



# SESSION 1

## HACKS FOR PRESCHOOLERS

MISSION:  
**DEEP SEA**

**BY TIFFANY THENOR**

### HOW TO HACK THIS SESSION FOR PRESCHOOLERS

In kids ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week. Here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your preschoolers more engaged.

#### GENERAL TIPS FOR ALL SESSIONS

**Worship time.** Worship might be a great opportunity to open up some of the Play Station activities to keep students engaged. You can also play Freeze Dance with these songs or provide hand motions. Also, remember that less is more. Young children have difficulty keeping focus. One well-intentioned song might have more impact than three songs to fill time. Choose wisely and make it fun!

**Bible story time.** Young children LOVE storytelling. What makes a great story telling experience is how engaging and interactive it is. Gathering children up close pulls in their attention. Telling the story on their level helps to keep their attention. Inviting the children to help you act out the story while you are telling it can help the children remember what you have said.

**Discussion time.** Instead of engaging one child's response at a time, have children turn to their buddy beside them to answer each of the questions so that all children can be responding at the same time.

#### ACTIVITY | S.E.A. Agent Badge

Have the adult write each child's name on the badge using dashed/dotted lines so that the preschool child can trace their own name in washable marker. If you would like them to decorate the badge afterwards, provide color pencils and crayons. Have the adult hole punch and lace the badge for the younger child. It is recommended that the adult also laminate these badges, as the younger child might handle the badge more than the others, causing it to tear.

### ACTIVITY | Sticky Toes

This activity might be too challenging for younger students. An alternative would be to use their hands instead of their toes. To prevent children from eating the jello or putting their hands in their mouths, have them watch you spray the jello before the activity with hair spray or something clear and non-edible as a visual reminder this is NOT FOOD. Also, have hand sanitizer and baby wipes readily available for cleaning hands/feet after each turn. Additionally, some children might opt out of this activity entirely due to being sensitive to texture. In this case, a sensory tub with blue-dyed rice or dry paste can have the same effect. Children could also use tongs to large tweezers to pull out the sea creatures instead of hands. Blue-dyed cooked spaghetti is also a fun alternative to the jello.

### ACTIVITY | Crossing the Sea

Using real seashells might be easier to pick up than small pieces of paper on the floor.

### THE BIG IDEA | People can help my faith grow.

To help younger children remember the Big Idea, provide hand motions for the words. Example: People (point to different people in the room around you) can help (raise your hands) my faith (hands to heart) grow (move a hand from the ground up in levels to demonstrate something growing taller).

### OBJECT LESSON | Parting of the Red Sea

Make sure you hot glue the lids of the bottles shut for this activity. Little hands will open it otherwise. Also, adding a little glitter into the bottle makes for an excellent “calming jar” which can be used as an extension to this lesson and a great take-home reminder for young children that God uses people to help us. Help us with situations, feelings, and everyday needs.

### REFLECTION | Tentacles of Faith

This language might be too difficult for a young child to relate to. Using the language “someone who reminds us Jesus loves us” or “someone who shows us God’s love” might help the child connect with the question better. Also, have an adult write the names dictated by the child for them. Or, have the child draw a picture of the person they are thinking of.

### MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 3:18

Have the memory verse typed and printed out in strips of paper for this activity. Invite the younger children to color it green and glue it down on the blue construction paper using glue sticks.



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#### **ACTIVITY | Lunch Launch**

To avoid this game becoming frustrational for young children, ensure that the game is done on a small scale or with large goals for easy aim. For example, instead of tossing bread loaves into a basket, tape off a large perimeter for children to aim into.

#### **ACTIVITY | Gifts I Have**

Have all children sit on the floor or in a chair. Change the statements to "I CAN" statements. If the child agrees with the statement, they can stand up. If the child does not agree with the statement, they can sit or remain sitting. For example, you can say things like, "I can ride a bike" or "I can make a new friend easily."

#### **THE BIG IDEA | My faith grows deeper when I use my gifts.**

To help younger children remember the Big Idea, provide hand motions for the words. Example: My faith (hands on heart) grows (move hand from ground up in levels to demonstrate growing) deeper (point downward) when I use (point to self) my gifts (hands on hips).

On a large butcher piece of paper, pre-write the Big Idea. When a child finds an index card containing one of the words from the Big Idea, they can match it with the words written on the butcher paper and velcro/tape it beneath the written word on the butcher paper that is displayed. For large groups of children, you can duplicate the set up of this activity in 3-5 areas of the room. It is important to not leave too many children waiting around for this to go on to avoid loss of student engagement. Or, you can make this relay-race style for more students to be engaged in the cheering of this game.

**ACTIVITY | I Draw, You Draw**

An alternative to this activity would be to provide the physical materials instead of requiring them to write or try to draw something that another child would have to decipher. In a brown paper bag, place random household objects (toothbrush, eating utensils, pencil, paint brush, bobby pin, hair tie, shoe laces, bowl, etc.). Make sure there are enough small items for each child to grab one. Then, have them think of an alternative use for it and act out the proper and new way of using the item for their group.

**MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 3:18**

Have the completed memory verse displayed so that they can reference the correct order, instead of needing the ability to read it. For children who have difficulty identifying the words, provide a picture underneath each word to help them make the right matches.



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#### **ACTIVITY | Beach Ball Bounce**

For pre-readers, use numbers or a picture instead of written questions. When the child catches the ball, they can tell you the number or picture their hand touches. Each number or picture may represent a question for the teacher to ask them from the list provided.

#### **ACTIVITY | Sunken Treasure**

Customize the sunken treasure map to lead to three spots around the room. When they arrive at each spot, have a leader ask them, "What is one way we can spend time with God?" They can think and talk it out together, before moving on to the next spot the map suggests where they will be asked the same or a similar question.

#### **THE BIG IDEA | My faith grows deeper when I spend time with God.**

To help younger children remember the Big Idea, provide hand motions for the words. Example: My faith (hands on heart) grows (hand moved from ground up to demonstrate growing) deeper (pointing downward) when I (point to self) spend time (points to wrist like their is a watch there) with God (points upward to heaven).

#### **REFLECTION | Water Beads**

Water beads take about 8 hours to grow. Explain to young children that the growing process takes time. Have them make predictions about what they think will happen to the water beads when they return the next time.

**MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 3:18**

- Leaders can blow bubbles, and kids can try to say the verse before they all pop.

**ACTIVITY | Deep Sea Coral Painting Craft**

- This activity can get really messy. Be sure to use trays or even shallow cardboard boxes to limit splatter. If available, use smocks for aprons to avoid getting the paint on clothing.



# SESSION 4

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#### **ACTIVITY | Swimming Fish**

Do this activity whole group, or with one leader per small group, to demonstrate this activity. Ask for volunteers along the way to participate in each of the instructions.

#### **ACTIVITY | Jump the Waves**

Knowing that younger children may have difficulty with controlling their movements, play this game outdoors or ask the children to hop instead of run, to limit chaos or hazard.

#### **ACTIVITY | Spitting Jonah**

Have the origami fish pre-created, but allow kids to add the decorations and googly eyes, and play with the pom pom as suggested.

#### **THE BIG IDEA | My faith grows deeper when I share my story.**

To help younger children remember the Big Idea, provide hand motions for the words. Example: My faith (hands on heart) grows (move hand from ground up to demonstrate growth) deeper (points downward) when I (points to self) share (move hands outwards) my story (hold hands like holding a book).

#### **OBJECT LESSON | Dominos**




Provide [cardboard blocks](#) that can work as dominoes. The kids will need larger areas to draw and these will allow for a whole piece of paper to be stuck to them. Use large crayons instead of permanent markers.

**RESPONSE | Sharing Your Story**

The child can dictate the name of this person to an adult, who can write the name for the child on the fish. Or, the child can draw a picture to represent the person they are thinking of.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# TIFFANY THENOR

 raisingwonders.org & WonderHere.org  
 facebook.com/tiffanydawn.samuels  
 instagram.com/raising.wonders



Tiffany Thenor graduated from Southeastern University with a degree in Elementary Education. She is a professional educator with 11 years of experience teaching in public and private education. Now, she spends the bulk of her time innovating and collaborating with parents and other educators through her Learn & Play Studio in Lakeland, FL-WonderHere. Prior to this, she has served in the local church as a children’s pastor and in other capacities in both children’s and youth ministry. She now believes her primary ministry field is parenting and homeschooling her small children and working

with parents and students through her educational facility and online platform.

Tiffany has been married to the love of her life, Jeffrey Thenor, for 9 years. Together, they raise their two beautiful boys, Jeremiah (age 4) and Ezra (age 1.5). They are super thrilled to be expecting their newest addition, a baby girl in May of 2020.

If you’d like to chat with Tiffany about Preschool Ministry, Children’s Ministry, homeschooling, or just whatever-reach out! She would love to connect with you!

**ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Amber Stephens, Linda Moon.

**TEACHING VIDEOS:** Sunday Cool, After School Program.

**TEACHING SKITS:** Natasha McGill.

**PRETEEN HACKS:** Mikey Sheley.

**SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** Kimberly Dorpenyo.

**PRESCHOOL HACKS:** Tiffany Thenor.

**MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE:** Sunny Brown.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**ILLUSTRATION:** James Huang.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Stephen Switzer, Ali Anne, Eddie Irvin, Ari Raines, Kellee Gentry, Tim Synan, Josh McLemore, Amber Gaddis, Megan Romer, Kathie Phillips, Sunny Brown, Dena Kitchens.