



### MEETING 1 – LAUNCH PARTY!

Monday, April 13, 7-8:30p

### MEETING 2 – BIBLE LESSONS

Monday, April 27

*Watch these recorded videos at home.*

### MEETING 3 – PRAYER & PREP

Monday, May 4, 7-8:30p

### SET-UP SUNDAY

Sunday, May 31, 12:00-5:00

*Lunch provided. All hands on deck!*

### WHEN DO VOLUNTEERS ARRIVE?

Early Childhood Classrooms - 8am in Room 9b

Camp Wilderness - 8:15am on the South Lawn

Everyone else - 8:30am in the gym

**NOTE: 0-4 year olds can be checked in at 8:15!**

### DON'T FORGET!

Register your own kids, too!

0-4s will be emailed a link.

Incoming K-6th  
can register online now!

### CONTACTS:

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# Overview





## MONDAY

Jesus is God's promised Son.  
Jesus asked his disciples who people said that he is.  
Matthew 16: 13-20  
God rules.

## TUESDAY

Jesus is God's perfect Son.  
Jesus was baptized and God spoke.  
Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:1-11, John 1:29-34  
We sinned.

## WEDNESDAY

Jesus is the powerful Son of God.  
Jesus performed miracles.  
Matthew 15:29-39  
God provided.

## THURSDAY

Jesus is the proven Son of God.  
Jesus died and rose to life!  
Mark 14:43-16:7  
Jesus gives.

## FRIDAY

Jesus is God's plan for forgiveness.  
Peter preached about forgiveness.  
Acts 2  
We respond.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

	9:00 - 9:10	9:15 - 9:35	9:40 - 10:00	10:05 - 10:25	10:30 - 10:50	10:55 - 11:15	11:20 - 11:40	11:45 - 11:55	12:00
<b>A-e</b>	Opening Assembly	Bible Lesson	Crew Time	MCM	Games	Crew Time (snack)	Wonder Workshop	Closing Assembly	Dismiss
<b>f-k</b>	Opening Assembly	Wonder Workshop	Bible Lesson	Crew Time (snack)	MCM	Games	Crew Time	Closing Assembly	Dismiss
<b>L-P</b>	Opening Assembly	Crew Time	Wonder Workshop	Bible Lesson	Crew Time (snack)	MCM	Games	Closing Assembly	Dismiss
<b>Q-U</b>	Opening Assembly	Games	Crew Time	Wonder Workshop	Bible Lesson	Crew Time (snack)	MCM	Closing Assembly	Dismiss
<b>V-Z</b>	Opening Assembly	MCM	Games	Crew Time (snack)	Wonder Workshop	Bible Lesson	Crew Time	Closing Assembly	Dismiss

**MCM** means **M**issions (Monday), **C**rafts (Tues/Thurs), **M**usic (Wed/Fri).

## CAMP WILDERNESS

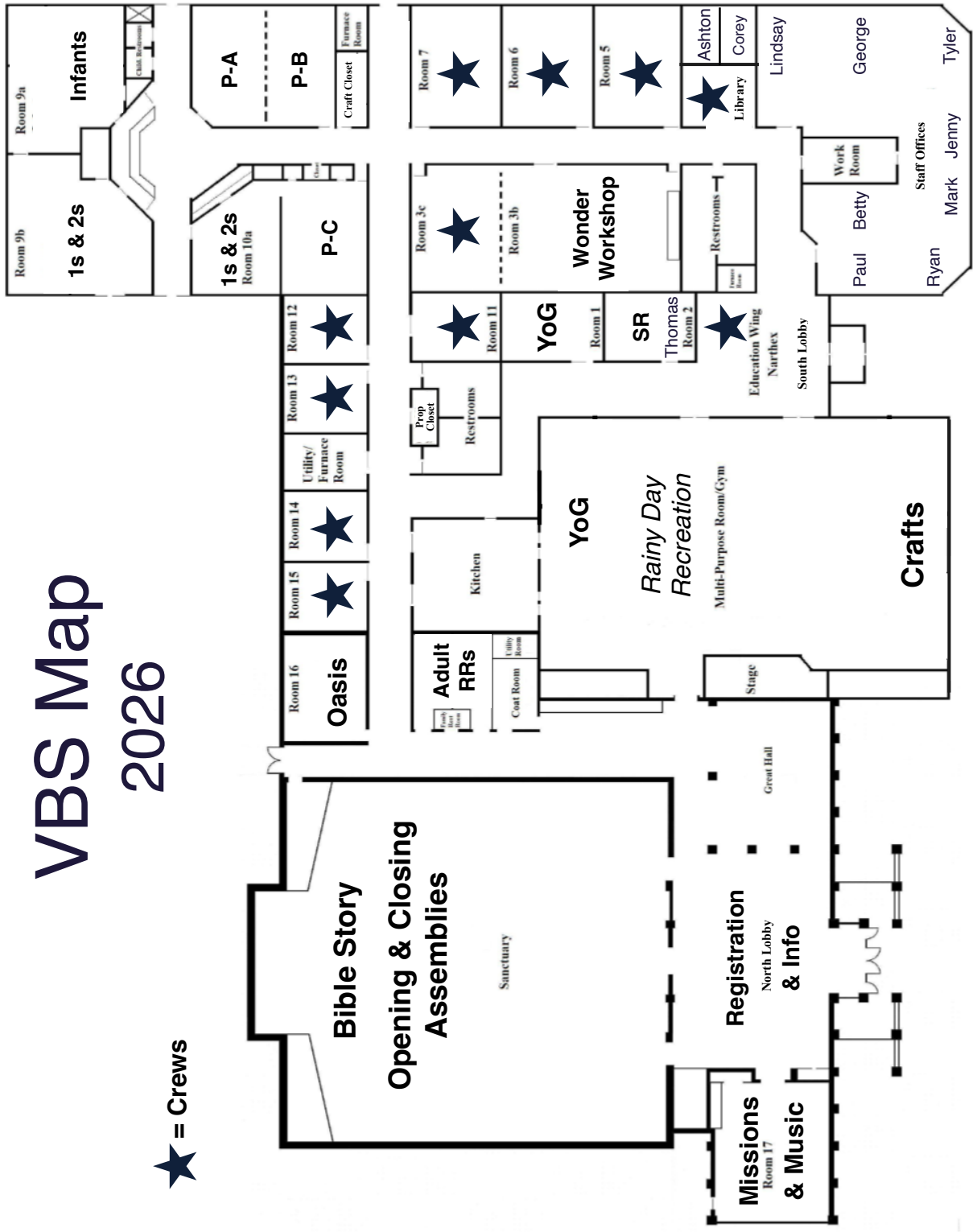
8:45a - 12:15p - meets in South Lawn for departure & arrival  
 (Thursday is an optional overnight at Bromelsick. Friday return is at 11:30.)

# DAILY SCHEDULE

# VBS Map

## 2026

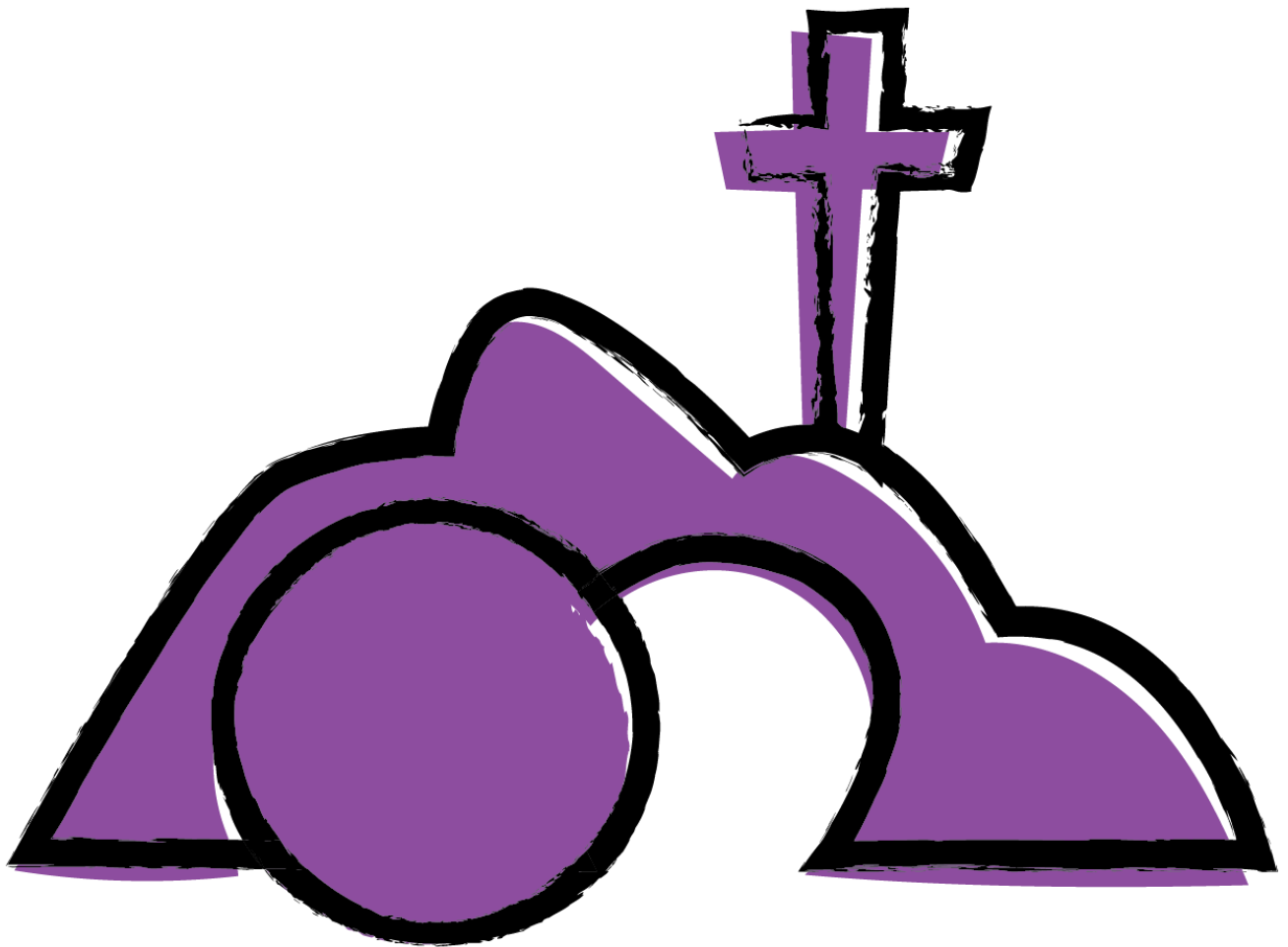
★ = Crews



Recreation

CW

# BIBLE LESSONS



# DAY 1: JESUS IS GOD'S PROMISED SON

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## Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

## Bible Story

Jesus asked who people thought He was. (Matthew 16:13-20)

## Bonus Verse

“Simon Peter replied, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” Matthew 16:16

## Leader Devotion

Think of a teacher who significantly impacted and brightened your life. This teacher likely made you feel loved, valued, and understood. This week, you have an opportunity to be that kind of teacher—one who helps children feel loved and valued in significant and uncommon ways. Pause now and pray, asking God to use you to make an eternal impact on the lives of the children you teach. Repeat this prayer each day.

Beyond building relationships, one critical trait of exceptional teachers is their ability to ask great questions that capture attention, inspire deep thinking, and foster renewed curiosity and wonder. These questions can illuminate gaps in comprehension in order to build bridges and strengthen understanding.

Jesus is the Master Teacher. His use of engaging questions is a hallmark of His teaching. Consider these:

1. “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (Mark 4:40)
2. “Why do you break God’s commandment because of your tradition?” (Matthew 15:3)
3. “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say?” (Luke 6:46)
4. “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6)

Let’s shine the spotlight on two of the most significant and revealing questions Jesus ever asked His disciples. After spending time with them in a boat, they traveled to Caesarea Philippi—a place known for its pagan gods. Against this backdrop, Jesus pressed His disciples for answers to these two questions: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” and “But you, who do you say that I am?”

Scripture records the disciples answering the first question, but the second question is specifically answered by Peter. Peter declared, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Have you ever wondered why Peter was the first disciple to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah? Surely, there was a less impulsive and more faithful disciple who could have spoken up rather than the flawed and impulsive Peter.

Jesus knew Peter’s weaknesses. He knew Peter would deny Him three times, yet Jesus washed Peter’s feet anyway (John 13). He knew Peter would fall asleep in the garden of Gethsemane, yet He blessed Peter when God revealed to him that Jesus was the Messiah (Matt 16:26). Jesus knew all of Peter’s story—his failures, doubts, and triumphs—and He still chose to love and use Peter in powerful ways. Jesus did not write Peter off or deem him useless. Instead, He entrusted Peter with the opportunity to preach at Pentecost and lead His Church (Acts 2). Peter’s story reminds us that God sees potential where others see character flaws, and He calls us to love, lead, and serve in ways that often do not make sense to others.

## Illuminate Your Heart

- Jesus asks each of us the same question. Take a moment to answer it. “But you, who do you say I am?”
- It may be easy to make a declaration of words, but much harder to live out our belief in Jesus as our Messiah. Peter struggled to walk out the words he declared. Thank God for His redemptive love for each of us and ask Him to use you this week to proclaim the good news of Jesus to each child in your care.

## This Week’s Bible Verse

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

# DAY 2: JESUS IS GOD'S PERFECT SON

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## Was Jesus just an ordinary man?

Jesus is the perfect Son of God who came to be the Savior of the world.

## Bible Story

The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11; John 1:29-34)

## Bonus Verse

“And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.’” Mark 1:11

## Leader Devotion

Children are often drawn to the tangible act of baptism before fully grasping its meaning and symbolism. As one of our two church sacraments that make theology visible and tangible, baptism is a powerful sign and seal of our adoption into God’s family. But sometimes children mistakenly think baptism itself saves.

When we teach children about baptism, it is good to shed light on why Jesus was baptized. Jesus did not need to repent or be saved from His sin because He was without sin (2 Cor 5:21). We know baptism is not what saves us, because Jesus was baptized and did not need to be saved from sin as we do. Instead, Jesus’ baptism affirmed Him as the Son of God and set an example for Christ’s covenant community.

Matthew 3:13-17 provides clear evidence to answer today’s Spotlight Question: Was Jesus just an ordinary man? Jesus is the perfect Son of God, who came to be the Savior of the world. When Jesus asked John the Baptist to baptize Him, John pushed back, recognizing Jesus’ greatness and even suggesting that John should be baptized by Jesus instead. Jesus’ response to John revealed His identity as the Son of God. However, it was not just the words of Jesus that affirmed Jesus as God. All three persons of the Trinity made themselves known at Jesus’ baptism. The Spirit of God descended like a dove and God’s voice from heaven declared, “This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased” (verses 16-17).

The baptism of Jesus also provides an example for all God’s people. Baptism is a sign of God’s covenant with His people, and a seal that what God has said is really true for those who repent and believe. It is a sign and seal that God in Christ washes away our sins, and that we are a part of the visible church. It is an outward demonstration that we have a relationship with Christ and His church, and a tangible reminder that God will keep all His promises to us - and already did - through Christ.

Think of it this way. Anyone driving along a main route might see a blue and white hospital sign. A seal would be like someone helping you to their car and saying, “I’ll take you there.” The sign is seen by everyone. It’s visible. But driving you there is particular and felt. Baptism fills both of these roles. It is a sign to anyone who should see or hear of it that the baptized person is a part of the church. And for that person, they feel the water and the care of their covenant community and know it’s particularly for them.

The baptism of Jesus powerfully declared His identity as the perfect Son of God and His obedience to the Father’s plan. Though sinless, Jesus humbly set an example for us. The voice from heaven and the presence of the Holy Spirit affirmed that He was no ordinary man—He is the Savior of the world.

## Illuminate Your Heart

- Have you been baptized? If not, pray about setting up a meeting with an elder. If so, think about your own baptism if you remember it, and/or think about the way God is keeping His promises to you.
- Is your focus on the perfect Son of God? Read Eph. 2:1-10 and remember what God has promised. This is what the sign of your baptism points to, and what is sealed and guaranteed to you as a believer in Jesus.
- As children hear today’s Bible story and reflect on Jesus’ baptism, tell them of God’s covenant promises to save His people, and that He will always keep His promises, as He did in Jesus.

# DAY 3: JESUS IS THE POWERFUL SON OF GOD

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## Was Jesus just a teacher?

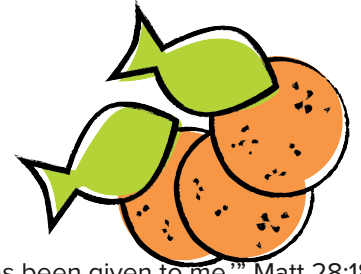
Everything Jesus said and did showed that He is the powerful Son of God.

## Bible Story

Jesus performed miracles. (Matthew 15:29-39)

## Bonus Verse

“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.’” Matt 28:18



## Leader Devotion

Matthew 15:29-39 provides compelling evidence that Jesus was more than just a teacher. He is the powerful Son of God. Let's shed some light on this passage. This account takes place on a mountain near the Sea of Galilee where large crowds gathered, bringing people who were in desperate need of healing.

Bringing those in need up a mountain to Jesus must have required physical effort and determination. Perhaps word had already spread about the paralyzed man whose friends lowered him through a roof to be healed by Jesus (Mark 2:1-5). Regardless, their actions reflected their faith in Jesus' ability to heal.

The details of how Jesus healed each person in this passage are left out. Scripture simply states, “They put them at his feet, and he healed them.” It was not unusual for Jesus to heal multiple people in one setting, as the Gospels record several similar occasions (Luke 4:40, Matthew 9:35, Mark 6:56).

Following this incredible display of healing, another miracle occurred—one that impacted everyone present. Jesus was moved by compassion because the people had been with Him for three days and had nothing to eat. The disciples pointed out the obvious challenge: they were in a remote place with little access to food. When Jesus asked how much food they had, the answer was just seven loaves of bread and a few fish, hardly enough to feed more than 4,000 hungry people. Yet, as they were about to witness, in the hands of Jesus, a little is more than enough.

After Jesus took the loaves and fish, He gave thanks and then began breaking the bread for the disciples to pass out to the people. The result? Matthew 15:37 says, “They all ate and were satisfied. They collected the leftover pieces—seven large baskets full.” Jesus was no ordinary teacher; He is the powerful Son of God. He could do things no one else could, and the disciples often had a front-row seat to His miracles.

What must it have been like to see these miracles unfold—to watch people be healed and to see over 4,000 people fed from just 7 loaves and a few fish? In both instances, Jesus responded to a need by involving people in His work. In this event, Jesus did not go looking for people to heal. People took the initiative to come to Him. For the hungry crowd, Jesus used what was given to Him by the disciples to meet the needs of the multitudes.

As you prepare to teach children about the powerful Son of God, also look for ways to share this amazing truth in everyday conversation with your good friend or your hair stylist or your kid's baseball coach. Be prepared to give personal examples of how Jesus has proven to be powerful in your life. Never underestimate what God may want to do through your efforts to share the gospel with the people around you both inside and outside of VBS.

## Illuminate Your Heart

- What are you doing to bring people to Jesus? Are you willing to give any necessary effort (physical or otherwise) and whatever possessions you have to carry people to Jesus to be saved?
- Pray for the children and families who are being brought to the feet of Jesus this week. Ask God to show you the people in your sphere of influence who you may need to bring to VBS, to church, and to Jesus.

# DAY 4: JESUS IS THE PROVEN SON OF GOD

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## Was Jesus just someone who lived a long time ago?

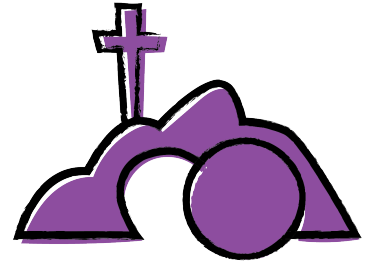
Jesus lived, died, and rose to life again to be our Savior, now and forever.

### Bible Story

Jesus died and rose to life. (Mark 14:43-16:7)

### Bonus Verse

“And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was the Son of God!’” Mark 15:39



### Leader Devotion

Do you remember the first time you heard the story of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection? If you grew up in a Christian home, it may be difficult to recall that moment, and you may have never questioned whether Jesus was more than just a man from long ago. For some children at your VBS, this week may be the first time they’ve heard the life-changing truth of Jesus’ resurrection and the salvation He offers each of us.

If it is hard to imagine children in your classroom not knowing about Jesus, consider this: Over the past 25 years, 40 million people have stopped attending church.<sup>1</sup> As a result, church membership in America has dropped below 50 percent.<sup>2</sup> This means we can no longer assume that every child in Vacation Bible School is attending church regularly or has even heard the true story of Jesus. What if you are the first person to tell them the truth of the gospel? How does that impact the way you prepare for this session?

It’s not just children who have never heard about Jesus and who need convictional teaching this week—it’s also people who have heard about Him but are surrounded by a world that questions and devalues the life of Jesus. To navigate an increasingly post-Christian world, children need a biblical worldview that upholds the Bible as absolute truth. A 2022 study found that only 18% of 13- and 14-year-olds listed the Bible as their primary source of truth<sup>3</sup> and 61% “either believe Jesus Christ sinned or may have sinned while He was on earth.”<sup>4</sup> It is important that we continually point children to the Bible as the source of all truth and show them the evidence found in the Scriptures to support Jesus as the proven Son of God.

Throughout this week, children will be having “light bulb moments” as they are learning who Jesus is and how His life provides proof that He was more than just a teacher who lived a long time ago. Jesus did things no one else could do, like heal people who were sick or who had physical disabilities, provide sight to people who were blind, and turn a small amount of food into more than enough to feed the multitudes. He spoke with an authority no one had heard before. The ultimate proof came through the resurrection—the undeniable evidence that He is who He claimed to be.

### Illuminate Your Heart

- How have you experienced Jesus personally? Thank Him for being present in your life.
- There could be no greater privilege than to tell children about the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Pray for the children in your care who may be hearing this story for the first time. Ask God to speak through you as you tell the good news of Jesus.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Jim Davis, Michael Graham, and Ryan P Burge. *The Great Dechurching: Who’s Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back?* (Zondervan, 2023), 5.
2. Jefferey Jones, “U.S. Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time,” *Gallup*, March 29, 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/341963/church-membership-falls-below-majority-first-time.aspx>.
3. George Barna, *Raising Spiritual Champions: Nurturing Your Child’s Heart, Mind and Soul* (Arizona Christian University Press, 2023), 27. (hereafter cited as *Raising Champions*).
4. *Raising Champions*, 28.

# DAY 5: JESUS IS GOD'S PLAN FOR FORGIVENESS

## Why do I need to respond to Jesus?

Jesus is the only way to receive God's forgiveness.

## Bible Story

Peter preached about Jesus. (Acts 2)

## Bonus Verse

"And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.'" Acts 2:38-39

## Leader Devotion

This week, the focus has been on laying a foundation for children to hear and believe that Jesus is their Savior. These truths are boiled down into the "Spotlight Questions" they've heard each day.

Today, kids will hear the message Peter preached that immediately led over three thousand people to see their need for a Savior. So now the spotlight will turn to each child with a deeply personal question:

### Why do I need to respond to Jesus?

Recognizing and believing Jesus is a great teacher, a powerful performer of miracles, and a compassionate servant leader is easy for most of us. The Bible is full of events that lead us to those conclusions. However, James 2:19 reminds us, "You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe—and they shudder." Unless we also acknowledge our desperate need for Him as our Savior—the One who willingly died for our sins and offers forgiveness—we miss the good news of who He truly is. Without Him, we deserve the punishment of death for our sins. In Him, we find grace, redemption, and forgiveness only He can bring.

Children need to understand why they need forgiveness to know why they need to respond to Jesus. Recognizing personal sin is one of the signs a child is beginning to follow Jesus on their own. Children must know what sin is and the problem it causes for their relationship with God. Children often define sin as a wrong choice like disobeying parents, cheating on a test, or fighting with a sibling. While those wrong choices are sin, the result of that sin makes them unable to have a relationship with a holy and perfect God. A simple definition of sin that children can easily understand is "anything we think (point to your head), anything we say (point to your mouth), or anything we do (hold out your hands) that does not please God." When children understand the impact of their sin - it separates them from God - they are often ready to answer today's spotlight question: Why do I need to respond to Jesus?

Take a moment to answer this question for yourself. Confess your own sin and receive the forgiveness of your loving Father. And then ask the next logical question of yourself: How do I respond to Jesus? In other words, how does my life give evidence that Jesus has saved me? How is my life lived for His glory? How do I daily respond to His call on my life, His direction and guidance, His Word, and His Spirit's leading?

VBS has always been an important part of our church's mission to share Jesus with our community. We know that this faith is not for us alone, but for all who will believe. Pray that Jesus will carry on the work that has started this week in the lives of these children, their families, and your co-laborers.

## Illuminate Your Heart

- Have you experienced the Holy Spirit piercing your heart in conviction and leading you to repentance? (See Acts 2:37.) When was the last time you were grieved over your sin?

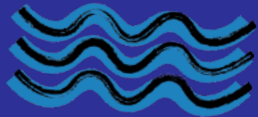


- Spend some time in prayer for each of the children in your care. Ask God to help them understand their need for Jesus and give them the courage to step out in faith to receive the forgiveness Jesus offers to each of them.

SHINING A LIGHT ON  
WHO JESUS REALLY IS

# ILLUMINATION STATION

JOHN 8:12



## CREW TIME LESSONS

JESUS  
IS GOD'S  
PROMISED  
SON

JESUS  
IS GOD'S  
PERFECT  
SON

JESUS IS  
THE POWERFUL  
SON OF GOD

JESUS IS  
THE PROVEN  
SON OF GOD

JESUS IS  
GOD'S PLAN FOR  
FORGIVENESS

## MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."  
John 8:12



# SUPPLIES

## BRING YOUR OWN:

- flashlight
- lantern, small spotlight, or string lights to illuminate the Spotlight Question each day
- music (your phone and an external speaker)
- Bible
- 3-5 children's books (Day 4)

## PER STUDENT

- salt painting background (D2)
- Jesus Silhouettes (D3)
- baggies with sun pieces (D3)
- \*\*paper lightbulb (D1) (p. 6)
- \*\*fill-in-the-blank paper lightbulb (D1)
- \*\*lantern pages (D5)
- \*\*Pentecost bookmarks (D5)

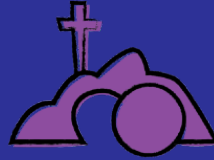
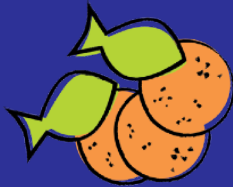
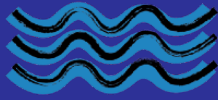
## PER CREW

- colorful post-its (50)
- small tags with the letters for "perfect" & "ordinary"
- glue bottle (D2)
- salt (D2)
- streamers (D4)
- string (D4)

*\*\*These items are for extra activities and will be provided upon request.*

## PROVIDED FOR EACH ROOM:

- 5 Spotlight Question posters
- 6 Bible verse posters
- 5 Bible story posters
- Gospel Truth poster
- Daily Motto poster + 5 add-ons
- Fun fact pictures
- Light Speed Silhouettes (D1)
- Flashlight cards (D2)
- set of beginning-middle-end cards (D4)
- "Jesus" in many languages poster (D5)
- pencils
- Sharpie
- hole punch (D3)
- 10 scissors (D3)
- 12 brads (D3)
- 10 blindfolds (D3)
- 10 glue sticks (D3)
- 10+ chairs (D4)
- 10+ markers
- clear tape (D5)
- painter's tape (D5)
- 15 glow sticks (D1)
- 15 balloons (D1)
- 3 pc black construction paper (D1, 3)
- 20 glow sticks in 2 colors (D2)
- tap light (D2)
- 3 small bowls (D2)
- 10 paintbrushes (D2)
- 1 bottle yellow watercolor (D2)
- plastic tablecloth (D2)
- \*\*Paper light bulbs with verse words (D1)
- \*\*cards with professions on them



## JESUS ASKED WHO PEOPLE THOUGHT HE WAS.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 16:13-20

### Spotlight Question

#### Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the Messiah, the promised Son of God.

JESUS  
IS GOD'S  
PROMISED  
SON

### MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
"I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me  
will not walk in darkness,  
but will have  
the light of life."

John 8:12

### CREW TIME 1: STORY STUDY

#### THE WELCOME

1. Welcome kids to your crew. Use a flashlight to create a lighted spot on the floor. Invite kids to take turns standing in the spotlight to take a bow while you introduce them to the group or they introduce themselves.

**Older kids** can jump into the spotlight to name something that lights up and starts with the same letter as their first name.

2. Direct kids to stand facing away from you. Hold up a "Light Speed Silhouette." Say: "You may look over your shoulder for no more than one second to guess what the shadow represents." On your signal, challenge kids to glimpse the silhouette in their peripheral vision without turning their bodies toward you. Call for kids to shout out what they saw and confirm or correct them.

**Younger kids** can face you as you conceal the picture with a piece of black construction paper, briefly display the silhouette, and quickly cover it again.

3. Ask: **Was it hard to recognize who was in each picture? Jesus asked his disciples if people recognized who he really was.**

#### BIBLE LESSON REVIEW

Open your Bible to Matthew 16 to show kids where today's story is found. Then help them to find the story in their own Bibles.

Tell your crew members that during this Crew Time each day, you're going to take a few minutes together to talk about what we learned at the Bible Lesson station. Encourage them to take turns speaking, to feel free to ask questions and make comments, and to be kind and respectful when someone else has something to share. Pray together as you begin, asking God to teach each of us about Him.

After taking a moment to briefly refer to a couple of particulars from the Storyteller, invite kids to ask a few questions. You be the judge - if the questions are silly, say, "Just one more now." But sometimes, they'll lead the discussion for you by asking questions that show you what they heard, understand, and are trying to process.

Then start with your own review questions.

## Discussion Questions

Start with review questions (and don't be afraid to go where the kids' questions lead you if it's productive conversation!) Invite them to answer questions in whatever format works for your group. Raising hands works sometimes, but often nervous or introverted kids are left out. On the other hand, some children may be embarrassed to be called on. Encourage kids to take turns because everyone has important things to say! And throw out some simple, factual questions you're sure "Johnny" knows the answer to and call on him specifically to help him feel more confident.

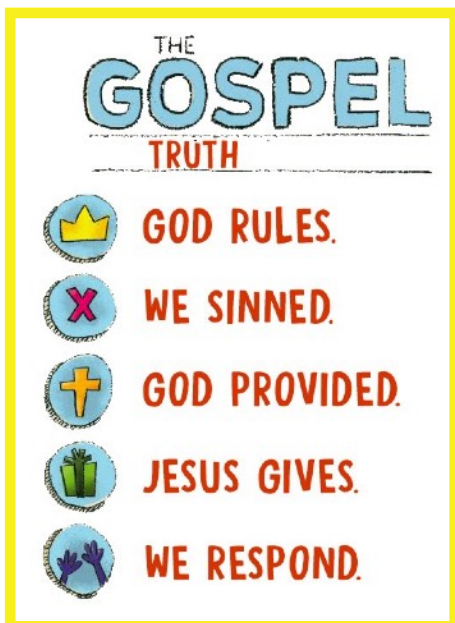
1. What two questions did Jesus ask his disciples? (*Who do they say I am / Who do you say I am?*)
2. Who did people think Jesus might be? (*John the Baptist, Elijah, or Jeremiah*)
3. Who did Peter say Jesus was? (*the Messiah, the Son of the living God*)
4. Who helped Peter know Jesus is God's Son? (*God*)
5. Who did God promise to send to earth? (*Jesus, to save us from our sins*)

Now ask a few discussion questions.

6. How does the Bible help people know about Jesus?
7. How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus asked them who they thought he was?
8. What kind of voice might Peter have used when he said Jesus was the Son of God?
9. If Jesus asked us the question "Who do you say that I am?" what might we answer?
10. Why is it important to know that Jesus is God's Son?

## THE WRAP UP

Invite kids to write their own response to the question "Who is Jesus?" on brightly colored post-it notes. **Older kids** can be encouraged to say some other names of Jesus they might know. **Younger kids** might try to write "Jesus" or "friend." Stick these responses to a special poster in your room with today's Spotlight Question on it ("Who is Jesus?"). Throughout the week, aim a light at the day's poster, or frame it with lights. *\*If you're sharing your space with another crew, use different colored notes for each crew.*



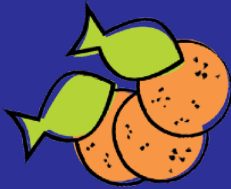
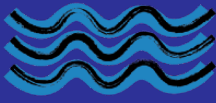
## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

### What does "the gospel" mean?

"Gospel" means "good news." THE Gospel is THE Good News about what Jesus has done. He's rescued us from sin and made a way for us to live free of that burden, and then, after we die, to be with God in heaven forever!

### What does it mean that "God rules"?

The Bible tells us that God made all things. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1. Because God made all things, he knows everything about everything, including us! And, like we might be an expert about something we've made, God is an expert about, well, everything! That's just one reason we're glad he rules!



## CREW TIME 2: Verse Work

1. Before children arrive, blow up balloons and write a phrase of the memory verse on each (see divisions below). For added fun, activate a glow-in-the-dark stick and put it in each balloon, playing the activity in the dark.

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

2. Help children look up John 8:12 (and Matthew 16:16 if you're doing that as well) in their Bibles. Read it all together.
3. Ask **"Why do you think Jesus called himself "the Light of the World?"** Remind kids that people need sunlight in order to be healthy - for plants to grow so that we can have food, for example. Light helps us navigate without getting hurt or lost. And light shows us God's world and all He's created.
4. Just as light helps us live and grow, guides us safely, and shows us God's world, Jesus gives us life, guides us, and shows us who God is and what He's done for us.
5. Guide children to form a circle. Distribute balloons and have kids keep their feet still and the balloons in the air. When a balloon touches the ground, everyone stops and repeats the verse. For a challenge, have kids take turns saying the verse.
6. As a second or alternative game, write one word of the verse on each bulb of some paper light bulbs you can copy and cut out ahead of time. Scramble the bulbs and then encourage the kids to put them in the right order. String (or tape to string) your bulbs and add as a decoration in your room.
7. Lastly, supply your team members each with their own light bulb or lantern printed on cardstock. Help older children write the verse on the back of the light, being sure to include the reference. Invite younger children to fill in the blanks for "light of the world" or trace "Jesus" in the verse.
8. If time remains, spend some time on this first day getting to know your crew. Ask them to shine a light on who they are. Ask questions about pets, favorite foods, and hobbies. Do they prefer games or crafts? What do they like about VBS so far?
9. As they tell you more about who they are, remind them that Peter learned little by little who Jesus was, until he eventually understood that Jesus is God's son!

## FUN FACT!

Millions of people (online and in person) watch the "ball drop" on New Year's Eve in New York City. This ball, made of crystal panels, is covered with more than 32,000 LED lights and can display more than 16 million colors!

## BONUS VERSE

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."  
Matthew 16:16

## EXTRA TIME?

We have coloring pages for every lesson. Want some for your crew? Just ask!

## BONUS GAME

Have kids draw a card with a profession on it (doctor, teacher, mailman, coach, etc.). Kids can take turns acting out their profession. After 15 seconds, the actor asks, "Who do you say I am?" If the crew can't guess, give another chance before revealing the answer. Continue until every child has a turn.



Again Jesus

spoke to them, saying,

“I am the

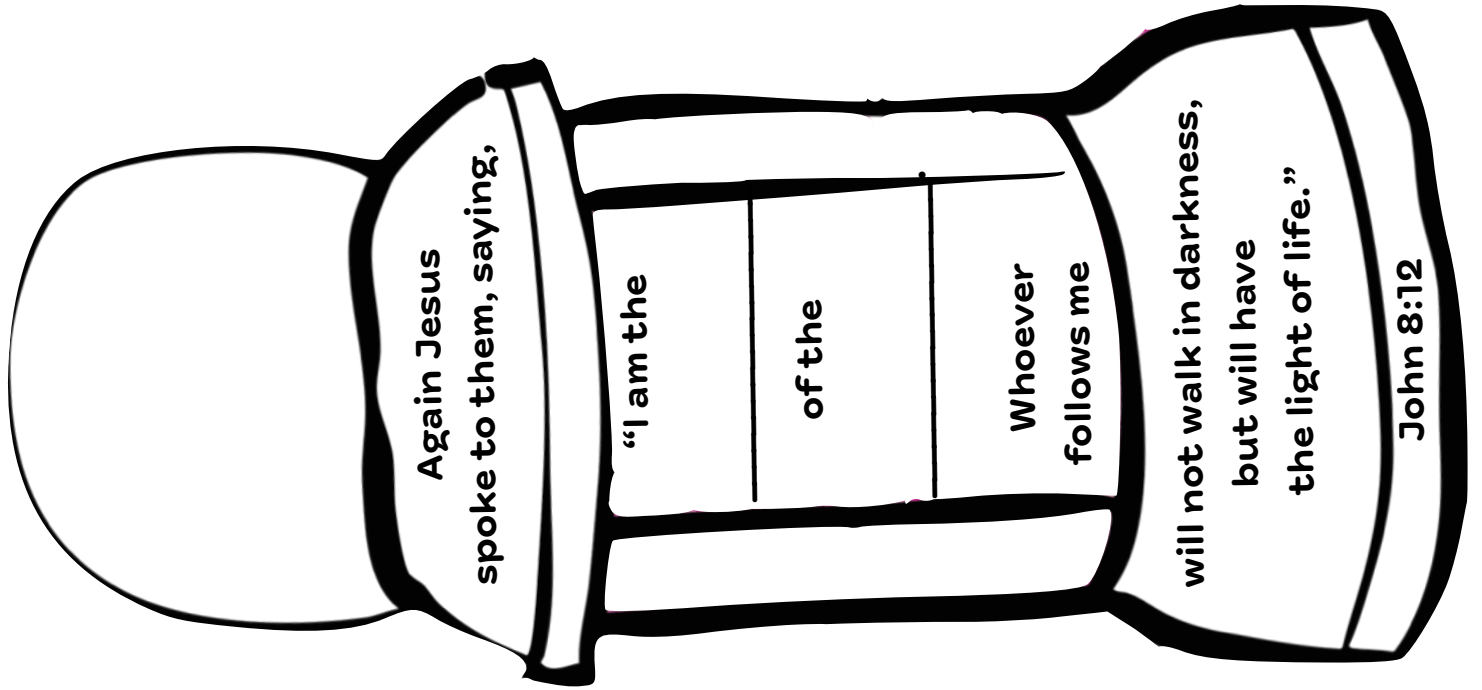
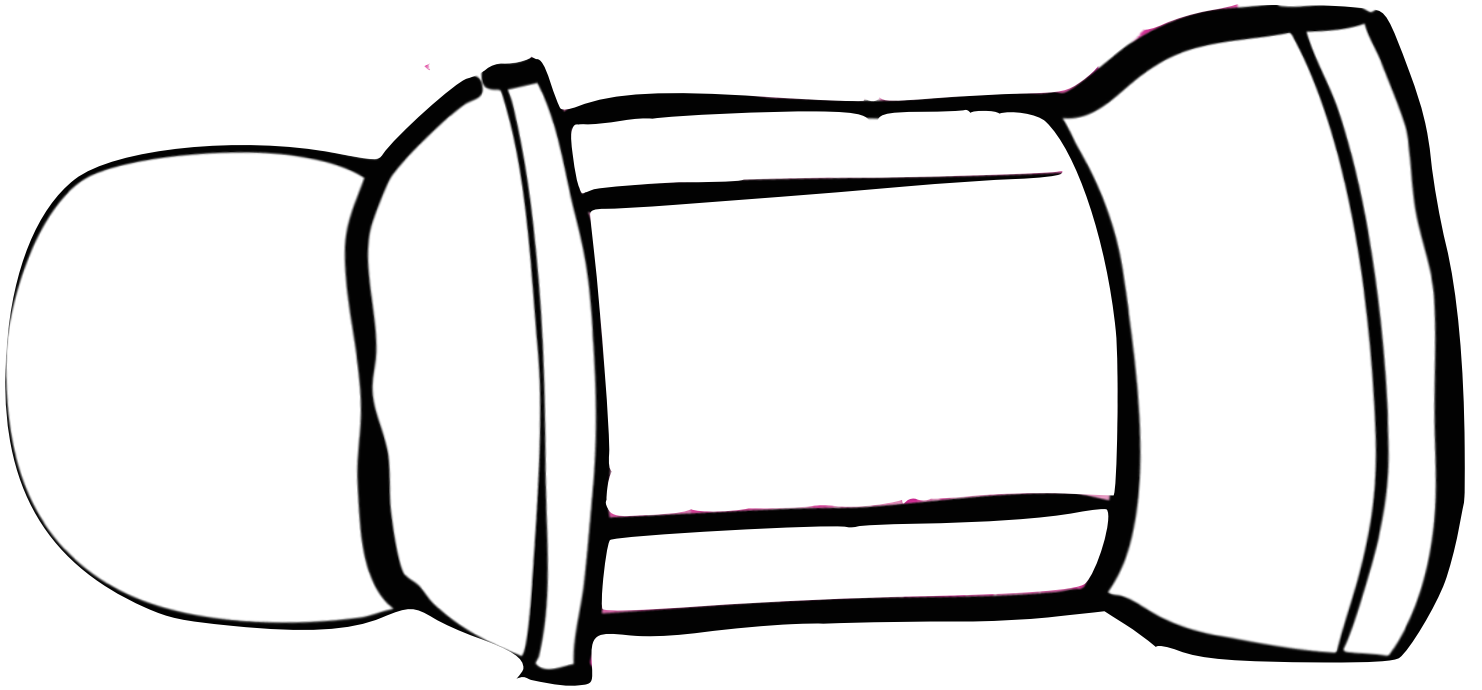
\_\_\_\_\_ of

the \_\_\_\_\_.

Whoever follows me will not walk  
in darkness, but will have the  
light of life.”

John 8:12

JESUS



Again

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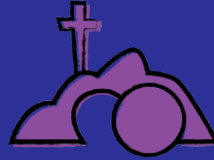
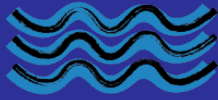
will

have

the  
light

of life.”

John  
8:12



## JOHN THE BAPTIST BAPTIZES JESUS.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:1-11;  
John 1:29-34

### Spotlight Question

**How was Jesus more than just an ordinary man?**

Jesus is the perfect Son of God who came to be the Savior of the world.

JESUS   
IS GOD'S  
PERFECT  
SON

### MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
"I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."  
John 8:12

### CREW TIME 1: STORY STUDY

#### THE WELCOME

1. As the kids come to your room, split them into two teams and guide them to hunt for glow sticks of their team's colors.

**Younger kids** should find their glow sticks and each team can lay them on the floor to create the best circle they can.

**Older kids** can find glow sticks with letters on them. One color should have one letter each to spell "perfect" plus a blank stick, and the other color should have one letter on each to spell "ordinary."

2. Say: **Ordinary means normal, and not surprising. Perfect is something with no mistakes or problems.** Read today's Spotlight Question. "Jesus was the PERFECT Son of God. That means he's never done anything wrong, and never will!"

#### BIBLE LESSON REVIEW

Point out the light shining on today's Spotlight Question and tell children you're going to answer that with the Bible Lesson they heard. Open your Bible to one of the passages with today's story. Ask them what they think it means that three of Jesus's closest friends all wrote about this special day. It was a very important part of Jesus's life on earth! Help them find the story in their own Bibles.

Remind your crew of your expectations for this time. Encourage them to share and ask questions, to listen, and to take turns.

To review the Bible Lesson, hold a Flashlight Card and invite a student to shine a flashlight through it. Help children read the words. Discuss how each word relates to the Bible Lesson.

#### Discussion Questions

First, ask straightforward questions to help children feel comfortable and to check that they heard. Then ease toward discussion.

1. Who did God send to get people ready for Jesus? (*Jesus's relative, John the Baptist*)
2. What are some ways John the Baptist got people ready for Jesus? (*He told them to repent of their sins, and baptized them to show that they had asked God for forgiveness.*)
3. What did Jesus want John the Baptist to do for him? (*baptize him*)

## Discussion Questions (continued)

4. Why was John confused when Jesus wanted to be baptized? (*Jesus had never sinned! He didn't need God's forgiveness.*)
5. Who said, "This is my Son"? (*God*) Who was God talking about when he said "Son"? (*Jesus*)
6. What reason did Jesus give as to why John should baptize him? (*God said this was right.*)
7. How did God feel about Jesus being baptized? How do we know? (*God was happy with Jesus. We know because He said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased!" Matt 3:17*)
8. Do you think you could live a perfect life, without ever doing something you shouldn't do? (*None of us could! Read Romans 3:23.*)

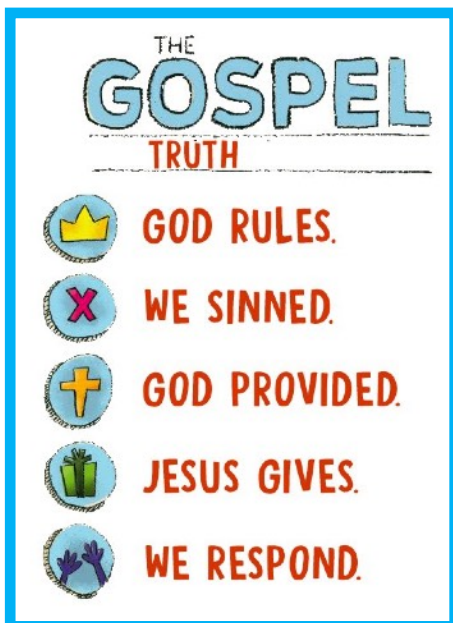
## THE WRAP UP

Revisit the words "ordinary" and "perfect." Say: **Jesus was not ordinary, because he wasn't like all the rest of us who sin. He was perfect! We can also say Jesus was extraordinary!** Help the kids think of some other ways Jesus was extraordinary. He walked on water, fed 5,000 people with one lunch, stopped a storm, and healed sick (or even dead!) people.

Invite kids to write their own response to the question "How was Jesus more than just an ordinary man?" on brightly colored post-it notes. **Older kids** can be encouraged to write a sentence about Jesus's sinlessness, or a miracle He did. **Younger kids** might try to write "perfect" or "Healer." Stick these responses to today's Spotlight Question poster. Pray together before ending the discussion.

## BONUS ACTIVITY

Play "Going to the River." Say: **Jesus was baptized in the river. What do you think you might see when you go to a river? Maybe a frog, a turtle, or some rocks?** Explain the game. The first child will say, "I went down to the river and I saw a [frog]." The next child will say, "[First child] went down to the river and saw a [frog]. I went down to the river and saw a [turtle]." Continue until everyone has had a turn. For **younger kids**, make a hand sign for each item and use it as a hint. Challenge **older kids** by continuing around the circle, adding more items, until time runs out. If you need a lesson review, have them only name things they might've seen at the river the day Jesus was baptized.



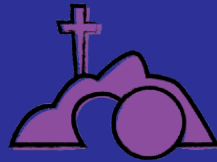
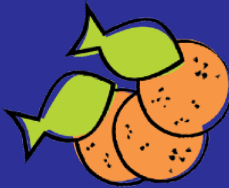
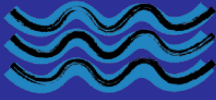
## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

### Review "The Gospel" and "God rules" mean.

The Gospel is the Good News about what God did to rescue us. We know it's true because God is in charge of everything - God rules!

### Have you ever done something wrong?

The Bible tells us we all have - every single person except for Jesus. Read Rom. 3:23. Sin is like aiming an arrow at a bullseye and totally missing it. God's center mark is perfection. None of us perfectly obey God in thoughts, words, and actions. Sin separates us from our holy (perfect) God. Read Rom. 6:23. The Bible also tells us that sin's consequence is death. Sin keeps us from living forever in Heaven with our perfect God.



## CREW TIME 2: Verse Work

1. Help children look up John 8:12 (and Mark 1:11 if you're doing that as well) in their Bibles. Read it all together.
2. Ask **What do you think "walking in darkness" means?** Give them opportunity to share their thoughts. Guide them to think about what happens when we're walking in a dark place with no flashlight. What if the place is a messy room or thick woods?
3. Tell children that all of us have sinned, ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed God and followed the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The serpent did not lead Adam and Eve to good and safe choices. He led them to disobey God, which leads to death.
4. Say: **We have God's perfect instructions which tell us the best ways to go. Like a flashlight, God makes the right choices clear to us. "Walking in darkness" means that when we sin, we choose to walk outside the lighted path.**
5. Place a tap light in front of you. When you tap the light to turn it on, kids should begin saying the Bible verse as fast as they can.
6. As soon as you tap the light to turn it off, they need to immediately become silent. Anyone still talking when the light goes off will sit out.
7. As you continue to play, go faster and faster to make it more difficult to stop. Recruit kids who are "out" to help you watch for the kids who are still talking when the light goes off.

### PREP THE DAY BEFORE:

8. As a take-home memory, print the following page on blue construction paper, making one per child plus an extra. Before class, trace the dotted lines with glue, generously sprinkle salt on it, shake off the excess, and allow it to dry.
9. Give the kids a prepared paper and brush. Set out small bowls with a little liquid watercolor in it. Put a plastic tablecloth on the surface under their pages. Instruct kids to get their brushes wet, load them with watercolor paint, dip once more (quickly) in water, and then touch the brush to the top of a "shaft of light" on their papers and hold it there. Don't forget to write names!
10. The paint will travel down the glue and salt line, like a beam of light! *Use your extra page to test beforehand.*

## FUN FACT!

Lite-Brite toys make it possible for kids to create pictures with translucent pegs, and then illuminate them with a small light bulb. Can you guess what year it was first sold?

## BONUS VERSE

And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:11

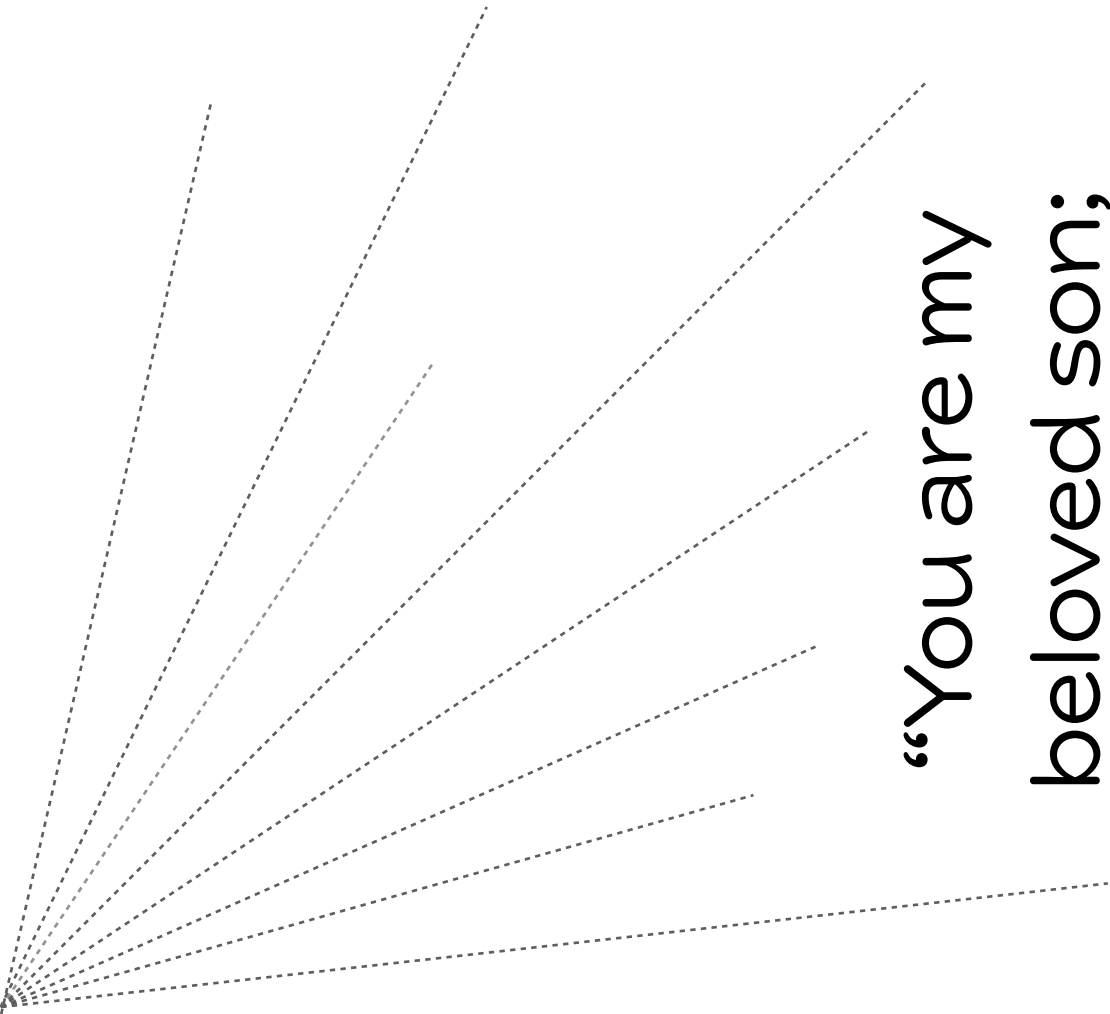
## EXTRA TIME?

Replay the spotlight game from yesterday to learn new facts about crew members.

## BONUS GAME

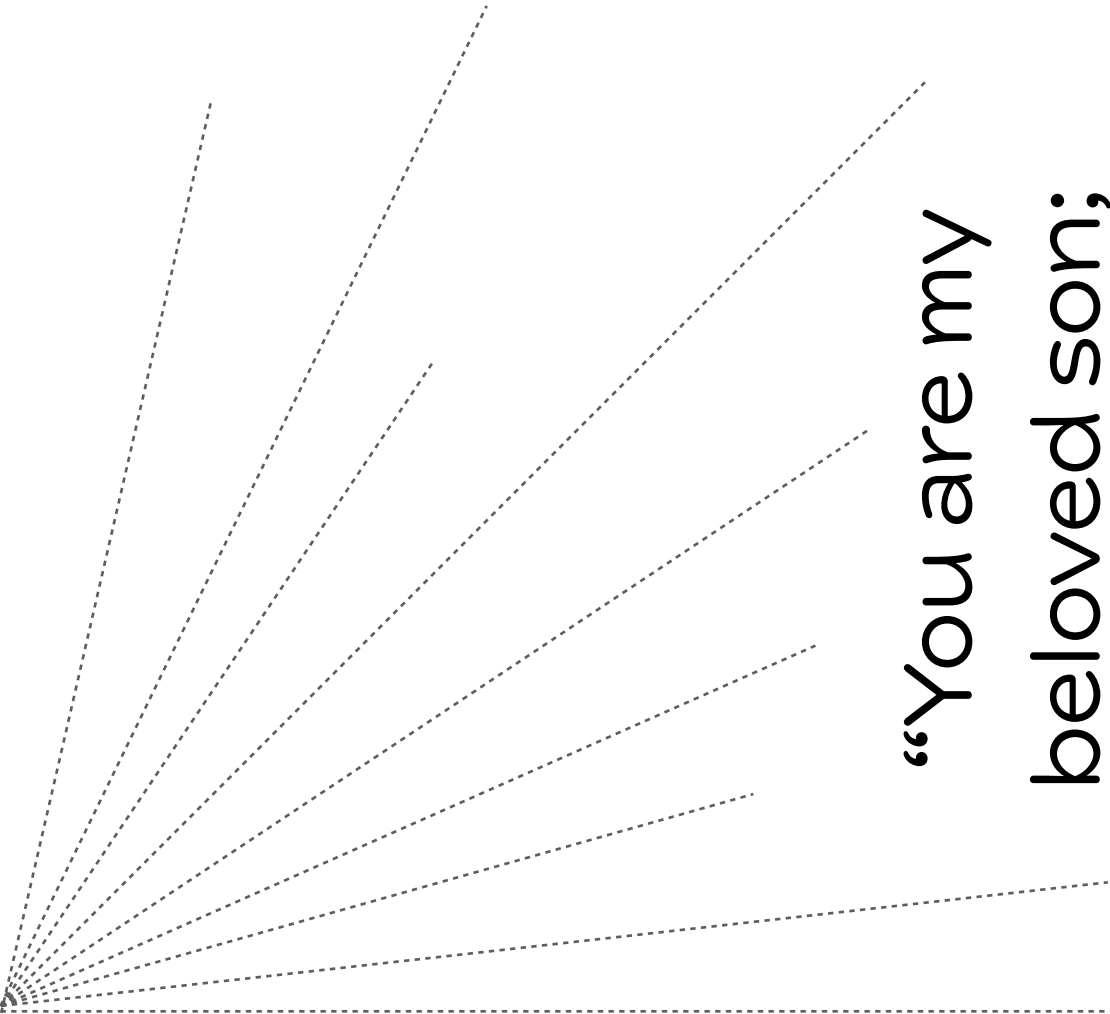
Place your tap light at the opposite end of the classroom. Have the crew line up and take turns running across the room to turn the light on, say one word of the verse, turn it off, and come back to the line. Continue until the whole verse and reference have been said.





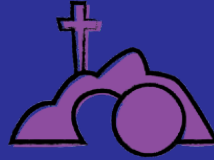
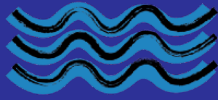
“You are my  
beloved son;  
with You I am  
well pleased.”

Mark 1:11



“You are my  
beloved son;  
with You I am  
well pleased.”

Mark 1:11



## JESUS PERFORMED MIRACLES.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Matthew 15:29-39

### Spotlight Question

#### How did Jesus teach?

Jesus taught with true words  
and amazing miracles,  
because He is the powerful  
Son of God.

JESUS is \*  
THE POWERFUL  
\* SON of GOD

### MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to  
them, saying,  
“I am the light of the  
world.

Whoever follows me  
will not walk in darkness,  
but will have  
the light of life.”  
John 8:12

### CREW TIME 1: STORY STUDY

#### THE WELCOME

1. Welcome kids back to VBS! Ask your crew what a “disciple” is. Jesus was a teacher. His 12 students spent several years learning from him by staying close to Jesus, watching what he did, and listening to what he taught. Point out that much of what they learned about Jesus came from seeing him perform miracles and hearing him teach.
2. But Jesus was no ordinary teacher. The disciples saw how powerful he is, and knew that he is the powerful Son of God!
3. Ask what a miracle is. It’s something only God (Jesus) can do. Let them know that some people try to make it look like they can do miracles, like a magician. But only God can truly do miracles.
4. Have the kids stand. When you say an activity, ask the group to shout, “miracle!” if it is a miracle, or “no, no, no!” if it isn’t. Use these, and add your own:
  - A man made well when someone says, “Be well!”
  - A sick person made well after taking medicine
  - A group of people collecting food to feed 200 families
  - A person feeding thousands with just one small plate of food
  - Someone painting a beautiful picture
  - Someone creating a mountain

#### BIBLE LESSON REVIEW

Illuminate today’s Spotlight Question and let children know what you’ll be learning. Open your Bible to Matthew 15 to show where today’s story is found. Help kids find the story in their own Bibles.

#### Discussion Questions

After reviewing some aspects of the Bible Lesson from the Storyteller, invite kids to respond to these review questions.

1. What did Jesus do when some people who were sick and hurt came to Him? (*He healed them.*)
2. Why did Jesus feel sorry for the more than 4,000 people? (*They had been with him for three days and needed food.*)
3. How many loaves of bread and how many fish did Jesus use to feed the crowd? (*Seven loaves and a few small fish*)

## Discussion Questions (continued)

4. Why do you think so many people were following Jesus?
5. Have you ever been super hungry? How do you feel when you've missed a meal or two?
6. How did Jesus show his power in this story? (*He fed so many people with just a little food, and he healed people who were sick.*)
7. What other things did Jesus show people by giving them food and health? (*He showed them that He loved them, that he cared for them, that he provided for their needs, etc.*)
8. What are some other miracles the Bible tells us Jesus did?

## THE WRAP UP

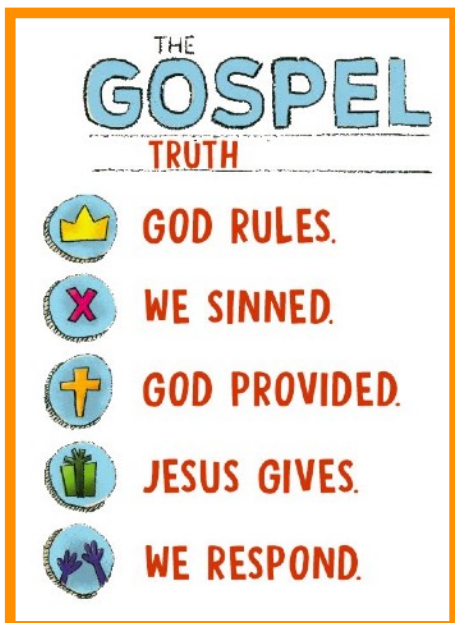
Invite kids to write their own response to the question "How did Jesus teach?" on brightly colored post-it notes. **Older kids** can be encouraged to write a miracle or some of Jesus's true words. **Younger kids** might try to write "miracles" or "powerful." Put these responses on today's Spotlight Question poster. Then, pray that God would show each of us His power and enable us to see miracles around us every day - things only God can do.

## BONUS ACTIVITY

Give each crew member a copy of the "Jesus silhouettes" page. Show them how it works. Cut the rectangles apart, and stack with 1 being on the bottom. Punch a hole where the numbers are in the top left corner. Use a brad to hold them together. Shine a light through the back (panel 1), and take turns putting Panel 2, 3, or 4 on top. Words and shapes will shine through from the back to add to each page in front of it.

Say: **Today's Bible lesson is in the book of Matthew, which is the very first book in the New Testament.** Help the kids look up Matt 15:3-31. Ask: **Which panel goes with Matthew 15:30-31?** Ask kids to write the reverence on the back of the "heals" panel. Repeat with Matt. 15:36-37.

Say: **Our theme verse is John 8:12. Let's find it in our Bibles.** After reading it, write the reference on the back of the "light" panel. Give your kids scissors and guide them to create their own silhouette story. Encourage them to use these to tell someone what they're learning about Jesus.



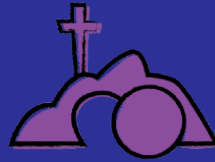
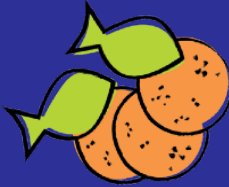
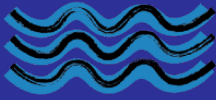
## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

Review the Gospel Truth.

**Have you ever been stuck and needed help to get out of a mess?**

**What does "God provided" mean?**

Remember - we all have sin and deserve the punishment of death. That's worse than stuck! But God, who is powerful enough to do anything, and to save anyone, provided just what we needed. He sent His perfect Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life. This means that Jesus is exactly what we needed. What God provided...is a *Who*. God provided the Only One who could pay for our sins for us. God provided a way out. He sent the Rescuer!



## CREW TIME 2: Verse Work

1. Help children look up John 8:12 (and Matthew 28:18 if you're doing that as well) in their Bibles. Read it all together.
2. Ask **"What did it mean when Jesus said to follow Him?"**
3. After discussion, play Follow the Leader, but first blindfold all the crew members. Then lead them around your room or in the hall, at first with all kids holding your hands, then with hands on each other's shoulders to make a chain to you, then with only an index finger on someone's shoulder, then walking without touching. When you reach a stopping point, say, **"Stop!"** Have them remove their blindfolds and return to the room.
4. Ask: **When was it easiest to follow me - when you were holding shoulders, touching with one finger, or walking by yourself? The more connected we are to the leader, the easier it is to follow. This is true for following Jesus, too. When Jesus says to follow Him, he means that we should be close to Him by listening to His words in the Bible, and by living with others who are walking close to Him and can help us.**
5. Dim the lights in your room and give each child (or pair of children) a flashlight. Give them one minute to find one baggie per child you've hidden somewhere in the room (see below). When they've found a baggie, they should come sit down.
6. Say: **Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." Matt 4:4 Jesus wants us to know that knowing God's words to us in the Bible is as important as food! Jesus fed 4000 people with very little, and God feeds the whole world with this one special book.**
7. Baggies should include the memory verse (of the week or the challenge verse - your choice!) with each word on a separate sun ray and a yellow circle. Instruct them to use their glue stick to glue the sun rays to the back of the circle (with words facing front) with the words in order.
8. Review any challenge verses from previous days. Pray together that the Lord would help them to hear, believe, and obey his instructions, and that God's Word would live in their hearts and minds forever.



## FUN FACT!

Our sun is a tiny flashlight compared to some objects in the sky. A quasar is a region at the center of a galaxy that produces a huge amount of light. Scientists recently discovered one that's 500 trillion times brighter than the sun!

## BONUS VERSE

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Matthew 28:18

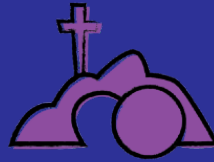
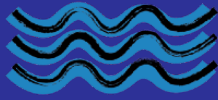
## EXTRA TIME?

Choose one of the songs from this week and talk about the lyrics. Then sing together!

## BONUS GAME

Play Flashlight Stomp while you listen to music. Turn off the lights in your room. Point your flashlight at the ground and swirl it around. Kids must try to stomp on your light. Once they do, they can sit down. When all are seated, try again! For an extra challenge, have your Yoggers move a flashlight around at the same time.

Again Jesus	28:18
spoke to them,	Matthew
saying,	me.”
“I am the light	given to
of the world.	has been
Whoever	on earth
follows me	and
will not walk	in heaven
in darkness,	“All authority
but will have	said to them,
the light of life.”	came and
John 8:12	And Jesus



## JESUS DIED AND ROSE TO LIFE AGAIN


### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Mark 14:43-16:7

### Spotlight Question

**Was Jesus just someone who lived a long time ago?**

No! He is alive! Jesus lived, died, and rose again to be our Savior, now and forever.

JESUS is   
THE PROVEN   
SON OF GOD

### MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying,  
“I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

John 8:12

### CREW TIME 1: STORY STUDY

#### THE WELCOME

1. Welcome kids to your crew room. Show them several children’s books you have sitting around the room. Say: **There are lots of things that make for a good story, but the most important thing about a story is that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.** Discuss these parts of a couple of the books, showing them the pictures.
2. Tell kids you have a game. Give the crew the cards on page 20 (provide 3-4 sets for an **older crew** and let them play in pairs). Ask them to sort their cards into four stories, and then in order with the beginning, middle, and end. **Younger kids** can play in pairs, with each pair having just one story to put in order with the help of a yogger.
3. Ask: **Is the end of a story important?** Imagine with the kids what any of these stories might be like without an ending. Tell them that today’s true story about Jesus had a surprise ending. People thought it ended when Jesus died, but it didn’t!

#### BIBLE LESSON REVIEW

Open your Bible to Mark 14 to show kids where today’s story is found. Then help them to find the story in their own Bibles.

#### Discussion Questions

Review what the Storyteller said and/or did during the Bible Lesson today. Allow your students to retell as much as possible, and pause to ask questions or clarify details as they come up. Then ask your review and discussion questions.

1. How did the religious leaders try to stop Jesus from teaching that He was God’s Son? *(They arrested him and then killed Him.)*
2. How did Jesus die? *(He was nailed to a cross.)*
3. What did the women find when they went to Jesus’s tomb on the third day? *(Jesus was gone, but a man met them there.)*
4. What good news did the man tell the women at the tomb? *(He told them that Jesus was not there because He had risen!)*
5. What did the Roman soldier say about Jesus? *(“Truly this man was the Son of God.” v. 39)*
6. What did Jesus do to show He’s God’s Son? *(He defeated death!)*

## Discussion Questions (continued)

7. Was Jesus just someone who lived a long time ago?
8. Why do you think the religious leaders wanted Jesus to stop saying He was God's Son?
9. Why could Jesus come back to life?
10. How did Jesus show love for all people?
11. This happened 2,000 years ago. Why does this story matter for us today?

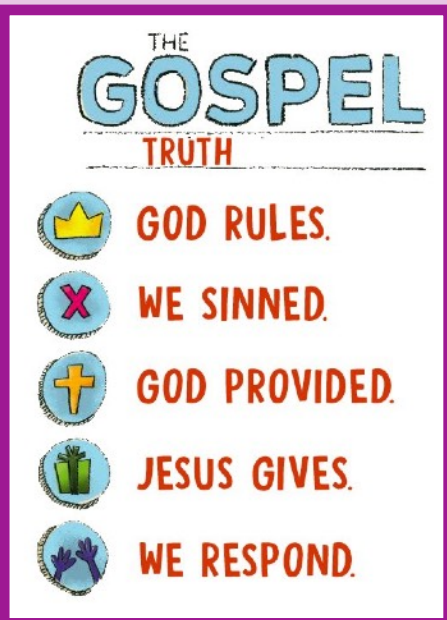
## THE WRAP UP

Invite kids to write their own response to the question "Was Jesus just someone who lived a long time ago?" on brightly colored post-it notes. **Older kids** can write how they know Jesus is more than an ordinary man from history. **Younger kids** might try to write "God's Son," "perfect," or "powerful." Put these responses on today's Spotlight Question poster. Pray with the crew members that God's Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of everyone in the room to enable them to believe in Jesus and follow him with their whole hearts.

## A SPECIAL PRAYER TIME

Tell the children that today's story is the most important story every told. And unlike the stories on the cards you played with, or in the books you showed them, this is a true story. Jesus *was* a man who lived a long time ago - as real as you and I. But he wasn't only that. Jesus is God's Son, and because He defeated death, He lives *right now*, too!

Say: **This week, you've learned more about who Jesus really is, and what He's done to rescue us from sin. Let's take a minute to pray in our heads and tell God thank you for sending Jesus. (Pause for 5 seconds.) Now if you believe that you have sins - things you've done that were wrong - take a minute to tell God you're sorry for those sins. List a few in your head. I'll give you a minute. (Pause for 10 seconds.) Last, if you believe that Jesus lived a sinless life, died to pay for your sins, and rose again after he'd paid for them all, take a minute to tell Jesus that you believe those things, and you want to live your life following Him. (Pause for 10 seconds.) Thank you, Jesus. It is in your name we pray. Amen. Kids, if you want to talk to us about what you prayed today, we'd love to listen. Just come tell us!**



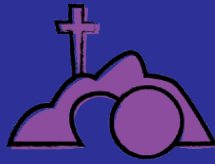
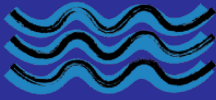
## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

Review the Gospel Truth.

**What's the best gift you've ever received?**

**What does Jesus give? To whom?**

Because we all sin, we all owe something. The Bible says, "the wages of sin is death." But Jesus lived a perfect life, and so he owes nothing. Jesus *chose* to die on the cross for our sins. And when death couldn't keep him anymore, because all the sin had been fully paid for, he came to life again! Now, when we believe in him, he shares his life with us. Our sin is paid for with his gift (his death and resurrection), and we are welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever!



## CREW TIME 2: Verse Work

1. Help children look up John 8:12 (and Mark 15:39 if you're doing that as well) in their Bibles. Read it all together.
2. Ask **"What is the 'light of life' Jesus mentions?"** At the beginning of the verse, Jesus said "I am the Light of the World." Imagine Jesus like a bright lantern you can hold in front of yourself while you're on a hike at night. You have the light - it's in your hands. And the lantern isn't a "light of life," but more like a "light of hiking" because it leads you along the hike.
3. Jesus is the Light of Life. He is with you, and you hold on to Him when you read his Word, praise Him, and pray to Him. He isn't just lighting a hiking trail, or even a whole forest. He's lighting up the way to live your whole life, leading to eternity.
4. Before the session, set up two parallel rows of chairs back to back, with at least 5 feet between the two rows. Stretch paper streamers (for **older kids**) or yarn (for **younger kids**) across the two rows and tape the ends, making a pretend laser maze in the middle. Tape the streamers in a zig zag pattern, from top to bottom, across the space between the chairs.
5. Cover today's challenge verse or the theme verse in black. As you point at the black cover, say: **Let's read this Scripture verse together.** When you get a blank stare, ask what the problem is. Talk about how seeing the words in the light help us to know it so much better.
6. **In Monday's story, we heard Peter say, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Today, who learned the same thing? The centurion. When we begin to understand who Jesus is and why he came, it's like you've been in the dark, and someone pulled the cover off. And when we see who Jesus is and choose to follow him, it changes the way we live.**
7. Let the kids line up and try to walk through the laser maze. If they can do it, discuss how being able to see the lasers made the obstacle course so much easier. If they struggle, discuss how life will still be difficult with Jesus. But just like you're with them right now, ready to help, Jesus will be with them always, ready to help them get through hard things.
8. If you're the last crew, have your yogger go through blindfolded, first with all the kids shouting instructions, and then with silence. Say, "Freeze!" Note how entangled he/she is and in need of help. Then guide him/her out of the maze - like God guides us.

## FUN FACT!

Most lightning is white, but depending on the conditions when it strikes, it can be blue, red, green, orange, or purple!

## BONUS VERSE

And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

Mark 15:39

## EXTRA TIME?

Play "I Spy" in your room. Give a clue, and any child who thinks he or she knows may raise one hand. When you call on him or her, that child will say "I got it!" and then will name the item. If they're wrong, call on someone else. Try to give themed clues like "I spy an item that turns a light on and off" or "I spy an item that's bright and shiny." Remind kids that "illuminate" means to make something clear. Jesus makes God's love for us clear, and illuminates God's plan to rescue us from sin and be with Him forever.



A girl with curly blonde hair went for a walk in the woods.



A blonde-haired girl tried chairs, beds, and breakfast at the home of some bears.



Three bears came home to find a blonde-haired girl asleep in the baby bear's bed.



A pig built a house of straw and a wolf blew it down.



A pig built a house of sticks and a wolf blew it down.



A pig built a house of bricks and a wolf could not blow it down.

A tortoise and a hare were in a race. Everyone thought the hare would win.



Along the way, the hare was far ahead, so he decided to take a nap.



When the hare woke up, the tortoise was crossing the finish line. The tortoise won!



Two teams ran onto a football field.

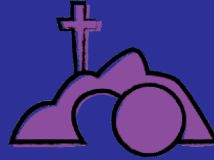
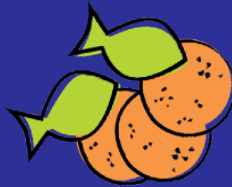
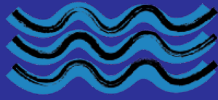


The two teams threw and caught and kicked and tackled to earn points.



When enough time had passed, one of the teams had more points, and they were very happy.





## Peter Preached About Jesus

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGE

Acts 2

### Spotlight Question

#### Why do I need to respond to Jesus?

Jesus is the only way to receive God’s forgiveness and live with Him forever.

**\*JESUS is GOD'S PLAN FOR FORGIVENESS\***

### MEMORY VERSE

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”  
John 8:12

### CREW TIME 1: STORY STUDY

#### THE WELCOME

1. Welcome kids to your last day of VBS! Be sure to invite them to come to church on Sunday to keep learning more about who Jesus is and how to follow Him. Remind kids that in the fall, there are Sunday School classes for babies, kids, teenagers, and adults. But even in the summer, we come together on Sundays to worship, pray, and learn together.
2. Guide kids to play “Come to Me.” Everyone should spread out around the room, face the walls, and close their eyes. Choose one volunteer to stand in the middle of the room with his or her eyes open. Have this child say “Come to me” very quietly. The other kids continue to keep their eyes closed, but move slowly and carefully toward the speaker. The speaker can keep repeating the phrase, more and more softly as others get nearer. When a child finds the speaker, he or she should sit down until everyone has arrived.
3. Say: **Jesus calls people to come to Him. This week, we’ve been learning to hear His voice and come closer to Him.**

#### BIBLE LESSON REVIEW

Open your Bible to Acts 2 to show kids where today’s story is found. Then help them to find the story in their own Bibles.

#### Discussion Questions

Briefly review what the Storytellers have taught this week, referring to specific elements of their Bible Lessons. Ask students what was memorable about each, or what light bulb moments they had during each lesson. Then ask your review and discussion questions.

1. Who did Peter stand and preach about? (*Jesus*)
2. How did the people feel when they heard about all the wrong things they had done? (*sad*)
3. How many ways are there to get forgiveness for our sins? (*There is only one way - trusting in Jesus.*)
4. How many people were baptized the day after they heard Peter preach? (*about 3,000!*)

## Discussion Questions (continued)

1. Where is Jesus now? (*with God in Heaven*)
2. What are some ways people might respond to Jesus?
3. Peter shared the good news of Jesus with many people, but we aren't all preachers. How might you spread the good news of Jesus?
4. Who are some people you might talk to if you wanted to know more about following Jesus?
5. Who are some people you can pray for and tell about who Jesus really is?

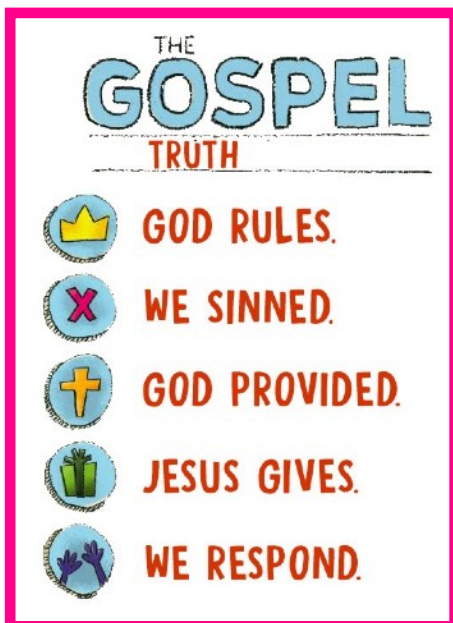
## THE WRAP UP

Invite kids to write their own response to the question "Why do I need to respond to Jesus?" on brightly colored post-it notes. **Older kids** might say "to be saved" or "to be forgiven for my sins" or "to go to heaven.". **Younger kids** might write "He is the Way." Stick these responses to today's Spotlight Question poster and shine a light on it. After this, take a moment to re-read the previous posters. (Pro tip: Ahead of time, note a couple of responses you can read on each poster, possibly from other crews so that no one is pointed out (either to be prideful or embarrassed) in your crew.)

## BONUS ACTIVITY

Say: **Jesus told others that He is the Light of the world. Jesus was not shining a candle, but was making clear that He was the Savior who brings us out of the darkness of sin and into the Light of Life.** Invite kids to make paper lanterns to remind them that Jesus is the Light of the World.

1. Copy p. 24 on card stock and give to each child. Kids should cut off the strip at the bottom and color the lanterns and the plain side of the strip as desired. Write names on the back.
2. Fold down the middle along the solid line. Cut on the dotted lines from the folded edge.
3. Unfold the paper and roll it so that the short ends touch, forming a cylinder. Tape in place.
4. Gently press down from the top until the cylinder looks like a lantern.
5. Tape the small paper strip to the top of the cylinder to make a handle.
6. Remind kids that lanterns give light when they have a fire or bulb in them. Challenge kids to place lanterns where their whole family will be reminded that Jesus gives light to the world!



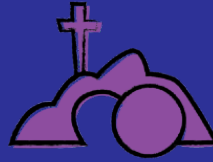
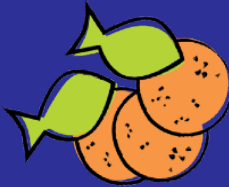
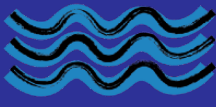
## THE GOSPEL TRUTH

### Review the Gospel Truth.

We know God is ruling all things powerfully and for our good. We know we have all sinned, and without God's help, we are stuck. But we also know God provided His Perfect Son Jesus, who chose to die to pay for our sins, and defeated death and resurrected! All that? That's the Gospel - because it's really, really, really GOOD NEWS!

### What does it mean to say, "we respond"?

When we know all that, we want to DO something! We believe that it's true, we feel sorry and apologize to God for our sins, we ask him to help us know and obey Jesus better and better, and we tell others about him! (John 14:6; Rom. 10:9-10, 13)



## CREW TIME 2: Verse Work

1. Help children look up John 8:12 (and Acts 2:38 if you're doing that as well) in their Bibles. Read it all together.
2. In John's gospel (where he wrote the story of Jesus's life as he witnessed and learned it) he writes that Jesus was at the temple, teaching people there about who He really was. Some of the people believed Him, and some of them accused Him of lying and wanted Him to be arrested. This mixed crowd is who Jesus was talking to when he said our memory verse for this week.
3. Ask: **Why do you think what Jesus said made some people mad? Who would a Jewish priest say could give light to the whole world?** Tell kids that these people believed in the One True God, and were waiting for a Messiah, but they thought the Messiah would be a military leader who would fight a war to get back their country from the Romans. They did not think Jesus was the Messiah, so they figured He must be lying, tricking other Jewish people to believe someone was God who wasn't.
4. Ask: **What must the people have felt who believed Jesus was the Messiah?** Allow time for responses, and nudge them toward thinking about getting something they've hoped for.
5. **Just like we often wait for good things to come, they waited, too, for God to keep His promise to save them. Think how happy they must have been to know that God remembered them! He did what He said He would do! And they were now saved from the weight of their sins, which for them meant constant sacrifices and offerings, among other things.**
6. Play Light Limbo. Have a yogger point a flashlight in a straight line to the top of several pieces of tape on a wall, at 1', and then every 6" until 5'. Play a song from the Illumination Station playlist.
7. When a crew member makes it under the light without it touching them, they must say the memory verse. If they do that as well, they can go to the back of the line and wait for the next round. If not, they can sit and help judge the others.
8. For each subsequent round (which starts when the first person to go is back at the start of the line), move the light down to the next tape mark. Continue until there's a winner. See if this person can recite any of the Bonus verses, or if they can remember any of the week's fun facts.

## FUN FACT!

The lights in some of New Zealand's caves aren't made by people. They're glowworms! You can tour the cave by foot and boat to see them shine!

## BONUS VERSE

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 2:38

## EXTRA TIME?

Make Pentecost Bookmarks. Say: **Because of a festival, people who spoke many languages were in town the day Peter preached and the Holy Spirit came.**

Allow kids to choose a word for "Jesus" in another language, write it in black Sharpie on the bookmark, and then color the rest as they like. Tell them to write "Jesus" on the back in English and put it in Acts 2 in their Bibles to take home.



JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

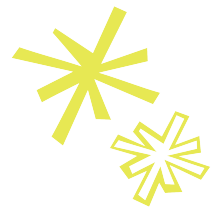
JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

# HELPFUL



# iNfO

# TIPS FOR GUIDING BEHAVIOR



## PREVENTION IS THE PREFERRED STRATEGY

“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.” Work to develop strategies and cultivate ideas to meet a child’s needs and/or reasonable wants before misbehaviors occur. This not only makes your time with the children more positive, but also creates a safe, predictable environment with a common language.

## THE WHYS OF POOR BEHAVIOR

When a child misbehaves, first ask yourself why. What is causing this behavior? Understanding will help you to create systems that prevent classroom management problems. Over time, grow your list of strategies, having them at the ready to implement when needed.

- **Need for more attention**

For classroom management, *why* they need more attention doesn’t matter as much as *that* they need it. Give extra attention to these children before they use outbursts and inappropriate actions to get it. Compliment what they’re doing well, allow space for their voice,, ask for their help, etc..

- **Masking insecurity**

This child may be nervous because they’re new, don’t have a friend, or have never heard these stories. Take care not to create situations where his or her lack of knowledge will be laughed at by other children. Don’t assume the children’s knowledge or abilities, but allow them to show you. This gives you an opportunity to pile on the praises rather than unintentionally causing embarrassment.

- **Find it hard to manage their anger**

Kids who “blow up” and are quick to “fight” may not have the skills to avoid these outbursts. Watch for opportunities to head off the poor behavior and model a way to cool down and self-correct. Slow breathing, leaning back-to-wall, walking a lap, or sitting with a weighted lap blanket are examples.

- **Looking for ways to be in control**

Some kids feel more secure when they are in control, even if it means disrupting the leader’s plans. Look past your own irritation and find ways to foster their leadership abilities. Give them choices whenever possible - choose to sit here or there, to be first in line or last, to hold your hand or walk nearby, join the circle or sit at the table, etc.

- **Full of energy**

God created children with lots of energy as part of His plan to help them develop, but as adults we often want them to be still and calm. A good rule of thumb is to assume about a one-minute attention span for every year of life. Asking a four-year-old to sit still and listen for ten minutes goes against how she was created. Don’t fight it; join it! “Put your hands on your ears if you’re listening.” “Stand up if you know who our story is about.” “Let’s march around the room while we recite our memory verse.”

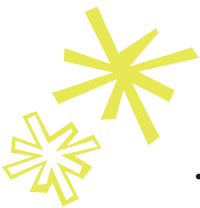
- **Boredom**

When a child gets bored (or thinks he’s bored) he starts looking for something to do. Plan sessions that consider the children, their preferences, and their abilities. Be ready with three more ideas than you plan to use, and then be ready to scrap all of that and go a different direction if they’re not tracking.

## MAKE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS UNDERSTOOD

Children can’t meet classroom expectations if they don’t know and understand them. Be succinct and clear. 3-5 rules, no more than 5 words per rule, and no unexplained abstract words. (How does a 6-yr-old explain “respect”? If they can’t, then it’s not a good word to use in the rule!). Recite them often, and use those phrases in corrections and compliments.

**Classroom management is primarily about knowing and understanding the kids you teach. Pray for your students by name, and for your group as a whole. Learn about their age in general, ask family and friends about your particular student, put systems in place you think may help, and be ready to adapt.**



# AGE-GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

## – INFANTS THRU KINDERGARTEN –

### Babies and Toddlers

#### Active

- Learn and explore through senses

#### Curious

- Feel, pound, pat, manipulate objects
- Reason and think through physical manipulation
- Imitate the activities of the adults around them

#### Self-focused

- Say 'no' to express desires
- Want everything now and cannot wait
- Have little interest in cooperative play

#### Have short attention spans

- Can focus for simple Bible truths, songs, stories, and pictures
- Learn by doing and hearing something repeatedly

#### Need security

- Set simple but clear limits
- Like being held securely but not tightly
- Respond to loving care and sense love from the way they are treated
- Consistent rhythms, routines, faces, and even smells during their day provide felt safety

#### Sensitive

- Sense fairness and are developing attitudes about church
- Learning to trust. Treat them with respect.
- Often sense changes and may internalize and be upset by them



### 3s - K

#### Active

- Most always up and moving
- Can focus their energy into a learning experience
- Need varied methods of teaching, even during group time

#### Literal

- Use and understand simple, concrete language (Phrases such as "give your heart to Jesus," "open your ears," or "zip your lips" are confusing.)
- Pictures to boost understanding

#### Curious

- Learn from hands-on experiences and discovering answers on their own
- Ask lots of questions, but accept "I don't know"

#### Self-focused

- Need help to focus on strengths and overcome failures or limits
- Develop social skills through play and interaction with peers

#### Short Attention Spans

- Learn best with multiple short activities encompassing different learning styles
- Teachers should be flexible and keep instructions short and simple.

#### Creative

- Have vivid imagination and enjoy free-play activities
- Discover through self-expression and making choices

#### Need Limits

- Simple, clear limits provide security
- Respond best to positive instructions (Instead of saying, "Don't run," say, "Walk.")
- Redirection of negative behavior is more effective than consequences (when possible)

#### Sensitive

- Heightened awareness of "fairness" - don't compare one child to another.
- Feel respect or disrespect, notice attitudes and interpret facial expressions

# HOW TO SUPPORT ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



## 1st-4th

### Physical

- Change activities and offer balanced times of play and rest.
- Plan activities that utilize children's senses.
- Remember children develop at different rates. They do not all have the same skills and abilities.
- Plan activities that use gross motor skills, such as games, and fine motor skills, such as crafts.

### Intellectual

- Keep activities challenging and relevant to their lives. Children are concrete thinkers.
- Implement multiple learning styles in your session. Children are naturally curious and becoming independent thinkers. They enjoy a variety of learning activities.
- Form groups and let children discuss ideas presented in the Bible study. Children enjoy group decision-making.

### Social

- Model appropriate ways to apply the concepts of right and wrong through your actions. Children are sensitive to fairness and honesty.
- Be specific in your praise and encouragement. Children are becoming more aware of their peers and what others think. They crave genuine affirmation.
- Be firm and loving as you address behaviors. Children understand rules and consequences. They desire appropriate guidelines for behavior.

### Emotional

- Children seek love and affirmation. They need you to love them for who they are.
- Keep in mind children are anxious in large groups of unknown people. They express feelings openly and are embarrassed easily.
- Allow children to make choices and do tasks independently as they are growing aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

### Spiritual

- Model Christian attitudes and actions. Children model the worship, prayers, and attitudes of others.
- Allow children to respond and participate actively in Bible study. They are acquiring biblical knowledge, skills, and principles and are relating this knowledge to their daily lives.
- Listen to their questions and encourage them to read the Bible for answers.
- Be a Christian mentor. Children are increasingly capable of making commitments. They are learning to trust Christ and talk to God about their feelings.

# Age—GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

## — MIDDLE SCHOOL —

### 7th-8th

#### Physical

- Bodies are changing with muscle development, overall growth, voice changes, and appearance of adult physical features, hormones are increasing
- Boys begin these developments later than girls and may be smaller
- May still look like kids or may look much older
- Awkward and clumsy

#### Social/Emotional

- Self-image is BIG—insecure, self-conscious
- Can be moody and unpredictable
- Relationships with the opposite gender take on a different nature
- Need attention but don't want to stick out
- Can have child-like emotions
- Spend more time with other teens and less time with family
- Push to find firm limits with adults and test for resolve
- Mixed feelings about independence from parents

#### Mental

- Concrete thinkers—no hypotheticals
- Think in terms of the present moment
- See themselves as the center of their world
- Risk-takers—believe bad things will not happen to them, primarily with regard to physical harm or illness
- Impressionable
- Not a child, but not yet a teen
- Short attention span

#### Spiritual

- Beginning to question things personally
- Still have child-like faith
- Excited in youth group—everything is new!



# Age-Group Characteristics

## — HIGH SCHOOL —



### 9th-10th

#### Physical

- Growing rapidly—spurts of 3–4 inches
- Girls have usually reached full physical development while boys are close
- Boys' voices lower, facial hair appears, weight and muscle gain continue

#### Social/Emotional

- More self-assured and able to solve problems
- Girls are more divisive and judgmental and often see small things as more important than they actually are
- Can be apathetic toward opinions and life, and socially are either 'on' or 'off'
- May have urges to use substances, become sexually active, or develop problems like eating disorders

#### Mental

- Can think about the future, and understand long-term effects of their decisions
- Often self-centered and/or can appreciate opinions of others
- Organizational skills—better able to juggle school, church, family, work
- Frequently challenge parental and school rules

#### Spiritual

- Many know the "church" answer but do not apply it to life
- May not have grasped concept of personal relationship with Christ
- May have difficulty prioritizing relationship with Jesus when life is going smoothly

### 11th-12th

#### Physical

- Physically developed for the most part (still growing but past major changes)

#### Social/Emotional

- Romantic relationships become very important (either developing, maintaining, or overcoming hurt)
- Starting to see the world outside hometown
- Guys internalize; girls externalize
- Not totally confident but more aware of who they are
- More guarded—don't show emotions easily

#### Mental

- Abstract thinkers
- Plan for graduation
- Seeing the "bigger picture"
- Reaching independence

#### Spiritual

- Maturity in this area can vary dramatically
- Still questions to be answered
- Putting pieces together of their faith
- Starting to understand what they believe and why

# SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH KIDS

The word *gospel* means “good news.” THE Gospel is THE Good News about what Jesus has done. It is the message about Christ, the Kingdom of God, and salvation. He has rescued us and made a way for us to be with God in Heaven forever!

## THE GOSPEL TRUTH



### GOD RULES

The Bible tells us that God created everything, including you and me. He is in charge of everything! (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17)



### WE SINNED

Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God’s punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



### GOD PROVIDED

God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. God has comforted us and provided away to remove the separation between us and Him. It’s something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)



### JESUS GIVES

The penalty for our sin is death. Jesus lived a perfect life here on earth, so He owes nothing. Jesus *chose* to die on the cross to pay *our* debt. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we are welcomed into God’s family forever. His death pays for our sin, and his resurrection means it’s paid in full. This is the best gift ever! (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18)



### WE RESPOND

When we know and believe all these amazing things, we want to do something! First, we feel sorry and apologize to God for our sins. Then we tell him thank you, and show our gratitude when we love, follow, and obey Jesus. And with good news like this, we’re eager to tell others about Him! (John 14:16; Romans 10:9-10, 13)

## HELPFUL TIPS FOR GOSPEL DISCUSSION

**START SMALL!** Before jumping into the Gospel, begin with questions like, “How are you liking VBS so far?” or “What has been your favorite part about VBS today?”

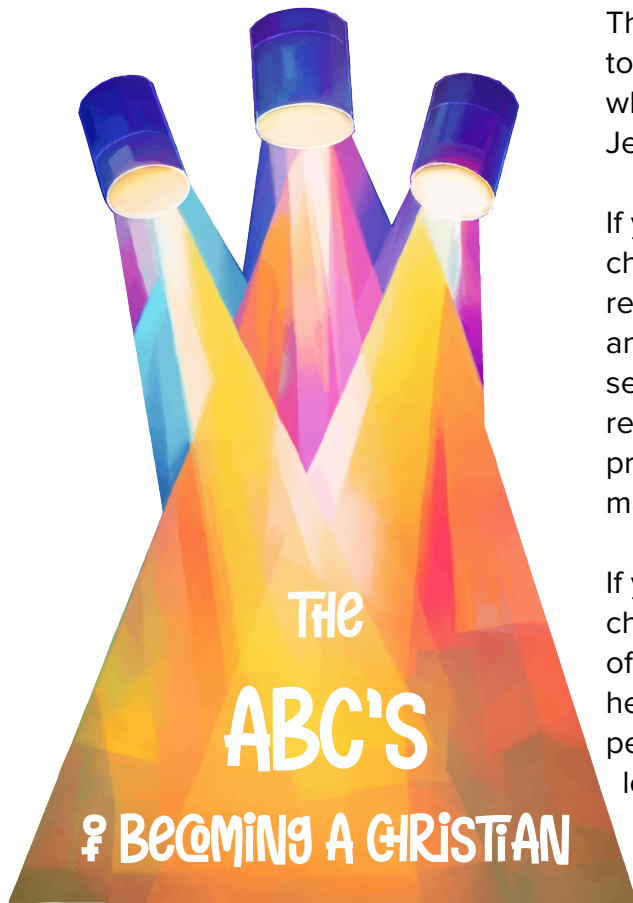
**ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS** Remind kids that this is a conversation, not a pass/fail test.

**KEEP IT SIMPLE!** Don’t complicate the Gospel. Avoid large, theological words and don’t assume a child has any prior knowledge or understanding of the gospel.

**REPETITION** Use and review *The Gospel Truth* and the *ABC’s of Becoming a Christian* with your kids throughout the week.

**USE SCRIPTURE** Scripture helps kids recognize that what you are saying is not your words ideas, but God’s words.

**CLOSE IN PRAYER** Ask God for wisdom and for His Holy Spirit to move and convict.



The *ABC's of Becoming a Christian* is a simple tool that helps us remember how to respond when prompted by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus with our whole hearts.

If you sense that the Holy Spirit is working in a child's heart in such a way that the child is ready to follow Him, spend some time talking and praying with him or her individually. If you sense that a child is not ready to pray and respond in faith and repentance, continue to prayerfully teach him or her about Christ and maybe revisit their questions again later.

If you feel uncomfortable about talking with a child about his or her questions or profession of faith, pray with the child that God would help him or her to understand, and then personally connect the child with a pastor or leader who will talk with them more. Be sure to share the news of the child's spiritual development with his or her parent/s or caregiver/s.

# A

**ADMIT** to God that you are a sinner. Ever since Adam and Eve chose to sin by disobeying God, all people have chosen to sin and disobey. (Romans 3:23) Tell God that you messed up and you are sorry for turning away from Him through your thoughts, words, and actions. Repent—turn away from your sin! (Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9) Repent doesn't just mean turning from doing bad things to doing good things. It means turning from sin to Jesus, not trusting even in your own good works. We must trust only in Jesus to save us.

# B

**BELIEVE** that Jesus is God's Son and receive God's gift of forgiveness from sin. You must believe that only Jesus can save you, and you cannot save yourself from your sin problem—not even by going to church or reading your Bible. Your faith or trust must be only in Jesus and what He did for you through His life, death, and resurrection (Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

# C

**CONFESS** your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Tell God and tell others what you believe. If Jesus is your Savior, you are trusting only in Him to save you. If Jesus is your Lord, it means that you are trusting Him to be in charge. You can start following Him and doing what He says in the Bible. You are born again into a **NEW LIFE** and look forward to being with God forever in eternity! (Romans 10:9-10, 13)



# HELPING KIDS LEARN TO USE THEIR BIBLES

## **Finding the Memory Verse with kindergartners & 1st graders**

Guide children to open the Bibles to where you have bookmarked the memory verse. (You may want to add a post-it note with an arrow that points precisely to the verse you're reading. Point to the book title at the top of the page as you say it aloud. Then guide children to find the large number(s) on the pages. Explain that this is the chapter number. Finally, guide them to look for the little numbers at the start of sentences; this is the verse number. Tell them to leave their finger on the verse as you read the verse aloud. Then lead everyone to say the verse together. Show them how to put the bookmark back in place so they can find the verse again easily.

## **Finding the Memory Verse with 2nd and 3rd graders**

Guide these kids to open their Bibles to the front and find the Table of Contents. (Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like.) When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the book you'll be using in the list under "Old Testament" or "New Testament." When the kids find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside the word and then help children find the page. Next explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers and help them find the correct chapter. Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the verse they'll be learning. Provide a bookmark and encourage them put it in place so they can find the verse again easily.

## **Finding the Memory Verse 4th graders**

Ask kids to tell you whether they book you'll be reading in is the Old Testament or the New Testament. Direct kids toward the front, middle, or back of the Bible as needed. When they find it, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers and give them a minute to find the right chapter. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers and allow time to find the verse. Provide a bookmark and encourage them put it in place so they can find the verse again easily.

## **Finding the Lesson Passage Each Day**

On Day 1, for all ages, it will be helpful to have a bookmark in several Bibles before VBS begins. This will be helpful for the Younger Crews every day. For the Older Crews, use the above methods for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders.

# SAfETY



# ALWAYS VISIBLE, NEVER ALONE.

## I. Always Visible, Never Alone.

- A. All doors should be propped open unless the door has a full window pane in the top (as do the office doors). These windows should remain uncovered at all times. Always remain within open sight of other adults.<sup>1</sup>
- B. Two adults (minimum) or an adult and two youth should be present with children at all times, even if only one child remains in the group.
- C. A Service Coordinator (SC) will be available in the hallway during both church services, classes, and events should you need assistance getting supplies, finding parents, sending children to the restroom (see “Restroom Policies”), or with other needs. The SC will be based at the Children’s Check-In area.

## II. Youth Assistants

- A. Eligible teens have completed 6th grade, are under 16 years old and serve with expressed parent/guardian permission.
- B. Youth assistants should remain in the room (with adults) or with the class from the start of service until the end of service. (*This will require any restroom or other breaks to be taken before the service begins or after it ends, and will preclude these assistants from running any errands during the service time.*)
- C. Youth assistants will not change diapers or escort children to the restroom.
- D. Youth assistants will not carry children or hold them in their laps unless directly asked to do so by an adult on duty.

## III. Restroom Policies

- A. Volunteers must avoid going into the bathroom with a child if at all possible. If an adult must go in, prop the door open and notify another adult as to where you are, who is with you, and why (e.g. a child is ill).
- B. Diaper changing
  - 1. Should be done according to the policies posted on the wall above each changing table.
  - 2. Should occur only on the three changing tables located in Rooms 9a, 9b, and 10a.
  - 3. Should be done by an adult volunteer (female whenever possible) or staff member.
- C. Using restrooms found in classrooms (Rooms 9b, 10a, and 10b)
  - 1. Children should go to the bathroom alone as much as possible, with verbal assistance from the adult volunteer and with door open.
  - 2. Because toddlers are curious the door may need to be closed, so windows are built into these doors. If door must be closed, a female adult should assist the child in the restroom, and another adult must be present and aware of the situation.

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<sup>1</sup> In this policy, “adults” are defined as anyone age 16 or older.

- D. Restroom use for children younger than Kindergarten
  - 1. 3-5 year olds (in classrooms 7, 8, or 10) should use the Children's Restrooms located to the east of Room 8, near the Infant Room.
  - 2. Restroom doors should be propped slightly open with a doorstop when in use, with teachers remaining outside the restrooms unless help is required inside. If additional help is needed, the teacher should prop the door fully open.
  - 3. Teachers should either:
    - a) take the entire class to the restrooms at once, with children lined up in the hallway, or
    - b) notify the Service Coordinator, who will either assist the child or take your place in class until you have returned from doing so.
- E. Restroom use for K-4th graders
  - 1. Teachers should take the entire class to the restroom whenever possible, with the restroom door should propped open and adults in plain sight.
    - a) Children should take turns a few at a time so that no one is in a classroom alone and so the restroom doesn't become overly crowded.
    - b) If it becomes necessary for an adult to enter the restroom, leave the door open and notify another adult as to where you are.
  - 2. If a child needs to use the restroom during class, notify the Service Coordinator.
    - a) The SC will monitor the child from one point in the hallway while one of the classroom teachers stands in their doorway, able to watch both the hall and the classroom.
    - b) The SC can provide further help as needed. At all times, both adults are visible and the child's location is clear.
- F. Children in 5th grade may go to the restroom alone if necessary.
  - 1. Children are encouraged to use the restrooms before or after service.
  - 2. During services, they are to use the restroom in the children's hallway.

#### **IV. Appropriate Touch**

- A. Appropriate physical contact varies according to the age of the child. Holding, rocking, sitting in laps, diapering, assisting with the potty, hugging for extended periods of time, rubbing backs and heads are all appropriate in many situations with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, but are typically not appropriate for school-aged children.
- B. Sitting on laps is most often only appropriate for ages birth through 4; it is not often appropriate for older children. It should not be necessary to pick up or hold older children unless injured or in distress.
- C. In some situations, a man will need to limit physical contact more than a woman in the same situation, especially when working with older children. Men should typically not assist with restroom issues for children at any age, though they may walk a child to the restroom and wait outside the door.
- D. Only touch children in "safe" areas and for brief times, with no rubbing or massaging. "Safe" areas generally include hands, feet, arms, shoulders, or upper back. Never touch a child on or near any region that is considered private or personal (on any part of the body that swimsuit covers), unless changing diapers or assisting nursery children with restroom needs.

- E. Ask children's permission before hugging them, and take care to note any discomfort they may express with appropriate physical contact, allowing children personal space as needed, and never indicating frustration in their not wanting to participate in a high five or other innocent physical touch.
- F. Never touch a child out of frustration or anger. Physical discipline is never an appropriate way for Grace staff or volunteers to correct a child.

## **V. Additional Child Protection Policies**

### **A. Family members and friends**

- 1. Anyone who accompanies volunteers during their turn to serve must be approved by Children's Ministry Staff. This includes children over the age of 10, friends, relatives, spouses, or any others who are not currently regular Children's Ministry Volunteers or caregiver staff.
- 2. If someone is interested in serving regularly, he or she should meet with staff to be trained and screened before serving.

### **B. Taking Pictures**

- 1. Do not take pictures of Grace children with personal cameras, cell phones, or any other personal property without explicit permission from Grace Staff.
- 2. Do not post photos including faces of children at Grace on social media or other publicly accessible places.
- 3. If photos are needed for a project, speak with Children's Ministry Staff ahead of time to request approval. Staff will collect parental approval and will take, approve, and share the photos as the situation dictates.

## **VI. Reporting**

- A. If you observe an adult talking or acting in a manner that seems to be innocent but might appear to others to be inappropriate, bring the behavior to the adult's attention and assist in correcting it. Also, notify Children's Ministry Staff.
- B. If you observe Church Staff, a children's ministry volunteer, or anyone talking or acting in a manner that creates suspicion of improper involvement, or the potential for improper involvement, promptly report your concern to Children's Ministry Staff who will take appropriate corrective measures. Behaviors may include but are not limited to:
  - 1. Inappropriate comments about sexual matters, especially about or in the presence of minors.
  - 2. Deliberate engagement with sexually explicit material.
  - 3. Excessive and inappropriate attention to a particular child or youth, especially if it involves an effort to be alone with the child.
  - 4. Harsh treatment or severe neglect of a child.
- C. If you suspect that a child has been physically, emotionally, or sexually abused:
  - 1. report it immediately. If you are a mandatory reporter due to your occupation or other commitments, of course do so. If you need assistance in doing this, Children's Ministry Staff can assist you with the process.
  - 2. Whether or not you are a mandatory reporter, please also report the incident to a Grace Staff member.

3. *Do not* talk to the suspect to attempt to substantiate allegations or suspicions. Let the authorities do this.
  4. *Do not* be afraid to report. We are responsible as a church community to comply with the law and cooperate with efforts to protect our children.
  5. *Do not* discuss the situation with anyone other than the proper authorities and Grace Staff. This could compromise investigation and/or further harm the victim.
- D. If a child discloses abuse to you, listen well and then report immediately to the appropriate legal authorities and/or a Grace Staff member. *A child who discloses abuse is almost never lying.*
1. Assure the child that he/she is safe and that you will help him/her.
  2. Do not interrupt the child to come find a staff member or to contact authorities. Listen attentively until he/she is done talking.
  3. Do not ask clarifying questions as this can create confusion for the child.
  4. After reporting the conversation, document all that was said and give this report to a staff member and the appropriate authorities.
  5. This information will remain confidential, once reported.

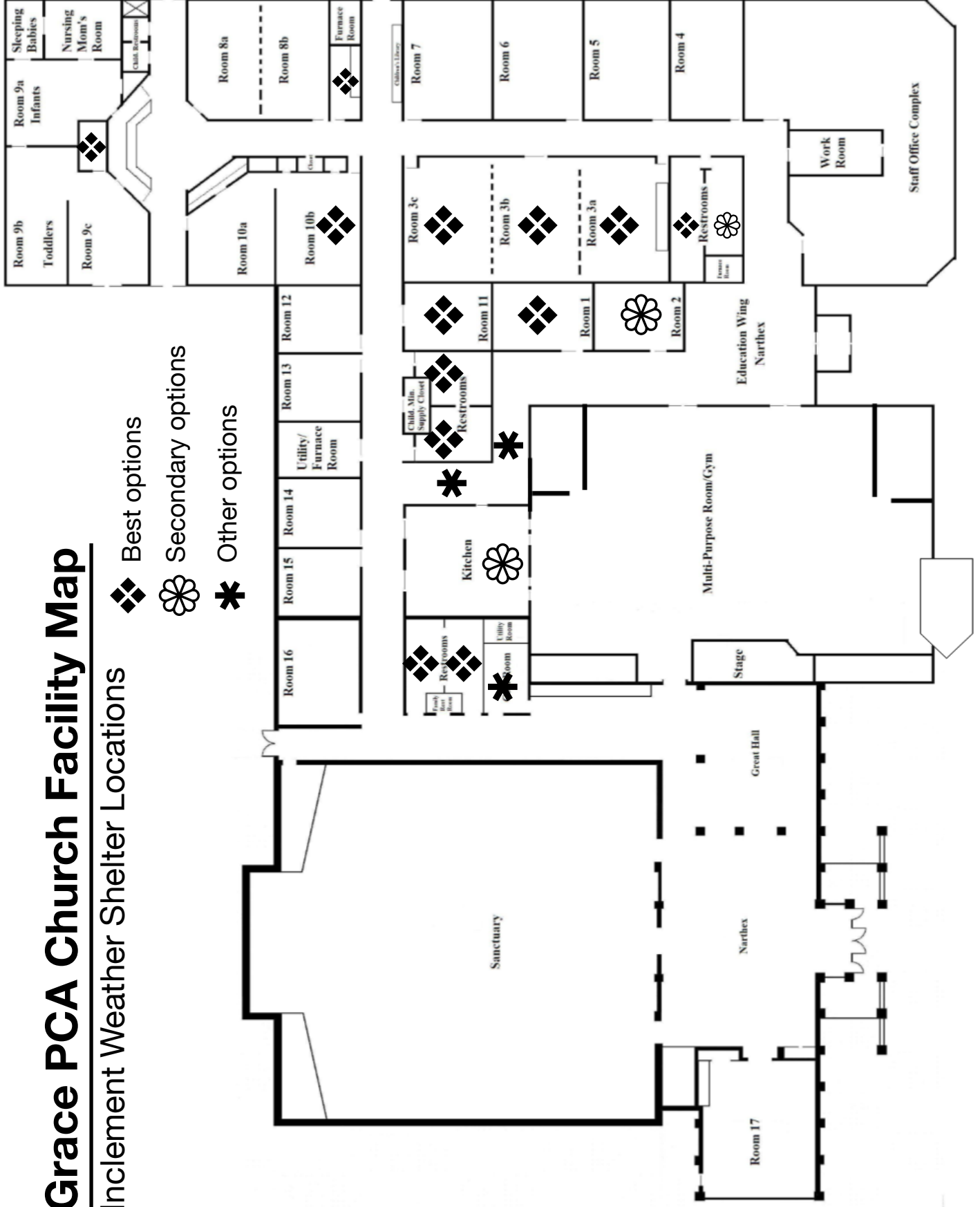
## **VII.Resources**

- A. Tchividjian, Basyle. "Protecting Children from Abuse in the Church: Steps to Prevent and Respond." Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2013. Print.
- B. Reju, Deepak. On Guard: Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse at Church. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2014. Print.
- C. [www.netgrace.org](http://www.netgrace.org)
- D. Holcomb, Justin and Lindsey. God Made All of Me. Greensboro, NC: New Growth, 2015. Print.

# Grace PCA Church Facility Map

## Inclement Weather Shelter Locations

- ◆ Best options
- ⊗ Secondary options
- \* Other options



# JOB— SPECIFIC



**iNfO**