

# APPRENTICES' ASSEMBLY

IN THE GREAT HALL



# ASSEMBLY GUIDE

## Course Overview

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<b>Title/Bible Content</b>	The Two Kingdoms	The Belt	The Breastplate and Shoes	The Shield and Helmet	The Sword and Prayer
<b>Bible Passages</b>	Creator King and Prince of Darkness John 18:37–38; Ephesians 6:10–14	Savior King Genesis 1–3; Gospels; Ephesians 6:10–14	King Josiah 2 Kings 22–23; Ephesians 6:14–15	King Solomon 1 Kings 2–11; Ephesians 6:16–17a	King of Kings vs. Prince of the Air Matthew 4:1–11; Ephesians 6:17–18a
<b>Lesson Focus</b>	We're in a battle between two kingdoms.	Each child of the King needs to fasten on the belt of truth.	Put on the breastplate of righteousness and the shoes of peace.	Take the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation.	Take the sword of the Spirit and pray.
<b>Apologetics Content</b>	Absolute truth is true for <i>all</i> people, for <i>all</i> times, for <i>all</i> circumstances.	Build a biblical worldview to stand strong in the truth.	Put on what's right (Jesus' righteousness) then do right.	Guard against false teachings and temptations.	Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is in you.
<b>Veritas Verses</b>	Ephesians 6:10–11	Ephesians 6:14	Ephesians 6:15	Ephesians 6:16	Ephesians 6:17–18a
<b>Rhyme Time</b>	Of two, only one is true!	Decide your side!	Do right in God's sight!	Learn to discern!	Train your brain!
<b>Animal Pals</b>	Winifred ("Winnie") the Warhorse	Wily the Fox	Grimwald the Dragon	Byron the Ironclad Beetle	Skye the Peregrine Falcon
<b>Kieran's Crafts in the Courtyard</b>	Castle Catapult Kingdom Crown Juggling Balls	Suncatcher Cross Fox and Geese Board Game	Breastplate Tin Punch King Josiah Puppet Theater Dragon Sock Puppet	Faith Shield or Necklace Wordless Book	Train Your Brain Card Caddy Mini Sword
<b>Kieran's Science in the Courtyard</b>	What's Up? Light and Dark	Newton's Cradle Goin' in Circles	Force Field Pom-Pom Launcher	Spring Thing Balloon Jousting	Tests of Strength Battering Ram
<b>Griffin's Games on the Green</b>	Capture the Flag Jumping Jesters	Bucket Brigade Belt Bonanza	Dragon Dash Royal Games of Skill	Defend the Castle Hat Stack	Knights' Obstacle Course Sword Tag
<b>Tessa's Treats in the Town</b>	Kingdom Cookies Be Strong Barbells	King's Cups Fox Faces	Dragon Munchies (Versions 1 & 2)	Mini Pizza Shields Cracker Shields	Moat Floats Banana Swords
<b>Cool Contests</b>	Guess the Cannonballs	Team Tournaments	Royal Dress-Up Day	Design a Helmet	Mission Money Mania



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### Assembly Guide

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Printed in China.

# Handy Helps

## Huzzah!

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 royal 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

Your role as music coordinator, mission coordinator, and/or drama director is outlined in the following pages. This is *your* guide. Read it carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. Then get ready! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives!

## Music Coordinator

- Learn all music and motions for the songs (see the *Minstrel's Music* DVD for help).
- Help plan and run the daily assemblies, including standing up front and enthusiastically leading the music.
- Train others to learn songs and motions so they can also help lead music.
- Help plan and run the Festive Finale closing program.

## Mission Coordinator

- Choose a mission project or projects for all ages.

- Arrange all details related to presenting the mission project during VBS week.
- Act as the presenter of the mission information the week of VBS.
- Deliver the mission collection to the appropriate parties after VBS is over.

## Drama Director

- Choose actors for the drama and prepare folders for each with copies of the scripts.
- Organize a rehearsal schedule.
- Run the drama practices and oversee all aspects of the production (lighting, sound, costumes, props, etc.).
- Provide direction for the design of the set.
- Oversee the production of the dramas during the week of VBS.
- Help plan and run the closing program.

# 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](http://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.

# Assemblies

## Daily Assemblies

One of the most exciting parts of *Keepers of the Kingdom* is the opening and closing assembly time. Each day begins and ends with an assembly of all classes and includes an

array of activities. (See below.) The assemblies can be led by the VBS director, children's pastor, music coordinator, drama director, a volunteer, or a combination of these.

### Assembly Activities

#### Welcome

Welcoming everyone to VBS is the first thing we do at *Keepers of the Kingdom*. And to start us off each day, we have a fun intro.

#### Minstrel's Music

Kids love to sing, and kids love song motions. That's why we do both at *Keepers of the Kingdom*. *Minstrel's Music* features fun songs that reinforce the spiritual theme. See the Music Leader USB that is included with a Super Starter Kit for audio files (stereo, split-track, instrumental-only versions of each song), hand motion videos, lyric videos, presentation images, and the song lyrics. Both styles of music (contemporary and traditional) are included on the Music USB, as well as all the memory verse music. Sheet music and student CDs are also available.

#### Mission Moment

During the opening assembly, the VBS mission project is highlighted. Collecting money for Forged in Hope in partnership with Children's Hunger Fund allows the children to contribute to the physical needs of children around the world, giving them an opportunity to hear the gospel. See the Mission Moment section for more information and the Digital Resources for videos and printable handouts.

An expanded version of this section is also featured in the missions, music, and memory verse guide. Some churches may want to have a separate mission time and only announce the total collected during the assembly time. Be sure to check with your director to find out when this will be done.

#### Creature Feature

During the closing assembly (or opening assembly if that works better for you), kids learn about each day's animal pal. See the Creature Feature section for information.

#### Drama

Because each day's drama segment is part of a continuing week-long story, it is one of the most anticipated events of VBS. The dramas are presented in the closing assembly each day. For information about the dramas, including set design and construction and each day's script, see the Drama section.

As an alternative, **shorter skits** for each day using fewer people are also offered on the Resource USB. A separate Drama USB can also be purchased and played.

#### Cool Contests

Not only do kids love to sing, but they also love a contest. That's why *Keepers of the Kingdom* has contests each day to keep excitement running high. Contest results are presented daily during the closing assembly. See the Cool Contests section for more information.

#### Announcements

Announcements can be made toward the end of each opening and closing assembly and should include information about the next day's contests and a reminder to bring mission money.

## Prayer

Ask for God's protection and blessing on your day during the opening assembly. At the end of the closing assembly, thank God for a good day at VBS.

## Takeaway Time

Just before everyone is dismissed to go home, take a minute to share a big thought to leave with.

## Tip Corner

- Use class signs to identify where each class should sit. Sign posts can be made and reused each year.
- Play VBS music before and after each assembly to enhance the atmosphere.
- In preparation for VBS, have some (or all) of your leaders learn the song motions.
- To add variety, wear something thematic.



## Daily Assembly Scripts

For your assembly leader, a detailed program for each assembly, including all scripted segments, is provided beginning on page 13. These include the welcomes, Mission Moments, songs, and Creature Features. These scripts are also available on the Digital Resources.

## Order of Program Forms

So that your assembly leader and production crew are on the same page, blank, reproducible "Order of Program" forms are provided for the opening and closing assemblies on the Digital Resources. Before each assembly, insert the songs of your choice and your notes. Then photocopy the completed form and distribute to your production crew.

# Minstrel's Music

Kids love to sing, and kids love song motions. That's why we do both at VBS. *Minstrel's Music* features fun songs that reinforce the spiritual theme. We have provided a variety of songs to go along with each day's teaching; however, feel free to choose the songs that work best for your children. You can use all of the songs throughout the week or just choose a few to repeat every day so the kids can learn them. You may also want to begin teaching the songs to your children a few weeks before VBS begins. Use your

Sunday school, children's church, or Wednesday evening programs to familiarize them with the VBS music. Hand out CDs of the music or encourage parents to download the audio files from [AnswersBookstore.com](http://AnswersBookstore.com) and play them for the children in the car and at home.

Note: Original purchasers of these music products are given limited permission to copy up to 25% of the total number of copies needed. Visit [AnswersBookstore.com](http://AnswersBookstore.com) for more licensing options.

## Music Leader USB

Included with each Super Starter Kit is a Music Leader USB, which provides all components of both contemporary and traditional music. The Music USB is also available for purchase separately (12-0-057). The Music USB contains files of hand motion videos and song lyric videos, as well as MP3s of the music in stereo, split, and instrumental versions. Presentation images and printable song lyrics are also included.

### CONTEMPORARY SONGS

Theme Song: "Keepers of the Kingdom" (2:07)

Day 1 Song: "Way, Truth, Life" (2:33)

Day 2 Song: "Hold on to the Truth" (2:41)

Day 3 Song: "Go, Go, Go" (2:36)

Day 4 Song: "Shield of Faith" (1:36)

Day 5 Song: "Take up Your Sword" (2:09)

Any Day Song: "Faith Is the Victory" (2:06)

### TRADITIONAL SONGS

Theme Song: "Keepers of the Kingdom" (1:30)

Day 1 Song: "The Kingdom on the Right" (1:02)

Day 2 Song: "My Armor" (1:30)

Day 3 Song: "Be My King" (1:17)

Day 4 Song: "Flaming Arrows and Fiery Darts" (1:38)

Day 5 Song: "The Army of the Lord" (1:21)

Any Day Song: "Faith Is the Victory" (1:51)

## Additional Music Aids

### SHEET MUSIC

The Super Starter Kit includes a sheet music book with both contemporary and traditional songs. This book includes the lyrics and the accompaniment for each song. This book can also be purchased separately (12-0-065).

### LYRICS

Printable lyrics for each song are available on the Music USB.

### STUDENT CDs

Audio CDs of the full-track songs are sold in packs of 10. These can be distributed to the children and their parents

before or during VBS to help with learning the songs. They make great rewards and souvenirs of VBS, as well. The memory verse and the theme songs are together on one student CD. (Contemporary—12-0-061; Traditional—12-0-062)

### DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

Lead sheets, chord charts, and audio files of each contemporary music song are available to purchase and download from [AnswersBookstore.com](http://AnswersBookstore.com). Hand motion videos and song lyric videos are also available to purchase and download. You can also purchase licenses for distributing videos or audio files to your children.

## Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! We offer fun songs for each of the memory verses from *Keepers of the Kingdom*.

The contemporary memory verse songs are produced by Seeds Family Worship and the traditional memory verse songs are produced by Majesty Music. Both are available on the Music USB, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. Songs produced by Seeds Family Worship are:

"Armor of God"

"Be Strong" (Ephesians 6:10–11)

"Stand Firm" (Ephesians 6:12–13)

"Shoes" (Ephesians 6:14–15)

"Shield" (Ephesians 6:16)

"Helmets and Swords" (Ephesians 6:17–18)



# Cool Contests

It never fails—announce a contest, and watch kids light up! Daily contests run in one of three ways. Decide which option best suits your situation and plan accordingly.

## Individual Effort

Each child earns points daily for the following:

- Attendance
- Learning the daily memory verse
- Bringing a visitor
- Participating in the daily special contest (see specifics below)

These points are tallied and the child receives a prize if he or she reaches a certain point total.

## Team Effort

Teams earn points as above, but all the points are tallied and scored for the whole team instead of the individual. When the team reaches a certain point total, they receive a special prize.

Another option for team effort is to tally the team points and award prizes to the top one or two teams daily.

The Resource USB contains a sample team roster.

## Whole Group Effort

All the children in VBS work together to reach a certain number of points. If they reach the goal, they receive a prize. This could be something for them or for someone else, such as a special gift given to a mission organization.

## Other Contest Info

- Send the student guide home daily and encourage the kids to do the Go and Do sections. They will receive 1,000 points for each Go and Do they complete. They do not have to bring these back. Just take their word for it.
- Our test churches include the Pre-Primaries in the contests, but they don't keep score for that age group because they don't really understand or care about the points. They just enjoy the fun of everything.
- Kids can receive points for being at VBS, learning their memory verses and bonus memory verses, and participating in the daily contest. The daily contests are as follows.

## DAY 1—GUESS THE CANNONBALLS

Prepare a see-through jar with “cannonballs” (round cheese puffs—Utz brand works great). Or, if you'd like to use candy, choose a round, safe candy that's not a choking hazard, such as Sixlets or Skittles. Count how many are in the jar and write the number on a piece of masking tape. Put the tape on the inside of the lid and put the lid on the jar. Place the jar, some slips of paper for kids to write their guesses on, some pens, and a small metal pail or basket somewhere near your assembly area. At any point in the day when they are passing by, each child can write their guess on a slip of paper with their name and put it in the pail or basket. Have an adult figure out who is closest, and award the jar to that person during the closing assembly or at the next day's opening assembly.

Alternate idea: guess how many dragon nails, using Bugles corn snacks.

## DAY 2—TEAM TOURNAMENTS

Each team comes up with a team cheer, song, motion, or sign. Or, they can each wear something depicting their group. For example, if a group's name is Jesters, everyone wears a homemade jester's hat.

## DAY 3—DRESS-UP DAY

Everyone dresses up in medieval-themed attire representing either the peasants or the nobility—think bakers, cobblers, jugglers, princesses, princes, knights, and so forth. Another option is to dress up as an animal from the time period, like a red fox or dragon. No weapons, please.

## DAY 4—DESIGN A HELMET

Have kids draw pictures or make actual helmets using their imaginations. If using real “helmets,” suggest either making them out of foil or paper buckets, or reimagining existing hats. What can they come up with? Award prizes for the craziest and most realistic helmets.

## DAY 5—MISSION MONEY MANIA

Bring in your final mission money today. Double points for anyone who brings in any amount.

## Suggested Prizes

If you are interested in giving out prizes for any of the contests or for anything else, here is a list of prizes available from AnswersBookstore.com.

- Tubular bandanas (12-0-152; 12-0-153; 12-0-154; 12-0-155; 12-0-156)
- Wristbands (12-0-083)
- Stickers (12-0-088)
- Puzzles (12-0-094)
- Water bottles (12-0-081)
- Pencils (12-0-085)
- Carabiners (12-0-082)
- Pens (12-0-086)
- Puffy stickers (12-0-143)
- Child backpacks (12-0-144)
- Notepads (12-0-146)
- Scratch art (12-0-147)
- Paper masks (12-0-148)
- Foam figure (12-0-149)

You can also check online retailers, such as Oriental Trading Company ([OrientalTrading.com](http://OrientalTrading.com)) and Rhode Island Novelties ([RINovelty.com](http://RINovelty.com)), for inexpensive bulk prizes and local discount retailers that sell bulk individually wrapped candy or other edible treats. Some prize possibilities include plastic knight cups; knight helmets; small shields; plastic, rubber, or stuffed animals (foxes, beetles, horses, falcons, or dragons); crowns; jester hats; armor of God items like silicone bracelets or bendables; globe balls; play trumpets; mini treasure chests; gummy worms; or play gold coins.

# Creature Features

During the assemblies each day, we'll share a Creature Feature to highlight the incredible design features of five amazing animals the Creator has made. These are written into the closing assembly but can also be done during the opening assembly—your choice! Do these live or use the [Creature Feature videos](#) that you can show instead of using the provided scripts. Check the Resource USB for the videos.

## Day 1: Warhorse

Today, we'll meet the warhorse, an iconic medieval animal that knights used when going into battle. As we learn some of the amazing design features of this animal, we'll also talk about the fact that we're in a battle—a spiritual one—between God's good kingdom and Satan's bad kingdom. Winifred ("Winnie") the warhorse will be a great reminder of this.



## Day 2: Red Fox

Time to meet the red fox, an animal that medieval people dubbed as sneaky and who does, in reality, have some wily ways. As we check into some of the fox's design features, we'll also learn that during the Middle Ages, the fox was considered a symbol for the ultimate trickster, Satan. Thus the name for our animal pal that we will meet today—Wily.



## Day 3: Dragon

Today's animal pal is the fascinating dragon. Of course, we've all heard many stories of knights fighting dragons. But were they just myths? Or could those "dragons" have been real live dinosaurs? This will be one fun creature feature as we meet Grimwald the dragon and talk about the dragon/dinosaur connection.



## Day 4: Ironclad Beetle

Did you know God made an insect that actually looks like it's clad in armor? This interesting little bug has such a strong "helmet" and "shield" on its exoskeleton that it can withstand a small car running over it! God made this guy tough, and Byron, our animal pal, will show us that.



## Day 5: Peregrine Falcon

The peregrine falcon is a beautiful bird with fantastic design features. It was a popular bird in medieval times, known to be highly trainable and obedient. Our animal pal, Skye, is a great reminder of today's rhyme time phrase: Train your brain!



# Mission Moment

The mission emphasis to your VBS program provides an amazing opportunity for children to participate in giving to ministries that share the gospel. **Check with your director to see when she wants to feature the Mission Moment—either during the assembly time or during one of the rotations.** The missions, music, and memory verse guide contains additional activity ideas.

This year, we've partnered with Children's Hunger Fund to provide food and the hope of the gospel to hungry children in the US and across the globe. Forged in Hope is a fun and meaningful addition to your VBS program, teaching kids about poverty around the world, and empowering them to make a difference.

## Forged in Hope



Your kids will explore five different countries and learn about children living in poverty around the world and ways to make a difference.

As your students explore Nepal, Kenya, Albania, Honduras, and the US, they'll hear the stories of boys and girls whose lives have been touched by poverty. These children have no guarantee of meals, shelter, or an education. They need help. And they need the hope that only comes from salvation in Jesus Christ.

The good news is you and your kids have the power to make a difference!

The Bible says that giving generously to the poor is really giving generously to God himself (Proverbs 19:17). Teach your VBS class the great joy that comes from sacrificing for the sake of Jesus and his gospel.

## Forged in Hope

During the Mission Moment, your group will meet Agnes, an enthusiastic—if slightly clumsy—apprentice blacksmith who has a heart for children in need. As she helps her kingdom prepare for the upcoming battle, Agnes will share what she's learned about standing strong in God's truth. Every day, she'll introduce you to a child in another part of the world who needs your help.

Your mission is to collect coins to fill Children's Hunger Fund Coin Paks and help provide meals for children in need, just like the ones Agnes introduces throughout the week.

When your VBS children earn coins for their Coin Paks, they make it possible for Children's Hunger Fund to fill Food Paks. A Children's Hunger Fund Food Pak is a box of up to 20 pounds of nutritious food that can feed a family for up to a week. In a Food Pak, a meal can be provided for just 25 cents!

The Food Paks are provided to partner churches in the US and around the world who deliver them to homes of families in need. Along with food delivery, relationships are built and the gospel is shared.

The following items are available on the Resource USB that comes with your starter kit and can be downloaded from AnswersVBS.com.

- **Daily videos**
- **Daily scripts and activities**
- **Child Profile Slides:** Daily profiles of the children your VBS students will meet. These informative prayer briefings will help your kids connect with the real needs of suffering children.
- **Printable Prayer Journals,** featuring true stories about hungry children living in poverty and prayer prompts that will help your kids connect with the needs of suffering children
- **Printable "Map of the World" activity sheet,** featuring locations of the children from the daily videos
- **Printable banner artwork**
- **PowerPoint images** to help your kids track their fundraising progress
- **Printable fold-up Coin Pak bank** for collecting coins
- **Donation Return Form** to accompany your donation to CHF at the end of your VBS program

## Purchasing Items

Included in your starter kit is a sample of the sturdy **pop-up Coin Pak bank** for your kids to use as they collect quarters for meals. Check with your director for a sample. After VBS, these will be fun souvenirs that can be kept as reminders to always care for the needs of others. Coin Paks are available for purchase from Children's Hunger Fund.

To order, please visit [ChildrensHungerFund.org/answers-vbs](http://ChildrensHungerFund.org/answers-vbs). To place an order over the phone, call Children's Hunger Fund at (800) 708-7589.

For questions regarding your Mission Moment resources, please call (800) 708-7589 or email [vbs@childrenshungerfund.org](mailto:vbs@childrenshungerfund.org).

Orders must be received 14 days prior to your VBS date. Available while supplies last.

## Collecting Donations

Give children their own Coin Pak bank for collecting donations. Work with your director to set up a fun area (e.g., mini wishing well, mini castle, or dragon bank) for kids to deposit their money each day as they begin VBS. Encourage your kids in the weeks leading up to VBS to save their money and then begin collecting the first day. Or, plan on passing out the Coin Paks on Day 1 and begin collecting on Day 2.

Once you've totaled your donations, please write a check to Children's Hunger Fund, indicating "Forged in Hope" in the memo area, then fill out the [Donation Submission Form](#). Send your check with the form to:

Children's Hunger Fund  
Attn: Forged in Hope  
DEPT LA 24373  
Pasadena, CA 91185-4373

Learn more about the gospel-centered mercy ministry of Children's Hunger Fund at [ChildrensHungerFund.org](http://ChildrensHungerFund.org).

## Tracking Your Progress

To help your kids maintain their excitement, announce how many meals they provided each day. Check with your director to find out when to do this: either during a special mission rotation or during the opening or closing assembly.

Here are fun ways to help your kids see their progress as they fundraise.

1. Show your progress with Forged in Hope [Daily Count PowerPoint slides](#). Update the slides with the total number of meals that can be provided each day.
2. Make your own goal tracker and update it throughout the week. Create or print a castle wall with stones and put equally spaced marks on it, going up. Each day, you can color in stones as you "scale" the castle wall. Color to the mark representing the kids' offering and write the total number of meals that can be provided so far on the corresponding line.
3. Consider having a contest between boys and girls, or between teams, to see which group can bring in the most money. (Printable "[Teams](#)" and "[Daily Count](#)" artwork are on the Digital Resources.)

**NOTE ON COUNTING COINS:** It may be helpful to recruit two or three adult volunteers to count and/or roll the coins at the end of each day. Some banks provide a coin counting service, but they may require several days to do so. Check ahead with your local bank, or see if anyone has a coin counting machine you can borrow.

# Daily Assembly Scripts

## Day 1: Opening Assembly

### Welcome (2 minutes)

SUPPLIES FOR DAY 1 WELCOME: weights and exercise equipment of your choice

**Person 1:** Huzzah! That means “hooray!” Let’s try that together. When I say, “Huzzah!” you answer with “Huzzah!” Do so. Welcome to *Keepers of the Kingdom*! Are you ready to enter a world of castles and kings and queens and dragons and epic battles?

**Person 2:** Enter flexing your muscles, lifting weights, and working out. Did someone say epic battles? If I’m going to be in a battle, I want to be ready. I want to be strong!

**Person 1:** Well, I’m glad you want to be physically strong, but this week, we’re going to talk about being strong in a different, more important way—being strong in the Lord.

**Person 2:** Ooo, I bet that involves lifting even more weights if I want to be strong in the Lord. Grab more stuff and try to lift it, grunting and groaning.

**Person 1:** Um, you know what? Being strong in the Lord has nothing to do with lifting weights.

**Person 2:** Nothing to do with lifting weights?

**Person 1:** Nothing.

**Person 2:** Then what does it mean to be strong in the Lord?

**Person 1:** We can’t just muster up our own strength. Listen as I read this verse from the Bible. Read *Ephesians 6:10*. Notice this says to be strong “in the Lord.” To be “in the Lord,” we need to be part of God’s good kingdom and rely on God to help us be spiritually strong. He gives his children special spiritual armor to wear in the spiritual battles.

**Person 2:** This sounds like big stuff!

**Person 1:** It is! We can’t wait to share more with everyone this week, so let’s get started! Everyone up, and let’s sing about being a keeper of the kingdom!

### Song (3 minutes)

“Keepers of the Kingdom”

### Song (3 minutes)

Contemporary: “Way, Truth, Life” / Traditional: “The Kingdom on the Right”

### Mission Moment (5 minutes)

SHOW: “Forged in Hope” slide

As we spend this week learning about standing strong in God’s truth, we’re also going to get the chance to meet

a boy or girl living in a different part of the world. We are partnering with Children’s Hunger Fund to help children who are living in poor conditions and don’t have enough to eat.

But the best part is you can help them! And along with sending food, you can help them hear about Jesus, too!

SHOW: “Forged in Hope—Ehani” slide

Are you ready to meet the first child? Pause for participation. Great! Today, we’re going to meet a very little girl named Ehani (eh-ha-nee), who lives in the country of Nepal.

SHOW: Video 1—Ehani

Country: Nepal

Problem: Generational Poverty

Ehani doesn’t have the same opportunities that you have here. If her mom can’t afford school supplies, Ehani doesn’t get to go to school. Without an education, Ehani’s children could live in poverty someday, too. Thankfully, a pastor from a local church came to break the cycle of poverty for Ehani and her family!

Do you want to help kids like Ehani? Pause for participation. Great! This week at VBS, we’ll be collecting coins to put in these Coin Paks. Show Coin Pak. Take this home today and tell your family and friends about Ehani. Ask them to help you collect coins for meals. It only costs 25 cents to provide a nutritious meal for a hungry child.

These meals will be packed into a Children’s Hunger Fund Food Pak, which is a box of nutritious food. This will be enough to feed a family for several days.

Each day this week, bring back any coins you’ve collected, and we’ll count how many meals you’ve given so far. With your help, we can deliver hope to suffering families all over the world.

### Announcements (time varies)

Announce any info pertinent to your situation. Today, you need to explain how the contests work so the kids can participate. Check with your director if you aren’t sure.

### Prayer

### Dismissal

### Song (play as children leave)

C: “Hold on to the Truth” / T: “My Armor” / Contemporary Memory Verse Song: “Be Strong” / Traditional MV: *Ephesians 6:10–18*

## Day 1: Closing Assembly

### **Song** (3 minutes)

C: "Way, Truth, Life" / T: "The Kingdom on the Right"

### **Song** (3 minutes)

"Keepers of the Kingdom" / C Memory Verse Song: "Armor of God" / T MV: Ephesians 6:10-18

### **Creature Feature: Winifred**

#### **"Winnie" the Warhorse** (5 minutes)

Use the PRESENTATION SLIDES or show the CREATURE FEATURE VIDEO

SHOW: Creature Feature title slide

Shorten the Creature Feature scripts each day (if needed) depending on the time you have.

Every day, we'll be hearing about one of God's awesome critters. Help me get ready for today's. Have everyone triple tap with hands to make a sound like a horse galloping. You got it!

SHOW: Knight and horse

Today we'll be talking about the warhorse.

Can you imagine being a knight in the Middle Ages riding a great charger into battle? I certainly can. These mighty animals are a great mix of strength and endurance.

Raise your hand if you get tired after playing tag. Pause. I sure do! But warhorses often run for long periods of time without stopping. And they can run fast! Depending on the kind, they can run up to 40 miles per hour. That's twice as fast as people.

Let's pretend we're driving a car. Do so. Now look out the window. Do so. There goes a warhorse running past!

SHOW: Jousting

Apart from fighting in wars, warhorses also carried knights in jousts. A joust is where two knights on horseback would charge at each other and try to knock each other off with a weapon called a lance.

Let's see how we do charging at each other with our pretend horses and our pool noodle lances! If there are two presenters, have fun with charging at each other and have one of you tap the other with the pool noodle.

Now, on the count of three, I want you all to shout out your favorite animal—1, 2, 3! Pause. What was that? I didn't quite hear you! Pause again.

SHOW: Horse ears

Did you know God designed horses to have good hearing? And they can turn each ear 180 degrees. Everybody, hold your hand up. Do so. Now turn it around. Pause to try.

That's 180 degrees. Now try to turn your ears 180 degrees. Pause to try. Can you do it? People can't, but horses can!

SHOW: Horse ear muscles

Not only that, but they can turn each ear in a different direction to help them pinpoint where a sound is coming from. In war, this would help warn a horse and their rider of potential danger.

Demonstrate the following. Now, bend down and place the side of your hand on the floor, with your thumb on top. Then place the side of your other hand on top of the hand on the floor. Do this about eight hands high. You got it? Great!

SHOW: Miniature horse

You just measured the height of a miniature horse. The way we measure the height of horses is in hands. The standard hand is about four inches wide.

SHOW: Shire warhorse

Some warhorses were 15 or more hands high at the top of their backs or withers.

SHOW: Horses in cavalry

Warhorses have accompanied soldiers into battle for thousands of years in fighting forces known as cavalry.

SHOW: Horse in armor

Sometimes, the horses themselves would be given special armor to keep them safe in battle. And the bond between a rider and his steed was usually unbreakable. They often fought and died together.

SHOW: Adam and Eve

But why did they have to fight at all? Well, war is a result of sin. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, this world has been broken, and people and kingdoms have been fighting. Wars typically happen between two kingdoms.

SHOW: Winifred the warhorse

Our trusty pal, Winifred the warhorse, is galloping in to remind us that we have two kingdoms in our world today, too.

SHOW: Two kingdoms

The kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of the world. One is ruled by our Creator God, and the other is ruled by the prince of darkness, the enemy. The Bible tells us in Psalm 20:7 that some may trust in chariots or horses but our trust needs to be in the name of the Lord our God.

SHOW: Winifred the warhorse

This week, with the help of Winnie and her friends, we'll learn about these two kingdoms, and how of the two, only one is true! Thanks for trotting by, guys!

## **Drama** (12 minutes)

See the Drama Production section starting on page 29 for details.

## **Announcements** (time varies)

## **Cool Contests** (3 minutes)

Announce winners of today's contests. Remind them to do their Go and Do on their student guides, learn their memory verses, and make up a sign or team cheer for tomorrow.

## **Prayer**

## **Takeaway Time** (2–3 minutes)

Each day, right before dismissal, share a thought to leave everyone with. Make sure to allow time for this final thought of the day.

Before we leave, let's play a super fast game called Lightning Round. I'll ask a question and you shout out the answer. It's gonna go really fast, so get ready. Pause. Here we go! Fire these off in rapid succession.

The ruler of the bad kingdom is\_\_\_? The enemy

The ruler of the good kingdom is\_\_\_? God

The ruler who lies is\_\_\_? The enemy

The ruler who is kind is\_\_\_? God

The ruler who is all things good is\_\_\_? God

The ruler who is against us is\_\_\_? The enemy

The ruler who has limited power is\_\_\_? The enemy

The ruler who wins is\_\_\_? God

Yes! God wins! Let's sit down, and every time I point to you, I want you to shout, "God wins!"

If I'm a child of God, I can be at peace and not anxious because—(point)—God wins!

I can have hope because—(point)—God wins!

No matter what's going on in this broken world, I need to remember—(point)—God wins!

## **Dismissal**

## **Song** (play as children leave)

"Keepers of the Kingdom"

## **Day 2: Opening Assembly**

## **Welcome** (2 minutes)

SUPPLIES FOR DAY 2 WELCOME: Brown delivery box with an assortment of belts in it (tool belt, silly belts, kids' belts, etc.)

**Person 1:** Huzzah! They answer back "Huzzah!" Welcome back to *Keepers of the Kingdom*! We have a great day planned for you!

**Person 2:** Come in excitedly with the box of belts. Look what I've got! This box of belts. I'm trying to decide which one to wear. What do you all think? Take audience input.

**Person 1:** I know which belt to wear, and it's not any of those.

**Person 2:** It's not?

**Person 1:** Nope. You need to wear the belt of truth.

**Person 2:** What's that?

**Person 1:** It's the most important belt of all. It's not a belt you can see, like these, but it's a belt God gives us when we're part of his kingdom. We'll be hearing how to become part of his kingdom today and how to wear the belt of truth, but before we do, let's sing "Hold on to the Truth."

## **Song** (3 minutes)

C: "Hold on to the Truth" / T: "My Armor"

## **Song** (3 minutes)

"Faith Is the Victory" / Memory Verse Song: "Stand Firm"

## **Mission Moment** (5 minutes)

SHOW: "Forged in Hope" slide

Do you guys remember Agnes, who we met yesterday? She's going to be introducing us to children around the world who need to hear about God's truth. Each one of these children lives in poverty, and you will have a chance to help them!

Do you remember how we're able to help them? Pause for participation. Yes! By collecting coins in your Coin Pak. Remember, each quarter you put in your Coin Pak means one meal for a hungry child.

SHOW: "Forged in Hope—Chiumbo" slide

Today, Agnes is going to introduce us to a little boy named Chiumbo, who lives in the country of Kenya. Let's hear his story.

SHOW: Video 2—Chiumbo

Country: Kenya

Problem: Orphan

Chiumbo's story is very different from the story we heard yesterday, isn't it? In the story we heard yesterday, Ehani has a mother to care for her and her sister. Chiumbo doesn't know where his parents are.



# DAY 1 DRAMA

Characters: Duchess, Albert, Sir Laughsalot, Eldrick

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*Theme music*

*The DUCHESS stomps onto the stage from inside the castle.*

**DUCHESS:** *(fuming and pacing)* Who does the King think he is? He can't tell me what to do. No one can. He thinks he's so wise, but he doesn't know everything. "Absolute truth" . . . ha! What is truth, anyway? I could be a much better ruler than him. Why, if I sat on that throne . . . *(thinking)* Yes . . . if I were queen . . . *(cunningly)* And why not? Why shouldn't I be queen? I wouldn't let all that power go to waste. *(smugly)* And I would look rather marvelous wearing a crown! *(self-satisfied laughter, then a pause)* There's no time to waste. I must come up with a plan. And I may need some assistance . . .

*The DUCHESS exits. ALBERT enters via an aisle and walks toward the stage, talking to himself energetically, full of naive excitement and anticipation.*

**ALBERT:** Today is the day! I can't believe I'm finally here. After years of just dreaming about it, I'm finally going to become a Knight of the Square Table!

*ALBERT arrives at the castle gate. A voice booms from behind the gate.*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Halt! Who goes there?

**ALBERT:** *(trying to sound as official as he can)* My name is Albert, and I have come from Faraway to join the Knights of the Square Table!

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** I'm sorry, but I can't let you in. *(tone changing from serious to almost silly)* First, you have to knock!

**ALBERT:** Uh, okay . . . *(gives two loud consecutive knocks on the door.)*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** *(playfully)* Who's there?

**ALBERT:** *(confused)* It's still me.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Me who?

**ALBERT:** Me Albert. Albert from the land of Faraway.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** *(exasperated)* No, no, no, that's not how it's done! Like this. Say, knock knock.

**ALBERT:** Uh, okay . . . Knock, knock.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Who's there? *(in a loud whisper)* Now say, Boo.

**ALBERT:** Boo!

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Now I say, booo whooo. And then you ask me why I'm crying! See? Hilarious!

*He laughs hysterically and opens the gate. ALBERT walks through into the castle courtyard.*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Welcome to the castle! I don't let anybody in without a joke. I love jokes. Here's a good one! Why did the knight fight with a sword made of cheddar cheese?

**ALBERT:** *(very confused)* Um . . . I don't know, why?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Because the cheese was extra sharp!

*He bursts out laughing again. ALBERT chuckles hesitantly, still a bit confused. Suddenly, GEORGE THE DRAGON groans [GROAN sfx].*

**ALBERT:** *(jumping)* Wha-what was that?!

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Oh, that was just old George! The not-so-fearsome dragon who "guards" *(using air quotes)* the castle. But, he really just eats and sleeps most of the time.

*GEORGE THE DRAGON roars in protest [ROAR sfx].*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Well, you do! *(to ALBERT)* The Princess treats him like her pet, giving him treats all the time. *(to GEORGE, playfully)* If you weren't so fat and lazy, maybe you could do your job!

*Then a big roar from GEORGE [BIG ROAR sfx], scaring SIR LAUGHSALOT, who jumps and falls backwards.*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Okay, okay! Sorry, old boy. *(standing up and saying under his breath to ALBERT)* He may be fat and lazy, but he can still breathe fire!

*ELDRICK approaches. He carries a large, worn hardcover or leather Bible tucked under his arm.*

**ELDRICK:** Hello there. Who is this?

**ALBERT:** *(reaching out to shake ELDRICK'S hand)* I'm Albert!

**ELDRICK:** Nice to meet you, young man. *(ALBERT is still eagerly shaking ELDRICK'S hand until ELDRICK*

*clears his throat and removes his hand*) You'll have to excuse Sir Laughsalot. When he's guarding the gate, the price to enter is a joke . . . quite literally.

**ALBERT:** Wait a minute. Did you say *Sir* Laughsalot? You're a knight? A real-life Knight of the Square Table?!

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** That's right, my fine fellow. And this is Eldrick, a very wise—and *very old*—advisor to the King. (*"very old" said humorously as an aside to ALBERT in a stage whisper*)

**ELDRICK:** I heard that.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Well, at least your age hasn't affected your hearing!

*ELDRICK doesn't find this amusing, but SIR LAUGHSALOT does.*

**ALBERT:** Nice to meet you both. I'm here to become a Knight of the Square Table! It's been my dream for as long as I can remember.

**ELDRICK:** That's very nice, Albert, but unfortunately it isn't quite that simple.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Yeah, you can't just waltz in here and become a knight on your first day! It takes a long time. Like, really, really, really, *really* long.

**ELDRICK:** It can take years to become a knight. Do you have any experience, Albert?

**ALBERT:** Well . . . I haven't used a real sword . . . but my brothers and I fought with sticks all the time growing up! And my father has told me all the stories and legends about the Knights of the Square Table!

**ELDRICK:** And why *do* you want to become a knight?

**ALBERT:** Well . . . I want to serve the king and help protect the kingdom. I want to do brave deeds and help people.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** You know, I was just about your age when I first came here. (*sizing ALBERT up*) Well, maybe a little older . . . (*walks around ALBERT and inspects his arm muscles*) . . . *definitely* stronger . . . (*standing back*) And maybe just a *little* bit—okay, a *lot*—better looking . . .

**ELDRICK:** (*disapprovingly*) Aren't you supposed to be guarding the gate?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Touché.

*SIR LAUGHSALOT dashes to the gate and ELDRICK invites ALBERT to follow him to a bench where they sit down.*

**ELDRICK:** Albert, you must have the proper training and prove yourself first before you can become a knight.

**ALBERT:** I'm ready to learn! But I already know everything there is to know about sword fights and battles and dragons. I've read every book that I could get my hands on!

**ELDRICK:** But have you read the Book of Truth?

**ALBERT:** The Book of what?

**ELDRICK:** The Book of Truth. It's the book the knight's code comes from. The Book of Truth is the Word of God. It's the source of absolute truth. Absolute truth is true for all people everywhere—past, present, and future. Without a standard of absolute truth, how do we know what's good and what's evil?

**ALBERT:** I never thought about that before.

**ELDRICK:** A knight knows that God has told us what is true, what is good, in his Word. God cannot lie. But his enemy, Satan, is the father of lies and of evil. When you do battle, whether with your sword or with your words, you must stand for absolute truth. Only then can you serve the King and become a Knight of the Square Table.

**ALBERT:** (*after a pause*) I think I understand. I want to become a knight even more now!

**ELDRICK:** (*chuckling*) I believe you do. And I'm willing to teach you. But you must begin by studying the Book of Truth for yourself. Here, you may have this. (*hands ALBERT his Bible*) It's a very old copy, full of my notes and scribbles from throughout the years. I pray you will cherish it as much as I have.

**ALBERT:** I will! Thank you!

**ELDRICK:** Sir Laughsalot can train you with the sword. He's a funny fellow, but he believes the Book of Truth, obeys God, and serves his King. Oh, speaking of him . . .

*SIR LAUGHSALOT approaches. He has brought ALBERT a sword. ALBERT rises and sets the Bible on the bench. ELDRICK remains seated.*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** It's Sir Percival's turn to stand guard at the gate. I've decided to give you a chance, Albert! Ready for your first sword fighting lesson?

**ALBERT:** (*jumping up*) Yes!

*SIR LAUGHSALOT hands ALBERT a sword, but it's heavier than ALBERT was anticipating, and he stumbles and falls forward. SIR LAUGHSALOT and ELDRICK react but ALBERT stands up again clumsily.*

**ALBERT:** Oof! . . . I'm all right! (*grips the sword incorrectly and comically, getting into position*)  
En garde!

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** (*laughing*) Whoooa, not so fast, my young friend. Let's start with the basics. Here, hold your sword like this. (*fixes ALBERT'S awkward position*) You've got to grip it properly with both hands. (*demonstrates*) That's right. Keep your elbows bent and close to your body.

**ALBERT:** Like this?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Yes, good! Now, always hold your sword at the ready. The ready position helps you react faster to your opponent.

**ELDRICK:** Just like knowing the truth of God's Word keeps us "at the ready" to give an answer when someone asks us about what we believe.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** That's right! Now, there are eight different angles of an attack. (*demonstrating as he describes each attack*) Straight down from above; straight up from below; diagonally down to the left; diagonally down to the right; diagonally up from the left; diagonally up from the right; right to left horizontally; and left to right horizontally. Now you try. Take it slowly, now. I'm going to block your blows with my sword. Just go like we're moving in slooow moootion.

*ALBERT performs each attack in slow motion and SIR LAUGHSALOT blocks each blow with his sword. ALBERT could forget a move now and then and SIR LAUGHSALOT could remind him. All three characters could ad lib or vocally react throughout, until all eight attack angles have been performed. As they cross swords on the final and eighth attack, the DUCHESS enters.*

**DUCHESS:** Well, well, well. What have we here?  
*SIR LAUGHSALOT and ALBERT lower their swords.*

**ELDRICK:** Good morning, Your Grace.

**DUCHESS:** Good morning, Eldrick . . . Sir Laughsalot. And who is this?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** A future Knight of the Square Table! Our new friend, Albert.

**ALBERT:** Hello, ma'am—uh, my lady—er, Your Grace.

**DUCHESS:** (*chuckling*) Hello, young man. So, you're training to become a knight, are you?

**ALBERT:** I am!

**DUCHESS:** (*chuckles*) And where are you from, Albert?

**ALBERT:** The land of Faraway.

**DUCHESS:** Well, welcome to the castle. (*pause*) You know, I should like to get to know our new young knight a little better. (*To ELDRICK and SIR LAUGHSALOT*) May I talk to him for a few moments?

**ELDRICK:** (*hesitantly*) As you wish, Your Grace. But don't be too long, Albert.

*ELDRICK and SIR LAUGHSALOT exit, carrying the swords.*

**DUCHESS:** Come, Albert. Let's take a little stroll.  
*They slowly walk down an aisle while talking.*

**DUCHESS:** Tell me what you have learned so far, young man.

**ALBERT:** (*nervously*) Um, well . . . Eldrick gave me my first lesson about absolute truth. And Sir Laughsalot is teaching me to sword fight!

**DUCHESS:** Hmm . . . And what has Eldrick told you, exactly? About absolute truth?

**ALBERT:** Well . . . he said that God has given us a standard for absolute truth, his Word. It's where the knight's code comes from. Eldrick said if I want to be a knight, I need to trust God's Word and stand for truth.

**DUCHESS:** Is that so?

**ALBERT:** Yes. Absolute truth is the same for all people everywhere, past, present, and future.

**DUCHESS:** You know, Albert, there are other ways—easier ways—to become a knight than by reading some dusty old book. I might be able to . . . speed up the process—that is, if you'd be willing to help me with something in return.

**ALBERT:** Really? Wow, thank you! What is it?

**DUCHESS:** I may need some information sometime. Will you keep your eyes and ears open for me?

**ALBERT:** You mean, like, *spy*?

**DUCHESS:** (*chuckling*) No, no, of course not. You'll just be helping me keep up with all the goings on around here. It's perfectly harmless. It's important for a Duchess to stay informed, that's all.

**ALBERT:** I guess I could do that.

*ALBERT and the DUCHESS are back where they started on the stage. ELDRICK enters.*

**DUCHESS:** It was nice to meet you, Albert. *(lowering her voice)* Remember what we talked about.

*The DUCHESS exits and ALBERT meets ELDRICK.*

**ALBERT:** The Duchess is nice!

**ELDRICK:** *(cautiously)* She may be nice, but can she be trusted? I'm not entirely sure whose side the Duchess is on . . .

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** *(entering and babbling excitedly)* Albert! Eldrick! I've got a new joke! Want to hear it? Who am I kidding, of course you want to hear it. Here goes . . . *(realizing he's getting ahead of himself)* Oh . . . er, are you ready?

**ALBERT:** *(laughing)* Yes.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Okay. *(takes a deep breath, does a quick vocal warmup, and "gets into character.")* Okay. Why did the knight polish his outfit before the King's dinner party?

**ALBERT:** *(playing along)* I don't know. Why?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** . . . Because he wanted to have a night in shining armor! *(holds his sides and collapses with laughter)*

*GEORGE THE DRAGON groans [GROAN sfx].*

**ELDRICK:** George is right. Enough horsing around, you two.

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** *(still laughing)* Did you hear that, Albert? Eldrick's voice sounds a little hoarse to me! What do you say, yay or neigh?

**ALBERT:** *(laughing along)* I think you mean hay or neigh! *(he neighs)*

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** Good one! Straight from the horse's mouth!

**ALBERT:** Oh no! I've fallen and I can't giddy-up!

*They are both holding their sides on the ground laughing. Suddenly, a loud wail is heard from offstage. ALBERT jerks up and all three characters exchange worried looks.*

**ALBERT:** What was that?

**SIR LAUGHSALOT:** I don't know, but it sounds like a job for a Knight of the Square Table! *(he jumps up, stretches out his sword, and proclaims his motto dramatically)* All for me, and me for all! Wait . . . that's not right. *(muttering to himself)* Me for one . . . for one and all . . . ? *(gives up, shaking his head, then, holding out his sword again, he declares)* Never mind! Come on, let's go.

*All three characters run off in the direction of the cry.*

*Theme music*