

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 softhearted 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.

AFTED

- · 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.

PRE-PRIMARY 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
Medallion	Number 1	Letter O	Crown	Heart	Diamond
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, good Savior who came to earth.	God is TRUSTWORTHY! He is our rock. We should praise, thank, worship, adore, and live for him.
Bible Passage	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. Psalm 145:3	Behold, I am the LORD Is anything too hard for me? Jeremiah 32:27	Holy, holy, holy is the LORD. Isaiah 6:3	While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8	Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Proverbs 3:5
Animal Pals	Camo the Chameleon	Flip the Flapjack Octopus	Clark the Great White Shark	Jam the Immortal Jellyfish	Trusty the Macaw
Apologetics Focus	There's only one God as revealed in the Bible. You can't make up a god of your own 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.
Discovery	Mystery Box	Mystery of the Missing Objects	I Spy a Crown	Play Creche	Sling It
Touch Table Water	Ocean Animals	Play Boats and Jonah	Fish in the Sea	Fishing Fun	Sink or Float
Touch Table Water Touch Table Sand Dramatic Play	One and Only God	Hidden Shells	Sand Castles	Crosses Memory Match	Cookie Cutters
	Beach Fun	Beach Fun	Beach Fun	Beach Fun	Beach Fun
Goloring Corner	Psalm 145:3	Jeremiah 32:27	Isaiah 6:3	Romans 5:8	Proverbs 3:5
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	Lei Cross Gospel Sand Art	God's Attributes Treasure Chest 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 Treat	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



Limited license to copy:

A limited license is available to make copies of this book. You may make copies of portions of the book if 1) you are the purchaser; 2) the copies are used exclusively for noncommercial purposes within your church or organization (an entire denomination is not considered a "church" or "organization" under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the book.

Pre-Primary Teacher Guide

Copyright ${\small \circledcirc}$ 2019 Answers in Genesis. All rights reserved. Limited license to copy.

Project Coordinator: Stacia McKeever

Writers: Randy and Barb Witt Content Editor: Roger Patterson

Assistants: Allie Klein and Amy Quinn

Editor: Karin Viet

Interior Design: Diane King Cover Design: Jon Seest

Illustrators: Paul Agner and Austin DeGroot

All Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), copyrighted © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

For more information, write: Answers in Genesis PO Box 510, Hebron, KY 41048

Printed in China.



Contents

Handy Helps	
Fun in the Sun	
Your Role	
Frequently Asked Questions	
Terms to Know	
Top 20 Teaching Tips for Teachers	
Tips for Managing a Group of Kids	
Age-Level Characteristics	
Special Needs	
Lighthouse Lessons	
Memory Verse Songs	
Sample Schedule	
Student Extras	
Decorating Decisions	
Day 1: GR+8	
Devotion 1: God Is Great	
Exploration Stations	
Introduce It!	
Teach It!	
Apply It!	
Day 2: ALL+MY+T	
Devotion 2: God Is Almighty	
Exploration Stations	
Introduce It!	
Teach It!	
Apply It!	
Day 3: RUE+LEARN-N	
Devotion 3: God Is Ruler	
Exploration Stations	
Introduce It!	
Teach It!	
Apply It!	
Day 4: E+MAN+YOU+L	
Devotion 4: God Is Emmanuel	
Exploration Stations	
Introduce It!	
Teach It!	
Apply It!	4/
Day 5: TRUST+WORD-D+THEE	
Devotion 5: God Is Trustworthy	
Exploration Stations	
Introduce It!	
Teach It!	
ADDIV ITI	54



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, joygiving 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 teacher is outlined in the following pages and includes planning and preparing the daily lessons, enthusiastically engaging in teaching the lessons, and praying over all aspects of your job. Read this guide

carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

And get ready! Get set! Get excited! 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.

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.

Lighthouse 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 Teaching Tips for Teachers

- 1. Psalm 145:1 tells us to extol the Lord. "Extol" means to "enthusiastically praise." Speak with awe, amazement, excitement, and joy when talking about the Lord. Your enthusiasm about our great God will be contagious!
- 2. Pray and study God's Word. This is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of opening his Word and sharing it daily with the children. Walk worthy!
- 3. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance. Become familiar with the Pre-Primary section of the Digital Resources. Begin to pray and plan, and continue to pray during and after VBS.
- 4. In this guide:
 - » Teaching Tips are marked with a ★.
 - » Materials for each activity are listed next to the activity.
 - » The "teacher says" portion is bolded.
- 5. Ask group guides to help man the exploration stations each day. Post the directions and teaching tieins at each station every day as an easy reference for your helpers. (See the Digital Resources.) If possible, gather all the supplies for the exploration stations and lessons before the week begins. It's particularly helpful to organize them by station and by day so they are ready and easily switched from day to day.
- 6. A puppet is used each day sometime during the lesson. It may also be used to welcome the children, sing a song, or review the lesson or a memory verse. The puppet comes up from the puppet stage if there are two of you to do the puppet skit. Or, if working alone, the puppet can come up from behind a suitcase that is flipped open. See Decorating Decisions.
- 7. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
- 8. Dress as if you live on a tropical island. Think casual island clothes (but not swimsuits). Check the VBS catalog for a cool island shirt and hat for teachers. Sunglasses or a lei can complete the look.
- 9. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. You may want to make up a fun name, dress in character and

- talk in first person, adopt an accent, or add something new to your "costume" each day. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
- 10. Call the children by name as you interact with them. Name tags help with this.
- 11. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions file on the Digital Resources for more information.
- 12. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills: plant seeds, bring to salvation, or strengthen and grow those who are already believers.
- 13. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access. Through your facial expressions and your actions, show the importance of the Scriptures.
- 14. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure to be aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.)
- 15. 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.
- 16. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting 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.
- 17. Modify the Exploration Stations as your situation warrants. Set them up as suggested, or incorporate one or more ideas into the lesson time to do with the whole group at one time.
- 18. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and complete their take-home student guides.
- 19. Use brown lunch bags labeled with the child's name to send everything home each day.
- 20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Whether you are a group guide, a classroom teacher, or an assistant, be prepared to confidently lead them with attention getters, proactive tips, and classroom control ideas. Check the Digital Resources and the *Helper Handbook* for specifics.

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 suggested 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 different age groups and can be used to help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see characteristics of children in general and then characteristics of Pre-Primaries (ages 4–6 years) specifically.

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics.

- They 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 with criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and about God.

Characteristics of Pre-Primaries 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 still often exhibit common fears, such as fear of dogs and 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's commands. They need a lot of guidance in tasks but can also follow a simple series of directions. They have an attention span of approximately five 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 down time, give them time to ask questions and be ready to patiently answer! But while you are teaching, be careful you don't get so wrapped up in letting them talk that the lesson doesn't happen!
- Vary activities often. The longer an activity goes, the wigglier they'll become!
- 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 well 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.

Special Needs

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (11-8-053) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

Lighthouse Lessons

At Lighthouse Lessons, kids will have fun tracking down the one true, amazing, beyond-description God. This session is written as a 35–40 minute period, divided into two segments: Exploration Stations (15–20 minutes) and Lesson Time (15–20 minutes). You can either keep your group together for the stations and lesson time or divide the group in two, with each half switching places after 15–20 minutes.

If stations aren't possible, simply choose one or more of the station activities to incorporate into your lesson time as an activity for the whole group, rather than having a separate area for them.

Exploration Station Time

There are five stations to choose from: Discovery Center, Touch Table Water, Touch Table Sand, Dramatic Play, and Coloring Corner. These stations can be in the same room as the lesson time or in an adjoining room. If both the stations and the lesson time are in the same room, set them up at opposite ends of the room if possible.

When the children enter the stations room, you may want to have them first sit while you briefly explain each station and teaching tie-in. Then the children can rotate in small groups through each station every few minutes, or they can independently move from one to another, which is what our test churches do. If you plan to have them all move at a certain time, you may want to use some kind of a transition signal, like ringing a bell softly, playing a tune, or flicking the lights.

Photocopy the directions and teaching tie-ins for each station (see Digital Resources) and leave them at the appropriate stations for leaders to reinforce. The children don't need to do every station each day. Send the coloring page home daily, colored or uncolored.

See the Exploration Stations supply list on the back cover for a list of the supplies needed each day. Post the

signs with each station's name (Teacher Resource Kit). For the Touch Table, use a small wading pool or large, clear, under-the-bed storage container, partially filled with play sand or water. Place it on a plastic tarp or tablecloth to catch the spills. Or purchase an actual water/sand table.

Check the Decorating Decisions section for more specifics on setting up the Dramatic Play area to look like a beach area and the Coloring Corner to reflect an underthe-sea station.

Lesson Time

The lesson time is divided into three sections:

- **Introduce It!** (5 minutes or less): This is a time to begin the lesson in an interesting way.
- **Teach It!** (10–15 minutes): This deepens the lesson, with the teachers sharing the Bible account and apologetics info.
- **Apply It!** (Remaining time): This is the memory verse review and practical application time.

Ideas are given throughout the lessons to adapt the activities to your time period. There are many possibilities. Choose the activities from the options given that will fit your timeframe, shortening or skipping some as needed.

The lesson format is written for a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two or the Teaching Assistant. The format also works if teaching alone. If team teaching, decide ahead of time who will teach what. If teaching alone, either find someone to help with the daily puppet script or work the puppet yourself, having it come up from behind a suitcase.

Check the Decorating Decisions section for specifics on decorating the classroom for Lighthouse Lessons.

Memory Verse Songs

We have partnered with Seeds Family Worship (contemporary, ESV, 11-8-069) and Majesty Music (traditional, KJV, 11-8-063) to create songs for each of the memory verses. They feature the full verses. (Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are taught condensed versions of these verses.) Singing Scripture is an excellent way for children to easily learn their Bible verses. If you choose to use these songs, we suggest using them (either video or audio) during the memory verse time in each lesson. The Leader Pack

comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit and can also be purchased separately. You can also purchase and download the songs individually from our online store for use on a handheld device (answersbookstore.com). Student CDs in packs of 10 are available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (11-8-061 or 11-8-062). The option you choose will determine which type of media device you use to play it.

Sample Schedule

Below is a sample schedule of a typical day at VBS. Check with your director for a copy of the schedule and room assignment for your VBS.

Time	Group One	Group Two	Group Three		
9:00-9:15	Islander Assembly—Opening: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)				
9:20-10:00	Lighthouse Lessons	Deep Sea Science and Crafts	Ride the Tide Games and Tropical Treats		
10:05-10:45	Ride the Tide Games and Tropical Treats	Lighthouse Lessons	Deep Sea Science and Crafts		
10:50-11:30	Deep Sea Science and Crafts	Ride the Tide Games and Tropical Treats	Lighthouse Lessons		
11:35-Noon	Islander Assembly—Closing: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)				

Student Extras

Check with your VBS director, and choose one or more of these fun optional materials to give to your students so they can take home a review of the daily lesson content.

Also, decide with your director when it will work best to give out the various items: during lesson time, during snack time (a good time to review!), or at the end of the day (a good time to pass out bookmarks, student guides, and other items that need to make it home safely).

Simple Songs: The songs referenced throughout this guide that are for Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are available on the Digital Resources (you'll need to upload them to an MP3 player) and on a separate *Simple Songs for Kids CD* (11-8-141) that you can play in a CD player. You may want to purchase one of the CDs for each child.

Student Guides: These age-appropriate guides feature a lesson review on the front of each daily take-home paper, as well as the memory verse, verse review game suggestion, and "Go and Do" section on the back that parallels the Apply It! part of the lesson. You can either go over these during class time or send them home with the students to be completed with a parent or caretaker. This is what our test churches do. If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good information. Give them to the leaders to pass out at the end of the day. Then have the leaders check with the kids the following day to see how they did and make a big deal about their hard work. The student guides are available in packs of 10.

- Pre-Primary ESV (11-8-073)
- Pre-Primary KJV (11-8-134)

Trail Guides: These fun, interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, animal pals, stickers, and a place to stamp (11-8-093) for attendance. Check with your VBS director to find out when he would like to first give these to the kids. They can receive them at any time during the first day. Or you can review them with the kids during the Apply It! section of the lesson if you have time, or leaders can go over them during snack time. These are available in packs of 10.

- Pre-Primary/Toddler ESV (11-8-090)
- Pre-Primary/Toddler KJV (11-8-138)

Treasure Maps: These maps of *Mystery Island* feature the daily sticker medallions and are available in packs of 10. They can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the day.

• Treasure Maps—ESV 11-8-078; KJV 11-8-140

Bookmarks: These are available in packs of 10 and can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the day.

- Gospel (11-8-076)—Day 4
- Attributes of God (11-8-077)—Day 5

Exploring God's Word: This little booklet encourages your students to continue studying God's Word for weeks after VBS has finished. It features a daily question and answer found in the Scripture verse. You or the leaders can pass out one of these to each student on the last day of class. Available in packs of 10 (11-8-075).

Decorating Decisions

A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories. So be creative, and use the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations.



Key Decorating Elements

To serve as a focal point for the teaching, the *Mystery Island* classroom backdrop features a tropical island scene. Mounted on the walls adjacent to the backdrop are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters.

Lighthouse

Use 2x2 boards and corrugated cardboard to create a simple three-sided lighthouse. Begin with the base, making a tapered frame where the top and bottom are square but the bottom is slightly larger than the top. Then cover three sides with corrugated cardboard painted white with horizontal black and red stripes.

Next, make the light section. Cut two corrugated cardboard squares with dimensions identical to the top of the base and four 2x2 pieces tall enough to accommodate the lantern. The 2x2s will serve as upright corner posts with the cardboard squares attached to them top and bottom. Paint the corner posts black and the underside of the top cardboard square yellow, red, or black. Wrap three sides of the light section with clear cellophane, then place it on

top of the base. For a lantern, use a large oatmeal container painted yellow, or a real flashing light.

Finally, construct a roof for the lighthouse. Cut four identical corrugated cardboard triangles with bases that match the length and width of the light section. Then paint them yellow, red, or black and attach their bases to each side of the light section with their points meeting at the top.

Seascape

The seascape panel can be made from corrugated cardboard or foam insulation board. The size of the panel is determined by the amount of classroom space that you have.

On the panel, draw a straight pencil line across the middle. This will be your horizon line with the sky above and the ocean below. Paint the sky a solid "sky blue" color, but for the sea, use two shades (lighter and darker) of greenish-blue ocean colors, using a two-color painting method. For this technique, use a single standard size roller, and pick up the lighter and darker shades at the



Prop up your set, and any free-standing decorations, with wooden jacks made from 2x4, 2x3, or 2x2 boards. Smaller decorations will need smaller jacks and larger decorations will need larger ones. If necessary, jacks can be weighted down with bags of sand or road salt.

same time (both colors on the roller, side-by-side). You'll get some minor mixing of colors in the two paint trays as a result, but it's not a problem. Then use a generally horizontal stroke to blend, but not totally mix, the colors. Two tones on the roller will result in lighter and darker areas of color. After the ocean colors, add a few reflective white patches on the sea, using a light horizontal stroke with a brush. Paint the horizon line white to provide contrast between the sky and the sea, and then, create some clouds by sponging some white onto the sky.

You can display your panel in a variety of ways. It can be hung from a pipe and drape (or PVC pipe frame) system, hung from the ceiling, mounted directly to a wall with mounting putty, or simply propped against a wall.

Treasure Chest

Because a treasure chest is used daily in the teaching, you will need to have one on your set. Spray paint a large foam cooler brown. Then add strips of black duct tape for straps and



gold thumb tacks for rivets. Have beaded necklaces hanging out of it.

Other Props, Tips, and Misc. Ideas

- Place a rug or raised platform in front of your backdrop to create a stage effect.
- Palm trees are a perfect accent piece. See How to Make a Pair of Palm Trees and clip art images on the Digital Resources

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

- 1. Photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
- 2. Place roll paper or a rigid material against a wall.
- 3. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
- 4. Trace the image outlines onto the paper or rigid material.
- 5. Paint the image, if necessary, and cut out.

- Add painted cardboard rocks, wave swirls, sand dunes, and tufts of grass.
- Add two or three seagulls to your ocean scene. See the Digital Resources for clip art images. Use fishing line to hang them from the ceiling.
- Add a thin (½-in.) black border to your painted props.
 This helps them stand out better and makes the colors appear more vibrant.
- Because corrugated cardboard tends to curl when only one side is painted, first apply a quick single coat of paint to the back.
- Lay beach towels on the floor for the kids to sit on.

Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to creating your own classroom backdrop, a scene setter is available for purchase (11-8-126) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount it to cardboard or foam insulation sheets, using clear packing tape or staples, or attach it directly to the wall with sticky tack or mounting putty. Another alternative for easy cleanup and wall protection is to apply strips of painter's tape to the wall, then put double-sided tape over



the painter's tape, and attach the scene setter to the double-sided tape. Mavalus® tape also works well.

Resource Posters

Contained in the Teacher Resource Kit are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters. These are important visuals for the islanders and should be displayed in an organized fashion on a wall (or walls) adjacent to the backdrop.

Puppet Stage

Because a puppet is used daily in the Pre-Primary classrooms, you will need a puppet stage. Use the front of the lighthouse for this purpose by cutting a small puppet door that opens. If you are using a scene setter, make one out of a large cardboard box or a tri-fold display board. Cut out a rectangular hole in the box or display board, cover the hole with fabric, and then paint or decorate the outside.

Check out Pinterest.com/AnswersVBS for colorful photos of decorations from our test churches!

Visit YouTube.com/AnswersVBS for how-to decorating videos!

Exploration Stations

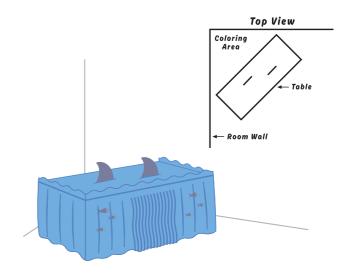
Pre-Primary classes will also enjoy Exploration Stations, which will include a dramatic play area, touch tables, a discovery center, and a coloring corner. Further information about these areas can be found on page 14, but check below for details on how to make the dramatic play area and coloring corner.

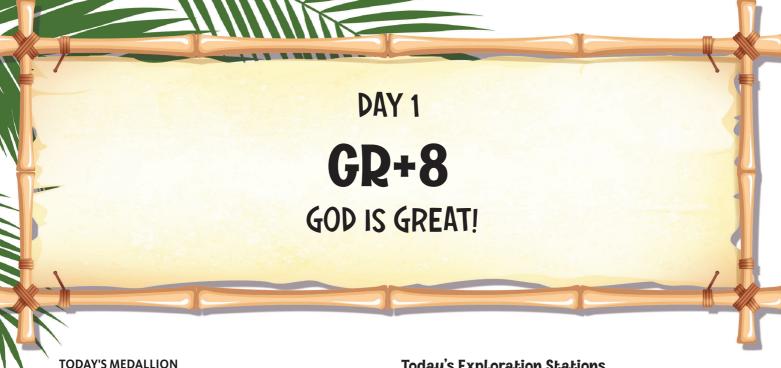
Dramatic Play Area

The dramatic play area simulates a tropical island beach. Begin by covering the wall with a tropical beach scene setter, or create your own scene with light blue (sky), medium blue (ocean), and tan (sand) roll paper. Then, add "beachy" props, such as beach chairs, beach umbrellas (with a sturdy base), beach towels, beach balls, sand toys, stuffed animal beach animals, tropical shirts and leis, and a picnic basket with play food. You can take it a step further by adding a thematic snack bar or souvenir shop where the kids can play "store" or "restaurant."

Coloring Corner

Set up an "under-the-sea" coloring corner by decorating a table for kids to sit under or crawl through as they color and learn their memory verses. Drape the top and sides of a rectangular table with blue plastic tablecloths and make a series of vertical cuts for an opening. Then decorate with fish, shark dorsal fins, and a wave border around the rim of the table. Solid blue bulletin board borders look like waves and can be found at teacher stores or online sources, like Oriental Trading Company.





TODAY'S MEDALLION

Number 1

BIBLE PASSAGE

Paul in a City of False Gods Acts 17:16-34

ANIMAL PAL

Camo the Chameleon

LESSON FOCUS

God is GREAT! He is the one and only God, the awe-inspiring Creator.

APOLOGETICS FOCUS

There's only one God as revealed in the Bible. You can't make up a god of your own choosing.

TREASURED VERSE

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised. Psalm 145:3

Today's Exploration Stations

- Discovery Center: Mystery Box
- · Touch Table Water: Ocean Animals
- · Touch Table Sand: One and Only God
- Dramatic Play: Beach Fun
- Coloring Corner: Psalm 145:3

Today's Lesson at a Glance

INTRODUCE IT!

· Day 1 Mystery Clue

TEACH IT!

- Part 1: Acts 17
- Part 2: Puppet Pal—One and Only God

APPLY IT!

- Part 1: Treasured Verses
- Part 2: Go and Do
- Song 1: "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah"
- Song 2: "Praise Him, Praise Him, All You Little Children"
- · Wrap-Up Review

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Acts 17:16-34 several times.
- · Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials as outlined in the brown Pre-prep text.
- Visit AnswersVBS.com/mifaq for more information on there being only one God—the God of the Bible.
- Pray.

Devotion 1 God Is Great

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight. Proverbs 9:10

At *Mystery Island*, we're encouraging our kids to discover the one true God. But . . . how do we know the one true God even exists? It's a question that has crossed the mind of every believer at some point—sure, I believe in God, but how do I know the God I love and serve is truly the one true God?

Before we answer that question, let's go a bit further by asking another question: how can we know anything? How do we even know to question the surety of God's existence? Here's the answer: apart from the perfect, truthful, unchanging, eternal God of the Bible, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3) and from whom come knowledge and understanding (Proverbs 9:10), we cannot know anything. Think about it.

If, as some suggest, there is no god—no ultimate standard of truth and knowledge—and we are simply the product of random processes operating on chemicals over time, then the thoughts in our brains are nothing more than the product of random chemical interactions. How could we know anything?

If, as others suggest, our universe is ruled by a god who is not eternal (Mormonism, *History of the Church*, vol. 6, ch. 14, p. 305–6) or who is deceptive (Islam, *Koran* 3:54, 8:30), how could we be sure that what we know is true today will still be true tomorrow?

The one true God of the Bible has created each person in his image and given us the ability to think rationally, to question thoughtfully, to know truth fully. And he has revealed himself to everyone so that no one is without excuse (Romans 1:18–21). Those who deny his existence or seek to change him into a false version of himself are

willfully ignorant, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18).

We can know the one true God exists because we have the ability to know in the first place. And we can praise him that he freely gives wisdom to those who ask for it (James 1:5). This week, let's be quick to seek wisdom from the one true God as we teach our children to know the one true God and embrace him fully.

May we be thankful as the Puritans were, not only that we can know things, but also that the one true God has enabled us to know him.

Glorious God,

I bless thee that I know thee.

I once lived in the world, but was ignorant of its

was partaker of thy providences, but knew not the Provider,

was blind while enjoying the sunlight, was deaf to all things spiritual, with voices all around

understood many things, but had no knowledge of thy ways,

saw the world, but did not see Jesus only.

O happy day, when in thy love's sovereignty thou didst look on me, and call me by grace.

Grant that I may always weep to the praise of mercy found,

and tell to others as long as I live, that thou art a sin-pardoning God, taking up the blasphemer and the ungodly, and washing them from their deepest stain.

—(Excerpt from "The Great Discovery" in *The Valley of Vision*)

Exploration Stations

Discovery Center: Mystery Box

MATERIALS

- ☐ Shoebox
- ☐ Piece of fabric, duct tape, and scissors
- ☐ Safe island items to put in the mystery box, such as a leaf, seashell, banana, toy boat, play fish or other ocean animals, piece of rope, flip flop, pool toy, swim goggles, sunglasses, lei, sand pail, sand shovel

PRE-PREP

Cut a hole in the side of the box that is big enough for a child's hand to fit through. Duct tape a small piece of fabric inside to cover the hole, taping it just at the top so the kids can't see the items inside the box, but can get their hands in and out.

DIRECTIONS

The islanders take turns putting their hand in the box and picking one object. While it's still in the box, they feel the item and try to guess what it is and then pull it out and see if they guessed right.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We've been pulling items out of our mystery box. All these things are found on tropical islands. God is the one who made the ocean, the plants, the birds, the lizards, and the ocean animals we find on tropical islands. God is so great!

Touch Table Water: Ocean Animals

MATERIALS

- ☐ Under-the-bed storage container, small wading pool, or "official" touch table
- ☐ Tarp or plastic tablecloth
- Water
- ☐ Plastic ocean animals

PRE-PREP

Cover the floor under the touch table with a tarp or plastic tablecloth. This will be used all week. Put water in the table, along with the plastic ocean animals.

DIRECTIONS

The islanders play with the animals in the water.

TEACHING TIE-IN

God is great! He's the only one who can create animals, like these animals that live in the ocean. I'm going to pick up one animal from the water at a time, and we'll say, "God made this ___ (turtle, fish, or whatever it is)," and God is great!" Do so.

Touch Table Sand: One and Only God

MATERIALS

- ☐ Under-the-bed storage container, small wading pool, or "official" touch table
- ☐ Tarp or plastic tablecloth
- ☐ Play sand, available from hardware stores (make sure it's marked *play sand*, not *regular sand*)
- ☐ Wet wipes for cleanup
- ☐ Craft sticks
- ☐ Set of four flashcards on white card stock: #1, 1, one, only

PRE-PREP

Cover the floor under the touch table with a tarp or plastic tablecloth. This will be used all week. Put the play sand in the table. Make the flashcards with the words or numbers on them.

DIRECTIONS

The islanders look at each flashcard, and then, using the craft sticks as a writing utensil, they try to write in the sand what it says on the card.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Let's see if you know what each card says. Go through each one. Explain that all the words have to do with the number one. Ask how many gods there are.

Yes, there is only one true God. Some people try to make up other gods, but there's only one, and we can learn about him in the Bible. God wrote the Bible. and it's all about him!

Dramatic Play: Beach Fun

This station, which will be a hit all week, can be as low-key or as elaborate as you'd like. There are a number of suggestions; choose what you would like to do. See Decorating Decisions for specifics on the suggestions below.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Beach area backdrop
- \square Low beach chairs or kids' fold-up beach chairs
- ☐ Beach towels
- ☐ Beach toys/sand toys
- ☐ Beach ball
- ☐ Stuffed animal beach animals
- ☐ Dress-up clothes (tropical shirts, leis, grass skirts, sunglasses, swim goggles)
- ☐ Picnic basket with play food
- ☐ Optional: snack shack to "sell" play food snacks
- ☐ Optional: souvenir shop to "sell" souvenirs

PRE-PREP

Put together the beach backdrop. This will be used all week. Check the Decorating Decisions for specifics.

Decide what you want to have in your center. Gather the supplies/props. These can be borrowed, made, or bought from thrift stores, garage sales, or online companies like Oriental Trading Company or Rhode Island Novelties. Our test churches found that dollar stores had what they needed for the dress-up costumes.

Choose which items you want to put out. You may want to put out some today and save some to add in as the week goes by. Doing so keeps this center fresh and full of discovery all week.

DIRECTIONS

Pretend to be enjoying a day at the beach.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Have you ever been to the beach before? Can you think of something God made at the beach? Take responses. He's so great!

Coloring Corner: Psalm 145:3

MATERIALS

- ☐ Under-the-sea decorating supplies (see Decorating Decisions)
- ☐ Day 1 Memory Verse Coloring Sheet
- ☐ Markers or crayons
- ☐ Optional for marker and crayon storage: sand pail
- ☐ Optional: additional supplies to glue on, glue sticks, and stickers

PRE-PREP

Make or gather the decorating supplies and set them up. These will be used all week. Photocopy the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE COLORING SHEET**, one per child. Gather additional supplies to glue on to the coloring sheets if desired, such as cotton balls for "clouds" or blue cellophane pieces for "sky."

DIRECTIONS

Color the sheet. Add additional supplies if desired.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Practice saying the memory verse on the sheet. Discuss its meaning.

Additional Exploration Station Ideas

Live Animals—Bring in an aquarium, a turtle, or a hermit crab, and talk about God's amazing design of each creature.

Seashells by the Seashore—Find a variety of seashells of different kinds, shapes, and sizes. Set up a station with the shells and have the islanders complete different tasks such as sorting the shells into small, medium, and big categories, sorting into like shell categories, making a line of shells going from smallest shell to biggest shell,

making shell imprints by pressing the seashells into play dough or salt dough, doing a shell rubbing, tracing around a shell, and reading books about animals that live in seashells.

A to Z Creation—Have magnetic ABC letters attached to a cookie sheet. Teachers name something God made, and the kids have to find the first letter of that item. For example, if the teacher says angelfish, the child finds an A. Emphasize that Creator God made all these things.

Boat Dock Book Nook—Make an exciting spot for reading by bringing in a real boat (canoe, kayak, rowboat), a blow-up raft, or a play boat. It can even be a play pirate ship! Or, make your own play boat, using a large cardboard box fashioned into a boat shape with small children's chairs inside. Put children's picture Bibles and books with individual Bible accounts in the boat, and have kids go in to look at the books or be read to. You may also want to include some children's books about tropical islands or animals God has made. Answers in Genesis has several good ones for this theme.

Texture Trays—Provide various textures *on* which and *in* which the kids can trace words or pictures of key Bible items they will learn about, such as the daily medallions—number 1, letter O, crown, heart, and diamond. Possible textures include shaving cream or hair gel in zippered baggies that are duct-taped shut (try coloring the hair gel bright yellow), burlap, trays of salt, thick fleece, magic slates, or chalkboards and chalk. Supervise carefully and make sure they know not to put their hands in their mouths. You may want to put out different textures on different days. Provide wipes for cleanup.

Play Dough—Play dough is always a favorite, so you may want to feature a station with it all week, adding thematic supplies each day, such as island nature items to press into the play dough for Day 1 (palm leaves, shells, etc.), a cookie cutter O (God is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent) for Day 2, play jewels to press into the play dough for Day 3, heart and cross cookie cutters for Day 4, and island cookie cutters (sun, flip flops, palm tree) for Day 5. Note: Gluten free play dough is available on Amazon.

How to Make Play Dough

2 c. flour 4 t. cream of tartar

½ c. salt 2 t. oil 2 c. warm water Food coloring

Mix the first five ingredients in a saucepan, blending well. Stir over low to medium heat until the dough is formed and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan, add the food coloring, and knead until smooth. After it has cooled, store in an airtight container.

- ☐ Treasure Map Poster, preferably laminated
- ☐ Day 1 Large Medallion, preferably laminated
- ☐ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster
- ☐ Bible or children's Bible
- ☐ Costumes for teachers (see #8 on page 5)
- ☐ Treasure chest
- ☐ Mounting putty or tape for hanging things
- ☐ Number 1s for hiding around the room
- ★ Be familiar with the lesson, but don't memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference. You may want to decorate the back of your clipboard (the side the kids will see as you hold it) with beachy stickers.
- ★ The Bible and mounting putty or tape are usually mentioned just once a day but are used throughout each day.
- ★ There are bonus puzzle cards on the Digital Resources that you may want to show daily. They have an attribute of God for each day in picture puzzle form.



★ Every day, there's a hidden symbol in the Animal Pal Poster that is the same as the daily medallion. Today's is a number 1. See if they can find it each day.



Introduce It!

Day 1 Mystery Clue (5 minutes)

Pre-prep: Gather your tropical island costumes, which you'll wear all week. Either buy a fake treasure chest or make one as directed on page 10, and put the Bible in it, bookmarked at Acts 17. Laminate and hang the **TREASURE MAP POSTER**. Cut out and laminate the **DAY 1 LARGE MEDALLION** and put it on the **TREASURE MAP POSTER** at Chameleon Cave. Cut out and post some number 1s in various colors and sizes around the room so they are visible.

Greet the islanders at the door as they come in. Once they are settled, begin with the following.

Teacher 1: Aloha, islanders! Welcome to our Lighthouse Lessons. I'm ____ and this is my assistant, ____. You may want to adopt fun names like Surfin' Sarah, Captain Karl, Luau Lindsey, or Flip Flop Frank. Have you ever seen a lighthouse? Take answers. Lighthouses are important because they keep ships and sailors from losing their way when the waters are stormy.

Teacher 2: Here at *Mystery Island*, we want to keep the light of God's Word, the Bible, shining brightly so you can know the way through life.

Teacher 1: So let's dive right in and play a game called *If I Say*. When one of us says a word, you need to shout out the very first word that comes to your mind. For instance, if I say *red*, what's the first thing you think of? Take responses. Okay, I think you're ready! Here we go.

Teacher 2: If I say *sun*, what do you say? Have them shout out answers.

Teacher 1: If I say ocean, what do you say? Shout out answers.

Teacher 2: If I say sand, what do you say? Shout out answers.

Teacher 1: If I say *oranges*, what do you say? Shout out answers.

Teacher 2: If I say *pirate*, what do you say? Shout out answers.

Teacher 1: Okay, here's the last one. If I say *God*, what do you say? Shout out answers.

Teacher 2: People have lots of different ideas about God, but we're going to learn who God really is and what he's like this week. I'm so excited to talk about this, because God is more important to me than anyone or anything else in the whole wide world! He's wonderful!

Teacher 1: We've hidden a clue about God around the room. Let's see if we can play *I*Spy to find any number 1s that are hidden. Have them look around the room and point them out to you as they find them. Then have them sit down. What do you think the number 1 has to do with God? Take answers.

Teacher 2: Point to the TREASURE MAP POSTER. Now look at our treasure map. Can you find a number 1 hidden somewhere there? Take answers and point out the number 1 hidden on Chameleon Cave and the large medallion. Today, we're going to find out God is the one and only God. There are no other gods. Let's put up our pointer finger and say, "There's only one true God!" Do so.

Teacher 1: Where do you think we should go to find out what God is like? Take answers. Yes, the Bible! The Bible is our greatest treasure on earth. Because God wrote it and he always tells the truth, we can trust the Bible to help us see who God really is and what he's really like. Show the DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER. Camo the chameleon is always changing, but the God of the Bible doesn't change. He was and is and always will be the same. Let's get the Bible out of our treasure chest and learn more about this wonderful God.

Pull your Bible from the treasure chest carefully and respectfully, and open it to Acts 17. Then share Option 1, 2, or 3 below.

Teach It!

Part 1: Acts 17 (10 minutes)

Pre-prep: Choose which option you will do for the telling of Acts 17, and prepare accordingly. All three options can use pictures of ancient Greece and ancient Greek gods to enhance the telling of the account. Search online for images, and make sure the Greek gods are modestly dressed. Someone (the second teacher) can hold the pictures up at the appropriate times as they are mentioned in the puppet show or live monologue. Option 1 also needs a Paul puppet, the **PAUL IN ATHENS SCRIPT—AUDIO VERSION**, found on the Digital Resources, and a player for the audio script. Option 2 needs a Bible. Option 3 needs a willing actor in a Bible time costume and the **PAUL IN ATHENS SCRIPT** below.

Option 1-Puppet Version of Passage

Cue the **PAUL IN ATHENS SCRIPT—AUDIO VERSION** and play it for the islanders while working the Paul puppet.

Option 2-Reading from the Bible

Open your Bible to Acts 17 and paraphrase the Acts 17:16–34 account. Read or tell it with emotion and interest.

Option 3-Live Monologue

Find someone to play Paul and learn the **PAUL IN ATHENS SCRIPT** below. Then have him share the Acts account expressively as a first person narrative. Before he begins, show the islanders where this account is found in Scripture.

PAUL IN ATHENS SCRIPT

Grace and peace to you! I'm Paul, a servant of the Lord from long ago. I've been traveling around, starting churches and telling people about our amazing God.

In my travels, I arrived in a beautiful city called Athens. As I was waiting for my friends, I decided to walk around the city, and as I did, I started to feel upset, because everywhere I went, I saw idols. Do you know what an idol is? Take answers.

An idol is an image or statue of a false god—a pretend god. The people here have made up all kinds of ideas about pretend gods, and they've made statues out of wood, silver, and gold. They even have a place that says, "To the unknown god." But we know there's only one true God—the God of the Bible.

Seeing all these idols upset me, because I want everyone to know the one and only God. So I decided to go to the marketplace and the synagogue, which is kind of like a church, to tell people about the one true God.

One day, some of the men of Athens asked me to meet them up on a rocky spot looking over the city. While I was there, I told them I had spotted their idols, their false gods, and I even saw an altar that said, "To the unknown god." I told them that God doesn't live in temples, and he isn't a statue made by people. God is the Maker of the whole world! He made us and gave us life. And the awesome thing is, God wants to have a relationship with each of us. God sent his Son, Jesus, who lived and died and was raised from the dead, so we can have that relationship if we turn from our sins and trust him.

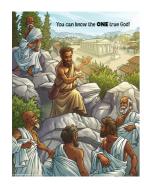
Well, when I finished speaking, what do you think the men said?

Some of them made fun of me. Has anyone ever made fun of you? It's not nice! Some of them said they'd like to hear more, and some of them came with me right then and there because they realized I was right—there really is only one God—the great and awesome Creator!

- ☐ Paul in Athens Poster
- ☐ Supplies for the Paul monologue (see Pre-prep)
- ☐ Optional: Pictures of ancient Greece and Greek gods

- ★ This is where you may want to show pictures of ancient Greece.
- ★ This is where you may want to show pictures of Greek gods.

★ Gospel Opportunity



- □ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster□ Day 1 Puppet Script (2 copies)
- ☐ Puppet (girl or boy) in costume
- ☐ Clipboard
- ☐ Picture of a surfer

Of course, we can never know absolutely everything about God—he's too big and great—but we can know him enough to have a relationship with him. This week, I hope you get to know God!

Thanks for having me in. Shalom!

Continue with the following paragraph after doing Option 1, 2, or 3.

Teacher: Wow, that was cool hearing from Paul! Let's take a minute and see what we can remember about what he said. Show the PAUL IN ATHENS POSTER. Here's a picture of Paul in Athens telling the men about God. Why was Paul feeling upset? What did the people there believe? How many true gods are there? Take answers and review. Remind them there's only one true God and he is great.

Part 2: Puppet Pal—One and Only God (5 minutes)

Pre-prep: See Decorating Decisions to set up the puppet stage. Tape one **PUPPET SCRIPT** inside the puppet stage, and place the other on the clipboard. Dress the puppet in a mini VBS T-shirt, a tropical shirt, or a lei. You may want to add a visor or mini sunglasses. Find a picture of a surfer.

Each day, the puppet pal will be used to teach or reinforce the lesson. It's always a favorite, so try to include it even if you have to cut something else.

If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist someone (a group guide or other volunteer) ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a suitcase with the lid flipped up, or just stand and work the puppet.

You can use either a boy or a girl puppet. Use a consistent voice for the puppet all week. Speak clearly and exaggerate words and expressions. For instance, draw out certain words for emphasis, or make an exaggerated action for things like groaning, turning its head, or sneezing. Use your free hand to do things with the puppet's hands or arms. For example, if the puppet is "thinking," put the puppet's hand on its chin. When the puppet is talking, make sure the mouth is open. (This is the opposite of what people often do!) In other words, the mouth should be open on most syllables. You don't have to open very wide, which will help you move the mouth faster and more naturally.

Your puppet should come out from behind the puppet stage. When the puppet is entering, hold your arm back and down, and have the puppet take three steps up, getting higher each time, until the puppet is out and visible. When exiting, turn the puppet toward you and take three steps down until out of sight.

Teacher: Now let's see if we can get our puppet pal, Sunny, to come out. On the count of three, let's all call to him (her). Ready? 1, 2, 3—Sunny!

Puppet: Come up. Aloha! Welcome to Mystery Island!

Teacher: Yeah, this is an awesome place. What do you like to do here?

Puppet: Well, one of my favorite things to do is to hang ten.

Teacher: Hang ten? What's that mean?

Puppet: Ever surfed before?

Teacher: Nope. But I know what a surfer looks like. Show the picture of a surfer.

Puppet: Well, surfers like to have their 10 toes hang over the front of their surfboard

while they're riding the waves. It's cool.

Teacher: Pretend to surf. That would be amazing! But there's a different number I'm

thinking about today besides 10.

Puppet: Oh yeah? What is it?

Teacher: One.

Puppet: Say dramatically. The number one. Numero uno. One and only. The big O. O-n-e.

Teacher: I think we get the idea. Number 1.

Puppet: It sure wouldn't work to hang one. Can you imagine having just my big toe hanging over a surfboard? Flip over backwards and laugh uproariously. Or maybe my pinkie toe. Now that would be a trick.

Teacher: Sunny, I wasn't talking about toes.

Puppet: Well, then, what are you talking about?

Teacher: God.

Puppet: God? What does God have to do with the number 1?

Teacher: Maybe the boys and girls out here can help us with that. Boys and girls, do you remember what the number 1 has to do with God? Take answers.

Puppet: Oh, I get it. There's only one God. But wait a minute. I have a friend who believes in lots of gods.

Teacher: Well, Sunny, there's only one *true* God.

Puppet: How do you know?

Teacher: Because the Bible tells us. It's the only perfect book in the world, written by God himself. So if the Bible says it, that settles it.

Puppet: What's God like? Can he curl his tongue into a tube shape? My friend Herbert can do that.

Teacher: Well, good for Herbert, but God isn't like any person. He's different. First of all, he can never make a mistake. Ever.

Puppet: You mean he's perfect?

Teacher: Forever perfect!

Puppet: Wow, that would come in handy when I'm doing my math homework. It's so hard to remember the addition facts.

Teacher: God invented math, so he knows everything about math and everything else. God also can't lie.

Puppet: You mean he always tells the truth?

Teacher: Always.

Puppet: My big brother doesn't always tell the truth. He told someone he's in fifth grade, but he's only in third!

Teacher: Well, you can count on God to always tell the truth. And God never changes. Camo the chameleon changes colors a lot, doesn't he? Point to the DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER.

Puppet: Yeah, I like to watch the chameleons that live on the island. They're green one minute, then change to blue or orange or a mixture.

Teacher: When I say God doesn't change, I'm not talking about what he looks like, because God is invisible. But I do mean what God is *like* always stays the same. He is forever kind, good, loving, truthful, and perfect. That will never change. And he made everything and everyone. He's the Creator!

Puppet: He sounds great!

Teacher: God *is* great! He's amazing! He's wonderful! He's better than you can even imagine. He's more important than anybody else to know—*by far*—and I can't wait to share more about him with you this week!

Puppet: Thanks for sharing about the great *one*. Now I'm going to go try to hang *ten*!

Teacher: You do that, Sunny, and we'll see you tomorrow!



- □ Day 1 Student Guides, 1 per child
- ☐ Trail Guides, 1 per child
- ☐ Stamp for Trail Guides
- ☐ Theme Verse Poster and Day 1 Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Memory Verse Music CD and player
- ☐ Footprints in the Sand supplies—10 footprint cutouts from card stock or construction paper (preferably laminated), plus extras if doing other verses
- ★ Another idea for learning memory verses is to make up motions to the key words of the verse. This can be done with any verse, any day.





- ☐ "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah" song
- ☐ "Praise Him, Praise Him, All You Little Children" song
- ☐ MP3 or CD player Also available on Simple Songs CD (11-8-141)

Apply It!

In the remaining time, complete one or more of the following ideas in class. You won't have time to do them all, but these ideas are also on the back of the Student Guides. Send the Student Guides home each day as a fun review, and also encourage the islanders to do the practical ideas (the Go and Do sections) that apply today's lesson to real life. They're important!

Put a stamp in the Trail Guides, or have group guides do so as the kids first arrive at VBS each day.

Part 1: Treasured Verses

Pre-prep: Cue the memory verse song. Hang up the DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER and the THEME **VERSE POSTER.** Prepare the footprint cutouts for the Challenge below.

Today's Verse: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised. Psalm 145:3

Practice the verse several times by playing the appropriate song from the Memory Verse CD and using the **DAY1MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference. Then try the following Challenge.

Challenge: Footprints in the Sand—Make 10 footprint cutouts and put them down in a path in order. Jump from one to the next, saying a word from the verse as you step on each footprint.

Tomorrow's Verse: Behold, I am the LORD Is anything too hard for me? Jeremiah 32:27

Try the Challenge again, this time with tomorrow's verse. You may also want to practice the week's theme verse, using the **THEME VERSE POSTER** as a reference.

Part 2: Go and Do

- Have someone read Psalm 145:8-9, 17-18 to you. Did you hear at least three great things this psalm says about God?
- Talk to God (that's prayer!) and tell him how great he is and why you think so. Remember some of what you heard from Psalm 145!
- Ask an adult what the first thing is that comes to mind when he thinks of God.
- With an adult, check Answers VBS.com/mikids for more fun information!

Ask yourself these questions: How would I describe God to someone? Is this what the Bible teaches about God?

Song 1: "Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah"

Before singing, explain that "hallelujah" means (basically) "Praise the Lord." In this song, one group stands and sings "Hallelujah" while the other group sits. Then the other group stands and answers back "Praise ye the Lord." Traditionally, kids like singing as loud as they can.

VERSE

Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah (Half the kids stand up and sing.)

Praise ye the Lord (Other half stands up and sings.)

Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah (Half the kids stand up and sing.)

Praise ye the Lord

(Other half stands up and sings.)

CHORUS

Praise ye the Lord ("Praise ye" group stays standing and sings.)

Hallelujah

("Hallelujah" group stands up and sings.) (Repeat those two lines two more times.)

Praise ye the Lord

(Everyone stands and sings together on the last one.)

Song 2: "Praise Him, Praise Him, All You Little Children"

VERSE 1

Praise him, praise him all you little children (Wave hands back and forth in the air.) God is love. God is love

(Point to God, then your heart.)

Praise him, praise him, all you little chil**dren** (Repeat first motion.) God is love, God is love

(Repeat second motion.)

VERSE 2

Praise him, praise him all you little children (Wave hands back and forth in the air.)

God is good, God is good (Pretend to blow kisses.)

Praise him, praise him, all you little children (Repeat first motion.)

God is good, God is good

(Repeat second motion.)

VERSE 3

Praise him, praise him all you little children (Wave hands back and forth in the air.)

God is kind, God is kind

(Make "kind" hands to symbolize someone giving something. To do so, put out

your left hand, palm up, then do the same with right hand.)

Praise him, praise him, all you little children (Repeat first motion.)

God is kind, God is kind

(Repeat second motion.)

VERSE 4

Praise him, praise him all you little children (Wave hands back and forth in the air.)

God is great, God is great

(Make strong muscles.)

Praise him, praise him, all you little children (Repeat first motion.)

God is great, God is great

(Repeat second motion.)

Wrap-Up Review

As your islanders prepare to leave, do this quick and fun review. Have them stand up if the answer is yes and sit down if it's no.

- Is there only one God? (yes—stand up)
- Can God change? (no—sit down)
- Did God make you? (yes)
- Did God make all the world? (yes)
- Can God lie? (no)
- **Is God great?** (yes—review Psalm 145:3 once more: Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised.)

★ End each day's Lighthouse Lesson with prayer!