



# Fiesta!

By Deborah Wassenberg

*Fiesta fun for your Kid's Ministry. Dress up in Mexican costumes and celebrate the return of the Prodigal Son. Teach children how to come near to God and join in the Mexican Hat Dance as they learn the Memory Verse.*

## Activity: Maracas

As children arrive make maracas. Play them with the Memory Verse and Praise and Worship.

You will need:

- 2 foam coffee cups per child
- Uncooked rice
- Tape
- Decorations

What to do:

- Decorate the 2 cups
- Add rice to one
- Tape the cups together and your maracas are ready to shake!

## Memory Verse: James 4:8

'Come near to God and He will come near to you.'

You Tube Video: Colin Buchanan Memory Verses. Or you might like to use the Lyrics Video on the 'Wright Ideas with Susan' channel so children can copy the Mexican dance steps.

## Praise and Worship: Unplugged

Invite guitar players from your Church music team to play acoustic guitar for the children just like a Mariachi Band. Choose simple songs and make sure your guests join in the fun and dress up. Maybe they'd like to wear a big moustache! Another option is the Chris Tomlin video 'God's Great Dance Floor' (Live Vevo version). A Mexican trumpeter plays a solo 2 minutes and 30 seconds into the video.

## Bible Story: The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Use a picture book for this lesson. Choose one with large, vibrant coloured illustrations. Add some Mexican motifs to each page (cactus, maracas, and tacos). If you are unable to find a

book you are happy with, create your own using illustrations from Free Bible Images. There are seven different illustration styles to choose from. Dress up as a Senor or Senorita who has come to visit to tell the story. Depending on the age you're teaching, you'll be able to have a lot of fun with the story, because many of your children will already know it well.

## Ministry to the Children:

### Extra Visuals for Flashcards or PowerPoint

**Visual 1:** children praising and worshipping God

**Visual 2:** children praying

**Visual 3:** children in trouble

**Visual 4:** children playing

**Visual 5:** child holding hand up 'stop'

**Visual 6:** child laughing joyously

**Visual 7:** child helping

**Visual 8:** child looking up at heaven

Who can remember today's Memory Verse? What can we do to come near to God?

- Praise and worship God (Visual 1)
- Talk to God (Visual 2)
- Ask God for His help (Visual 3)
- Enjoy His company everyday of your life not just on days you attend Church (Visual 4)

If you 'come near to God' it will help you...

- Resist the devil: James 4:7 (Visual 5)
- Keep you free from sin: Romans 6:22 (Visual 6)
- Help you live right: Galatians 5:22 (Visual 7)
- Think about eternal things - they're things that really matter because they are forever: Colossians 3:1-2 (Visual 8)

Remember, as soon as you come near to God, He is on His way to come near to you! If you're feeling far away from God today, let's pray together right now. (*Altar call.*)

## Games:

**Jumping Beans:** Play music (or the Memory Verse song) and children jump around like jumping beans. When the music stops they have to freeze. Anyone who moves is out. Then restart the music and repeat until only one child is left.

**Mexican Hat Dance:** Place a sombrero (available from cheap shops) on the floor and make a circle around it, everyone holding hands. Play Mexican Hat Dance music and dance clockwise around the sombrero. Call out the name of a child and that child leaves the large circle and

dances around the sombrero going counter clockwise while the rest of the children are still dancing clockwise. After 15 - 20 seconds call out another child's name. That child takes the place of the inside dancer and the first dancer takes their place back in the large circle. Continue until everyone has had several turns.

**Cactus Ring Toss:** Buy a blow up cactus. Cut rings out of cardboard large enough to fit over the branches of the cactus. Children line up and toss the rings onto the branches. Or make your own cactus from a large cardboard box. Add hooks as the spikes and children toss rings and try to hook them.

**Pin the Tail on the Burro:** The party classic 'Pin the Tail on the Donkey'.

**Piñata:** Buy a piñata and hang from a secure point. You will need a blindfold and stick. I've seen some near misses with this activity so make sure all your Volunteers are vigilant. Keep children safe by making them stand back 5 metres from the piñata so they are not accidentally hit with the stick. As soon as the piñata is broken open and lollies fall out, a volunteer must take control of the stick. The child with the stick is spun around three times before having three turns at hitting the piñata. Make sure you have extra lollies so no one misses out.

## Craft: Paper Fan

You will need:

- Bright paper
- Felt pens
- Dolly pegs (old fashioned wooden clothes pegs)
- Brightly coloured string or wool

What to do:

- Decorate the bright paper using felt pens
- Fold the paper accordion style
- Insert the folded paper into the gap in the upside down Dolly peg
- Use the string or wool to wind around and around the peg (it holds the fan in place as well as adding more colour and decoration)

## Brunch: Tacos

Combine with Big Church and have a Taco Stand. Stay in your costumes so families can see the fun you've had in Kid's Church. Talk about what the children have learned and ask them to perform the Memory Verse. Maybe some of the grown-ups will join in!