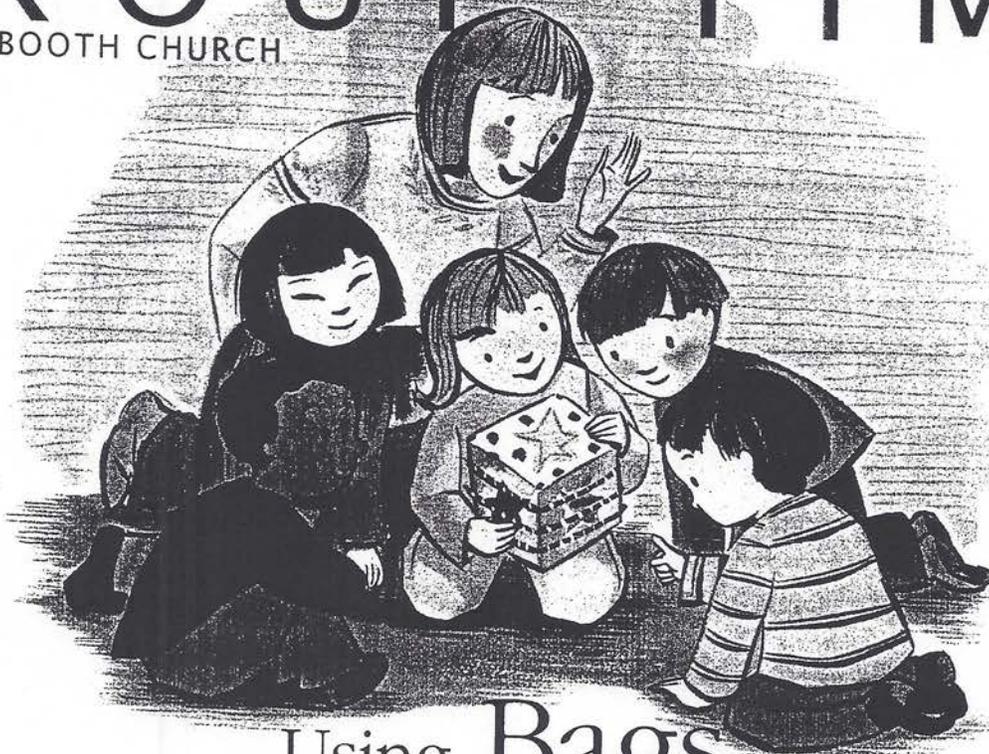


GROUP TIME

N BOOTH CHURCH



Using Bags and Boxes for Group-Time Surprises

have
their
attention
all
piped
with
these
imitating
-time
activities!

IT'S APRIL ... HOW DO WE KEEP CHILDREN'S INTEREST in group time strong? With a little magic! As you well know, without a few surprises and changes, group time can become repetitive and even tedious. This is the time of the year when children start feeling reluctant to come and fidgety when they stay. It's time to shake things up a bit by introducing mystery boxes and feely bags. You can use a pretty pillowcase, a drawstring bag, or decorated boxes in different sizes. You can make them silly, interesting, and colorful. But, best of all, no matter what the container looks like, children will love the mystery and magic of wondering what's inside. You can use these "objects of wonder" to share ideas, introduce materials, and explore the world of words.

The "Tell-and-Show" Surprise Bag
Try taking the age-old group-time activity and updating it by adding a surprise bag, a song, and reversing the game! Create a tell-and-show bag out of a pillowcase or plastic bag. Send a letter home inviting

the "child of the day" to bring her tell-and-show object to hide in the bag and surprise her friends. At group time, it's the job of the other children to ask questions in order to identify the object. You can sing the following song to get the game started:

The Tell-and-Show Song
(Tune: "One Little, Two Little, Three Little Indians")

*Tell us please, tell us please,
What's hiding in your bag.
Tell us please, tell us please,
What's hiding in your bag.
Give a clue, give a clue,
What's hiding in your bag.
We're all playing the tell-and-show game*

You might need to help children by asking some questions to get started. *What color is it? What shape is it? What do you do with it?* Write down children's ideas of what the object is as they are suggested. Toward the end of the game, invite the child to pass

the Little Things That Make
Difference...



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GROUP TIME

the closed bag around for the other children to feel the object. Then, read the suggestions on the chart to see which one, if any, they think is correct.

The Creative-Idea Bag

Instead of telling children what they are going to make at the art table, use a feely bag for brainstorming ideas. For example, if you are making a kite, you can hide the materials in a feely bag. Pass the bag around the circle and invite children to feel and guess the contents. You might ask, *What do you notice about these pieces? Do they remind you of anything?* Then, ask children, one by one, to take out the pieces for further examination. *What do you think we could make with these?* Write the ideas on chart paper as children come up with them, accepting all ideas equally. Remember, in brainstorming, there is no right or wrong answer. If children don't suggest a kite, you can always give a clue to lead them there: *This is something to play with outside on a windy day.* But, remember, when it comes time to do the art project, children should have the choice of making the kite or using one of their own ideas.

The Mystery-Word Box

What happens when you reverse brainstorm? You get a guessing game that uses many words to find one! Before group time, write a word on a large file card that identifies something children are familiar with. Hide the card in a mystery box. Use words for things that are easy to describe, such as weather, animals, or careers. At group time, give children clues to guess the word. For example, if the mystery word is *rain*, you would give words such as *water, drop, puddle*. Write the clue words on chart paper, and add a simple drawing to illustrate each. After all the clues are given, review them: *Let's read all the words we have collected. Can you think of something that they describe?* ECT

Ellen Booth Church is an education consultant, keynote speaker, and author of The Great Big Book of Classroom Songs, Rhymes & Cheers (Scholastic Inc.; \$21.95). To order, call 800-SCHOLASTIC.