



## Morning Circle

Ask the children if they enjoyed their "Picnic Party." Tell them that today we'll be learning about another "P" word: "Planets!" Ask them if anyone can name one or more of the planets. Ask them if they know how many planets are in our solar system. Show the children some nice glossy photos of our planets, and help them understand the concept of the solar system. Explain that there is a special body in our solar system that, until very recently, was one of our planets. It's called "Pluto," and scientists now call it a "dwarf planet." It's very far away from Earth, past our farthest planet, Neptune. Pluto is made of ice and rocky minerals, similar to some planet's moons. That's why space scientists, called astronomers, say it is really not a planet. We used to have nine planets, and now we only have eight!



Read: There's No Place Like Space: All About Our Solar System (Cat in the Hat's Learning Library) by Tish Rabe

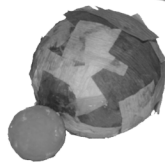
### Music & Movement:

Popping Planets on the Parachute. Most preschools have a parachute specifically used for large group activities. However, if you do not have a parachute, you can use a large sheet. Place several balls of varying colors and sizes on the parachute. Position the children all around the perimeter of the parachute or sheet and have them grab the edges in both hands. Play some fun music and "pop the planets" by alternately lifting and dropping the parachute.



## Art Activity

### Pretty Planets



Let the children experiment with color and texture by making two planets, Mars and Neptune. Give each child two styrofoam balls, one considerably larger than the other (the larger one is Neptune.) Roll the balls around in white glue until well coated. Give each child two containers: one filled with red sand and the other with small bits of torn blue tissue paper (in at least two shades of blue.) Let the children coat the smaller styrofoam ball with red sand for Mars, and the other ball with tiny bits of blue tissue for Neptune. This activity can be adapted for other planets as your time, resources, and creativity allow.

## Center Activities

1. Solar system exploration. If you have a model of the solar system at your school, set it up on a table decorated with photos of the planets and books about the solar system.
2. Planet count and sort. Have nine (or eight, if you really want to be technical) styrofoam balls (available at craft supply stores) of various sizes painted in colors similar to our planets. Encourage the children to sort them into categories by color or size. Let them place them in order from smallest to largest. Count the "planets" in small groups and then as a larger group.
3. Play Dough center. Let the children create their own solar system out of colorful play dough.

## Bible Story



Read: God Made Outer Space, (Happy Day Books) by Heno Head, Jr.

### Bible Verse Bracelets:

Psalm 8:3 "I look at your heavens, which you made with your fingers. I see the moon and stars, which you created." (New Century Version)



Song: "My God is So Big" from Bible Songs recording by CedarMont Kids Classics.

**Snack Time:** Flying saucer snacks.  
Directions online

## Additional Activities

If a parent in your room has an astronomy hobby, set up a time to let the children do some real night sky viewing. The winter months often provide an especially good time for stargazing due to the cold clear atmosphere.