

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH 2023 - FOOTPRINTS



Preparation

- Using the templates provided, print six sets of footprints and cut out each foot. The activity will be easiest to set up if you keep the footprints in order, alternating left and right.
- **Activity – Option 1:** Fill a large, shallow tub with sand. Cover the ground with a large towel. Place the tub with sand on the towel. You'll need a long ruler to smooth the sand.
- **Activity – Option 2:** Cover the ground with a plastic mat. Pour a thin layer of diluted paint into a tray and place it on the mat, next to a large sheet of paper.
- For Options 1 and 2: Supply towels, a tray of water, baby wipes etc., to clean feet after the activity.

Invite everyone to take off their shoes and socks. (Some people might prefer not to participate.) Ask them to compare their feet to someone else. What do they notice? What is similar? What is different?

Did you know that your footprints are unique? They are different from every other person, just like your fingerprints.

Have you ever walked on the beach and created footprints in the sand?

I wonder if you have ever noticed another set of footprints on the beach? A person's footprints? Doggy pawprints? Seagull claws?

Have you ever tried to follow the footprints?

Let's try it now...

Set the footprints out to form a pathway. Keep them close together so the children can reach them.

Invite each of the children to walk along the pathway, stepping on each footprint.

It can be easy and fun to follow someone's footsteps. But sometimes it can be harder.

Spread the footprints out to make them harder to reach.

Invite each of the children to try to follow the footprints again.



When we talk about following in someone's footsteps, it can also mean that we are trying to follow their example – to live like they do. For example, we might say that Olivia followed in her dad's footsteps by becoming a doctor like him. [Try to use an example from your group, using the name of the child and the profession of one of their parents.] Or that William followed in his big brother's footsteps by being very kind to others.

Psalms 119:15 says, "I will study your teachings and follow your footsteps" (CEV).

We can follow in the footsteps of Jesus. By learning about Jesus and following his example, we can understand how to live well and which direction to go in life.

We can create footprints or footsteps too.

Create footprints:

- **Option 1** – Invite the children to step in the sand to create footprints (use the ruler to smooth the sand between turns).
- **Option 2** – Invite the children to step in the paint then walk across the paper to create footprints.

The things that we do and say can also make memories, a bit like our feet leave footprints on the sand. Our footprints don't last long on the beach – waves wash them away, wind blows sand over the top, people and dogs scamper over them and wipe them away. But the memories we leave through the things we say and do can last a long time.

When we follow Jesus, we leave footprints that help others to follow Jesus too.

*Job 23:11 says, "I've followed him closely, my feet in his **footprints**" (The Message).*

Ask everyone to repeat the verse several times with you to finish.

