



SESSION 1

HACKS FOR PRETEENS

MISSION:
DEEP SEA

BY MIKE SHELEY

HOW TO HACK THIS SESSION FOR PRETEENS

In kids ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but preteens tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your preteens more engaged.

GENERAL TIPS FOR ALL SESSIONS

Worship time. Unless you have a large enough preteen group to do a separate worship with slightly more "preteen" songs, the best hack here is to involve them in leading worship. Some will be good at actually singing, whether or not you mic them. Others can be really good with leading motions. And then others can be dispersed among the younger kids, leading the others in worship by example.

Bible story time. Preteens would be more engaged if you have them help act out the story or if you have them read it while others are acting it out. Try to bring in props during the storytelling, such as a can of sardines for Jesus Feeds the Crowd, or a mist bottle to spray the kids while telling the Moses or Jonah stories.

ACTIVITY | S.E.A. Agent Badge

Make your preteen badges a little different, perhaps adding in a stripe or a different color. Or you could give them a specific color of yarn not available to the other kids. Also allow them to help younger kids make their badges.

ACTIVITY | Crossing the Sea

If your small groups have mixed ages, have preteens let the younger kids go first. This is similar to how some people run an Easter Egg hunt. Only let the preteens go after the younger children have gone so they don't take all the shells. And have preteens "[crab walk](#)" through this activity. . . if

anyone's going to enjoy a good challenge of picking up shells while crab walking, it will be your preteens!
*Bonus: If you have any gymnastics preteens, they are probably good at crab walking and can teach the others!




REFLECTION | Tentacles of Faith

- In addition to making the tentacle, have some purple paper they can use to write a little thank you note or note of encouragement to that person. Challenge them to take the note home and have their parents help them mail it to the person.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Mike Sheley is the Middle School Pastor overseeing ministries for preteen (5th-6th grade) and young adolescent (7th-8th grade) students at Mount Pleasant Christian Church in central Indiana. He has been in student ministry for over twenty years, with more than twelve of those years in his current position. In his current ministry, preteens participate alongside middle schoolers for weekly programming, but have their own lessons and special events. However, part of the health of the ministry is due to the close friendship and working relationship Mike has with the children’s ministry team.

Mike is married and has three kids - one in college,

one in high school and one in middle school. Mike has had the joy and challenge of ministering to all of his kids as their youth pastor during their preteen and middle school years.

Mike’s odd jobs over the years have included working at the his local Apple Store, Target, and at a couple fast-food restaurants. He has a weird fascination with presentations and fonts.

If you’d like to chat with Mike about spiritual disciplines with preteens, parent ministry or developing better presentations, reach out! He would love to connect with you!

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