



BOZ, The Green Bear Next Door™

Counting on God's Love

We can always count on the many ways God shows us His love.

The following lesson will help young children learn how to count some of the many ways that God loves us and how to count the ways we can show our love to God. You can use this lesson in Sunday school, Mommy and Me, daycare, children's church, or whatever programming need that you have. Parents can also easily adapt the lesson for use in home schooling or devotion time at home.

The lesson has been divided into several segments, with various activity options to choose from. Select the activity options that best fit your needs.

BOZ's fun stories help preschoolers discover God's world. The Bible helps preschoolers discover God's love. Thanks for your commitment to teaching God's children!

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY: Counting the Steps to God's Love!

You will need: Paper, two-sided tape, various items to show God's love for us

Before the kids arrive, set up several "stations" around the room that kids can visit, displaying different ways God shows His love to us. For example, you might include things like:

- A plant: God gives us things that grow
- Foods: God gives us things to eat
- Stuffed animals: God gives us animals
- Pictures of people: God gives us family, friends
- A doll house: God gives us our home
- Mr. Potato Head: God gives us our eyes, ears, nose, mouth
- Growth charts: God helps us grow

Next, create a simple footprint pattern and photocopy it or cut out a number of them to create a path leading children from the entrance of the room to each station. Vary the number of footprints between each station so kids can practice counting to different numbers along the way.

Welcome kids at the door (or the start of the path). Encourage kids to count the steps toward learning different ways that God shows His love.

As the children arrive at each station, encourage them to identify what they see and try to connect it to how God loves us.



SHOW THE VIDEO

You will need: Thank You God For...Colors and Shapes DVD, television and DVD player.

Introduce kids to BOZ, The Green Bear Next Door! BOZ is a fun, green bear who enjoys counting the many ways God shows His love to us and how we can show our love to Him. BOZ lives in his tree house next door to a little boy and girl named Drew and Gracie. BOZ knows that every day is a gift from God and he's ready to have a good time with your kids as they learn how to count the many ways God loves them.

Show Part 3 of the DVD: Counting on God's Love. Stop the DVD after Part 3 and ask the following questions:

What is the church project that Drew and Gracie are working on? (Find five ways that God shows He loves them; and five ways they can show they love God.)

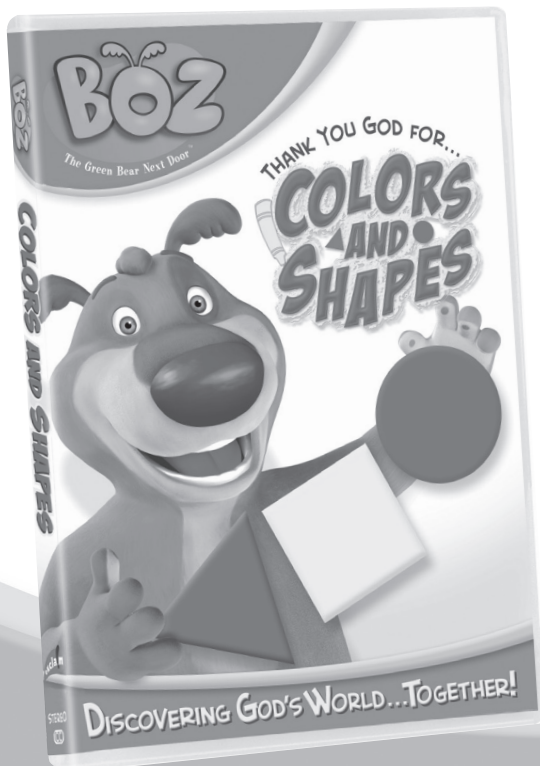
What are the five ways that Drew and Gracie discover that God loves them?

1. God gives them air to breathe.
2. God gives them trees and flowers.
- 3-5. God gives them eyes, ears, and a nose.

What are five ways that Drew and Gracie can show their love to God?

1. Doing what parents ask of them.
2. Helping each other.
3. Taking the time to clean up and take care of the world around them.
4. Taking care of God's creatures.
5. Sharing with each other.

BOZ, Drew and Gracie discover one more way to show their love to God. What is it? (Taking time to thank Him.)



BIBLE PRESENTATION: John 6:1-14

You will need: Bible story cards (attached), a Children's Bible written for preschoolers.

Before you begin, create 12 Bible story cards and color them (if desired). Use them to tell the story in one of two ways:

- a. Attach the first six cards to a different side of a square box, and attach the second set of six cards to a different side of a second square box. After you are done telling the story using the first box, open it up and pull out two fish and five small loaves (or slices) of bread to share with the class. Then tell the story using the second box and story cards. When you are done, open it up and pull out a basket. Ask the kids if they remember how many baskets of food were left at the end of the story.
- b. Wear a story apron with a large pocket. Insert the story cards into the pocket, and pull them out one at a time as you tell the story. Pull out two fish and five loaves of bread to allow the children a chance to taste the items they will be counting in the story.

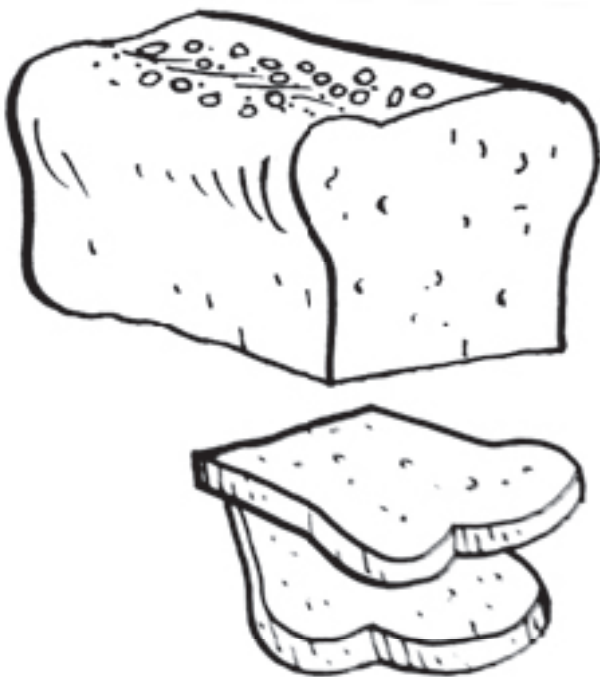
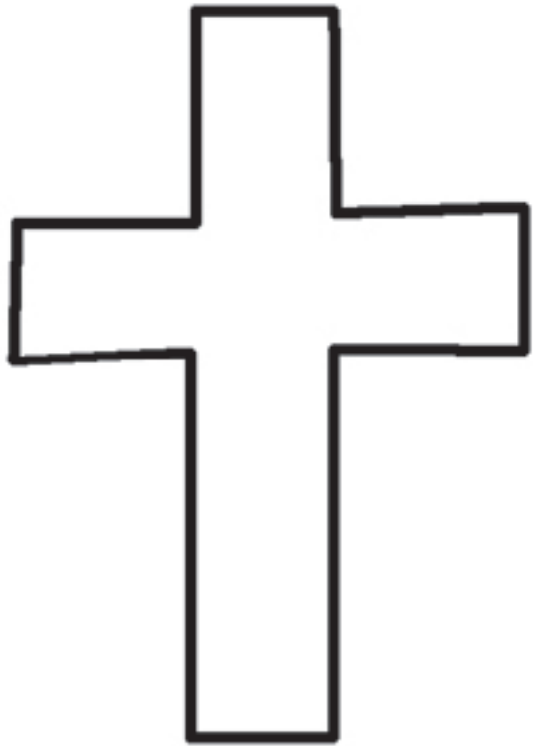
The Boy Who Shared His Lunch: John 6:1-14

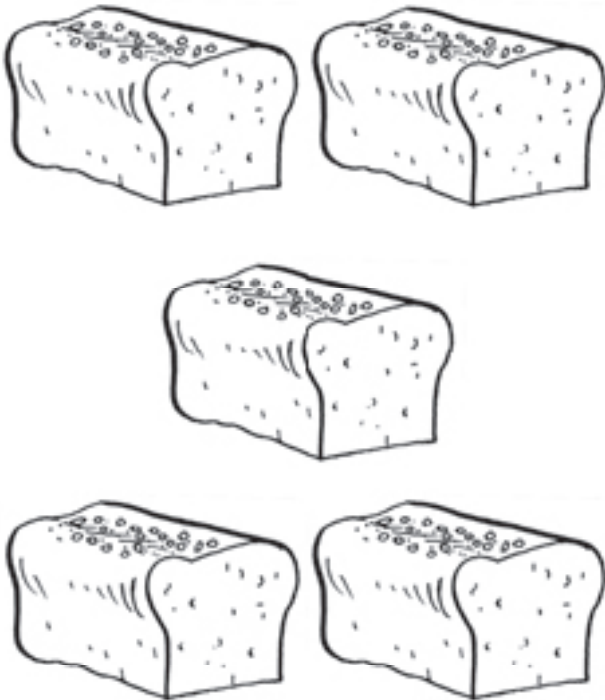
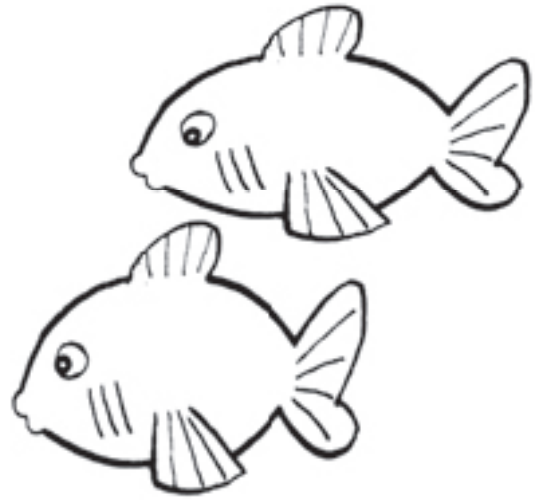
- Card 1: God's Son, Jesus, crossed the Sea of Galilee with His twelve disciples. A disciple is a special person that Jesus chose to learn from Him and follow Him. As they walked up the mountain, a large crowd followed behind them. That's because the people had seen Jesus heal the sick. (A picture of a cross to represent Jesus.)
- Card 2: Let's count Jesus' twelve disciples. (Lead the children in counting the twelve disciples.) (A picture of twelve smiling faces.)
- Card 3: Jesus and his twelve disciples sat down on the mountain side. When Jesus looked up, he saw that the big crowd had followed them. He asked one of his disciples named Philip, "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" (A picture of a loaf of bread.)
- Card 4: Philip answered Jesus, "It would take almost a year's wages to buy enough bread for each person to have one bite!" That's because there were five thousand people! It would be very expensive to purchase that much food, and they didn't have much money. (A dollar sign ... \$)



- Card 5: Another one of Jesus' disciples came up to Jesus and said, "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" The little boy loved God so much that he was willing to share his lunch with God's Son, Jesus. . (A boy ... stick figure is fine!)
- Card 6: Let's count the two fish the little boy was willing to share.
Lead the children in counting the fish.
(Two fish)
- Card 7: Let's count the five small loaves of bread the little boy was willing to share.
Lead the children in counting the five small loaves of bread.
(Five loaves.)
- Card 8: Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was a lot of grass for the big crowd of almost five thousand people to sit down on. Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. Be sure you remember to thank God before you eat.
(Praying hands)
- Card 9: Then Jesus took the bread and fish and passed them out to everyone who was seated. He gave each person as much as he or she wanted to eat! That's because God loved the people so much that He provided enough food for all of them.
(A big heart to show Jesus' love)
- Card 10: When the people were done eating, Jesus told his disciples, "Gather up the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." So they gathered up all the food and filled twelve baskets with all the leftovers!
(Twelve baskets.)
- Card 11: Let's count the twelve baskets of leftover food. Lead the children in counting the twelve baskets of leftovers. (Use picture of 12 baskets again)
- Card 12: After the people saw what Jesus had done, they said, "Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world." That's because God loves us so much that He promised to send His Son into the world. (A picture of a big heart with a cross in it.)









LEARNING EXPLORATION

Choose from these activities to help the children count the many ways God shows His love for us and we can show our love for Him.

Snacks:

1. **Yummy Number Worms:** Use small finger foods to create the shape of a wiggly worm number. Then count how many foods it took to create that number! Food suggestions: mini-marshmallows, berries, popcorn, cheese squares, cereal, and so on.
2. **Count the Food!** Invite kids to bring an egg carton (or collect them). Fill each hole with a different bite-sized food. God shows His love by giving us food.

Crafts:

1. Growth Chart

You will need: Continuing printer paper reams, BOZ the Bear clip art, markers, measuring tapes, crayons, scissors, glue, and star stickers

Before children arrive, tear off strips of seven sheets of continual paper. Cut them in half, vertically. Measure and mark each foot on the paper. Photocopy BOZ the Bear clip art.

If you offer this craft option, include the beginning part of it as your last station in your introductory activity of this lesson.

Lay the growth chart out on the floor and use a measuring tape to measure child. Then use a marker to fill in each inch marking on the chart, and label with child's name. Set aside for later use.

Redistribute the charts to children during craft time. Explain to the children that God shows His love to us by helping us grow each and every inch! To celebrate each of those inches, allow the children to place a star sticker by each one they have grown to date. Help the children to count the inches between each foot (as most preschool children do not know how to count much past twelve yet).

Pass out the BOZ pattern and tell kids to color him green and then cut out. Glue onto the Growth Chart to decorate it. Allow children to take their charts home with an additional sheet of star stickers so that kids can continue to celebrate how God helps them to grow in the year ahead!





**Learn
and
GROW
with
BOZ!**



2. God Created Animals

You will need: Construction paper, pencils, black markers, scissors, glue, cotton balls, feathers, black felt, small and tiny circle labels, black chenille wires, tiny wiggly eyes, miniature pumpkins or modeling clay.

Explain to the kids that God loves us so much He gave us many different animals to enjoy. We can show our love to God by taking care of those animals. Allow the kids to choose one or two animals that they can create to remember this.

Sheep: Distribute a white piece of construction paper and tell kids to spread a hand out on the page, trace, and cut it out. Tell the kids to count their four fingers and use them as the lamb's feet. Count the one thumb and use it as the lamb's head. Take a black marker and draw an eye, nose, mouth, ears and black hooves. Then spread a glue stick onto the lamb and count how many cotton balls it takes to cover the lamb to make him fuzzy!

Turkey: Distribute a brown piece of construction paper and tell kids to spread a hand out on the page, trace, and cut it out. Tell the kids to count their four fingers and use them as the turkey's feet. Count the one thumb and use it as the turkey's head. Take a black marker and draw an eye, nose, mouth, and ears. Then spread a glue stick onto the top of the turkey's body and count how many feathers it takes to create the turkey's feathers.

Zebra: Distribute a white piece of construction paper and tell kids to spread a hand out on the page, trace, and cut it out. Tell the kids to count their four fingers and use them as the zebra's feet. Count the one thumb and use it as the zebra's head. Take a black marker and draw an eye, nose, mouth, ears and black hooves. Then spread a glue stick onto the zebra and count how many thin felt strips it takes to create the zebra's stripes.

Leopard: Distribute a gold piece of construction paper and tell kids to spread a hand out on the page, trace, and cut it out. Tell the kids to count their four fingers and use them as the leopard's feet. Count the one thumb and use it as the leopard's head. Take a black marker and draw an eye, nose, mouth, and ears. Then spread a glue stick onto the leopard and count how many small black circles it will take to cover the leopard's body!



Spider: Distribute a miniature pumpkin or a ball of air-drying modeling clay to each child. (Prior to distributing them, puncture three tiny holes on opposite ends of each pumpkin so children can easily insert the legs.) Distribute three black chenille wires to each child. Show kids how to bend in half and cut. Then count six spider legs. Tell kids to insert three spider legs into top right side of the pumpkin or clay and three spider legs into the top left side of the pumpkin or clay. Bend a large portion of the leg downward. Take a black marker and create a mouth. Glue on two tiny wiggly eyes.

Ladybug: Distribute an orange piece of construction paper with a circle pattern to each child to cut out. Tell kids to draw two eyes and a mouth with a black marker. Then count how many tiny round stickers it takes to create the ladybug's spots.

3. God Made Me and All the Hairs on My Head!

You will need: Paper plates, wiggly eyes, markers or crayons, scissors, glue, and yellow, brown, orange, and black yarn

Distribute a paper plate to each child. Point out that kids will be making a picture of themselves out of the paper plates. Distribute crayons or markers for kids to draw a nose, mouth, and ears, and wiggly eyes to glue in place.

Next, explain that God loves us so much that He created and cares about every single hair on our heads! Tell kids to create hair for their paper-plate heads by cutting strips of the color that best represents their hair color. Then tell kids to count all the strands they glue to their paper-plate heads!



Games:

1. How Many Can You Find?

You will need: A variety of things (or pictures) that show God's love for us.

Before kids arrive, hide a variety of items or pictures that show God's love for us. (Be sure you have at least one item for each child to find.) On the word, "Go!" allow the kids to search for them. Be sure to tell kids if there is a limit as to how many they can find. Encourage kids to collect what they find and return to a circle with you. Invite each person to share what he or she has discovered along with how it shows God's love for us. When you are done, ask the entire class to count all the items they uncovered. If the number is too high, separate them into several groups, and count the items in each group.



2. God Loves You in Many Ways!

You will need: Large boxes, items or pictures to represent *God's* love for us.

Before kids arrive, prepare various stations (similar to the first activity) that hold a variety of things that show *God's* love for us. The only difference is that each item must be put into a box in various quantities. You will need one station for each child. Put one set of stations on one side of the room, and the other half of the stations on the opposite side of the room.

Divide the kids into two teams. Explain that one person from each team chooses one station to race toward; then tries to identify how that item shows *God's* love, and counts how many items are in the box. That child then races back to his or her station with all the items from inside of the box (more than one trip may be needed).

When everyone is done, the kids share what they have found and lead the others in counting how many items they found in their boxes. Afterward, the kids must help one another put all the items back into the boxes while singing the "Helping Song" from the DVD:

The more we help each other, each other, each other;

The more we help each other, the happier we'll be.

Cuz your friends are my friends and my friends are your friends.

The more we help each other the happier we'll be.

Helping and working together each day

Will help get the job done in every way.

We're friends forever in work and in play.

When we're together, it's fun to say . . .

(REPEAT CHORUS)



REMEMBERING AND APPLYING

Choose from a variety of the activities below to help the children review what they learned and apply it to their lives.

1. “Minute by Minute and Day after Day”

Lead children in singing the chorus from the DVD song, “Minute By Minute and Day After Day.” After each chorus, invite a child to name a way that God shows His love for them personally, along with one way they can personally show their love for God. Encourage kids to think about all the things they do and places they go, morning, noon, and night! Here are the words of the chorus:

Minute by minute and day after day
God shows He loves us in so many ways.
All of His creatures are singing His praise.
Minute by minute and day after day!

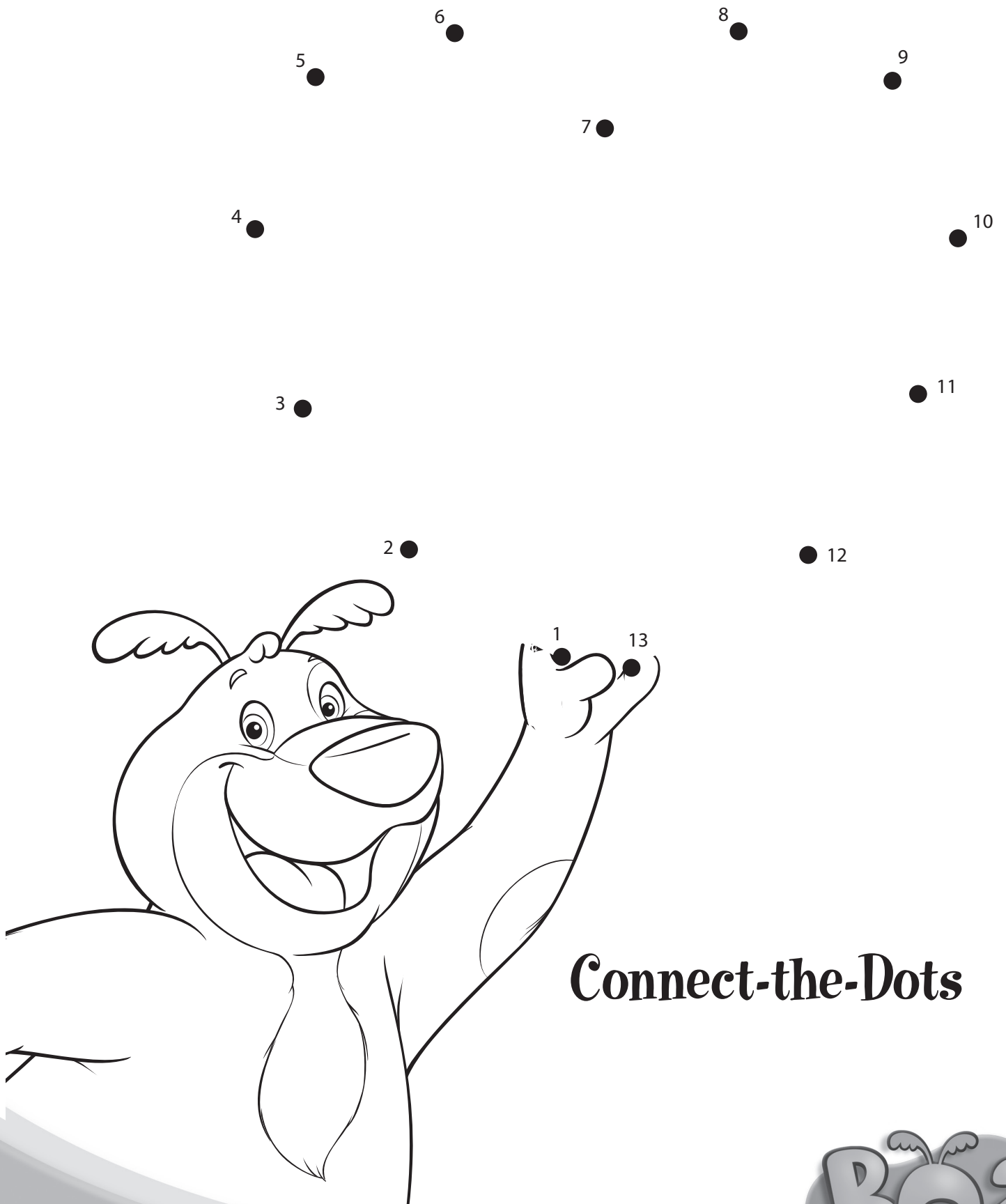
2. Connect-the-Dots

You will need: The reproducible dot-to-dot of BOZ.

Before children arrive, reproduce the dot-to-dot pattern for each child.

Distribute the pattern to each child and encourage kids to count each dot as they follow a path toward completing the picture. When kids are done, ask: Why is BOZ holding a picture of a heart? (Encourage kids to answer: Because God loves us and we love Him!) Then say: Let’s count how many ways we talked about today!





Connect-the-Dots



3. Closing Prayer

Teach the kids this closing prayer, by asking them to repeat each line after you, and holding up the correct number of fingers with each number.

Thank you God for sending your Son.
Thank you God, that's number one.

Thank you God, for baby chicks.
Thank you God, that's number six.

Thank you God for all things blue.
Thank you God, that's number two.

Thank you God for making heaven.
Thank you God, that's number seven.

Thank you God for flowers and trees.
Thank you God, that's number three.

Thank you God, for kids named Kate.
Thank you God, that's number eight.

Thank you God for lions that roar.
Thank you God, that's number four.

Thank you God, for trees of pine
Thank you God, that's number nine.

Thank you God, I am alive!
Thank you God, that's number five.

Thank you God, thank you times ten!
We love you God. Thank you. Amen!

Kids can count the cans in the cupboard, fruit and vegetables in the bins, jars in the fridge door, food on their plate, and so on.

Kids can also count items within each food, such as: pepperoni on a pizza, peas on their plate, and so on.

Kids learn a special prayer to say to thank God for food.

FAMILY TAKE-HOME

Distribute the Family Take-Home Page (front and back) for each child to take home. This will allow the children to continue counting the many ways God loves them, and the many ways they can show their love for God.





Dear Mom and Dad,

We sure had lots of fun today! We worked on numbers as we counted many different ways that God shows us His love, and ways that we can show God we love Him!

We heard a great story from the Bible that tells how Jesus fed 5,000 people with just two fish and five loaves from a little boy! There were even 12 baskets of leftovers! The story is found in John 6:1-14.

We also watched a really fun BOZ episode called "Counting on God's Love" that comes from the DVD **Thank You God For...Colors and Shapes**. BOZ helps his friends Drew and Gracie with a Sunday school assignment similar to what we did: counting all the different ways to count God's love for us (and our love for Him).

Here are some great activities that you and your child can do at home that will let you help your preschooler continue discovering great ways to show God how much we love Him and to find ways that He loves us! Count on having lots of fun!

BUBBLING OVER WITH GOD'S LOVE!

Go outside with your children and give them some bubble-blowing liquid. You can purchase it or make your own (see recipe on this page). As the kids blow bubbles, have them run around and pop as many bubbles as they can. While they're popping bubbles, encourage them to count how many bubbles they're popping.

(As they're popping, be sure to tell them the best bubble joke: What did the daddy bubble say as he chased after the baby bubble? "Here comes Poppa!")

After everyone is done popping bubbles, encourage your child to look around the yard and see if they can discover things that show God loves them. After you're done playing, say a prayer of thanks to God for all the ways He makes you bubble over with His love!

Homemade Bubble Recipe:

- 5 gallons of water
- 1 cup of dish detergent (Joy and Dawn work well)
- 1 tablespoon of glycerin
- Large wire hangers bent in desired shape to create extra large bubbles



FUN COUNTING GAMES

Encourage your children to work on their counting skills by playing a variety of fun games at home:

- Create a hopscotch grid with chalk outside, or with masking tape inside. Number the grid from one through nine and cap it with a cloud of God's love. Kids toss a pebble from the number one through nine as they hop and count their way to the top and back!
- Use marbles to play a variety of games. (CAUTION: Be sure that an adult is around when kids play with marbles ... and they should never put marbles in their mouths.)
- Draw a circle on the ground with chalk or on the floor with masking tape. Try to flick the marbles toward the circle with their fingers, counting all the marbles they can get into the circle.
- Another marble game can be played by filling a small wading pool with water and scattering the marbles around in the pool. Kids try to pick as many marbles up as they can with their toes, counting as they go!
- Play the game, "I Spy!" with slightly different rules. In this game, one person chooses a color to spy and says, "I spy the color red!" Everyone works together to count how many items the group can spy that is that color that has been spied.
- Play "Follow the Leader" and count how many times the leader does something, such as five jumping jacks, seven circles around the tree, three frog leaps, and so on.

GOD'S LOVE EVERY SEASON

God loves us every day, all year long! Kids can find ways to count God's love each and every season. Count how many you can name and make as many as you can count! Here are some ideas:

- WINTER: snowflakes, snowmen, Christmas trees, ornaments, and candy canes
- SPRING: raindrops, flowers, and robins
- FALL: leaves, pumpkins, gourds, and scarecrows
- SUMMER: grasshoppers, lightning bugs, baseballs, and beach umbrellas

THE MORE WE HELP EACH OTHER

One of the ways children can show their love for God is by listening to their parents and helping each other out. Have fun singing this song from the BOZ episode ... and have fun helping each other out!

The more we help each other, each other, each other:

The more we help each other, the happier we'll be.

Cuz your friends are my friends and my friends are your friends.

The more we help each other, the happier we'll be!

Helping and working together each day

Will help get the job done in every way!

We're friends forever in work and in play.

When we're together, it's fun to say ...

(REPEAT CHORUS)

