

Hoppin' Good Games



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LEADER GUIDE

Course Overview



	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Title	The Beginning of Life: Made in God's Image	The Wonder of Life: Made with Amazing Design	The Value of Life: Made with Worth	Eternal Life: Made for Relationship	Using Your Life: Made for a Reason
Area of Australia	Outback Life at Uluru	Great Barrier Reef Life	Coastal Life	Forest Life	Outback Life at Coober Pedy
Land Down Under Lesson Focus	The Creator of the universe created <i>you</i> ! You didn't evolve from an ape-like creature.	<i>You</i> are fearfully and wonderfully made, with a body full of awe-inspiring design features.	God values <i>you</i> greatly! Each and every person—young, old, healthy, sick—is a priceless treasure.	God loves <i>you</i> ! He loves you so much he sent his only Son to die for you.	<i>You</i> are created on purpose for a purpose.
Bible Passages	Genesis 1:26–28 Genesis 2:7–23	Psalms 139:13–16	Matthew 1–2 Luke 2	Select Scriptures	Acts 1:6–11 1 Corinthians 12:12–26
Fair Dinkum Verses	So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27	I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. Psalm 139:14	And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. Luke 6:31	Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." John 11:25	For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10
Apologetics Focus	They can't make a monkey out of me! (Ape-men Frauds)	God thought of everything! (Design Features of our Bodies)	Be a defender of the defenseless! (Protecting and Respecting Life)	SMYLE! God loves you! (Only One Way to Eternal Life)	All I want to do is live each day for you! (Life has Meaning and Purpose)
Animal Pals	Jumpin' Jack the Kangaroo	Shimmer the Coral	Bill the Platypus	Paula the Koala	Ringo the Dingo
Turtle-y Terrific Science	Bonzer Boomerang Fossil Handprint	Pick Your Brain Making Sense of Senses	Stellar Stethoscope Toothpick Heartbeat	Let's Get "A-Lung" Blood Sample	Mining Cereal Fabulous Fingerprints
Turtle-y Terrific Crafts	Rockin' Dot Art Hop-a-Shot	Crocs and Kangaroos Fitness Game Manta Ray Bookmark	Life is Precious Photo Frame Playful Platypus	Southern Cross Ornament Koala Pen	Straya Sun Pillow Clay Echidna
Hoppin' Good Games	Jumpin' for Jesus Aussie Rules	PS139 Obstacle Course Reef Thief	King of the Court Let Me Help You	SMYLE! Kickball Animal Pal Dash	Teamwork Towers Dingo Fence
Top Koala-ty Treats	Outback Hat Funky Monkey	Coral Cup Thumbprint Cookie	Celebration Cake Baby in a Blanket	SMYLE! Pizza Koala-fied Cookie	Dingo Puppy Chow Boomerang Bread
Cool Contests	"Lollies" Guessing Game	Team Cheers	Dress-Up Day	"Beaut" of a Bible Challenge	Mission Money Mania



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Hoppin’ Good Games

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Handy Helps



Welcome to "Aus-some" Australia!

G'day, mate! Are you ready for the trip of a lifetime as we zoom off to the Land Down Under? Be prepared to experience the jaw-dropping beauty of the Great Barrier Reef, the arid temperature of outback afternoons, the architectural marvels of Australia's modern cities, and the fascinating eucalypt forest, home of the koalas.

At *Zoomerang*, the newest Answers VBS, you'll marvel at the unforgettable wildlife, culture, and beauty of Australia while exploring the wonder and value of life, from the lives of preborn babies to eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Day 1: The Beginning of Life—As we explore the Genesis account that describes the creation of man and woman, we will find that people didn't evolve from ape-men.

Instead, we'll discover that Jesus is the author of life.

Day 2: The Wonder of Life—We'll check out the words of King David, who expressed the wonder of being formed by God even before he was born. As we look at the special design features of our bodies, we'll learn that we're fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image.

Day 3: The Value of Life—The book of Matthew tells the account of Jesus' birth and the subsequent killing of Bethlehem's baby boys. As we look at this passage, we'll discover that God wants us to protect and respect all life—no matter how old, young, smart, or physically fit someone is. Every life is precious to God!

Day 4: Eternal Life—As we explore the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we will see there is only one way to have eternal life with God—through repenting of sin and believing in his Son.

Day 5: Using Your Life—When Jesus ascended into heaven, he left his followers with an important mission. We will take a closer look at the truth that we are created for a reason—to glorify God through the good works he has prepared for us to do. Our main mission is to tell others about our Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ!

From the minute our mates step off the plane onto Australian soil, they will find themselves on a trip they'll never forget! The day begins at the **Aussie Assembly**, the thrilling opening complete with entertaining welcomes, "aus-some" songs, a mission moment, and prayer. Then we're off to four fun rotation sites:

Land Down Under Lessons—the teaching time. Here, our mates will unearth the value and wonder of all life created by God and for God.

Top Koala-ty Treats—the snack spot. Mates will enjoy delicious tucker (food) at this much-anticipated stop.

Hoppin' Good Games—the recreation location. At this location, mates "av a go" (put in a good effort) at working together as teams and trying out various physical challenges.

Turtle-y Terrific Science and Crafts—the science, craft, music, mission, and memory verse spot. This location features a wide array of activities to choose from: engaging science experiments to explore, appealing crafts to invent, rockin' songs to sing, fun memory verse games to play, or mission time to explore (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 **Aussie 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 an Aussie game show called *Zoomerang*. Before the game show goes on the air each day, the kids will witness some drama between the staff members who work on the show. Then, when the announcer gives the countdown, the show begins, complete with kids being called from the audience to be contestants.

So grab your Aussie hat and "sunnies," and let's begin our fun-filled adventure at *Zoomerang*!

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 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 overseeing others who are running game time
- 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 *Zoomerang* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit AnswersVBS.com/zrfaq.

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.

Mates: Friends or buddies are often called “mates” in Australia. Mates at VBS will be the kids.

Tour Groups: Classes of kids will be put in tour groups named after Australian animals (e.g., Kangaroos, Wombats, Sugar Gliders, and Kookaburras).

Group Guides: Adult and teen leaders will be the group guides who get the mates from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required for this position.

Tour Guides: This refers to the teachers at the Land Down Under Lessons.

Aussie Assembly: At this location, everyone joins together for the opening and closing assemblies.

Land Down Under Lessons: This rotation site is where Bible and apologetics teaching occurs.

Turtle-y Terrific Science and Crafts: At this site, mates participate in exciting science and crafts. There are also options for singing songs, learning memory verses, and exploring missions around the world.

Top Koala-ty Treats: The mates will enjoy some yummy outback eatables at this rotation.

Hoppin' Good Games: At this indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred), the mates will “av a go” (put in a good effort) at fun land and water games.

Fair Dinkum Verses: “Fair dinkum” is an Australian term meaning something that is 100% genuine and truthful. Mates at VBS will learn their fair share of fair dinkum memory verses.

Aus-some Songs: Mates will be singing along with the catchy music of VBS.

Animal Pals: These are our friendly animal mascots used to emphasize the key point of each day's lesson.

Creature Feature: During opening or closing assembly, mates will hear of real-life Australian animals and the amazing design features God has given them.

Toddlers: These are mates who are 2–4 years old.

Pre-Primaries: These are mates who are 4–6 years old or kids who are age 4 through those who have completed “kindy” (kindergarten).

Primaries: These are mates who are 6–9 years old or kids who have completed grades 1–3.

Juniors: These are mates who are 9–12 years old or kids who have completed grades 4–6.

For multiage K–6 teams, we recommend using the Primaries material.

Top 20 Tips for Hoppin' Good Games

1. Psalm 139 teaches that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. Treat every child with kindness and respect, remembering each is a precious image bearer of God. Our attitude toward and treatment of others will speak volumes.
2. Pray! This is your most important preparation. Give all concerns to the Lord and watch *him* do great things.
3. 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 16, geared primarily for Juniors and Primaries. There are also Toddler Games (page 7), Pre-Primary Games (page 10), and Super Simple Games (page 14). 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.
4. Before VBS, gather the game workers for a trial run. Play all the games to work out any trouble spots.
5. Invest in a megaphone for the game leader to use as a microphone.
6. Use bandanas, strips of material, jerseys, or wristbands to designate teams.
7. Use cones, rope, or tape to designate the playing area and start and finish lines. Use chalk if playing on pavement.
8. Change the size of the balls to make the activities easier for younger children (larger balls) or more challenging for older children (smaller balls).
9. 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.
10. Teach children to always tag with two fingers on the shoulder.
11. 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.
12. Make sure everyone who is physically able participates and no one feels left out. At the same time, be sensitive to those with disabilities who are unable to play, and model through your words and actions how you value and care about each person.
13. 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 _____.
14. Keep instructions short and simple. Expect children to be quiet and respectful when instructions are being given.
15. 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.
16. 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 the Koalas will win?
 - » Who thinks the Kangaroos will win?
17. Have a countdown to get started.
 - » Example: Everyone ready? 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, GO!
18. Keep children moving as much as possible.
19. Keep everyone hydrated.
20. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.

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*. Some of the Pre-Primary games can work for toddlers. Also, it's fun to repeat favorites throughout the week.

If you have mates with disabilities, be sensitive and adapt so they can participate in some way if that is at all possible.

Thematic Game Ideas

Day 1

Pass the Mirror

Before class, gather a nonbreakable mirror to pass and VBS music to play.

Have the mates sit in a circle, then share the teaching tie-in. Explain that they will pass the mirror around the circle while the music plays. When the music stops, the mate who is holding the mirror stands up, does a little dance, and then sits down. Start the music again and continue as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

When you see yourself in a mirror, you can thank God for making you in his image. This means you can do things animals can't. You are God's special creation. God made ___ special. Insert one of the children's names in. God made ___ special. Continue on with each child's name.

Boomer Balloon Bonanza

Before class, draw or tape pictures of kangaroos to several blown-up balloons. See the Digital Resources for clip art of kangaroos.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates will try to keep the balloons (the kangaroos, also nicknamed "boomers") in the air. Don't let the kangaroos touch the ground! Play as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Jumpin' Jack is our animal pal today. Do you know what kind of animal he is? Take responses. Let's jump to remind us of that. Do so. Jumpin' Jack is hopping by to remind us that God is the maker of all life. He's the one who made all the kinds of kangaroos and crocodiles and koalas and every other plant and animal. Can you think of an animal God made? Take a couple quick responses. God is also the one who made us! We're different than animals. We're God's most special creation.

Day 2

Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Before class, gather a rope or cones for a finish line, a bucket of water, and a board to walk on as a plank.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates are going to try a series of challenges that highlight some of the cool things our bodies can do. Do the following together:

- Do ten jumping jacks. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my arms that help me do so many things."
- Stretch up high and down low. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my bendy waist."
- Run to a finish line and back. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my legs that help me run."

- Balance on one foot and then on the other. Hop on one foot and then on the other. Say, “Thank you, God, for my feet that help me walk and hop.”
- Take a deep breath, smelling the air God made for us to breathe. Then say, “Thank you, God, for my lungs that help me breathe.”
- Dip your hand in a bucket of water. Feel the sensation God gave you on your skin. Then say, “Thank you, God, for my sense of touch.”
- Walk across a plank (a board on the ground) to test your balance. Then say, “Thank you, God, for the gift of balance.”

See if the mates can come up with more challenges to show how wonderfully God made their bodies!

TEACHING TIE-IN

God made our bodies special. He planned every part of us before we were even born! The Bible says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, so we’re going to use some of those wonderful body parts today as we thank God for them.

Dance, Dance, Freeze

Before class, gather VBS music to play.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates will sing along and dance to VBS music. When the music stops, they must immediately freeze in whatever position they are in until they hear the music start again.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Let’s shake our right foot. *Do so.* Now let’s shake our left foot. *Do so.* Let’s wave our right arm. *Do so.* Now let’s wave our left arm. *Do so.* Let’s wiggle a little. *Do so.* Okay, I think we’re ready to move our bodies that God has made as we listen to music with the ears God has made! Thank you, God, for our wonderful bodies! Here we go.

Day 3

Surfer Says

Before class, gather one or more pictures of surfers in the ocean.

This game is similar to “Follow the Leader.” Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the leader will call out actions for the mates to do using the phrase “Surfer says ____.” Actions can include hopping on one foot, twirling, sitting, doing jumping jacks, bending at the waist, touching toes, etc. Every so often, the leader yells, “Wipeout!” and lets the mates go crazy running and moving for a few seconds. Then start again with them following the leader’s commands.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Lots of Australians live near a beach. Have you ever been to a beach and played in the sand and water? *Take responses.* Well, many Australians love the beach, and many like to surf. *Show a surfing picture.* Isn’t it amazing to think how God knows every one of the people in Australia by name and that he cares about every one of them? He knows all of you by name, too, and he cares about each one of you! Let’s remember God knows you and cares about you as we play “Surfer Says.”

Take Care

Before class, gather two baby pools with water, a lot of miniature people figurines (like Fisher Price or DUPLO—3 or more per child), and a foam plate for each child. Place the pools a short distance from each other. Add mini people to each pool.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates will carefully carry a miniature person from one baby pool to another on their plate. This requires them to pay attention and take good care of the person. Don’t let them fall off their plate! Put them in the water gently! Once they’ve transported their first mini person, have them go back and do it again. Play as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Who made all people? *Take responses.* And how do you think God wants us to treat other people? *Take responses.* With love! It doesn’t matter how old or young they are, if they are healthy or sick or in a wheelchair, or if they have dark skin or light skin. Every person is special to God, so we should consider them special, too, and treat them with care! Let’s practice taking good care of some pretend people in this fun game.

Day 4

Good News Tag

Before class, tape a smiley-face picture to the end of a pool noodle.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that mates will run around the playing field while a leader tries to tag them with the smiley-face pool noodle. When a mate is tagged, the leader says, “Smile, God loves you.” Then the player grins his biggest grin and repeats, “Smile, God loves you!” He then returns to the game. Play as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

What do you see here on the end of this pool noodle? *Take responses.* Yes, a smiley face. That reminds us that we have the best reason in the world to smile—God

loves us! Let's practice our biggest smiles because that's the best news ever—God loves us! [Do so.](#)

Snatch the Croc Eggs

Before playing, gather plastic Easter eggs and put strips of paper with simple messages in each one, like “God loves me!” “Jesus is alive!” “Jesus didn’t stay dead!” “God sent his Son!” “Jesus came to save us!” and so forth. Scatter these “crocodile eggs” across the playing space. Place a bucket or baby pool in the middle of the area. Use a stopwatch or phone for a timer.

Share the teaching tie-in and explain that players have to gather the croc eggs and take them back to the bucket/pool in the time allotted. To add an element of fun, a leader can be the crocodile and chase students back to the bucket/pool.

After the eggs are gathered, take turns opening them and reading what they say.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We’ve been talking about Jesus coming to earth as a baby, living, dying, and coming back to life. He did all this because he loves you and wants you to be his child. Let’s find some pretend crocodile eggs and read messages about Jesus to remind us of this.

Day 5

Parachute Paradise

Before class, gather a bed sheet or parachute and a bunch of cotton balls.

Share the teaching tie-in first, then begin. Have everyone grab onto the outer edge of the sheet/parachute and lead them in the following activities as time allows.

- Players pretend to enter the empty tomb by sitting under the mushroomed parachute with the edge of it tucked under them. While there, explain Jesus came out of the tomb on the third day and have everyone count to three. Then crawl out saying, “Jesus is alive!”
- Explain that after Jesus came back to life, people saw him, and then he went back up to heaven as the clouds hid him from sight. Toss some cotton balls onto the parachute to represent clouds. Have everyone shake the parachute so the clouds move, then catapult the clouds by having the mates raise their arms and quickly snap them down.

- Jesus left us here to tell others about him and his love. Have everyone begin by slightly shaking the parachute while whispering, “Jesus loves you.” Continue to shake it more and more vigorously by pumping the arms faster and higher. Say, “Jesus loves you!” louder and louder.
- Remind the mates that Jesus wants us to use our hands, our feet, our voices, and our whole bodies to serve him. Have them use their bodies as they move in fun ways while holding onto the parachute. First, walk in one direction, then switch and walk in the other direction. Next, do the same thing, except have each person hold the parachute with just one hand and extend the other arm for balance. Finally, try going one way then the other while doing different animal motions, such as hopping like a kangaroo, running like a dingo dog, flying like a kookaburra bird, jumping like a jumping spider, scurrying like a Western pebble mouse, waddling like a king penguin (yes, there are penguins in some parts of Australia), and gliding like a sugar glider.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We’ve been talking about Jesus dying, coming back to life, going up to heaven, and leaving us here to tell others about him. We’re going to use our parachute to remind us of these things. Here we go.

Dingoes on the Move

Before class, set up a start and finish line with cones, rope, or tape.

Share the teaching tie-in first, then have players line up at a start line on all fours (like a dog). When the leader gives the “Go!” signal, mates act like dingoes, running on all fours and howling or barking as they make their way to the finish line. Play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

How many of you have a dog? [Take responses.](#) What does your dog look like? [Take responses.](#) Our animal pal today is part of the dog family that God made. It’s a special kind of dog called a dingo. Dingoes, like Ringo the Dingo, are wild dogs that run around all over Australia. Let’s pretend we’re dingoes as we play “Dingoes on the Move.”



Pre-Primary Games

Each day, three options are listed for Pre-Primary Games. Some are the same as Toddler Games; some are different. Because the little mates' 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, or repeat favorite ones. Some of these can also be used with older kids.

Keep in mind that there may be children with disabilities. Be sensitive and adapt the games so they can participate in some way if at all possible.

Day 1

Option 1: Pass the Mirror

Before class, gather a nonbreakable mirror to pass and VBS music to play.

Share the teaching tie-in while the mates sit in a circle. Explain that you will pass around the mirror while the music plays. When the music stops, the mate who is holding the mirror stands up, does a little dance, and then sits down. Start the music again and continue on.

TEACHING TIE-IN

When you see yourself in a mirror, you can thank God for making you in his image. This means you can do things animals can't. You are God's special creation. God made ___ special. Insert one of the children's names. God made ___ special. Continue on with each child's name.

Option 2: Kangaroo Crossing

Before class, set up a start and a finish line using cones, rope, or masking tape.

Share the teaching tie-in, then line up players on the start line. Explain that when the leader says, "Kangaroo crossing," players start to jump like kangaroos toward the finish line. When the leader says, "Stop—dingo alert!" they need to freeze in place. (You may want to explain ahead of time that dingoes are wild dogs that are enemies of kangaroos.) Go back and forth between jumping and freezing until players reach the finish line. Play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Jumpin' Jack is our animal pal today. Do you know what kind of animal he is? Take responses. Let's jump to remind us of that. Do so. Jumpin' Jack is hopping by to remind us that God is the maker of all life. He's the one who made all the kinds of kangaroos and crocodiles and koalas and every other plant and animal. Can you think of an animal God made? Take a couple quick responses. God is also the one who made us! We're different from animals. We're God's most special creation.

Option 3: Catch the Croc by the Tail

Before class, gather a sock for each leader and a picture of a crocodile.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the leader(s) are the crocs. Show the crocs' tails (the sock that is tucked into the back of each leader's shorts, belt, or pants). Players chase the crocs around and try to catch the end of the sock (the tail). Once all tails are caught, play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Have you ever seen a picture of a crocodile? Show the croc picture. They have the strongest bite ever measured—stronger than a lion's! A crocodile can use its powerful tail to quickly swim through water and knock something or someone over. Stay out of the way of crocs! That's what we're going to do today as we play Catch the Croc by the Tail.

Day 2

Option 1: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

Before class, gather a rope or cones for a finish line, a bucket of water, and a board to walk on as a plank.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates are going to try a series of challenges that highlight some of the cool things our bodies can do. Do the following together:

- Do ten jumping jacks. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my arms that help me do so many things."
- Stretch up high and down low. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my bendy waist."
- Run to a finish line and back. Then say, "Thank you, God, for my legs that help me run."

- Balance on one foot and then the other. Hop on one foot and then the other. Say, “Thank you, God, for my feet that help me walk and hop.”
- Take a deep breath, smelling the air God made for us to breathe. Then say, “Thank you, God, for my lungs that help me breathe.”
- Dip your hand in a bucket of water. Feel the sensation God gave you on your skin. Then say, “Thank you, God, for my sense of touch.”
- Walk across a plank (a board on the ground) to test your balance. Then say, “Thank you, God, for the gift of balance.”

See if the mates can come up with more challenges to show how wonderfully God made their bodies!

TEACHING TIE-IN

God made our bodies special. He planned every part of us before we were even born! The Bible says we are fearfully and wonderfully made, so we’re going to use some of those wonderful body parts today as we thank God for them.

Option 2: Dance, Dance, Freeze

Before class, gather VBS music to play.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates will sing along and dance to VBS music. When the music stops, they must immediately freeze in whatever position they are in until they hear the music start again.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Let’s shake our right foot. *Do so.* Now let’s shake our left foot. *Do so.* Let’s wave our right arm. *Do so.* Now let’s wave our left arm. *Do so.* Let’s wiggle a little. *Do so.* Okay, I think we’re ready to move our bodies that God has made as we listen to music with the ears God has made! Thank you, God, for our wonderful bodies! Here we go.

Option 3: Splash, Splash, Soak

This game is played like Duck, Duck, Goose, except you will need a small water ball and bucket of water. Players sit in a circle. One player is “it” and holds the water ball. He lightly taps each player on the head with the water ball, saying, “Splash,” as it touches them. When he is ready to choose a player to chase him around the circle, he says, “Soak!” and squeezes the water ball over the chosen player’s head. That player gets up and chases “it” back to his seat. Note: If you have a lot of kids that don’t want to get wet, you can play without the water ball and instead play like regular Duck, Duck, Goose, just with Australian-themed words like, “Surf, surf, swim!” or “Coral, coral, reef!”

TEACHING TIE-IN

We’re going to play a game today that involves running around. We can thank God that we’re able to run! Some people use wheelchairs to get around or aren’t able to walk, and they may not be able to play a game like this. We can find out things they like to do and play those things with them. Whether we can run or not, we are all of great value! Each person is made in God’s image. Be sensitive to those who may have different abilities. Make sure they know that each person is made in God’s image with great care and purpose. We can look for similarities with others instead of focusing on the differences.

Now let me share how to play Splash, Splash, Soak.

Day 3

Option 1: Take Care

Before class, gather two baby pools with water, a lot of miniature people figurines (like Playmobile® or LEGO®—3 or more per child), and a styrofoam plate for each child. Place the mini people in the baby pool and the other baby pool a distance away.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that the mates will carefully carry a miniature person from one baby pool to another on their styrofoam plate. This requires them to pay attention and take good care of the person. Don’t let them fall off their plate! Put them in the water gently! Once they’ve transported their first mini person, have them go back and do it again. Play as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Who made all people? *Take responses.* And how do you think the Creator of us all wants us to treat other people? *Take responses.* God is love and wants us to treat the people he made with love! It doesn’t matter how old or young someone is, if he is healthy or sick, or if she has dark skin or light skin. Every person is made in his image and is special to God, so we should consider them special, too, and treat them with care! Let’s practice taking good care of some pretend people in this fun game.

Option 2: Surfer Says

Before class, gather a picture or two of someone surfing in the ocean.

Surfer Says is similar to Follow the Leader. Have the leader share the teaching tie-in, then explain that you will call out actions for the mates to do using the phrase “Surfer says ____.” Actions can include hopping on one foot, twirling, sitting, doing jumping jacks, bending at the waist, touching toes, etc. Every so often, the leader yells, “Wipeout!” and lets the mates go crazy running and

moving for a few seconds. Then start again with them following the leader's commands.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Lots of people in Australia live near a beach. Have you ever been to a beach and played in the sand and water? Take responses. Many Australians love the beach, and many like to surf. Show a surfing picture. Isn't it amazing to think God knows every one of the people in Australia by name, and he cares about every one of them? He knows all of you by name, too, and he cares about each one of you! Let's remember God knows you and cares about you as we play Surfer Says.

Option 3: Musical Hoops

Before playing, gather toy hoops and the VBS music. This game is like Musical Chairs, except put toy hoops on the ground in a circle instead of chairs, with enough hoops for each player to stand in one except for one person. Tell the kids they will enjoy some music as they walk around the circle. Play one of the VBS songs (or sing a song if you aren't able to use a music player) while the players walk around the outside of the hoop circle. When the music stops, players quickly find a hoop to stand in. Give the player without a hoop a high five and keep playing. (No one gets out.) Continue as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Do you like to sing? Did you know God is the one who invented singing? I'm sure glad God made singing and created our bodies so we're able to sing! We're going to listen to some music while we play this game called Musical Hoops. We might even want to sing along!

Day 4

Option 1: Good News!

Before class, set up a start and finish line using cones, rope, or masking tape.

Share the teaching tie-in, then have players line up next to each other along the start line. Allow an arm's length on either side between players. Have one or more leaders at both ends (start line and finish line).

The leader(s) at the start line should quietly go down the line sharing a good news message over and over, such as "God loves me" and "Jesus is alive!"

On "Go!" everyone starts to run to the finish line at the same time. As they run, they should be repeating their good news message. When they get to the finish line, they high five a leader and yell out the good news message.

Play again. Every time you play, use a different good news message and have the players move down and back in different ways.

A variation is to play as a tag game and have tagged players shout out a good news message to become untagged.

TEACHING TIE-IN

I have some good news for you—God loves you! Let's play this game to remind us of that good news message.

Option 2: Snatch the Croc Eggs

Before playing, gather plastic Easter eggs and put strips of paper with simple messages in each one, like "God loves me!" "Jesus is alive!" "Jesus didn't stay dead!" "God sent his Son!" "Jesus came to save us!" and so forth. Scatter the eggs, which are acting as crocodile eggs, across the playing space. Place a bucket or baby pool in the middle of the area. Have a stopwatch ready for a timer.

Share the teaching tie-in and explain that players have to gather the eggs and take them back to the bucket or baby pool in the time allotted. To add an element of fun, a leader can be the crocodile and chase students back to the bucket.

After the eggs are gathered, take turns opening them and reading what they say.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Jesus came to earth as a baby, lived, died, and came back to life. He did all this because he loves you and wants you to be his child. Let's find some pretend crocodile eggs and read messages about Jesus to remind us of this.

Option 3: God Cares

Before class, scatter lots of balls around the playing area and position a baby pool on the side of the playing area.

Share the teaching tie-in, then explain that players will have two minutes to pick up as many balls as they can and return them to the baby pool. To add an extra challenge, leaders can periodically throw some balls that have been gathered back onto the playing area, or tag players and make them freeze while they count to ten. Play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Do you think there are lots of people in the world? Pause for responses. Does God care about every person? Pause. Let's pretend each of these balls represents a person, and remember, God cares about every single one because every person is made in his image.

Day 5

Option 1: Parachute Paradise

Before class, gather a sheet or parachute and a bunch of cotton balls.

Share the teaching tie-in first, then begin. Have everyone grab onto the outer edge of the parachute and lead them in the following activities as time allows.

- Players pretend to enter the empty tomb by sitting under the mushroomed parachute with the edge of it tucked under them. While there, explain Jesus came out of the tomb on the third day and have everyone count to three. Then crawl out saying, "Jesus is alive!"
- Explain that after Jesus came back to life, people saw him alive, and then he went back up to heaven and the clouds hid him from sight. In this activity, cotton balls represent clouds. Have everyone shake the parachute so the clouds move, then catapult the clouds by having them raise their arms and then quickly snap them down.
- Jesus left us here to tell others about him and his love. Have everyone begin to slightly shake the parachute while whispering, "Jesus loves you." Then shake more and more vigorously by having everyone pump their arms faster and higher while holding on to the edge of the parachute and saying louder and louder, "Jesus loves you!"
- Remind the mates that Jesus wants us to use our hands, our feet, our voices, and our whole bodies to serve him. Have them use their bodies as they move in fun ways with the parachute. First, have everyone walk in one direction, then switch directions and walk the other way. Next, do the same thing, except have each person hold the parachute with just one hand and extend the other arm for balance. Finally, try going one way then the other while doing different animal motions, such as hopping like a kangaroo, running like a dingo dog, flying like a kookaburra bird, jumping like a jumping spider, scurrying like a Western pebble mouse, waddling like a king penguin, and gliding like a sugar glider.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Jesus died, came back to life, and went up to heaven. He left us here to tell others about him. We're going to use our parachute to remind us of these things. Here we go.

Option 2: Dingoes on the Move

Before class, set up a start and finish line with cones, rope, or tape.

Share the teaching tie-in first, then have players line up at a start line on all fours (like a dog). When the leader gives the "Go!" signal, mates act like dingoes, running on all fours and howling or barking as they make their way to the finish line. Play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

How many of you have a dog? *Take responses.* What does your dog look like? *Take responses.* Well, our animal pal today is part of the dog family that God made. It's a type of dog called a dingo. Dingoes, like Ringo the Dingo, are wild dogs that run around all over Australia. Let's pretend we're dingoes as we play *Dingoes on the Move*.

Option 3: Pass the Opal

Before class, gather the VBS music and either a colorful ball or a large plastic gem.

Have players sit in a circle and pass an opal (the colorful ball or large plastic gem) around the circle while the leader plays or sings music. Whenever the music stops, the person holding the opal stands up and howls like a dingo (you may need to demonstrate this) and then sits back down. Play again as time allows.

TEACHING TIE-IN

The area of Australia we're in today has a place that's known for its beautiful, expensive gemstones called opals. Opals are used in jewelry. They're pretty! As a result of the flood of Noah's day, God has hidden these treasures deep in the earth in Australia, but people work together to get the opals out. Isn't it awesome when we work together and do what God has for us to do? Let's work together now to pass the opal.



Super Simple Games

Each day, two super simple ideas are suggested—one outdoor and one indoor. Depending on your space, however, some of 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.

All the Simple Outdoor Games (except Sponge Reef-lays) are favorites that many Aussie children like to play.

Simple Indoor Games

Day 1: Lyrebird Lingo

In this game, players will mimic various sounds just like lyrebirds (an Australian bird that can imitate many sounds). Start by secretly assigning each child to a particular sound. At least two players need each sound. Their sound can be whispered in their ear or you can count off players and then assign each number to a particular sound. You can choose to use animal sounds, “thing” sounds, or a combination of both. Animal sounds can include hissing like a snake, howling like a dingo, squeaking like a mouse, croaking like a cane toad, and snorting like a wild pig. Thing sounds can include firing up a jeep engine, buzzing like a chainsaw, ticking like a clock, swishing like waves, and singing like an opera singer. Blindfold the players or have them close their eyes and start to make their sound. Players carefully mill around the playing area while making their sound, trying to find the rest of their team that is also making that sound. The first team to find a designated number of players making their sound wins. As a variation, you can have players try it without closing their eyes.

Day 2: Aussie Animal Upset

This is like Upset the Fruit Basket. Before playing, assign players to one of four animal categories: koalas, kangaroos, crocodiles, or corals. You should have an equal number of players assigned to each category if possible and toy hoops for all but one player. To play, have players sit or stand in a circle, one in each hoop. Select one player to start in the middle. This player says the name of one of the animals (koalas, for example). Anyone that is that animal moves to find another hoop that is open, while the person in the middle also tries to find an open hoop. The person left without a hoop moves to the middle and starts the next round by saying the name of another animal. Once in a while, the person in the middle can say, “Aussie Animal Upset!” and everyone moves. Play as time allows. As a variation, switch up the categories to include other Australian-themed animals,

places, or things. You could also make it a game of elimination by having anyone who can't find an open hoop step out of the game, while also removing one hoop. See who can make it to the end.

Day 3: Listen to the Leader

This younger kiddos' game is like an Aussie-themed Follow the Leader. As you move about, act out various Aussie animals (turtles, sharks, fish, stingrays, birds, kangaroos, etc.) or activities (swimming, surfing, snorkeling, relaxing in the sun, building a sand castle, etc.) and have the players imitate the action. Play as time allows.

Day 4: Koala Capers

The leader calls out one of three positions that a koala may take. Players respond by quickly getting in that position. Positions include:

- Eating koala: sit up and act like you're eating leaves
- Climbing koala: stand up and act like you're climbing a tree
- Sleeping koala: lie down on your side and act like you're sleeping

The last person to get in the correct position each round is out. Add excitement by speeding up the directions. Play until only one person is left. He or she is the winner. Play again as time allows.

Day 5: Mission Messages

This game is like the classic game of Telephone. Before playing, write some sentences on strips of paper and place them in a baggie. These will be your Mission Messages and can be things like the following:

- “People did not come from ape-men, but are made in God's image.”
- “God considers you a priceless treasure and of infinite value.”
- “Your body is full of awe-inspiring design features.”

- “You were created by God and for God. Your life matters.”
- “You were created on purpose for a purpose.”
- “Be a defender of the defenseless.”

To play, have everyone sit in a circle. Pick a player to start the game. She pulls a message from the baggie and whispers what she read into the ear of the player next to

her. That player whispers the message to the next player and so on. The last person to receive the message in the circle says what he heard out loud. That message is compared to the original message to see if the team got it right as it was shared around the circle. Play again and pick a new player to start the game.

Simple Outdoor Games

Day 1: Jumpin’ Jack and Jillaroos

Before play, set up start and finish lines and gather sacks. Explain that sack races are popular among many Australian children. Have players line up on the start line in their sacks. If you don’t have enough sacks for everyone, play two rounds. On the “Go!” signal, players jump down to the finish line. The first to make it to the end is the winner. Play again as time allows and make it into a competition by having winners of various rounds compete against each other.

Day 2: Sponge Reef-lay

Before play, set up start and finish lines and gather empty 2-liter bottles, sponges, and buckets of water—one of each per team. Have the kids form into at least two teams and line up at the start line. Place the buckets of water at the finish line. On “Go!” the first person on each team grabs a sponge, runs to the finish line, dunks the sponge in the water, then runs back and squeezes it into the empty 2-liter bottle. The next person takes the sponge and does the same thing. Continue on, with the winning team being the one who fills their 2-liter bottle the highest in the time allotted.

Day 3: Melting Candles Tag

This is a popular Australian children’s game. Set up boundary lines with cones. Pick one player to be “it.” Once play begins, “it” runs around the playing field and tags other players. Once a player is tagged, she begins to slowly melt by gradually dropping to the ground. Another player can tag the melting player back in to the game to save her from melting. If no one tags the melting player back in to the game, that player is out and moves

off the playing field until the round is over. Play continues until only one player is left or time is up.

Day 4: What’s the Time, Mr. Wolf?

Before play, set up start and finish lines. Explain that this is a popular game many Australian kids love to play. To play, a leader stands at a distance from the start line where all players are lined up, with a bit of space between each one. Players shout in unison, “What’s the time, Mr. Wolf?” to which the leader replies with a time such as 1 o’clock, 9 o’clock, etc. Whatever time he says corresponds to the amount of steps the players take toward him (e.g., 3 o’clock means they take three steps). After a while, when asked what time it is, he can respond with, “Dinnertime!” at which he turns around and chases the players back to the start line. Play again as time allows.

Day 5: Down, Down, Down

This is a popular Australian children’s game. Before play, gather tennis balls (or other small balls), one for every two players. To begin, players pair up with a partner, stand about 10 feet apart, and toss their tennis ball back and forth from a standing position. If one of the partners misses a catch, he loses a leg and has to catch the ball while standing on one leg for the rest of the game. If he misses another catch, he loses the other leg and goes down on his knees. Next time he misses the ball, he goes down with one elbow touching the ground—this goes on until he’s completely lying on the ground. At that point, the game is over for that team. The winning team is the one who stays in the game the longest without lying on the ground. For a variation, partners can take a step backward on every successful catch.

DAY 1

Jumpin' for Jesus

Supplies

- ❑ 1 jump rope per team
- ❑ 1 utility ball per team (7–8.5 inches)
- ❑ 2 buckets per team, 1 filled with water
- ❑ 1 plastic cup per team
- ❑ 1 toy hoop per team
- ❑ Cones, rope, or tape to mark start and finish lines

Pre-prep

Decide which relays you will do (see Class Time Directions) and gather and set up the equipment. Mark the start and finish lines.

Teaching Tie-In

Do you know what an author is? *Take quick responses.* An author is a creative person who begins or creates something, like a book or play. For instance, the authors of the game we're about to play are two awesome gym teachers in Ohio. But talking about authors reminds me about a much more incredible author—Jesus. He's the author of all life, whether outback life or rain forest life or life at the bottom of the ocean! He created it all. Now that's something to get excited about!

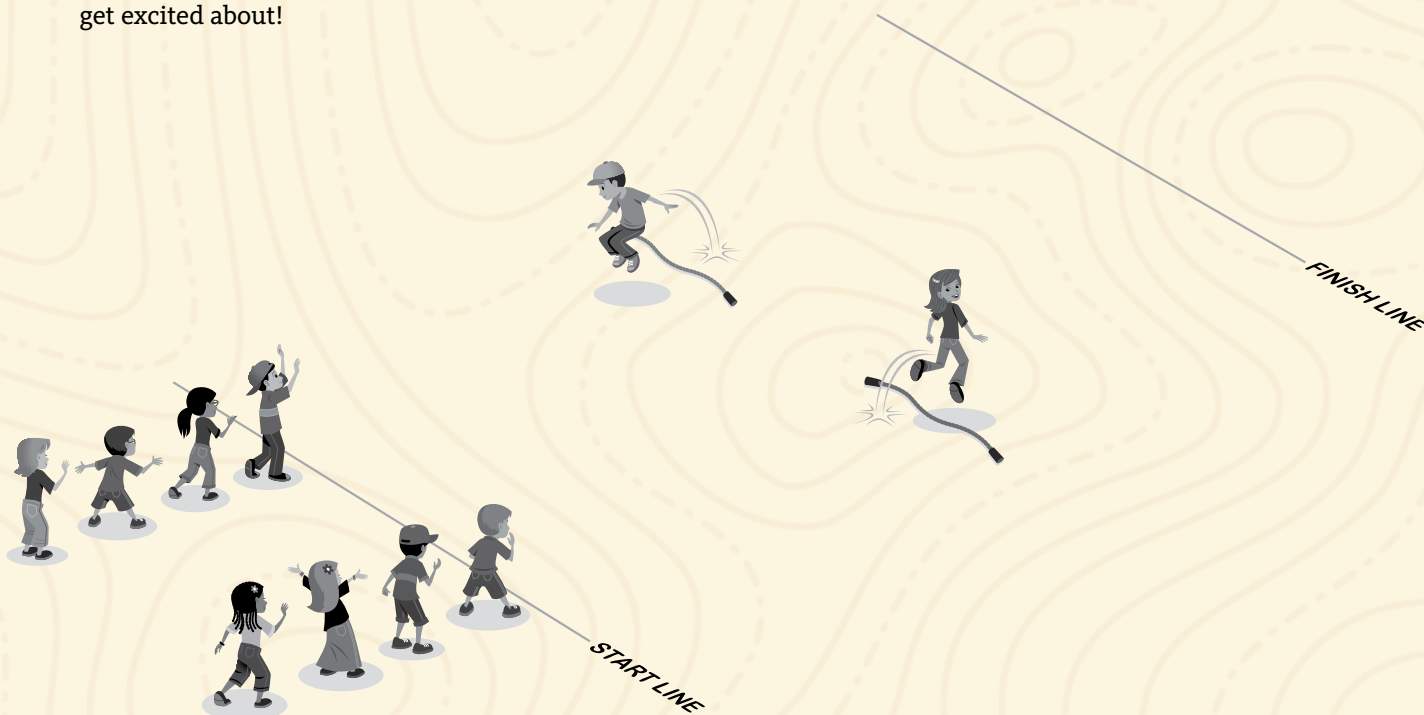
We're gonna do some jumping for Jesus in this game because Jesus is the awesome Creator! Let's hear how to play.

Class Time Directions

Divide players into two teams. Line up behind the start line and begin running relays. The first team to complete a challenge wins that relay. The team that wins the most overall challenges is the overall winner.

Jump the Still Rope—Place one jump rope in front of each team, approximately 10–15 feet from the start line. Players run one at a time to the rope and jump back and forth over it 10 times, then run back and high five the next player to run. The first team to get all the players back wins.

Ball Hop—Place a utility ball between your legs, anywhere from slightly above your knees to your ankle bones. Jump to the finish line without dropping the ball. After passing the finish line, remove the ball and run back to the next player in line. If the ball falls out, the player



**Jump the Still Rope
pictured**

repeats the challenge by returning to the start line and trying again. If it falls out again, do not redo the challenge but let the player pick it up and run back to the next player in line. The first team to get all the players back wins.

Jump It!—Place a jump rope 10 feet from the start line. The first player runs to the jump rope, turns to face the team, and begins to jump. The rest of the team counts as he jumps. He jumps until he reaches five in a row, or until 20 seconds have passed, whichever is sooner. He then runs back and the next player goes. The first team to get all the players back wins.

Cup o' Water Jump—Place a stack of cups and a bucket of water at the start line and an empty bucket at the finish line. The first player dips the cup into the water and hops to the finish line. He dumps the water into the bucket and runs back. Players continue like this until

time is called. The winning team is the one with the most water in the bucket.

Pretzel Jump—Everyone does this at the same time. Players stand on their right leg and lift the left leg, cross it over the right knee, then cross their arms. On “Go!” players hop to the finish line. The first player to get to the finish line wins the challenge for their team.

Jump the Hoop Relay—Place a toy hoop at the finish line. The first player runs to their toy hoop and scissor jumps over the hoop three times then runs back. (A scissor jump is when a player jumps up and opens his legs like scissors as he's in the air.) The first team to get all the players back wins.

Tip Corner

- Have an even number of players on each team. Use leaders if you need to make the teams even.
- Adjust the distance to the finish line depending on the space you have to work with.

DAY 1

Aussie Rules

Supplies

- ☐ Soccer ball
- ☐ 8 extra large cones, buckets, or PVC pipe or pool noodles with stakes (to mark goalposts)
- ☐ Bandanas, jerseys, or wristbands to denote teams
- ☐ Cones, tape, or rope to mark boundary lines

Pre-prep

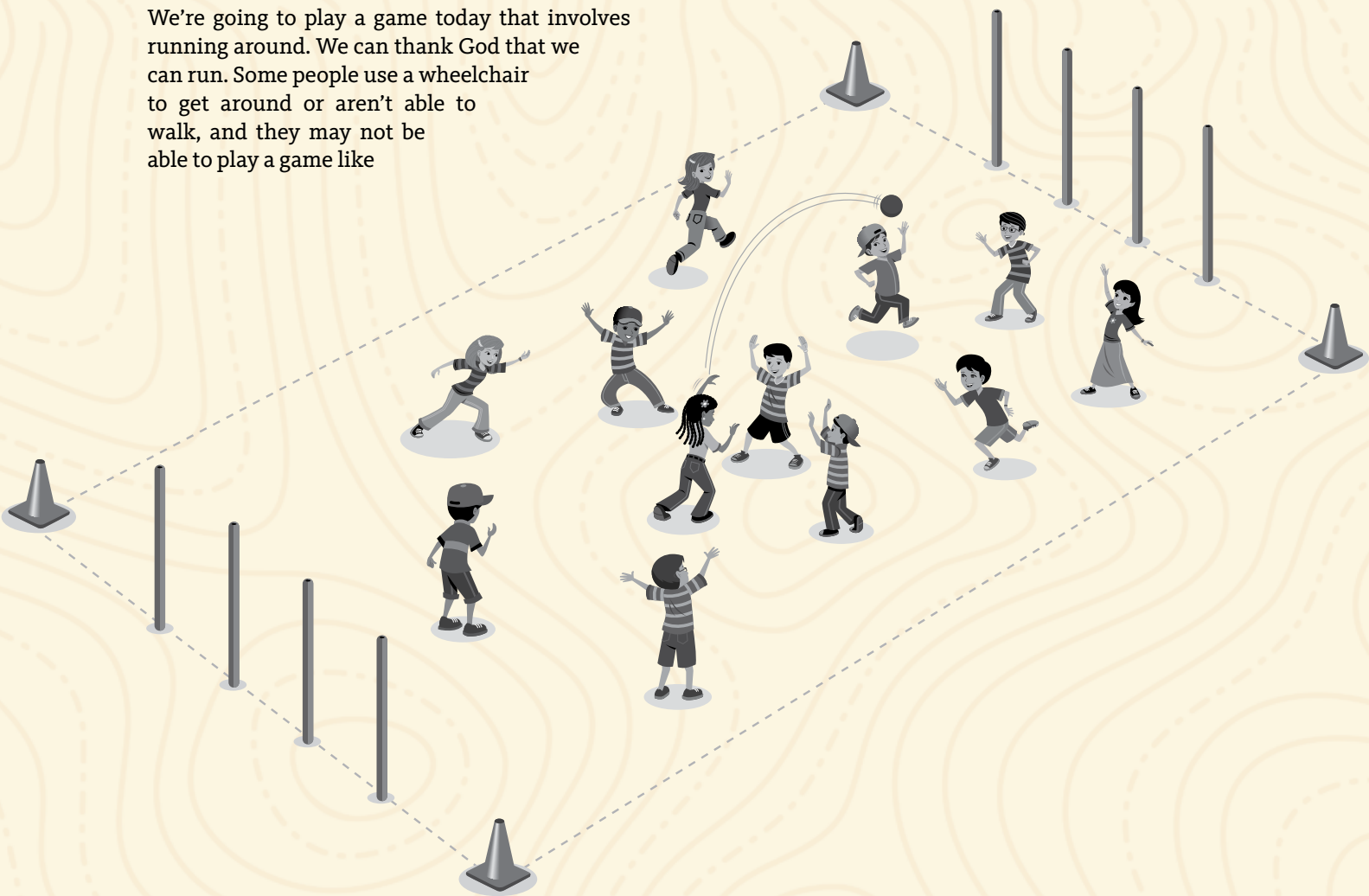
Set up the field by placing cones around the field to mark boundary lines. The playing field should be large, at least 40 yards on each side, if possible. Set up goalposts on each end using large cones, buckets (can be overturned trash cans), or PVC pipes/pool noodles staked into the ground. There should be four evenly-spaced cones, buckets, or pool noodles on each end to make the goals.

Teaching Tie-In

We're going to play a game today that involves running around. We can thank God that we can run. Some people use a wheelchair to get around or aren't able to walk, and they may not be able to play a game like

this. We can find out what games they like to play and play those with them. Whether we can run or not, **we are all of great value!** Be sensitive to those who may have different abilities. Make sure they know that each person is made in God's image with great care and purpose. We can look for similarities with others instead of focusing on the differences.

Now raise your hand if you've ever played football or been to a football game. **Pause.** In Australia, one of the most popular sports is called Australian Rules Football. Even though it's called football, it's actually a lot different than what you might be imagining. In this game, we're going to experience a little of the thrill of Australian Rules Football, also called Footy or Aussie Rules. Are you ready? Let's go!



Class Time Directions

Note: This is super popular in Australia and fun to introduce to the kids at VBS, but it will take a good leader and a decent-size group of players to pull it off.

1. Divide the players into two even teams and give one team wristbands or jerseys. Ideally, there should be at least 10 players on each team, but you can play with less. Assign each team to a goal so they know where to score.
2. The leader throws the ball into the air at the center of the field. Players compete to get possession of the ball. Once a player has the ball, he can move the ball toward his goal in three ways. (1) He can kick the ball into the air, hoping another teammate will catch the ball or that it will go through the goalposts. (2) He can underhand toss the ball to another teammate. (No overhand throwing allowed!) (3) He can take five steps with the ball and then either kick or underhand throw it.
3. To score a goal, players must get the ball through one of their team's three goals. If they get it through

the middle one, their team gets three points. If they get it through one of the two outer goals, their team gets one point.

4. The ball can be intercepted, fumbled, or blocked by the opposing team, who then tries to move the ball toward their goalpost.
5. No touching or tackling allowed! If a player gets fouled, their team gets an automatic point.
6. When a team gets a goal, the other team gets the ball.
7. Whoever has the most points at the end of the game wins.

Tip Corner

- This game isn't just a hit in Australia. The test church kids really liked it, too.
- Check YouTube for footage of Australian Football. Our version is a simplified form.
- After explaining how to play, ten minutes is a suggested length of time to actually play Aussie Rules.
- If playing with younger kids, let the ball drop without possession changing teams.

Day 1 Overview

The Beginning of Life: Made in God's Image

Lesson Focus		Bible Passages	
The Creator of the universe created <i>you</i> ! You didn't evolve from an apelike creature.		Creation of Man Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7-23	
Fair Dinkum Verse	Animal Pal	Cool Contest	
So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:27)	Jumpin' Jack the Kangaroo	"Lollies" Guessing Game	
Turtle-y Terrific Science and Crafts	Top Koala-ty Treats	Hoppin' Good Games	
Experiments: Bonzer Boomerang and Fossil Handprint Crafts: Rockin' Dot Art and Hop-a-Shot	Outback Hat Funky Monkey	Jumpin' for Jesus Aussie Rules	