



Early Childhood Summer Outreach Ideas, part 2 of 2—

Life in the Son

by Sharon Ellard

Early Childhood Consultant in the Sunday School Field Ministries Department

Outreach Ideas, cont.

Twice the Fun

When a summer Bible lesson includes a fun craft or lesson-related toy, offer duplicates to your students. Explain that one is to keep and one is to share with a friend in their neighborhood. If the craft or toy is used with an interesting song or game, every child will share the lesson, as well as the craft, with a friend. As the children arrive for class the next week, ask how they used their duplicate. When you hear a good report, share it with the other children.

Fun Food With a Message

Plan lesson-related summer snacks during Sunday School or children's church. For example, ask the children to use their imagination to turn apple slices into rocking boats. Then make up a simple rhyme to connect the snack with a Bible idea. (e.g., *Oo, oo, aa, aa, ee, ee, ee; My boat is rocking on the sea./ Oh, oh, ah, ah, before I'm ill./ Jesus made the sea be still.*) The next time the children eat the same snack at home, they are likely to repeat the pretend play and Bible focus for their friends.

As your church develops a reputation for presenting the gospel at young children's level of understanding, families who want to teach good values to their children will visit to see for themselves what you offer.

Summer Reading

Find ways to give or loan Bible picture books to young families. Reading is an important part of early childhood development. Sometimes family budgets don't allow for the purchase of Bible picture books, and often these are not offered at public libraries. With that in mind, consider working with the local library to contribute Bible picture books.



Consider working with a local maternity ward in a community hospital to give first Bible books to parents of newborns. Offer a summer Bible story hour at your church or in the homes of church members.

Summer Viewing

Consider scheduling some Christian video showings that would appeal to both young children and their parents.

Depending on your budget and community, summer viewing could be offered in a park after dark, in your church during a Mothers' Day Out or a Parents' Night Out, or at the home of church members. If possible, include snacks and drinks with a fellowship time following.

It's possible that none of these ideas fit your church or your community. Take heart. Summer outreach ideas can take many forms: mailing "I prayed for you today" cards to young families, taking meals to parents of newborns, offering to baby-sit so parents can have time for themselves, opening the church playground for neighborhood play times, or posting parenting information on a church website. The Holy Spirit is your witnessing partner. He will help your church tailor outreach for young families in your community.

Jesus told His followers to take His message of love and life around the world. Through the centuries, that message made its way from person to person, town to town, country to country, sea to sea, until it found its way to you and me. Now that we have Christ's light in us, we can follow Paul's instruction to "shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life" (Philippians 2:15,16). Let's use the events of summer to help young families live in the Son.

Questions For Further Study—

1. How does your community perceive your church's concern for children?
2. What community programs might you utilize to enhance your children's ministry outreach?
3. How can you effectively involve the children in your congregation in outreach activities?