Play & Learning Newsletter

7th – 11th December 2020

Nativity, Mary, Joseph, Jesus, manager, straw, donkey, shepherds

Wonder words to use with your child:

A big thank you to two of our lovely grandparents for helping make this week at pre-school a little more festive and magical! Isambard’s grandma Penny donated to us a beautiful Nativity stable complete with all the characters from the story, a donkey and sheep. With some added fairy lights and straw the resource has been the perfect way to introduce the children to the Christmas story, and the play involving it has been lovely to watch (although not all of it quite following the actual story 😊). The children have spent time listening to the story, sequencing the events of it (an important skill for helping support their language development) and singing songs which are linked to it. Our ‘Mary had a Baby’ song makes much more sense when you know the story! Thank you, Penny, for this (and the other lovely goodies you donated too!).

Another big highlight this week has been the Christmas pebble hunts which we have held each day for groups of children. This lovely fundraiser was made possible by Charlie’s granny, Kate, who donated her beautiful, personalised pebbles – and to all of you who purchased them! The children received a letter from Santa telling them that Elvis the elf had asked him if he could give all of the children one of his magic pebbles as Elvis had noticed how kind and helpful they were to their friends. They had special instructions that when they had found their pebble (this involved having to remember what their name looked like) they had to tap it 10 times with their finger to make the magic start working. They then had to take it home and put it in their windows so that Santa knew where to drop their presents off. There was a lot of tapping and counting going on – and perfect opportunities for chanting to 10. Lots of excitement and Christmas magic – so lovely to observe. Thank you, Kate, not only for helping us to raise £151, but also for helping us provide the children with a fun, festive experience!

Other highlights this week have been festive smelly playdough with snowmen challenges to create, home building for Elvis and his festive friends, present making and wrapping in Santa’s grotto and Christmas cake making in the sand tray. There has been lots of collaborative work to build obstacle courses outside too. Lots of opportunities for developing number, visual spatial, problem solving, language and imaginative skills – plus, most importantly of all – building those special relationships with each other.

***Sounds and Letters/language focus:***



This week we have focused the children’s listening skills on spotting when words begin with the ‘s’ sound. We have practiced making this sound with our mouths, found lots of items that begin with the sound in a stocking left by Santa and in our Sound Box. The Flying Fish children have also been introduced to the actual letter ‘s’ and practiced writing it in air and some have been spotting it in books that we share.

Ideas to support your child at home:

**The power of planting positive seeds in children’s minds!**

Our letters from Santa and Elvis told the children that they had noticed how kind and helpful they were being to their friends - something that all the children smiled at and visibly held themselves a little prouder when they heard it. What has been interesting to see is that hearing this has created a new wave of kind and helpful behaviour towards each other which reinforces our knowledge that being told you are something is likely to help make you into that something – what ever it be!

Telling your children that they are so good at listening, being helpful, walking sensibly, being kind to their sibling etc – just before you need them to do this – usually has the effect of making them more likely to do it when you need them to. Try using this strategy this weekend with your little ones and see if it makes a difference! 😊