

DIRECTOR

LEADER GUIDE



Director Guide

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

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

Course

DAY 1 THE TWO KINGDOMS

DAY 2 THE BELT

BIBLE PASSAGES

Creator King and Prince of Darkness
John 18:37-38; Ephesians 6:10-14

Savior King
Genesis 1-3; Gospels; Ephesians 6:10-14

VERITAS VERSES

Ephesians 6:10-11

Ephesians 6:14

ANIMAL PALS

Winifred ("Winnie") the Warhorse

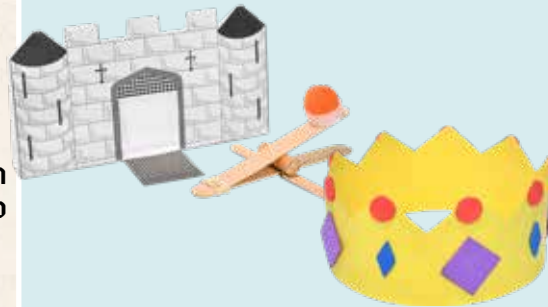
Wily the Fox

APOLOGETICS FOCUS

Absolute truth is true for all people, for all times, for all circumstances.

Build a biblical worldview to stand strong in the truth.

KIERAN'S CRAFTS IN THE COURTYARD



Castle Catapult

Kingdom Crown



Suncatcher Cross

Fox and Geese Board Game

KIERAN'S SCIENCE IN THE COURTYARD

What's Up?

Light and Dark

Newton's Cradle

Goin' in Circles

GRIFFIN'S GAMES ON THE GREEN

Capture the Flag
Jumping Jesters

Bucket Brigade
Belt Bonanza

TESSA'S TREATS IN THE TOWN



Kingdom Cookies

Be Strong Barbells



King's Cups

Fox Faces

COOL CONTESTS

Guess the Cannonballs

Team Tournaments

Overview

Day 3

THE BREASTPLATE AND SHOES

King Josiah
2 Kings 22-23; Ephesians 6:14-15

Ephesians 6:15

Grimwald the Dragon

Put on what's right (Jesus' righteousness), then do right.



Breastplate
Tin Punch

King Josiah
Puppet Theater

Force Field

Pom-pom Launcher

Dragon Dash
Royal Games of Skill



Dragon Munchies

Royal Dress-Up Day

Day 4

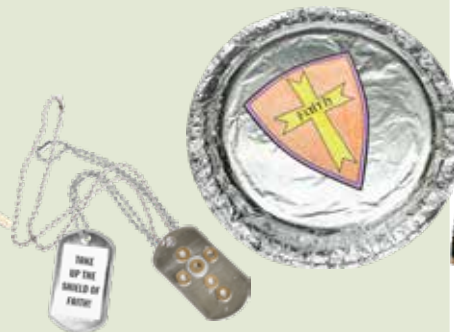
THE SHIELD AND HELMET

King Solomon
1 Kings 2-11; Ephesians 6:16-17a

Ephesians 6:16

Byron the Ironclad Beetle

Guard against false teachings and temptations.



Faith Necklace

Faith Shield

Spring Thing

Balloon Jousting

Defend the Castle
Hat Stack



Mini Pizza Shields

Cracker Shields

Design a Helmet

Day 5

THE SWORD AND PRAYER

King of Kings vs. Prince of the Air
Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:17-18a

Ephesians 6:17-18a

Skye the Peregrine Falcon

Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you.



Train Your Brain
Card Caddy

Mini Sword

Tests of Strength

Battering Ram

Knights Obstacle Course
Sword Tag



Moat Floats

Banana Swords

Mission Money Mania

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Director Guide

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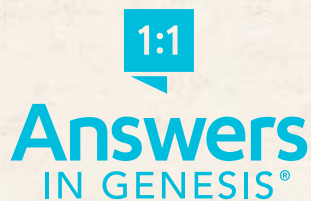
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OVERVIEW

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Hooray! It's time to charge into medieval times—a world brimming with breathtaking castles, regal kings and queens, fire-breathing dragons and brave knights, and epic battles.

Amid the pages of *Keepers of the Kingdom: Standing Strong in Today's Battle for Truth*, your knights will learn how to be part of God's kingdom and wear the armor of God. Our Royal Majesty's kingdom is under attack, and we must prepare for battle!

Day 1: The Two Kingdoms—We will discover there are just two kingdoms—the kingdom of light versus the kingdom of darkness. One is ruled by the good King, Creator God. The other is ruled by the enemy, Satan.

Day 2: The Belt—We must decide our side. Those who become citizens of God's good kingdom need to wear the armor of God daily, starting with the belt of truth that helps us have an unshakable trust in God's Word, along with helping us live as truthful people.

Day 3: The Breastplate and Shoes—The breastplate helps God's children put on Christ's righteousness and grow in right living. The shoes show us we can be at peace with God, which helps us stand firm in our Christian convictions and share Jesus with others.

Day 4: The Shield and Helmet—The shield and helmet protect us from the enemy's attacks—wrong thinking, discouragement, and deception. We will learn to discern!

Day 5: The Sword and Prayer—The sword of the Spirit is the Word of God, which helps us train our brains to know, memorize, love, and obey God's Word. And as we battle, we must pray!

Excitement and adventure await from the first minute of each day when kids meet in traveling troupes. The troupes gather at the **Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall**, a high-energy beginning that includes wacky intros, lively songs, a missions moment, and prayer.

Then they're off to rotate through five fun sites:

Truth Talks in the Keep, where God's Word is taught in hands-on ways.

Kieran's Science and Crafts in the Courtyard, where kids are bedazzled making special craft and science creations of their own.

Tessa's Treats in the Town, where kids can feast on tantalizing treats and eats.

Griffin's Games on the Green, where there are plenty of old-world games with new fun twists.

Minerva's Missions, Music, and Memory Verses at the Manor, where kids can sing songs, learn their memory verses with fun games, or go in-depth with the mission moment featuring Children's Hunger Fund and the Wild Brothers.

Finally, everyone heads back to the **Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. This is situated in the royal chambers and features some regal (and not so regal) characters who are engaged in a classic battle between good and evil.

So prepare to step back in time, embark on the journey, and partake in one royally fun time!

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 softhearted 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, and 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, we don't want 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

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

- Oversee the entire VBS (read through the *Director Guide* and other manuals for further information)
- Work with the church staff on VBS-related issues such as goals, dates, and budget
- Recruit, organize, and oversee the entire VBS staff
- Run training workshops
- Coordinate the closing program to bring everyone back together after VBS is over
- Establish effective follow-up
- Pray over all aspects of this job before, during, and after VBS

Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *Keepers of the Kingdom* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit AnswersVBS.com/keeperfaq.

Terms to Know

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

Traveling Troupes: Groups of children (individual classes) named after people of the Middle Ages, such as Jesters, Bakers, or Troubadours.

Troupe Leaders: Group leaders who lead the traveling troupes from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.

Truth Talks in the Keep: Bible and apologetics lesson time in the most fortified part of the castle—the keep.

Royal Trainers: Teachers of the Truth Talks.

Kieran's Science and Crafts in the Courtyard: Rotation site where crafts are made and science experiments are explored.

Tessa's Treats in the Town: Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

Griffin's Games on the Green: Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

Minerva's Missions, Music, and Memory Verses at the Manor: Rotation sites where kids can spend additional time learning songs, memory verses, and missions.

Veritas Verse: Daily memory verse. (*Veritas*, a good medieval word, means “truth is mighty and will prevail” and “true, trustworthy.”)

Animal Pals: Our friendly animal mascots that remind us of the main themes of each day.

Toddlers: 2–4-year-olds.

Pre-Primaries: 4–6-year-olds, or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

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

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

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

Top 20 Tips for the VBS Director

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

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

Connect with us and other Answers VBS directors through the following platforms:

[Facebook.com/answersubs](https://www.facebook.com/answersubs)

[Facebook.com/groups/answersubs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/answersubs)

[YouTube.com/answersubs](https://www.youtube.com/answersubs)

[Pinterest.com/answersubs](https://www.pinterest.com/answersubs)

[Twitter.com/answersubs](https://twitter.com/answersubs)

Terrific Trivia Tidbits

Did you know the Middle Ages lasted for about 1,000 years between approximately AD 500 and AD 1500? They were very different times than now. For instance, imagine having a falcon or squirrel as a pet or being married at age 12 or 13 (for girls) or wearing a suit of shining armor that could weigh as much as 50 pounds!

Use these fun facts (also available on the Resource USB) to start thinking about our fun theme—medieval times—as well as our spiritual theme—the armor of God. These trivia tidbits can be shared ahead of time at staff meetings with adults and teens or during the week of VBS with the kids. Use them at arrival and dismissal times or during any downtime between rotations.

PART 1: GENERAL MEDIEVAL INFORMATION

- Did you know that the word *medieval* literally means “of the Middle Ages”? This time period refers to the Middle Ages between the fall of the Roman empire and the beginning of the Renaissance period.
- Imagine a wall as thick as the width of your house! Castle walls were very thick—15 feet or more! One castle wall was even 80 feet thick!
- If you were royalty, you’d better not be in a hurry to move into your new house because it could take 10 years or more to build a castle.
- Pass the salt, please! Salt was very expensive. It was placed in the middle of a dining table with the important people (lord and lady) seated above the salt while the less important people sat below the salt.
- Castles were stinky! Castle restrooms were called a garderobe or privy chamber, usually built into the castle walls. Instead of a toilet that flushed, the garderobe had a seat or bench with a hole where waste dropped into the castle moat or a courtyard below. Pee-ew!
- Think punishments are tough nowadays? Think again! In the Middle Ages, troublemakers could be placed in the stocks (which held the feet) or pillories (which held the neck and wrists) while people threw rotten vegetables at them. They could also be strapped to a chair and paraded around town or dunked in a nearby pond.
- Here are some nifty inventions from the Middle Ages: clocks, eyeglasses, windmills, cannons, the compass, and the printing press.
- What’s the big deal about the color purple? Well, laws were passed that allowed only powerful nobles to wear purple.
- Do you like dessert? Depending on where you lived, fruit or sweets were eaten during after-dinner talks or between meal courses. Dessert as we know it wasn’t invented until later!
- LATIN WAS WRITTEN IN ALL CAPITALS AND WITH NO SPACES. Latin was the most common written language during the Middle Ages, although not many people could read at that time.
- From a young age, medieval children helped care for animals and did other household chores, but they also had time to play with toy knights, dolls, and even play dishes.
- Did you know the word *holiday* came from this time period? A special day was first called a “holy day.”
- Royalty loved to show off their wealth. They often wore velvet and silk clothing and displayed precious jewels in their necklaces, brooches, belts, and even their weapons!
- How many shirts do you own? Most working people during the Middle Ages didn’t own more than one outfit, a tunic and breeches or trousers for men and a long dress and stockings for women.
- What’s love got to do with it? The lord and lady of the castle usually married to get more land, wealth, or power—not because they loved each other.
- When medieval people had a toothache, they went to a barber surgeon who pulled teeth, cut hair, and performed minor surgery.
- Do you know what a quarrel is? In medieval times, it was a dart shot by a crossbow.
- Keep your distance! The English longbow could shoot an arrow well over 600 feet (200 meters).
- What can you get done in 60 seconds? A skilled archer could shoot 12 arrows per minute!
- No matter how you slice it, a favorite food was bread. The average person ate as much as three pounds a day! They even used hard pieces of bread, which they called trenchers, as plates!
- Spiral staircases are common in medieval castles, and they were designed to wind clockwise to make it hard for attackers coming up the stairs to draw their swords. Plus, the narrow design meant the castle’s defenders only had to face one attacker at a time.

PART 2: ARMOR/KNIGHTS INFORMATION

- Did you know knights didn’t start out as knights? Boys from royal families left home to become pages at age 7. They became squires around age 14 and were finally knighted around age 21 after years of training.
- Want to dance? Page boys learned music and dancing along with how to ride horses and hunt at the castle of another nobleman. They were also taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, just like kids today!

- Squires were assigned to serve and fight alongside a lord or knight. They would care for his armor, serve him at meals, and perform other household duties. Squires trained with wooden swords and lances and played popular court games like chess, checkers, and backgammon.
- Good knight! The eve before becoming a knight, the knight-to-be took a bath. This was thought to wash away his sins.
- Wanna buy a suit of armor? Then you'd better start saving. Customized plate armor for a knight would cost up to half a million dollars in today's money.
- That's heavy! Armor could weigh as much as 50 pounds. Sometimes knights needed help getting boosted onto their horses because of the weight.
- Armor wasn't only worn by knights. Sometimes horses and dogs wore it too.
- What was a knight's most important weapon? His sword.
- Whoa! Some swords were longer than normal swords and needed to be used with both hands because they were so heavy. These two-handed "great" swords could crush heavy armor.
- At one time, knights weren't very well-behaved, so a set of rules and customs called the Code of Chivalry was created. These were rules of good behavior, such as protecting the weak, being brave, and treating ladies with respect. All squires and knights were expected to follow them.
- Did you know they had mail in the Middle Ages? It wasn't like our mail though. It was metal rings

linked together that made up part of the armor called chain mail.

- Knights fought in pretend battles called tournaments to entertain people and practice their skills. They could also win riches and honor.
- Have you ever heard someone say, "Get off your high horse"? This means to stop acting proud, and it comes from medieval times. Since knights and royalty rode on tall horses, they'd have to "get off their high horse" to be on the same level as other people.
- Knights rode on special horses called destriers. These powerful horses were trained to bite and kick on command and even trample fallen enemies!
- If a knight brought disgrace on his lord or king, he could lose his status as a knight. If this happened, the knight would have his armor smashed, his spurs hacked off, and his coat of arms removed.
- How would you like to be called "Sir"? If you were a knight, you would be. Even today in England, people are still knighted and given the title of "Sir" if a man or "Dame" if a woman.
- If you were a prince, you might be given a hunting dog as a gift. Hunting with hounds was a popular sport for noblemen and ladies during the Middle Ages.
- Like to wrestle? Knights practiced their skills by wrestling, sword fighting, and throwing a javelin.
- Forty days was the typical length of time a knight was required to fight for his noble each year. If he fought well, he might get some land and a house (called a manor).

Surely You Jest!

ANIMAL PAL JOKES AND RIDDLES

DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL JOKES—HORSE

- What do warhorses eat on their pancakes? *Maple stirrup.*
- What type of horse stays up past midnight? *A night-mare.*
- What did the horse say to his buddy across the street?
"Hey, neigh-bor!"
- Why didn't the horse mind burping at the dinner table?
Because he had bad stable manners.
- Why did the warhorse wear socks? *Because it had colt feet.*
- What did the warhorse say when he saw a giant dragon? *"WHOA!"*

DAY 2 ANIMAL PAL JOKES—FOX

- Why did the fox get red in the face? *Because he was fur-ious!*
- What do you call a fox that loves adventure? *A tail-blazer.*
- Why do foxes make great storytellers? *Because they tell the best tails!*
- Where did the fox go when she got hurt? *The fur-staid office.*

DAY 3 ANIMAL PAL JOKES—DRAGON

- Why did the dragon win the music competition? *Because he really knew his scales.*
- What did the dragon say to the other dragon who was lifting heavy weights? *"Dude, you're a beast!"*
- Why did the dragons play rock music before the big game? *To help them get fired up.*
- What dragon likes to use a portable toilet? *The commode-o-dragon.*
- What did the dragon boss say to his employee?
"You're fired."
- What do you call a dragon that can't fly? *Draggin'.*

DAY 4 ANIMAL PAL JOKES—BEETLE

- What do you call an anxious beetle? *A jitter-bug.*
- What's a beetle's favorite band? *The Beatles.*
- What did the beetle police say about the bad beetle on the loose? *"Watch out! There's a nasty bug going around!"*
- What did the one beetle say to the other beetle? *"You really bug me."*

DAY 5 ANIMAL PAL JOKES—FALCON

- What is a falcon's favorite event to compete in? *A talon show!*
- Why didn't the falcon study for his test? *Because he likes to wing it.*
- What do you call falcons born in the 90s? *Millennial falcons.*
- What do you call a falcon who can juggle? *Talon-ted.*

MISCELLANEOUS JOKES AND RIDDLES

- What was the medieval king's favorite cheese?
Moatzarella.
- What do you call a medieval lamp? *A knight light.*
- What was the peasant's favorite recreational activity? *Serfing.*
- Why was the medieval queen crying on a Monday?
Because it was another reigny day.
- Why do some historians call medieval times the Dark Ages? *Because there were so many knights.*
- What was the king's favorite device? *The remoat control.*
- What's a medieval queen's favorite fast-food restaurant?
White Castle.
- Why was the medieval man exhausted? *Because he worked the knight shift.*
- Who was the roundest knight at King Arthur's table? *Sir Cumference.*
- Why did the queen go to the dentist? *To get her teeth crowned.*

KNOCK KNOCK JOKES

- Knock knock. *Who's there?*
Olive. *Olive who?*
Olive learning about medieval times. Do you?
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*
Figs. *Figs who?*
Figs the drawbridge, please, it's broken.
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*
Dozen. *Dozen who?*
Dozen anyone want to go to the jousting tournament?
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*
Robin. *Robin who?*
Robin you! Give me all your silver coins!
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*
Dishes. *Dishes who?*
Dishes a nice castle!

TONGUE TWISTERS

- A dozen dragons dance by daylight.
- Five falcons' feathers flutter.
- Nice knights never nag neighbors.

Medieval Times A to Z

A

acrobat, apprentice,
archer, armor, arrow

B

bailey, banner,
banquet, bard, baron,
belt, blacksmith, bow,
bravery, breastplate

C

castle, catapult,
cathedral, ceremony,
chainmail, chivalry,
coat-of-arms, code of honor,
count, countess, courage,
courtyard, crossbow,
crossroad, crown

D

damsel, deer hunt,
defender, dragon,
drawbridge, duchess,
duke, dungeon

E

earl, embroidery,
empire, estate

F

fair, falcon, family crest,
feast, festivity, forest,
fortress, friar

G

gatehouse, gauntlet,
goblet, great hall, guard,
guild

H

hawk, helm, helmet,
herald, horse, hunting,
huzzah

I

inherit, invader

J

javelin, jester, jewel,
journey, jousting, juggler

K

keep, king, kingdom,
knight

L

lady-in-waiting, lance,
longbow, lords, loyalty

M

maiden, manor,
marionette, medieval,
merchant, merriment,
Middle Ages, minstrel,
moat, mutton

N

noble

O

opponent

P

page, peacock,
peasant, prince, princess,
portcullis, proclamation,
puppeteer

Q

queen, quest, quintain,
quiver

R

relic, roasted pig,
round table, royalty

S

serf, servant, shield,
shoes, siege, sir, squire,
stable, stained glass,
steward, stockade,
storyteller, sword

T

tapestry, target, tart,
throne, torch, tournament,
tower, town crier, training,
trebuchet, trencher,
troubadour, troupe,
trumpet, turkey

U

undermine

V

valor, vassal, venison,
victory, village, virtue,
visor

W

wall walk, watchman,
weaponry, weaving, wild
boar

XYZ

Your Majesty,
zither

Ye Olde English

A	Attend the comely lass—Serve the pretty girl	L	League—The distance a person or horse can walk in one hour
B	Bellytimber—Food	m	Mayhap—Maybe
C	Cake—Loaf of bread	n	Nay—No
D	Deor—Wild animal	O	Oft—Often
E	Eadig—Happy, prosperous	P	Prithee—Please Pray, hear me—Listen to me Privee—Bathroom
F	Fare thee well; I bid thee farewell—Good-bye Fine victuals—Good food	Q	Quest—An adventurous journey
G	Good morrow—Good morning Gramercy—Thank you	R	Rampart—defensive earth or stone wall around a castle
H	Hail—Hello Huzzah—Hoorah! Hither and yon—here and there How fare ye?—How are you? How met?—How are you? He had goods aplenty—He was wealthy	S	Sikerly—Certainly
I	I cry your mercy—I beg your pardon	T	Tarry and feast—Stay and eat
J	Jolly us now—Cheer us up	U	Undercroft—cellar or basement
K	Kiss the hare's foot—to miss dinner and be left with scraps	U	Verray—True
		W	Well met—Nice to see you
		XYZ	Yea—Yes

Top 20 Tips When Working with Children

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

1. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day, and always be ready with smiles, giggles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure all staff are aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.)
2. Learn names. It makes children feel important and loved to be called by their name. Make sure visible name tags are always on each child.
3. Keep it moving. Children have short attention spans.
4. Use active learning. The more children can actively be involved in the learning process, the more they will retain.
5. Be all there! Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care during VBS. Listen to them and care for them.
6. Eliminate downtime. Find activities to do when you have a few free minutes so all time is being used in a fun and productive way. Practice memory verses, share Terrific Trivia Tidbits and jokes (Surely You Jest!), play impromptu review games, or ask fun conversation starters (page 78).
7. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions on page 54. Ensure there are always at least two unrelated adults with the children at all times.
8. Be thematic. Get the kids enthused and excited about participating in the daily contests. Children love costumes, fun cheers, songs, and anything that goes with the theme, so dress to reflect medieval times.
9. Walk worthy. Be an example in both word and deed. Children need to see authentic Christianity, so make sure you are walking the walk and not just talking the talk.
10. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes act up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
11. Be aware of age-level characteristics. With younger children, activities need to be hands-on, concrete, short, and simple. Older children love to talk and are processing and questioning information. Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you.
12. Challenge them. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to learn their memory verses and song lyrics. At the same time, encourage in them a true love for the Lord and his Word.
13. Pray. Before, during, and after VBS, be a faithful prayer warrior for the children in your care.
14. Be organized. Read through all training information, ask questions, and faithfully prepare any materials for which you are responsible.
15. Be a team player. Children do not need to hear negative words from their leaders. If you are frustrated or upset, take it to the Lord, but do not complain or get angry in front of the children.
16. Remember to take bathroom breaks. The younger the children, the more important this is!
17. Maintain order. Children like order! Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
18. Build team spirit. Work as a team rather than allowing cliques to develop. Everyone should be an important member of the team.
19. Use guided conversation. Be alert and ready to turn conversations to spiritual matters. Build upon what the children are learning throughout the VBS day.
20. Be prepared to lead a child to Christ. Attend the Gospel Presentation Workshop to be equipped should God give you the awesome opportunity to talk to a child about Christ.

Age-Level Characteristics

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

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

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

Common Characteristics

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

Toddlers (2–4 years old)

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

- Let toddlers be helpers. Give them simple one-step jobs to do and have them help pick up things and straighten the room at the end of the lesson. Let them know they've done a good job.

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

SPIRITUAL/MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

Pre-Primaries (4–6 years old)

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

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 after active play.

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

SPIRITUAL/MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

Primaries (6–9 years old)

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

- Use games to teach! Primaries love any kind of games, whether active or learning-type games.
- Help them learn to take turns and to be good winners and good losers! Both winning and losing well are important in God's sight.
- Use boy versus girl competitions to get them revved up! As long as you keep it light and fun, they will enjoy these times.

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls

and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl and boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the team and want adult and teacher approval.

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

SPIRITUAL/MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete rather than abstract or symbolic thinkers. They're learning to read. They need active learning. Their attention span is growing. They understand the consequences of their actions. They

can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. Becoming a child of God, or being in God's family, is a more concrete way to express the same concept, as they will understand what it means to be in a family.
- Although their attention spans are growing, it's still good to vary activities and involve Primaries with movement as much as possible.

- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking children to read out loud. Try asking for volunteers.
- Small print can be a challenge, so use larger print when possible.
- Encourage memorization.
- Use visuals.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully. Explain Bible words and concepts even if you think they are widely understood.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Juniors (9–12 years old)

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Juniors can't wait to grow up. They look up to teenagers and young adults. They like challenges and may develop interests and hobbies, although they're self-conscious about their abilities and failures. They're becoming more independent and can handle responsibilities. They enjoy close friendships and small group discussion with peers. They're greatly influenced by their friends and want to be accepted. They look to friends for information and advice on issues. They like humor and jokes and most understand sarcasm. As they head into puberty, they may experience mood swings.

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

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

SPIRITUAL/MENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

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

TAKEAWAYS FOR US

- Ask thought-provoking spiritual questions. They are thinking and like to talk. Be there for them as a safe person to bounce thoughts and ideas off of.
- Listen well and pray with them.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking children to read out loud unless they volunteer or you know they can read well.
- Allow them to act out lessons. Most Juniors enjoy this active involvement.
- Give them opportunities to be involved in missions or service projects.
- Challenge them to ask God to help them grow in their love for him and his Word. Help them set up Bible reading plans and encourage them to memorize passages of Scripture.

- Make sure to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. They can spot inconsistencies, so it's important to walk worthy.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Whether you are a troupe leader, a classroom teacher, or an assistant, be prepared to confidently lead them using some strategies that follow.

ATTENTION GETTERS

Call and Response—The teacher teaches the kids that when she says something, they reply back with something else. Practice the following ideas so they know your expectations for responding to them.

- » **Teacher:** Huzzah!
Kids: Hooray!
- » **Teacher:** Hooray!
Kids: Huzzah!
- » **Teacher:** Jeepers, creepers!
Kids: We are the keepers!
- » **Teacher:** Good morning!
Kids: Good “knight”!
- » **Teacher:** Turkey leg, turkey leg
Kids: Can I get a roasted egg?
- » **Teacher:** Keepers (clap, clap)
Kids: Of the Kingdom (clap, clap)

Rhythm Claps—The teacher claps a little rhythm and the kids try to clap the exact rhythm back. Vary the clapping patterns.

Countdown—Hold up five fingers and start to count down from five to one. By the count of one, they need to be completely quiet.

Soft Talk—Start talking about something important very softly, or in a whisper. Kids will often get quiet to hear what you are saying. Or, share a command in a soft voice such as, “Anyone who hears me clap once.” Continue to share other commands.

Flash the Lights—This is a good signal to listen up.

LINING UP AND WALKING THROUGH THE BUILDING

If You . . .—Say different categories for lining up in fun ways, such as the following:

- » “If you are wearing red, line up. Now, if you’re wearing blue, line up.”
- » “If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up.”
- » “If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up.”
- » “If your first name starts with A–L, line up. Now, if your first name starts with M–Z, line up.”
- » “If you are quiet, line up.”

Let’s Be . . .—When you are leaving a room, encourage good behavior in the hallway by making a game out of it. This works well with younger kids.

» “Let’s be mice and walk as quietly as we can.”

» “Let’s be robots. No talking—just stiff movements.”

PROACTIVE TIPS

Be Prepared—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. If you have things well organized and have thought through your day so there isn’t downtime, it really helps. Keep things moving! This takes more time on your part but is very worth it.

Active Participation—Keeping kids actively engaged in the lesson is perhaps the best thing you can do to keep the class from getting rowdy. The lessons are written to be creative, fun, and full of active participation. Play the games, act out the Bible accounts, and do the other ideas listed. Occupy kids’ minds and attention with good stuff!

Helpers—Involve the kids. Let them be helpers. Some kids just want to feel wanted, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task like filling out the attendance roster as kids come in to VBS, collecting name tags, carrying crafts, helping others learn memory verses, passing out papers, or holding a poster for the teacher. Sometimes a simple task can keep them busy and make them feel important!

Pray—Some kids may never have had anyone pray for them. Pray not only about behavior situations but also about their eternal souls.

Notice the Good—Sometimes a poor behavior is an attention-seeking device, so be proactive and give attention to that child so she doesn’t feel the need to act out negatively. Negative behaviors can be a cry for love and attention.

Use Humor—Kids of all ages love to laugh! Have fun together. If you see a situation is getting tense or a child is getting upset for some reason, try thinking of a way to lighten the mood with humor.

Distraction—When young kids are dropped off or start to cry, distracting them is a good technique to try. Ask them to tell you about something on their clothes (“Oh, what’s that on your T-shirt?”), get them talking about some of their favorites, or show them an intriguing toy or puppet.

Keep Them Busy—If there is any downtime, fill it with something productive! This could occur while waiting for the next rotation or the assembly to begin, if craft time ends a few minutes early, etc. Use the time to practice team cheers, ask questions, or go over memory verses in fun ways (make up motions, make them into a rap, etc.). You may also want to play a quick game, like one of the following.

- » **Stone Face**—Have a competition to see which child can hold a frown for the longest without cracking a smile.

- » **I Spy**—Look for medieval things to spy out.
- » **Simon Says**—Simon can say Bible-themed things, like read your Bible (hands in front of you making a book), pray (praying hands), tell others (cup hands around mouth), go to church (make a church with a steeple out of your interlocked hands), etc.
- » **Quiet Mouse**—Have a competition to see who is the quietest in line.
- » **Follow the Leader**—Play the normal version or a medieval version. A medieval version uses medieval animals and activities, like the following:
 - Soar like a peregrine falcon.
 - Throw a javelin.
 - Gallop like a warhorse.
 - Crawl like an ironclad beetle.
 - Fly like a dragon.
 - Trot like a fox.
 - Wave like a queen.
 - Walk like a knight in armor.

CALMING ROWDINESS

Don't Yell—Kids may respond at first if someone yells, but they eventually dismiss it. Try some of these other ideas instead.

Separate Kids—Separate kids who misbehave around each other, but also encourage problem-solving when possible. “What are some things we could do to help you and ___ get along?”

Give Choices—Avoid power struggles by giving choices. If a child is resistant to doing something you've asked of her, try your command another way. “You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen to the teacher or sit with ___ (leader's name) at the back of the room.”

Praise in Public, Correct in Private—If someone does need correction, be careful not to embarrass him in front of his peers. If you need to talk to a child about a misbehavior, pull him aside at a time when the rest of the group is distracted. Kids will be less defensive if they don't feel they have to “save face” in front of their peers, and if they feel you really care and aren't just coming down on them.

Know Church Policies—Know your church's policy for severe behavior issues. Do you take the child to your VBS director? Do you alert the child's parents? Do you involve other staff members? Be prepared.

What's on the Resource USB?

All resources listed on this page are on the Resource USB that comes with the purchase of a kit and can also be downloaded from AnswersVBS.com. They are also included in the Digital Pro Library, which is available to purchase at myAnswers.com. You may upload the contents of the Resource USB to a file-sharing site for your organization only. You may also email the resources to your team as necessary. Or each leader can access the above link to download the resources necessary for their rotation.

Assembly Resources

This folder contains what is referenced in the *Assembly Guide*, including the presentation images and videos for the Creature Features, contests, and assembly scripts. For Children's Hunger Fund materials, see **Mission Moment_Children's Hunger Fund** folder. For materials referenced in the drama, see the **Assembly_Drama** folder.

Assembly_Drama

This is the folder that will be used by your drama director. It features the sound effects, scripts, and prop lists needed to perform the drama. It also includes **a shorter script option**.

Bible Lessons

These folders are used by your Truth Talks in the Keep (Bible lesson) teachers.

The simple songs referenced in the teacher guides for younger children have their own folder. They can be uploaded onto an MP3 player (on a phone, tablet, or other device) to be played in the classroom. These songs are also available to purchase on a CD (12-0-141) or as a download through our online store.

The patterns and coloring sheets referenced throughout the teacher guides are found in their respective age folders, along with a rich text (RTF) document of each teacher guide.

Presentation images of the memory verses, animal pals, and illustration posters are found in the **Presentation Images** folders.

Clip Art

A variety of clip art pertaining to the theme is found in this folder in both color and black-and-white versions.

The clip art is provided in three formats. Each format has a specific type of use. **PDF** files are vector files, which have transparent backgrounds and are scalable for shirt printing or to make large signs or banners. **PNG** files are a general image format that contain transparent backgrounds. They

can be used for any print or web use but cannot be scaled up without resolution issues. **SVG** files are the simple vector formats required for Cricut machines.

Coloring Pages

Craft and Science Patterns

Your science and crafts leaders will use this folder. PDFs of the patterns referenced throughout the science and crafts book are included in this folder.

Director Folders

These folders are for the VBS director and feature the forms listed throughout the *Director Guide*.

The **Royal Fun Faire** folder has what you need to host the carnival mentioned on page 69.

The **Helps and Forms** folder features editable forms mentioned throughout this guide.

Registration forms are also available. You may also want to register children online through the myAnswers.com portal.

Logos

We have provided a variety of logo options for you to use in promoting your *Keepers of the Kingdom* VBS program. You have permission to use these logos in any way that pertains to your VBS. You will also find images to use on various social media platforms in order to advertise your VBS.

Logos are provided in three formats. Each format has a specific type of use. **PDF** files are vector files, which have transparent backgrounds and are scalable for shirt printing or to make large signs or banners. **PNG** files are a general image format that contain transparent backgrounds. They can be used for any print or web use but cannot be scaled up without resolution issues. **SVG** files are the simple vector formats required for Cricut machines.

Mission Moment

One folder features the mission moment with Children's Hunger Fund, and the other folder features the Wild Brothers mission videos. Determine when you would like to show these videos—either during the opening assembly or during one of your rotations. Check the *Assembly Guide* and the *Minerva's Missions, Music, and Memory Verses Guide* (there is a mission rotation featured here) for more information. The CHF folder features presentation images, printable activities, as well as a reply form for whatever money is collected.



Presentation Images

These folders feature slides of the animal pals, Bible lesson illustrations, blank backgrounds, memory verses (in KJV and ESV), course overviews, and trivia (including daily jokes). We have also included PDFs in case you would like to print some of the files.

The **All** folder contains a PowerPoint file that contains all the images. Use this file to manipulate the images for your specific use by moving them around, deleting what you don't need, and adding in any videos. We aren't able to include videos in the file because it becomes too large for the USB.



Short Animations

Animations used in our videos can be found here for inclusion in your media.



Snack Patterns

Your snack director will need to have access to the PDF in this folder. You may want to print this file and give it to your snack leader for use as necessary.




Supply Lists

The supply lists for each leader guide are included in this folder, as well as in the Procedure section of this guide. They are included as RTF documents so you can modify them according to which activities you choose for your VBS.

Music USB Contents

All music resources (hand-motion videos, song lyric videos, lyrics, and presentation images) for both contemporary and traditional songs are found on the Music USB that comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. Additional Music USBs can also be purchased. These resources are also available with the purchase of Digital Pro at myAnswers.com.



Notes

1. Definition of a function
 A function f from a set A to a set B is a rule that assigns to each element x in A exactly one element y in B . We write $y = f(x)$.
 Example: $f(x) = x^2$ is a function from \mathbb{R} to \mathbb{R} .
 Not a function: $f(x) = \pm x$ (fails the vertical line test).
 Domain: $\text{Dom}(f) = A$.
 Codomain: $\text{Cod}(f) = B$.
 Image: $\text{Im}(f) = \{y \in B \mid \exists x \in A, y = f(x)\}$.
 Pre-image: $f^{-1}(y) = \{x \in A \mid f(x) = y\}$.
 Composition: $(f \circ g)(x) = f(g(x))$.
 Inverse function: f^{-1} exists iff f is bijective.

PRIORITIES

Put on the Spiritual Armor

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

To ensure that your VBS doesn't take a detour down the wrong path, work on deepening your relationship with the Lord before, during, and after VBS. As director, your commitment to continual growth in your personal relationship with the Lord is vital. This comes as you depend upon the Lord and eagerly follow after him. Daily prayer and Bible study provide fuel for your growth. The Lord tells us that "whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Encourage your staff to regularly spend time fellowshiping with the Lord through prayer and reading his Word.

Take seriously the responsibility of finding a prayer coordinator to head up a VBS prayer ministry. Copy the following page for your prayer coordinator and encourage him to put together a combination of ideas that suits your situation.

Devotions for each VBS day have also been provided. You may want to read through these together or encourage your staff to read them on their own. Copies of the [devotions](#) can also be found on the Digital Resources, in the *Helper Handbook* (item 12-0-007), and in the teacher guides for each age group.



Praying for Your VBS

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

Top 10 Tips for a VBS Prayer Ministry

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

1. Find prayer warriors. Enlist people who are willing to pray consistently for VBS. Send each of them a list of VBS prayer requests for which they can regularly be praying. See the [Prayer Calendar Sample](#) for ideas.
2. Set up an email prayer loop. Use your church’s email prayer loop—or create your own—to pass along VBS prayer requests.
3. Gather your VBS crew to pray. Pray at meetings and encourage them to pray on their own. Write all VBS crew names on slips of paper and have each draw a name of a fellow crew member to pray for and with.
4. Hold a weekly prayer meeting devoted to VBS. Pray over that week’s praises and prayer requests.
5. Encourage your troupe leaders to pray through the names on their class lists before, during, and after VBS.
6. Hold a dedication service. Encourage the pastoral staff to include a time of prayer during the church service the Sunday before VBS.
7. Print maps and prayer request sheets and encourage your church family to walk the premises and pray over every area of the building and grounds.
8. Pass out “Praying for You” post-cards (item 12-0-028) to willing and trustworthy church members with instructions to write a quick note to a child, letting him know someone is praying for him. Collect the post-cards the week before VBS begins and have church staff address and mail them.
9. People who may not be able to make it to VBS can help by praying during the VBS hours from work, home, or wherever they are.
10. When VBS is over, continue to encourage your church family to pray for the children who came to VBS. Ask God to continue to work in their hearts and minds.



Staff Devotions

Devotion 1: The Two Kingdoms

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Psalm 51:6

When Pilate questioned Jesus about the charges the Jews were leveling at him, Jesus replied, “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

Can you hear the cynicism and sarcasm in Pilate’s voice as he asks dismissively, “What is truth?” and hands over Jesus to the Jews for crucifixion (John 18:37–38)?

Throughout the ages, people have echoed Pilate’s question, in sincerity as well as skepticism. In fact, the battle over truth is as ancient as the original sin. Take a look at the lies Satan told himself and those who rebelled with him against their Creator:

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star,
son of Dawn!

How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid
the nations low!

You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven;
above the stars of God I will set my throne on high;

I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches
of the north;

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will
make myself like the Most High**” (Isaiah 14:12–14,
emphasis added).

Satan knew the truth—that there is none in heaven like the Creator God—but he exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and in the process became the father of lies (John 8:44). His first temptation of Adam and Eve was a continuation on the theme. He introduced error into God’s words (“Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” Genesis 3:1) and then blatantly lied about what God had said (“You will not surely die,” Genesis 3:4).

For the past six thousand years, we’ve been floundering, trying to find our own way and denying that truth comes from God and his infallible Word. Thankfully, God has called his children into his kingdom through the sacrifice of his Son. In his infinite grace, God has given us the armor we need to stand strong in this battle for truth and boldly serve our Creator.

This week as we examine the pieces of armor God has provided, ask yourself this: Where am I in the battle? Am I asking “what is truth?” along with Pilate, or do I know the difference between truth and error based on God’s Word?

“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue is
but for a moment” (Proverbs 12:19).

Devotion 2: The Belt

The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. Psalm 119:160

There are no absolutes. Ever heard that one before? Of course, the irony with that statement is that it’s an absolute statement. Those who say that actually mean, “I choose not to accept the absolute truth claims you are making.”

So, can we know truth? Is there any basis on which we can make absolute moral statements (e.g., “Homosexual behavior is sinful; Jesus is the only way to heaven; there are only two genders”)?

The only basis for determining truth from error, and right from wrong, comes from embracing the one who is truth. Jesus is “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). And Jesus reiterates that God is the source of truth when he claimed, “I am the way, and **the truth**, and the life” (John 14:6, emphasis added).

When we know Jesus, we know truth. When we believe in Jesus, we believe in truth. Because he is the Creator, he is

the one who sets the rules for his creation to follow. And he has given us those rules in his Word. There is no room for wavering because he has confirmed that we can trust his Word to be truth (John 17:17).

Apart from the standard given in the Bible, there is no way to determine what truth is—everything becomes a matter of personal opinion. And who determines which opinion is correct?

Examine your heart today. As you teach the children the **truth** that the Savior King Jesus came to earth as a baby, died on the cross to pay for our sins, and rose from the dead, showing that God had accepted his payment, are you harboring doubts about God or his Word? Can you say with the psalmist, “I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I set your rules before me” (Psalm 119:30)? Have you put on the belt of truth?