Kieran's Science & Crafts in the Courtyard
# Course Overview

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Krista Black, Amy Quinn Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy
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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 soft-hearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they’re children, so it’s apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, 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!
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.
1. Ephesians 6:10–18 teaches us about a real battle between two kingdoms. Take seriously the need to pray and study God’s Word as you prepare amidst this battle. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of opening his Word and sharing it daily with the children. Stand firm!

2. Pray! This is your most important preparation. Give all concerns to the Lord and watch him do great things!

3. This guide offers main craft and science experiment suggestions as well as ideas for extra crafts and craft kit options. Some are simple and quick, while others are more involved. There are also toddler crafts. Think through your time and resources and decide which crafts and/or science experiments you will do each day.

4. Gather faithful helpers who will prepare items well in advance. Record their names, addresses, cell phone numbers, and email addresses so you can contact them quickly and easily.

5. Make a sample of every craft and science experiment before you meet with your team for the first time so they can visualize what you are presenting. Each helper should make a sample of each craft so they’re familiar with all the steps. Try out each science experiment ahead of time and make sure your presenters have done a trial run as well.

6. Host “Craft Shops” or “Science Shops.” Workers can drop by and pick up something to work on at home, or they can stay for part or all of the time. Assembly lines can be set up to prep crafts quickly. Weekday or Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to noon, complete with doughnuts and coffee, can be an enjoyable time.

7. Use an office paper cutter for Prep cutting of patterns or paper with straight edges. Make sure to remove the paper cutter and any other dangerous supplies, such as miter saws and craft knives from the classrooms. If a science experiment calls for this type of item, store it in a safe place before and after use.

8. Be prepared. Organize crafts into individual kits for each child, using plastic baggies or lunch sacks. Place the individual kits into boxes labeled for each rotation. Organize science experiment supplies as well, considering whether they will be done by individuals, groups, or as a teacher demo as noted in the directions.

9. Cover the tables with plastic tablecloths and secure with tape.

10. Craft glue, such as Tacky Glue, works better than school glue. Toothpicks work well for dipping into and applying the glue.

11. Permanent markers in vibrant colors can be a good alternative to paint for grade-schoolers. They work on most surfaces—paper, wood, fabric, and plastic.

12. Decorate the room to correspond with the theme. See Decorating Decisions in the Director Guide for possible ideas. Play VBS music to set the mood. Display the memory verses on each table or around the room in various locations. Place a sample of each craft or science experiment on every table so children can visualize what they will be making or doing.

13. Overhead projectors can be used to display craft and science experiment directions.

14. Use this time to engage in conversation and share God’s love. Be ready to offer smiles, hugs, and laughs. (Be aware of your church’s appropriate touching policies.) Also, be ready to help children who are easily frustrated. Helping with steps requiring physical dexterity does not detract from the child’s creativity.

15. To reinforce the day’s lesson, share the teaching tie-in that goes along with each craft or science experiment. Ask the kids about what they’re learning throughout your time together or right before they leave this rotation.

16. Print the daily memory verses on address labels and place on crafts or experiments, if possible.

17. Give leftover craft supplies to sick children, another VBS, or your church’s resource area.

18. Always, always, always put names on crafts and take home science experiments! Strips of masking tape work well for name labels.

19. The test churches divided this rotation time by having 17 minutes in a science room, attempting one or two science experiments, and 17 minutes in a craft room, doing one or two crafts.

20. This book is loaded with fabulous stuff—more than you’ll probably be able to do—so consider incorporating unused ideas at other times during your ministry year.
**Materials**

**For Demo 1**
- Regular golf ball
- Plastic golf ball

**For Demo 2**
- 2 similar latex balloons, one filled with air, the other filled with helium
- Two 4-foot lengths of string or ribbon
- Masking tape
- Balloon weight
- 2 pieces of paper for each student

**Prep**

1. Fill one balloon with air and the other with helium to the same size. Tie the balloons closed and attach a string to each. Use masking tape to secure the balloons to a nearby stationary object, oriented so that they appear identical to the students. Secure the ends of the strings to a balloon weight.
2. Cut the two pieces of paper to be slightly smaller than the book.

**Class Time Directions & Dialogue**

**Introduction**

There are many things in our world that we can’t see, but we believe they’re real. God created the physical realm, the world around us, to be organized and controlled by scientific laws. We can see what these laws do, so we know they exist. Scientific laws are laws of nature; they don’t change, and they can’t be broken. For something to become a scientific law, it must be repeatable for years and years—and if it doesn’t work even once—it can’t be a law.

In some cases, something labeled a scientific law has been found to be false. We have to make sure we understand the whole story. For example, “spontaneous generation” is the idea that living things come from nonliving things. This was thought to be a law because people living before 1859 saw something happening. They knew that if they left old rags in the corner of the barn, baby mice would appear! Did mice actually come from old rags? What was really happening? Take answers. A momma mouse found a way into the barn and used the old rags for a nest. The people simply didn’t understand all the facts. The Bible tells us that life only comes from life. God created living things in the beginning to reproduce after their kind.

Today we’ll practice thinking about the facts we can’t see by using another scientific law—the law of gravity.

**Directions**

What is gravity? Take answers. It’s a force that attracts any two objects that have mass. For instance, if I trip and fall, what will gravity do? It will pull me (an object with mass) down to the ground (or the earth, which also has mass). Because the earth is so big, all objects fall at pretty much the same speed, or acceleration.

Demo 1: What do you think will happen if we drop these two golf balls at the same time? Take answers. Well, let’s try it. Choose two volunteers to hold both balls up high and drop them at the same time on the count of three. Did they hit the ground at the same time? Take
answers. What you may not have known is that one of these is a real golf ball and the other is a hollow, plastic ball. Because of gravity, the acceleration or the speed they fall toward the earth is always constant. They should fall at the same speed. But sometimes other forces get in the way. If I were able to repeat this experiment in a vacuum (a space where all of the other forces, such as air, have been removed), these two balls would always land at the same time. In fact, even a feather would fall at the same rate as a bowling ball.

**Demo 2:** Choose two volunteers to hold the balloons by their knots, keeping them oriented the same way. What do you think will happen when our volunteers let go of these two balloons? Take answers. On the count of three, release. What happened? Take answers. Does that mean that the law of gravity has failed? Of course not. It simply means that we didn’t have all the facts. One balloon is filled with air and one is filled with helium. If we went back into that vacuum that we talked about, both balloons would have fallen toward the earth. The balloon filled with helium didn’t disobey the law of gravity. Helium is much less dense than the air—you might say it’s lighter than air. So as the earth pulled the air toward itself, the helium was being pushed up above the air.

Now it’s your turn to try a gravity experiment. Each of you needs two pieces of paper. Keep one piece flat and unwrinkled but scrunch the other piece up, as tight as you can, into a ball. Now hold these two pieces of paper straight out like this (demonstrate holding the papers straight out from your body with the flat paper horizontal to the ground) and drop them at the same time, watching to see which paper lands first. Did they land together? Take answers. No, but that doesn’t mean that the law of gravity has failed. What do you think happened? Take answers. The air got in the way. Since the flat paper had a larger area, it had to push more air out of the way, so there was more resistance on it as it fell, like the air was holding it back. So the flat paper landed after the ball of paper.

**Teaching Tie-in**

This week, we’ll learn about two kingdoms and the spiritual battles going on all around us. What are the two kingdoms we’re learning about this week? Take answers. Can we see God’s good kingdom and the enemy’s bad kingdom? No, we can’t. That’s because they’re in the spiritual realm, which we can’t see or feel. We live in the physical realm, which God has created for us, where we can see and touch things. Today’s experiments remind us that there may be other forces at work that we can’t see. Just as it’s important to look for additional explanations to understand what’s happening in an experiment, it’s also important to look for truth in God’s Word to understand what’s happening around us in the spiritual realm. Remember, just because we can’t see what’s happening in the spiritual realm doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. God tells us the truth about the spiritual realm in his Word, so we can learn and understand what we can’t see.

**Tip Corner**

• You may want to increase the length of the balloon string if your ceiling is high.
• YouTube has videos of objects falling in a vacuum.
• Helium can be found at party stores.

**Terms to Know**

Spiritual realm: where God and other spiritual beings exist, not seen by people
Physical realm: the created world around us where we see and touch physical things
Acceleration: the increasing speed of an object in free fall under the influence of earth’s gravity
**Materials**
- 4½ x 9-inch piece of blackout fabric per student
- Duct tape
- Fabric marker (pick a color that’s easy to see on the fabric)
- Empty paper towel tube or any cylinder up to 2-inch diameter

**Prep**
Make the light/dark fabric tubes.
1. Cut one 4½ x 9-inch blackout fabric piece for each student.
2. Write the word “truth” in the center of the fabric so it fits within the diameter of the paper towel tube.
3. Place an open end of the paper towel tube over the word and wrap the fabric up and around the tube (as if you were wrapping a gift).
4. Tape all seams of fabric together but do not tape the fabric to the tube.
5. Remove the paper towel tube.
6. Confirm that all seams are taped so no light enters the fabric tube except by the top opening.

**Class Time Directions & Dialogue**

**INTRODUCTION**
What are the two kingdoms we’re learning about this week? Take answers: God’s good kingdom and the enemy’s bad kingdom. Can we see these kingdoms? No, we can’t. That’s because they’re in the spiritual realm, which we can’t see or feel. We live in the physical realm, which God has created for us, where we can see and touch things. In science time this week, we’ll focus mainly on the physical realm. But we’ll also be talking about the spiritual realm. Do you think both kingdoms in the spiritual realm are good? Take answers. They certainly are not. In fact, the Bible describes one as light and one as dark. Tell me a few words to describe the bad kingdom, the dark side. Take answers: Satan, evil, sin, enemy, all kinds of bad things, and lies. Now tell me some words that you might use for the good kingdom, the light side. Take answers: God, Jesus, love, caring, all kinds of good things, and the truth. Keep these words in mind as we do an experiment with light and darkness.

**Directions**
Each of you has a fabric tube in front of you. Look inside the tube and tell me what word you see. Take
Day 1 Experiment: Light & Dark

answers: the word “truth.” For small children, you may simply ask if they see anything inside or what letters they see. Although the tube is dark, we can see the “truth” when we have the light coming in. But what if you’re in the darkness? Hold that tube close to your eye and make a good seal around the edge with your hands. Can you still see the word “truth”? Take answers. If any students can still see it, instruct them to reposition their hands to get a better seal to keep the light out.

Teaching Tie-in
It’s harder to see and know the truth when we’re surrounded by darkness. But with the light that Jesus offers, we can know the truth of his Word, the Bible. That’s where we learn that Jesus is the Savior, and only he can save us from sin. Sadly, we all start out in the kingdom of darkness because we all sin. For instance, God says to always tell the truth. But have you ever told a lie? Acknowledge. God says to obey your parents. Have you ever disobeyed your mom or dad? Acknowledge. Those are sins—disobeying God’s commands. We need the salvation Jesus offers to know his truth and become part of his kingdom of light. We need to make a choice to follow God and walk in his light rather than take part in things of darkness. Make sure you’ve chosen to become part of God’s kingdom of light so you can know truth and won’t find yourself in the dark.

Tip Corner
- Rip the duct tape in half lengthwise to make thinner strips.
- You may want to use colored duct tape to match the blackout fabric.
- Students may need to remove glasses to seal out the light from around their eye.
- If doing both experiments, do this one last.

Terms to Know
Spiritual realm: where God and other spiritual beings exist, not seen by people
Physical realm: the created world around us where we see and touch physical things

Day 1 Experiment: Light & Dark • 9
Materials
- Jumbo craft sticks, 2 per child
- Standard craft sticks, 1 per child
- ½-inch dowel rods, one 1½-inch piece per child
- Medium-size rubber bands, 1 per child
- Mini hair rubber bands, 1 per child
- Water bottle caps, 1 per child
- Glue dots, 1 per child
- White or gray cardstock
- Castle Pattern
- 1-inch pom-poms, 1 per child
- Zippered baggies, 1 per child

Tools and Basic Supplies
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

Prep
1. Cut dowel rods into 1½-inch pieces, one per child. Sand any rough edges.
2. Photocopy the Castle Pattern onto white or gray cardstock. Then cut out a castle for each child.
3. Place 2 jumbo craft sticks, 1 standard craft stick, 1 dowel rod piece, 1 medium rubber band, 1 mini hair rubber band, 1 water bottle cap, an adhesive dot, and a pom-pom into a zippered baggie for each child.

Teaching Tie-In
Show the sample craft and say:
Today’s craft is a castle catapult. Catapults were used in medieval times during battles. During an attack, the enemy would use them to try to knock down the castle walls. If the walls were strong and the defenders were on their guard, they could withstand the attack and be the victors.

Today at VBS, we’re talking about the two opposing kingdoms that are battling each other. Can you remember who the ruler of each is and what he’s like?
Take responses. God's kingdom is the good one. I hope you're a child of God.

Class Time Directions

1. Take a jumbo craft stick and attach a standard craft stick across the middle in a perpendicular fashion with a mini hair rubber band. The standard craft stick should be under the jumbo stick. This will form the base of the catapult.
2. Lay the other jumbo craft stick on top of the first one and attach the ends of one side together by tightly wrapping with the larger rubber band.
3. Use a glue dot to attach the bottle cap near (about ¼-inch from) the loose end of the top jumbo craft stick.
4. Slide the dowel piece (fulcrum) in between the two jumbo craft sticks so it rests in line with the standard craft stick and between the strands of the mini hair rubber band.
5. Fold the Castle Pattern in half and then carefully cut out the tops of the two towers and stone wall. Cut only where indicated.
6. Cut out the drawbridge (what looks like the door of the castle).
7. Fold the bottom ends of the pattern toward each other and glue stick together.
8. Glue stick the drawbridge tab to the base of the castle so the drawbridge lies flat in front of the castle.
9. Using the catapult, try to shoot the pom-pom over the castle or through the castle door.

Tip Corner

• To collect water bottle caps, consider having a “bottle cap challenge.”

Super Simple Idea

Each day, at least one super simple option is included, which is a premade craft kit from Oriental Trading Company (call 1 (800) 875-8480 or visit orientaltrading.com) that goes along with the main concepts of the day.

As an alternative to the Day 1 main crafts, try the following craft kit. Note that this is available at the time of printing and may not be available later.

• STEM Craft Stick Catapult Craft Kit (Item Number: #13772396)—Manufacturer does not recommend for children under three years of age.
**Kingdom Crown**

**PRE-PRIMARY**

**Materials**
- Yellow poster board, 1 piece for every 10 children
- Plain, fun foam shapes in assorted colors, amount varies
- Crown Pattern

**Tools and Basic Supplies**
- Scissors
- Invisible tape
- Glue sticks
- Colored markers
- Stapler

**Prep**
1. Photocopy the Crown Pattern then cut out the two pieces. Tape the pieces together into one long paper crown strip.
2. Use your paper crown strip as a guide to create a new rigid crown strip the full width (22 inches) of the yellow poster board. Then cut out and use as a template to trace the rest of the crown strips. If you trace each pair with the zig-zags together (one up, one down, etc.), you should be able to get 10 crowns from a standard 22 x 28-inch piece.
3. Cut out the crown strips.

**Class Time Directions**
1. Decorate your crown as desired with colored foam shapes and colored markers. Leave one end free of any decorations to allow for overlap when stapling the ends together.
2. When finished decorating, wrap crown around head to size properly, remove from head, and staple the ends together. Then tape over the staples to cover any sharp edges.

**Tip Corner**
- Plain bulletin board borders purchased from teacher stores work great for crowns.
- Stickers are also good for decorating.

**Super Simple Idea**
Try the following Oriental Trading Company craft kit. (Call 1 (800) 875-8480 or visit orientaltrading.com.) Note that this is available at the time of printing and may not be available later.
- Mosaic Crown Kit (Item Number: #13688061)—Manufacturer does not recommend for children under three years of age.

**Teaching Tie-In**
Show the sample craft and say:
Isn’t it fun to pretend to be kings and queens? Did you know the Bible describes Jesus as the King of kings? He’s by far the greatest king ever! Let’s think of some great things about Jesus. Who thinks Jesus is kind? True? Loving? Good? Great? Let’s make our crowns and remember Jesus, the best king ever.