

Answers **VBS**

THE INCREDIBLE

RACE

*One Family, One Race,
One Savior*

HANDBOOK
Helper

HELPER HANDBOOK

 **Answers**
IN GENESIS®

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Helper Handbook

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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 super-charged 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!

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.

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.

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."

Devotion 2

By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. Psalm 65:5

Our God is a God of infinite characteristics. Of the many things he is, hope springs eternal from him. He is our hope, and he provides hope in the middle of his judgments. Even in the account of Babel, we find the seed of hope.

With Noah, God unleashed the measure of his judgment against the sin of mankind with a devastating global flood. The ark provided hope that Noah and his family would survive the flood.

One hundred years later at Babel, God provided hope in his judgment of the rebellion of mankind. He did not let man's rebellion run its full course, as he had before Noah's flood. He nipped the rebellion in its early stages so that humans would not hurt themselves too much.

And the hope does not end there. The next verse opens a new chapter in the history of mankind: "These are the generations of Shem" (Genesis 11:10). The history of this family