

THE CIRCUS

THEMED PROGRAMME



AIM

It's time to join the circus for an evening of clowning around. You'll learn all the skills you need to be a successful circus clown as well as exploring some of the other tricks of the circus.

ACTIVITIES

-  Find the Clown!
-  Clown's Face
-  Jesus: The Greatest Showman
-  Tightrope Walking
-  A Clown's Wardrobe
-  A Trip to the Circus

THE CIRCUS

» INTRODUCTION

A circus is a form of entertainment that features many different spectacular acts. Often, a circus presents feats of human skill and daring stunts - including acrobatics and tricks on a tightrope, a trapeze, or horseback - along with silly and amusing clowns.

Historically circuses also used to feature animals such as elephants, lions and monkeys, however this doesn't happen as much now due to it not being kind for the animals.


? DID YOU KNOW?

- Travelling circuses often perform in a tent. This is called the 'Big Top'.
- Circus acts often perform in a circle, or ring, with the audience sitting on all sides.
- Some aspects of the circus have been around since the Roman times, however it is thought that the modern circus came to the UK in the 1700s.
- It's thought that there are roughly 75,000 clowns around the world.

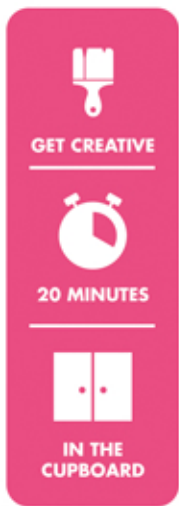


GET LEARNING: PROBLEM SOLVING FIND THE CLOWN!

Our circus clowns are well known for getting up to mischief and then getting lost. Can you keep an eye on our eight circus clowns and find the missing clown each time?

- 1  Download the Find the Clown PowerPoint. Display this for the group to see on a projector or large TV screen.
- 2 Show the group the first slide called 'Meet the Clowns'. Explain that shortly the clowns are going to start to go missing. It's therefore really important we get to learn who they are. Talk about each clown and ask children to find something on that clown that makes them unique (i.e. their unicycle, their juggling balls, their handstand etc). Let the group discuss what makes each clown different. Encourage the group to try and memorise each of the eight clowns.
- 3 Now it's time to see if you can find the missing clown. The PowerPoint includes a 10 second countdown slide, this is where the mischievous clown goes missing. After the countdown has finished a new slide will appear, but this time one of the clowns is not there.
- 4 Can the group find which clown has gone missing? Encourage those who have worked it out to put their hand in the air. Once everyone has had a good chance to work it out, ask one of the children to tell you the answer.
- 5 Continue through the activity, with different clowns going missing each time.
- 6 In the final two rounds, two clowns go missing each time. Explain to the children that in these rounds, there will be two of each clown on the screen, apart from two of the clowns. The easiest way to find them is to work out which clowns haven't got their matching clown on the screen.





GET CREATIVE: ARTY & CRAFTY

CLOWN'S FACE



- 1 Before the activity a leader should cut out some large triangles from coloured card. These will become the clown's party hat later on.
- 2 Give each child one of the triangles. Ask them to stick some feathers to the top of the triangle (hat) and to colour some spots onto the triangle, to make the party hat look fit for a clown.
- 3 Give each child a paper plate. Glue the bottom of the party hat to the edge of the plate.
- 4 Now add some large googly eyes to the plate (or draw some on).
- 5 Add one pom pom under the eyes to create the clown's nose.
- 6 Draw on a large smile using colouring pens. You could also draw on some big red circles on the clown's cheeks.
- 7 Finally add a load of coloured pom poms to the top of the paper plate, under the hat and above the eyes, to become the clown's hair.

What you'll need:

- Paper Plate
- Glue
- Coloured Card
- Scissors
- Pom Poms
- Feathers
- Large Googly Eyes
- Colouring Pens



GET INTO THE BIBLE: DEVELOPING MY FAITH

JESUS: THE GREATEST SHOWMAN

- 1 Ask the children if any of them have ever watched the film 'The Greatest Showman'. If they have, ask the group to share what the film is about.
- 2 The Greatest Showman follows the story of a circus ringleader called PT Barnum. It shows him bringing together a number of people to be part of his circus.
- 3 Explain to the group that you're going to watch a video of the people who performed in Barnum's circus. Afterwards the group will need to try and describe as many of those people – so watch very closely.
- 4 Watch **'The Greatest Showman Cast – This is Me'** by Atlantic Records on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/CjxugyZCfuw>).
- 5 Now ask the group to describe as many of the people in the circus as they can. This might include the bearded lady, the very tall man, the conjoined twins, the lady with white hair, the very hairy man etc.
- 6 These people in the circus were what some people might call 'outcasts' or 'weirdos'. Lots of people didn't want anything to do with them as they weren't seen as 'normal' or 'perfect'. They were people that others tried to avoid. Thankfully Barnum believed in them and helped others to see their value.
- 7 In the Bible we see Jesus do this too, just like the Greatest Showman does. Jesus often chose the outcasts and the poor. He chose the tax collectors, the poorly, the fishermen and the people others didn't want anything to do with. Jesus often chose to perform miracles on people that others had rejected or ignored. If you have time, explore one of these stories or moments from the Bible.
- 8 Jesus didn't need perfect people then and he doesn't need perfect people now. Jesus wants all of us to be in his team, no matter who we are, what we look like or what we have done. Jesus wants us to be proud of who we are, just like the characters in the 'This is Me' song, for God made us exactly how he wanted us to be. We're all perfect in God's eyes. How special is that!
- 9 Finish in prayer, thanking God that we can all be part of his team despite our 'imperfections'.



GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES

TIGHTROPE WALKING

- 1 For this activity you'll need to create a 'tightrope' (tape a line on the floor or lay out a length of rope).
- 2 Explain to the group that tightrope walking requires great balance. Get children to practice balancing by standing on one leg. Who can do that for the longest amount of time? Can anyone do it with eyes closed?
- 3 Now everyone has practised their balancing it's time to start tightrope walking. One child at a time should see if they can walk along the tightrope, staying on the rope at all times. Let everyone have a few attempts and see if they can stay on the rope. How quickly can they do it?
- 4 With basic tightrope walking now mastered, increase the difficulty. Can they stay on the tightrope whilst holding an opened umbrella in the air? What about with soft balls being thrown at the tightrope walker? Now can they do it with their eyes closed?

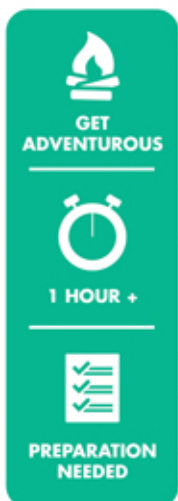


GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES

A CLOWN'S WARDROBE

- 1 For this activity you'll need a box of fancy dress outfits, themed around clowns. This could include wigs, glasses, brightly coloured clothes, large ties/bow-ties, red noses, hats, masks etc.
- 2 Split into two or more teams. Sit the teams at one end of the room and place all the costumes/props etc at the other end.
- 3 One person in each team should be nominated to be the clown. They should stand by their team and be ready to have costume items / props placed on them.
- 4 On go teams should send one person to the costume/prop area. They are allowed to grab one item and bring it back to their team, to place on the clown.
- 5 The next person in the team can then race to the costume area to retrieve a second item.
- 6 Continue doing this until all the items have been retrieved and have been placed on the clowns.
- 7 The winning team is the team that manages to create the best-looking clown.
- 8 You could play this game multiple times if you wish, changing the clowns each time.

Take it Further: Adapt the game by adding obstacles/challenges for children to do when retrieving items. This could include walking a tightrope, juggling with two balls, pulling a funny face, miming, telling a joke or more.



GET ADVENTUROUS: VISITS & TRIPS

A TRIP TO THE CIRCUS

A trip to the circus is a fantastic opportunity for your group to experience incredible acts, skills, stunts and more. What amazing sights will you see under the big top?

With circuses touring the country all the time, there is always an opportunity throughout a session to book a trip to your local circus. Alternatively is there a local Circus Skills Entertainer you could arrange to come to your meeting night and run a workshop?

Keeping Everyone Safe: All activities, especially trips and visits, should be risk assessed and have suitable leader numbers to supervise the children on the visit.