

Lead on ... Session 6

Calling God's People to Celebrate

Aim: To encourage children that God wants us to celebrate that He is a good and loving God!

Preparation: Read the 'Lead on..' notes for this session, so that you are aware of the theology of celebration. The aim is for the children to have a good time – but we also want them to realize that God wants them to celebrate!

Create a surprise party! Have the room decorated for a festive occasion – balloons, streamers, party hats, etc. Have a large cheerful banner with the word CELEBRATE! on a focal wall.

Have some celebration food ready, but if possible have this out of sight initially, so that children are not distracted by it.

(Make sure you have checked if any children have allergies and where necessary ask the parent's advice regarding diet so that you can provide a treat for every child).

Warm up Activity: Have an OTT (over the top!) time of celebratory praise to God, including some of the children's favourites. If you do not have a skilled musician perhaps some of your church's worship team could come in to support you this week.

Alternatively there are some excellent Children's Praise CD's available.

If any of the children play a musical instrument, try to include them in part of the music.

Use lively action songs, musical instruments such as bells and tambourines and if possible make streamers or flags, which the children can use for some of the songs. (A streamer is easily made by threading several long pieces of ribbon through themselves, around one edge of a large wooden or plastic curtain loop).

Looking at the Bible: At an appropriate time in the celebration, read Psalm 33:1-4.

(Ensure that the reader conveys the mood of Celebration!)

If possible have Bibles or copies of the passage for the children to follow the verses are being read.

Discussion:

How does God want us to sing to Him? (v.1)

Do you think God wants only grown-ups to praise Him?

What musical instruments do we hear about here?

Do you think that God likes us to use other musical instruments too?

Do you think we only need to sing the hymns from the hymn book when we are in church? (v. 3) (If your church uses hymn books, discuss that some of the hymns in the hymn book are very beautiful and we sing them because they help us to think about God - but God likes new songs too!)

Does God want us to be very quiet when we celebrate Him? (v.3)

(With pre-readers, you could create a puppet show with two characters having a conversation about the party today and what they heard in the Bible passage. Prepare this in advance, using the questions above to create the line of thought presented.)

Puppets are fun but they are also a powerful teaching tool – don't miss the opportunity to help children grasp spiritual truth!)

With older children, you could also use the following questions.

Look at verses four – five to see WHY we celebrate.

If we feel His love here today – how do you think God would like our lives to be when we go back home and to school?

Do you think we can only celebrate God's goodness out loud or in our hearts as well?

How?

Activity: Enjoy the feast!

With young children, if there is enough time, play some traditional party games, ensuring that everyone feels included.

With older children, if there is time, you could divide them into groups of three to five and encourage them to prepare a song, rap or playlet to present to the group.

Alternatively, provide materials for the children to create bookmarks with the word CELEBRATE – Psalm 33:1-4.

Conclusion: Choose a suitable praise or worship song and close with prayer, so that the children leave with their attention focused on God.