to be in His family. Mary Magdalene was one of the Jesus People who was a good friend to Jesus. She followed Him from place to place and helped take care of His daily needs. What a good friend. Mary Magdalene was with Jesus when He rose from the grave. Can you imagine how excited she was to see her friend alive again?

Today we are going to make a Jesus People paper weight with our first names printed on them. This is a project you will enjoy doing and will have for a very long time. Have fun!

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WEEK #11: THE SURPRISE SHOPPE

ISAIAH GOES BACK TO THE FUTURE

TEACHER PREPARATION

Isaiah was a prophet who knew how Jesus' life was going to begin and end five hundred years before Bethlehem. Today's project is more meaningful than any of the other projects the students have completed. Choose a cross project. There are many options available. Choose from the following selections or design a homemade cross.

SAND CROSS NECKLACE: It is so easy to create these beautiful cross pendants. Just peel the backing off the precut cross, sprinkle with sand in your own design and then string on a black cord to wear. Pack contains precut self adhesive cross shapes, ultra fine glitter sand, black cord and instructions. CHB-RE337 \$28.99 per pack of 48. 60 cents per project. (Price may change.)

CRYSTAL CROSS NECKLACE: Custom painted wood crosses are covered with clear crystal glitter for a dazzling effect. Includes crosses, gold braid, glitter, non toxic glue and acrylic paint, brushes and instructions. 3". CHB-RE 83 \$14.99 per pack of 24, 62 cents per project. (Price may change.)

SHELL CROSS NECKLACE: The cross is the sign of God's love for us. Enjoy making one of a kind crosses and wearing this special symbol. Includes a variety of attractive shells, gold cord, plywood crosses, non toxic glue and instructions. 2 1/4" x 3". CHB-RE201 \$12.99 per pack of 16. 81 cents per project. (Price may change.)

GLASS LIGHTS CROSS. A true reflection of His love. Hang on a window and let the sun stream through, casting a colorful reflection across the room. Includes precut acetate cross shapes, non toxic glass stain and dimensional paint, cord and instructions. 5" W x 8" H. CHB-RE417 \$12.99 per pack of 24. 54 cents per project. (Price may change.)

INTRODUCTION: THE WAY OF THE CROSS

Isaiah the prophet knew when Jesus was going to be born and when and how He was going to die five hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem. God gave him the details to prove His love for the people of earth. We are now able to go to heaven when we become Jesus People. All Jesus People follow the Way of the Cross. Believe that Jesus died and rose for you and you are one of the Jesus People too. Wear your cross with pride!



CLOSENCOUNTERSINGERS

There are lots of songs about Jesus. Choose a few contemporary and classic choruses that tell the stories of Jesus and of people He changed. Keep the Close Encounters With The Jesus People theme in mind while choosing songs for this series. Use the suggestions listed from song books available through CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES or use music available in your community.

Use the suggested songs in conjunction with personal favorites. Prepare several of the songs that the group enjoys for SHOW OFF NIGHT. Consider the youngest students. Choose a few familiar songs with repeating words with them in mind. Visit your local Christian bookstore to find more music for CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH THE JESUS PEOPLE.

To order music from CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES, call 1-888-CEM-LIFE.

The Ultimate Praise Songbook Book and Split-Channel 2 CD Set The Close Encounters Club Theme Song Sheet music and tape available

Songs from "The Ultimate Praise Songbook for Kids"

He Is The King of Kings, p. 2 Bless The Name of Jesus, p. 10 Open Our Eyes, p. 15 Search My Heart, p. 19 Take Off Those Rags, Lazarus, p. 25 Gentle Shepherd, p. 34 Saints Society, p. 36 There Is A Redeemer, p. 49