

Hug a Jesus 'for faith and fun'

From correspondents in New York

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HUGGABLE Jesus is just one of the "dolls that love you back" being offered by a couple of biblical doll-makers in Boston who hawk plush dolls "that pack fun and faith into one lovable, kid-sized package".

There is also Huggable Moses, who cradles in his arms two pillows like tablets and recites all Ten Commandments at the push of a button on the front of his brown robe, which is tied up with twine.

Cliff Rockwood said he and his wife started their Holy Huggables business to fill a need of their own child.

"I wanted her to have a doll that delivers a message of love and moral grounds," Mr Rockwood said.

"It's better than giving a toy gun," he said.

The 15cm dolls are flying off the shelves, "giving every other doll and snuggle toy a run for its money", their website says.

"We sold more of them than we thought we would," said Mr Rockwood, 39.

Huggable Esther, resplendent in purple and wearing a crown, shares philosophy from the book of the *Bible* bearing her name: "God had a plan for my life just like he has one for yours."

Jesus concurs. "I'm the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the father except through me," quoting John 14:6.

"Toys can be fun and instructional at the same time. Why not spiritual?" said Mr Rockwood, who makes the dolls in China and has shipped them to Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The website calls the dolls "a wholesome alternative to teddy bears and stuffed animals".

On the drawing board are Jonah, David and Noah dolls, Mr Rockwood said.

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