



What's in a Story?

The great thing about telling stories in playgroups is that you can tell them to small groups of two or three children. This means that you can be a lot more intimate in your style and more specific and direct in your story content. You can also be much more flexible in your response to your audience. It's the ideal time to both read and teach the stories of Jesus.

The challenge, however, is a tendency for these situations to be a lot less structured. Creating structure in a playgroup can include storytelling to small groups of children in a small private space. Create a space with dividers, furniture or a quiet spot outside.

Storytelling might occur quite informally and can be a spontaneous moment of connecting. More than likely, when a book is opened it will be an automatic magnet for other passersby. To maximize these opportunities, have some books that would be appropriate tucked away in an easy to reach place.

For the more formal time of storytelling in a large group, wait until food and drink is finished and disposed of, collect all toys and put them out of sight, and have all adults take part along with the children so that they can model good listening and participation.

This is best done with each carer sitting with their children and actively joining in with the storyteller. I know that carers need time to talk with each other over a cup of tea during play groups and that this is an important function of playgroups, but everyone will gain if this is done at a specific time and not during storytime.

Storytime in playgroup will form an invaluable part of our children's journey towards literacy. This is yet another way that our playgroups scaffold a child's early development. Storytelling with our children helps to develop their vocabulary, ability to listen and comprehend and ability to understand the purpose of print. We will be helping to set up a lifelong positive attitude towards reading.



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