

# STRENGTHENING MOTOR SKILLS THROUGH DISCOVERY PLAY

## Feeding Our Farmyard Friends

In the bright and lively preschool classroom, the children gather around an inviting farm scene. Toy farm animals—cows, chickens, pigs, and horses—are arranged in a playful setting, and a small container of rice sits nearby, representing the “feed” for these animals. Today’s activity is feeding the farm animals, an exercise that blends imaginative play, hands-on learning, and Christian values.

As the children scoop rice into cups and “feed” the toy animals, they are developing several important fine motor skills. Using small scoops, tongs, or even their hands to carefully transfer the rice into the containers helps them practice hand-eye coordination and precision. These actions are crucial for building the dexterity needed for tasks like writing, drawing, and using utensils. The repetitive motion of scooping and pouring also strengthens the muscles in their hands, preparing them for more advanced fine motor tasks in the future.

While this activity is fun, it also teaches responsibility and care for others. The teacher is able to gently guide the children, saying, “Just as we feed these animals, God calls us to take care of all His creatures. We can help feed them, love them, and make sure they have what they need—just like how God provides for us.” Through this, the children begin to understand the Christian value of stewardship—that God has entrusted them to care for His creation, both big and small.



The teacher also has the opportunity to weave in a lesson on gratitude and thankfulness as the children feed the animals. “Just like how we’re making sure these animals have enough to eat, God makes sure we have enough too. Every meal we have is a gift from God.” This encourages the children to pause and think about the blessings in their own lives, helping them understand the importance of being thankful for what they have. The act of feeding the animals becomes a way to express care and empathy, reinforcing the idea that we are all connected in God’s creation.

Through imaginative play, the children are also engaging their creativity and problem-solving skills. As they decide how much food to give each animal, they are thinking critically about what the animals might need, practicing early math skills like measuring and estimating. Should the cow get more rice than the chicken? What if they run out of food? These simple decisions help the children build independent thinking and confidence in their ability to make choices.

The activity also fosters a sense of empathy. As the children imagine the animals being hungry and needing food, they start to develop an understanding of what it means to care for something other than themselves. This translates into real-world kindness, as the children learn to recognize the needs of others and respond with generosity and compassion.



## Bringing It All Together:

This playful yet purposeful activity teaches the children far more than how to feed a toy farm animal. They develop fine motor skills, practice patience, and learn about sharing and responsibility. Through the lens of their faith, they are introduced to concepts like stewardship, gratitude, and trust in God's care. Feeding the animals becomes a way to nurture not only the pretend creatures before them but also the virtues and values growing within their own hearts.

