

BLESSINGS IN THE NICU



All Kids

What Kids Do

Prepare NICU support kits for families.

Before Kids Arrive

- * Two months ahead: Contact your local Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) to find out what items they need and accept as donations. When you call the hospital, ask to speak to the Nurse Manager for the NICU. Some items might include small journals and pens, nonperishable snacks, bottled water, drink mixes, gift cards to gas stations and convenience stores, lip balm, gum, mints, and unscented hand lotion.
- * One month ahead: Purchase items to include in the kits. You may consider asking congregation members to donate some of these supplies.
- * Purchase gift bags or baskets for the supplies.
- * Set up an assembly line for putting together the kits.
- * Cut card stock into strips.

Welcome

Welcome the kids (by name if you can!) and invite them to join you at a spot away from the supplies, if possible. Explain that Jesus invites us to participate in his healing work, and that today you'll be preparing kits to help with the healing of families who have a baby in the hospital.

In today's Bible story we heard about Jesus healing a woman who was bent over for many years. Throughout the Bible we hear that God invites people to participate in healing others too. Today we'll be doing a mending activity to help heal families who have a newborn baby in the hospital. Do you know anyone whose babies had to stay in the hospital for a long time after they were born? Allow time for kids to respond. Today we'll prepare kits with supplies to help families while they wait in the hospital with their babies.

Supplies

- Supplies for NICU support kits based on the rules/needs of a local NICU

Optional/If time allows

- Gift bags or baskets
- Mason jars
- Card stock in various colors
- Scissors
- Markers or colored pencils
- Washi tape

Tip

Be mindful of the fact that some of the kids present might have been in the NICU themselves or might know families (including their own) whose babies never came home. Be compassionate about kids' feelings and experiences.

Service Learning Activity

Guide kids through these steps.

1. Prepare NICU support kits based on the requirements and needs of a local NICU. If possible, explain the significance or usefulness of each item to be added. ("We're adding water bottles because waiting in the NICU can take a long time, and people might not be able to step away when they need a drink of water." "We're including journals and pens in case families need to jot notes from their visits with the doctor, or want to write things to remember later on when their baby is older.")
2. If time allows, make mason jars of well wishes for the families. Invite kids to write a wish for the child and their family on a strip of card stock. Gather the strips into a mason jar for each family. Please note that not all families will be Christian, so avoid prayers or other specifically Christian content. If time allows, decorate the jars with washi tape.

