

# Creative Props for Singing with Tots

Lisa Baydush ♦ NewCAJE 2015

Preschoolers learn through DOING. Providing something for children to hold in their hands is an important technique for engaging them, especially with very young children who may be too shy or unable to participate by singing. Props give shape and context to songs, and make music class enriching and fun. Additionally, these props play a role in helping children develop fine motor and sequencing skills.

Enliven your classroom by making your own props to accompany stories and songs. It's amazing what you can do with a laminator, glue gun and some Velcro! Here are some ideas to get you started...

## Stick Puppets— craft sticks, Velcro, laminated pictures

Affix a piece of soft Velcro to the tip of a craft stick, and a piece of grippy Velcro to the back of a laminated picture. *Put animal stick puppets in a bag, sticks facing up. Let each child pick a stick and show the class what animal he/she got. Sing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."*



## Glove Puppets— child-size knit gloves, Velcro, laminated pictures

Affix a piece of grippy Velcro to the back of a laminated picture; they will cling to fuzzy gloves. *Make five of each picture for each student and sing sequencing songs, such as "Five Green and Speckled Frogs."*



## Finger Puppets— child-size knit gloves, laminated pictures, glue gun

Cut the fingers off of gloves (or create a similar shape with felt) and glue or Velcro a laminated picture to each finger. Finger puppets can also be made with fuzzy pony-tail elastic bands. *Caterpillar puppets can become butterflies by attaching wings with Velcro!*



## Paintbrushes— paintbrushes, ribbon, glue-gun

Cut ribbon into 8" strips; staple three ribbons together at one end; glue ribbons into the middle of the brush. *Use paintbrush props for color and rainbow songs!*



## Felt-Board— cardboard, felt, glue, Velcro, laminated pictures; easel



Glue felt to cardboard. *Use the felt-board to accompany stories and songs, to display holiday images, etc. It's very helpful to have a foldable easel to hold the board.*

## Laminated Story-Board— laminated background

Laminate a background for a story/song. Attach pictures with tape, blu-tak or Velcro. *Make a Tu B'shvat tree... children can pick laminated fruit!*



## Prop Cards— cardboard, glue, laminated background picture



This is a smaller version of the laminated story-board; make one for each student. Put additional Velcro on the back as a place to hold laminated pictures – this is a useful way to distribute pictures for glove puppets. *Be extra creative and make a shaped prop card, such as Noah's Ark.*



### Tzedakah Shakers— small containers, pennies, stickers

Affix a decorated 'tzedakah' label to a small container; cut a slit in the top for coins; fill container with 5-10 pennies. *Use as a shaker to accompany songs about giving tzedakah.*



### Fruit Shakers— plastic fruit-shaped containers, beads/rice

Fill containers with beads or rice, and use glue-gun to secure the tops so children can't open them. *Use for Sukkot and Tu B'shvat!*



### Sukkah— wood crate, leaf garland, laminated pictures of fruit, Velcro, ribbon



Drape a crate with a leaf garland; put a strip of grippy Velcro across the front of the top of the crate. Glue ribbons to laminated pictures of fruit, and affix soft piece of Velcro to the ribbon. *Children enjoy decorating the sukkah with the fruit. Crate can be used to make an Aron Kodesh for Simchat Torah with a piece of fabric and stuffed Torahs.*



### Tashlich— blue towel or plastic tablecloth; crumbled pieces of construction paper or crepe paper.

Children throw their "sorry's" away during the High Holy days.



### Flower Garden— craft sticks, foam flowers, foam base



Glue flowers to craft sticks; add green leaves. Cut slits in base and insert flowers.

*Use this prop for songs about spring and colors; add bumble-bee stick puppets for a sequencing song.*

### Song Cards— laminated picture cards

Print cards with pictures to accompany counting and color songs, as well as other themes, such as tikkun olam.

### Seder Plates— laminated picture of a seder plate and pictures of seder plate items



Laminate pictures of seder plates, and glue to paper plates; laminate pictures of seder plate items. Make a set for each student. *Students match the items to the images on the seder plate.*

### Manipulatives— laminated pictures, puppets, etc.

Laminate pictures for children to hold, such as dinosaurs and lulavs. Purchase inexpensive bulk items at party and dollar stores, such as groggers for Purim and frogs for Pesach.



### Havdalah Bags— small bags, laminated ritual items, spice bag

Laminate pictures of Kiddush cup and Havdalah candle, and fill a small mesh bag with spices; put in a small bag and give one to each child to use during Havdalah ceremony.

### Digital Props— iPad; iBooks

Make a pdf of any document and display it through iBooks on an iPad. *This can be a single- or multi-page prop.*