

WEEK 1: I Learn About Dogs

Guidance Tips

- Good communication with parents is fostered when you post outside the door to your room the session title and some of the activities you have planned for the children. For example, a small poster on your door might read: “This week we are learning about dogs. A puppy will visit our room. We will sing a song about dogs and hear a Bible verse, **‘God made the animals.’**”
- Another important posted notice might read: “Please tell us if your child is allergic to dogs.”
- Anytime you bring animals or plants into the room or serve food, inform parents and ask about allergies. Also check your enrollment forms which should include a question about allergies.
- Be prepared to make special arrangements for a child if an allergy is a problem or if the parent does not want the child to participate in an activity.
- Stuffed animals are not recommended for use in weekday programs because of allergies and sanitation guidelines. If you use a stuffed toy dog for this session, however, remove it from the room immediately following the session; do not allow stuffed animal toys to remain in your room.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Books

Locate books about animals, especially dogs and puppies. If you do not have animal books, make a homemade book using magazine pictures of dogs. Place the books on the floor propped against a wall. Place a big furry pillow nearby to sit and lean on; or locate a piece of fake fur to use as a blanket for sitting on the floor. As you look at pictures of dogs, say: “A Bible verse is **‘God made the animals.’** Thank You, God, for dogs.”

Music

Singing about dogs is a good way for younger preschoolers to become comfortable with dogs. Be sensitive to situations when an infant or toddler may have been frightened by a dog. Sing the song “Thank You, God.” Substitute the words *my dog* for *good food*. If you can record a dog barking prior to the session, play the tape. Say, “Thank You, God, for Collin’s dog.”

Nature

Arrange to bring a puppy into the room for a few moments during the session. Ask the puppy’s owner to hold it while older infants and toddlers look at it. If good supervision is possible, a few toddlers at a time may be able to touch or gently pet the animal. (Younger preschoolers do not know how to be gentle.) Remove the dog immediately if a problem develops.

Assist children in washing their hands after they have touched the dog. Say: “You were a helper with the puppy. A verse in our Bible is **‘We are helpers.’**”

Concepts for Emphasis

- God made animals I can enjoy.
- A dog is an animal that may live in people’s homes.
- People feed dogs, play with them, and take care of them.
- Dogs usually are friendly but sometimes may bite people if we are not gentle and careful.

Bible Verses and Phrases

- God made the animals (Genesis 1:25).
- We are helpers (2 Corinthians 1:24).

Allergy Alert!

Post an allergy alert on the door notifying parents of the puppy to be used in the session.

Teaching Pictures

Locate the picture “A Family Walking” (picture 12 from *WEE Learn Teaching Pictures for Two-Year-Olds*). As you sit on the floor with a child and look at the picture, talk about the children and the puppies.

Toys and Games

Make a coffee-can-and-lid puzzle by cutting a slot in the plastic lid so that flat canning lids slide through. Find pictures of a dog, cat, bird, and fish to fasten to the flat canning lids. As a child drops the lids through the slot in the top of the can, opens the can, removes the lids, or examines the pictures, name the animals and say, “**God made the animals.**”

Additional ideas for Toddlers

- Blocks—Place a vinyl toy dog near the cardboard blocks.
- Homeliving—Make a bed for a clean, stuffed toy dog by placing a pillow in a shallow box. Put the dog in the bed with a plastic feeding dish nearby. Do not leave the stuffed toy dog in the room after this activity.
- Puzzles—Make puzzles by covering large pictures of dogs with clear contact plastic and cutting the pictures in half. Toddlers can match the halves.

Evaluation

- Did children have a firsthand experience seeing or touching a puppy?
- Was your planning adequate in providing teaching materials about dogs?

WEEK 2: I Learn About Cats

Guidance Tips

- Many people are allergic to cats. Check with parents about allergies if you plan for children to be around a kitten during this session.
- Rather than bringing a kitten into your room, consider taking one child at a time to a quiet area outside your room to see a kitten. Although you may supervise carefully enough for older toddlers to pet a kitten, infants and younger toddlers should only observe the kitten. Assist older toddlers in washing their hands if they pet the kitten.
- Stuffed toy animals are not recommended for use in weekday programs because of allergies and sanitation guidelines. If you use a stuffed toy kitten for this session, however, remove it from the room immediately following the session; do not allow stuffed animal toys to remain in your room.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Books

Locate books about cats. Display the books on the floor so that toddlers can discover them. Make a peek-at-a-pet book. Needed are eight five-by-seven-inch pieces of poster board; a picture each of a dog, cat, bird, and fish; glue; clear contact plastic; and sharp scissors. Glue each picture to a piece of poster board. Cut a three-sided flap in each of the other poster boards so that when the piece of poster board is placed over the picture, the flap can be lifted to reveal the pet.

Concepts for Emphasis

- God made animals for me to enjoy.
- A cat is an animal that may live in people’s homes.
- People feed cats, play with them, and take care of them.
- Cats usually like to play with people but may scratch if people are not careful.

Bible Verses and Phrases

- Be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- God made the animals (Genesis 1:25).

Place the flapped board over the picture board and cover all surfaces with clear contact plastic. Cut through the contact plastic around three sides of each flap so the flap will lift.

Punch two holes in each page and tie the pages together with yarn or ribbon to make a book. When an infant or toddler lifts a flap to look at a picture, say the name of the animal and the Bible verse **“God made the animals.”**

Music

Sing the the song “Thank You, God.” Substitute the words my cat for good food. Talk with a child about his cat and its name. Sing the song again and substitute the cat’s name for the words *good food*. Musical mobiles and other musical toys help entertain and interest infants. Toddlers need musical toys that they can manipulate by winding, shaking, or rolling.

Nature

If you cannot arrange for children to see a kitten during this session, make a cassette tape recording of a cat or kitten meowing. Play the cassette tape for the children to listen to. Say: “Did you hear the kitty? Thank You, God, for kittens. A verse in the Bible is **‘God made the animals.’**”

Teaching Pictures

Locate the pictures “God Made Animals” and “Thank You, God, for Kitty” (pictures 31 and 32 from *WEE Learn Teaching Pictures for Two-Year-Olds*). When the children are looking at pictures cooperatively or playing alongside one another, say: “Thank you for being kind. A Bible verse is **‘Be kind to one another.’**” Make a picture box to display pictures of animals. Find large pictures of a dog, cat, bird, and fish. Attach pictures to four sides of a medium-sized grocery box. Older infants will crawl to the box and look at the pictures. Toddlers will climb in and out of the box or push it around.

Toys and Games

Make a furry-feely can using a coffee can and several textures of fabrics. Glue pieces of velvet, fake fur, velour, and corduroy to the sides of the can. As a child touches the soft fabric, say: “The can is soft like a kitty’s fur. Thank You, God, for Jennifer’s hands to feel fur.”

Additional Ideas for Toddlers

- Blocks—Place a soft vinyl toy kitty near the cardboard blocks if such a toy is available. Stack a few blocks to attract the attention of toddlers.
- Homeliving—Place an empty cat food bag in the homeliving area near a plastic feeding bowl. Seal the bag so the children cannot open. To interest toddlers, put a few large plastic rings or Snap-Lock Beads inside a brown grocery bag. Toddlers will enjoy emptying and filling the bag.
- Puzzles—Place wooden puzzles of animals (four pieces or fewer) on the floor. Display the teaching picture “God Made Animals” nearby.

Evaluation

- Did preschoolers have a variety of experiences involving cats: songs, pictures, toys, games, conversation, and so forth?
- Did infants and toddlers hear teachers thank God for animals?

WEEK 3: I Learn About Birds

Guidance Tips

- The caution about children’s allergies also applies to bringing a caged bird into your room. If allergies do not seem to be a problem for children, borrow a canary or parakeet to place in your room for a short period. Hang the birdcage from the ceiling out of reach of preschoolers.
- If you are nervous around birds or any other animals, do not bring that particular animal into the room. Children may sense our feelings about the animal, and this can affect their own attitudes toward certain kinds of animals.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Books

Locate books about birds. Open the *Read to Me Bible for Kids* to the picture “God Made the Animals.” Hold the Bible and sit on the level of the children. As a child approaches you or needs your attention, hold her and look at the picture together. Say: “Here in our Bible is a picture of animals. **God made the animals.**”

Music

Is a cassette tape or CD of birds singing available to play during this session? If your program does not have such a recording, do you know someone with a canary who would tape-record the bird singing? Preschoolers will enjoy any whistling sounds you can make with your mouth as you talk about birds singing. Sing often during the session as you rock an infant, change a diaper, play with a toddler, or greet a child at the door. Say, “People can sing, and birds can sing, too.”

Nature

If you have a window in your room, spread birdseed on the windowsill or hang a bird feeder near the window. As birds are attracted to the seed, take infants and toddlers to the window to observe.

An activity that older toddlers will enjoy is crumbling bread to take outside to feed to the birds. If you do this activity, assist toddlers in washing their hands before handling the bread since they probably will eat some of the bread as they handle it. When this occurs, say: “Birds eat bread, and people eat bread, too. Thank You, God, for bread.”

Concepts for Emphasis

- God made animals for me to enjoy.
- A bird is an animal that lives outside. Birds also may live in people’s homes.
- People feed birds and help take care of them.

Bible Verses and Phrases

- God made the birds (Genesis 1:21).
- The birds have nests (Matthew 8:20).

Teaching Pictures

Locate the picture “Snow” (picture 28 from *WEE Learn Teaching Pictures for Two-Year-Olds*). If you have a bird feeder outside, talk with the children about the picture and watch for birds to come to your feeder to eat. Continue to use the picture box prepared for the previous week’s session. As an older infant crawls to the box, say the name of the animal pictured on each side of the box. Or ask a toddler, “Can you find the picture of the bird?”

Toys and Games

Play a guessing game with a child using the peek-at-a-pet book prepared for the previous session. Ask a child to lift the poster board flaps to find the bird. Can a child imitate your sounds of a bird, a dog, a cat. Prior to the session find several bird feathers. (A few feathers can be removed from a feather duster that may be purchased inexpensively at a discount or hardware store.) Spray the feathers with a disinfecting solution before placing them in your preschool room. Gently rub a feather across an infant’s leg or arm. Say: “The bird feather tickles Amanda. Feathers keep birds warm and help them fly. Thank You, God, for making birds.”

Additional Idea for Toddlers

- Blocks—Place several sturdy plastic toy airplanes alongside the cardboard blocks. Toddlers may use the blocks to make runways for airplanes.

Evaluation

- Name the ways you used pictures, songs, the Bible, and conversation during this session to teach Bible truths to infants and toddlers.
- Did children experience a number of activities related to birds?

WEEK 4: I Learn About Fish

Guidance Tips

- If a child has been absent from one or two sessions, call a parent to find out if members of the family have been ill. Or you may want to drop a note to the family indicating that you have missed seeing the child. Your Christian influence is extended when you show an interest in the entire family.
- Sending birthday cards to children at appropriate times during the year is another way to extend yourself to the family. Check with the director of your program about the possibility of purchasing birthday cards and stamps for mailing a card to each child. Print a short Bible verse in each card when you sign your name.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Books

Display books about animals. If you have books specifically about fish, use them for this session. Display alongside these books the peek-at-a-pet book used during the previous sessions. As you name the animals, ask older infants and toddlers to show you the animals you are naming. Children enjoy hearing animal

Allergy Alert!

Post an allergy alert on the door notifying parents of the feathers to be used in the session.

Concepts for Emphasis

- God made animals for me to enjoy.
- A fish is an animal that lives in water.
- People can feed fish and help take care of them.

Bible Verses and Phrases

- God made the animals (Genesis 1:25).
- God made the water (Psalm 104:10).

sounds imitated. However, for a greater challenge, talk about how the animals move about. For example: dogs walk, cats walk, birds fly, and fish swim. Older toddlers may even want to imitate these movements.

Music

Play a cassette tape or CD of quiet background music as infants and toddlers rest or sleep. Such a recording sets a relaxed tone which is comforting to tired or unhappy children. Some quiet music also has nature sounds in the background. If you can find such a cassette tape or CD with bird sounds, play it for the children to enjoy.

Nature

Provide a goldfish for children to observe. Prior to the session borrow or purchase a fish and fish food. Let a gallon of tap water set overnight or use dechlorination tablets before placing the fish in your container of water. The best container for taking a goldfish into an infant or toddler room is a large, clear plastic detergent bottle with a lid. When keeping a fish in this container of water, remove the lid periodically to allow air into the bottle. Place the sealed container and gold fish in a crib for an infant to observe. Say: “We read in the Bible, ‘**God made the animals.**’ God made the goldfish for Lisa to see.” Toddlers will enjoy holding the bottle with the goldfish swimming inside.

Teaching Pictures

Continue to use the animal picture box from week 2 of this unit, focusing children’s attention on the side picturing the fish.

Toys and Games

A homemade mobile of fish pictures may be used in either an infant room or a toddler room. Glue magazine pictures of fish to poster board. Punch a hole in the top of each picture card and attach the cards to a molded-plastic coat hanger with strings of yarn or ribbon. Suspend the mobile near an infant’s crib. In an infant room or a toddler room, suspend the mobile from the ceiling where it is out of reach of the children.

Additional Ideas for Toddlers

- **Blocks**—Provide sturdy, plastic toy boats. Place them on a blue piece of carpet in the block area.
- **Homeliving**—Assist one or two toddlers at a time with water play in the home-living area. Put only one or two inches of water in a dishpan that has been placed on a plastic tablecloth or floor covering. Protect children’s clothing with plastic smocks or aprons. Place several plastic toy fish or ducks in the pan of water.
- **Puzzles**—Make a fish puzzle from a vinyl place mat. Prior to the session, use a knife to cut two or three shapes of fish from the place mat to make a form board. Toddlers will enjoy fitting the fish into the shapes cut from the mat.

Evaluation

- Did the children have an opportunity to see a fish?
 - Did preschoolers hear that God made the animals?
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RESOURCES

Bible

- *Read to Me Bible for Kids* • 155819844X (NirV)
- *Read to Me Bible for Kids* • 1558198458 (KJV)

Books

- *About Birds* (Still, Peachtree Publishers) 1561450286
- *Baby Animals* (Dogi, Reader's Digest Children's Publishing) 1575842688
- *Baby Farm Animals* (Penguin Putnam) 0721495486
- *Baby Pet Animals* (Penguin Putnam) 0721495478)
- *Cubs & Colts & Calves & Kittens* (Fowler, Children's Press) 0516449133
- *God Made Kittens* (Bennett, Standard) 0784702683
- *God Made Puppies* (Bennett, Standard) 078470256X
- *Puppies Are Like That* (Pflood, Random House) 0394829239
- *Who Says Quack?* (Grosset and Dunlap) 0448401231

Music

- *'Specially Special Songs: Music for Early Childhood*
Songbook • 0767334884
Double Cassette • 0767334825
Double CD • 0767334817

Pictures

- *WEE Learn Teaching Pictures for Two-Year-Olds* • 0767333381