



# RIDE THE TIDE GAMES



LEADER GUIDE



# Leading a Child to Christ

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” Romans 1:16*

VBS presents an ideal opportunity to share the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ with all attending. Every leader and team member should be ready to clearly present the gospel and counsel those wanting to learn more. Children are usually soft-hearted toward things of the Lord, and some will be interested in becoming a follower of Christ. Be ready, because eternal matters matter most!

## BEFORE

- **Pray.** Salvation is God’s work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone. We need to ask God to prepare the children and open their hearts to him.
- **Be prepared.** Learn more about presenting the gospel and counseling a child about salvation.

## DURING

The gospel will be presented during the lesson time. Opportunities may arise, however, to share with a child one-on-one or with a small group of children. If so, keep the following in mind:

- Becoming a child of God involves repenting of one’s sin and having faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Repentance involves understanding what sin is (disobeying God’s commands) and desiring to turn from that sin.
- You can use *How Can I Become a Child of God?* to explain the plan of salvation. Along with this, use your Bible. Children need to see and hear God’s Word, so have your Bible opened and marked ahead of time with the appropriate scriptures.
- Avoid abstract phrases like “asking Jesus into your heart.” Instead, use terminology like “becoming a child of God.” Most children still think in concrete terms and need examples that are easy to understand.
- If a child indicates an interest to know more after hearing the gospel presentation, ask questions (such as one or more of the following) that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer:
  - » What do you want to talk to me about?
  - » Do you know what sin is?
  - » Can you think of a specific sin (wrong) you have done? Are you bothered by your sin?

**These questions are important.** A child who cannot verbalize a sin or does not seem to be repentant about being a sinner may not fully understand his need for a Savior. In this situation, you might list a child-oriented example of sin and ask him to notice any time he catches himself sinning over the next few days. Give him *How Can I Become a Child of God?* Pray with him, then send him on his way. Check back a day or two later, if possible.

- » Why did Jesus come to earth? Why did Jesus need to die? Why did Jesus rise again?
- » Why do you want Jesus to be your Savior?
- » Why should God let you into his family? (Make sure the

child understands that salvation is not based on what he does, but is a gracious gift of God through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.)

- Pray for discernment while listening to a child’s answers.
- When a child seems to have a basic understanding of salvation (belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection, admission of and repentance from sin, and a desire to follow the Lord), encourage him to talk to his parents about what it means to become a child of God (if they are followers of Christ). Encourage a child who comes from a non-Christian home to verbalize his understanding to the Lord through prayer. There is no one prayer that should be prayed. Encourage him to ask the Lord to forgive him and help him know he is a child of God.
- Let him see in your words and your face that you are excited that he wants to become a child of God! Read Luke 15:10 to him.
- Some children may not want to make decisions but may want to learn more, to be assured of salvation, or to confess sin. Read Romans 10:9–10 and John 10:28–29 with children who are seeking assurance of their salvation. Encourage them to ask the Lord to help them know they are his children. If a child wants to confess sin, read 1 John 1:9 with him and encourage him to ask the Lord to help him know he is forgiven when he repents.

## AFTER

- Review what it means to be a child of God.
  - » How long does God keep his children? (Hebrews 13:5b, John 10:28–29)
  - » Can anything separate God from his children? (Romans 8:38–39)
  - » What happens when God’s children sin? (1 John 1:9)
  - » What do children of God believe? (Romans 10:9)
- Explain that Jesus loves his children and wants to spend time with them. Discuss practical ways to grow as a child of God. Provide him with *Growing Up in God’s Family*, and share the following:
  - » Read your Bible, and obey what you read. You can start your Bible reading with the short Bible study you will receive the last day of VBS. (Make sure he has a Bible at home, and if not, provide one. Write his name, the date, and the occasion [VBS] on the presentation page.)
  - » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
  - » Go to a church that believes and teaches the Bible as the Word of God.
  - » Tell others about Jesus. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors how they can become children of God.
- Fill out a Decision Card. Turn in to the VBS director.
- Stay in touch with the child through postcards, visits, or phone calls. Invite him to upcoming church events.



# Course Overview

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
God is ...	GR+8	ALL+MY+T	RUE+LEARN-N	E+MAN+YOU+L	TRUSTY-Y+WORD-D+THEE
Lighthouse Lesson Focus	God is GREAT! He is the one and only God, the awe-inspiring Creator.	God is ALMIGHTY! He is all knowing, all powerful, and all present.	God is RULER! He is the majestic king who is holy and perfect.	God is EMMANUEL! He is the loving and good Savior who came to earth.	God is TRUSTWORTHY! He is our rock. We should praise, thank, worship, adore, and live for him.
Medallion of the Day	Number 1	Letter O	Crown	Heart	Diamond
Bible Passages	Paul in a City of False Gods Acts 17:16–34	Jonah and God Almighty Book of Jonah Psalm 139	Isaiah's Vision of God Isaiah 6:1–3 Psalm 8	God Comes to Earth (Gospel Presentation) Select Scriptures	David Trusts God 1 Samuel 17
Treasured Verses	Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. Psalm 145:3	Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? Jeremiah 32:27	And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" Isaiah 6:3	But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8	Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. Proverbs 3:5–6
Apologetics Focus	There's only one God as revealed in the Bible. You can't make up a god of your choosing.	Nothing is too hard for God.	God is the same in the Old Testament as he is in the New Testament. He was and is and always will be in charge.	God is three-in-one—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Even though there is mystery to this, God is knowable.	God is bigger and greater than our unanswered questions. We can trust him.
Animal Pals	Camo the Chameleon	Flip the Flapjack Octopus	Clark the Great White Shark	Jam the Immortal Jellyfish	Trusty the Macaw
Deep Sea Science	Rainbow Water Mystery Color	Can Crushing Diving Octopus	Diaper Duty Shark Float	Lava Lamps Sea Snakes	Salty or Fresh? Jewel Treasures
Deep Sea Crafts	Tropical Tree Glass Gem Magnets	Shell Necklace Splash Octopus	Wind Chime Great White Game	Mini Diorama Gospel Sand Art	God's Attributes Rock Seek and Find Treasure
Ride the Tide Games	Island Ambush Island Olympics	Fish Out of Water Sharks and Minnows	Glory Corners Tropical Relays	Triple Play Take Heart	Buccaneer Barriers What's the Treasure?
Tropical Treats	One and Only Bread Seascape Snacks	Pail of Whales Omni Os	Shark Teeth Moon and Star Sammies	Heart Melts Jolly Jellyfish	Hidden Treasure Treats Treasure Maps
Cool Contests	Swedish Fish Guessing Game	Team Cheers	Dress-Up Day	God of Wonder Challenge	Mission Money Mania





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# Handy Helps

## Fun in the Sun

What is it about a tropical island that is so captivating—the beach, sunny skies, sparkling water, and awesome resorts? Or how about the beauty, sunsets, island animals, and glittering stars? It certainly is a special place on earth.

On *Mystery Island*, prepare to be thrilled from the top of your sun-drenched head to the tip of your sandy toes as we explore an intriguing and mysterious tropical paradise while tracking down the one true God.

**Day 1: God is GREAT!**—As we stop in Acts 17 and find a city full of idols, we'll hunt for clues about our great God and discover we must have the right view of him. We can't make up a god of our own choosing.

**Day 2: God is ALMIGHTY!**—Our mighty God knows everything, is everywhere, and has the power to do anything. As we study the account of Jonah, we'll oooohhh and aaahhh as we focus on the three big Os of God—his omniscience, his omnipotence, and his omnipresence.

**Day 3: God is RULER!**—We'll check in with Isaiah and realize God is not like us. Our minds will be blown away by his vastness, beauty, and holiness.

**Day 4: God is EMMANUEL!**—God is high and mighty, Lord of all creation. And yet, he also came to earth (Emmanuel means “God with us”) and desires a relationship with the people he has made. He is good and he loves us.

**Day 5: God is TRUSTWORTHY!**—With the account of David, we'll learn that God is great, God is good, and God is perfect in all things, so we can trust him with our lives. He is our rock.

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

**Lighthouse Lessons**, the teaching time. Here, islanders will track down truths about the one true God and discover he is a priceless treasure.

**Tropical Treats**, the snack spot. Islanders will enjoy island eatables at this yummy stop.

**Ride the Tide Games**, the recreation location. At this location, islanders attempt fun surf and sand challenges.

**Deep Sea 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, or 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 **Islander 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 two siblings who are invited to an island treasure hunt as part of their inheritance from a rich uncle. In the midst of their search, much mystery, intrigue, adventure, and humor occur, and valuable lessons are learned.

So grab your beach tote, and let's head out for some fun in the sun at *Mystery Island*!

## 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 teaching. 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

Your role as the Game Coordinator is outlined in the following pages. Your responsibilities may include:

- Planning games for all age levels
- Gathering game supplies ahead of time
- Setting up games daily during VBS
- Running game time and/or overseeing others who are running game time
- Organizing the daily game time challenges
- Making sure key lesson themes are reinforced through the games
- Overseeing the cleanup of the game area(s) each day
- Praying over all aspects of this job before, during, and after VBS

This is *your* guide. Read it carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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

## 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.

**Islanders:** The kids at VBS. Islanders are put in groups named after tropical islands (e.g., Puerto Rico, Bora Bora, Fiji).

**Group Guides:** Adults who guide the islanders from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required for this position.

**Keepers:** Teachers at the Lighthouse Lesson time.

**Lighthouse Lessons:** Rotation site where Bible and apologetics teaching occurs.

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

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

**Tropical Treats:** Indoor or outdoor site where island eatables are served.

**Ride the Tide Games:** Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) to dive into surf and sand games.

**Treasured 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:** 2–4 year olds.

**Pre-Primaries:** 4–6 year olds, or kids who are age 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

**Primaries:** 6–9 year olds, or kids who have completed grades 1–3.

**Juniors:** 9–12 year olds, or kids who have completed grades 4–6.

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



# Top 20 Tips for Ride the Tide Games

1. Pray! Study God's Word and the VBS lessons! This is your most important preparation. Give all concerns to the Lord and watch *him* do great things.
2. Decide which games you will play. Consider the age group and the amount of time you have scheduled. Two main game possibilities are given daily starting on page 15, geared primarily for Juniors and Primaries. There are also Toddler Games (page 7), Pre-Primary Games (page 10), and Super Simple Games (page 13). Additional game ideas that can work any day are given at the end of the game guide. Keep in mind that younger kids like to do several simple games each period, as well as repeat favorite games played on prior days.
3. Before VBS, gather the game workers for a trial run. Play all the games to work out any trouble spots.
4. Invest in a megaphone for the game leader to use as a microphone.
5. Use bandanas, strips of material, jerseys, or wristbands to designate teams.
6. Use cones, rope, or tape to designate the playing area and start and finish lines. Use chalk if playing on pavement.
7. Change the size of the balls to make the activities easier for younger children (larger balls) or more challenging for older children (smaller balls).
8. Depending on the game, the amount of time you have, and the size and age of your group, consider setting up several games as stations and having kids rotate through them. This works especially well with large groups or young children who have short attention spans.
9. Teach children to always tag with two fingers on the shoulder.
10. Use water! Children love to get wet. Use water from buckets and get children wet with sponges, cups, or splash balls. (The football-style splash ball works great!)
  - » Note: Limit the wetness to a reasonable amount—don't get the kids dripping wet.
11. Some of the outdoor games that use water can be adapted to indoor games. Play with the same supplies except eliminate the water component and play a dry version.
12. Announce the name and object of the game with excitement and energy. The kids will pick up on how you feel about it.
  - » Example: Hey, kids! We're going to play an awesome game today called \_\_\_\_\_. The object of the game is \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Keep instructions short and simple. Expect children to be quiet and respectful when instructions are being given.
14. Do a quick tie-in of the day's Bible content using the teaching tie-in suggestions. Games are great, but games with a point are better! Make sure to have a Bible so you can read any verses mentioned in the teaching tie-ins.
15. Form teams quickly and in fun ways. Once in teams, pump them up by asking questions:
  - » Who thinks their team is going to win today?
  - » Who thinks Cat Island will win?
  - » Who thinks Bora Bora will win?
16. Have a countdown to get started.
  - » Example: Everyone ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO!
17. Make sure everyone who is physically able participates and no one feels left out.
18. Keep children moving as much as possible.
19. Keep everyone hydrated.
20. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.



# GAMES Shopping List

# Shopping List



# Toddler Games

Playing is what this age group does best! While they're playing, they're learning. These games are an important part of the teaching process because they help to cement the lessons into the kids' minds in a fun way.

Consider having an outdoor playtime if you have a good space for it. It's nice to break up the day and have a new location to explore. The outdoor location should be enclosed so no one wanders off. If you don't have a safe area, use tarped hay bales or snow fencing to create one. Ask church families to bring in plastic slides, big wheel riding toys, and other age-appropriate outdoor

equipment. Make sure they're labeled so they can easily be returned after VBS.

You may also want to consider having wading pools with a small amount of water for outdoor playtime. (Supervise carefully.) Make sure parents are notified ahead of time to bring swim floats, a swimsuit, a towel, and extra clothes for their child. Ask if it's okay to put sunscreen on their child, and apply it at least 10 minutes before going outside. If possible, place the pools in a shady area.

For game time, use the following suggestions or other games from the game guide. Any of these ideas may be repeated throughout the week as time allows.

## Thematic Game Ideas

### Day 1

#### Chameleon Fun Run

Place various solid-colored objects around the playing area such as toy hoops, small flags, papers, balls, orange cones, etc. Anything solid-colored and safe for play can work. Don't place objects that are the same color (all the red objects, for instance) next to each other, but scatter them around the playing area.

Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then call out a color and have the kids run to an object that is the color you called. Play as time allows.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Our animal pal today is a kind of lizard called a chameleon. God made chameleons so they can change colors. We change, too, as we grow up, but we don't change colors, do we? But you know who never changes? God! He's always the same. You can count on him.

#### One Time

No pre-prep is needed. Before playing, share the Teaching Tie-In, then have them do the following directions one time each. Adapt to fit your situation.

- Run around the perimeter of your space *one* time.
- Do *one* jumping jack.
- Find *one* person whose name is \_\_\_ and give her/him *one* high five.

- Sing *one* verse of "Jesus Loves Me" while walking around in a circle.
- Run and find *one* thing that is yellow.
- Lie down and stay still for *one* long second.
- Sing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" *one* time while doing the motions. God made all those parts of your body!
- Hop over to *one* person and say hi.
- Take *one* giant step forward and *one* giant step backward.
- Jump up and down for *one* minute.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Today we're hearing about a man named Paul who went to a place called Athens. The people of Athens believed in many gods, but Paul told them there is only one God. Let's put up one finger and say, "There's only one God!" Do so. Let's see if we can do some things *one* time to remind us there's only *one* God.

### Day 2

#### Octopus Explorations

Before class, gather items to make eight simple stations to explore, such as running through a sprinkler, jumping over pool noodles, dancing through toy hoops on the ground, wading through a baby pool, scooping sand into a pail, squeezing water sponges, bouncing a beach ball, and lying down on a beach towel.



Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then explain what they can do at each of the eight stations and give them time to explore. At this age, it may be best to allow them to have free exploration time to enjoy each activity at their leisure.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Today's animal pal is Flip the flapjack octopus. Did you know God made octopuses with eight arms? Let's count to eight together. Do so. These arms help the octopus get its food, swim, and even fight off other animals. I'm sure glad God made the octopus! Let's think of the octopus while we explore eight different stations.

### Octopus Tag

No pre-prep is needed. Before playing, share the Teaching Tie-In, then play the game. To play, kids run around the playing area while the leader (who is pretending to be an octopus) tries to tag them. If tagged, they have to give the leader a high five, but can continue playing. Play as time allows.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Let's jump up and down eight times while we count to eight. Do so. Now let's touch our toes eight times while we count to eight. Do so. Did you know God made the octopus with eight arms? God gave them all those arms to help them catch food, swim, and even get away from their enemies. Let's try to stay away from our octopus leader while we play Octopus Tag.

## Day 3

### Parachute Paradise

Before class, gather a sheet or parachute and one or more play fish or sea creatures.

Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then begin. Have everyone grab onto the outer edge of the parachute and lead them in imitating various island noises as they wave the parachute. For example, kids can caw loudly like a macaw, blub like a fish, whoosh like the wind, hiss like a snake, or squeal like a dolphin. They can also practice being the island wind by waving the parachute quickly and then slowly. To finish parachute time, toss one or more play fish or sea creatures into the middle of the parachute and let the kids have fun bouncing it around.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

Today we're talking about how God is the ruler of everything. He's in charge of the wind and the sea. He's in charge of all the animals. He's the king of everything. Let's have fun making some noises we

might hear on an island that remind us of all the things God has made.

### Bubble Fun

Before class, gather supplies to make a bubble station. You can make your own solution with a ratio of 3 c. water to 1 c. dish soap and ½ c. light corn syrup, or you can buy pre-made bubble solution. You will need bubble wands as well. Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then blow bubbles up toward heaven as suggested in the Teaching Tie-In. Next, encourage the kids to try various challenges with the bubbles such as blowing the biggest bubble, not getting touched by bubbles blown by a leader, not letting a bubble hit the ground, blowing a bubble through an upright toy hoop, hitting a target with a bubble, etc. This will be fun exploration!

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

We're going to play with bubbles today! When we first start, let's blow some bubbles up toward heaven and say, "God is king!" to remind us he's the ruler over all. Here we go!

## Day 4

### Fill the Bucket

Before class, collect two buckets and lots of small plastic cups (one per player). Fill one bucket with water. Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then play the game. Kids work together to transfer water from one bucket to the second bucket, which is approximately 20 feet away. They can only use their cups to do so. If you have lots of kids, you may want to divide into two teams and use extra buckets.

#### TEACHING TIE-IN

We have been having so much fun on our island this week, haven't we? And today we learned that God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus. We can never count how much God loves us, just like we can't count how much water is in the ocean. God's love for us is so big and huge! He's a great and loving God. Let's remember that as we play this game with water. We can't count the drops, but there are lots!

### Jumping Jellyfish

Before class, gather enough toy hoops to have one per child. (Or, you can use pieces of paper instead if necessary.) Also, gather something with which to play music. Set up the toy hoops on the ground in a large circle.

Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then have the players each stand inside a toy hoop. Begin to play the music, and have the kids jump from hoop to hoop as long as the music is playing. As soon as it stops, players must freeze in place until the music starts again. Play as time allows.



## TEACHING TIE-IN

Today's animal pal is Jam the immortal jellyfish. Immortal means it will live forever. Did you know we can live forever with God if we trust in his Son Jesus and say that we are sorry for disobeying him (sinning)? Take responses. I hope you trust in God! Let's remember that as we try to be jumping jellyfish.

## Day 5

### Treasure Hunt

Scatter various items throughout the playing area such as plastic or rubber ocean animals, small balls, water toys, sand pails, etc. Also gather a large container the kids can put their "treasures" in, and place it in the middle of the playing area.

Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then play the game. Players look for hidden treasures in the grass, which they place in the large container. Play as time allows.

## TEACHING TIE-IN

What's something you own that you love? Take responses. Things we love can be treasures to us. Well, today we're talking about someone who is greater than any treasure on earth. Who do you

think is the greatest treasure of all? Take answers. Yes, God! In our game today, we're going to search for treasures hidden in the grass, but remember, there's no treasure that compares with God!

## Listen to the Leader

There's no pre-prep needed for this game. Share the Teaching Tie-In first, then play the game. It is like an island-themed Follow the Leader. As you move about, act out various island animals (turtles, sharks, fish, stingrays, birds, monkeys, etc.) or activities (swimming, surfing, snorkeling, relaxing in the sun, etc.), and have the players imitate the action. Play as time allows.

## TEACHING TIE-IN

Our animal pal today is Trusty the macaw. A macaw is a kind of bird called a parrot. Parrots were considered trusty friends of pirates. It's nice to have pet friends, but did you know the Bible tells us God can be our forever trusty friend, better than any other friend we can ever have?

We're going to play a game to remind us of that. In this game you'll be copying motions the leader does, because parrots like to copy what others are doing. Here we go!



# Pre-Primary Games

Each day, three options are listed for the younger set. All three work with Pre-Primaries and most can also be used with Toddlers. (Some even work for the older kids!) In addition, the Toddler Games starting on page 7 are great ideas. Because the little islanders' attention spans are short, it's good to have several shorter games like these. Use one at a time, or if you have at least three leaders and twelve kids, it works well to set up three daily stations using the three options. The kids rotate in small groups from one option to the next, spending approximately a third of their time at each. You can also substitute other games in this guide in place of any of these options.

## Day 1

### Option 1: Mystery Island Olympics

Ahead of time, set up some Olympic challenges for the players. (This can also be made into an obstacle course.)

Explain that Paul, in the Bible, went to a place where some special games called the Olympics started, and he taught them that there's only one true God. Today we're going to have our own *Mystery Island* Olympics.

Possible challenges/obstacles include the following:

- Tunnels—Either use a child's pop-up tunnel or large box on its side to crawl through.
- Ring Toss—Use toy hoops, or make your own rings using a pool noodle that has been shaped into a ring and taped shut at the ends with strong tape. Put half a pool noodle on a stake in the ground so it is sticking straight up. This will be the post they throw the pool noodle rings on.
- Hurdles—Lay six pool noodles on the ground five feet apart. Players run and jump over each noodle.
- Balance Beam—To form a balance beam, lay a wooden board down. Players walk across the balance beam and try not to fall off.
- Javelin—Players see how far they can throw a pool noodle.
- Discus—Players see how far they can throw a Frisbee®.

### Option 2: Chameleon Chase

Explain that our animal pal today is a lizard called a chameleon. You may want to show a picture of a chameleon and share how God gave chameleons amazing tongues that fold up like accordions and shoot out in less than a second to catch their bug dinner. Tell the kids they are going to pretend to be chameleons in this fun game. On the "Go!" signal, kids run around the playing area. After a random amount of time, yell out, "Chameleon sighting!" Upon hearing those words, everyone has to freeze with his "chameleon" tongue stuck

out as far as possible. Hold that pose for a couple seconds, and then have everyone do a physical challenge to unfreeze, such as doing five jumping jacks, running in place, or giving someone a high five. Play again as time allows.

### Option 3: God Is Always the Same

Before class, make identical matching sets of *Mystery Island* items, such as two seashells, two play fish, two play sharks, two flying discs, two large red sand pails, two smaller blue sand pails, two sand shovels, two flip flops, two pairs of sunglasses, two toy boats, etc. Also gather several beach towels.

Use cones to create a space that is 30 feet by 30 feet. Spread the items throughout the play area with matching items not being right next to each other. Place beach towels directly outside the play area.

Explain to the players that God is still exactly the same as he has ever been. He has never changed. Send the kids off to find matching items. When they find two items that are the same, they lay them side-by-side on a beach towel and try to find another pair.

## Day 2

### Option 1: Jonah's Journey—Parachute Fun

Use a sheet or a play parachute to teach about Jonah's journey.

**Round 1—Jonah Ran from God:** Explain that God asked Jonah to go to a city called Nineveh, but Jonah didn't want to go, so he ran away and got on a boat going the other direction. God sent a big storm. To simulate the storm that blew up, have the kids create different kinds of waves—soft waves, fast waves, big waves, little waves, rough waves—by shaking the parachute to differing degrees.

**Round 2—Thrown Overboard:** Tell the players that the sailors on the boat threw Jonah overboard so God would stop the storm. To simulate being in the ocean, place a small rubber fish on the parachute. Have the players shake the parachute vigorously to make the fish jump.



**Round 3—Swallowed by a Big Fish:** Explain that a big fish came along and swallowed Jonah, and he sank into the big fish's belly. To simulate this, have the players grasp the sides of the parachute and lift it over their heads, take two steps in, crouch down, pull it behind their backs, and sit on the edge. All children will now be sitting inside the parachute, which you can pretend is the inside of the big fish. The parachute can be further inflated with air by having children scoot forward with the end of the parachute under them. If you have more time, you can instead have the kids take turns being Jonah and going inside the big fish's belly, one at a time.

**Round 4—Spit Out:** Explain that after a time, the big fish spit Jonah out onto dry land. To simulate this, either just have all the kids jump out from underneath the parachute, or place an 8-inch lightweight ball or a water balloon with a face drawn on it in the center of the parachute, with all the kids standing around with the parachute at chest height. On the leader's signal, everyone snaps the parachute down to waist level. This will cause the ball or balloon ("Jonah") to fly up in the air and land on dry ground.

### **Option 2: Three Os**

Gather three inflatable pool rings per team—36 inches or larger.

Before play, hold up the ring and ask what shape it is. Explain that the O shape can remind us of the three big O words about God—God is omniscient (he knows everything), omnipotent (he is all powerful), and omnipresent (he is everywhere).

Line up the players and have them take turns trying to throw a pool ring over a leader's head. The leader should be kneeling a few feet away. See if they can get all three over the leader's head and stacked on his body before time is up.

### **Option 3: Water Works**

Before class, set up various water exploration stations. Ideas include a sprinkler to run through, water balloons to toss back and forth with a partner, a kiddie pool with "treasures" to explore, sponges to throw at targets or into sand pails, and pails of water to transfer to larger buckets using only cups. (Also see page 7, Octopus Explorations, for further ideas.)

## **Day 3**

### **Option 1: Octopus, Octopus, Shark**

Play this game like Duck, Duck, Goose. Have the children sit in a circle, and pick one player to be the tagger. This player walks around the outside of the circle and lightly taps each child on the head saying, "Octopus!" each time he touches someone's head. When he reaches the person he wants to have chase him, he says, "Shark!" The tagged

player then chases the tagger around the circle. If the tagger makes it to the empty spot and sits before being tagged, he wins, and the player chasing him is the next tagger. However, if he gets tagged before sitting down, he sits in the center of the circle until someone else gets tagged.

### **Option 2: Beach Ball Relay**

Divide the players into two teams. Have the teams line up in two lines next to each other, and give the first player on each team a beach ball. On the "Go!" signal, one player from each team runs their beach ball down to a cone and back to the starting line, handing the ball to the next player.

### **Option 3: Hide and Seek**

Play this classic game by having the kids hide in a safe space with boundaries and having one person try to find them. (Make sure an adult is watching the kids at all times.) Explain after playing that even if the person looking for them couldn't see them or find them, God always knows where we are. We can try to hide from him, but it won't work. He's everywhere and sees everything.

## **Day 4**

### **Option 1: Jelly Fishing**

Gather nets (toy butterfly and/or small fish nets) for half the children. Also make a lot of "jellyfish" using a sponge ball or ball pit ball as the body. Put one ball in each tube sock, tie the sock in a knot, and fray it to look like tentacles.

Explain that today's animal pal is Jam the immortal jellyfish. Jam can seem to live forever and we can live forever with God if we believe in Jesus, who is God.

To play, divide players into two groups—one with nets and one without. Line up players with nets on one line, allowing for a lot of space between each player. Place the jellyfish in a line about 12–15 feet away. Have the rest of the players pick up the jellyfish and toss them high in the air with an underhand throw. The players with the nets try to catch the flying jellyfish. After a little bit, switch places.

### **Option 2: Trinity Transfer**

Gather sand pails in three different colors, such as a red, a blue, and a yellow one. Also, gather one bigger container to put in the middle of the play area and a bunch of pom poms, craft sticks, and chenille stems in the same three colors as the sand pails. Scatter the items around the play area.

Explain that God is one God in three Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity.

To play, the children pick up items one at a time and put them in the matching color of container—a red pom pom



in a red pail, for instance. Once all items are found and in the right pails, pick up a pail and have them say, “God the Father.” Then pick up another and say, “God the Son,” and a third and say, “God the Holy Spirit.” Then all together, dump everything in the big container in the middle and say, “Three in one.”

Before they leave, you may want to have them scatter the items back all over the play area so they are ready for the next group.

Note: An additional way to play is to place all the items in the bigger bin ahead of time. Players then take one item at a time out of the bigger bin and transfer it to the appropriate smaller colored pail.

### **Option 3: Jellyfish Jump**

Players line up on a start line and the leader stands backwards about 50 feet in front of the line. On the “Go!” signal, players race toward the leader to see who can get the closest before the leader turns around. When the leader yells, “Jellyfish jump!” he turns around and chases the kids back to the start line. If he tags any players, they have to stop to jump and jiggle their arms and legs and then make their way back to the line for the next round. If any of the players touch the leader before he turns around, or if they all make it back to the start line without being tagged, the kids “win.”

## **Day 5**

### **Option 1: Macaw Mimicry**

The players will be copying what they see the leader doing in this game, like Follow the Leader. Explain that our animal pal today is a macaw, an island bird that likes to copy what others do. The leader does various actions

that the players have to copy, like jumping, hopping on one foot, running in place, patting different places on their body, shaking arms or legs, dancing in place, etc. Also add in some verbal mimicry, like having the leader say a Bible verse or a phrase about God (“God is so good!”) then having the players mimic it back. Play as time allows and let players take turns being the leader.

### **Option 2: Islander Obstacle Course**

Before class, create a simple obstacle course. Check out the Buccaneer Barriers game for possibilities, but simplify for this age group—a tunnel to crawl through, pool noodles to jump over, a “plank” (board) to walk across, a kiddie pool or sprinkler to run through, a leader acting as a shark to dodge, green “seaweed” streamers to crawl through (don’t let the jellyfish sting you), etc. Have a treasure chest at the end that they are trying to reach, and remind them that God is the greatest treasure.

### **Option 3: David’s Stones**

Throughout your play area, scatter “stones” (crumpled up pieces of butcher or copy paper). Set an empty kiddie pool at the far end of the area.

Explain that David trusted God when he fought the giant Goliath. David defeated Goliath with a stone.

To play, have them pick up one “stone” at a time and return it to the empty kiddie pool without getting tagged by a leader. If a player is tagged, he must drop the stone and go stand next to the pool, saying today’s verse (with help as needed). The verse is Proverbs 3:5: “Trust in the LORD with all your heart.” Once the player has done so, he returns to the game. Play until all the stones are collected or the time runs out.



# Super Simple Games

Each day, two super simple ideas are suggested—one outdoor and one indoor. Depending on your space, however, the outdoor games may be able to be played indoors and vice versa. Check them out and adapt for your area. These require few supplies and pre-prep.

## Simple Indoor Games

### Day 1: Island Imitations

Play an island version of charades. Players are in two teams. The first team sends up a player who thinks of an island animal or item to imitate. His team has 30 seconds to guess what he is trying to act out. If right, the team gets a point. If they don't get it, the other team can try to guess. Next, play goes to the other team, which does the same thing. Continue with different team members acting out different island things. If they are having trouble thinking of something, a leader can whisper a suggestion in their ear, such as surfing, driving a boat, a dolphin jumping, a crab snapping its claws, or a shark swimming.

### Day 2: Silly Seals

Players find a spot on the floor, and the leader stands at the front of the group. The leader calls out commands that the players must follow. The commands include the following:

- Happy Seal (players sit on their knees and clap their arms together while barking like a seal)
- Mad Seal (players lie on their sides and flail their arms and legs in the air)
- Sleeping Seal (players lie on their backs with arms and legs still)

The last player to complete the command each round is out (if playing it as an elimination game).

### Day 3: Mystery Pass

Gather one small island animal figurine. To play, choose someone to be “It.” This player stands in the middle and

everyone else sits around in a circle. The player who is “It” closes her eyes. Give the animal figure to one player in the circle. Have him hold it in his hands behind his back. Have all the other players also put their hands behind their backs so it's not obvious who has the animal.

Now “It” opens her eyes and tries to guess who currently has the animal. While she is deciding, the players in the circle discreetly pass the figure from person to person behind their backs.

If “It” guesses correctly, she wins and the round ends. After three guesses, if she hasn't guessed the right person, choose someone new to be “It.”

### Day 4: Hot Coconut

Gather a coconut or a ball you pretend is a coconut. This game is played like Hot Potato. Have kids sit in a circle and give one player the coconut. Play or sing music and have the players pass the coconut around the circle. When the music stops, whoever is holding the coconut is out or has to stand up and do a silly dance. Play continues until time runs out.

### Day 5: Bible Verse Tag

Choose a player to be “It.” On the “Go!” signal, this player chases the rest of the players and tries to tag them. If a player is tagged, he freezes and waits for another player to come untag him. To be able to be untagged, the player must first recite the day's verse to his teammate. Once he's done so, the teammate can untag him and they are back in the game. Play until the majority have been tagged. Choose someone new to be “It.”



# Simple Outdoor Games

## Day 1: Stingray Shuffle

Before class, make a start and finish line. Choose one player to be the stingray. This player starts in the middle of the playing field while everyone else starts on the start line. Explain that players will shuffle their feet across the field in this game because when you swim in a place that has stingrays, experts say to shuffle your feet along the ocean sand to avoid getting stung by a stingray.

On the “Go!” signal, players attempt to shuffle to the finish line without getting “stung” by the stingray. A “sting” consists of tagging a player with two fingers on the shoulder.

If players are tagged, they have to stay in the spot where they were tagged. They become “seaweed.” They can tag any player who comes within their reach, but they cannot move their feet.

The last player to get tagged is the winner.

## Day 2: Sailor in the Center

This fun game is a take-off of Monkey in the Middle but played in teams.

To play, set up two lines that are 20–30 feet apart. Divide players into three teams. One team stands behind the first line, one team stands in the middle between the lines, and one team stands behind the far line.

Give one of the teams behind a line the ball. The goal is to successfully pass the ball over the team in the middle to the team on the other side.

Players cannot cross their boundary line and the middle team cannot go past the other teams’ lines.

Play continues as the teams pass the ball back and forth. If a player from the team in the middle catches the ball, the middle team switches places with the team who just threw the ball.

Play as time allows, or keep score of which team spent the least amount of time in the middle and award them the win.

## Day 3: Shark Tag

Pick one child or leader to be the shark. This person’s job is to tag as many people as possible once the game starts. If a player is tagged, he has to sit down. Play continues until all players have been tagged or time is up.

## Day 4: Sunrise to Sunset

Make a start line, a middle line, and an end line, all equally spaced approximately 20 feet apart. Have players line up on the middle line.

Explain that each line has a name—the start line is sunrise, the middle line is high noon, and the end line is sunset.

Randomly call out a name of a line. Players must run as quickly as possible to that line. The last player to make it to the line is out.

Continue to quickly and randomly call out the name of different lines. This should be fast-paced. Keep things interesting by calling out the name of a line the players are already standing on, calling out a new line as they are running to a different line, or calling out the name of a line that is non-existent. (“Sunspot!”)

The last few players standing are the winners.

## Day 5: Steal the Treasure

This is a take-off of Steal the Bacon.

Make two lines 40–50 feet apart. Gather something to act as the “treasure”—a painted rock, a coconut, a lei necklace. Just about anything can work. Place it in the middle of the playing field.

Divide players into two even teams. Aim to have between 6–12 players per team. If you have an extra large group of kids, make two more even teams and have two games going at once.

Assign each team’s players consecutive numbers from one to however many players are on that team. There should be a player from each team that is number one, a player from each team that is number two, and so on. Assign each team a line, and have the teams line up facing the middle of the field.

Randomly call out one of the assigned numbers. When a number is called, both players with that number run to the middle of the field, trying to be the first to grab the “treasure.” The player that gets it first runs back to his team’s start line without getting tagged by the opposing team’s player. If he is tagged, the other team wins that round. If not, his team wins. Replace the treasure and play another round.

Continue to randomly call out numbers, making sure every player gets a chance to play. At times, call out a couple numbers at one time.

The team with the most rounds won at the end of the time wins.



DAY 1

# Island Ambush

## Supplies

- ☐ 8 or more cones
- ☐ Sponges or splash balls
- ☐ Large number 1 (see Pre-prep)
- ☐ 2 buckets of water
- ☐ Rope, masking tape, or cones for start and finish lines

## Pre-prep

Gather the supplies. Create a narrow rectangle for the running space using the cones. The rectangle should be about 10 feet wide and 60 feet long. Make start and finish lines, and place the large number 1 at the finish line. Either use a pool noodle for a number 1, or make a large number 1 out of poster board and laminate it. Gather sponges and/or splash balls, and place in buckets of water. One bucket should be on each side of the course.

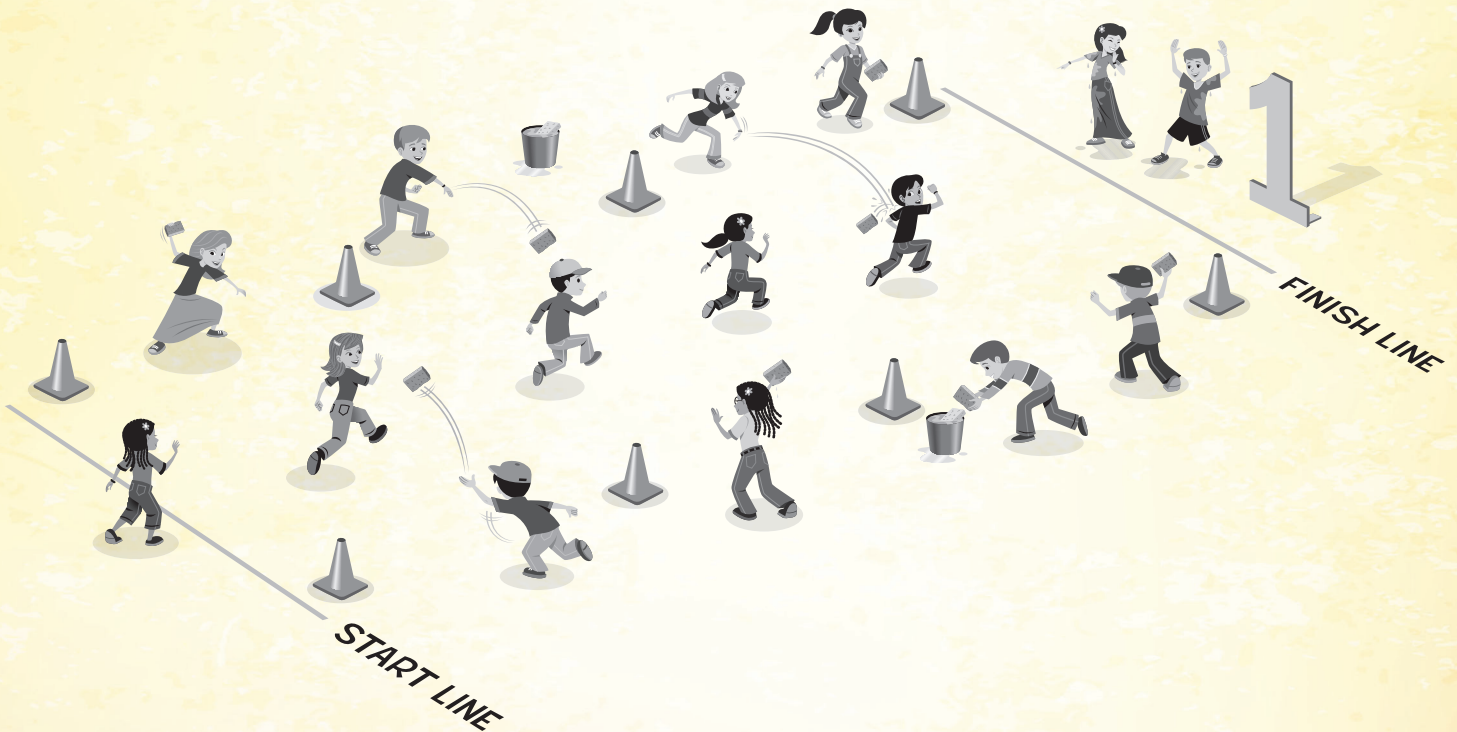
## Teaching Tie-In

What's the object we're trying to reach at the end of this obstacle course? *Pause for responses.* Yes, the number 1. God wants to be number one in our lives because he's the one and only God. He made us, he knows us inside and out, and he loves us more than anyone ever will. Think about that—he loves you more than anyone *ever* will. He is the amazing, one and only God!

So let's remember the one true God as we play our game, Island Ambush.

## Class Time Directions

1. Divide players into two teams. One team will be the Island Explorers and one will be the Buccaneers.
2. Have the Island Explorers line up on the start line, getting ready to run to the finish line. Have the Buccaneers line up on the sides of the course, behind the side cones.





3. On the “Go!” signal, the Island Explorers run as fast as they can down the middle of the course and try to make it to the number 1 at the end. At the same time, the Buccaneers try to tag the Island Explorers by throwing the sponges and splash balls at them from behind the line. These should be thrown to tag from the waist down.
4. If an Island Explorer is hit, he has to join the opposing team and try to get the Island Explorers out. If a player makes it to the number 1, he is safe until the next round. The sponges and splash balls can only be used once per round. After all the players have run the course once, the Buccaneers can pick up the

sponges and splash balls and use them for the next round.

5. Once the round is complete, play again with only the players that made it to the number 1 running. Continue to play until there is only one player left who is the winner.
6. Once the first group has gone and has a winner, let the teams switch roles.

### Tip Corner

- Another way to play is to just switch places after every round. Any players who make it to the number one without getting tagged with a splash ball win that round.

## Day 1 Overview

God is . . . GR+8

Day 1 Overview		
God is . . . GR+8		
Lesson Focus		Bible Passage
God is GREAT! He is the one and only God, the awe-inspiring Creator.		Paul in a City of False Gods Acts 17:16–34
Treasured Verse	Animal Pal	Cool Contest
Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. Psalm 145:3	Camo the Chameleon	Swedish Fish Guessing Game
Deep Sea Science and Crafts	Tropical Treats	Ride the Tide Games
Experiments: Rainbow Water and Mystery Color Crafts: Tropical Tree and Glass Gem Magnets	One and Only Bread Seascape Snacks	Island Ambush Island Olympics



# DAY 1

# Island Olympics

## Supplies

Note: Supply lists will vary depending on which events you choose to put in your Island Olympics. This is a possible list; tailor to suit your needs.

- ☐ For Barbell Relay—6 pool noodles and zip ties (see Pre-prep)
- ☐ For Javelin Throw—1 pool noodle
- ☐ For Discus Throw—1 flying disc
- ☐ For Shot Put—1 beach ball
- ☐ For Human Ring Toss—5 inflatable pool rings and a timer
- ☐ For Island Run—2 beach balls
- ☐ Rope, masking tape, or cones for start and finish lines

## Pre-prep

Decide which events you want to do. Two are relays between two teams—the Barbell Relay and the Island Run. The others are throwing games.

**For Barbell Relay**—Make two “barbells.” A barbell uses one pool noodle as the bar, with the other two pool noodles acting as the pretend weights at the ends of the bar. To make them look like weights, wind them around the bar and zip tie them together to the bar. Make a start line,

and place the two barbells a short distance from each other at the start line.

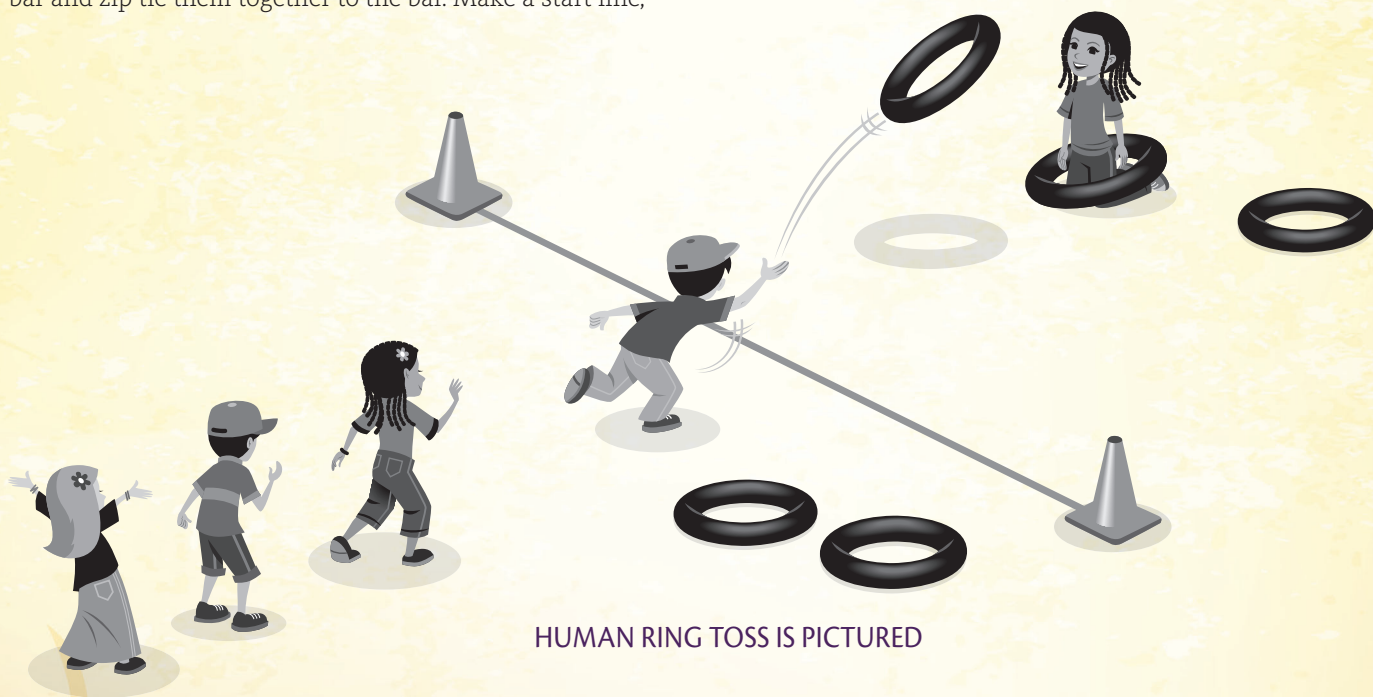
**For Javelin Throw, Discus Throw, Shot Put, Human Ring Toss, and Island Run**—Set up the start lines, and put the supplies listed for each one behind each start line. The Island Run also needs a finish line a distance from the start line.

## Teaching Tie-In

Have any of you ever seen the Olympics? [Pause for responses](#). Athletes from different countries come together and compete in various athletic competitions. The very first Olympics was in Athens, Greece. Can you think of anything else that happened in Athens, Greece? [Take responses](#). Yes, Paul visited there and told the people there’s only one God and he can be known.

But how can we get to know God? In other words, how does he reveal himself to us? [Take responses](#).

1. *The Bible* reveals him to us.
2. *Creation* reveals him to us.
3. *Jesus*, God’s Son, reveals him to us.





God wants us to know him, so he has taught about himself!

Let's remember that truth as we play our own island version of the Olympics.

## Class Time Directions

1. Explain how to play each game, then divide into groups, with one group at each game. In some instances, you may be further dividing into mini groups within the group, which will be explained below.
2. For Barbell Relay—Divide the group at this relay in half to form two mini groups. If you have six kids, for instance, they will be in two groups of three. On "Go!" the first person on each mini team sprints to his barbell and does an Olympic Clean and Jerk, lifting the barbell off the ground and over his head. Repeat three times. Lay the barbell on the ground, and race back to the start line. The next team member goes and so on. The first mini team to complete the race wins.
3. For Javelin Throw, Discus Throw, and Shot Put—Team members take turns throwing each item from its start line. Have a leader stand where the first person's throw lands. If a throw exceeds the first one,

the leader should move to where that throw landed. The longest throw wins the round.

4. For Human Ring Toss—Have one team member kneel about 10 feet in front of the start line. Team members take turns throwing the inflatable pool rings, attempting to land the ring over the head of their teammate. The teammate cannot move her legs but can catch the ring and help guide it over her head and down her body. Play until the team has all five rings stacked on their target player in the allotted time.
5. For Island Run—Divide the group into two mini teams, each with a beach ball. On "Go!" the first person on each mini team runs from the start line to the finish line, all the while with a beach ball between his knees. If he drops the ball, he can pick it up and put it back between his knees. When he gets to the finish line, he holds the ball and runs back to the start line, where the next team member awaits and is ready to go. The first mini team to get all players down and back wins.

## Tip Corner

- Games can be arranged in a large circle or in a line.
- Decide if everyone moves at the same time upon a prearranged signal, or if the groups can just move to the next spot when they have finished one.