

Lead on ... Session four

God wants us to keep close to Him

Aim: To understand that God wants us to keep close to Him.

Preparation: Equipment for memory verse (see Activity below).

Copies of memory verse for younger children, written in clear script.

Warm up Activity:

Provide large sheets of paper and large, fat wax crayons (so that children can work quickly). Ask children to sit comfortably and still and to close their eyes so that they can use their imaginations. Lead them through the following visualization.

Sit quietly and feel your breath coming in and out of your body.

In and out – in and out. (PAUSE)

Imagine that you are a tree.

What sort of tree are you?

Very large or small?

Do you have leaves? What are the leaves like?

Do you have any thorns or flowers on you?

Are there other trees or plants close by, or are you alone?

Does anyone live in your branches or underneath you?

Are you planted near a river?

What else is near you?

Are you happy where you are?

Keep the picture of your tree in your head.

When you are ready open your eyes and look at me.

When children have opened their eyes ask them to take about five minutes to draw their trees. Encourage them not to talk until they have finished, so that they can think about their pictures and what they were imagining.

When they have finished, encourage them to talk in pairs or threes, telling each other about their pictures.

(With younger children, have enough leaders for the children to share about their pictures groups of twos or threes).

Looking at the Bible:

Remind children about talking about fear last week. Explain that sometimes bad or sad things happen in our lives. The Bible tells us that God encourages us to be like strong trees, planted by a river. (Read Psalm 1:3)

Discussion:

Take the verse phrase by phrase and discuss with children what it means and how we can be like 'trees by the river':-

Talk about how the tree sucks up water from the river, which passes through the trunk to keep the leaves strong (so they don't wither/ *dry up*).

What if there was a great big hole in the trunk of the tree so that water couldn't get to the leaves?

What if the tree said 'I don't want to be near the water'- and went off to live in the desert by itself?

Use this image of the tree to help children recognise how important it is that we keep near God.

Ask children how we keep near to God. E.g. prayer, reading our Bibles, coming to this study group/church

Each one of us is different – just like all the pictures of the trees are different, but God loves each of us and has a special job for each of us in our lives. (Encourage children to think how each type of tree is different (e.g. apple trees give fruit, a fir tree keeps green for Christmas!))

Activity:

In advance prepare a large tree shape with each word of the verse written on a separate 'leaf'. Have these stuck on the tree with blu-tak and then help the children to learn this as a memory verse, repeatedly taking off a couple of 'leaves' at a time, until the children can say the whole verse, even though the tree is bare. (*With younger children add to the fun of this by asking them to pretend to be a strong wind and to 'blow' off the leaves at each interval*).

Conclusion:

Encourage children to take their pictures of trees home and to put it up somewhere in the house to remind them that no matter what we are like, we need to keep near to God.

With older children encourage them to write the memory verse underneath the picture.

With younger children you could have copies of the verse to be glued onto their pictures.

Encourage children to share with somebody at home what they learnt from the session today.