

Horton Hears a Who

I. Background

Learners: Group of 10-12 elementary age children from the small congregation of a Presbyterian church who are meeting as one class for summer Sunday school

Setting: A Sunday school classroom in the Education Building

Time Frame: 55 minutes

II. Focus

Unit Subject Matter: Dr. Seuss books which are being used to teach biblical principles to the children. Each book will focus on a different theme.

Biblical Principal for this session: All of creation is important to God who intimately knows and hears every creature no matter how small. Our cries are heard by God even if those around us cannot hear them.

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-2

Session goals:

Play the game of telephone to illustrate how difficult it can be to hear a message.

Read Horton Hears a Who to discuss how Horton heard even the tiniest of creatures just as God hears all that God has created.

Create pictures on cloth squares to become part of a church banner to illustrate God's care for all creatures great and small.

III. Space, set-up, and materials

Environment: A Sunday school classroom with floor space for children to listen to the story and one long table for the banner project which concludes the lesson.

Materials, Resources, Equipment:

Horton Hears a Who

4" cloth squares

Fabric markers and paints

Chart paper and markers

Banner sized piece of material that completed squares will be attached to

Volunteer seamstress to sew the banner for the church

IV. Step-by-Step Story Experience Plan

FEELING into the story (10 minutes)

Play the game of “telephone” with the children. All children sit in a circle and the teacher begins the game by whispering a sentence into the ear of the child beside him/her. Children continue passing on the message until it gets to the last child who says it out loud. Compare the message that the child says to the original message. Why is it that the messages may appear different? What are some things in our world that may keep us from hearing? Tell the children that today we are going to read a story about an elephant who is different from all of his other friends.

MEETING with the story (20 minutes)

Read Horton Hears a Who using the following discussion questions to talk about the story as it unfolds. How is Horton different from the other animals? Why does he care for the residents of Who-ville? What do Horton’s friends think of his actions? How do they try to stop him? What words would you use to describe Horton? What can this story teach us about caring for others?

Link Horton’s caring for the residents of Who-ville to God’s caring for all of God’s creation. Read Psalm 24:1-2 and talk about what it means? Are certain creatures more important than others? What characteristics does Horton possess that God also possesses?

RESPONDING out of the story (25 minutes)

Using the letters of the alphabet, brainstorm with the children a list of creatures that live on the earth. Encourage the children to come up with something big and something small for each letter. Write their ideas on chart paper.

Give each child two fabric squares. Using fabric paint and markers, the child will create an image of one creature that lives on the earth. Each child will do a different letter of the alphabet.

The remaining squares of fabric, paints, and markers will be displayed on the long table in this classroom along with directions for completing one or two squares. Members of the congregation will be invited to come into the classroom following worship or midweek meal and create one or two squares for the banner. The chart of ideas for each letter of the alphabet will be left in the room so that as images are created, they can be checked off the list. The children who participated in the original lesson will be asked to “supervise” the adults who choose to help create this banner by decorating squares.

When all images have been made, the fabric squares will be given to a volunteer to sew onto the banner cloth. The words of Psalm 24:1-2 will be written on the banner with fabric paint. The banner will be presented to the congregation by the children in a worship service. It will be displayed in the fellowship or sanctuary.

V. Rationale

We are all so busy in our world today that often times we don’t take the time to care for and “hear” members of the created world who may need our help. The telephone game is a way to illustrate how difficult is it sometimes to “hear” others even when they are close to us.

Horton Hears a Who illustrates what it means to care for even the smallest of creature who may be ignored by others who are too busy with their own lives or don't want to slow down and take the time to "hear." Horton's attitude and actions can be used as clear illustrations to children of what it means to truly care about our world and all that is in it.

Children need to have visible reminders of biblical principles so that they will be able to absorb the concepts behind them. This banner is one such example. By inviting all members of the congregation to participate in the creation of it, the project becomes one of the community of believers of all ages who come together to illustrate an important biblical truth.

