

PRESCHOOL



31

**PRE
SERVICE**

KidMin

GAMES

AND

ACTIVITIES

by **DAVID**

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A GO! Curriculum Companion

A NOTE TO CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADERS

Games and Activities are a great way to welcome kids to your KidMin. Don't be mistaken, though. Those games and activities aren't just a time filler. They do more than just keep kids busy while waiting for the service to begin. With the right mix of activities, that time can make kids excited to come to church. Better yet, it motivates them to get to church ON TIME! And in turn, they motivate their parents. There have been more than a few times my kids have pushed me out the door on a Sunday morning because they didn't want to miss a single minute of activity time. Moreover, that pre-service activity time can help kids connect with each other and with their leaders. Ultimately, it's those relationships that will help kids feel like they *belong* in your KidMin and make them want to come back again and again. With that said, here are a few things to consider when choosing your games and activities:

Choose games and activities that promote relationships. There's nothing wrong with having a few activities that allow kids to work alone, but for the most part, try to provide activities that encourage kids to connect with each other and their leaders.

Cycle activities in and out every 2-4 weeks. If you have the same games and activities week after week, they lose their appeal. Switch them out in order to keep them fresh.

Encourage your leaders to participate with the kids. It's easy for leaders to think that play time is just for the kids. It's not! Remind your leaders that playing a game or doing an activity alongside a kid is a great way to connect with them and earn their respect.

So with no further ado, here are 31 games and activities that preschool kids will flip for. For your convenience, many of the titles are clickable and contain links to online stores where the game or activity can be purchased.

Mega Bloks—80 Piece Big Build Bag: Building blocks are fun for everyone, but Legos® are small, which makes them difficult for preschoolers to manage. These Mega Bloks are like the training wheels of building blocks. As a bonus, they come in a zip bag that makes for convenient storage.

Price: \$15

Play-Doh Fun Tub: Play-Doh is a preschool staple. At a young age, kids are learning about texture and exploring how different things feel. Play-Doh encourages that. Moreover, it teaches fine motor skills and promotes creativity. This Play-Doh set comes with 5 different colors and 20 shape cutting tools. Of course, if you want to save a little money you can make your own Play-Doh at home using [this recipe](#).

Price: \$15

The Sneaky Snack Squirrel Game: Board games are a great developmental tool for young children. This one is an award winning game that touts itself as the best selling preschool game 5 years running. It doesn't require any reading, but challenges kids to match and sort colored acorns using squirrel tongs.

Price: \$12

Hape Dynamo Kid's Wooden Domino Set: Set 'em up, then knock 'em down! Dominos encourage STEM development. This set has over 100 colorful pieces that are slightly larger for young kids and are finished with a non-toxic paint.

Price: \$33

Jonah and the Giant Fish Floor Puzzle: This extra large floor puzzle is created by "Melissa and Doug." It's 2 ft. x 3 ft. when finished and has 48 pieces to it. Best of all, it comes with a wonderfully illustrated picture of Jonah and the Whale. There are multiple other Bible scenes you can get including "Daniel and the Lion's Den" and "David and Goliath."

Price: \$12.50

[The Switchersons—Family Face Changing Puzzle](#): Christianbook.com describes it like this: “Kids will love the Switchersons Face Puzzle from Schylling Toys. Designed for ages 3 years and older, this hilarious puzzle is ever changing! Featuring 1,048,576 different face combinations that will have kids howling with laughter. This block puzzle features images on each side of the block, making for lots of interesting combos.”

Price: \$12

[Coloring Books](#): Preschool kids and coloring books go together like peanut butter and jelly. They can go through them pretty quickly, though, so it’s important to find some inexpensive options. This Bible story coloring book fits the bill. It’s designed for children ages 2-4 and includes Bible verses. Christianbooks.com has numerous other Bible themed coloring books as well.

Price: \$2

[Mr. Potato Head](#): This spud is now over 70 years old, but it’s a classic for a reason. This toy is timeless and preschoolers love arranging his silly faces today as much as they did when we were kids.

Price: \$20

[Boxes and Buckets](#): No—that’s not the name of a toy. Sometimes the best toys are not toys at all. Save all of the boxes from your Amazon deliveries or buy a large amount of [cheap plastic buckets](#) that kids can stack into a wall or tower. Once they’ve stacked them high, let them run through it and knock it down.

Price: Free

[Indoor Skating](#): If your Kidmin room has carpet, cut a bunch of wax paper pieces so that they’re slightly bigger than a kid’s foot. Kids can place one piece under each foot, then “skate” around the room.

Price: \$2 for a roll of wax paper

Sink or Float: This is both fun and educational! Fill a plastic bin with water, then place an assortment of items next to it. One item at a time, have the preschool kids predict if the item will sink or float, then let them toss it in the water to find out. Include a towel to help keep things dry. You can find some ideas for Sink or Float items [here](#), but just about any item will work.

Price: Free if you have the materials

[Kinetic Sand](#): As described on Amazon: “Kinetic Sand is 98% sand and 2% magic! Pull it, shape it and mold it to create incredible sand art. Kinetic Sand sticks to itself and not to kids so it can be easily cleaned up and stored! Kinetic Sand stimulates children’s creative and sensory skills, allowing them to create anything they can imagine over and over again.”

Price: \$10.50 for a 3lb. Bag

[Balnore Bubble Machine](#): Bubbles are a blast when you’re a little kid. This bubble machine looks like a whale and blows more than 2,000 bubbles per minute. If that’s more bubbles than you can handle, try the more classic [bottle with a bubble wand](#). These bubble solution are eco-friendly, safe, non-toxic and will not stain clothing or furniture.

Price: \$13

[Little Tikes EasyScore Basketball Set](#): This classic indoor/outdoor basketball hoop adjusts to 6 different heights, includes an oversized rim and 3 junior sized basketballs. It’s great for helping young kids develop social and motor skills.

Price: \$35

[Radio Flyer Red Spin N Saucer](#): If I spin around one time I feel sick, but kids can do it all day! The Radio Flyer product description says this: “Get ready for some out-of-this-world fun with the Spin ‘N Saucer from Radio Flyer! Equipped with EZ-Glide wheels for 360 degree movement, children are free to create their own motion and can move in any direction—there is no getting stuck!”

Price: \$20

Giant Jenga: Jenga is a hit with both kids and adults, but the little blocks can be hard for preschoolers to manipulate. Problem solved! Build a giant set out of 2x4 lumber. You can find instructions on how to build it [here](#).

Price: Approximately \$25 for material to build giant Jenga

Monkey Foam: Another great creative play toy. Here's the product description: "Squeeze it, form it, shape it! Kids will love what this foam can do. Parents will love just how quick and easy it is - simply unwrap the foam blocks, squish them up and kids will be playing and shaping in no time. Won't dry out or harden - keep on squishing and squeezing. All the fun without the mess - won't stick to furniture or carpet."

Price: \$17

Balance Buckets: These stepping buckets are great for physical play and help children develop balance and coordination while they step from one bucket to the next. The buckets can be rearrange to form different shapes and patterns and nest together for easy storage.

Price: \$39

Paw Patrol Vehicle Set: Paw Patrol is all the rage with preschool kids. This set of 6 die-cast vehicles looks just like the rescue vehicles from the hit TV show. Now, instead of just watching the action unfold, kids can race to the rescue using their Paw Patrol vehicles. It's great for promoting imaginative play.

Price: \$25

Giant Marker Board: Another simple, but very effective pre-service activity. Does your church have a giant marker board on wheels? Well, what are you waiting for? Roll it into your KidMin room, stock it with an assortment of dry erase markers and let the kids get creative. If you want to, you can even organize a game of Pictionary with it.

Price: FREE (if your church already has one.)

Squigz: What are Squigz? Great question! This is how it's described on Amazon: "Squigz are fun little suckers. Apply pressure to two Squigz. Air rushes out and the fun rushes in. Connecting to each other and to any solid, non-porous surface - Squigz are a species all their own. They flex. They stick. They suck people into creativity. Willingly, they assemble to become rockets, vehicles...or a ginormous octopus or squid."

Price: \$25 for the 24-Piece Starter set. \$49 for the 50-Piece Deluxe set.

Dinosaur Take Apart Toys: Young kids are fascinated by dinosaurs. Not only can they play act with these dinosaur toys, they can take them apart and put them back together again. "This Stem supported take apart toy set will develop their coordination abilities and creativity with puzzle solving, hand-eye coordination, and patience."

Price: \$26

Seek and Find: Do your kids have a favorite movie character or sports team mascot? Print out pictures of that character, then tape them in hidden locations around the room before the kids arrive. If you use [GO! Curriculum](#) for Preschool (or even if you don't), you can get an assortment of [Topher the Gopher printouts here](#). Make some of the pictures bigger and easy to find and some smaller and more difficult. Challenge the kids to find all of the pictures before service begins.

Price: FREE

Bozo Buckets: This game was a staple on the popular "Bozo Show" in the 70's and 80's. Set up 6 buckets in a row, then have kids toss bean bags into them, starting with the closest bucket and ending with the furthest away. It's easy to create on your own or you can buy it from Oriental Trading.

Price: Free if you have the materials or \$17 on Oriental Trading

Fun with Friends Kitchen Set: Pretend play is a huge part of a preschoolers life. This kitchen set allows kids to pretend like they're preparing a meal for themselves or to share with others. It's especially popular with the girls, but contrary to common belief, the boys love it too!

Price: \$75

Parachute Game: Just about every preschool has one of these, and for good reason. Preschoolers LOVE it! Up to 12 kids can hold onto this parachute at a time. Throw a foam or inflatable ball into the middle and let the kids toss the ball around by moving and shaking the parachute. The Amazon description includes a variety of parachute game options.

Price: \$28

Hide and Seek: Preschoolers never get tired of this game! And best of all, it requires NO materials! Close your eyes and count to 10 while the children hide, then go find them. Or let a child do the searching. You can also hide an object in the room, then have all of the preschoolers hunt for it. Any way you play it, it's sure to be a hit!

Price: FREE

Paper Bag Puppets: These puppets are both creative and fun! Give the children some paper lunch bags and markers. Consider giving them stick on googly eyes as well. Let the kids create, then have playtime with their new puppet.

Price: \$10 for 60 paper lunch bags

Fisher Price Little People Christmas Story: It's never too early to be thinking about Christmas! This nativity set is perfect for preschoolers to play with. They can use the little people to act out the Christmas story for themselves.

Price: \$30

Little Tikes First Slide: You can bring some outdoor fun inside with this slide. There's not much to say about it. It's a slide and preschool kids LOVE it!

Price: \$34

Balance Beam: This is cheap and easy to create on your own. All you need is a roll of masking or painters tape. Use the tape to create a line or a series of zig-zagging lines on the floor. Have the preschoolers start at one end and try to get to the other end without stepping off. If they step off the line, have them start over and try again.

Price: The cost of a roll of tape.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David Rausch is the founder and President of Mooblio, a dynamic organization devoted to developing resources for children’s ministries. He’s also the creator of GO!—an interactive curriculum that gets kids out of their seats and into the storytelling action. For many years prior to that, David was the Programming Director with Promiseland, the children’s ministry at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. David has also served as the Children’s Director at The Crossing, a multi-site church in St. Louis. His passion is for resourcing and training people to plant the Word of God in the hearts of children. When he’s not pursuing that passion, you might find David climbing a mountain or trekking through the wild places on Earth.

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FREE PRESCHOOL LESSON

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