



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They learn primarily by exploring their world using all their senses.
- They are becoming aware that living things have needs.

Forest Sunday Acts 17:22–28

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Forest's Story

(Explain that this is a story from a forest, and encourage children to guess what each thing might be.)

She stopped at my tree trunk and then started to climb. Up, up, up she climbed. Soon she sat on my largest branch and had a nap. What might that be? *(Encourage answers.)*

I started as a seed. I grew and I grew and I grew. My roots went deep, deep into the ground. The warm sun shone on my branches. Wind blew through my leaves. Who do you think that I am? *(Encourage answers.)*

Every day I feel many tiny forest friends running up and down my tree trunk. There are so many of them and sometimes it's hard to see them. What might that be? *(Encourage answers.)*

One day, I felt a tickle on one of my branches. A forest friend flew onto me. It had colourful wings. It sang a beautiful song. What might that be? *(Encourage answers.)*

One day a group of forest friends found my shade. They had a picnic on the ground beside me. I could hear them laugh and talk. Who might that be? *(Encourage answers.)*

One morning I saw a forest friend walking toward me.

God has given me so many wonderful forest friends.

Optional activity after the story

Sing "I Am a Tree" (tune: "Head and Shoulders")
Practice the following actions: tree top (*touch head*); branches (*stick arms out*); trunk (*run hands down sides*); roots (*touch toes*), then lead the children in singing the song several times.

*Tree-top, branches, trunk, and roots,
trunk and roots, trunk and roots.
Tree-top, branches, trunk, and roots, I am a tree.*

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 6.

- **Forest scene** Alternative idea: Cut a hole in the middle of one side of each cardboard tube. Invite each child to decorate or glue on leaves to make a tree and then place a hand up the tube and stick out one finger to become a squirrel, a bird, or a mouse living in that tree.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They experience the immediate environment and the materials in it (such as rocks, soil, sand).
- They use all of their senses to make sense of the world around them.

Land Sunday Psalm 139:7–12

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Land's Story

(Before starting the story, invite children to practice the bolded phrase.)

In the beginning, God made the Land. **"God is everywhere!"**

God made mountains and lakes on the Land. **"God is everywhere!"**

God made flowers and plants grow on the Land. **"God is everywhere!"**

One day, a family had a picnic on the Land. The father spread a blanket on the ground. The grandmother put out a basket and they enjoyed the food together. **"God is everywhere!"**

When the people finished their picnic, they played a game on the Land. **"God is everywhere!"**

Soon it was time to pack up and go home. But the people forgot some things. The boy left a plastic bag. The girl left a juice container. The father left his newspaper. The grandmother left a chocolate wrapper. All these things were left on the Land. That was so sad.

Then another family came to play on Land. They picked up the plastic bag. They picked up the juice container. They picked up the newspaper. They picked up the chocolate wrapper. They put some things in the garbage can, and they took some things home to recycle. Now the Land was happy again. **"God is everywhere!"**

Optional activity after the story

Sing "Recycling" (tune: "The More We Get Together")

The more that we recycle, recycle, recycle,
the more that we recycle,
the happier Land is.
For your Land is my Land

and my Land is your Land.
The more that we recycle,
the happier Land is.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 12.

- Mud play** You may find that some children do not like getting their hands dirty for long. Make sure you have clean-up supplies close by so the accumulated mud can be wiped off quickly.
- Litterbag** Children might prefer to place their bags in their homes, especially if they don't have cars.
- Snack** Skip the sunflower seeds. Bananas are also a good snack for this age group.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They use exploration as their primary method of learning.
- They are beginning to understand that in similar environments, similar living things can be found.

Wilderness/ Outback Sunday Romans 8:18–27

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Wilderness/Outback's Story

(When you introduce each element, draw a shape or pattern in the sand that might represent the element and smooth out afterwards. Please use either the word "Outback" or "Wilderness," to suit your location.)

This is Wilderness/Outback. Rain falls on the trees and plants (*use a finger to make dots in the sand*). The rain helps everything to grow. God created good things. (*Smooth out the sand.*)

This is Wilderness/Outback. The wind swirls all around (*draw loops and spirals in the sand*). It blows seeds everywhere. God has created good things. (*Smooth out the sand.*)

This is Wilderness/Outback. Snakes slither through the sand (*use fingers to make an "s" shape in the sand*). They find warm rocks and curl around them. God created good things.

This is Wilderness/Outback. Many furry animals walk here (*use fingers to make some tracks in the sand*). God has created good things. (*Smooth out the sand.*)

This is Wilderness/Outback. The sand is smooth (*smooth out the sand.*) There are no footprints. Not many people come here. But lots and lots of things happen in Wilderness/Outback.

Snakes live here (*use fingers to make an "s" shape*).

Rain falls here (*use a finger to make dot shapes*).

Animals live here (*use fingers to make some tracks*).

The wind swirls all around (*draw loops and spirals*).

God has created good, good things.

Optional activity after the story

Movement Invite children to act out the elements in the story: wind blowing, rain falling, animals scurrying, and snakes slithering.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 18.

- Meditation** Simplify the sentences and pause between each one. (Example: "We are going to pretend that we are in the Wilderness/Outback. The wind is blowing... The rain is falling... Little animals are running...")
- Sand trays** If possible, provide one large sand tray for the children to use cooperatively.
- Walking sticks** Long cardboard tubes (such as wrapping paper tubes) would be safer to use with this age group.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They have an increasing use of descriptive vocabulary (such as describing water as wet, cold, dirty).
- They love to play with water, noticing the way it flows and fills a container.

River Sunday Revelation 22:1–5

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

River's Story

(Invite children to take turns dipping a hand into a bowl of water as they repeat the bolded phrase after you.)

I am River. My water flows over rocks and sand. It flows beside grass and trees.

River, tell us more!

Plants live in my waters. They grow green and grand.

River, tell us more!

Fish swim in my waters. They lay their eggs in my sand.

River, tell us more!

Insects live in my waters. They fly on top of my waters, too.

River, tell us more!

Frogs live in my waters. They look for insects to snack on.

River, tell us more!

Birds live beside my waters. They like to catch fish or frogs.

River, tell us more!

Trees live beside my waters. Their leaves fall all around me.

River, tell us more!

Big people and little people like to swim in my water.

Thank you, God, for rivers.

Optional activity after the story

Sing "Here's a Little Fishy" (tune: "Hush Little Baby")

Here's a little fish-y in the river. *(With palms together make swimming motions.)*

Here's a tiny insect flying above. *(Flap hands close to shoulders to show insect wings.)*

Here's a little frog, that's oh, so sweet. *(Hop up and down.)*

We show God's love for each one we meet. *(Cross arms over chest.)*

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 24.

- Water surprise** Fold the set of papers for each child ahead of time or explain to parents/caregivers how to help the child prepare this surprise at home.
- Water painting** Option: draw pictures on white paper using water based markers. Paint over the pictures with water and watch the outlines soften.
- Creation collage** Help children to work cooperatively to choose where to glue the pieces of paper.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They are learning to make choices and explore their own preferences.
- They are beginning to learn that God's loving ways go together with everything we do.

Words for Living Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

(Open the storytelling box. Remove the felt mountain and place it near the edge of the blanket. Bring out the other figures at the appropriate times in the story. Invite children to repeat

bolded phrases.)

Clippety-clop, clippety-clop went the donkeys.

Trip-trot, trip-trot went the sheep.

Step-step, shuffle-shuffle went the people. *(Place figure of group of people near another edge of the blanket.)* They were walking across a big, hot desert.

Moses was leading them to a new home. *(Place Moses figure beside people. Gradually move everyone towards the mountain.)*

The sun hurt their eyes. *(Rub eyes.)* The sand hurt their feet. *(Rub feet.)* They were thirsty. *(Hang out tongue.)* They were tired. *(Close eyes.)* Sometimes the people pushed and shouted. Sometimes the children didn't listen to their parents. Sometimes the parents didn't listen to their children.

God's Loving Way

(based on Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20)

Moses wanted to help the people. He climbed a mountain and prayed to God, "Please help us, God. The people have forgotten how to live in loving ways." *(Moses figure "climbs" up the mountain.)*

God said, "Moses, I will help my people. I will give them some loving rules."

"Thank you, God," said Moses.

Moses climbed down the mountain. *(Moses figure "climbs" down the mountain.)* He gathered all the people to tell them about God's loving rules. *(Spread the numbered paper hearts on the blanket. Each time a child chooses a heart, read one of the following loving rules.)*

1. God is love.
2. Say God's name with love.
3. Love each other.
4. Share with each other.

There were other loving rules, too.

The people were happy again. "Thank you, God," they said. "Thank you for your loving ways."

Optional activity after the story

Sing "Moses Climbed" (tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star")

Moses climbed a hill so high.
Moses climbed towards the sky.
Moses prayed and heard God say,
"This is how to live my way."
Moses climbed a hill so high.
Moses climbed towards the sky.

God gave Moses loving ways,
for the people all their days.
This is how to live God's way.
This is how to love each day.
God gave Moses loving ways,
for the people all their days.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 30.

- Activity sheet** Use this sheet as a conversation starter instead of asking children to draw.
- Art response** Make sure that the children are wearing a protective covering over their clothing.
- Poster** Provide a variety of large paper hearts so they can choose which ones they would like to decorate.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They are beginning to develop logical reasoning skills.
- They are beginning to classify and compare things.

Living as a Liberation Community Exodus 32:1–14

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Moses and the Golden Calf

(based on Exodus 32:1–14)

(Open the storytelling box. Remove the felt mountain and place it in the middle of the blanket. Bring out the

group of people and the figure of Moses #1.)

This is Moses. *(Show Moses figure.)* Moses was leading the people to a new land.

One day Moses wanted to talk with God. Moses walked up, up, up a mountain (*“walk” figure up the mountain*). Moses prayed to God.

Then Moses walked back down the mountain. Down, down, down walked Moses (*“walk” figure down the mountain*). It was a long way down. When he reached the bottom, Moses heard music sounds. He saw something shining in the sun. It was a calf made of gold. *(Place golden calf figure and figure of the group of people at the bottom of*

the mountain.) Moses didn't know what this meant, but he was worried.

“What are you doing?” Moses asked the people.

“We waited and waited for you to come down the mountain,” the people said. “We wanted to talk with God too, but we did not know what God looked like... We decided to make a god. We made this beautiful golden calf.”

Moses knew that this was not the way to talk with God. Moses said to the people, “Take away this golden calf! *(Put calf back in box.)* We don't know what God looks like but we do know God is not a golden calf. We can pray to God anywhere. We can pray at any time. God listens. God cares a lot about what we do.”

The people felt very sorry for what they had done. They realized how much God loves them.

Optional activity after the story

Sing “Do You Know? (tune: “I’m a Little Teapot”)

Do you know who loves you all the time?

Do you know who loves you rain or shine?

We know that God loves us all the time.

We know God loves us rain or shine.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 36.

Dancing plates Attach the ribbons ahead of time.

Activity sheet Fold the papers in half so that children see the “All Day” side first. Together choose the pictures that are done during the day. Glue them in place. Then, turn the paper over so the children see the “All Night” side. Talk about those pictures and glue them in place.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They experience joy being with other children and are learning cooperative play.
- They experience God's love in the community of the church.

Known by Goodness and Mercy Exodus 33:12–23

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Moses Thinks About God

(a story based on Exodus 33:12–23)

(Open the storytelling box. Remove the felt tent and place it near the edge of the blanket. Remove figures of

Moses #1 and group of people and place them nearby.)

Moses was sitting outside the tent. He wanted to be alone with God. *(Put Moses figure beside the tent.)*

Moses found a rock and sat on it and thought about God. "I wonder what God looks like? I want to see God," Moses said to himself.

Moses looked around. He could hear the sounds of a river. He could hear two women helping each other wash clothes. *(Invite children to imitate washing clothes.)*

Moses saw a colourful bird singing in the tree. He saw people help each other to pick up tree branches to make a fire. *(Invite children to imitate picking up sticks.)*

Then Moses saw some sheep eating grass. Nearby, some people were helping look after these sheep. *(Invite children to imitate patting a sheep.)*

Moses thought about everything he had seen and heard. Then Moses thought about all his friends who loved and cared for each other. *(Place group of people nearby.)* Even though he couldn't see God, Moses knew that God was here. Moses could feel God's love when he was sitting by the river. He could feel God's love when he heard the birds sing. He could feel God's love when he saw his friends helping each other.

"I can feel God all around me," Moses said. It was such a wonderful, wonderful feeling!

Optional activity after the story

Sing "God's Love" (tune: "Muffin Man")

Do you feel God's love around, *(hug self)*
all around, all around?
Do you feel God's love around
around each one of us?

Yes, I feel God's love around, *(hug self)*
all around, all around.
Yes, I feel God's love around
Around each one of us.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 42.

- Music** Make up the extra verses yourself while the children dance.
- Game** Being by going through the pictures one-by-one and asking the children what is happening in each. Say after each one, "And that's how we feel God's love." Play the game with the pictures face-up.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They are beginning to initiate the telling of personal experiences to others.
- Their storytelling usually involves only the main events, without a lot of detail.

A Prophetic Vision's Power

Deuteronomy 34:1–12

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Moses Blesses Joshua

(based on Deuteronomy 34:1–12)

(Open the storytelling box. Remove the figures of Moses #1, Moses #2, Joshua, and group of people and

place them nearby.)

Moses helped the people travel to a new land. They had many adventures along the way. *(Place Moses #1 figure on the blanket.)* But now Moses was growing very old. *(Replace figure with Moses #2.)* His hair was grey. His beard was grey. He walked slowly.

One day Moses called all the people together. *(Place group of people near Moses #2.)* "Friends, I am growing very old," Moses said. "I have been your leader for many years. Now I am tired and I need to rest."

The people whispered to each other. "Who will be our leader now?" The people felt worried.

Moses heard their whispers. "Don't worry," he said. "There will be a new leader."

Moses invited Joshua to come and stand beside him. *(Place Joshua beside Moses #2.)*

Moses said, "This is Joshua. Joshua is a good listener. Joshua will be a great leader."

Joshua knelt down in front of Moses.

Moses put his hands on Joshua's head and said, "Joshua, God bless you. Lead the people to the land God has promised to them. Tell the people about God's love. God will be with you and keep you safe."

The people were happy again. God would be with them and with their new leader, Joshua.

Optional activity after the story

Invite children to sit in a circle. Take turns passing a small Bible storybook around from one child. Ask the child holding the Bible storybook to think of someone he or she would like to tell about God's love. Repeat passing the book until all who wish to have a chance to speak.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 48.

- Music** Just listen to the recording instead of singing the song.
- Blessing bags** Simplify the blessing for the children by taking their hands in yours and saying, "God blesses you."



Tips for Three-year-olds

- Many of them like to hear the same story told many times.
- They ask questions about what happened and why.

On the Right Road

Matthew 5:1-12

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

(Whenever the feather symbol is shown in the story, hold the feather high in the air and let it go. Encourage everyone to say, "God blesses you.")

When the feather lands on the floor, everyone cries, "Yes!"

(Point to stand-up figure of Jesus.) "Come, sit down, my friends. I have something important to say to you. When you see someone hungry, know that God doesn't want anyone to be hungry. Share your food with others."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, when you see someone sad, know that God wants to help their sadness go away. Please help others who are feeling sad."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, when you see someone who wants to know more about God, be kind and loving, share your food and toys, and people will know what God is like."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, when you see someone who is kind to others, know that God wants kindness to come to them, too. Care

Blessed by God

(based on Matthew 5:1-12)

about other people. God cares about you very much."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, when you see someone who is gentle and who doesn't hurt others, know that they will always be part of God's family. Tell others that God loves them."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, when you see someone who tells the truth and is honest, know that God loves them and will always be with them. Tell others that we can always trust God.

 God blesses you...
Yes!

"Friends, you are all God's children. Listen to God. Listen to each other."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

Jesus looked around at all his friends again and said, "I love you and I want you to be happy. You are a blessing to others when you live God's way."

 God blesses you...
Yes!

Optional activity after the story

Sing "We Can Learn from Jesus" (tune: "The More We Get Together")

We can learn from Jesus,
from Jesus, from Jesus.
Yes, we can learn from Jesus,
who shows us God's love.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 54.

- Group activity** Play a "Follow the leader" game instead.
- Booklets** Prepare booklets ahead of time, gluing in the pictures. Have children colour the pictures and add the yarn hangers.
- Scrolls** Prepare scrolls ahead of time by gluing on the heart shapes.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They are beginning to develop the skill of waiting.
- They may be familiar with the idea of “getting ready” – for a meal, for bed, for preschool, or church.

Door Shut or Open Matthew 25:1–13

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

Who Is Ready?

(based on Matthew 25:1–13)

(Have the illustration of the bridesmaids (folded in half), from the poster Storytelling Resources #3, nearby.)

Once there were ten women. (Together count the bridesmaids. Then hold up your hands and count 10 fingers.)

The women were waiting to go to a wonderful party. They had their party clothes all ready. The women waited to hear someone say, “It’s time! Come to the party!”

The women waited. (Invite the children to hold up all their fingers and wiggle them.)

And they waited. (Wiggle fingers a little more slowly.) And waited. (Barely wiggle fingers.)

The women were getting sleepy. One by one the women fell asleep. (Place hands in laps.)

Suddenly the women heard someone shout, “It’s almost time for the party!” The women woke up quickly.

Five of the women looked at their lamps. (Show illustration with lamps unlit.) There was no more oil and the flames had gone out. “Oh no!” They ran off to look for some oil.

The other five women looked at their lamps. (Show illustration with lamps lit.) They had extra oil and their lamps were shining brightly. And they picked up their lamps and went to the wonderful party.

Optional activity after the story

Chant Lead the group in the chant “Ten Young Bridesmaids” (p. 76).

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 60.

- Guest speaker** Keep the conversation short and very simple.
- Helping hands** Use crayons for tracing their hands so no marks remain on their skin.
- Lamp** Choose very soft clay or use play dough to make it easy for small hands to manipulate.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They delight in their growing accomplishments.
- They love dramatic play.

Rejecting Fear / Embracing Joy Matthew 25:14–30

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

The Gift of Me!

(a contemporary story)

(Give a little toy figure or a paper figure to each child. As each group of actions is mentioned, encourage children to use their figures to demonstrate those actions.)

“Thank you, God, for our arms and hands,” they said. Everyday the children loved to smell and touch and hear. “Thank you, God, for our noses and fingers and ears,” they said.

Once there were some little children who loved to do many things.

There were also some big people who loved to be with the little children.

Everyday they loved to run and jump and play.

They loved to watch the children. “Thank you, God, for children,” they said.

“Thank you, God, for our legs and feet,” they said.

Everyday the children loved to laugh and sing and dance.

“Thank you, God, for our voices,” they said.

Everyday the children loved to clap, and wave, and dig.

Optional activity after the story

Action poem “God’s Child”

I am God’s child, *(point to self)*
growing each day. *(crouch and stand)*
I am God’s child, *(point to self)*
learning God’s way. *(walk in place)*

You are God’s child, *(point to someone)*
growing each day. *(crouch and stand)*
We are God’s children, *(hands open to the side)*
learning God’s way.

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 66.

- ❑ **Church work** You may want to direct the conversation with some simple questions that the children will understand such as, “What is one thing you do when you work at the church? Do you wear special clothes? Do you have helpers working with you?”
- ❑ **Activity sheet** Before you start, invite the children to show their biggest smiles.
- ❑ **Display** Use crayons to trace hand shapes; help children glue these onto the poster board.



Tips for Three-year-olds

- They watch adults closely to see how we speak and act towards one another and all of creation.
- They need modelling of Christian values.

Do You See Me? Matthew 25:31–46

A supplemental resource to adapt sessions for groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds.

The Queen Who Felt the People's Love

(based on Matthew 25:31–46)

(Distribute five paper hearts to each child. In the story, when the queen says, "That is love!" the children each take one of their hearts and place it around the picture that the queen is talking about.)

Once there was a queen who loved all the people. More than anything the queen wanted the people to love each other. Every day the queen watched the people. Whenever the queen saw someone showing love, she smiled. The queen felt the love too.

(Invite a child to follow the yellow yarn and bring back picture #1 and place it on the blanket.) The queen saw people sharing food. "Ah," said the queen, "that is love!" *(Everyone places a heart around the picture.)*

(Retrieve picture at the end of the green yarn.) The queen saw people sharing drinks. "Ah," said the queen, "that is love!" *(Place hearts around picture.)*

(Retrieve picture at the end of blue yarn.) The queen saw people making friends. "Ah," said the queen, "that is love!" *(Place hearts around picture.)*

(Retrieve picture at the end of red yarn.) The queen saw people sharing warm clothes. "That is love!" *(Place hearts around picture.)*

(Retrieve picture at the end of orange yarn.) The queen saw people tidying up their neighbourhood. "That is love!" *(Place hearts around picture.)*

The queen saw love everywhere. When the people loved each other and the earth, they loved the queen too. The queen was very, very happy. *(Gather all the hearts, stand up and let hearts rain down on all the pictures.)*

Optional activity after the story

Wondering time Give each child a soft toy or a doll to hold. Talk about some wondering questions and encourage them to act out their answers with or without their dolls.

- I wonder how a baby feels when it has a wet diaper? How can we help the baby?
- I wonder how a puppy feels when it is lonely? How can we help the puppy?

- I wonder how a hungry person feels? How can we help that person?
- I wonder how God feels when people leave garbage on the ground? How could we help?

Respond

Use these ideas to adapt the Respond activities on page 72.

Puppet play Have children choose one puppet each and use it as you discuss the problem situations.

Heart basket Tape over the staples so there are no sharp edges.