

Age Group Ideas

Pretend Play - age 3-5

You will need: toy tea set

Arrange a children's tea set and then encourage the children to create their tea to entertain whoever they would like. Ask who they would like to invite for tea.

Place Mats - all age

You will need: natural coloured sheeting cut into place mat size, fabric pens or paints, pencils, scissors, (note: depending on your choice of paints/pens an iron may be needed to set the colours).

Give each child a place mat shape and allow them to decorate it in any way they choose with the fabric paints or pens. If wished the edges could be fringed before the decorating begins. Talk to the children about the story and of Martha's chores and Mary's listening. How would they feel if they were Martha, if they were Mary? Was anyone right or wrong or had both a part to play?

Setting The Table - all age

You will need: all the items you would use to set a table formally for a meal (tablecloth, napkins, cutlery, glasses, placemats, and so on).

Teach the children how to set a table for a meal. The younger the child the less they need to set.

Talk about starting on the outside with cutlery and working in towards the middle of the setting.

Have the children ever seen a butter knife? A cake server? Pastry Fork? White wine glass or red wine glass? Let them try to set the table first and then teach them the conventional way, if necessary.

Angry Volcano - all age

You will need: a quantity of play dough, small jar without a lid, red food colouring, bicarbonate of soda, vinegar, tablespoon, teaspoon, a tray on which to place it and newspapers.

This can be an extremely messy activity so do have plenty of newspaper to hand when trying it out with the children and don't have them stand too near!

Using the tray as a base, mould the play dough into a volcano shape. Place the jar within the volcano shape up to the level of its rim. Now put some red food colouring into the jar with a few tablespoons of vinegar and stir them together. Drop in a heaped teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda and watch the volcano erupt.

Talk to the children about the fact that sometimes when we are angry we erupt like a volcano and relate this to the story where Martha is angry with Mary.

Afternoon Tea - all age

You will need: ingredients as below, cups, saucers, napkins.

Arrange to make fairy cakes with the children using the recipe below, but if you don't have the time then pre-make them and get the children to ice and design them.

The children then set up tables with cups, saucers, napkins and the cakes. Ask people to stay behind after the service for Afternoon Tea and while they are enjoying the tea get the children to read or perform something for the adults.

Ingredients:

- 110g/4oz butter or margarine, softened at room temperature
- 110g/4oz caster sugar
- 2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 110g/4oz self-raising flour
- 1-2 tbsp milk

For the icing:

- 300g/101/2oz icing sugar
- 2-3 tbsp water
- 2-3 drops food colouring
- hundreds and thousands, or other cake decorations

Recipe

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C / 350 °F / Gas Mark 4 and line 2 x 12-hole fairy cake tins with paper cases.
2. Cream the butter and sugar together in a bowl until pale. Beat in the eggs, a little at a time, and stir in the vanilla extract.
3. Fold in the flour using a large metal spoon. Add a little milk until the mixture is a soft dropping consistency and spoon the mixture into the paper cases until they are half full.
4. Bake in the oven for 8-10 minutes, or until golden-brown on top and a skewer inserted into one of the cakes comes out clean. Set aside to cool for 10 minutes, then remove from the tin and cool on a wire rack.
5. For the icing, sift the icing sugar into a large mixing bowl and stir in enough water to create a smooth mixture. Stir in the food colouring.
6. To ice the fairy cakes, drizzle the icing over the cakes, sprinkle with decorations and set aside until the icing hardens.

Bob-A-Job! - all age

You will need: lots of elastoplasts or adhesive bandages, cups of water.

Based on the old activity of the Scouting Association raise funds by going around the community offering to do odd jobs for a bob (a shilling, five new pence).

Once the children are in a circle give each child a slip of paper with a job on it that must be done. This might be to walk around the circle and shake hands with every third person, say good morning to the first person you make eye contact with, run around the circle three times, persuade the rest of the circle to link arms and so on.

Alternatively you could challenge each child to do something at home.

A Listening Ear - all age

You will need: various first aid equipment or medical equipment (toy or real, but if using real equipment ask parents for permission first).

Tell the children a story; it can be any type of story but one that has a number of facts. For example, 12 red roses, the bus went east instead of west, it was a birthday party, the boy lost his iPad. After you have read the story ask the children some questions about the story to find out if they had been really listening.

For example, taking the facts suggested above, how many roses were there? What colour were they? Which direction did the bus take? What kind of party? What did the boy lose?

Then retell the story of Martha and Mary and ask questions about the story. Which sister was busy? What was the name of the sister who listened? Where was Mary sitting?

Is it a good time to call?

A large blow up phone (this can be mimed).

Two people talk to each other on the phone, one can ask as many questions as possible as part of the conversation. The other person has to try to 'answer the call' whilst doing one of the following:

1. Not being able to say any words, only sounds.
2. Doing a dance routine.
3. Playing a computer game.
4. Saying the alphabet backwards.
5. Watching a short video on which they will be asked a series of questions (e.g what colour of trousers did the person have on, what did the character have in their right hand).
6. Browse web whilst taking the call.

Message: Sometimes we are so busy doing other things that it is difficult to have a normal conversation. Do we make time to listen for God, during the busyness of everyday living. How did it feel not getting answers back during the call?

Hey can you hear me?

Two chairs are brought into the circle facing each other. Children are asked by the worship leader to think of a topic that they know well. They are to pretend that they are the world expert on this topic and they will be asked to talk about this. It can be a silly topic if they wish, like the sounds of different brands of sellotape or the range of accents that chickens have across the united kingdom or something more serious like the different powers used by Marvel superheroes, or I like school because....? The choice is up to each child.

Children are invited to stand opposite each other just out of touching distance on their chairs. They are timed and have to out-speak each other on their topic of choice. They can talk over the other person and volume and animated speech is to be encouraged.

The role of the master of ceremonies is to 'big up' each speaker and encourage 'loud' talking. Most children will last under a minute so keep the sessions punchy.

The winner (i.e. the person with the most to say) should take a well deserved bow.

Message: It is hard to hear anyone else if we are always doing the talking. It is a skill to listen to others.