

Bible Point

We Thank God

Bible Verse

We thank God (adapted from Psalm 107:1).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn that people in Bible times thanked God,
 - realize that God wants them to thank him, too, and
 - express thanks to God for their friends and families.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ We thank God for family and friends.

Deuteronomy 16:13-15



The Israelites were specifically told to celebrate the Festival of Shelters as families and as a whole community (Deuteronomy 16:14). Together they would share in the joy of experiencing yet another year of God's faithfulness. Times of purposeful reflection on what God had done for them were necessary lest the people forget the central role God was to have in their lives. Many modern holidays have Christian roots. However, those roots are often eclipsed by busyness, parties, and presents. Christians should be careful to keep the focus on God during these times.

During the Festival of Shelters, the people constructed special booths to help them remember God's rescuing them from Egypt. Similarly, it is often helpful for families today to develop certain traditions (such as the lighting of the advent candles at Christmas) in order to keep the focus on God during holidays. Adults and young children alike can often participate in such traditions, providing a special opportunity for the family to honor God together.

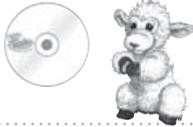
Prayer

- Read Exodus 12:24-27.
- Are there ways in which your celebration of the Christian holidays needs to be refocused upon God? What is one practical step you can take to do that for the upcoming holidays?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for the special times when we gather as family and friends to remember and thank you for what you've done for us. Help me, and help the children I teach, to keep the right focus during those seasons.

Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart on the next page.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God's direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Arrival Activities Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Welcome Time —Receive a warm welcome from the teacher and Cuddles the Lamb.	Name tags (p. 8), marker, tape or safety pins, CD player	
	Option 1: Home, Sweet Home —Play in pretend houses and take care of their “families.”	Blankets, dolls or stuffed animals, paper plates and cups, shoe boxes	
	Option 2: Cuddly Cuddles —Make cuddly puppets that look like Cuddles the Lamb.	Lunch sacks, cotton balls, glue sticks, black crayons, scissors, black construction paper	
	Pick-Up Time —Sing a song as they help clean up the room.	CD player	
Bible Story Time	Bible Song —Sing a song about the Bible.	Bible, CD player	
	We Thank God —Interact with sensory items on the StoryBoard as they learn about being thankful from Deuteronomy 16:13-15.	Napkins, crackers, medium-sized box, bowl, lamb puppets from Option 2	
	We Thank You, God —Sing a song to thank God for what he gives us, and thank God for each other.	Eyeglasses pattern (p. 176), CD player, construction paper, tape, scissors, chenille wires, lamb puppets from Option 2	
Bible Activities	Interactive Bible Bulletin Board —Review the Bible Point with Cuddles the Lamb as they create a bulletin board together.	Friends and family patterns (p. 163), scissors, tape	
	Sing It Out —Sing a quiet song to thank God for the things he gives us.	CD player	
	Bible Craft —Make funny friends from leaves.	Leaf-friend finger puppet patterns (p. 162), leaves or construction paper, crayons, tape, scissors, heavy-stock paper	
	Bible Game —Use their leaf-friends in an action rhyme.	Bible, leaf-friend finger puppets from Bible Craft	
Closing 	Banana Bunches —Say a prayer, and have a snack.	Bananas in bunches, napkins, plastic knife	

Arrival Activities

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: name tags (p. 8), marker, tape or safety pins, CD player



- Play “We Thank God” (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) from the CD as children are arriving.
- Use Cuddles the Lamb to help you greet each child by name and with a warm smile.
- Tape or pin a name tag to each child’s clothing.
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► we thank God.**
- Place Cuddles out of sight so the children won’t be distracted by him during the next activity.



It’s important to say the Bible Point just as it’s written in each activity. Repeating the Bible Point over and over throughout the lesson will help kids remember it and apply it to their lives.



Option 1: Home, Sweet Home

SUPPLIES: blankets, dolls or stuffed animals, paper plates and cups, shoe boxes

Before class, drape blankets over tables or chairs to make “tents.” Provide shoe boxes to use as doll beds, paper plates and cups for dishes, and a variety of dolls or stuffed animals for children to “care for.”

As children arrive, invite them to set up “housekeeping” in one of the tents. Encourage them to take care of their doll families.

Tell children that today they’ll hear a Bible story about thanking God and that some people had a party to thank him. Mention that the people lived in tents during the special party and that they thanked God for their families. Remind children that ► we thank God, too.



Option 2: Cuddly Cuddles

SUPPLIES: lunch sacks, cotton balls, glue sticks, black crayons, scissors, black construction paper

Before class, cut a pair of black construction paper lamb ears for each child and for yourself. Make a Cuddles the Lamb puppet so you’ll have a sample to show the children. Glue cotton balls on a lunch sack, add construction paper ears, and use a black crayon to draw facial features.

Set out lunch sacks, cotton balls, glue sticks, and black crayons. Slip the homemade Cuddles the Lamb puppet on your hand, and invite children to make cuddly “Cuddles” puppets of their own. As children work, tell them that ► we thank God for our friends at church and that Cuddles is a special friend. Let toddlers pet their Cuddles the Lamb puppets and use them to say, “Cuddles likes his friends” and “Cuddles likes hugs.” Write children’s names on their puppets.



If some children choose not to make a Cuddles the Lamb puppet, ask adult helpers to make extras so that each child has one. You’ll use the puppets later in the lesson.

■ Pick-Up Time

SUPPLIES: CD player



As Arrival Activities draw to a close, gently mention that it will soon be time to clean up. Encourage children to help you pick up things in the room as you lead them in singing “Let’s Pick Up All Our Things” (track 2). Use the *CD* and sing the song to the tune of “Looby Loo.”



Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things
And put them all away.

Everyone here can help.
Everyone here can help.
Everyone here can help.
Let’s put it all away.

Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
Let’s pick up all our things.
It’s time to stop our play.

Bible Story Time

■ Bible Song

SUPPLIES: Bible, CD player



Say: **Who can we thank for our families and friends?**

► ***We thank God.*** How do we know that? **The Bible tells us.** Show children the Bible. **The Bible is God’s special book. The Bible tells us about God and Jesus. Let’s sing a song about the Bible.** Using the *CD* (track 3), lead the children in singing “God’s Special Book” to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”



This is God’s special book.
Yes, it’s God’s book you see!
I learn about all God has done
And his love for me!

(Repeat.)

Bible!



■ Bible Story: We Thank God

SUPPLIES: napkins, small crackers, medium-sized box, bowl, lamb puppets from Option 2



Before class begins, please make sure that the sensory items are still attached securely so the children can touch them without danger of pulling the items off or putting them into their mouths.

Before this activity, place a napkin in each of the baskets you made in week 10. Put small crackers on the napkins. Have extra crackers in a bowl beside you.



Panel 1



Insert the shelves on Panel 2. Set the food baskets behind you. Place a medium-sized box and the paper leaves and cellophane from Sensory Packet 3 beside you. Set aside the lamb puppets children made earlier to use with Panel 3. Put the detachable Bible and Cuddles figures beside you. Make sure children have washed their hands.

Open the StoryBoard to Panel 1. Say: **Our Bible story is about thanking God. Long ago God wanted people to thank him. God wanted everyone to have a “thankful” party. So families and friends and everybody had a party and thanked God for all he had given them. Our StoryBoard shows pictures of things we thank God for. Let’s see what we can find.**

Ask: • **Who can find the apple tree?** Have toddlers point at the tree and smell the apple scratch-and-sniff sticker.

Say: **God gives us trees that have good apples to eat. Trees also have leaves that fall in autumn.** Point to the leaves in the picture. **The leaves are so pretty. Oh, listen!** Rustle the cellophane to make it crackle like dried leaves. **I hear crunchy leaves falling to the ground. We can pretend to be falling leaves.**

We’re leaves in the trees (*stand on your tiptoes and reach your arms high in the air*), **But uh-oh—here comes the wind!** (*Make blowing sounds and sway back and forth.*) **We’re fluttering down!** (*Wave your arms and crouch lower and lower.*)

Flutter, flutter all around;

Leaves are falling to the ground. (*Sit on the floor by the StoryBoard.*)

What pretty falling leaves! The boys and girls in the picture are playing in leaves. And the children are dressed in warm clothes. Let’s touch the jacket and hat. Pause for children to touch the fabric and pompom on Panel 1.

The children put leaves in their wagon. Can you make the wagon wheels spin around? Let toddlers turn the wheels on the wagon.

We can put leaves in a pretend wagon. Set the box near the StoryBoard. Hand children the paper leaves. **Let’s count to three and then toss our leaves in the air. Ready? One, two...three! Wheee! Now we’ll rake the leaves and put them in our pretend wagon.** Have toddlers “rake” the paper leaves with their fingers and put the leaves into the box.

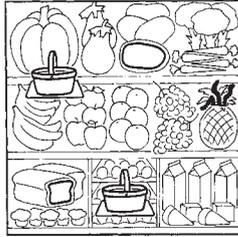
It’s fun playing together, and ►we thank God for friends. What else do we thank God for?



If you have very young children in your class, let them simply find and touch the StoryBoard pictures and sensory items. Repeat the Bible Point often, and reinforce learning with hugs and smiles.



Panel 2



Hold the StoryBoard so children see Panel 2. Be sure the shelves are attached. Say: **What colorful foods I see! God gives us good foods to eat. Let's find some foods in our picture.** Ask the following questions, and allow children to find and touch each food.

- Ask:
- Can you find the potatoes?
 - Where is the purple eggplant?

- Can you find the carrots?
- Who can point to the pineapple?
- Where are the bananas and oranges?
- Can you find the bread?
- Who can point to the milk and eggs?

Say: **You're good food-finders! It's fun to go shopping and pick out foods for our families to eat. Our class is like a big family, and we can eat together, too. Let's taste some good foods.** Set the food baskets on the shelves, and pass the bowl with extra crackers for the children to share. Ask the children not to eat their snacks until everyone has some. When everyone has a cracker or two, say: **Let's bow our heads and thank God for our food. Dear God, we thank you for food and families and friends to eat with. Amen.** Let children eat their treats.

► ***We thank God*** for our food and families and friends. What else do we thank God for?



Panel 3

Reveal Panel 3. Say: **Look! Here are people at church. They're having fun just like we're having fun with our friends.**



- Ask:
- Who can find a child sitting on a carpet square?
 - Where is the teacher?

Allow each child to touch the carpet square and the teacher's beard. Say: **The boys and girls are listening to their teacher tell Bible stories with the StoryBoard. They're learning about God. Here's the Bible.** Fasten the punch-out Bible to the teacher's hand. ► ***We thank God*** for the Bible. **Let's touch the Bible and say, "Thank you, God."** Hold the

StoryBoard and have each child touch the Bible. When a child touches the Bible, lead him or her in saying, "Thank you, God."

Do you suppose Cuddles is in their room, too? Have the punch-out figure of Cuddles peek at the children over the top and sides of the StoryBoard. **Oh, here's Cuddles. We'll put Cuddles in the teacher's hand.** Fasten the figure of Cuddles on the teacher's hand. Hand children the puppets they made in Option 2. **We each have our own Cuddles to play with. Pet Cuddles, then give him a warm hug.** Pause. **Cuddles is our friend, and ► *we thank God*** for friends. **Let's use our Cuddles the Lamb puppets to sing a song about thanking God.**

Put the StoryBoard away.



Important: Put the StoryBoard away and out of reach of children.

■ We Thank You, God

SUPPLIES: eyeglasses pattern (p. 176), CD player, construction paper, scissors, chenille wires, tape, lamb puppets from Option 2



Before class, use the eyeglasses pattern as a model and make a large pair of glasses from construction paper. Cut openings for the eyes. Attach chenille wire earpieces with tape. Fold the ends so that children can put the oversized glasses on their heads. Remove the *blue cellophane* from the Learning Lab. Cut the *blue cellophane* to fit over the eyes of the eyeglasses. Tape the cellophane in place, and place the remaining cellophane back in the Learning Lab.

Use the *CD* and lead children in singing “We Thank God” (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” Encourage children to use their Cuddles the Lamb puppets to do the motions in parentheses.



SING

Thank you, God, for food and friends (*pet the puppets*)
And your love that never ends. (*Give the puppets a hug.*)
Thank you for the clothes we wear (*have the puppets nod their heads*)
And for church where we can share. (*Have the puppets hop up and down.*)

We thank God. (*Have the puppets bow their heads.*)
We thank God. (*Have the puppets bow their heads.*)
We thank God (*have the puppets bow their heads*),
And we love him, too. (*Have the puppets nod their heads.*)

(Repeat.)

Say: **God gives us families and friends, and ► we thank God for their love.**

Have the children join you in a circle on the floor. Say: **We’re going to use these giant, pretend glasses to look at all of our friends in this room. We’ll use the glasses to remind us that ► we thank God for our families and friends.**

Hand the glasses to someone in the circle. Have that child place the glasses over his or her eyes and tuck the earpieces behind his or her ears. Let the child look around the room and then say, “I see [another child’s name].”

Say: **Good. You see your friend** [child’s name]. **God gave** [child’s name] **for all of us to love. Let’s thank God for** [child’s name]. Encourage the children to say with you: **Thank you, God, for** [child’s name].

Allow each child a turn with the glasses. Make sure each child’s name is called out at least once.

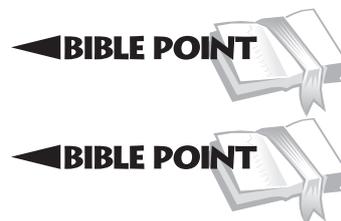
Ask: • **Who made your friends?** (God did.)

• **How can you show your friends that you love them?** (Play with them; share with them; give them hugs.)

• **How can you thank God for your friends?** (In my prayers; by telling them about God; by saying thank you.)

Say: **God gave us our families to love and he gave us our friends to love. ► We thank God for our families and friends!**

Say: **Right now, let’s put family members and friends around the Thanksgiving table on our bulletin board. But first, we’ll let our puppet friends rest.** Lead children to a wall and have them lay their puppets down for a “nap.”



◀ BIBLE POINT

◀ BIBLE POINT



◀ BIBLE POINT

Bible Activities

■ Interactive Bible Bulletin Board

SUPPLIES: friends and family patterns (p. 163), scissors, tape



Before class, photocopy and cut out the friends and family patterns. Be sure to cut out a pattern for each child.

Lead the children to the bulletin board. This week you'll add friends and family members to the Thanksgiving table.



Bring out Cuddles the Lamb.

Cuddles: Hello, hello! Where are the sheep I just saw?

Teacher: Those were puppets we made, Cuddles. They weren't real sheep.

Cuddles: They looked just like me! I thought I had friends to play with.

Teacher: You do have friends to play with, Cuddles. We're your friends, aren't we children? Let's give Cuddles a hug to show that he's our friend. (*Have children hug Cuddles.*) We've been learning that ► we thank God. And we thank God for our friends and families.

Cuddles: You're all my friends, too.

Teacher: We're going to add pictures of friends and family members to the bulletin board. Would you like to help us, Cuddles?

Cuddles: Oh, yes! I like helping my friends!

Have Cuddles hand each child a cutout. Help children tape the friends and family member figures around the table. As each child places a figure, lead him or her in saying the Bible Point. Then let children find and point to the food pictures you placed on the bulletin board last week.

Teacher: It's fun gathering with friends and family members to tell God "thank you." At Thanksgiving, ► we thank God for all that he gives us. Right now, we'll thank God with a special song.

Set Cuddles out of sight.

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■ Sing It Out

SUPPLIES: CD player



Using the CD, lead the children in singing “We Thank God” (adapted from Psalm 107:1) (track 15) to the tune of “Jesus Loves Me.” Encourage children to fold their hands while they sing.



**Thank you, God, for food and friends
And your love that never ends.
Thank you for the clothes we wear
And for church where we can share.**

**We thank God.
We thank God.
We thank God,
And we love him, too. (Nod your head.)**

(Repeat.)



Say: **God gives us so many things to be thankful for. The most important thing we thank God for is Jesus. Jesus wants to be our best friend and our forever friend. All we have to do is love him. Let’s shout a big “thank-you” to God for giving us Jesus.** Lead children in shouting “thank you!”

Let’s make fun leaf-friends to remind us that we’re thankful for friends and families.

■ Bible Craft

SUPPLIES: leaf-friend finger puppet patterns (p. 162), leaves or construction paper, crayons, tape, scissors, heavy-stock paper

Before class, gather colorful autumn leaves. Be sure you have one or two small leaves for each child. If you don’t have access to real leaves, provide construction paper and let children tear leaf shapes. Using heavy-stock paper, photocopy the finger-puppet patterns. Cut out the patterns and then the finger circles at the bottom of each one. Cut a finger-puppet pattern for each child.

Set out crayons, tape, and the finger-puppet cutouts. Say: **God gives us so many wonderful things like pretty autumn leaves and friends. Let’s make happy leaf-friends to play with.**

Distribute the finger-puppet cutouts, and invite children to scribble-color them. Help children tape one or two leaves to the bodies of their leaf-friends. As children work, encourage them to name things that ► we thank God for, such as families, friends, food, clothes, and trees.



If the weather permits, take your toddlers for a short walk outside, and invite them each to choose two pretty autumn leaves to use in their craft project.



When the leaf-friends are finished, invite children to slip their fingers through the holes and make their leaf-friends “walk,” “skip,” and “hop” around the table. Talk with children about the people who are special to them, such as best friends and family members.

Say: **Real friends are best, but we can have fun with our leaf-friends. We'll use them to play a game.**

■ Bible Game

SUPPLIES: Bible, leaf-friend finger puppets from Bible Craft

Lead children in the following action rhyme. Encourage toddlers to use their finger puppets to act out the motions. Repeat the rhyme twice and substitute the word *family* for *friend* the second time.

I like my friend. We have such fun!

We hop and walk and skip and run. (*Make puppets hop, walk, skip, and run along the floor.*)

**And when it's time to run along,
I hug my friend to say, "So long!"**

It was fun playing with our leaf-friends. This time, let's say the rhyme with real friends. We'll walk, hop, and skip together. Then we'll find a friend to hug. Lead children in saying the action rhyme once more and end with gentle hugs. Be sure each child gives and receives a hug.

Friends and families are gifts from God. Open your Bible to **Psalm 107:1**, and show children the words. **The Bible says in Psalm 107:1 that ►we thank God for everything! Now let's quietly walk with our leaf-friends to the snack table for a delicious treat.**

BIBLE VERSE ►



Closing

■ Banana Bunches

SUPPLIES: bananas in bunches, napkins, plastic knife

Have children wash their hands. When children are seated at the table, ask them to place the puppets under their chairs. Say: **It was nice to get and give hugs in our Bible game, wasn't it? Hugs are a good way to say "thank you" to someone. There are other ways to say "thank you." We can thank God with special prayers. Let's say a prayer to thank God for families and friends. Fold your hands.** Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for families and friends. We love them, and we love you. Thank you for all you give us. In Jesus' name, amen.**

We have special snacks today. Hold up bananas still in a bunch for kids to see. **Just like there are bunches of bananas, we have bunches of friends we're thankful for.** Hand each child a napkin and a banana half. **Say the name of a friend or person in your family each time you take a bite of banana.**

When children have finished with their snacks, have them throw the napkins in the wastebasket. Be sure children take their Cuddles the Lamb puppets and leaf-friends home.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

■ **Roll Along**

Sit with children in a circle on the floor. Have children sit cross-legged so that their knees are touching to create a continuous circle. Let children wear their Cuddles the Lamb puppets. Roll a playground ball or paper wad to each child in turn. Encourage each child who receives the ball to have his or her puppet say, “Thank you, God, for [name of a friend in class].” If you have very young children, help them simply say, “Thank you, God.” Be sure everyone receives the ball at least one time.

■ **Finger-Rhyme Fun**

Have children repeat the action rhyme from the Bible Game. Encourage them to use their Cuddles the Lamb puppets or leaf-friends. End by having kids choose a real friend to hug.

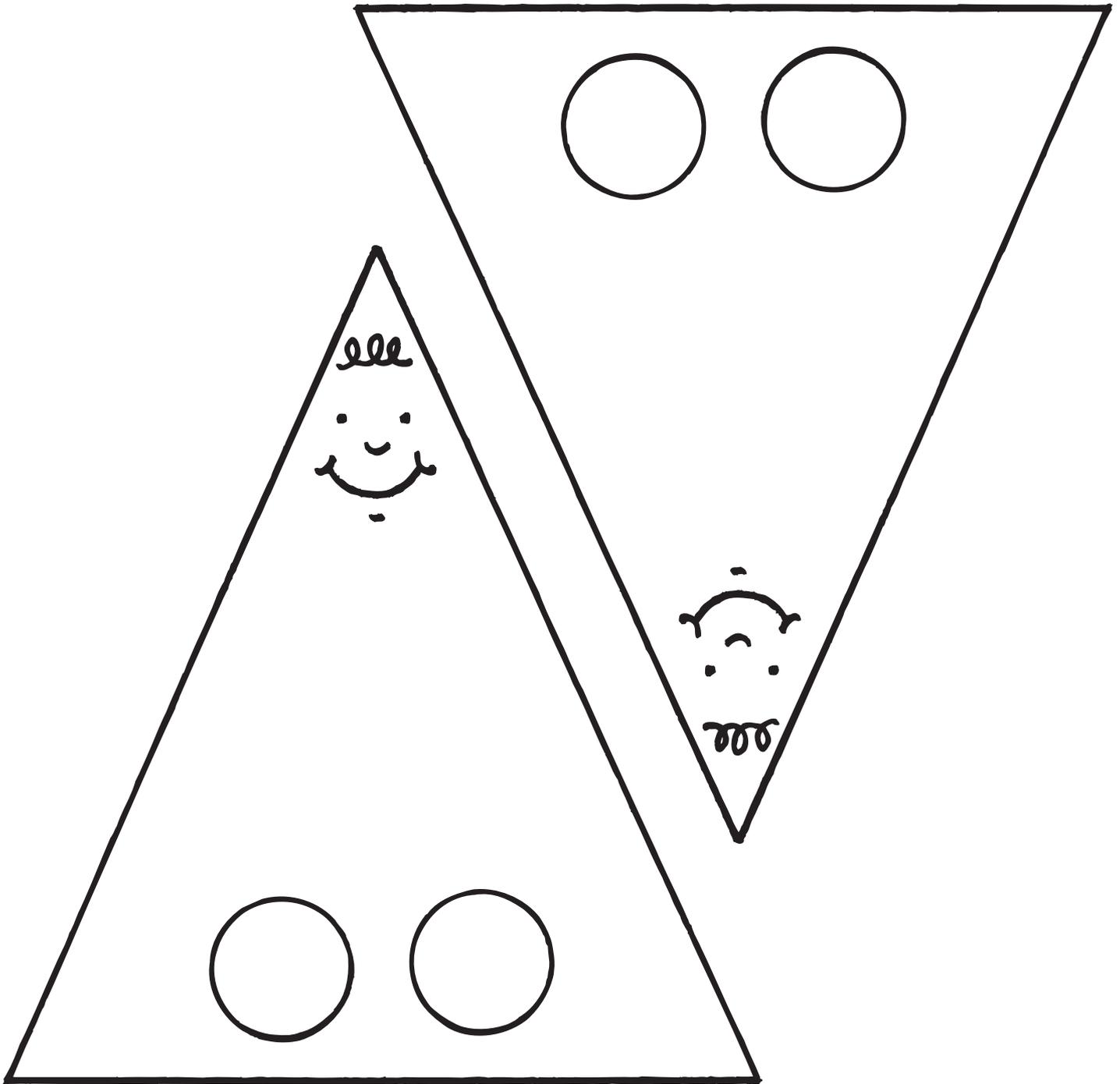
I like my friend. We have such fun!

We hop and walk and skip and run. (*Make fingers or puppets hop, walk, skip, and run along the floor.*)

And when it’s time to run along (*jog in place*),

I hug my friend to say, “So long!” (*Hug a friend and then wave goodbye.*)

Patterns



Patterns

Cut loosely around each pattern instead of cutting exactly on the outlines.



