

Making Use of the Environment

The physical environment, including the sandpit, moveable play equipment, home corner, block corner and the like, provide creative elements which can extend the religion program and afford students' direct physical participation.

SANDPIT A significant number of biblical stories take place in the desert and the following could be told with students sitting around the sandpit as figures and props are moved over the sand to tell the story.

- **Moses crossing and travelling beyond the Sea of Reeds:** Have two rolls of blue paper which can be rolled back as Moses and the Hebrew slaves pass through.
- **The Good Samaritan:** Make a high mountain area and winding road down to its bottom into the city of Jericho. Represent this with some small branches and blue paper or dish embedded into sand with water to be the oasis. Tell the story moving the figures down the steep narrow road of the mountain towards the bottom into Jericho.

OUTSIDE WITH MOVEABLE PLAY EQUIPMENT Climbing equipment could be set up to represent some journey stories found in the Bible:

- **The Crossing of the Sea of Reeds:** You could include a small pool of water between sections of the equipment.
- **Mary and Joseph's journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem.** Include long boards so as to provide a place for rest and sleep that would be needed for such a long journey. Have students think about what you would need to pack for such a long journey.

HOME CORNER The home corner can be set up to represent a number of elements. Provide props that can be made out of readily available materials such as boxes, blocks, cardboard and so on.

- **Baptism:** Include baby baths, jugs, dolls, white gowns, candles. You could also include "flash cards" to develop students' specific language such as, oil, water, white robe, candle, as well as specific language used in the Rite of Baptism, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" "Receive the light of Christ"
- **House in biblical times:** Include a table, a box that could be cut out to resemble simple oven of those times, simple oil lamp.

BLOCK CORNER The block corner is open to many constructions either for entire stories or for physical elements in stories, such as the Temple, small biblical village, fishing boats and so on.

- **The Temple:** Have images of the Jerusalem Temple during Jesus' time. Discuss with students the two main parts of the main building, the many rooms which formed part of the walls, the porticos.
- **Villages and cities such as Capernaum, Bethlehem, and Nazareth:** Ensure students understand the physical set up houses during these times and the importance of flat roofs. For bigger cities show them images of the city gates and what their use was in the daily comings and goings of the people visiting markets, synagogue, blacksmith and the like.