CRAFTS

Why Crafts?

Making crafts in Sunday School has many advantages.

It's fun! If you do things in class children enjoy, they will want to keep coming back.

It gives the children a chance to use their imagination and creativity. It helps their self-esteem. They feel good to know they created something. It gives the teacher an opportunity to encourage and praise them.

It gives an opportunity for an informal time. The children do not have to "sit still and listen". It gives the teacher a chance to interact with students more personally. The lesson can be reviewed or other topics of importance can be casually discussed as they are creating their "masterpieces".

The children have something to take home with them. It may be a reminder of the lesson itself or a reminder of Sunday School, an encouragement to return.

It may encourage parents to ask children about their Sunday School lesson. This can reinforce the lesson as the children recount it or be a witness for family members.

Kinds of crafts to use

The ideal craft is one that goes hand in hand with your lesson. The child can go home look at their creation and retell the bible lesson.

Crafts can be seasonal such as Mother's Day cards and Christmas ornaments.

The children will keep most of the crafts they make, or will display them in a prominent place in their home. You can teach the importance of compassion and sharing by creating crafts designed to be given away. Occasionally they can learn valuable lessons by making Christmas presents to give away or cards for a member of the church who is sick.

Sometimes you just pick out a craft because it is fun. It doesn't have anything to do with the lesson and there's no holiday or special cause. You just do it because it's something the kids will like.

When you have a class with different ages, it is a little more difficult to pick out a suitable craft idea. A 12 year old boy does not want to color a page in a coloring book. A young child does not have the skills to create a more detailed craft. One way to handle this is have more than one craft plan available. Pages to color work well for young children, while the older children can make an actual craft. However, if not handled carefully, feelings can be hurt and egos can be bruised in determining who makes which one.

Another way to resolve the challenge is to prepare crafts "in stages". For example, if a craft requires patterns to be traced and cut out, have some pieces already cut for the younger children who do not have the skills to do this. You could have the crafts assembled for the little children and let them color them or glue on sparkles.

Tips

When you do a craft in Sunday School, show the children a completed sample before they begin. Keep it displayed in view, while they are creating theirs.

Along with helping the younger children when they need it, make the item yourself along with the children. This will be an encouragement to them and may serve to replace any of the children's who have a "major oops" in preparing theirs.

Plan crafts that fit your time frame to be completed in one class.

Plan crafts that are not too messy.

Do not use permanent markers or paint.

If you are using (washable) paint or other things that can be spilled on clothes, put a smock on the children. (You can make smocks by

simply putting an adult shirt on the child backwards and roll the sleeves up. Make sure the child's sleeves are protected.)

Have a speedy cleanup plan in case of an accident. Have water, paper towels, etc. nearby just in case.

No matter how old the children are, make certain all items used for crafts are non-toxic.

Before determining to do a craft, consider the children's safety. Are the tools sharp? Will there be hazardous fumes? If there is any question of danger do not do it!

Admittedly every child is not a budding Picaso. However, every child's project should be praised, and his efforts applauded.