



# **Director**

LEADER GUIDE



**To make your job as VBS Director  
easier, make sure you**

- read the *Director Guide* completely.
- check out the Digital Resources thoroughly.
- spread out all the materials that came in your kit.
- browse the other leader and teacher guides to become familiar with all aspects of this VBS.

# Course

Day 1  
Ready, Set, Go  
*Before Babel*

South America

Day 2  
Hitting a Roadblock  
*At Babel*

Asia

Bible  
Passages

Genesis 1-11

Genesis 11:1-9

Mile Marker  
Memory Verses

Romans 3:23

Genesis 11:9

Animal  
Pal

Bo the Anaconda

Jamal the Camel

Apologetics  
Focus

Sin cycle

How the world was  
divided into continents

Ziggurats

Languages

World-class  
Crafts

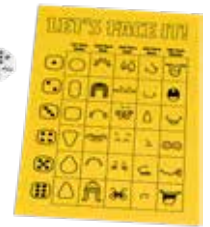


Table Top  
Fútbol

Tie Snake



Mini Globe



Let's Face It

World-class  
Science

Light It Up!

Let It Rain

Flying High

Full of  
Hot Air

Globe-trotting  
Games

South American Games

Asian Games

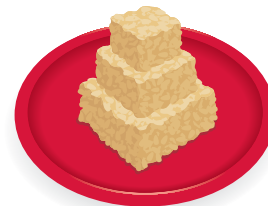
Runway  
Café



Circles and  
Salsa



Brazilian  
Brigadeiros



Tower  
Treats



Pita Chips  
and Dip

Cool  
Contests

Guessing Game

Team Cheers



# Overview

**Day 3**  
**One Race, Many Nations**  
*After Babel*  
**Africa**

Genesis 10, Psalm 139, Acts 17:26

Acts 17:26

Pup Patrol

One blood,  
one race

I've got DNA—  
why I look like I do

**Day 4**  
**One Way—Jesus**  
*Babel and the Gospel*  
**Europe**

Revelation 7:9–10

1 John 4:14

Agape and Phileo the  
Polish Mute Swans

God provides just one  
way to be saved

**Day 5**  
**Green Light—Go**  
*Why Babel Matters Today*  
**North America**

Luke 10:25–37

1 John 4:11

Racer the Roadrunner

Fighting prejudice and racism



Mud Hut  
Missions Bank



Pipe Cleaner  
People



Mosaic  
Cross



Backpack  
Zipper Pull



Kindness  
Cards



Traveler's  
Tic-Tac-Toe

DNA is  
Everywhere

Spot the  
Color

Polishing  
Pennies

Rainbow  
Float

Go!

All Bandaged Up

African Games

European Games

North American Games



Shades of Cake



Chapatis



Leaning Tower of  
Chees-a



English  
Scones



Global Cheese  
Balls



Big Apple Mini  
Pies

Dress-Up Day

Bible Verse Challenge

Mission Money Mania

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# OVERVIEW

## On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

A race. But not just any race. A race filled with fun clues to find. A race loaded with interesting challenges to attempt. A race around the world that's a global scavenger hunt like you've never seen.

At the same time, it's about another race. A race that began at the garden of Eden and continues until this day. A race made up of all people from all time. What race? The human race.

As we move from continent to continent in *The Incredible Race* from Answers VBS, we'll make stops at various times before, at, and after the hugely important tower of Babel incident and see how it matters greatly today.

**Day 1 Before Babel**—As the race starts, we explore the beginning of the human race and why nobody has run a perfect race through life.

**Day 2 At Babel**—On this leg of the race, we stop at the tower of Babel and check out the important and loving roadblock God provided there.

**Day 3 After Babel**—On leg three, we see how the human race developed into people groups with different languages, cultures, and physical features, but how we are still one race.

**Day 4 Babel and the Gospel**—On our fourth leg, we discover the need to yield our lives to God as he reaches out to all nations, tribes, and peoples with his love.

**Day 5 Why Babel Matters Today**—On the final leg, we learn from Babel that because God loves us, we also ought to treat others with love and respect, not prejudice and judgment.

From the minute our racers arrive at *The Incredible Race*, they'll find fun waiting to happen! The day begins at the **Checkpoint Assembly**, a supercharged opening complete with entertaining welcomes, rockin' songs, a mission moment, and prayer. Then we're off to four fun rotation sites:

**Refueling Station**, the teaching time. Here, as racers receive and accept challenges, they'll discover the tower of Babel account isn't just ancient history, but incredibly important to how we live today.

**Runway Café**, the snack spot. Racers will enjoy global goodies at this yummy spot while completing food-related challenges.

**Globe-trotting Games**, the recreation location. At this spot, racers attempt fun physical challenges of international proportions.

**World-class Science and Crafts**, the science, craft, music, mission, and memory verse spot. This location features a wide array of activities to choose from: electrifying science experiments to explore, creative crafts to invent, high-energy songs to sing, fun memory verse games to play, and mission time to investigate (for those who want to spend more time than is given during the Assembly).

After finishing the day's rotations, everyone heads back to the **Checkpoint Assembly** for the closing that includes more singing, a Creature Feature, contest results, and the greatly anticipated daily drama, which is a highlight of the kids' day. The drama features a team on *The Incredible Race* that is flying to the next race location, only to crash in the jungles of Central America at an ancient step pyramid (ziggurat). Many funny adventures and epic lessons occur at this unexpected roadblock.

So grab your gear and get ready for the race of a lifetime as we embark on *The Incredible Race*. On your mark, get set, go!

### Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place, and why are we still at it, by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be soft-hearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!



Children are loved by their Creator. Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-chart, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, it's critically important to us not to sacrifice rich content. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun!

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and to understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it! May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

## Your Role

As director of VBS, you are someone who possesses vision, organizational and people skills, and a heart for children. The following are your responsibilities.

- Oversee the entire VBS (read through the *Director Guide* and other manuals for further information)
- Work with the church staff on VBS-related issues such as goals, dates, and budget
- Recruit, organize, and oversee the entire VBS staff
- Run training workshops
- Organize the clues and challenges (see Cool Contests section) and communicate pertinent info regarding this to your staff
- Coordinate the closing program
- Establish effective follow-up
- Pray over all aspects of this job before, during, and after VBS

## Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *The Incredible Race* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit [AnswersVBS.com/irfaq](http://AnswersVBS.com/irfaq).

## Terms to Know

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here's a list of some of the most common terms to know.

**Racers:** The kids at VBS. Racers are put in teams named after countries (e.g., Team Brazil, Team Kenya, Team Japan, Team Germany).

**Team Leaders:** Adults who guide the racers from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required for this position.

**Trainers:** Teachers at the Refueling Station lesson time.

**Refueling Station:** Rotation site where Bible and apologetics teaching occurs.

**Checkpoint Assembly:** Spot where everyone joins together for the opening and closing assemblies.

**World-class Science and Crafts:** Rotation site where kids make crafts, perform science experiments, sing songs, learn memory verses, and explore missions around the world.

**Runway Café:** Indoor or outdoor site where global goodies are served.

**Globe-trotting Games:** Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for international games to be played.

**Mile Marker Memory Verses:** Daily memory verses.

**Animal Pals:** Friendly animal mascots used to emphasize the key point of each day's lesson.

**Creature Feature:** Daily time during the opening or closing assembly when we marvel together at God's design of various thematic animals.

**Toddlers:** Ages 2–4 years.

**Pre-Primaries:** Ages 4–6 years, or age 4 through children who have completed kindergarten.

**Primaries:** Ages 6–9 years, or children who have completed grades 1–3.

**Juniors:** Ages 9–12 years, or children who have completed grades 4–6.

For multi-age K–6th teams, we recommend using the material for the Primaries.

# Top 20 Tips for the VBS Director

*Whether you're a first-time recruit or a seasoned director, here are some tips just for you.*

1. Pray and study God's Word. "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). You *will* be busy, so keep in mind that the busier you get, the more you need to pray and study! God will multiply your time if you give him your best.
2. Read through the various guides thoroughly and early. Become familiar with the Digital Resources, which contains clip art, logos, printable and customizable versions of the forms mentioned throughout this guide, and more. If you're a first-time director, ask previous directors and VBS veterans what's been done in the past. It helps to receive counsel! At the same time, don't be afraid to try something new.
3. Be sure to check out the Cool Contests section to find out more about the daily fun clues and challenges that are an important part of this year's race-themed VBS.
4. Check out the web address listed on page 8 for great articles on the teaching at *The Incredible Race*. This is a good resource for you and a good reference for volunteers or parents who have questions.
5. Many hands make light work. Be careful not to overextend yourself. Delegate areas of responsibility to people and allow them the joy of serving, even if it is not quite how you would do it.
6. When working with people, there most likely will be conflicts. Resolve conflict with prayer and gentle answers based on principles from God's Word. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).
7. Have a backup plan for games in case it rains and you need to be inside all day.
8. Have fun. Directing your VBS should be a joy for you. At the same time, though, remember you are in a spiritual battle with an enemy who will try to throw darts your way. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).
9. Label file folders or electronic file folders with different areas of VBS, and use these to file ideas and suggestions.
10. Help your church catch the significance of this event by sharing that VBS is a huge, God-given opportunity to reach many with the gospel of Christ.
11. Get enough sleep and exercise.
12. Make people feel loved, appreciated, and needed.
13. Communicate well. Make announcements, require attendance at the training workshops, send emails, and keep everyone informed.
14. Be enthusiastic! Your excitement is contagious and makes others want to be in on the fun.
15. When deciding on the ages to include in your VBS, keep in mind that this VBS is written to appeal to not only young children but also older elementary kids. It has real answers from God's Word for real issues all kids face.
16. Be the *director*. Don't commit to teaching or any other VBS leadership role during VBS week. Stay as free as possible to greet, encourage, and troubleshoot.
17. Carry a cell phone or walkie-talkie with you during VBS week so you can be reached throughout the building.
18. Prepare two containers for each team leader. See page 36 for more information.
19. Soon after VBS is over, survey the staff so you can make improvements for next year.
20. Keep a list of answered prayers and praises. Share your list with others. Continue praying, even after VBS is finished, for God to grow the seeds he planted and to bring more fruit over the next months. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

# Terrific Trivia Tidbits

Use the fun facts below to start thinking about the fun theme (traveling around the world) and our spiritual theme (God's love for the nations, starting from the tower of Babel). The trivia tidbits can be used during arrival and dismissal times or during any downtime while kids wait to get to their next rotation.

## South America Trivia

- Which continent is home to the largest rain forest and the driest desert on earth? South America (the Amazon rain forest and the Atacama Desert)
- How many countries are there in South America? 12
- Do you like the color pink? Some dolphins in South America are actually pink!
- Hola! Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world and is widely spoken in South America.
- Watch out! At the Catatumbo River in Venezuela, lightning storms occur repeatedly up to 10 hours a day.
- Feel like a swim? The world's largest swimming pool is in Chile.
- How would you like to live in a floating house? The houses are attached to stilts in one village in Peru, and they float on the river.
- In South America, used toilet paper is thrown in a trash can or waste basket—not in the toilet.
- The tip of South America isn't warm, like you may think. It is cold and covered with giant ice fields.
- Take a deep breath. More than 20% of the world's oxygen comes from rain forests, including the Amazon rain forest in South America.

## Asia Trivia

- Which continent is the biggest and has the most people? Asia
- How many countries are there in Asia? 48
- If you want to go to the highest point or the lowest point on earth, Asia is the place for you. Mt. Everest is the highest, and the Dead Sea is the lowest.
- Which job is popular in Asia? Farming. Asia has the most farmers in the world!
- Have you ever played the board game Chutes and Ladders? It started in India as a game called Mokshapat.
- If you own a computer, TV, or other electronic device, there's a good chance it was made in Asia because Asian countries produce most of the world's electronics.
- There's only one place giant pandas can be found in the wild—in the bamboo forests of China.

- If you took a dive into the ocean off the coast of Japan, guess what you might find? The remains of what appear to be step pyramids!
- What country likes to go to the movies the most? India! Indian people go to more movies each year than people from any other country.
- Ever buy anything from a vending machine? In Japan, there are vending machines everywhere, selling unusual items like comic books, toilet paper, and even used underwear!
- $2 + 2 = 4$ . Kids in Singapore have the world's best math scores. Maybe that's because they study so much.
- Hopefully, yellow isn't your favorite color because in Malaysia, it's against the law to wear yellow clothes.
- Did you know tigers don't live in the wild in Africa? They are only found in the wild in Asia!
- The name "Japan" means "Land of the Rising Sun" because people used to believe Japan was the first country to see the sun rise each day.
- There are over 2,000 languages spoken in Asia!
- Go to Hong Kong if you like heights. It has the most skyscrapers in the world.
- What's the most unusual thing you've ever eaten? How about monkey brains? They're a favorite in parts of Asia.
- Happy birthday to you! Everyone in Vietnam celebrates the same birthday on the same day—their Vietnamese New Year.

## Africa Trivia

- Which continent is the overall hottest and poorest on earth? Africa
- How many countries are there in Africa? 54
- Which is more dangerous: hippos or crocodiles? Hippos actually kill more people each year than crocodiles and lions combined.
- The world's biggest frog is found in Africa. It can be up to a foot long and weigh 8 pounds and is called the Goliath frog. Why do you think it's named that?
- What country in Africa has the most pyramids? If you said Egypt, you're wrong! Sudan has over 200 pyramids, twice as many as Egypt.
- Are you seeing double? Maybe that's because a country in Africa (Benin) has the highest rate of twins.
- Moo! In one tribe in Africa, your wealth is determined by how many cows you own.

- Have you heard of the Great Sphinx? It doesn't have most of its nose (it was broken off), but it does have a tail!
- Bonjour! There are more people who speak French in Africa than in France.
- The Mursi women in Africa pierce their lips around the age of 15 or 16 and put in plates that can be up to 5 inches in diameter.

### *Europe Trivia*

- One European country is the favorite tourist spot of the whole world. What is it? France!
- Here's something to be thankful for: the first Bible ever printed was printed in the European country of Germany.
- Did you know there's one city in the world that is on two continents? Istanbul, which is in the country of Turkey.
- Instead of hiding Easter eggs, Germans throughout the centuries hid baked pretzels on Easter.
- Watch where you're going! There's only one stop sign in the entire city of Paris.
- Do you like French toast? Well, surprise, surprise. French toast isn't French!
- Tea time! English people drink more tea on average than anywhere else in the world.
- How would you like to eat a dish called vedarai in Lithuania? If you said yes, you'd be eating intestines stuffed with potatoes!
- Know anyone who snores? They may want to visit Germany where there's a museum of snoring.
- Cheese lovers, listen up! There are over 300 different kinds of cheese in France.
- Fill 'er up! It's illegal to run out of gas on Germany's highway, the Autobahn.
- Do you like to eat hamburgers? They got their name from a town in Germany called Hamburg.
- Cluck. Cluck. There are more chickens than people in England.

### *North America Trivia*

- How many countries are there in North America? 23
- Russia and the United States are separated by about two miles of ocean!
- Do you like donuts? Then head to Canada, where there are more donut shops per person than in any other country.
- Depending on how you measure it, some say the biggest pyramid in the world is found in Mexico, not in Egypt.
- Chihuahuas are the smallest dogs. They come from a place in Mexico called, of all things, Chihuahua.
- North America contains the world's largest island. Do you know what it is? Greenland.
- Do you receive presents on Christmas Day? Mexican children don't! They receive theirs on January 6 to remember the wise men who came to see Jesus and bring him gifts.
- Ever seen the movie *Cool Runnings*? It's a true story of a bobsled team from Jamaica, one of the island countries of North America. They were the first team from a tropical country to participate in a winter Olympics.
- Monarch butterflies migrate all the way from Canada and the US every year to the mountains of Mexico, flying some 2,000 miles (and sometimes landing in the exact same tree). Amazing design by our Creator!
- Yikes! Mexico is sinking by about eight inches a year.
- Have you heard of the queen of England, Queen Elizabeth II? Well, she happens to be the queen of Canada, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Grenada, and other countries, too!



# Global Giggles

## Jokes and Riddles

### Day 1 Animal Pal Jokes—Anaconda

- What do you get when you cross a snake and a yellow fruit? *A bananaconda.*
- How did the anaconda hit the target? *With a boa and arrow.*
- What do you call an anaconda who builds things? *A boa constructor.*
- What style of music is an anaconda's favorite? *Wrap (rap).*

### Day 2 Animal Pal Jokes—Camel

- What nursery rhyme does a camel like to read? *Humpty Dumpty.*
- How do camels hide in the desert? *Camel-flauge.*
- What name does a camel go by if he is without a hump? *Humphrey (hump free).*

### Day 3 Animal Pal Jokes—Pups

- What happens when a dog lives in a rain forest? *You might step in a poodle.*
- What do you call a silly dog in Australia? *A dingo-ling.*
- What do you nickname a quiet pup? *A hush puppy.*
- What do you call a black lab that likes to do magic tricks? *Labracadabra.*
- What state do US puppies like? *New Yorkie.*

### Day 4 Animal Pal Jokes—Swans

- What happened to the swan who stole the money? *He became a jail bird.*

- Why did the swan go on a diet? *To become light as a feather.*
- What did they nickname the well-behaved swan? *A good egg.*
- What is louder than a whooping crane? *A trumpeting swan.*

### Day 5 Animal Pal Jokes—Roadrunner

- What did the daddy roadrunner say to the baby roadrunner? *Beak-a-boo!*
- What did the roadrunners say when they weren't ready for their school project? *Let's just wing it.*
- How do roadrunners stay in shape? *They do worm-ups.*
- What do you call a sick roadrunner? *Under the feather.*

## Travel and International Jokes and Riddles

- What country is popular at Thanksgiving? *Turkey.*
- What country has a problem with stains? *Greece.*
- What country enjoys concerts? *"Sing" apore.*
- What country can never get enough to eat? *Hungary.*
- What country should you go to if you're too warm? *Chile.*
- What country has a favorite color? *Greenland.*
- What country outlaws paper plates? *China.*
- Why are the guards at Buckingham Palace tired? *They're working around the clock.*
- What's the weather forecast this week in Mexico? *It's chile today and hot tamale.*

- Where does soda pop go on vacation? *"Can" ada.*
- What did one pyramid say to the other? *How's your mummy?*
- What body of water was very sick? *The Dead Sea.*
- What landmark do pepperonis like to visit? *The Leaning Tower of Pizza.*
- What country is the fastest paced? *Russia (Rush-a).*
- What do you call a train that chews gum? *A choo choo train.*
- What did the mama plane say to the baby plane? *I'll take you under my wing.*
- What did the fighting taxi cabs say to each other? *U-turn! No, U-turn!*

## Knock Knock Jokes

- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Luke. *Luke who?*  
Luke out the plane window at the clouds!
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Canoe. *Canoe who?*  
Canoe tell me the way to the Eiffel Tower?
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Parker. *Parker who?*  
Park 'er over there by the taxi!
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Lettuce. *Lettuce who?*  
Lettuce go with you to Brazil!
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Police. *Police who?*  
Police help us on the bus.

## Tongue Twisters

- Racing rowboats.
- Sneaky snakes slither south.
- Crabby camels.



# A to Z Fun Theme Words

- A** Africa, airplane, Angel Falls, Antarctica, Arc de Triomphe, Argentina, arrival, Aruba, Asia, Australia, Austria, Ayers Rock
- B** Backpack, Barbados, Belgium, Benin, Bermuda, Big Ben, bike, boarding pass, Bolivia, Brazil, Buckingham Palace, Burj Khalifa, bus
- C** Canada, caution, check-in, check-out, Chichen Itza, Chile, clue, Colosseum, compass, continents, Costa Rica, Croatia, currency, Czech Republic
- D** Dead end, Dead Sea, Denmark, departure, destination, detour, Dominica, Dominican Republic
- E** Easter Island, Ecuador, Egypt, Eiffel Tower, El Salvador, Estonia, ETA, Europe
- F** Faroe Island, fast forward, Fiji, finish line, Finland, first place, flight time, Forbidden City, France, frequent flier
- G** Germany, globe, globetrotter, GPS, Grand Canyon, Great Barrier Reef, Great Sphinx, Great Wall of China, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala
- H** Haiti, Honduras, Hungary
- I** Iceland, Iguazu Falls, international, intersection, Ireland, Israel, Italy, itinerary
- J** Jamaica, Japan, Jerusalem, Jordan
- K** Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait
- L** Latvia, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, London Eye, luggage, Luxembourg, Luxor Temple
- M** Macedonia, Machu Picchu, Madagascar, Malawi, Matterhorn, map, marathon, merge, Mexico, miles, Monaco, Mount Everest, Mount Fuji
- N** Netherlands, Neuschwanstein Castle, New Zealand, Niagara Falls, Nicaragua, nonstop, no passing zone, North America, Norway, Notre Dame
- O** Oman, one way
- P** Palenque, Panama Canal, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Parthenon, passport, Peru, Petra, Philippines, photo finish, pit stop, Pompeii, Portugal, Pyramid of Cestius, Pyramids of Giza
- Q** Qatar, Quebec City
- R** Race, reservation, rest stop, roadblock, Rock of Gibraltar, Romania, round trip, Russia, Rwanda
- S** Scenic route, short cut, Singapore, South America, South Korea, Spain, speed bump, speed limit, standby, start line, Statue of Liberty, step pyramid, Stonehenge, stop, subway, suitcase, Switzerland, Sydney Opera House
- T** Table Mountain, Taiwan, Taj Mahal, taxi, Thailand, ticket, Timbuktu, time zone, Togo, Tower of London, traffic, train, Trinidad and Tobago
- U** Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, U-turn
- V** Vanuatu, Venezuela, Versailles, Victoria Falls, Vietnam, Vinson Massif
- W** Wailing Wall, wayfarer, Westminster Abbey, White Cliffs of Dover, windmills in the Netherlands, worldwide
- XYZ** Yemen, yield, Zaire, Zambia, Ziggurat of Ur, Zimbabwe, zoom

# Top 20 Tips When Working with Children

*Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:13–14*

1. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day, and always be ready with smiles, giggles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure all staff are aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.)
2. Learn names. It makes children feel important and loved to be called by their name. Make sure visible name tags are always on each child.
3. Keep it moving. Children have short attention spans.
4. Use active learning. The more children can actively be involved in the learning process, the more they will retain.
5. Be all there! Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care during VBS. Listen to them and care for them.
6. Eliminate downtime. Find activities to do when you have a few free minutes so all time is being used in a fun and productive way. Practice memory verses, share Terrific Trivia Tidbits and jokes (pages 10–12), play impromptu review games, or ask fun conversation starters.
7. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions on page 54. Ensure there are always at least two unrelated adults with the children at all times.
8. Be thematic. Children love costumes, fun cheers, songs, and anything that goes with the theme. Be ready to wear a trainer costume (trainer T-shirt and athletic wear) or authentic cultural clothes from your family's heritage. Get them enthused and excited about participating in the daily contests.
9. Walk worthy. Be an example in both word and deed. Children need to see authentic Christianity, so make sure you are walking the walk and not just talking the talk.
10. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes act up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
11. Be aware of age-level characteristics. With younger children, activities need to be hands-on, concrete, short, and simple. Older children love to talk and are processing and questioning information. Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you.
12. Challenge them. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to learn their memory verses and song lyrics. At the same time, encourage in them a true love for the Lord and his Word.
13. Pray. Before, during, and after VBS, be a faithful prayer warrior for the children in your care.
14. Be organized. Read through all training information, ask questions, and faithfully prepare any materials for which you are responsible.
15. Be a team player. Children do not need to hear negative words from their leaders. If you are frustrated or upset, take it to the Lord, but do not complain or get angry in front of the children.
16. Remember to take bathroom breaks. The younger the children, the more important this is!
17. Maintain order. Children like order! Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
18. Build team spirit. Work as a team rather than allowing cliques to develop. Everyone should be an important member of the team.
19. Use guided conversation. Be alert and ready to turn conversations to spiritual matters. Build upon what the children are learning throughout the VBS day.
20. Be prepared to lead a child to Christ. Attend the Gospel Presentation Workshop to be equipped should God give you the awesome opportunity to talk to a child about Christ.

# Age-Level Characteristics

Kids are awesome! Each one is unique and is a special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, they also share some common characteristics. That doesn't mean every child always exhibits the following characteristics at the corresponding age, but these guidelines can be a benchmark to use when looking at

characteristics of children as a whole. It can be helpful to see how God has wired children as they develop, enabling us to be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see characteristics of children in general and then characteristics broken down by the four age groups we use with Answers VBS.

## *Common Characteristics*

- Children are born sinners.
- God has given each a conscience, and they (generally) want good to win over evil.
- God has shown himself to all children through his creation, making it obvious to all that there is a Creator.
- Children enjoy active learning—moving around, seeing things, touching things, smelling and hearing things, and being involved.
- Children need to be loved, encouraged, and praised.
- Children are rapidly growing and changing.
- Children trust the adults who are responsible for them.
- Children can get discouraged by criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and about God.

## *Toddlers (2–4 years old)*

### *Physical Characteristics*

Toddlers are active! They're on the move, running, climbing, and exploring. Some are beginning to perform simple tasks like using scissors. They can easily get hurt as they are rapidly developing physical skills but don't have wisdom to know when to stop running, climbing, etc.

### *Takeaways for Us*

- Keep toddlers moving. Engage them actively as much as possible. Have them do motions to songs and actions to Bible accounts.
- Supervise them carefully.
- Provide chunky, nontoxic supplies.
- Intersperse periods of sitting with something active.

### *Emotional/Social Characteristics*

Toddlers want to do things by themselves, such as picking out their clothes and dressing themselves. They like imaginative, dramatic play. They're testing their powers and saying "no" a lot. They often want to please adults and try to mimic their behaviors. They're affectionate toward others. Toddlers are fearful of things that are loud and out of the ordinary.

### *Takeaways for Us*

- Let toddlers be helpers. Give them simple one-step jobs to do, and have them help pick up things and straighten the room at the end of the lesson. Let them know they've done a good job.
- Be consistently present all week; establish routines and stick with them.

- Be consistent in discipline. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no."
- Give them opportunities to dress up and play imaginatively.
- Don't dress in elaborate costumes that may seem unfamiliar and scary.
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways. Little eyes are watching and will want to imitate you!

### *Spiritual/Mental Characteristics*

Toddlers are curious and want to touch, smell, feel, see, and experience their world. They have short attention spans and learn and communicate in short sentences. They understand short and simple directions. They believe what you say. Their attitude toward God and others is in the process of being formed during these years.

### *Takeaways for Us*

- Involve toddlers' senses in learning! The more they can touch, smell, see, taste, and feel, the better!
- Give clear, simple directions.
- Keep activities and lessons short. Toddlers' attention spans are only a few minutes long before they need to switch to something new, so keep it moving!
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible, and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

## ***Pre-Primaries (4-6 years old)***

### ***Physical Characteristics***

Pre-Primaries are active and more confident in physical activities like jumping, hopping on one foot, and walking backwards. They love to be moving. They're improving in hand-eye coordination. They're rapidly growing and may need rest after active play.

### ***Takeaways for Us***

- Pre-Primaries like to play hard, so keep them moving with short, simple games and activities. They may need to sit and rest for a brief time afterwards.

### ***Emotional/Social Characteristics***

Pre-Primaries are less fearful than toddlers but may still be afraid of common things like dogs or the dark. They can have emotional extremes and are testing others to see who can be controlled. They want to please adults and want praise. They will often mimic adults' behaviors. They like imaginative play. Pre-Primaries can handle small tasks and levels of responsibility.

### ***Takeaways for Us***

- Let them be helpers. Give them simple jobs to do, and have them help pick up things and straighten the room at the end of the lesson. Let them know they've done a good job.
- Give them opportunities to dress up and play imaginatively.
- Be consistent in discipline. Let your "yes" be "yes" and your "no" be "no."
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways. Little eyes are watching and will want to imitate you!

### ***Spiritual/Mental Characteristics***

Pre-Primaries talk a lot and ask a lot of questions, including questions about God. They understand that sin is disobeying God. They need a lot of guidance in tasks but can also follow a simple series of directions. They have an attention span of approximately 5 minutes. They enjoy doing new things and hearing stories and songs. They're not always able to tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They're developing attitudes toward right and wrong and can do basic memory work.

### ***Takeaways for Us***

- In downtime, give them time to ask questions and be ready to patiently answer! During teaching time, however, be careful you don't get so wrapped up in letting them talk that the lesson doesn't happen!
- Vary activities often—every 5–10 minutes.
- When engaged in pretend activities, name them as such (e.g., "Let's pretend to be explorers!"). At the same time, point out often that God's Word is not pretend but true!
- Repetition in songs and stories works great and is enjoyed by Pre-Primaries.
- Sing the memory verse songs with them. They will be able to learn at least parts of the verses by the end of the week.
- Use visuals.
- Teach them about sin and asking God for forgiveness.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible, and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

## ***Primaries (6-9 years old)***

### ***Physical Characteristics***

Primaries love games and competitions, but it can be hard for them to lose. They are continuing to grow and improve in hand-eye coordination and fine and gross motor skills. They need to have opportunities for movement.

### ***Takeaways for Us***

- Use games to teach! Primaries love any kind of games, whether active or learning-type games.
- Help them learn to take turns and to be good winners and good losers! Both winning and losing well are important in God's sight.

- Use boy vs. girl competitions to get them revved up! As long as you keep it light and fun, they will enjoy these times!

### ***Emotional/Social Characteristics***

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl and boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the team and want adult and teacher approval.

## Takeaways for Us

- Give Primaries plenty of opportunities to work in teams or with partners.
- Use humor with Primaries. The sillier, the better!
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

## *Spiritual/Mental Characteristics*

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete rather than abstract or symbolic thinkers. They're learning to read. They need active learning. Their attention span is growing. They understand the consequences of their actions. They can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

## Takeaways for Us

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. Becoming a child of God, or being in God's family, is

a more concrete way to express the same concept, as they will understand what it means to be in a family.

- Although their attention spans are growing, it's still good to vary activities and involve Primaries with movement as much as possible.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking children to read out loud. Try asking for volunteers.
- Small print can be a challenge, so use larger print when possible.
- Encourage memorization.
- Use visuals.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully, and explain Bible words and concepts even if you think they are widely understood.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Show care and respect for your Bible, and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

## *Juniors (9–12 years old)*

## *Physical Characteristics*

Juniors can vary widely as they grow, with some having a growth spurt that launches them into puberty. (This can make them get tired easily.) Height, weight, and physical maturity can be all across the board. Their stamina, strength, and coordination are improving, and some are becoming known for their athletic abilities. Juniors enjoy going places and doing interesting things.

## Takeaways for Us

- Don't comment on physical appearance, such as how tall someone is. Juniors can feel sensitive and awkward about their bodies.
- Make sure to help each child realize how special and uniquely created by God he or she is. Some have giftings and talents physically, some musically, some academically, etc. They need to be assured that they are God's masterpiece, created exactly as they are for a special purpose.
- Some love being active, and some don't, but it's good to keep them involved and moving.

## *Emotional/Social Characteristics*

Juniors can't wait to grow up. They look up to teenagers and young adults. They like challenges and may develop interests and hobbies, although they're self-conscious about their abilities and failures. They're becoming more independent and can handle responsibilities. They enjoy close

friendships and small group discussion with peers. They're greatly influenced by their friends and want to be accepted. They look to friends for information and advice on issues. They like humor and jokes and most understand sarcasm. As they head into puberty, they may experience mood swings.

## Takeaways for Us

- Make sure the teens and young adults in their VBS world are good role models.
- Don't tear down Juniors or resort to sarcasm. Be an encourager, listen well, and be patient with them.
- Incorporate small group discussion into the lesson, and do things that allow teams or pairings that don't rely solely on the children choosing partners. This helps avoid children repeatedly getting chosen last by peers.
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

## *Spiritual/Mental Characteristics*

Juniors are beginning to think abstractly and are asking many questions, for which they're looking for good answers. They have a much longer attention span than younger children. Their reading and memorization skills are improving. They're developing their views on current issues and often want to associate themselves with their parents' belief system. They spot inconsistencies in what people do versus what they say. Juniors enjoy serving and caring for others.



## Takeaways for Us

- Ask thought-provoking spiritual questions. They are thinking and like to talk. Be there for them as a safe person to bounce thoughts and ideas off of.
- Listen well and pray with them.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking children to read out loud unless they volunteer or you know they can read well.
- Allow them to act out lessons. Most Juniors enjoy this active involvement.
- Give them opportunities to be involved in missions or service projects.
- Challenge them to ask God to help them grow in their love for him and his Word. Help them set up Bible reading plans, and encourage them to memorize passages of Scripture.
- Make sure to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. They can spot inconsistencies, so it's important to walk worthy.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible, and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.



# What's in the Digital Resources?

The items listed here are available on the disc that comes with the leader guides. You may also download the resources from [AnswersVBS.com/RaceResources](https://AnswersVBS.com/RaceResources). The music resources are available on the disc that comes with the Music Leader Sets.

<i>Assembly Resources</i>
Assembly Order of Program
Assembly Presentations
Assembly Scripts
Cool Contests
Checkpoint Challenge Videos
<i>Challenge Clues for All Stations</i>
<i>Clip Art</i>
Black and White (EPS, JPG, PNG, SVG)
Color (EPS, JPG, PNG, SVG)
Font and Template Info
Blank Background PDFs
<i>Coloring Pages</i>
Animal Pals
Memory Verses (ESV, KJV)
<i>Craft and Science Patterns</i>
<i>Decorations</i>
<i>Director—Helps and Forms</i>
Attendance Chart
Award—Participation
Award—Visitor
Budget Worksheet
Caretaker Handbook (Sample)
Child Safety Precautions
Concession Stand Menu—Sample
Countdown Calendar
Course Overview
Daily Schedules
Decision Card

Director's Evaluation (submit by email)
Director's Evaluation
Icebreaker Pattern
Job Descriptions
Jokes
Leadership Chart
Leading a Child to Christ (KJV)
Leading a Child to Christ
Memory Verses
Memory Verses (KJV)
News Release
Prayer List
Room Assignments
Room Schedule
Scavenger Hunts
Schedule
Staff Devotions KJV
Staff Devotions
Team Guide Responsibilities
Team Placement
Team Roster
Terrific Trivia
Promo Skits
Top 20 Tips for Working with Children (KJV)
Top 20 Tips for Working with Children
VBS Crew Chart
Word Puzzles
Workshop Invitation—Gospel
Workshop Invitation—Teacher
Workshop Invitation—Volunteer

### *Director—Registration Forms*

Nursery Letter to Parents (sample)

Registration Confirmation

Registration Form—Child

Registration Form—Nursery

Registration Form—Volunteer

Worker Pledge (KJV)

Worker Pledge

### *Drama*

Scripts

Set Art

Sound Effects

### *Drama Short Scripts*

Option 1 Drama Scripts and Sound Effects

Option 2 Skits

### *Logos*

Main and Simple Logos

Font and Template Info

Color Palette

### *Mission Moment: Children's Hunger Fund*

Digital Files

PowerPoint

Print

Scripts

Videos

### *Presentation Images*

Animal Pals

Blank Backgrounds

Creature Features

Memory Verses (ESV, KJV)

Overviews

Teacher Posters

Terrific Trivia

PowerPoint of All

Short Animations

### *International Carnival*

Face Painting Reference Chart

Games

Invitation

Ticket

Templates

### *Supply Lists*

Craft Supply List

Experiments Supply List

Game Supply List

Junior Supply List

Mission Supply List

Pre-Primary Supply List

Primary Supply List

Snack Supply List

Toddler Supply List

### *Teacher—Decorating Helps*

#### *Teacher—Junior*

Patterns

Animal Pals Coloring Sheets

Junior Teacher Guide RTF

Memory Verse Coloring Sheets

Small Group Discussion Sheets

#### *Teacher—Primary*

Patterns

Animal Pals Coloring Sheets

Memory Verse Coloring Sheets (ESV and KJV)

Puppet Scripts

Primary Teacher Guide RTF

Small Group Discussion Sheets

### *Teacher—Pre-Primary*

Patterns

Animal Pals Coloring Sheets

Exploration Station Posters

Exploration Stations Overview

Memory Verse Coloring Sheets

Puppet Scripts

Pre-Primary Teacher Guide RTF

#### *Teacher—Toddler*

Forms

Patterns

Animal Pals Coloring Sheets

Exploration Station Posters

Exploration Stations Overview

Memory Verse Coloring Sheets

Toddler Alternate Craft Patterns

Puppet Scripts

Toddler Teacher Guide RTF

### *Teacher—Simple Songs*

## Music Resources

### *Available with the Leader Music Set*

#### *Video Resources*

Hand Motion Videos

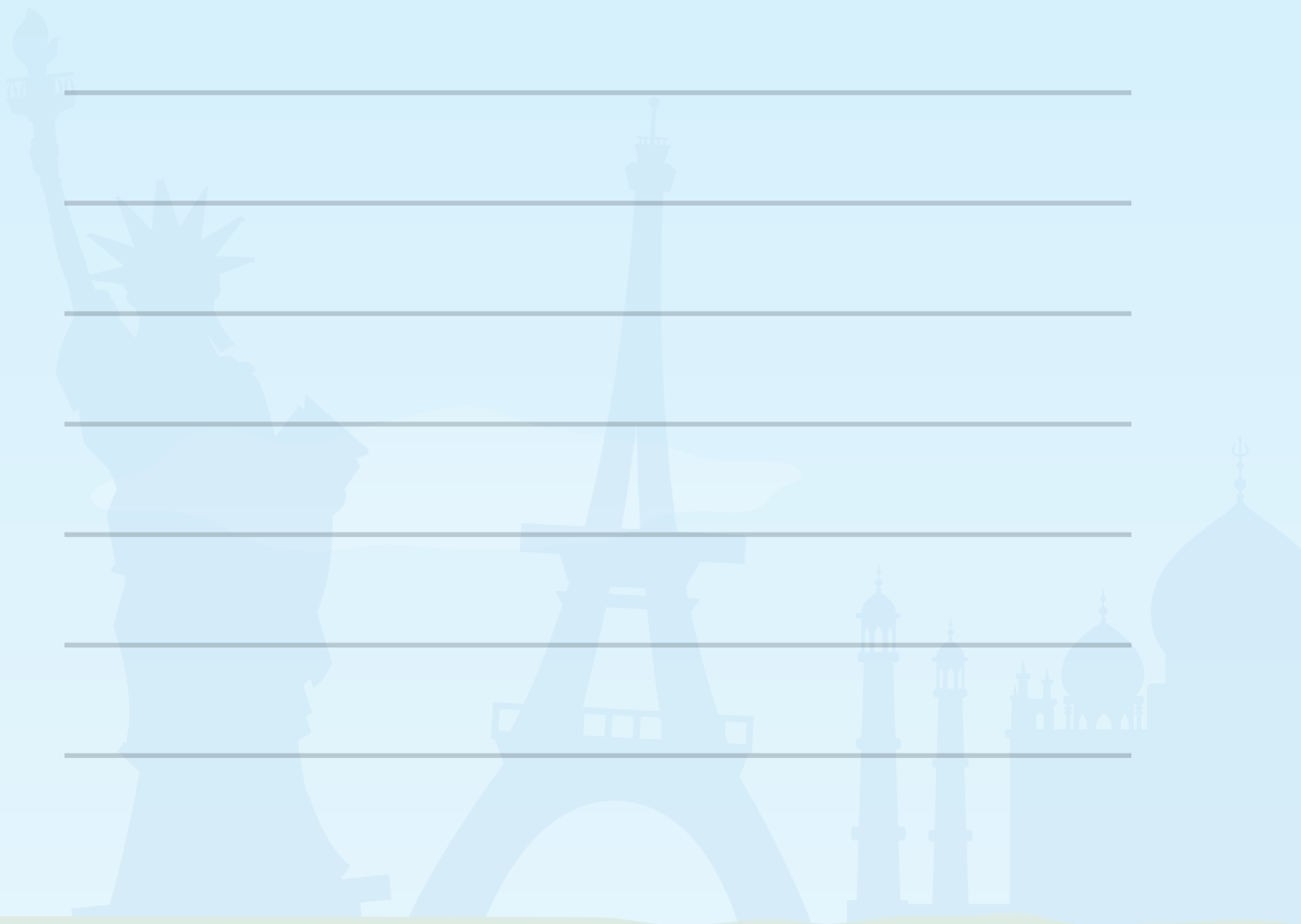
Hand Motion Instructional Videos (Contemporary only)

Song Lyric Videos

#### *Song Resources*

Song Lyrics

Presentation Images of Songs







*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. Psalm 1:1–3*

To ensure that your VBS stays on track, work on deepening your relationship with the Lord before, during, and after VBS. As director, your commitment to continual growth in your personal relationship with the Lord is vital. This comes as you depend upon the Lord and eagerly follow after him. Daily prayer and Bible study provide fuel for your growth. The Lord tells us that “whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5). Encourage your staff to regularly spend time fellowshiping with the Lord through prayer and reading his Word.

Take seriously the responsibility of finding a prayer coordinator to head up a VBS prayer ministry. Copy the following

page for your prayer coordinator and encourage him to put together a combination of ideas that suits your situation.

Devotions for each VBS day have also been provided. You may want to read through these together or encourage your staff to read them on their own. Copies of the devotions can also be found on the Digital Resources in the *Helper Handbook* (item 11-7-007) and in the teacher guides for each age group.



## Praying for Your VBS

Praying that the Lord will use this VBS program for his purposes is vital. Apart from him, we can do nothing. As you launch your prayer ministry, choose from the following ideas.

# Top 10 Tips for a VBS Prayer Ministry

*“When God plans a great work, he first sets his people to prayer.”—Charles Spurgeon*

1. Find prayer warriors. Enlist people who are willing to pray consistently for VBS. Send each of them a list of VBS prayer requests for which they can regularly be praying. See the prayer calendar sample on the Digital Resources for ideas.
2. Set up an email prayer loop. Use your church's email prayer loop—or create your own—to pass along VBS requests.
3. Gather your VBS crew to pray. Pray at meetings and encourage them to pray on their own. Have each draw a name of a fellow crew member to pray for and with.
4. Hold a weekly prayer meeting devoted to VBS. Pray over that week's praises and prayer requests.
5. Encourage your team leaders to pray through the names on their class lists before, during, and after VBS.
6. Hold a dedication service. Encourage the pastoral staff to include a time of prayer during the church service the Sunday before VBS.
7. Print maps and prayer request sheets and encourage your church family to walk the premises and pray over every area of the building and grounds.
8. Pass out “Praying for You” postcards (item 11-7-028) to willing and trustworthy church members with instructions to write a quick note to a child, letting him know someone is praying for him. Collect the postcards the week before VBS begins, and have church staff address and mail them.
9. People who may not be able to make it to VBS can help by praying during the VBS hours from work, home, or wherever they are.
10. When VBS is over, continue to encourage your church family to pray for the children who came to VBS. Ask God to continue to work in their hearts and minds.



# Staff Devotions

## Devotion 1

*But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7*

Take a look at the people around you. What do you notice first about them? Skin shade? Ability level? Physical characteristics? How they speak? Where they're from? How much money they make? Do you look for similarities to yourself or do you examine the differences?

Or . . . do you look at every individual human being as a precious image-bearer of our Creator first and foremost, and as your relative in the family of Adam and Eve?

We are in the middle of heated, sometimes violent, discussions on how people are treated based on their skin shade or ability levels. Tensions are high. Social media blazes with tweets and posts and photos of opinions from all sides.

Where are you in the middle of this? Do your words and actions and posts and tweets reflect the biblical idea that we are all part of the same family made by the same Creator and in need of salvation by the same Savior? Do you value listening to your fellow image bearers, seeking to understand their point of view, more than you value sharing your own opinion or memes that support your current view? Do you value the Creator's fearfully and wonderfully made creations more than you value the mic drop on the latest point you made? Do you wait to hear the whole story before rushing to judgment and hitting that “post” button? Are you willing to dialogue face-to-face over lunch with a fellow descendant of Adam and Eve who may have a different skin shade and unique experiences, or are you intent on having him for lunch with your latest tweet?

Would your reaction to news and events change if your first thought was, “Wow, what an amazing image bearer he is!” instead of, “Wow, what a(n) \_\_\_\_?”

The sin cycle that began with our—all of our—first parents continues today. We see it in the violence, the anger, the hatred in so many . . . and in ourselves. Are we continuing the cycle with our attitudes and actions toward those

who bear the image of God? Or are we standing against the antagonism and the us-versus-them mentality that grieves our—all of our—Creator? Are we making much of the reconciliation found only in Christ and through his love? Do we demean or resent our fellow image bearers in our thoughts and actions or do we treat them and think about them with dignity and respect?

This week, as we teach our kids about the incredibly amazing human race filled with so many beautiful shades of brown, let's take an honest look at our attitudes—both in public and in our secret heart-of-hearts. As we learn the true history of the wide variety of people groups and God's love for them, let's allow the Holy Spirit to produce his fruit in us and to conform us more to the image of the Son.

May we pray as the Puritans did:

Thy will is supreme in heaven and earth,  
and all beings are creatures of thy power.  
Thou art the Father of our spirits;  
thy inspiration gives us understanding,  
thy providence governs our lives.

But, O God, we are sinners in thy sight;  
thou hast judged us so,  
and if we deny it we make thee a liar.

Yet in Christ thou art reconciled to thy rebellious subjects;  
give us the ear of faith to hear him,  
the eye of faith to see him,  
the hand of faith to receive him,  
the appetite of faith to feed upon him;  
that we might find in him light,  
riches, honour, eternal life.

—Arthur Bennet, *The Valley of Vision*  
(The Banner of Truth Trust: 2005), “Seventh Day  
Morning: God's Good Pleasure.”