

Every Toddler COUNTS

Learning NUMBERS through Bible Stories
Fun Fish Toddlers



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Welcome to “Every Toddler COUNTS”

Learning NUMBERS through Bible Stories

Welcome to ‘**Every Toddler COUNTS,**’ a Fun Fish Toddlers’ guide for developing through Bible stories and NUMBERS. Jesus always communicated with children at their level. The Bible says, ‘*He took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them*’ (Mark 10:16).

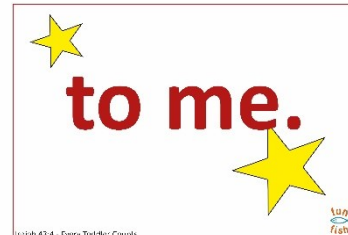
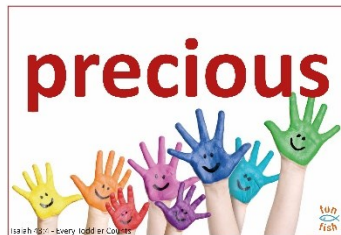
- He made them **feel safe** - He drew them close to himself.
- He gave them **focused attention** – He reached out to each child.
- He **affirmed** them – He gave them God’s blessing.

And every person who works with little children can do the same.

The theme of this book is ‘**Developing**’, and it happens best in a safe environment. The topic, ‘**Bible Numbers,**’ gives a toddler the chance to reciprocate focus on God as they learn their numbers. The heart attitude of this series is to affirm these children, bless them and enable them to move on in confidence.

Each Bible story in this series teaches a number, for even though the Bible doesn’t emphasize numbers, they were there. Five fingers on a hand. Four legs on a lion. One world created by God. And each story teaches a life lesson, helping a toddler learn how to live.

‘**Every Toddler COUNTS,**’ explores twelve Bible stories and what they mean. The ‘memory line’ enables a toddler to build a solid foundation for life. “You are precious to me” (Isaiah 43:4), reminds them of their worth.



Enjoy the adventure of “**Every Toddler COUNTS**”!

Suggested Fun Fish Toddlers Structure

Welcome

Theme Song: to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star...”

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Introduce Number and Topic:

Have the memory line pegged up on a clothesline. (Downloadable free - <https://www.funfish.org.uk/page31.html>) Download the appropriate NUMBER cards ready for each session. Add a new one new session. Talk about the number, where it is found or used, and link it to the topic for that day.

More songs:

Bible Story (interactive):

- A dramatized telling of the story with puppets, dolls, toy animals and props.
- Invite Toddlers to take part as they wish.

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask questions about the story, for even toddlers have opinions. Always thank them for their contribution. Always take seriously what they say. Link the story to the number. For example, ‘Whenever you see a “one,” always remember that God loves you.’ Then end with the [memory line](#).

Bean Bag Prayers:

Prayer is a challenging concept for a toddler. To help, hand out beanbags (or a soft toy animal) and place a cloth on the floor in front of them. They can hold up their beanbags during the one sentence prayer. Then when the ‘Amen’ is said, they can throw their beanbags onto the cloth. But remember to always begin with, ‘I shall say a prayer. If you want, you may join in...’ Praying is a choice.

Craft of your choice and best related to the story.

Close with Theme Song

Materials Needed for Sessions

Remember to set up!

What to bring to every session:

- “Every Toddler COUNTS” Cards, string, and clothes pegs
- Puppets
- Safety pins, tape, string
- Name Badges for leaders
- Words for songs: memory stick, or acetates for an Overhead Projector

What to have on hand in your cupboard for the various sessions:

- Lengths of fabric between 2 - 4 meters long.

Non-wrinkly, easily washable fabrics best, like polyester.

These make excellent backdrops, boats, mountains, cloaks, rivers...

Bright solid colours are best...red, brown, blue, purple, white, green...

- Laminator for all “Every Toddler COUNTS” Cards and paper items to use
- To make a donkey/horse hoof sound – tap plastic cups together
- Toy props

Session 1: God Loves Us – ONE – I Want that Pearl

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

You can find the number ONE everywhere, even on yourself. You have ONE nose, ONE chin, ONE mouth. ONE is everywhere in the world. There is ONE earth, ONE highest mountain, ONE moon. Each one of these is very special. And there is only ONE of you. God loves you so much.

Bible Story: I Want that Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

A boy

Any 3 soft toys can be used to represent three sellers - fox, sheep, rabbit

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

Ball

Globe

Huge pretend pearl

Bag

Bicycle

Table and chair

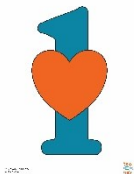
Reflective Time (interactive):

God loves you so much. It is just like you loving your ONE favourite cuddly toy/blanket. How do you treat it? Do you take it with you everywhere? Do you hug it? God loves you just like that...

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for loving me. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 1: ONE – I Want that Pearl (parable of the pearl - Matthew 13:45-46)

Jesus once told a story. Here is an everyday child's version...

A boy wanted to buy a pearl. He put a sign up on his shop door. **Wanted, the biggest pearl in the world. Call Me.** Soon everyone read it. Everyone was talking. Who had a pearl that big?

Fox hurried to boy's door. KNOCK! KNOCK! "Hi there. Here is the ONE pearl you are looking for. It is perfect." He handed it to the boy and smiled.

The boy tapped it and poked it. He looked at it with his magnifying glass. "This isn't the biggest pearl," he said. "This is a ball!"

Sheep came next. KNOCK! KNOCK! "Hi there. I hear that you want something big and round." She handed it to the boy and smiled.

The boy tapped it and poked it. He looked at it with his magnifying glass. "This isn't the biggest pearl," he said. "This is a globe."

Rabbit came next. KNOCK! KNOCK! "Hi there. I hear that you want the biggest pearl in the world. Here it is!"

The boy tapped it and poked it. He looked at it with his magnifying glass. He laughed. "This is the ONE! I am so happy. How much will it cost?"

Rabbit held out a big bag. "Fill this up and you can have my pearl."

The boy put in his blocks, his stacking cups, and books. "Is that enough?" he asked.

"Not yet!" said Rabbit. "My ONE big bag is still quite empty."

The boy put in ONE bicycle. ONE table and chair. "Is that enough?"

"Not yet!" said Rabbit. "A tiny little space still left."

The boy put in the key to his shop. "Is this enough?"

"Yes," said Rabbit and gave him that pearl, the biggest and best ONE in the world.

The boy danced and laughed. He was ONE happy boy. And do you know that God loves us that much. He gave up everything for us.

Session 2: We Can Help – TWO – Oops, I Forgot!

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

You can find the number TWO everywhere. TWO ears on an elephant. TWO wings on a bird.

You can find TWO on you. TWO elbows. TWO knees. TWO feet. TWO hands, which you can use to help.

Bible Story: Oops, I Forgot! (Matthew 21:28 - 31)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Two brothers
A father

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

Grapes
Two buckets (plastic bowls are good to use)
Grapes
Rabbits (or any cuddly animals)
Biscuits

Reflective Time (interactive):

Sometimes it isn't that easy to be helpful. We want to play and do nothing else. But it is good to help when someone asks. How can you help your mum or dad, your granny and grandpa?

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help us to be helpful. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



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Story 2: Oops, I Forgot! (parable of the two sons - Matthew 21:28 - 31)

Here is a story Jesus told a long time ago...

A dad lived on a grape farm with his TWO big boys. Sam and Dan. One day he found Sam in the kitchen with biscuits in his hand. "Sam," said his dad, "please can you go and pick some grapes? I will join you as soon as I can."

"I'm busy," said Sam. "I'm just having a snack and then I want to play. I really don't want to pick grapes today."

But as Sam ate his biscuits, he thought. "I should help dad. He always works so hard." So, Sam found a bucket. He hurried to the field. His dad wasn't there, so he picked all by himself.

Back at the house the dad looked for Dan. He looked in the garage. He looked in the kitchen. He found Dan behind the house playing with his pet rabbits. "Dan," called the dad, "please can you go and pick some grapes? I will join as soon as I can."

"Sure thing," said Dan. "I'll just put my rabbits away." He put them in their pens. He gave them food and water. But he forgot what his dad said. He didn't go and pick grapes. Instead, he played with his toy car all day.

As soon as the dad could, he got another bucket. He hurried to the field, but he only saw Sam. "Hi Sam," he called. "Thanks for helping today. We TWO can finish the job. We can get it done today..."

His dad and Sam carried the buckets home. Dan saw them! And suddenly he remembered that he had meant to help. Oh dear!

Jesus told this story because he wants ALL of us to be helpful. How do you think you can help at home?

Session 3: Don't Give Up – THREE – Bread for a Friend

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

You can find the number THREE everywhere, but often it is hiding. A triangle has three sides, and you can see it in houses, on bridges. It makes everything strong.

A short experiment for the children. One string is easy to break. Two strings together are harder to break. THREE strings together are almost impossible to break.

Bible Story: Bread for a Friend (Luke 11:5-10)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

- Man in the house
- Guest
- Neighbour that is asleep

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

- Kitchen
- Sofa
- Basket
- Food

Reflective Time (interactive):

It is easy to give up when things get tough. But we can keep trying. What are some things that are good to keep trying until you get it right? Brushing teeth. Buttoning coat. Picking up toys.

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help me not to give up. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 3: Bread for a Friend (parable of a guest in the night - Luke 11:5-10)

It was nice and quiet in the house. A man lit the fire. He put on his pyjamas. It was almost time for bed. He sat his chair for a little while. He fell asleep. Suddenly, KNOCK! KNOCK!

The man jumped up. He opened the door. His friend stood outside. He hadn't seen him for such a long time. "Come in!" said the man. "I will make you a meal."

His friend sat by the fire. The man ran to the kitchen. He opened a cupboard. It was time to make something nice. But it was completely EMPTY. He looked under the table. EMPTY as well. He looked in a bag. It was EMPTY too. What could he do?

"I know," said the man, "I'll go next door. I know they are asleep, but they won't mind."

He grabbed a basket. He grabbed a torch. He ran next door. KNOCK! KNOCK! He waited outside. He knocked again, even louder this time. **KNOCK! KNOCK!**

The man heard something move inside the house. He smiled to himself. Soon he would have all the food he needed. Instead, he heard a shout, "GO away. I'm asleep."

The man knocked again, even louder this time. KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK! He called, "Please, a friend has come to visit. I need THREE loaves of bread."

The door suddenly opened. "What?" said the neighbour. "Couldn't you wait till tomorrow morning?" But even though the neighbour rumbled and grumbled, she got some food. THREE loaves of bread. She filled the man's basket up.

The man was so happy. What a feast for his friend! He was so happy he didn't give up.

Session 4: Listen Carefully – FOUR Posts – A Big Strong House

Memory Line: “You are precious to me.” (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Number and Topic:

Can you find the number FOUR around you? An elephant, a camel, and a lion all have FOUR legs. A chair has FOUR legs! But what if someone asked you to make a chair with four legs and you forgot. You only put on three. That chair would fall over. It is good to listen.

Bible Story: A Big Strong House (Matthew 7:24-27)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Jesus

Lazy man

Hard working man

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

Four logs (sticks are fine)

bucket (plastic bowl works well)

book and cup

Reflective Time (interactive):

Sometimes it is hard to listen well and follow instructions. But if you do, you can do things well.

Bean Bag Prayer: “Dear God, help me to listen carefully. Amen.”

Sing a song:

“Every Toddler COUNTS” card for this session:



Story 4: A Big Strong House (parable of the house on sand Matthew 7:24-27)

Jesus told a story and he said, "Listen carefully..."

...There were two men who wanted to be neighbours. The first one was smart. He wasn't scared of hard work. The second one was smart, but he didn't like work.

"I'm going to build a house up on the hill," said the first man. "It will have FOUR strong walls. It will be safe." He picked up his bucket and climbed a hill.

"I'm going to build a house quick and easy," said the second man. "I will build it by the river in no time at all." He picked up FOUR logs.

The first man dug deep and filled his bucket with soil. He laid a foundation for his house. And no matter how hot and tired he felt, he kept right on working.

The second man didn't dig a foundation. He built his house on the sand. No digging. No sweating. He finished it that day. Then he read his book and had a cup of juice.

He called over to the first man who was still working up on the hill. "You're wasting your time. Ha! Ha! I'm the one who knows how to build a proper house."

The first man didn't stop. He built brick walls. He put up a strong roof. He finally finished and smiled. "This is a strong house," he said.

Suddenly it started raining, pouring. Thunder and lightning! The rain fell so fast, the river overflowed. It rose higher and high.

The lazy man closed his door. The water seeped in. He climbed out the window. He ran away. His house fell down with a CRASH!

The man on the hill looked out his window. "This house is strong," he said. "I am safe." His hard work paid off...

Jesus said, "...If you listen carefully to what I say, you will be safe."

Session 5: Do Your Best – FIVE – Five Bags of Gold!

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

You can find the number FIVE right down by your feet. Yes! Five toes on each foot. And if you ever see a badger, bear, or beaver track, they have five toes on each paw as well! Amazing!

Bible Story: FIVE Bags of Gold (Matthew 25:14-30)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

The Boss

Servants One, Two, and Three.

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A total of 15 bags of gold. (you could use bars of soap or rolled up socks...)

Two horses (plastic cups tapped together make wonderful hoof sounds)

A spade

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Is there something you really don't want to do? Like brushing your teeth, putting on your socks, or buttoning your coat. Don't give up, just keep doing your best.

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help me to do my best. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 5: FIVE Bags of Gold (parable of three servants - Matthew 25:14-30)

Here is another story Jesus told about some servants...

There was a boss who called his three servants, "Servants, I'm going on holiday and leaving you in charge. Please take care of my gold."

The boss gave the first servant FIVE bags of gold. He gave the second, two big bags. And to the third, he gave just one bag of gold.

The boss drove away, and the first servant jumped on his horse. He rode into town and started a business. The second one jumped on his horse and rode the other way. He too started a business somewhere else.

But the third one said, "Why should I work while my boss is on holiday? I'll hide the gold behind my house." So, he dug a deep hole and covered it up.

A long while later the boss came back. He called his three servants and asked, "How did it go?"

The first servant gave his boss the FIVE bags of gold, then FIVE more bags!

"Well done!" said the boss. "I will give you an even better job to do."

The second servant gave his boss two bags of gold, then TWO more bags!

"Well done!" said the boss. "I will give you an even better job to do."

The third servant shook the dirt off his bag of gold and said, "It really was quite unfair for you to go on holiday and think that I should work."

The boss was sad and said, "If you had done your best, you could have had a better job as well." But the third servant didn't care. He walked out the door. He didn't want to do his best.

Session 6: God Is Good – SIX – It Isn't Fair!

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Number and Topic:

The number SIX is everywhere! Look under a rock or in the grass. You will find bugs/insects with SIX legs! Ladybirds. Beetles. Ants! Can you count their legs? And ants are strong. A tiny ant can carry a huge leaf right down into his tiny house.

Bible Story: It Isn't Fair! (Matthew 20:1 - 16)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Boss

Helper

Six soft toys to represent workers

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A clock face with numbers

Six coins

Grapes

Buckets

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Have you ever shared something? Was it hard to do? Did it make the other person happy? Do you know that God is good and always shares?

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help me to be good like you. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 6: It Isn't Fair! (parable of workers in a vineyard - Matthew 20:1 - 16)

Here is another story Jesus told:

Early one morning a boss went out to his vineyard. The grapes were ready to pick. He said, "Great! But I only have one helper. He can't pick it all by himself. I'll go to the market at SIX this morning. I will find someone else to help."

He looked at his watch. The little hand pointed at SIX. He ran to the market and hired a worker. He said, "I'll pay you a silver coin." Now there were two in the vineyard that day. His helper and that worker.

But the boss still needed help. He ran to the market and found another one. He said, "I'll pay you what is right." Now there were three.

At lunchtime, still too many grapes. The boss ran to the market and found another worker. He said, "I'll pay you what is right." Now there were four!

Later, the boss had to run to the market again. Now there were five.

But that evening there were still too many grapes. The boss ran to the market yet again. Now there were SIX working in the vineyard that day.

They finished picking grapes. The boss looked at his watch. The little hand pointed at SIX. "Everyone, stop!" he called. "I will pay you now."

He called the last one who had only worked for only one hour. He gave that person a silver coin. The rest of the workers looked at each other. "Wow!" they said. "If he gave that person a silver coin, imagine how much he will give us!"

But the boss gave each one silver coin. The workers cried. "This isn't fair."

"I am fair," said the boss. "You agreed to work for one silver coin. Please, take what you earned and go. Don't be angry because I am good."

The first helper smiled. He took his silver coin. His boss certainly was kind and good.

Session 7 Jesus Cares for You – SEVEN – So Much Bread!

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

SEVEN is a harder number to find, but you can if you know where to look. A rainbow has SEVEN colours. And there are also SEVEN days in a week. Hold up seven fingers and let's say them together – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday.

Bible Story: So Much Bread! (Matthew 15:29-39, Mark 8:1-10)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Jesus

Helpers and crowd (you can use a lot of cuddly animals for the crowd)

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

Seven loaves of bread (you could use real bread, or rolled up socks)

Seven baskets (you could use seven bowls instead)

Some fish

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – It is good to care for others, just like Jesus. You can care by saying nice things to them, like 'How are you?' or 'Please, can I help?'

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for all the people who care for me. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 7: So Much Bread (Jesus feeds a crowd - Matthew 15:29-39, Mark 8:1-10)

People heard that Jesus was close by. They packed their lunches and ran. It was all so exciting, they stayed for three days!

By the third day, 4000 tummies rumbled. They really RUMBLED. Jesus could hear it. His helpers heard it. So, Jesus said, “These people are hungry. They mustn’t leave without food. They might faint on the way home.”

His helpers stared. “Jesus,” they said, “there are 4000 people! We’re in the middle of nowhere! Where can we find food for all of them?”

Jesus smiled. He knew what to do. He asked, “How many loaves of bread do you have?”

The helpers looked in their pockets and bags. They pulled out ONE. TWO. THREE. FOUR. FIVE. SIX. SEVEN! “We have SEVEN loaves,” they said.

Jesus smiled. He called out to the crowd, “Please sit down.” And everyone did. But everyone whispered, “What is Jesus doing now?”

Jesus took all SEVEN loaves into his arms. He looked up to heaven and said, “Dear God, thank you for this food.” Then he broke the loaves in pieces and gave them to his helpers.

The helpers did the same. They broke the loaves in more pieces and gave it to the crowd. And they kept on breaking those loaves, until everyone had a piece.

Then one of the helpers found some fish and Jesus thanked God for these. He gave them to his helpers and the helpers gave them to the crowd.

EVERYONE ate! EVERYONE had enough! And there was so much food, the helpers went around and picked up the leftovers. SEVEN baskets-full!

Jesus called to the crowd, “You can go home now. Thanks for coming.”

Everyone stood up. Their tummies had stopped rumbling. As they walked home, they said, “Jesus really cares.” And guess what... Jesus still cares today.

Session 8: Jesus Always Helps – EIGHT – EIGHT Helpful Hands

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

There is something out there with EIGHT knobbly legs, and you can find it anywhere in the world. They usually hide in corners, or outside in a shed. You can find them in a tree or in a bath. Can you guess? Spiders! And spiders are helpful, as well. They eat the bugs which want to gobble up plants.

Bible Story: Eight Helpful Hands (Mark 2:1-11)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Jesus

Sick man

His four friends – feel free to use cuddly animals instead

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A box to use as a house, with a lid you can tear up.

A small bed with string attached to the corners. (you can use a cereal box and shoelaces)

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – When you are sick, it is really nice when someone helps you, who brings you a drink and food. Do you know of anyone who is sick? How can you help them?

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for helping me. Help me to help others. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 8: Eight Helpful Hands (sick man through the roof - Mark 2:1-11)

Jesus sat inside a house. But too many people wanted to visit. They stepped on toes. They elbowed each other. “Ouch!” they said.

Four men tried to get inside. They carried a sick man on a bed. “Excuse us,” they called. “We want to ask Jesus to make our friend better.”

But those in front said, “Shh! Be quiet? We were here first!”

The four men stopped. Their EIGHT arms and hands ached, but they held that bed. They didn’t let go. “We will help our friend,” they said to each other.

Then one of them pointed up to the roof. “Let’s go up there. Let’s make a hole. Maybe we can get our friend to Jesus that way.”

They climbed up the stairs. “Don’t you worry,” they told their friend.

They pulled off the tiles. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. EIGHT. Down below those people called, “Stop! Go away! We were here first!”

But the four men didn’t listen. With EIGHT big hands they grabbed the bed. They lowered their friend.

Jesus looked up at the man. He said, “Friend, you are forgiven for everything you did wrong.” Jesus knew what that man needed to hear.

The others complained. “Jesus. You can’t say that. Only God forgives.”

Jesus just smiled. “Is it easier to say, you are forgiven, or get up and walk?”

Nobody answered, so Jesus said, “Friend, get up and walk! Take your bed and go home.”

The man moved one leg, and then the other. He jumped out of bed. He picked up his bed, up over his head! “Amazing!” everyone said. They made a path. They stepped on toes. They elbowed each other. But they didn’t say “Ouch!” They laughed and cheered.

Session 9: Remember to Say 'Thanks' – NINE – Nine Forgot!

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Number and Topic:

You can find the number NINE everywhere, but everyone just flies over it. When you count from 0 to 10, you always say 9, but it doesn't seem that important, because you're trying to get to 10. And there is something else that is very easy to forget, saying 'thanks.'

Bible Story: NINE Forgot! (Luke 17:11-19)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Jesus

10 sick people (If you don't have 10 cuddly toys, use spoons or rolled-up socks)

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A road (a dark towel or sheet works fine)

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Saying 'thank you' is important. Can you remember a time when you said 'thanks'?

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help me always remember to say 'thanks.' Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 9: NINE Forgot! (healing 10 lepers - Luke 17:11-19)

A long ago there were no hospitals. If someone got very sick, they had to move out of their house. And they couldn't come near anyone.

One day ten sick men saw Jesus walking down a country road. These men had huge spots on their faces, hands, and toes. And because they couldn't come near, they shouted as loud as they could, "JESUS, HELP US!"

Jesus stopped. He looked at those ten sick men. He called back, so they could hear, "GO TO THE PRIEST AND TALK WITH HIM!"

Those ten sick men got into a circle. They said, "We don't want to talk with a priest? We want to get well." But then they said, "Hmmm, this is Jesus. He always knows what is best. Maybe going is right."

So, they turned to Jesus and called back, "OKAY!"

They walked down the road all together. Then one of them lifted his hand to shoo a fly away. Suddenly he shouted, "LOOK!"

All the rest gathered around. "What is it?" they asked.

"LOOK at my hands! LOOK at your faces! LOOK at our feet and toes! Jesus did it! He made us well."

"YIPEE!" they shouted and ran to the priest. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. NINE. But the tenth one stopped. He watched the NINE. He said, "I must go back and say thank you to Jesus."

He ran the other way. He found Jesus by the road. "Thank you!" he called. He fell on his knees

Jesus smiled. "You're welcome. But weren't there ten of you? Where are the other nine?" The man didn't know.

Jesus told him that now he could go home. That man jumped up. He called back, "THANKS again!". He ran down the road all the way home.

Session 10: Don't Be Lazy - TEN – Those TEN Girls

Memory Line: "You are precious to me." (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

You can find the number TEN in a zoo. Most monkeys have TEN toes! And they can eat with their toes as well! Have you ever tried? Can you eat peas just by using your toes? Of course not! You use a fork or spoon.

Bible Story: Those TEN Girls (Matthew 25:1-13)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Ten girls –

Bride and groom

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A wedding invitation – a folded piece of paper or a card

Ten lamps – you could also use ten birthday candles

Door – you could use a piece of card or a breakfast cereal box...

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Do you ever feel lazy and don't want to brush your teeth or wash your hands? You don't want to put your shoes away? Why do you think these are good to do?

Bean Bag Prayer: "Dear God, help me not to be lazy. Amen."

Sing a song:

"Every Toddler COUNTS" card for this session:



Story 10: Those TEN Girls (Matthew 25:1-13)

Jesus told a story about TEN big girls. Each one got a card. It said, “The wedding is tonight! Bring a lamp.”

All TEN girls found a lamp. All TEN girls polished them. But when girls one, two, three, four, and five, looked inside their lamps, not much oil was left. “Never mind,” they said. “We will have enough for the wedding.”

So those first five girls washed their faces. They put on their dresses and hurried to the wedding. But they got there too early and sat on the grass.

Girls six, seven, eight, nine and TEN, looked inside their lamps as well. “Oh no!” they said. “Not much there.” They ran to the shops. They each bought a bottle of oil and then they ran all the way home.

They washed their hot faces. They put on nice dresses. They huffed and puffed as they ran to the wedding. But it still hadn’t started, so they sat down as well.

The first five laughed. “What a waste of time. The wedding will soon begin.”

But they waited and waited. Soon they all fell asleep. Suddenly, at midnight a shout woke them up. “The wedding has begun!”

The TEN girls jumped up and rubbed their eyes. It was dark. Their lamps had gone out. Girls one to five said, “We have run out of oil. Please give us some.”

Girls six to ten said, “We only have just enough. Go buy some yourselves.”

Those first five girls ran off. Huff and puff. But by the time they got back, the doors were locked. They never got in.

Jesus looked at the people. “Please, don’t be lazy,” he said. “Be like girls six to ten. Always be ready! You never know when I will come.”

Session 11: Jesus Is Our Friend – ELEVEN – Eleven Sad Helpers

Memory Line: “You are precious to me.” (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.
Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.*

Number and Topic:

It isn't easy to find the number ELEVEN, but it is there. If you play cricket or football, there are ELEVEN people of a team. If you have a dozen eggs and drop one of them, there are eleven left!

Bible Story: ELEVEN Sad Helpers (Luke 24, Acts 1)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Jesus

Eleven helpers – Eleven is a big number. Use cuddly toys as well, or rolled-up socks

Two angels

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

Green cloth for mountain

White cloth for clouds to hid Jesus

Brown cloth or box for the house

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Have you ever been sad? How do you know when someone is sad? How can you be a friend to them?

Bean Bag Prayer: “Dear God, thank you for being my friend. Amen.”

Sing a song:

“Every Toddler COUNTS” card for this session:



Story 11: ELEVEN Sad Helpers (Jesus goes to heaven - Luke 24, Acts 1)

Nothing was going right. One day Jesus was alive, with his twelve helpers around him. The next day he had died and one of his helpers as well. Now there were only ELEVEN helpers left, and no Jesus as well.

Then someone ran up to them, a huge smile on her face. “Jesus is alive! I just saw him!”

The helpers shook their heads. “IMPOSSIBLE!”

But Jesus suddenly appeared in the room. The helpers’ eyes almost popped out. “Is that you?” they asked. “How did you get in? The doors are locked.”

Jesus laughed. “Hi, everyone! Don’t be scared. I told you I would come back to life. Look! It’s me.”

The helpers gathered around, touching his hands. They were too happy for words. Then Jesus took them outside. They climbed a mountain.

One of the helpers asked, “Jesus, there is a lot of sadness on earth. When will you make things happy?”

Jesus smiled. “I came to earth to help you love God. Now it’s your turn. Go into the whole world and help people love God. Then they will be happy as well.”

The helpers looked at Jesus. “The whole world? That’s a huge job!”

Jesus nodded. “It is. But don’t worry. I will be with you and send you help.”

Then Jesus raised his arms. He rose up into the sky. He disappeared behind some clouds. He was gone... The ELEVEN helpers just stood there, sad again.

Then two angels appeared. “Don’t stare in the sky. Jesus is coming back.”

The helpers laughed. It made them so happy. They ran back to the town, leaping and singing. Everything would be okay.

Session 12: Everyone is Special – Special Number TWELVE – Acts 1

Memory Line: “You are precious to me.” (Isaiah 43:4 NLT)

Welcome:

Theme Song: to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Up above the world so high. Like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star. God loves you just as you are.

Number and Topic:

If you think about it, the number TWELVE is everywhere. It is on clocks, watches and mobile phones. TWELVE in the day means, “Time to eat!” In the middle of the night, it means, “Go to sleep!”

Bible Story: Special Number TWLEVE (Acts 1)

Dolls, puppets or dressed up wooden spoons:

Eleven helpers

Matthias

Joseph

Materials needed: (feel free to swap the materials with what you have)

A long stick and a short stick

A room with chairs all around

Reflective Time (interactive):

Ask the children – Who is special in your life? Who is your friend?

Bean Bag Prayer: “Dear God, thank you for friends. Amen.”

Sing a song:

“Every Toddler COUNTS” card for this session:



Story 12: Special Number TWELVE (choosing another helper - Acts 1)

After Jesus went to heaven, his helpers got together. One of them said, "Jesus always had TWELVE special helpers. Now we are eleven. Let's choose another one to make us TWELVE again."

The other helpers nodded and put their heads together. Two names came to mind. Joseph and Matthias. Both people were equally great. But which one should they choose? They didn't know what to do.

The helpers called the two men in for a meeting. "Hello," said the helpers. "Would one of you like to become a Jesus helper?"

But both people said, "We will do whatever you think best."

So, everyone prayed. "Dear God, you know everyone's heart. Please show us which of these two men you would like us to choose."

Then a helper picked up two sticks. One was short, and the other long. He said, "The one who picks the long stick is the one who will be Jesus's new helper."

The helper mixed up the sticks. He held out his fist, with the two sticks tucked in. "Please choose one," he told Joseph and Matthias.

Both the men took a hold of a stick. They pulled it out of the helper's hand. They both held up their stick and looked at them.

Which one had the long one? Matthias! Joseph threw his arms around Matthias. "Congratulations, my friend! I am so happy for you." And Joseph really was.

But that isn't the end of the story. Joseph wasn't Number Twelve, but he was still precious to God. He could still do good things. And the same is true for each of us. We are very precious to God, no matter what we do.

The End 😊

You can find out more about Fun Fish Toddler Sessions at funfish.org.uk