



Playtime

Creation

Storybook for
toddler groups

Care
for the
Family



CREATION DAY ONE:

Let there be light

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day one** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores the themes of darkness and light, opposites, and the power of words.

READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and think about the advantages of light and darkness. Print out the craft sheet for the children (page 8) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 9 - 10).
- Collect some items to illustrate the story. You could use a child's clock, socks, soft toy animals, fish and birds, shapes cut into a sun, stars and a crescent moon, leafy twigs, a bucket and spade and a rosy apple. Place them on a tray and use a large container to collect them during the story (you could use pictures from magazines if you haven't got any of these items).
- You might like to decorate your refreshment area with fairy lights and use a night-light or candle while you read the 'Teddy' story or during the prayer time.
- As the children arrive, give them some black paper to decorate with white, yellow or silver paint, sequins, glitter, etc.

TEDDY

Make up a simple story about Teddy not being able to sleep because he doesn't like the dark.

Mrs Bear tells Teddy not to worry because she is not far away. Teddy asks, '*Do you like the dark?*' Mrs Bear says she does because it is very restful and makes her feel all sleepy. It is like a soft, velvety blanket wrapping around us and helping us to sleep.

She says, '*If it wasn't dark, we wouldn't be able to see the moon and the stars.*'

'And fireworks,' adds Teddy, yawning.

Then Mrs Bear fetches a night-light to put beside Teddy's bed. She reminds Teddy that Jesus calls himself 'the light of the world.' He has promised to be beside us always, to look after us and keep us safe, so we don't need to be afraid. Now Teddy settles down happily to sleep.



GO

Your aim is to show that when God spoke, light broke into the darkness.

STORYTELLING TIP



Let the children identify the items on the tray. Before you begin, ask helpers to dim the lights but to switch them back on again when you say 'let there be light!' (You might like to ask someone else to handle the props as you read the story poem.)

THE STORY: LET THERE BE LIGHT!



Leader:

I wonder who made the world ... *(pause)*,

Look all around you. What can you see?

I wonder what it was like *before* the world was made ... *(pause)*.

A long, long time ago,

Before there were **clocks** ... tick, tock *(put the clock away)*,

Or toes wriggling in **socks** ... can you wriggle your toes? *(put the socks away)*.

Before the pitter patter of **paws** ... pitter, patter *(put the cat away)*,

Or the clickety clack of **claws** ... clickety clack *(put the lion away)*.

Before the flip, flap of **wings** ... flip, flap *(put the bird away)*,

Or the slip, slap of **tails and fins** ... slip, slap (*put the fish away*).
 Before **sunbeams and moonbeams** danced upon the sea (*put the sun and moon away*),
 Or the first **leafy twig** dangled from a tree (*put the twig away*).

Before there were **sandcastles** in the sand (*put the bucket and spade away*),
 Or the first **wave** splished and splashed upon dry land ... splish, splash (*make a wave gesture with your arm*).

Before the sky glowed rosy as an **apple** in the evening, or at dawn (*put the apple away*),
 Even before the very first **star** was born (*put star away*),
 (*Slowly*) There was absolutely nothing but darkness.

No shapes. No colours.
 No 'because' or 'why?'
 For the world was just a twinkle in God's eye!

(*Whisper*) Then God said,

'LET THERE BE LIGHT!' (*Switch on lights*),
 And there was light!

The darkness turned bright.

And God said, 'Hooray! I'll call the darkness night and I'll call the light day.'
 So that was the very first day.

All:

(*Shout and raise arms*) HOORAY!

(*You might like to repeat the poem and get the children to join in with the sounds and the words, 'let there be light'.*)

FUN AND GAMES

- Play a 'God made ...' memory game. See how many of your story items the group remember and replace them on the tray as they are mentioned.
 - Make some simple shadow shapes on the wall with your hand.
 - Have a torchlight procession around the room.
 - Sing '*Twinkle Twinkle, Little Star*' together.
 - Make some 'feely' shoe boxes, with a different object inside each one. The children have to guess what's inside by feeling the object before they take a look! Use different textures.
 - Decorate the big 'number one' shape (see craft sheet on page 8).
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CREATION COLLAGE

Cover a rectangular notice board in white paper. Add some of the decorated black paper to form a smaller rectangle in the middle, leaving a big enough white border to be able to add animals, birds, fish, etc. in future weeks.



SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing very slowly to the tune of *'The Twelve Days of Christmas'*. We will build on this song throughout this 'Creation' storybook series.

On the first day of creation,
 God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
 The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).
 (*Repeat this several times so everyone becomes familiar with it.*)

PRAYER

You might like to light a candle and ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

On the first day of creation you said, 'Let there be light' and there was light.

Thank you for your gift of light to me every new day, when sunbeams come dancing through the window. And thank you for the soft blanket of darkness every night that helps me to sleep and lets the moonbeams sparkle.

However light or dark it is, I know you can see me and that you are keeping me safe.

Amen

PARTY BAG

You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be light' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home.

CRAFT:

Draw a big 'number one' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.



ACTIVITY SHEET:

CREATION DAY ONE -

LET THERE BE LIGHT

JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



The Bible narrative describes God creating the world in seven days. Whether we understand that poetically or literally, the underpinning truth conveyed is that God made the world in a logical way, creating order and beauty out of nothing.

God's spoken words, 'Let there be light,' were powerful because they brought light into being. Our words can be powerful too, with their ability to encourage and inspire or to discourage and deflate. Let's use them to let our children know how much we love them, to praise them and to teach them about their creator.

THE BIBLE STORY

Have a treasure hunt at home to find some items, toys or pictures to represent the various elements in the story, such as: time, people, animals, plants, fish, birds, stars, sun and moon. Place all of these elements in a box or tray in front of you.

Ask your child:

I wonder what it was like before God made the world? There were no ... *(ask your child to choose and name an item from the box or tray, then remove it until there are no items left).*

Continue to say:

There was absolutely nothing except darkness, so God said, *(encourage your child to say these words with you)*

Let there be light, and there was light!

He called the light ... day,

And he called the dark ... night,

The very first day ... hooray!

DARK AND LIGHT

You might like to say 'let there be light' as you open the curtains, pull up the blinds or switch on a light. During the day, chat about all the advantages of light, e.g. we can see where we are going, it helps the plants to grow, we can see shapes and colours.

On a gloomy evening, let your toddler walk about with a small torch. Talk about Jesus being called 'the light of the world' because he shows us the way to go and helps us not to stumble.

TRAFFIC LIGHT BISCUITS



Have fun icing some oval or rectangular biscuits and add red, orange and green sweets. Talk about how traffic lights keep us safe. On a walk or journey, look out for other safety lights, such as: cat's eyes, bicycle lamps, street lights, etc.

OPPOSITES

Point out that light and dark are opposites. Find a picture book of opposites to share together. As you go about your day, look out for other opposites to examine, e.g. hot and cold, tall and short, wide and narrow, big and small, loud and quiet, wet and dry, empty and full.

BEDTIME PRAYER



Dear God

Thank you for all the different lights we saw today (*name the different light sources you noticed today and how they helped you*).

And now it's nearly bedtime (*yawn*) thank you for the softer light that helps us to feel sleepy, and lets us rest our eyes ... and settle down to sleep. Goodnight God.

Amen

CREATION DAY TWO: EARTH AND SKY

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day two** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores themes of big and small, a space adventure, and the idea that God is with us wherever we go.



READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3, and Psalm 139. Print out the craft sheet for the children (page 17) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 19 – 20).
 - As the children arrive, they could make clouds by gluing cotton wool on cloud shaped card.
 - For the 'Teddy' story you might like to bring some toys to illustrate Teddy's questions, e.g. a toy rocket or submarine.
 - For the main story, you will need a candle to light or a torch to turn on, and if possible, a picture of the Earth taken from space.
 - You could provide 'space rocks' at refreshment time by dusting rock cakes with edible glitter or dust.
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TEDDY

Make up a simple story about Teddy.

One morning, Mrs Bear pulls Teddy's curtains and says, *'Let there be light!'* She asks, *'Who made the light, Teddy?'*

Teddy answers, *'God did!'* Teddy looks out of the window at God's big world and sees the clouds floating in the sky. *'Where is God?'* he asks.

'God is everywhere, Teddy,' replies Mrs Bear.

Get Teddy to ask a series of questions, such as, *'If I zoomed up into space in a rocket, or dived to the bottom of the sea, or went to Granny's house, or flew in an aeroplane ... would God be there?'*

Then reply that God will be wherever we go in his great big world – up in the sky or down here on the Earth, God is there looking after us.



GO

Your aim is to show that God made the Earth and the sky – and that his love for us, like the universe, goes on forever.

STORYTELLING TIP



Before you tell the story, practise the actions you will need the children to do. You could say:

Teddy says:

Put your hands over your eyes ... it's very dark, isn't it?

Blink your eyes (*pretend you're looking at a bright light*),

Look down / look up.

Point to the Earth (*point down*),

Point to the sky (*point up*),

Stretch out your arms and flap them (*let's fly like birds!*)

Lift up your arms and shout, 'Hooray!'

THE STORY:

LET THERE BE EARTH AND SKY!



Leader:

A long, long time ago,
Before God made the world,
There was absolutely nothing.

There was absolutely nothing to see (*put hands over eyes*),
No shapes. No colours.
No 'because' or 'why?'
For the world was just a twinkle in God's eye!

(Whisper) Then God said,

'LET THERE BE LIGHT!' Look! (*Light the candle or switch on the torch*),
And there was light!

It was 'blink your eyes' bright (*all blink*),
And God said, 'Hooray! This is the very first day!'

I wonder what God made on the second day ...

Well, God looked down (*look down*),
And God looked up high (*look high*),
But there was no Earth (*point down*),
And there was no sky (*point up*),

(Sad voice) There was nowhere for animals to live,
Nowhere for birds to fly (*flap arms*),
Nowhere for rockets to zoom ... whoosh!
Nowhere for clouds to float by.

Then a little light twinkled in God's eye,
(Whisper) And he said,

'LET THERE BE EARTH AND SKY!'
And there was Earth and sky! (*Show your picture of the Earth*).

There was somewhere for everything to live and breathe,
To stretch their wings and fly (*stretch and flap arms*),
So, God said, 'Hooray! That's very good work for the second day!'

All:

(*Shout and raise arms*) HOORAY!

(*You might like to repeat the poem and encourage more participation.*)

FUN AND GAMES

- ➔ Sing 'Zoom, zoom, zoom, Jesus' love is very wonderful' (to stretch arms high, low and wide) and 'The Grand Old Duke of York' (to model the words up and down).
- ➔ Make chairs or blocks into a pretend rocket and go on a group expedition into space! Count down to blast-off, zoom up through the clouds, speed through space (it's such a long way), land on the moon, go for a moon walk, float in space, etc. before taking the return journey and landing safely back at toddler group.
- ➔ Make a collection of sphere-shaped objects (to represent Earth) for the children to examine, e.g. a globe, different sports balls, round fruit and vegetables, a bunch of balloons – tied and suspended. You could even see if any adults can juggle with these objects, to add a bit of fun!
- ➔ You could get the children to stick cotton wool on cloud shapes.
- ➔ Decorate the big 'number two' shape (see craft sheet on page 17).

CREATION COLLAGE

Staple an Earth shape (to be decorated next time) to the centre of your collage and a cotton wool cloud to the black paper (see collage design).



SONG: THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.

On the first day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

(To be continued ...)

PRAYER

You might like to relight the candle and ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

On the second day of creation, you made the big round 'Earth' beneath our feet to be our home. You made the great big sky over our heads that seems to go on and on forever.

Thank you that you are the God of everything, big and small. Even though I'm only small, your love for me is bigger than the world.

Amen

PARTY BAG

You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be Earth and sky' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home.

CRAFT:

Draw a big 'number two' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.

You could draw some cloud shapes on it and encourage the children to stick cotton wool to them.



Draw an Earth shape with a smiling face ready to stick in the centre of your collage, or use the illustration below.



ACTIVITY SHEET: CREATION DAY TWO - EARTH AND SKY



JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

On day two of the 'Creation' story in the Bible, God created an expanse and called it sky. He is the maker of the vast universe – and yet he is the God of small things, too. When we gaze out into infinite space, it can make us feel insignificant. But God knows each one of us, even before we were born. He cares about every detail of his children's lives and his love for us and our families is endless.

As our children grow up, it's important to show them that our love for them (like God's love for us) is unconditional and not dependent on achievement, but simply because they are our children.

STORYTIME

Look through a picture-book about the theme of 'love' with your toddler, such as '*Guess How Much I Love You*' by Sam McBratney.

Play a game with your toddler about how much you love them, e.g. I love you all the way to the front door, or to the town, or to the clouds, or to the moon, or all the way around the world and back, etc.

Chat about how God's world goes on forever, and so does his love for us!

BIG AND SMALL

At home, play with any stacking toys and practise words to do with size (big, bigger,

biggest, small, smaller, smallest).

On a walk, look out for natural things that God has made that are big, e.g. a hill, a tree or a horse; and small, e.g. a flower, an insect or a duck. Chat about how God loves everything he has made, from the biggest to the smallest.

CLOUD WATCHING

On a warm day, lie on your backs on the grass and watch the clouds float by. If you have any worries or concerns try and imagine them floating to Jesus, just like the clouds.

SPACE ADVENTURE!

Perhaps you could organise a 'space' playdate with a friend from toddler group. Make a rocket with sofa cushions or cardboard boxes. Count down to blast off and fly to different places, such as a star (do some star jumps) or the moon (singing the song 'Hey Diddle Diddle'), before returning to Earth for some astronaut food!

Cut sandwiches into rocket or star shapes. Make rockets from crackers and cut cheese into triangles for the nose and fins. Use carrot batons for the exhaust. Eat Earth-shaped fruit such as grapes and blueberries.

BEDTIME PRAYER



Dear God

Thank you for all the big and small things that you have made. Today we saw ... (name things you saw).

When I gaze out into your big sky, it's amazing to know that you are everywhere. Thank you that you are always near me, looking after me and my family and friends (*you could name different people if you want to*).

Amen

CREATION DAY THREE:

LAND AND SEAS, PLANTS AND TREES

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day three** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores themes of new life and growing.



READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and think about the ways we grow closer to God. Print out the craft sheets for the children (pages 27 – 28) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 29 – 30).
- For the 'Teddy' story, you will need a flower pot filled with soil, a packet of seeds and a small watering can.
- For the main story, pack your story basket or bag with a candle to light or a torch, two big pieces of material (one blue and one green), some pot plants or pictures from a catalogue or a simple, very tall sunflower drawn on wallpaper and rolled up.
- As the children arrive, you could ask them to help you tear up blue and green tissue paper into tiny pieces, screw them up and then sort them into two piles (you will need more blue than green).

TEDDY

Make up a simple story about Teddy seeing some beautiful flowers or tall trees in the garden or park.

Mrs Bear explains that each one grew from a tiny seed. She asks, *'Would you like to grow something, Teddy?'* (Pretend to help Teddy plant a seed in the flower pot. Show the crumbly soil.)

Teddy waters the seed with the watering can. He stares at it.

Mrs Bear asks, *'What are you doing Teddy?'* He says that he is trying to make it grow!

Mrs Bear continues, *'Only God can do that Teddy.'* Teddy just needs to give the seed a drink whenever the soil is dry and put the pot in the light. God will do the rest, but Teddy will need to be patient and keep watching for a shoot to appear.



GO

Your aim is to show that God separated the seas from the dry land and created every kind of plant and tree, each with its own seed.

STORYTELLING TIP



As a 'way in' to the story, ask the children to squat down and pretend to be a tiny seed planted in a pot. Sing to the tune, '*I'm a little teapot*'.

I'm a little seed sown in a pot,
I need water when it's hot (*pretend to water the children*).
Put me in the light and watch me grow,
Up and up and up I go (*grow tall, arms spread, big smiles*).

Say, 'I wonder what kind of plant you've grown into. Perhaps you're a sunflower ... or a runner bean ... or a Christmas tree.'

THE STORY:

LET THERE BE LAND AND SEAS, PLANTS AND TREES!



Leader:

Do you remember what it was like before God made the world?
It was dark, wasn't it?
There was nothing to see

So God said, 'Let there be light!' (*Light candle/switch on torch*),
And his eyes shone with glee!

On the second day of creation,
God said, 'Let there be Earth (*point down*) and sky (*point up*),
Somewhere for things to live and somewhere for birds to fly.' (*flap arms*).

Then God said, 'Hooray! Good work for the second day!'

(*Pause*) I wonder what God made on the third day ...

Well, God looked at the empty Earth,
(*Sad voice*) Nothing seemed to grow,
So he said, 'LET THERE BE DRY LAND!'
And it was so! (*Gradually pull out the green material*).

He gathered all the water into one place (*gradually pull out the blue material*),
And he called those the seas.
Now there was room for things to grow,
So 'LET THERE BE PLANTS AND TREES!'

Let's see ... (*Bring out any pot plants and place on the green material*),
There were plants with spiky leaves and feathery leaves,
There were plants that were really small and there were plants that were really tall,
Take a look ... (*Gradually unroll the sunflower drawing*).

And God was very pleased with them all.

He said, 'That's very good work for the third day!'

All:

(*Shout and raise arms*) Hooray!
(*You might like to repeat the poem and encourage more participation.*)

FUN AND GAMES

- ➔ Perhaps the children could plant or be given their own cress seeds to take home so they can watch them grow.
- ➔ Bring in a fun height chart. Measure Teddy and the children. Teddy might ask how he can grow closer to God. You could tell him that he can do this by listening to Bible stories at toddler group, talking and listening to God and singing songs to God.
- ➔ Sing '*Mary, Mary, quite contrary*' or '*Lavender's blue*'.
- ➔ Identify and sort different fruit and vegetables into a fruit bowl and vegetable basket.
- ➔ Make cupcake flowers by opening out colourful paper cases and gluing sequins, stickers or pom-poms to them.
- ➔ Decorate the big 'number three' shape. (See craft sheet on page 27).

CREATION COLLAGE

Glue the green and blue tissue paper onto the Earth shapes. Fix a completed one over the plain one you had left on the collage from last time. Add some cupcake flowers and draw some stems with a green felt tip.



SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune '*The Twelve Days of Christmas*'.

On the first day of creation,
 God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
 The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the third day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Seas and trees (*hold out arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

(To be continued ...)

PRAYER

You might like to light a candle and ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

On the third day of creation, you made the dry land and the wet, splashy-splashy seas!
Then you made all sorts of green plants grow.

Thank you for giving us our food and drink and people to love us as we grow up. Help us to grow closer to you as we begin to explore your wonderful world.

Amen

PARTY BAG

You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be land and seas, plants and trees' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home.

CRAFT:

Draw a big 'number three' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.

You could draw some plants and trees for the children to colour in.



Draw different fruit and vegetables for the children to colour in and add to the collage.
We've created some templates in the craft sheet below.



ACTIVITY SHEET: CREATION DAY THREE - LAND AND SEAS, PLANTS AND TREES



JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

If you have ever read the care instructions on plants at a garden centre, you will know that their needs are very different, with some requiring lots of water or light and others requiring dry conditions or shade.

Our children are all unique too, even within the same family, and they each have different needs that need to be met in order for them to thrive. One may need reassurance about a new experience, while another may not.

Just as a plant needs the sun, rain and soil, so our families need the right environment to grow spiritually. They need love and understanding, and simple everyday opportunities to explore what it looks like to have a relationship with Jesus. Even if our faith is just a tiny seed, we can trust God to ensure it grows within ourselves and within our children.

THE BIBLE STORY

Retell and play out the 'Creation' story so far. For example, ask: Do you remember what it was like before God made the world?

It was all dark, wasn't it? *(Your toddler hides under a blanket or their hood).*

So what did God say?

He said 'Let there be light!' *(Pull the blanket or hood back, peekaboo!)*

On the second day, God made the Earth and the sky.

Can you point to the Earth ... can you point to the sky?

I wonder what he did on the third day?

Well, he sorted the wet, splishy-splashy sea ... *(make waves with our hands)* ... from the dry land. And then he said, 'Let all kinds of plants grow!' And they did.

Shall we look out for some tomorrow?

Let's give God a clap for making all these things *(clap hands)*.

ON A WALK

Look out for different types of plants, e.g. tall trees, plants with flowers, hedges and plants with seed-heads. Blow on a dandelion seed-head. Explain that some of the seeds might land in some good soil and grow into new dandelions.

IN THE SUPERMARKET

Look at the different fruit and vegetables and name some of them. Say, 'Isn't God clever to make all these different things for us to eat?' Perhaps your toddler could choose something new to try together. As you slice the fruit or vegetable, look at any seeds together.

FUN FINGER FOOD

A good way to encourage your toddler to eat fruit and vegetables is to make a picture on a plate. Create flower centres out of rounds of bread with half a cherry tomato or grape in the middle, petals of sliced strawberry or satsuma segments, and cucumber or runner bean leaves. Broccoli florets make good trees. For an exotic palm tree, use sliced banana for the trunk and sections of a kiwi fruit for the palm leaves!

GROWING A STRONG FAMILY

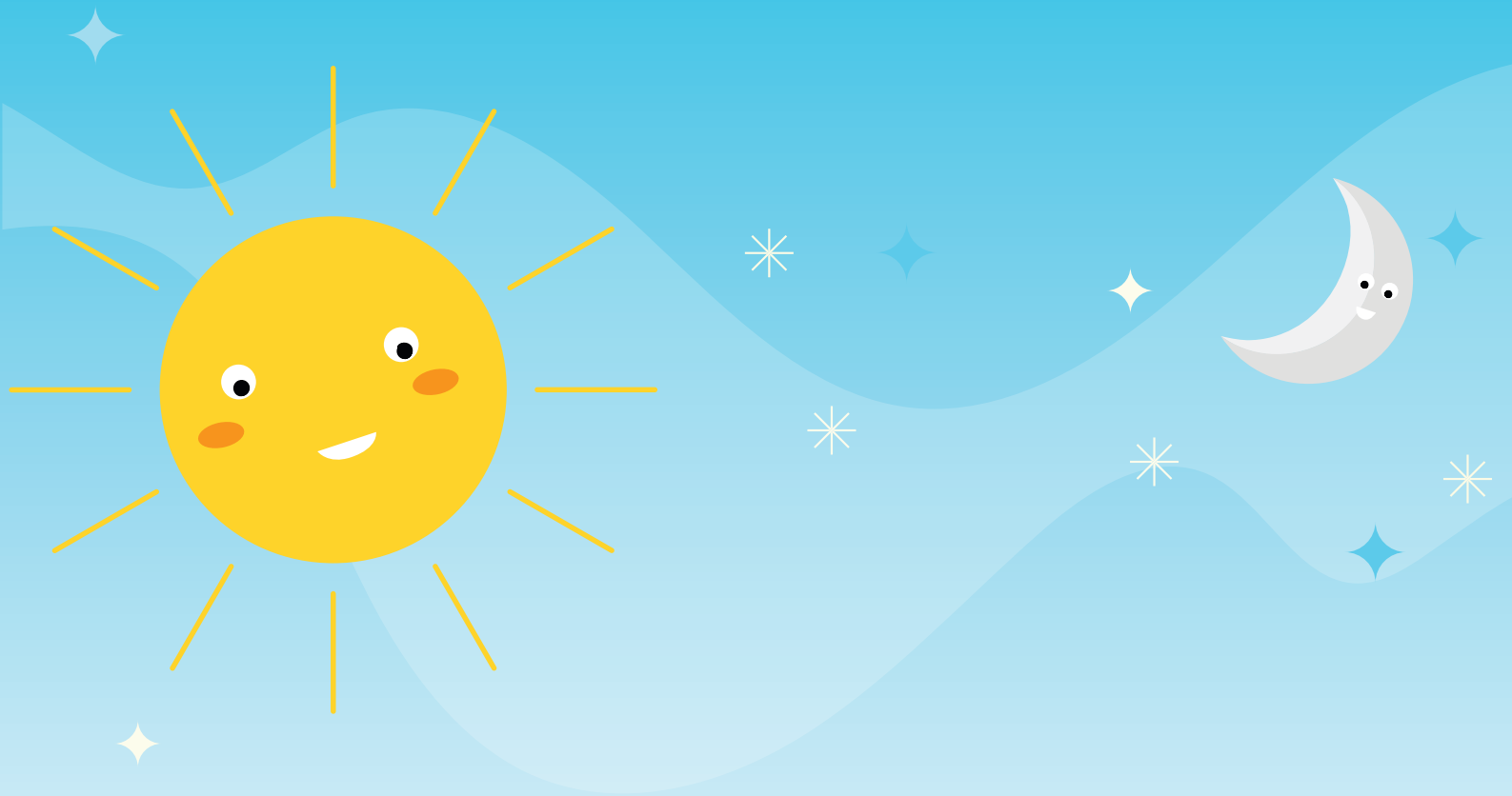
Family traditions can help to create strong families. Could you think up your own family traditions? Maybe you could measure children on a height chart every birthday, eat a slice of pizza and a healthy salad or try a different piece of fruit every Friday night, or have a regular movie night.

PRAYER

Dear God

Thank you for making so many fruits and vegetables for us to eat. They help us to grow strong. Today, my favourite fruit/vegetable was ... (*insert fruit*)

Amen



CREATION DAY FOUR:

SUN, MOON AND STARS

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day four** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores themes of day and night, and shining like a star.

READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and think about anyone you know whose faith shines out like a light. Print out the craft sheet for the children (page 38) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 41 – 42).
- As the children arrive, give them a silver foil circle to scrunch into a ball and then carefully open out again. Glue this moon shape to black paper and add star stickers.
- Bring any useful props for the 'Teddy' story.
- Pack your story bag or basket with a candle or torch, blue and green material, and sun, moon and star shapes.
- You might like to serve some moon and stars malted milk biscuits at refreshment time, or make your own star biscuits with a shaped cutter.

TEDDY

Make up a simple bedtime routine story about Teddy.

Mrs Bear says, *'The sun is going to bed.'*

Soon it will be Teddy's bedtime. He looks out of the window and sees the rosy sky. He whispers, *'Goodnight sun, sleep well.'*

Teddy gets undressed and puts on his pyjamas. Out of the window he sees a glowing crescent shape. It's the moon coming up. Teddy brushes his teeth until they sparkle.

Outside, it's getting darker, so he can see some stars twinkling in the sky. He says, *'Goodnight moon, goodnight stars.'*

Mrs Bear reads Teddy a story. They both yawn. Teddy says, *'Thank you God for the soft light of the moon and the stars which shine in the sky until the sun gets up in the morning.'*

Mrs Bear tucks Teddy in and whispers, *'Goodnight, Teddy. Sleep well.'*



GO

Your aim is to show that God made the sun, moon and stars to separate day from night and to give light to the Earth.

STORYTELLING TIP



As a 'way in' to the story, ask the children to mime jumping out of bed in the morning and then going to sleep in the evening. You could use this rhyme (which can be sung to the tune of the chorus of *'The wise man built his house upon the rocks'*). Start curled up on the floor.

The sun comes up
And the world grows bright (x3)
Now it's time to start the day.
(Jump up) Yay!

The stars come out
And the moon grows bright (x3)
Now it's time to go to bed.
(Curl up again) Sleepy head!

THE STORY:

LET THERE BE SUN, MOON AND STARS!



Leader:

It's story time, everyone!

I wonder what time you jumped out of bed this morning.

Shall we ask the grown-ups?

Was it light or dark?

(Have fun hearing about some early mornings.)

Well, it was very dark before God made the world, wasn't it?

Until God said, 'Let there be light, and there was light.' *(Light candle or switch on torch)*

GOOD! *(All clap)*

On the second day, God made the Earth *(point down)*,

And the sky *(point up)*,

A place for us to live and a space for things to fly *(flap arms)*.

GOOD! *(All clap)*

On the third day, God said, 'Let there be dry land and wet seas. *(Pull out blue material)*,

And let all kinds of plants grow *(pull out green material)*,

From tiny seedlings ... to tall trees.' *(arms spread like branches)*.

GOOD! *(All clap)*

(Pause) I wonder what God made on the fourth day ...

Well, God looked at the Earth,

And his eyes shone with delight,

But there was nothing to show the difference,

Between the day and the night.

Nothing to show when it was time to go to sleep *(curl up)*,

Or when it was time to get up, with one enormous, LEAP *(jump)*.

So God said, 'Let there be a big bright light,'

A light we call the sun *(bring out sun)*,

To signal when it's day time,

Time for work and play and fun!

And let there be a moon and stars *(bring out moon and stars)*,

With softer twinkling light,

To signal when it's bedtime and it's time to say, 'Goodnight!'
 AND THEN THE SUN, MOON AND STARS were created!
 And God said, 'That's good work for the fourth day.'

All:

(Shout and raise arms) Hooray!

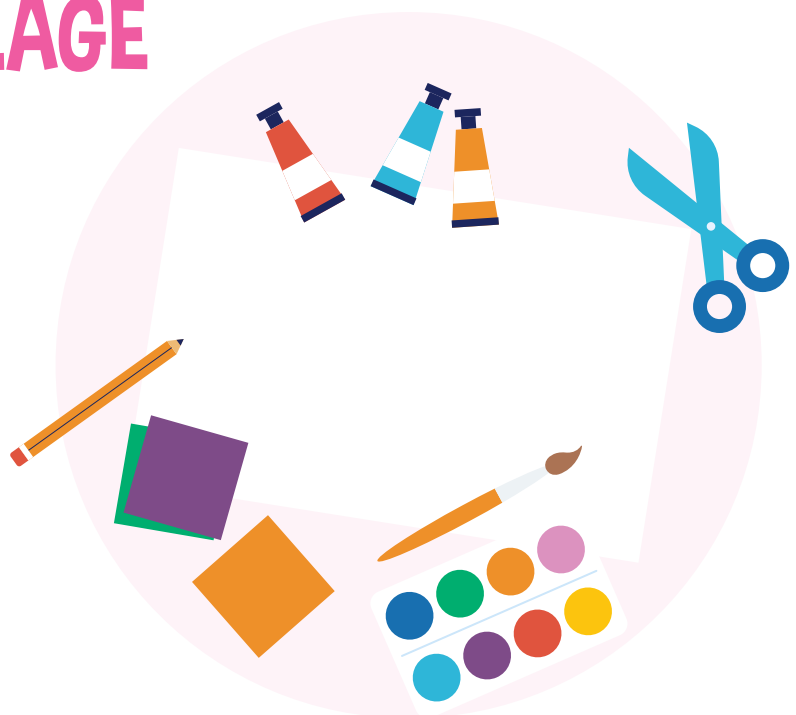
(You might like to repeat the poem and encourage more participation.)

FUN AND GAMES

- ➔ Decorate star shapes with glitter (the children could peg them on a line) and make suns (see craft sheets on pages 39 and 40).
- ➔ Sing, 'The sun has got his hat on', 'Hey diddle diddle' or 'Twinkle, twinkle little star'. Play 'Sunrise, sunset' from Fiddler on the Roof.
- ➔ Make a collection of old sun hats for the children to try on.
- ➔ Decorate the big 'number four' shape (see craft sheet on page 38).

CREATION COLLAGE

Fix a sun, silver foil
 moon and glittery star
 to your collage.



SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune '*The Twelve Days of Christmas*'.

On the first day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the third day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Seas and trees (*hold out arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fourth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms out like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

(To be continued ...)

PRAYER

You might like to ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

It's amazing to think that you were there when the very first star was born,
and when the sky first glowed, rosy as an apple, in the evening and at dawn!

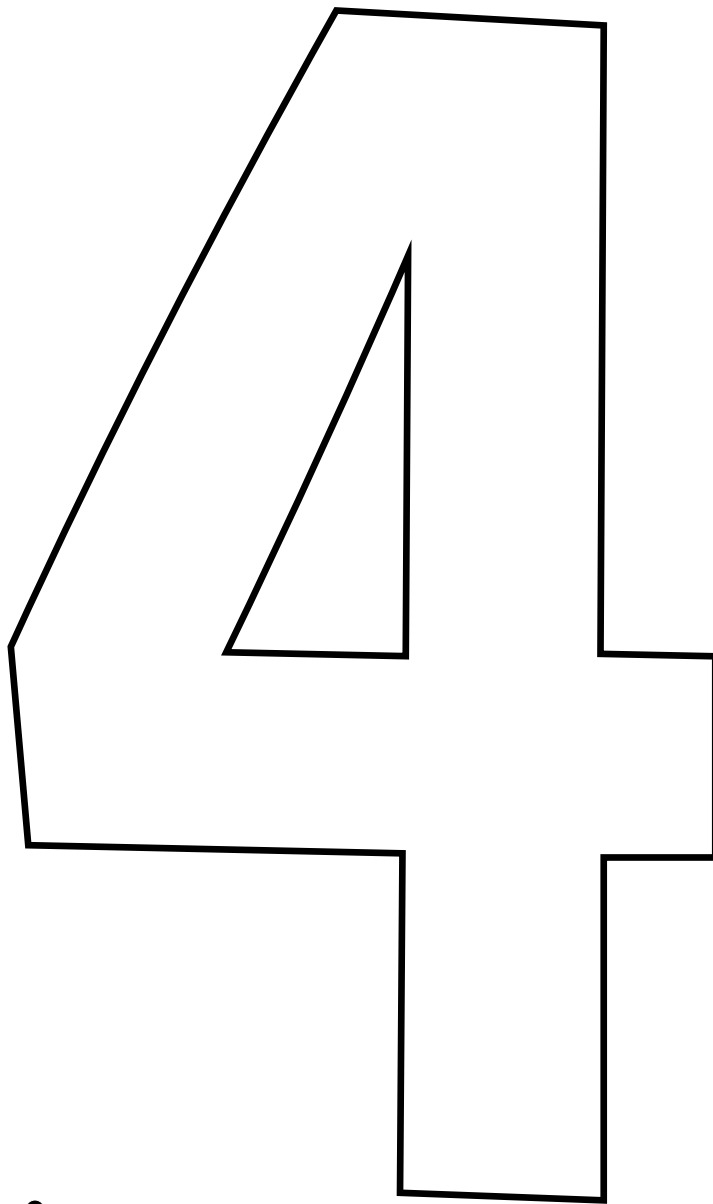
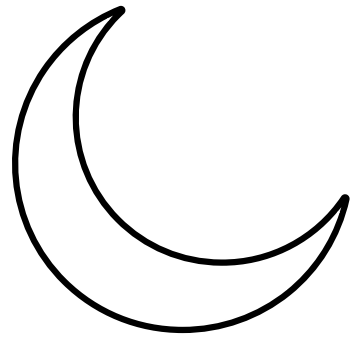
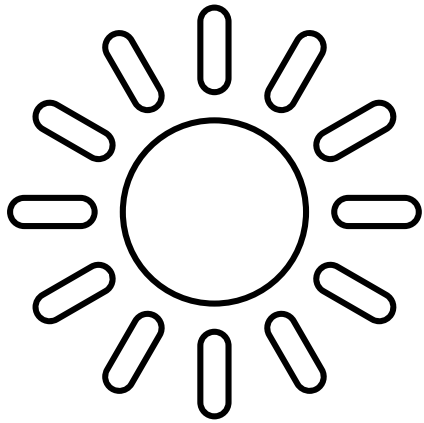
Thank you for your wonderful world. Please help us to light it up with our big smiles.
Amen

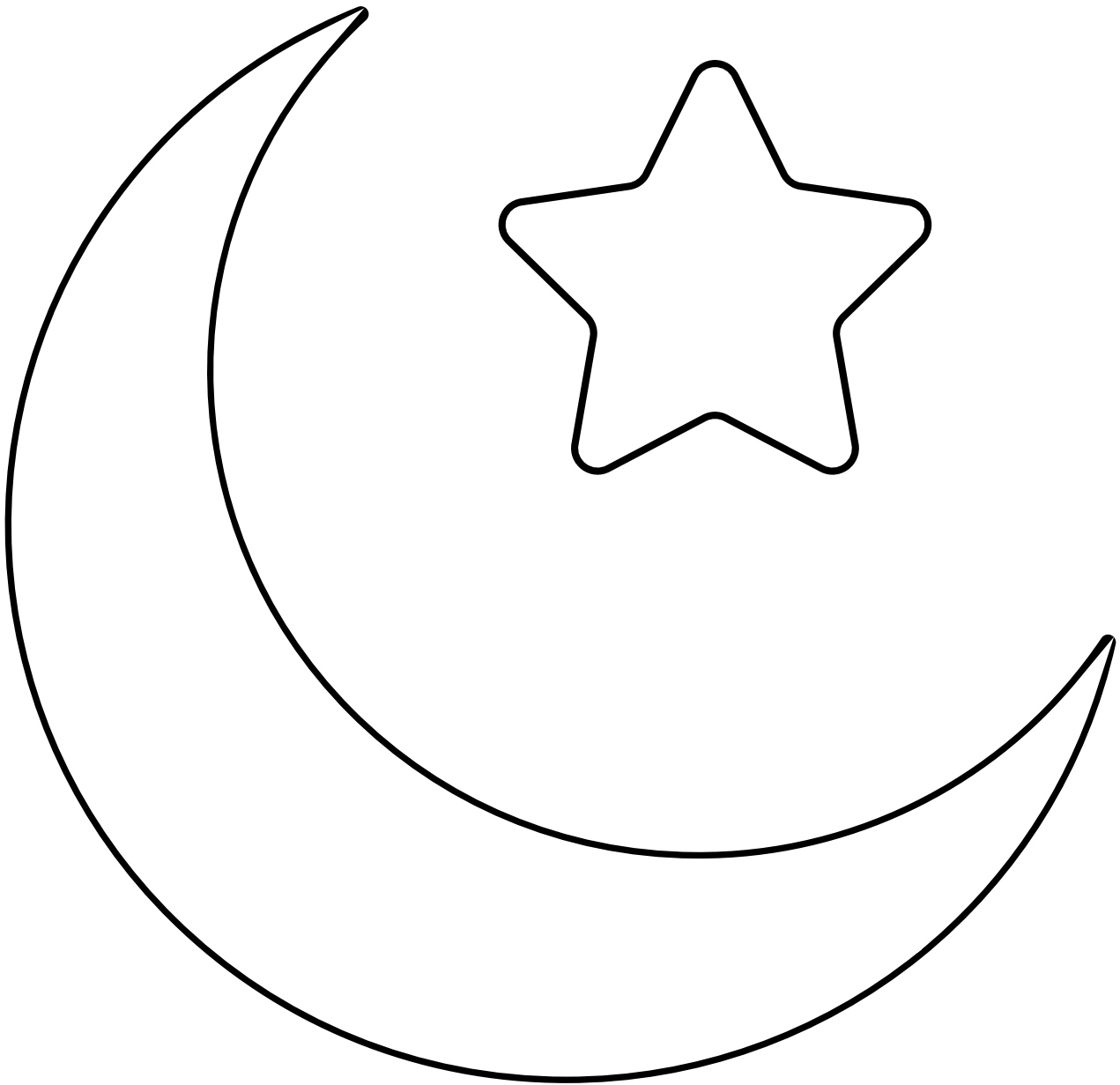
PARTY BAG

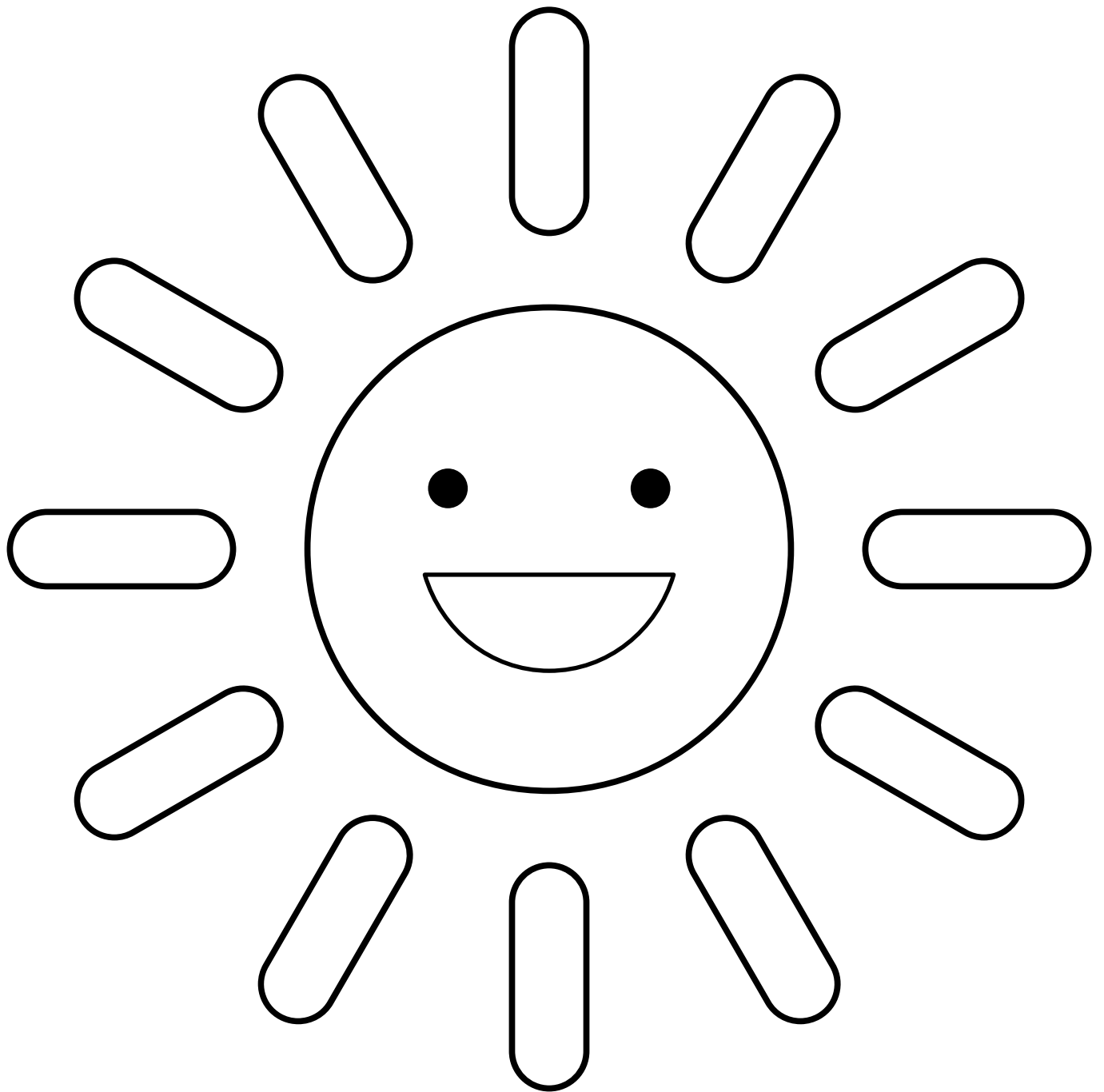
You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be sun, moon and stars' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home. Perhaps you could also give them a packet of star stickers.

CRAFT:

Draw a big 'number four' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.







Using yellow paper, cut circles for suns and long strips of paper for rays. These could be doubled over and glued at the ends to form loops. Glue these ends to the back of the suns.

ACTIVITY SHEET: CREATION DAY FOUR - SUN, MOON AND STARS



JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

On day four of the 'Creation' story in the Bible, God created lights in the sky to separate day from night, to let them mark seasons, days and years and to give light on the Earth. Perhaps you know someone who seems to make the world a better place. Their warm smile, encouraging attitude and lack of grumbles shines out. We want so much to be kind, joyful and patient parents. But we can only do our best! After a challenging day, remember that tomorrow is another day and a new start. Our children grow up all too quickly as the days pass, so let's try to savour these fleeting early years.

THE BIBLE STORY

Retell the 'Creation' story so far, as you put your toddler to bed (try to make this a calming time). For example:

As you switch on a bathroom light, say, 'Let there be light!'
What did God make next?

(As you take off socks and slippers, say) 'Let there be Earth!'
(As arms point up to take off a jumper, say) 'Let there be sky!'
(As you make waves in the bath, say) 'Let there be sea!'
(As you lift them out of the bath, say) 'Let there be dry land!'
(As you stretch out arms to dry under, say) 'Let there be trees!'

I wonder what God made next ...
(As you look out of a bedroom window, say) 'Let there be sun, moon and stars!'
What a wonderful world!
Goodnight sun,
Goodnight moon,
Goodnight stars,
Thank you God for sunlight, moonlight and starlight. Amen

AT HOME

You could draw and chat about different shapes together, including circle, crescent and star shapes. Post shapes in a toy shape sorter. Make the link to God making the sun, moon and stars.

NIGHT AND DAY ART

Have fun gluing a milk bottle top or circle of foil (screwed up and then opened out) onto black paper to look like the moon with craters. Add some star stickers. Your toddler could paint a big shining yellow sun on white or blue paper.

SUNRISE AND SUNSET

It's never a good idea to look straight at the sun. So using a satsuma, demonstrate how the sun comes up in the morning, moves across the sky and goes down in the evening.

Introduce words such as sunrise, dawn, midday and sunset.

In the summer, chat about how we protect ourselves from the sun with sun hats, sun cream and sunglasses. Look out for pink skies in the morning and beautiful sunsets.

In the winter, go out on a clear frosty night to see the moon and the stars – too many to count!

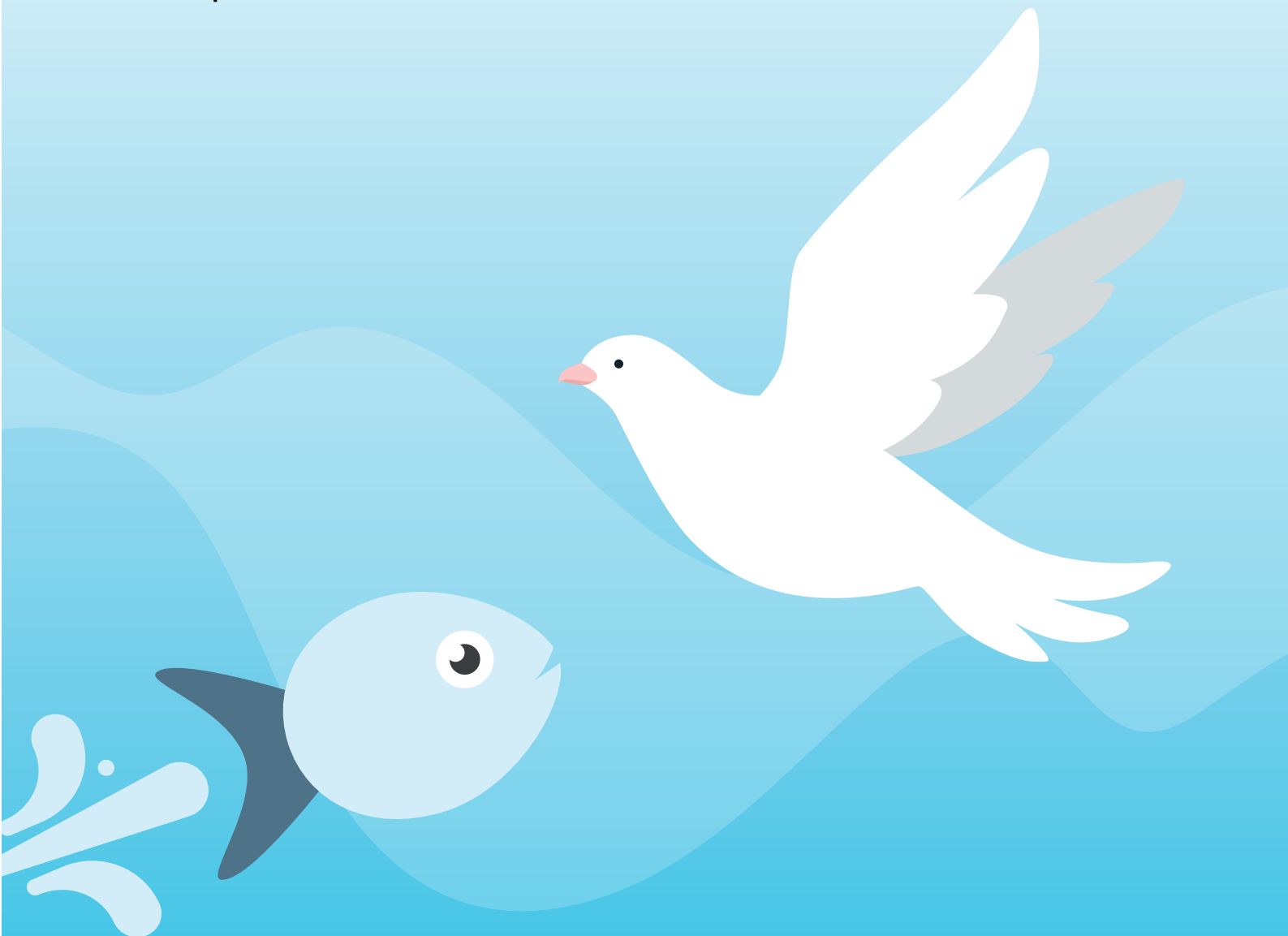
RECONNECTING WITH JOY

What brings you joy? This might be something as simple as a few daffodils in a jam jar. When you bring something seasonal into the house, share your joy with your toddler.

When your toddler is asleep, allow yourself a few minutes to sit quietly, close your eyes and take some deep breaths. Imagine a warm sun just above your head. Feel the warmth on your skin gradually radiate throughout your body as your muscles relax. Allow a feeling of joy to radiate, too. Behind the clouds, the blue sky is always there!

CREATION DAY FIVE: **FISH AND BIRDS**

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day five** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores the themes of fish and birds, colours, the opposites empty and full, and God's protection.



READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and wonder at the diversity of sea-life and bird-life. See also Psalm 91:4. Print out the craft sheets for the children (pages 50 – 51) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 52 – 53).
- Bring along any helpful props for the 'Teddy' story, such as blue material, fish and bird food, and a bird feeder.
- For the Bible story, you could bring a candle or torch, a soft toy octopus, a toy whale, a pot of bubbles to blow, a decorative nest with eggs or whatever visual aids you can find.
- As the children arrive, they could decorate the bird shapes with an assortment of coloured craft feathers and the fish shapes with rainbow-coloured fingerprints (see craft sheet on page 51). Bring them to the 'Teddy' story.

TEDDY

Make up a simple story about Teddy meeting fish and birds.

Teddy is going to his Grandpa's house to help him in the garden. Grandpa has a pond (*spread out some blue material*).

They are going to feed the fish. But where are they? The pond looks empty. Perhaps they're hiding! Teddy sprinkles some fish flakes on the water. Ah, here come the fish! (*Children bring their fish*).

Now the pond is full of flapping fish! They dart around and gulp the food!

Next, Teddy cleans the empty bird feeder and fills it with bird food. Teddy and Grandpa sit very quietly ... sssh!

The sky seems empty. Then suddenly there's a fluttering of wings, and lots of birds fly down for their breakfast! (*Children bring their birds*).



GO

Your aim is to show that God filled the seas with every kind of sea creature and the sky with every kind of bird.

STORYTELLING TIP



As a 'way in' to the story, practice some mimes for birds and fish:

Birds singing (*hands open and shut like beaks*),
 Birds stretching their wings and flying (*flap arms and pretend to fly around the room*),
 Birds pecking at bird seed (*nod heads*).

Fish swimming (*wiggle hands like darting fish*),
 Fish splashing their fins (*flap hands*),
 Fish eating fish food (*open and shut mouths like gulping fish*).

THE STORY:

LET THERE BE FISH AND BIRDS



Leader:

Before God made everything, the world was empty and dark, wasn't it?
 There were no shapes or colours.
 Then God said, 'Let there be light!' (*Light candle or switch on torch*),
 And light appeared! Do you remember? And that was just the start!

God made the Earth and the sky,
The seas and the trees,
(Sad voice) But nothing swam in the water (*mime swimming with hands*),
Or sang in the trees (*all open and shut fingers*).

Nothing flew through the air with brightly coloured wings.
Nothing darted through the waves with spotted tails and fins.

So God said, 'Right, there is still work to do. (*Pull up your sleeves*),
LET THERE BE FISH!
Of every shape and colour,
Yes, let there be fish.

Fill the seas to the brim,
With creatures that splash, dive, blow bubbles and swim.'
AND THERE WERE FISH! (*Mime swimming with hands*).

There were fish with rainbow colours,
And fish with golden scales,
There were creatures with eight legs (*show toy octopus*),
And big, black shiny whales (*show toy whale*).

And most of them had no trouble,
Opening their mouths to blow a bubble!
Would you like to see? (*Have fun blowing bubbles from pot*).

Then God said, 'LET THERE BE BIRDS!
To fill the sky,
To perch in the tree tops,
To stretch their wings and fly.'
AND THERE WERE BIRDS! (*Flap arms like a bird*).

There were birds with long beaks (*indicate long beak*),
And birds with beady eyes (*draw circles in front of your eyes*),
Birds that peck, peck the grass (*nod heads like birds eating*),
And birds that soared up high.

There were birds that made nests (*show nest*),
And laid pale blue eggs,

And bright pink birds,
That stood on one leg (*demonstrate standing on one leg*).

Can you do that? (*All try to stand on one leg*).

'Well, that's good,' said God,
And he clapped his hands. (*All clap their hands*),
'I think that's all for today.'

All:

(*Shout and raise arms*) Hooray!
(*You might like to repeat the poem and encourage more participation.*)

FUN AND GAMES

- ➔ Perform the '*Two little dickey birds*' finger rhyme to the children and adults.
- ➔ Decorate an image of a bird (see craft sheet on page 51). The children could paint the bird red and the beak yellow. For some messy fun, spread red, yellow, green and blue paint in stripes on an old plate and let the children make handprint feathers.
- ➔ Play a magnetic fishing game.
- ➔ Ask a parent or church member to bring in a goldfish in a bowl or a budgie in a cage.
- ➔ Decorate the big 'number five' shape (see craft sheet on page 50).

CREATION COLLAGE



Add a feathery bird and decorated fish to your collage.

SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.

On the first day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the third day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Seas and trees (*hold out arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fourth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms out like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fifth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to self and others*),

Fish and birds (*swim and flap arms*),
 Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
 Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
 Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
 And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

(To be continued ...)

PRAYER

You might like to ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

Thank you that the sea isn't empty – it's full of fish; fish that dart about and splash and blow bubbles! And thank you that the sky isn't empty – it's full of birds; birds with feathers all colours of the rainbow, that flutter their wings and sing!

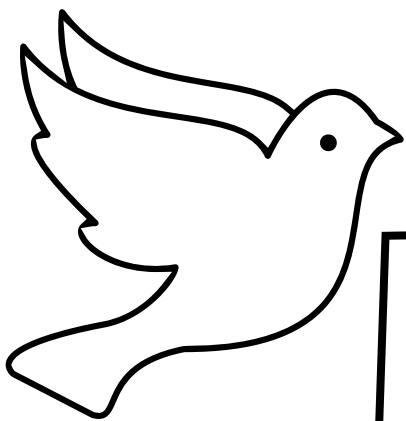
As we stretch our wings and fly, help us to open our mouths and sing your praises for such a beautiful world!

Amen

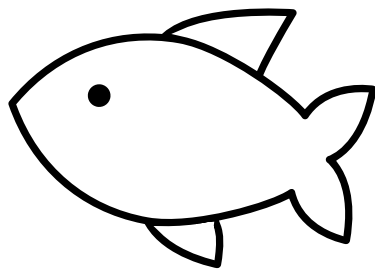
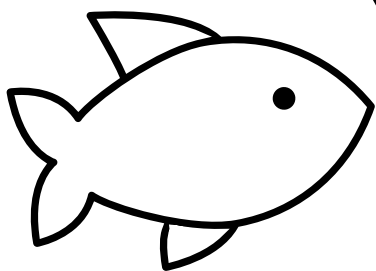
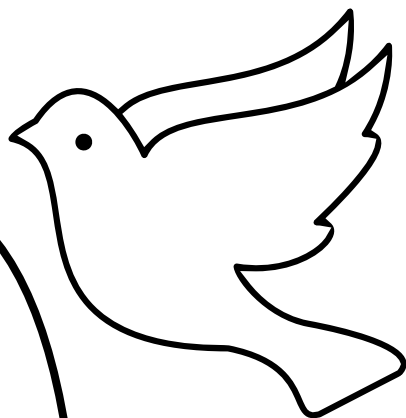
PARTY BAG

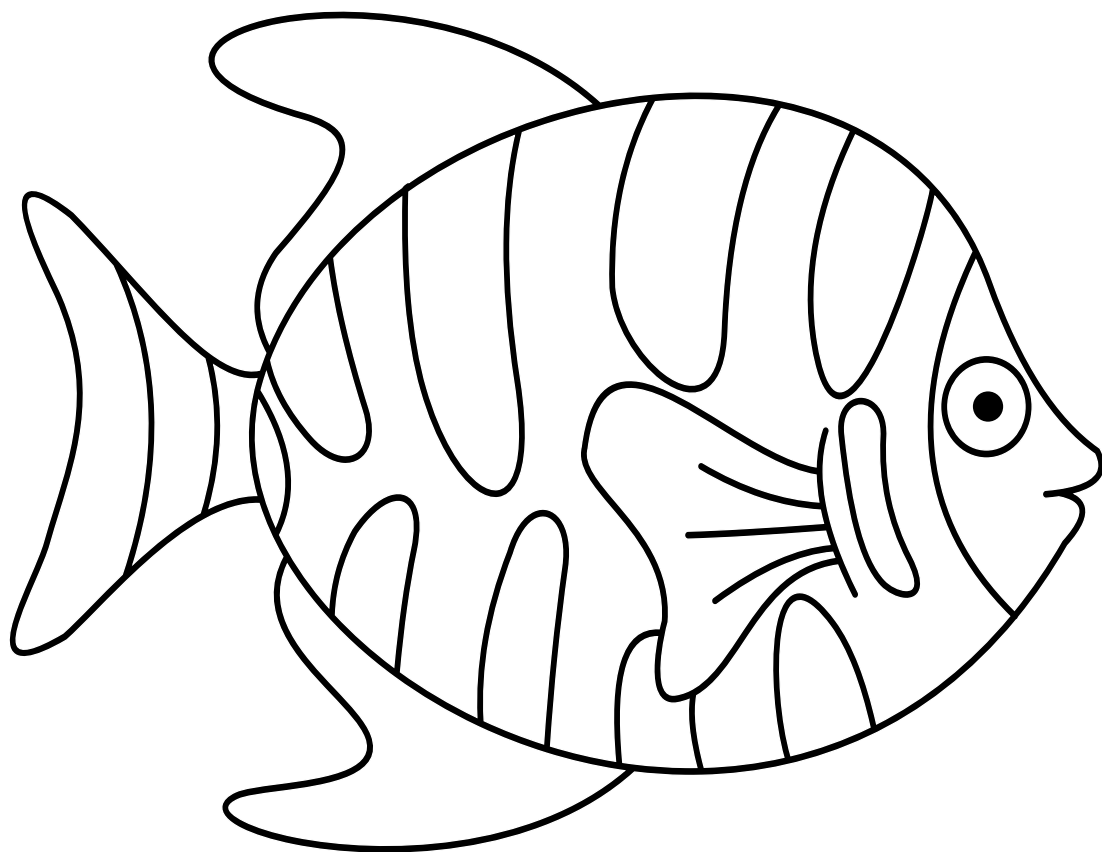
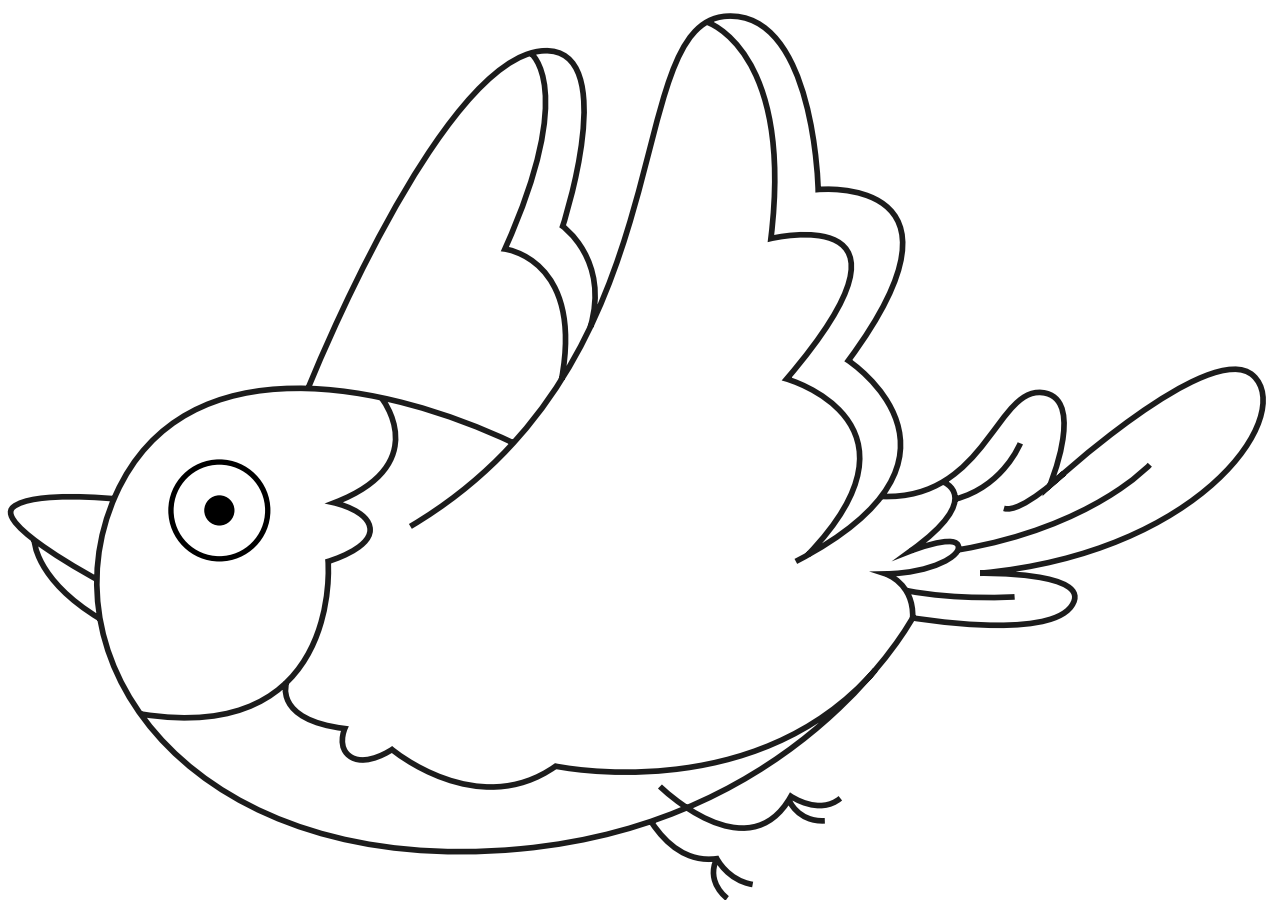
You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be fish and birds' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home. Perhaps you could also give them a small bag of bird food.

CRAFT: Draw a big 'number five' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.



5





ACTIVITY SHEET:

CREATION DAY FIVE - FISH AND BIRDS

JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



In Psalm 91:4 in the Bible, there is a wonderful picture of God's protection over us. It says,

*He will cover you with his feathers,
And under his wings you will find refuge.*

As the parent of a new baby or toddler, the fact that they are completely dependent on us at first can seem overwhelming. But just as we look after them, God is looking after us and provides us with a safe refuge. Our toddler group can be a wonderful place of safety to meet with others and to share concerns. As every day passes, our children grow more and more independent. Our job is to help them stretch their wings and fly.

THE BIBLE STORY

Play 'eye-spy' to see how many of the things God made in the creation story so far you can spot during the day. For example, *Oh, look, I spy a ... (bird, tree, fish, star, etc)*. These might be real or pictures in books, on pyjamas and curtains, or in shop windows.

IN THE GARDEN OR PARK

Look out for and collect some real feathers.

In the spring, watch for birds flying back and forwards with dry grass, moss and leaves to make nests. Explain what they are doing and how the mother bird will lay some eggs in the nest and then cover them with her wings to keep them warm until they hatch.

Encourage your toddler to fly around like a bird, and use words such as ... 'Flap your arms like wings', 'Soar like a bird', and 'Glide through the air' etc.

FEED THE BIRDS

Your toddler might like to help make the birds a pudding:

- ➔ Stir some kitchen scraps, uncooked porridge oats and bird food together. Add some melted fat to help the mixture stick together.
- ➔ Make a hole in the bottom of a yoghurt pot and thread string through. Spoon the mixture into the pot, let it set and then hang it upside down from a tree or railing.
- ➔ You could also make sure that the birds have some clean water to drink in an old tin tray or pie dish.

IN THE PADDLING POOL OR BATH

Ask your toddler to pretend to be a little fish swimming and splashing in the water. Have fun blowing some soap bubbles. Try to fish the soap out of the bath water. Talk about it being slippery like a fish.

FISHY ON A DISHY!

Cut a fish shape from a slice of bread or half a long soft bread roll. Spread a tuna filling on the bread and then layer slices of cucumber on top to resemble scales. Use a slice of olive for the eye, red pepper for the mouth and triangles of carrot for the fins. Add some cress for seaweed.

PRAYER

Dear God

Sometimes I like to pretend that I'm a little bird going to sleep in my nest, high up in a tree. Thank you for keeping me safe, like a mother bird covering me with her soft feathers!

Amen

CREATION DAY SIX:

ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day six** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores the idea that we are a special part of creation and that God wants us to help him look after his wonderful world.



READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and wonder about us being made in God's image. Print out the craft sheets for the children (pages 61 – 64) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 65 – 66).
- You might like to put out a toy farm for the children to play with when they arrive.
- For the Bible story you will need a candle or torch, a green rug or piece of material, a selection of toy animals; e.g. elephant, giraffe, monkey, cat, rabbit, and a mirror packed in your story bag or basket.
- For the 'Teddy' story you will need a baby basket and any items you want to use from the Bible story (above) for the nursery makeover.
- You might like to provide animal-shaped biscuits and gingerbread people to give out at snack time.

TEDDY

Make up a story about Teddy being very excited because he is soon going to have a new baby brother or sister (*indicate towards the empty baby basket*).

Teddy wants to help his mum and dad make the baby's room beautiful.

So, he helps them to:

Find a night-light (*let there be light!*),

Unroll a green rug (*dry land*),

Get a baby bath (*sea*),

And hang a starry mobile.



Then Teddy kindly shares some of his animal toys. The nursery is all ready for the baby. Teddy waits ... and waits ... until at last the new baby is born (*place a small teddy in basket*).

Teddy says, '*Hello! Welcome to the world, little Ted. We're going to be good friends!*'

GO

Your aim is to show that God made animals and he made people.

STORYTELLING TIP



As a 'way in' to the story, encourage everyone to make some animal movements and sounds. You could:

Hop like rabbits, kangaroos or frogs (*croak*),

Curl up like a pet dog or cat (*woof/meow*),

Gallop like a horse (*neigh*),

Shake your mane like a lion (*roar*),

Swing your arms like a monkey (*oooh, oooh*),

Swoosh your trunk like an elephant (*trumpet and pretend to squirt water!*).

Talk about our features as people. You could sing '*Head, shoulders, knees and toes*'.

Share how we can talk (*point to your mouth*) and listen to God when we pray (*point to your ears*), and that he wants us to use our hands and feet to help him look after the world.

THE STORY:

LET THERE BE ANIMALS AND PEOPLE!



Leader:

After God said, 'Let there be light!' (*Light candle or switch on torch*),
He made a lot of things, didn't he?

He made the Earth (*point down*) and the sky (*point up*),
 The seas (*make waves with hands*) and the trees (*hold your arms out like branches*),
 The sun, the moon and the stars (*open and shut raised hands*),
 The fish (*wiggle hands*) and the birds (*flap arms*),
 (*Slow*) And he made them all with words!
 He said, 'Let there be ...'
 And there were! As easy as A, B, C!

(*Pause*) I wonder what God made on the sixth day?

Well, God looked in the jungles (*lay out the green rug or material*),
 The fields and dry ground,
 (*Sad*) But no creatures lived there,
 There wasn't a sound!

No monkeys chattered (*oooh, oooh*),
 No lions roared (*roar*),
 No cuddly pets walked on soft padded paws.

So God said, 'LET THERE BE CREATURES,
 WITH ALL SORTS OF FUNNY FEATURES!'

AND THERE WERE!

There were elephants with long trunks (*list different animals as you bring out your selection of toy animals*),

'That's good!' said God,
 'Now, one thing left to do,
 The most special thing,
 And that's really true.'

God was excited,
 And said, 'Let there be ...'

What ... Can you guess?

It was ... YOU and ME! Look! (*Bring out the mirror*),
 YES, God made people,

To be his best friends,
And to help him look after this world. AMEN!

All:

(Shout and raise arms) AMEN!

FUN AND GAMES

- ➔ Sing your favourite animal songs, such as *'Old MacDonald had a farm'*, *'Incy Wincy Spider'* or *'Five Little Frogs'*.
- ➔ Make lion and cat faces (see craft sheets on pages 62 – 63). The children could make symmetrical butterflies by blobbing paint on the outline of the wings on one half of a pre-folded piece of paper, then folding it back again and spreading the paint to make a pair of colourful wings.
- ➔ The children could choose whether to make a girl or a boy (see craft sheet on page 64).
- ➔ Ask everyone to help tidy up as you sing your favourite *'Tidy Up Song'*.
- ➔ Decorate the big 'number six' shape (see craft sheet on page 61).

CREATION COLLAGE

Add some of the animals you have made and a girl and boy holding hands.



SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.

On the first day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the third day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Seas and trees (*hold out arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fourth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms out like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fifth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to self and others*),
Fish and birds (*swim and flap arms*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).
On the sixth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to self and others*),

Animals and people (*clap hands*),
Fish ... and ... birds (*swim and flap arms*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*),

Phew! Well done everyone!
(To be continued ...)

PRAYER

You might like to ask a parent or carer to read today's prayer.

Dear God

Thank you for creatures with all their funny features. For elephants with long trunks, for monkeys with swing-a-long arms, and for giraffes with their long, long necks. Thank you, too, for farm animals and for our friendly pets.

You made us, too, with our eyes and ears, our fingers and our toes. Please help us to use them to look after our wonderful world.

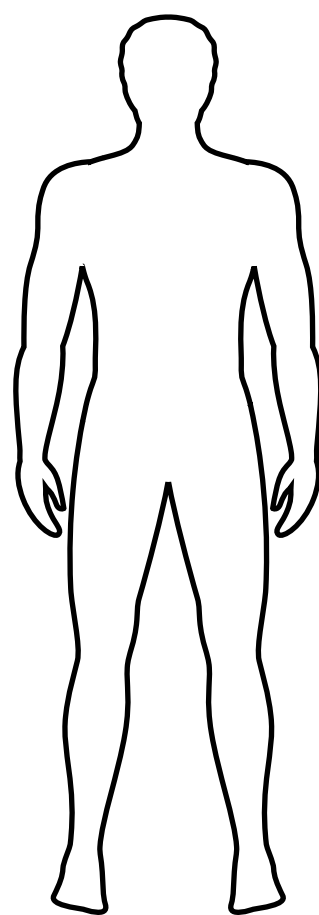
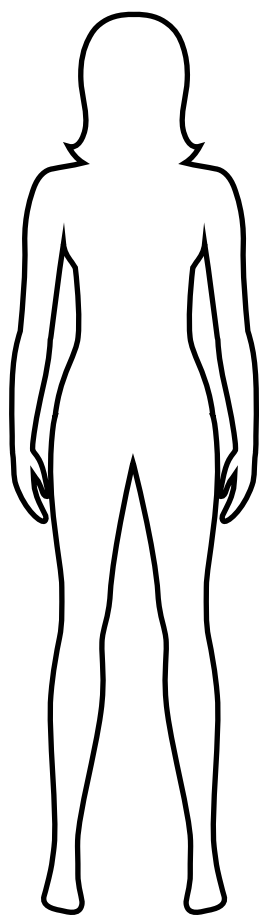
Amen

PARTY BAG

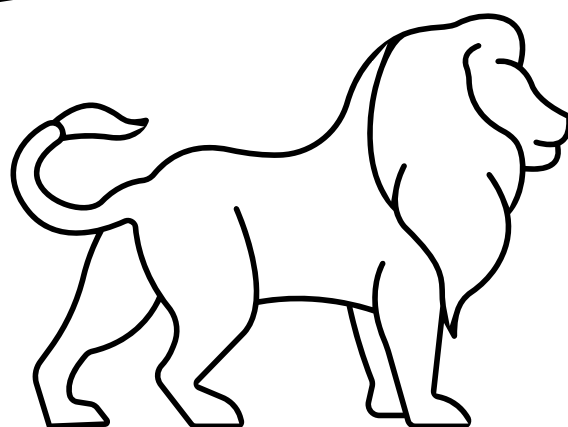
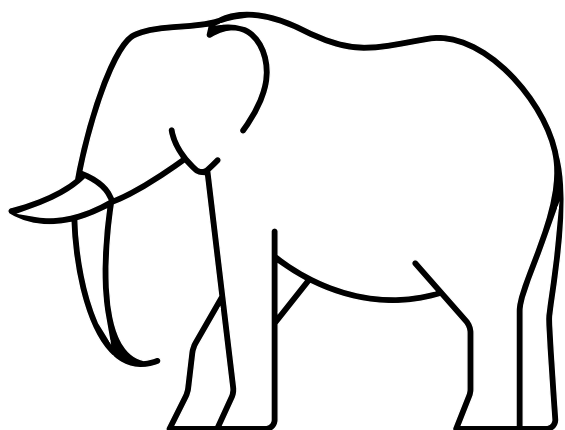
You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be animals and people' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home. Perhaps you could also give out smiley face stickers to place on a mirror at home to remind us that God is pleased with us, his special part of creation.

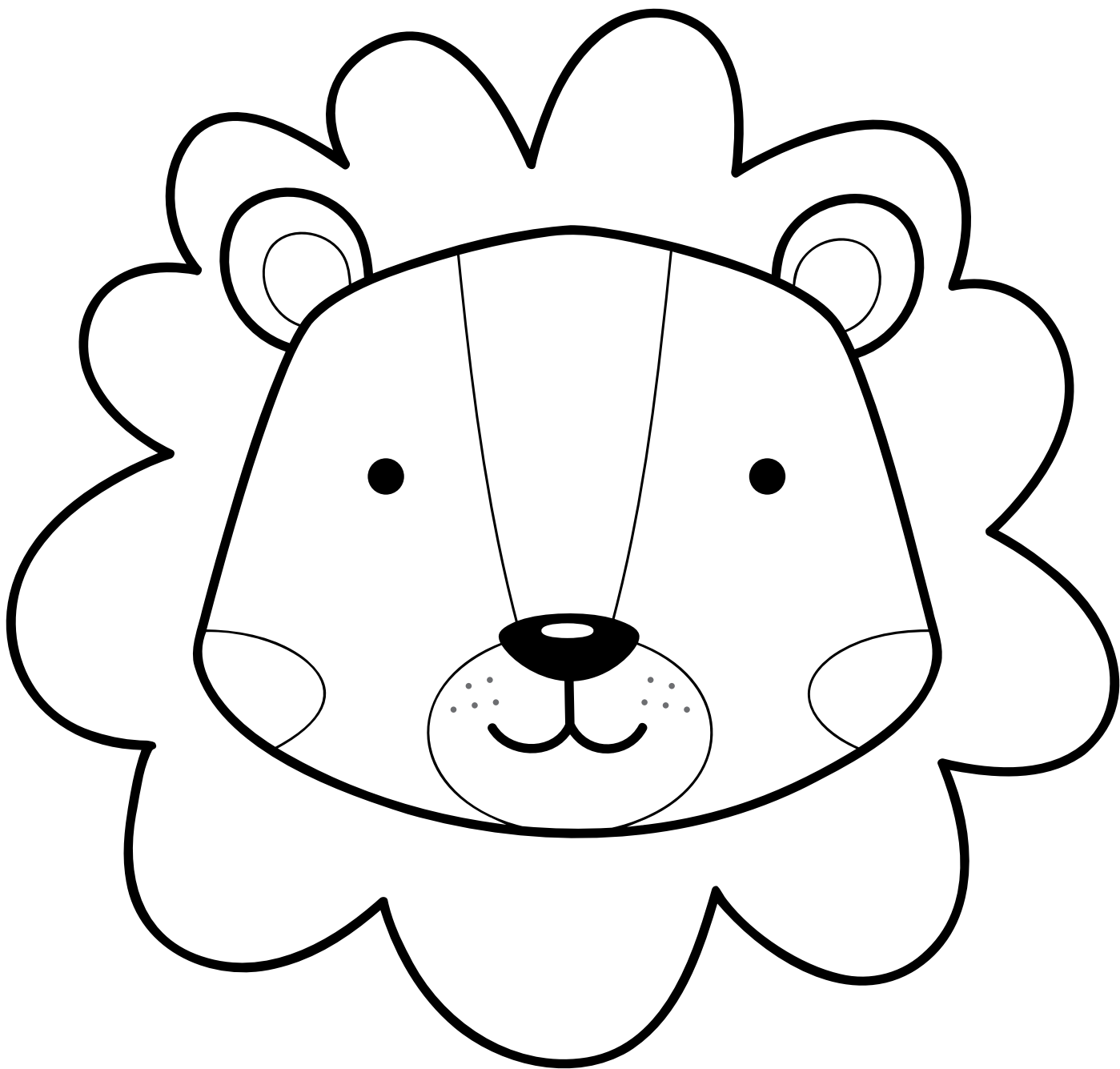
CRAFT:

Draw a big 'number six' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.

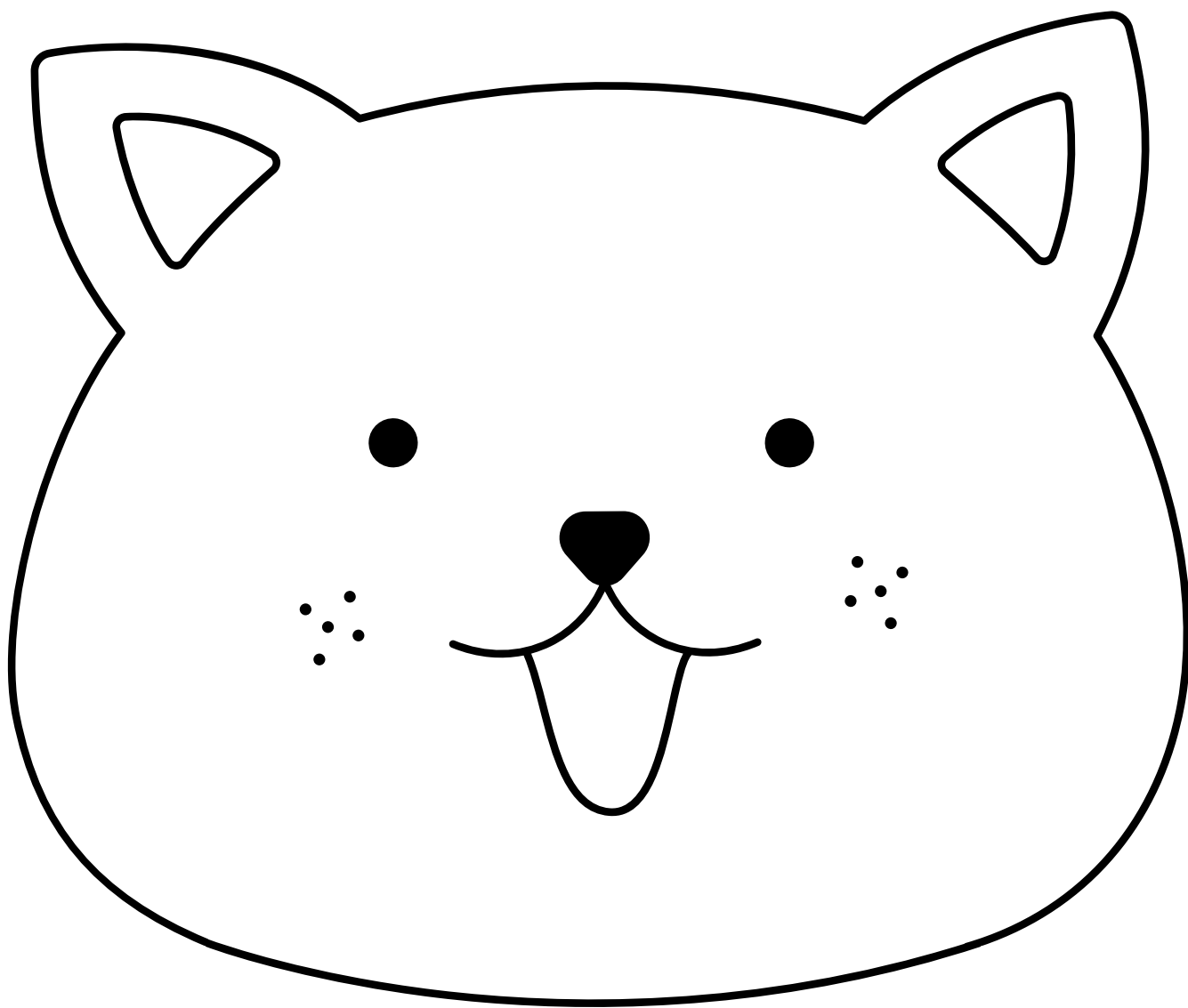


6





Decorate the lion's face and stick on a pasta mane.



Decorate the cat's face and stick on a pom-pom nose and drinking straw whiskers (you might want to cut the straws into shorter lengths in advance).



Decorate the children. You could stick material scraps on their clothes and wool hair.

ACTIVITY SHEET:

CREATION DAY SIX - ANIMALS AND PEOPLE

JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



On the sixth day of creation, God made animals and people. The Bible says that people were made 'in his likeness' and we have the ability to be able to respond to God and to choose whether or not to build a relationship with him. God delights in us, just as we delight in our children. Out of all the living things that God made, he gives people the responsibility to be good stewards of his world. Let's share with our children the joy of doing so.

THE BIBLE STORY

Perhaps you and your toddler could gradually create 'a wonderful world' in their bedroom, a new baby's room, or for a doll, using items from the 'Creation' story. Maybe you could place stick-on stars on the ceiling; hang up a sun, moon and stars mobile; arrange soft toy animals or plants; or display photographs of family members in frames. Every time you add something you could clap and say, 'God said, 'That's very good!'

LOOKING AFTER GOD'S WORLD

Joyfully share anything you are doing to help look after God's world. This might include:

- Turning the tap off while brushing teeth (*let's save God's precious water*).
- Turning off the light when leaving a room.
- Making a point of taking rubbish home and helping to tidy up after toddler group! (*This is the way we tidy up, etc.*)
- Sorting paper for the recycling.
- Watering plants and topping up a bird bath.
- Feeding the birds in winter.

- ➔ Making a simple bug hotel. Your toddler could help collect dry leaves, pine cones and pebbles to put in old flower pots stored on their side in a wooden box. Create nooks and crannies for insects to rest.

FAMILY PHOTOS

Have a look through some family photos. Talk about your different features. Chat about us being God's children and how he takes great delight in us. Talk about how excited you were when they were born or came to live with your family. Connect these conversations to how we are all part of God's family.

SMILEY FACE STICKER

Stick a smiley face on a mirror (at a suitable height) to remind your family that God loves us, that he is always smiling on us and seeing the best in us. As our love for him grows, we will become more interested in what is important to him and want to shine his light in the world.

FOOD ART

Use healthy finger food to create a picture of an animal on a plate. You could make a hungry caterpillar with six slices of cucumber (*body*), a round rice cake or bread (*face*), celery slices (*antennae*), and red pepper cut up to make legs and facial features. You could even add a salad leaf for the caterpillar to eat!

PRAYER

Sing in a whisper at bedtime.

Dear God

Thank you for my ... (Sing the '*Head, shoulders, knees and toes*' song).

Please help me to use them to look after all the animals and people in this wonderful world.

Amen

CREATION DAY SEVEN:

LET THERE BE A SPECIAL DAY

Here are some ideas for your toddler group based on **day seven** of the 'Creation' story. This session explores the themes of work, rest and play.



READY

- Read the 'Creation' story in Genesis 1:1-2:3. Print out the craft sheet for the children (page 76) and the activity sheets for the parents (pages 77 – 78).
 - For the Bible story, pack your story basket or bag with some green and some blue material, your candle or torch and some items or toys to illustrate the various things God made. You might like to have a stool handy to put your feet up on at the end of the story.
 - For the 'Teddy' story, bring a colourful diary or calendar showing the days of the week and some items to illustrate Teddy's Sunday activities.
 - Perhaps your team could make a special teddy bears' picnic to serve at refreshment time, e.g. tiny sandwiches, jam tarts, teddy-shaped biscuits.
 - Lay out some picnic rugs, cushions, large bean bags and sleeping bags for the children to play around and then lie down for a rest.
-

TEDDY

Make up a simple story about Teddy.

Teddy wants to know what day it is today. Ask the children if they know what day it is today. You could show the calendar and name the days of the week.

Teddy says, *'I like Sunday best of all.'* (Ask Teddy why he likes Sunday best of all.)

Teddy replies, *'It is a special day because on a Sunday we try to spend some special time together and sometimes go to church.'* (Ask Teddy what they do to have fun together.)

'We play a game, go for a walk with a picnic, look at a book and have a rest. But most important of all, we put our paws together and thank God for all the good things he has given us in the past week and ask him to be with us in the week that is coming.'

Say, *'That is a special day, Teddy!'*



GO

Your aim is to show that by the seventh day, God had finished creating the world and so he rested. He blessed the day and made it holy.

STORYTELLING TIP



Decide whether you are going to use visual aids or mimes, or a mixture of both as you tell the Bible story.

Just before you tell the story, ask everyone to listen out for when you say “‘That’s good,’ said God.’ They need to say, ‘That’s very good!’ Practise this a few times and encourage everyone to speak boldly.

THE STORY: LET THERE BE A SPECIAL DAY!



Bring some rugs or blankets into the story circle.

Leader:

Has anyone been working hard this week?

Well, God worked very hard making our world, didn't he?

On the first day, he said,

‘Let there be light!’

And light appeared. (*Light candle or switch on torch*).

‘That’s good,’ said God.

All:

That's very good!

Leader:

God made the Earth (*lay out green material*),

But there was nothing growing on it.

'Let all kinds of plants grow on the Earth,' said God.

And they did. (*Bring out plants or flowers, or mime some growing*).

'That's good,' said God.

All:

That's very good!

Leader:

God made the heavens (*sweeping gesture upwards*),

But there was nothing shining in it.

'Let there be lights in the sky!' said God.

And there were. (*Bring out sun, moon, stars or wiggle fingers to mime twinkling stars*).

'That's good,' said God.

All:

That's very good!

Leader:

God made the sea (*lay out blue material*),

But there was nothing swimming in it.

'Let the sea be filled with all sorts of sea creatures!' said God.

And it was. (*Bring out sea creatures or mime fish swimming*).

There were fish and octopi and crabs and whales,

All swimming through the water.

'That's good,' said God.

All:

That's very good!

Leader:

God made the sky (*point up*),

But there was nothing flying through it.

'Let there be birds!' said God.

And there were. (*Bring out birds or mime flying*).

The sky was filled with birds.
 'That's good,' said God.

All:

That's very good!

Leader:

God made the jungle, the forests and the fields,
 But nothing roared or trumpeted in it.
 'Let there be animals!' said God.
 And there were! (*Bring out animals or make animal sounds*).

So, God made the world,
 But there was no-one to look after it,
 And to be his special friends.
 'Let there be boys and girls, mums and dads,
 Grannies and grandpas,' said God.
 And there were! (*Hold out your arms to everyone*).
 'Oh, now that's good,' said God.

All:

That's VERY good!

Leader:

(*Slowly*) THEN, on the seventh day, God was so pleased with the world he'd made, that
 he stopped for a rest.
 He blessed the day and made it special. (*Put your feet up*).
 'Ah, that's good,' said God.

All:

That's very good!

FUN AND GAMES

- Sing *'Thank you, God, for this fine day', 'This is the day that the Lord has made'* or *'Teddy bears' picnic'*.
- Play some lullaby music such as *'Hush little baby, don't you cry'*, as everyone sits quietly and relaxes.
- Set up some quiet stations on rugs or blankets around the room for adults and children to visit together. Place a quiet activity on each, such as a simple wooden jigsaw, a big furry soft toy to stroke, a lavender bag or pillow to smell, smooth pebbles in a shallow dish of water to feel, a big beanbag to sink into. Use your imagination!
- Decorate the big 'number seven' shape (see craft sheet on page 76).

CREATION COLLAGE

Admire the completed collage and praise everyone for their hard work. Identify together all the things that God made on the six days of creation.

Say, 'Didn't God work hard! Let's give him a clap ... No wonder he had a rest on the seventh day.'

You could point out to the adults that God has given us the gift of a special or holy day to rest, for recreation (literally re-creation!), to reconnect with him and to get things back into perspective.



SONG:

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Sing slowly to the tune '*The Twelve Days of Christmas*'.

On the first day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
The light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the second day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the third day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Seas and trees (*hold out arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fourth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to yourself and others*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms out like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the fifth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to self and others*),
Fish and birds (*swim and flap arms*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*).

On the sixth day of creation,
God made for me and you (*point to self and others*),
Animals and people (*clap hands*),
Fish ... and ... birds (*swim and flap arms*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through (*hands up, wiggle fingers*),

On the seventh day of creation,
God had a lovely rest (*rest head on hands*),
(*spoken*) After making ...

Animals and people (*clap hands*),
Fish ... and ... birds (*swim and flap arms*),
Sun, moon and stars (*open and shut fingers on both hands*),
Seas and trees (*hold arms like branches*),
Earth and sky (*point down and up*),
And the light that comes shining through! (*Hands up, wiggle fingers*).

Phew! Well done everyone!

PRAYER

You might like to relight the candle and play some peaceful music as you read today's prayer.

Dear God

On the seventh day of creation, you had a rest after all your hard work making this wonderful world.

Thank you for giving us a special day to rest and play. Help us to make this day special by spending time with you and with our families.

Amen

PARTY BAG

You might like to give the adults the 'Let there be a special day' activity sheet so that they can continue to enjoy these themes at home. Perhaps you could include an invitation to a special family service at your church.

CRAFT: Draw a big 'number seven' shape for the children to colour and decorate, or print out the outline on the following page.



ACTIVITY SHEET:

CREATION DAY SEVEN -

A SPECIAL DAY

JUST FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



The Bible says that by the seventh day of creation, God had finished the work he had been doing. So he rested. He blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Life with young children can be extremely busy with hardly a moment to catch our breath. So, it's very important to make sure that we have a good balance of work, rest and play. It is especially important to make time to spend with God, perhaps at church or to pray and read about him in the Bible. Jesus's ministry on earth was only three years long. Yet he regularly found time to leave the demanding crowds and find a quiet place to be with his Father. We can model this healthy balance to our children, so that they will learn to develop the same practice as they grow up.

CREATION STORY BAG

You might like to make a creation story bag for your toddler. Maybe you could make a colourful drawstring bag (like a shoe bag) and fill it with items such as soft toys or pictures, which represent all the things God made. Say, 'God made ...' before your toddler pulls out each item and then names it. The order doesn't matter. At the end, explain that when God had finished his work, he had a rest. Point out that rest helps our bodies to grow and to get better from being unwell. It helps us get ready for the next day. If your toddler says they are not tired at bedtime, explain that they can just rest as they look at a mobile or listen to the birds or the hum of chatter from another room.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

Explain that each day has a name. Write down the day of the week you go to toddler group in bubble letters for your toddler to decorate. You could gradually introduce other days and link them to a particular place or activity that your toddler attends. You could even find relevant drawings or stickers to decorate the different days of the week.

A SPECIAL DAY

Try and find some time each week to spend time talking and listening to God and being present with your family. It may be putting your work or phone aside to simply enjoy being 'in the moment'. It could be playing a game, enjoying nature, sharing a book or simply relaxing together. This really can help strengthen relationships.

A GOOD BALANCE

If you have a 'balance scales' you could involve your toddler in measuring out ingredients to make cakes or biscuits (perhaps for a picnic). Talk about how it is good to balance doing lots of things with having time to rest. If we don't rest enough we will get tired.

TIME FOR A REST CRAFT

On a large piece of paper draw an outline of a bed with a duvet and pillow on it. Cut a small slot at the top of the duvet and place a photo or drawing of the child in between the slot so it looks like you are 'putting the child to bed under the duvet cover'.

Let your toddler decorate the duvet and pillowcase. They could use crayons or stickers of teddy bears, cars, hearts etc. Then 'tuck in' a photo or drawing of themselves. You could also write, 'Thank you, God, for rest.' on the drawing.

BEDTIME PRAYER

Dear God

It's been a busy day, with lots of work and lots of play.

Thank you that I can close my eyes and rest now.

Help me to let my feet go all floppy ... and now my legs ... and now my arms ...

Please bless us all this night as we go to sleep.

Amen

About Care for the Family

Since 1988 Care for the Family has been a UK charity with increasing international reach. We focus primarily on supporting parents, couples and those facing bereavement, in order to strengthen family life and help those who face family difficulties.

Our aim is to be accessible to everyone, whatever their circumstances, and to create evidence-based, preventative and easy-to-apply resources to help build firm foundations for family life.

For more information

 cff.org.uk

 029 2081 0800

 mail@cff.org.uk



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Written by Vicki Howie.

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