



Welcoming Preschoolers Back to Mission Friends

Consider doing the following things before, during, and after your Mission Friends sessions. These are general suggestions, and do not cover all guidelines to be considered or practiced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beforehand

- **Deep clean classroom equipment.** Take some time to thoroughly clean the room. Ask other leaders who share the room to join you in this effort. Clean and sanitize all surface areas of the classroom. This includes tables, chairs, shelves, countertops, homeliving equipment, and floors.
- **Assess and clean classroom materials.** Now is a good time to look at all the materials in the interest areas and assess whether the materials can be cleaned and disinfected easily. Consider removing stuffed animals or cloth dolls at least temporarily as these hold germs more easily than hard surfaces. Use disinfectant wipes to wipe off all wooden and plastic blocks, puzzles, dolls, etc.
- **Contact preschoolers beforehand.** Let preschoolers know that you look forward to seeing them in Mission Friends. Send an email or text message to the parents or send a note through snail mail. Tell them an activity your Mission Friends group will do when you start again.
- **Plan for the month.** Use [Mission Friends Leader](#) to plan the activities you choose for each session. Jot down the activities on the [Plan Sheet for Mission Friends](#) to use as a quick reference during the month. Pull the pictures and resource kit items from [Mission Friends Leader Kit](#), and place these in a folder for the month.
- **Extra face coverings.** If your state, county, city, or church requires face coverings for the ages of preschoolers you teach, have extra children's masks on hand for preschoolers who may not bring one.

During Mission Friends

- **Start a new greeting.** Greet preschoolers with a new ritual such as a hand wave or an elbow bump.
- **Wash hands.** Leaders and preschoolers should wash their hands when entering and exiting the room. Follow handwashing procedures for rest rooms, serving snacks, and diaper changing.
- **Individual materials.** Place a set of materials for the session in individual gallon ziplock bags for each preschooler, and label each with the child's name. This includes materials such as glue sticks, crayons, and markers. This cuts down on the number of hands touching materials.
- **Using interest areas.** Limit the number of preschoolers in each interest area as preschoolers are involved in activities.
- **Distance at Group Time.** Mark a place for each child to sit on the floor to keep a distance apart. Use masking tape to mark the spots, tape construction paper circles to the floor, or set chairs a distance apart.
- **Individual snack packages.** If you serve snacks during Mission Friends, serve snacks in individually wrapped packages. Do not use homemade snacks.
- **For babies.** Wear a long-sleeved smock. Follow diaper changing guidelines, making sure to wear gloves. Clean and disinfect the diaper changing area following each diaper change. Keep a tub to place all items or toys after a baby has put them into his or her mouth, to be cleaned after the session.

After Each Session

- **Clean and disinfect.** After the sessions, take a few minutes to clean and disinfect all toys, common materials, and surface areas of the classroom.
- **Wash hands.** Wash your hands before leaving the room.