Program Idea: Lego Literacy

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Submitted by: Erin Moehring, emoehring@greenwoodlibrary.us Library: Greenwood Public Library, Greenwood, IN Audience: All ages, Families Group Size: Any group size Season: Any time of year

Play has been shown to impact creativity, problem solving skills, and can even increase attention span among children. Lego Literacy builds upon these skills by using playtime as an opportunity to connect kids with literature. Each session is designed around a theme, such as Space Travel, Architecture or the Titanic, and is introduced by short book talks. In January, Greenwood Public Library hosted a LEGO Star Wars program in collaboration with IndyLUG, a group of Lego builders based in Indianapolis. Participants helped build a display to be featured at the

Supplies

Tables and Chairs

Optional Supplies

Volunteers for the day of event

created a guide with all the supplies and key steps you will need to follow.

Preparation

Choose a theme and some materials from your collection to feature on your program Book List

Give participants about a week to read materials from the Book List

Prepare Book List

Leave at least 30 min to prep the day of event

Preparation Steps

1. First, begin your program by choosing a theme. LEGO sets have some good themes, but it's best to start with some good books in your library. Find some interesting books, for instance fantasy and sci-fi, which work well with LEGO building, and structure the program and activities around them.

2. Make a large list of books and other materials (both picture books, fiction and non-fiction selections) to complement your theme. Pick just a few to read prior to the event, but keep the list to inspire participants to continue reading after the program is over.

3. On the day of the event, set up enough tables and chairs to accommodate however many participants registered for the program. Set up each section in a U shape, with a large bin of LEGOs set in the middle and empty bins distributed among all the tables. Display program books along the walls or around the outside of the space. (approx. 30-40 min)

4. If you are also doing a craft with the event, set up one table with crafting supplies. Once participants are finished building, they can return to their seats to craft while others finish working.

Activities

1. Begin the program with a few short book talks or read-aloud stories. If you have invited your local

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LEGO user group, this is generally a good time to let them discussion their displays, talk about their organization, etc. (approx. 15 min)

2. Next, participants take turns getting blocks from the bins, using their small bins to bring LEGOs back to their seats and spend the rest of the time building creations inspired by the program's theme. (approx. 60-90 min)

3. If your program includes crafts, participants can get up and get materials for crafting at any time during the program. Generally, however, participants choose to craft after they are finished building.

4. Transfer creations to display case if you want to keep them on display. Otherwise, have participants break down their creations and dump the blocks back into the nearest bin. Clean-up & put away tables and chairs, etc. (approx. 60 min)

Extra Hints & Tips

Volunteers can be very helpful, but if you make the event open the whole family, you'll have no trouble finding parents to help control the chaos.

Consider holding LEGO building contests and finding creative ways to display participant creations. For instance, during the holidays Greenwood Public Library challenged program attendees to create LEGO ornaments to display on the Christmas tree.

LEGO programs can draw large and diverse audiences, so Erin from Greenwood Public Library suggests combining LEGOs with all kinds of topics:
"You really have endless angles. You can pair the program with crafts, books, science projects, and story times. We have recently discussed conducting a program geared towards physics that would involve LEGO launching!"

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