

— TRUTH TALKS IN THE KEEP —

TODDLER



TEACHER GUIDE



Course Overview

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
Title/Bible Content	The Two Kingdoms	The Belt	The Breastplate and Shoes	The Shield and Helmet	The Sword and Prayer	
Bible Passages	Creator King and Prince of Darkness Genesis 1; Ephesians 6:10–11	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	
Lesson Focus	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.	
Apologetics Content	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.	
Veritas Verses	Ephesians 6:11	Ephesians 6:14	Ephesians 6:14–15	Ephesians 6:16	Ephesians 6:17–18a	
Rhyme Time	Of two, only one is true!	Decide your side!	Do right in God's sight!	Win against sin!	Train your brain!	
Animal Pals	Winifred ("Winnie") the Warhorse	Wily the Fox	Grimwald the Dragon	Byron the Ironclad Beetle	Skye the Peregrine Falcon	
Discovery Center	Kingdom Cards	Strength Exercises	Obedience Drawing	Glitter Play Dough	Armor of God Banner	
Exploration Stations	Touch Table Wet	Make It Clean!	Snakes and Fruit	Icy Treasure	Keep Out!	Bible Truth Colors
	Touch Table Dry	Two Kingdoms Sandcastles	Nativity	Find the Treasure	Solomon's Robe	People Play
	Dramatic Play	Inside the Castle	Inside the Castle	Inside the Castle	Inside the Castle	Inside the Castle
	Coloring Corner	Ephesians 6:11	Ephesians 6:14	Ephesians 6:14–15	Ephesians 6:16	Ephesians 6:17–18a
Kieran's Crafts in the Courtyard	Kingdom Crown Winnie the Warhorse Coloring Sheet	Cross Magnet Wily the Fox Coloring Sheet	Tower Growth Chart Grimwald the Dragon Coloring Sheet	Faith Shield Byron the Beetle Coloring Sheet	Train Your Brain Card Caddy Skye the Falcon Coloring Sheet	
Griffin's Games on the Green	Knights' Ride Bible Quest	Belt of Truth Relay Decide Your Side	Dragon's Treasure Don't Wake the Dragon	Shield of Faith Defenders Put Your Helmet On!	Bible Treasure Hunt Knights' Training Course	
Tessa's Treats in the Town	Kingdom Cookies A Few Twos	King's Cups Fruit Tarts	Dragon Munchies King's Scepters	Mini Pizza Shields H Is for Helmet	Moat Floats Popsicle Swords	

Contents



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Toddler Teacher Guide

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Handy Helps	3
Huzzah!	3
Your Role.	4
Frequently Asked Questions	4
Terms to Know	4
Top 20 Toddler Teaching Tips	5
Tips for Managing a Group of Kids.	6
Age-Level Characteristics	7
Toddler Schedule	8
Memory Verse Songs	10
Student Extras.	10
Special Needs	10
Decorating Decisions	11
Costume Considerations	14
Griffin's Games on the Green	15
Kieran's Crafts in the Courtyard	18
Tessa's Treats in the Town	21
Day 1: The Two Kingdoms	23
Devotion 1: The Two Kingdoms.	24
Exploration Stations	25
Introduce It!	27
Teach It!	28
Apply It!	30
Day 2: The Belt	31
Devotion 2: The Belt	32
Exploration Stations	33
Introduce It!	34
Teach It!	34
Apply It!	38
Day 3: The Breastplate and Shoes.	39
Devotion 3: The Breastplate & Shoes	40
Exploration Stations	41
Introduce It!	42
Teach It!	43
Apply It!	44
Day 4: The Shield and Helmet	46
Devotion 4: The Shield & Helmet	47
Exploration Stations	48
Introduce It!	49
Teach It!	50
Apply It!	51
Day 5: The Sword and Prayer.	53
Devotion 5: The Sword & Prayer	54
Exploration Stations	55
Introduce It!	56
Teach It!	57
Apply It!	58

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. Amidst the pages of *Keepers of the Kingdom: Standing Strong in Today's Battle for Truth*, the latest from Answers VBS, the 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, and to 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 the kids arrive. They will gather at the **Apprentices' Assembly** in the Great Hall for the opening, a high-energy beginning that includes wacky intros, lively songs, a missions moment, and prayer.

Toddlers and young preschoolers then head back to their room to experience their own special schedule which includes Exploration Stations, Lesson Time, and snacks, games, and crafts.

Next, 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 of 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, it's critically important to us not to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

Your Role

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

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

Get ready! Get set! Get excited! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

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 or Troubadors.

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.

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.

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

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

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 Toddler Teaching Tips

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. Walk worthy.
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the resources on the Resource USB or at AnswersVBS.com. Begin to pray and plan now, then continue to pray during and after VBS.
3. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
4. In this guide:
 - » Teaching Tips are marked with a ✖.
 - » Materials for each activity are listed next to the activity.
 - » The “teacher says” portion is bolded.
5. If possible, gather all the supplies for the Exploration Stations and lessons before the week begins. It’s particularly helpful to organize them by station and by day so they are ready to easily be switched out.
6. Ask leaders to help man the Exploration Stations each day. Post the directions and teaching tie-ins at each station every day as an easy reference for your helpers. (See the Resource USB or AnswersVBS.com.)
7. Modify the Exploration Stations as your situation warrants. Set them up as suggested or incorporate one or more ideas into the lesson time to do with the whole group together.
8. A puppet is used each day at some point during the lesson. It may also be used to welcome the children, sing a song, or review the lesson or memory verse. The puppet comes up from the puppet stage if there are two of you to do the puppet skit. Or, if you’re working alone, the puppet can come up from behind a trunk that is flipped open. (See Decorating Decisions.)
9. Dress as if you are living during medieval times. Wear medieval-era clothing, depicting either royal or peasant attire. Check Costume Considerations for ideas. Or check the VBS catalog for a cool T-shirt and hat. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. Some teachers enjoy making up a fun name or adding something new to their “costume” each day. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
10. Call the children by name as you interact with them. Name tags help with this.
11. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions file on the Resource USB or at AnswersVBS.com for more information.
12. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills in the heart of each child.
13. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access.
14. Show the importance of the Scriptures through your facial expressions and your actions.
15. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure to be aware of your church’s appropriate touching policies.)
16. 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.
17. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting up in an effort to receive it, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
18. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to work on memory verses and complete their take-home student guides.
19. Use brown lunch bags labeled with each child’s name to send everything home each day.
20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. “Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Prepare to confidently lead them using the following strategies.

ATTENTION-GETTERS

Call and Response—The teacher will teach the kids that when she says something, they should reply 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 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. They will often get quiet to hear what you are saying. Or say, “If you can hear me, clap once.” Continue softly with other commands.

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

LINING UP TO WALK THROUGH THE BUILDING

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

- “If you’re 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.”

PROACTIVE TIPS

Be Prepared—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. Think through and organize

your day, leaving no downtime. Keep things moving! This takes more effort on your part, but it’s 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 needed, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task like 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!

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

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 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, try your command another way. “You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen 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 while the rest of the group are 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.

Age-Level Characteristics

Kids are awesome! Each one is a unique and special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, kids often share some common characteristics. Use the following guidelines as a benchmark when looking at characteristics of children as a whole. Seeing how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with our students.

First, you'll see general characteristics of children and then specific characteristics of Toddlers (ages 2–4).

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics:

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

Characteristics of Toddlers

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Toddlers are active! They're on the move, running, climbing, and exploring. They're 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. 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. 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.
- Adults—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/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.

Toddler Schedule

When working with this age group, flexibility is key. In some cases, they are dropped off early and picked up late by parents who have VBS responsibilities. It may be important to revamp the schedule as necessary by removing some activities and allowing for more rest and free play.

Be aware that young ones get tired as the day wears on—even more so as the week wears on. The schedule may work fine at the beginning of the day or week, but toward the end, less is often better.

Exploration Station Time

There are five Exploration Stations: Discovery Center, Touch Table Wet, Touch Table Dry, Dramatic Play, and Royal Pavilion Coloring Corner. These stations should be set up at the end of the room opposite where the lesson time is held or in an adjoining room. See the Exploration Stations Supply List on the back cover for all the supplies needed each day.

If stations aren't possible, simply choose one or more of the station activities to incorporate somewhere in your lesson as a group activity.

Children may rotate together through each station every few minutes, or they may independently move from one station to another, which is what our test churches do. They don't need to do every station each day, although the coloring page should be sent home daily—colored or uncolored. Many of these stations are big hits and can be repeated on other days.

Check the decorating section for more specifics on setting up the dramatic play area as the inside of a castle and the coloring corner as a royal pavilion. In the touch table area, use a small wading pool or a large, clear, under-the-bed storage container. Place it on a plastic tarp or tablecloth to catch the spills.

Post the signs with each station's name. Also, consider posting the directions and teaching tie-in for each station so the troupe leaders can share the main point with the kids. (See the Resource USB.)

Lesson Time

The lesson time (Truth Talks) is divided into three sections:

- Introduce It!
- Teach It!
- Apply It!

The lesson time works well with a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two or Teaching Assistant. If team teaching, decide ahead of time who will do what. The lesson can also be taught alone, but find someone, such as a troupe leader or other staff person, to help when you need an extra set of hands, especially during puppet pal time.

Check the Resource Catalog for a fun T-shirt and hat to wear while you teach!

Below is a sample schedule with descriptions of each time period. Check with your director for a copy of your specific schedule and room assignment.

Sample Schedule

Based on a 3-hour VBS

Note: This schedule reflects a 30-minute period before VBS begins to accommodate VBS parents' schedules.

8:30–9:00	Arrival/Free Play
	Morning VBS Program—Breakfast Snack
9:00–9:15	Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall—Opening
9:15–9:40	Exploration Stations (Session 1)
9:40–10:05	Lesson Time
10:05–10:30	Griffin's Games
10:30–10:45	Kieran's Crafts (Session 1)
10:45–11:00	Exploration Stations (Session 2)
11:00–11:20	Tessa's Treats and Rest Time
11:20–11:35	Kieran's Crafts (Session 2)
11:35–11:55	Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall—Closing
11:55–Noon	Return to Room/Dismissal

Arrival	In some cases, children in this age group will arrive earlier than the rest of the VBS children. Therefore, make sure you're there early, as well! Be ready to greet your little ones with smiles, hugs, and love. Follow your church's check-in procedures and safety precautions.
Free Play	Provide inviting toys ready for free play. Help kids become familiar with their VBS space.
Tessa's Treats Breakfast Snack	If you are running a morning VBS, offer a small snack. This helps the children get used to their setting as they focus on food rather than being dropped off at the nursery! See page 21 for snack ideas, or choose mini muffins, fruit, or another light breakfast item.
Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall— Opening	Walk the children to the opening assembly. Request to be seated in the front on small chairs or in a special spot so the children can see. Plan to leave before or during the last song so you are back in your room before the other children leave.
Exploration Stations (Session 1)	Allow the children to explore the stations or participate in free play during this time. See the Resource USB or AnswersVBS.com for patterns.
Lesson Time	This is the heart of the day. If some of the other activities need to go, make sure this one <i>does</i> happen! Present the lesson early before fatigue sets in. At the same time, if you notice the kids are especially antsy or tired, remain flexible and switch activities. You can come back later to finish the lesson, or you can break it up and finish it the next day.
Griffin's Games	Play inside or outside. Just spend time playing! Young children learn as they explore their world. See page 15 for game ideas.
Kieran's Crafts (Session 1)	Toddlers and young preschoolers need simple crafts. Gluing sensory items (cotton balls, fabric, sandpaper, etc.) onto papers, attaching stickers, and coloring are always a hit. See page 18 for craft specifics.
Exploration Stations (Session 2)	Allow the children to continue exploring the stations.
Tessa's Treats and Rest Time	Make sure all snacks are bite-sized and not choking hazards. Be alert to any allergies children may have.
Kieran's Crafts (Session 2)	If the children seem up for it, try a second craft before heading out to the closing assembly.
Apprentices' Assembly in the Great Hall—Closing	Take the kids to the closing assembly, once again sitting close to the front. Leave five minutes early so they are back in their room when VBS is dismissed. Follow your church's safe dismissal procedures.

Memory Verse Songs

We have partnered with Seeds Family Worship and Majesty Music to create songs for each of the memory verses. They feature the full verses. (Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are taught condensed versions of these verses.) Singing Scripture is an excellent way for children to learn their Bible verses easily. If you choose to use these songs (either video or audio), use them during the memory verse time

in each lesson. The Music USB comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit and can also be purchased separately. You can also purchase and download the songs individually from AnswersVBS.com for use on a handheld device. Student CDs in packs of 10 are also available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (12-0-061 or 12-0-062).

Student Extras

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

Simple Songs: The songs referenced throughout this guide that are for Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are available on the Resource USB (you'll need to upload them to an MP3 player) and on a separate *Simple Songs for Kids* CD (12-0-141) that you can play in a CD player. You may want to purchase one of the CDs for each child. Downloads of the songs can also be purchased from AnswersVBS.com.

Student Guides: These age-appropriate guides feature a lesson review on the front of each daily take-home paper, as well as the memory verse and a suggested verse review game. The "Go and Do" section on the back parallels the Apply It! part of the lesson. You can either go over these during class time or send them home to be completed with a parent or caretaker, which is what our test churches do.

The student guides are available in packs of 10.

- Toddler ESV (12-0-074)
- Toddler KJV (12-0-135)

Royal Adventure Journals: These fun interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, animal pals, stickers, and a place to stamp (12-0-093) for attendance. They can receive them at any time during the first day (preferably as they arrive), and you can review them with the kids during the Apply It! section of the lesson. These are available in packs of 10.

- Pre-Primary/Toddler ESV (12-0-090)
- Pre-Primary/Toddler KJV (12-0-138)

Armor of God Sticker Sets: Use these sticker sets as a fun review of each armor piece.

- 12-0-078, pack of 10

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

- Gospel (12-0-076)—Day 2
- Armor of God (12-0-077)—Any day

Special Needs

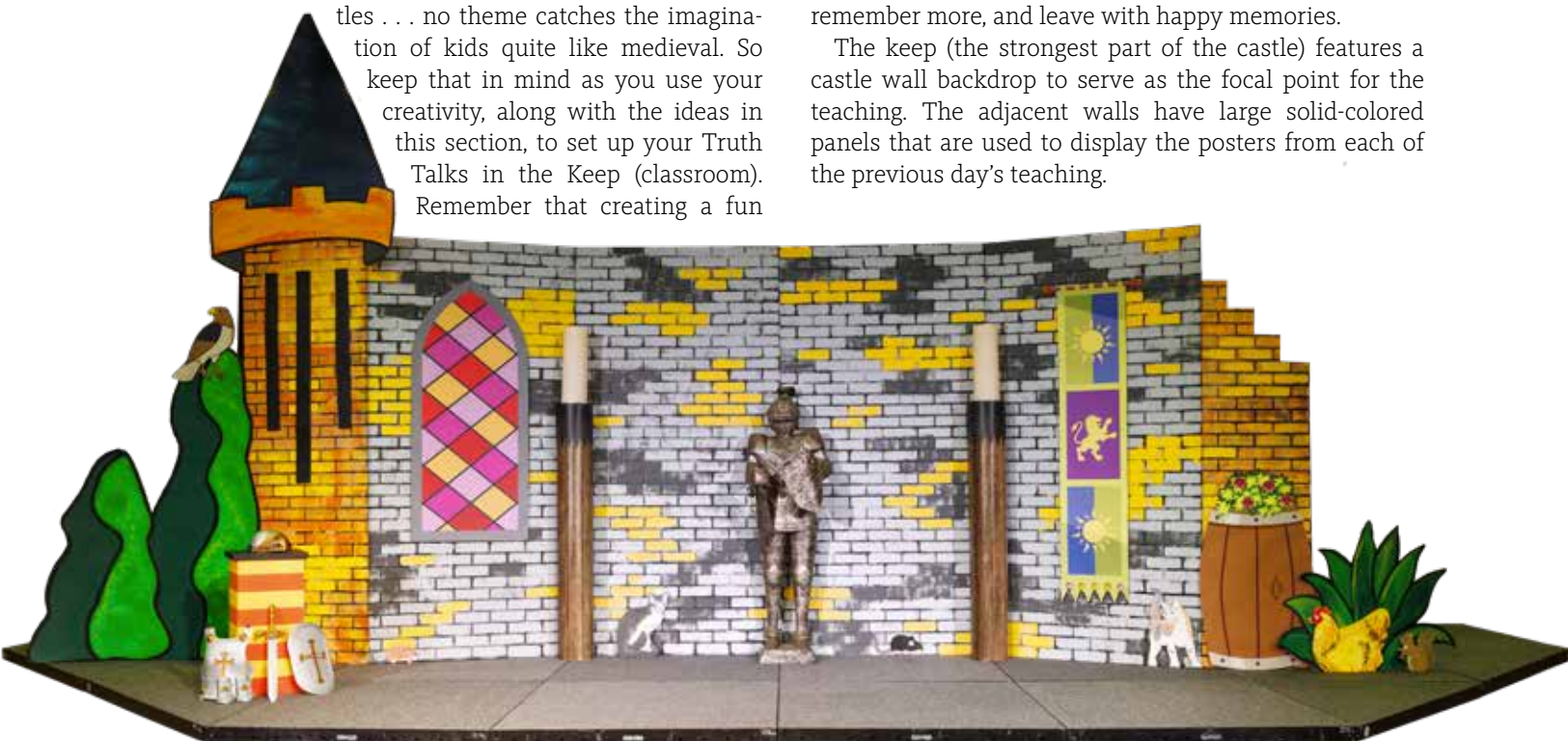
The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (12-0-053) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

Decorating Decisions

Kings, queens, knights, and stone castles . . . no theme catches the imagination of kids quite like medieval. So keep that in mind as you use your creativity, along with the ideas in this section, to set up your Truth Talks in the Keep (classroom). Remember that creating a fun

and exciting environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories.

The keep (the strongest part of the castle) features a castle wall backdrop to serve as the focal point for the teaching. The adjacent walls have large solid-colored panels that are used to display the posters from each of the previous day's teaching.



Key Decorating Elements

CASTLE WALL BACKDROP

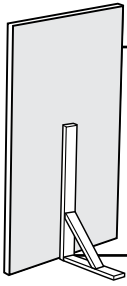
Your backdrop should be made out of a rigid material such as foam board or corrugated cardboard. Check party supply stores and websites for patterned backgrounds or scene setters of castle walls to attach to the backdrop, or paint your own. See the *Director Guide* for more on painting techniques. Add a stained glass window or archer's window on one side of the wall and a banner or coat-of-arms on the other. See the Resource USB for various banner and window design clip art images. Consider adding a turret on one or both sides as well. If you are using corrugated cardboard, apply one coat of paint to the back of the backdrop to minimize curling. Your backdrop should be braced from behind with wooden supports (jacks) and weighted down with bags of sand or rock salt. If necessary, you can further secure it by running thin strands of wire to the ceiling. Check YouTube www.youtube.com/AnswersVBS for how-to videos on building a jack.

POSTER DISPLAY PANELS

Four large colored panels on the walls adjacent to the backdrop are used to display the resource posters from each of the previous day's teaching. At the end of each day, the posters are transferred from the backdrop to a colored panel. Use roll paper or purchase inexpensive rectangular plastic tablecloths for this purpose. To dress them up, cut them into banner shapes. You will only need four panels because the last day's posters will remain on the backdrop.

RESOURCE POSTERS

Contained in the Teacher Resource Pack are the daily teaching, animal pal, and memory verse posters. These are important visuals for the kids and should be mounted in an organized fashion.



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

PUPPET STAGE

The stained glass window or archer's window in the castle backdrop can be cut so it swings open for a puppet stage. Make sure it's big enough for the puppet to fit through, and cover the hole from the inside with fabric. Puppets are used daily in all but the Junior rooms.

OTHER PROPS AND DECORATIONS



Embellish the area in front of your castle wall backdrop with various items such as a high-back chair; a large, old-fashioned Bible on a stand; artificial trees, plants, and vines; floor candelabras and fake flickering candles; tapestry rugs; wall torches made from paper towel tubes and colored tissue paper; a treasure chest; and assorted castle animals like mice and cats. An armor of God playset (26-1-049) can be purchased from AnswersVBS.com.

HOW TO ENLARGE AND TRANSFER CLIP ART

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

CLIP ART IMAGES

Don't forget to check the Resource USB for clip art images. These are an important part of your decorations. Use an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the images onto paper, poster board, or rigid materials such as corrugated cardboard.

CLASSROOM SCENE SETTER

A castle keep scene setter is available for purchase (12-0-126) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount the panels to cardboard or foam insulation sheets using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples and prop it up with wooden supports (jacks). Or, you can attach it directly to the wall with mounting putty or Mavalus tape.



Exploration Stations

Toddler classes enjoy Exploration Stations, which include a discovery center, two touch tables, a dramatic play area, and a coloring corner. Below are some directions for setting up these areas.

DISCOVERY CENTER

Set up this area with a table and chairs.

TOUCH TABLES

There will be two touch tables each day, one wet and one dry. Use under-the-bed storage containers, small wading pools, or "official" touch tables. Place a tarp or plastic tablecloth underneath.

INSIDE THE CASTLE DRAMATIC PLAY AREA

Make a castle where the children can spend time role playing. Your Inside the Castle dramatic play area should,

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VISIT [YOUTUBE.COM/ANSWERSUBS](https://www.youtube.com/AnswersUBS) FOR HOW-TO DECORATING VIDEOS!

naturally, resemble the inside of a castle. Begin by designating a corner of the room and deciding how large of an area to decorate. Next, cover the walls with “flagstone” or “stone wall” patterned background (“scene setter”) paper. On one wall, set up a royal throne by mounting a purple plastic tablecloth with a large gold crown icon behind a high-back armchair. Then add a large fireplace and stained glass windows to the other wall. (See the Resource USB for clip art images.)

Make play armor sets from simple items: stiff paper plates for shields, spray-painted fast-food chicken buckets for helmets, old ties for belts, and vests for breastplates. Play armor sets (26-1-049) are also sold in the Resource Catalog. Other costume ideas include crowns (see toddler crafts—Kingdom Crowns), tiaras, princess hats, dresses found at garage sales, and tunics made from old pillowcases (side slits for armholes and an opening cut for the head).

ROYAL PAUVILION COLORING CORNER

Set up a tent and decorate with fabric and banners. Or for more of a canopy style, secure a hula hoop near the ceiling of the room. Attach mosquito netting or sheer fabric/tulle around the hoop so that it flows down to the floor. Place a round table inside and supply crayons, markers, and extras to complete the daily coloring sheets.

ADDITIONAL EXPLORATION STATION IDEAS

Each day’s instructions have suggested stations, but here are some extra ideas if you would like to add more.

Castle Building—Assemble various supplies that kids can use to build castles. It can be on a small scale (e.g., LEGO, building blocks, cereal boxes) or on a larger scale (e.g., appliance boxes, copy paper boxes, cardboard tubes). You can also make “bricks” out of lunch bags by stuffing them with newspaper. Fold and flatten the end, then tape shut.

Canopy Reading—Make a colorful canopy/tent using a sheet draped over a table. Put a basket inside with a variety of children’s books, including children’s books about the armor of God, children’s picture Bibles, books about knights and castles, and books with accurate accounts of dragons, such as *When Dragons’ Hearts Were Good*.

Play Figurines/Castles—Borrow or buy play plastic figurines of knights, kings, queens, and horses. Also, see if anyone has any large or small play castles that can be borrowed. Or buy pop-up castles or large cardboard versions online.

Play Dough—Play dough is always a favorite, so you may want to feature a station with it all week. Add thematic cookie cutters such as crowns (for King Jesus, King Josiah, King Solomon), animals (for the Creator King), or crosses. It can also be rolled into a belt (like a “snake”) or a sword for armor pieces. You may also want to make scented or glitter play dough. Make sure to monitor it carefully with the toddlers. Note: Gluten-free play dough is available on Amazon.

How to Make Play Dough

2 c. flour	2 t. oil
½ c. salt	Food coloring
2 c. warm water	Optional: essential
4 t. cream of tartar	oils, glitter

Mix the first five ingredients in a saucepan. Stir over low-medium heat until a dough forms and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan, add the food coloring, and knead until smooth. For scented or glitter play dough, add a few drops of essential oils or glitter to each batch. After it has cooled, store in an airtight container.

Princess or Jester’s Hat—For a princess hat, pre-cut construction paper (triangle with one curved side) to shape into a cone. Kids color and add stickers, then tape edges into a cone shape. Staple a piece of sheer fabric at the tip. Punch holes in the bottom for yarn or ribbon to tie under the chin. For a jester’s hat, cut solid-colored bulletin board border into 20-inch strips. Cut six tall, thin triangles and tape them inside the bulletin board strip. Keep it flat for now. Kids color and add stickers, and then the teacher takes a pencil and rolls each of the six triangles outward a little before fitting the strip on the child’s head and taping or stapling the two ends together.



Costume Considerations

*A medieval theme begs for cool costumes!
Watch a favorite medieval-era movie for costume ideas,
then check out the simple directions below.*

Guys

Wear black pants and shoes as a base. (Brown can also work.) Put together one of the following for the top.

1. For a peasant look, wear a long-sleeved, puffy white shirt either alone or with a suede vest over it. Add a small leather pouch or a ring of large keys attached to a belt. Hint: Check out a thrift store to buy a puffy-sleeved shirt that's a couple sizes too big for you. Believe it or not, ones with lace work, too!
2. Make a simple tunic with a strip of rectangular material that will go from your shoulders to your knees. (Old bedsheets, tablecloths, or oversized T-shirts with the arms and neck cut out can be used for this. Solid-colored material is best.) Fold it in half and cut a hole for the head. Put it on and belt it with a leather belt or belts. Or crisscross belts to make a belted X across it. The puffy white shirt looks good under the tunic.
3. For a knight look, wear a silver or gray long-sleeved T-shirt, silk pajamas, or silver material as a base. Make a tunic as suggested above out of gray material and add a red felt cross emblem hot-glued onto the front. To make a headpiece, buy silver material that has the look of chain mail. Sew into a round tube. Put the tube over your head and wear bunched around your neck. (Or use a gray or black hoodie or a gray ski mask with the face part cut out.)
4. Another option for a shiny knight look is to buy bright silver sun reflectors at the dollar store and cut them to make tunics and other accessories.
5. For a king/prince look, buy or make a crown and a cape. Royal purple or red look particularly good. Old bedsheets or tablecloths can work for this. Once again, this can go over a base of black pants, black T-shirt, and black shoes.
6. For a jester look, make or buy full pajama-style pants that have elastic around the ankles and waist. Bright, crazy-patterned material is good. Couple these with a coordinating, bright-colored, solid T-shirt and jester hat. You can buy jester hats online or at costume shops, or look online to learn how to make one.

Gals

1. For a peasant look, wear a long, solid-colored skirt and plain white blouse. These are easy to find at thrift stores. Top it with a vest or shawl.
2. For a queen/princess look, some styles of old prom gowns can work as period costumes. Crushed velvet or satin are popular fabrics. Consider adding ribbon or gold rickrack to dress them up. Or make a wide fabric belt and crisscross gold ribbon on it. If the dress is too long, duct tape the hem at the desired length.
3. Sandals, ballet flats, or black flats all work for shoes.
4. Garland wreaths or tiaras work in the hair.
5. Gold jewelry and large, fake gemstone rings and necklaces can add flair.

Kids

1. Use ideas from above as possibilities, adjusting to kid sizes.
2. For tunics, use old pillowcases with the sides slit and a hole cut out for the head.
3. To make knight helmets, spray-paint either fast-food chicken buckets or empty milk jugs with a metallic spray paint. Cut them so the face of the child will mostly show, with the exception of a section that hangs down between their eyes, as the helmets of old were designed.
4. To make crowns, check the *Craft Guide* on Day 1 for instructions.
5. Ask around to gather children's princess and knight/armor of God costumes. Armor of God playsets (26-1-049) are also available for purchase from AnswersVBS.com.

Griffin's Games on the Green

Playing is what this age group does best! While they're playing, they're learning. These games are an important part of the teaching process because they help to cement the lessons into the kids' minds in a fun way.

Consider having an outdoor playtime if you have a good space for it. It's nice to break up the day and have a new location to explore. The outdoor location should be enclosed so no one wanders off. If you don't have a safe area, use tarped hay bales or snow fencing to create one. Ask church families to bring in plastic slides, big wheel riding toys, and other age-appropriate outdoor equipment. Make sure they're labeled so they can easily be returned after VBS.

You may also want to consider having wading pools with a small amount of water for outdoor playtime. (Supervise carefully.) Make sure parents are notified ahead of time to bring swim floats, a swimsuit, a towel, and extra clothes for their child. Ask if it's okay to put sunscreen on their child and apply it at least 10 minutes before going outside. If possible, place the pools in a shady area.

For game time, use the following suggestions or other options from the *Game Guide*. Some of the Pre-Primary games can work for Toddlers. Also, it's fun to repeat favorites throughout the week.

If you have kids with disabilities, be sensitive and adapt so they can participate as much as possible.

Thematic Game Ideas

Day 1

Knights' Ride

Ahead of time, gather a half pool noodle for each child and one blue sheet or plastic tablecloth for everyone to use. Check online for fun ways to make pool noodles into horses if you want to jazz them up.

Give each child the half pool noodle to ride as a horse. Have the kids follow a leader, riding around the play area. The blue sheet or tablecloth acts as a moat for kids to jump over as they ride. At some point, the leader should stop and say, "Oh no! This is the bad kingdom. Quick, ride back to the good kingdom!" Then have kids ride in the opposite direction. Finally, have children sit down to let their "horses" rest while you share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

There are two kingdoms. Who's the ruler of the good kingdom? [Take responses](#). God rules over the good kingdom. God is perfect and true. Who rules the bad kingdom? [Take responses](#). Satan is the ruler. He's bad and he lies. Let's be part of God's good kingdom!

Bible Quest

Ahead of time, gather some Bibles. Keep in mind the toddlers will be holding and hugging whichever Bibles you choose to use.

Stack some Bibles at one end of the play area, and have the children line up on the opposite end. Each child will have a turn running to the stack, picking up a Bible, and running back to start while hugging the Bible. If you have older kids who are more coordinated, they can ride a half pool noodle "horse" to pick up a Bible and bring it back. After each child has had a chance to run at least once, share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

The Bible's a very special book because it's God's Word. It tells us the truth about God and his good kingdom. And best of all, the Bible tells us how we can be part of God's kingdom!

Day 2

Belt of Truth Relay

Ahead of time, gather one belt for every two children. Optional: Blow up at least one balloon for each child.

Gather the children at one end of the play area and share the teaching tie-in. Then have two kids each hold an end of a belt and run together to the other end of the area and back. If using balloons, have each child running with the belt pick up a balloon at the other end to bring back with them.

TEACHING TIE-IN

This game uses regular belts. *Show a belt from the game and put it on.* These belts can help us remember the belt in God's armor. What's that belt called? The belt of ___ (truth)? We should fasten on the belt of truth. It helps us remember that the Bible's true and that we should always tell the truth.

Decide Your Side

Ahead of time, place a long piece of tape on the floor. Attach the *Good and Bad Kingdom Posters* (from the Teaching Posters) to the wall or to two chairs on either side of the tape.

Have the kids stand on the tape. Call out "good side" or "bad side" and "good kingdom" or "bad kingdom" while kids jump off the tape to the correct side. Add in other words like "God's kingdom" or "the enemy's kingdom"; "the loving kingdom" or "the mean kingdom." Play several times, then share the teaching tie-in while the kids sit down and rest.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We've learned that there are two kingdoms, a good one and a bad one. But in real life, you can't go back and forth like you did in the game. Every person must choose which kingdom they want to be a part of. You must decide your side. Let's choose the good side—God's side!

Day 3

Dragon's Treasure

Using a small ball, play this game somewhat like Red Light, Green Light. Choose a leader to be the dragon and stand at one end of the play space. Have the children line up at the opposite end. Explain that the ball is the dragon's treasure, then place it near the dragon. Whenever the dragon turns away from the kids, they will all sneak toward the treasure. When the dragon turns back, all the kids must freeze in place. If anyone moves, the dragon may tell them to return to the start. The first child to grab the treasure must run back to the start while the dragon chases him. When finished playing, share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Some stories say that dragons love treasure like gold and jewels. But what's our greatest treasure? *Hold up a Bible.* God's Word, the Bible, is our greatest treasure. It tells us how to do right in God's sight.

Don't Wake the Dragon

Use a small object that can be easily hidden. Have students sit in a semicircle on the floor. Place a chair at the

open end of the circle facing away from the kids. Put the small object under the chair. Choose a leader or child to be the dragon. Have the dragon sit on the chair (facing away from the kids) with his eyes closed. Silently choose a child in the circle to quietly pick up the treasure, then go back and sit down, placing it behind him. Have the dragon turn around. Give him three guesses to find the one who took the treasure. If he guesses correctly, that child becomes the dragon. If he guesses incorrectly, the teacher chooses the next dragon. Play several rounds, then share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We were playing with the dragon's treasure, weren't we? Did you know that God's truth is like a treasure? Where can we find God's truth? *Hold up a Bible.* We can find wonderful truth about God whenever we read the Bible.

Day 4

Shield of Faith Defenders

Ahead of time, gather stiff paper plates, one for each child. Use duct tape to make simple handles on the back of each plate. (If the kids did the Faith Shield craft, you may use those shields.) Make a line of tape or cones across the middle of the play area. Place a large amount of sponge balls, ping-pong balls, or crumpled paper balls on either side of the tape.

Share the teaching tie-in. Divide the children into two teams and have them line up on either side of the tape. Pass out one shield/plate to each child. Show them how to put their hand through the tape handle and hold the shield up in front of them. When you say go, the children on both sides will toss the balls at the other team, using their shields to defend themselves. Leaders can help toss the balls and encourage kids to hold up their shields.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Sometimes the enemy's lies and bad ideas will come at us like arrows. *Hold up a Bible.* But if we know and obey God's Word by faith, God will help us to turn from those sins and he will protect us like a shield. Let's pretend the balls are sins like lies. We'll use our shields to keep them away.

Put Your Helmet On!

This game of tag requires space to run. Share the teaching tie-in, then play the game. Have the children stand in a circle in the middle of the play area. Choose one or two leaders to be It. Show the children how to put their helmets on by placing their hands on their heads. When you say go, they must keep their helmets on as they run. If they put their hands down, that means their helmet fell off, and they can be tagged. (You may need to remind the kids to put their helmets on during the game.) When

a child is tagged, he must show it that his helmet is back on by putting his hands on his head before he may run again.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Which part of the armor of God is worn on the head? [Take responses](#). The helmet of salvation helps us remember that Jesus saves us from our sin and doesn't want us to sin anymore. We must keep our helmet on so we can win against sin and obey God.

Day 5

Bible Treasure Hunt

Ahead of time, print, laminate (if possible), cut out, and hide the [Bible Cutouts](#) around the room, and bring a timer.

Share the teaching tie-in, then set the timer and see if the kids can find all the cutouts before time runs out.

TEACHING TIE-IN

The Bible's like a treasure because it tells us the truth about God. It's also part of the armor of God. What part is it? [Take responses](#). It's the sword of the Spirit. The more we know about the Bible, the more we can share God's truth and hope with others.

Knights' Training Course

Ahead of time, set up a course using obstacles such as walking across a board (a moat), riding a hoppity ball (a horse), throwing a pool noodle (a javelin), and knocking down play bricks or boxes (a castle wall) with a pool noodle.

Have the kids take turns going through the course, then share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Knights had to practice to get ready for battles and learn to use their armor. We need to practice using the armor of God by reading the Bible and obeying it!

Kieran's Crafts in the Courtyard

Simple. Simple. Simple. Young children need simple crafts that are fun to touch and explore. More prep needs to take place so the children are left with simply decorating, attaching stickers, and gluing. This hands-on fun time helps kids really connect with what they're learning.

As with all other items used with the toddlers and young preschoolers, watch carefully that items are not choking hazards and that all items are nontoxic. Use

chunky crayons. Remember to put names on all crafts as children work on them.

Plan two craft times a day, but be prepared to skip one or both if the children need more rest time. Decide who will be in charge of preparing the craft materials (craft leaders, toddler teachers, or someone else). Whatever ideas you choose, have fun and use the crafts to reinforce the big themes of the week.

Thematic Craft Ideas

Several of these crafts require simple materials for the craft volunteers to use ahead of time, such as an office paper cutter, scissors, glue, and a pen or pencil. These items will not be listed in the supply lists below.

Day 1

Session 1—Kingdom Crown

Gather the following supplies: bulletin board border in gold or silver, large foam or jewel stickers, and a stapler. Optional: Use the [Kingdom Crown Pattern](#) and yellow poster board instead of the border.

Ahead of time, cut the bulletin board border into 20-inch strips, one per child. Optional: If using the Crown Pattern, make a template and trace a crown strip for each child onto yellow poster board.

During class, the children will decorate the outside of their crown strip with stickers. As each child finishes, fit the strip around the child's head and staple or tape the two ends together to form a crown. (Tape over the staples to cover any sharp edges.)

TEACHING TIE-IN

Have children put on their crowns. Our crowns are fun to wear. We can pretend to be a king or queen. But do you know who's the true King of the good kingdom? It's Jesus! He's the greatest king forever. Let's give him praise! Lead children in shouts of "Yay, King Jesus!"

Session 2—Winnie the Warhorse Coloring Sheet

Gather the following supplies: [Horse Coloring Sheet](#) and crayons. Optional: yarn (brown, black, or gray), googly eyes, Q-Tips or small paintbrushes to spread glue, and foam/paper bowls. You'll also need the [Day 1 Animal Pal Poster](#).

Ahead of time, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Cut yarn into 3-inch pieces and pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

During class, children will color their coloring sheet. Optional: Spread glue and attach pieces of yarn onto the head/mane and tail then add googly eyes.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the [Day 1 Animal Pal Poster](#). What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

Day 2

Session 1—Cross Magnet

Gather the following supplies: [Cross Text Labels](#), printable return address labels (½ x 1¼ inches; Avery #18294; colored if available), two large craft sticks (6 x ¾ inches) for each child, heart stickers, small craft magnets, and glue. Optional: crayons, markers, and glue sticks for labels printed on paper.

Ahead of time, print the Cross Text Labels onto the return address labels or print them onto white or colored paper then cut apart. Make one set ("King Jesus is the Savior") for each child. Glue pairs of craft sticks together to form

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a cross for each child. Attach a magnet on the back of each cross at the top.

During class, children will attach the text labels to their cross then add heart stickers. Optional: If the text labels are printed on paper, have kids color, if necessary, and use glue sticks to attach them.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Show a finished cross. Let's read the words on our crosses. Read the text "King Jesus is the Savior." And what do these hearts remind us of? Take responses. Our craft reminds us that King Jesus, God's perfect Son, loves us so much that he died on a cross to save us from sin. That's why he's called a savior. Now sinners, like you and I, can be part of his good kingdom. Let's say thank you to Jesus. Lead children in shouts of "Thank you, Jesus!" and "We love you, Jesus!"

Session 2—Wily the Fox Coloring Sheet

Gather the following: Fox Coloring Sheets and crayons. Optional: faux fur for the fox's tail, plastic googly eyes, black ½-inch pom-poms, Q-Tips or small paintbrushes to spread glue, and foam/paper bowls. You'll also need the Day 2 Animal Pal Poster.

Ahead of time, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Cut pieces of faux fur to fit the shape of the fox's tail on the coloring sheet. Pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

During class, children will color their coloring sheet. Optional: Spread glue onto the tail and attach the faux fur. Then glue on googly eyes and a pom-pom nose.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the Day 2 Animal Pal Poster. What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

Day 3

Session 1—Tower Growth Chart

Gather the following: Tower Growth Chart pages, tape, crayons.

Ahead of time, print one set of 4 growth chart pages for each child. Trim off ends at the dotted lines.

During class, have kids color the picture on each page. To finish the chart, line up the design end to end and tape the pages together. If you have time, measure each child and mark their chart with today's date.

TEACHING TIE-IN

What does your new growth chart say? Read the text: "Do right in God's sight!" When we wear the armor of God, it will help us do what's right as we live and grow each day.

Session 2—Grimwald the Dragon Coloring Sheet

Gather the following: Dragon Coloring Sheets and crayons. Optional: tissue paper (red, orange, yellow, and green), plastic googly eyes, Q-Tips or small paintbrushes to spread glue, and foam/paper bowls. You'll also need the Day 3 Animal Pal Poster.

Ahead of time, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Cut tissue paper into small pieces. Pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

During class, children will color their coloring sheet. Optional: Tear pieces of red, orange, and yellow tissue and glue them around the dragon's mouth. Then spread glue on the back/tail and attach green tissue. Add googly eyes.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the Day 3 Animal Pal Poster. What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

Day 4

Session 1—Faith Shield

Gather the following: Faith Shield Pattern, sturdy paper plates, duct tape, chenille stems (pipe cleaners), aluminum foil, crayons or markers, and glue sticks.

Ahead of time, print and cut out one shield for each child (or help children cut them out after coloring). Cut the foil into 12-inch squares. Shape the chenille stems into large loops and tape them to the front (indented) side of each plate for a handle.

During class, children will cover the back (bottom side) of their plates with foil and pinch it tightly around the edges. Next, they will color the shield and glue it onto the plate. (You may want to use these shields to play Shield of Faith Defenders. See the game instructions on page 16 in the Toddler Guide for details.)

TEACHING TIE-IN

What kind of shield is part of the armor of God? Take responses. It's called the shield of faith. Hold up a completed shield craft. That's what this says on the cross, "faith." When we use the shield of faith, it helps us say "no" to sin.

Session 2—Byron the Beetle Coloring Sheet

Gather the following: Beetle Coloring Sheets and crayons. Optional: colored cellophane or bubble wrap, Q-Tips or small paintbrushes to spread glue, and foam/paper bowls. You'll also need the Day 4 Animal Pal Poster.

Ahead of time, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Cut the cellophane into small pieces or cut

bubble wrap to fit the shape of the beetle's back. Pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

During class, children will color their coloring sheet. Optional: Spread glue onto the back of the beetle and attach pieces of crumpled cellophane or bubble wrap.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the **Day 4 Animal Pal Poster**. What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

Day 5

Session 1—Train Your Brain Card Caddy

Gather the following: "Train Your Brain!" Shields Pattern and Memory Verse Cards Pattern, white or colored copy paper and cardstock, 9-oz. clear plastic cups (2 per child), glue sticks, and liquid glue.

Ahead of time, print onto copy paper and cut out 1 shield for each child. Print onto cardstock and cut out one set of cards for each child. Cut the colored tissue paper into 1½-inch squares.

During class, children will decorate 1 cup by using a glue stick to spread glue onto a section of the outside of the cup and then pressing colored tissue paper squares onto the glue. Continue until the outside of the cup is covered. Have the kids color their shield, if necessary, then glue it to the side of the cup on top of the tissue paper squares.

Apply a few dots of liquid glue to the outside of the decorated cup just below the rim. Then place the decorated cup inside the second cup and press down to secure. Add one set of the memory verse cards to each cup.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Each of these cards has verses from God's Word, the Bible. Whenever you take a card out and ask someone to read it with you, you're training your brain. Try it and see how many verses you can learn to say all by yourself!

Session 2—Skye the Falcon Coloring Sheet

Gather the following: Falcon Coloring Sheets and crayons. Optional: feathers, googly eyes, Q-Tips or small paintbrushes to spread glue, and foam/paper bowls. You'll also need the **Day 5 Animal Pal Poster**.

Ahead of time, print one coloring sheet for each child. Optional: Pour glue into bowls for kids to share.

During class, children will color the coloring sheet. Optional: Spread glue onto the wings/tail and attach feathers. Then add googly eyes.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Refer to the **Day 5 Animal Pal Poster**. What's the name of our animal pal today? Take responses. Continue discussion about the pal and its significance.

Tessa's Treats in the Town

Yum! Snacks are always a hit. But with this age group, it is especially important to find out from parents about food allergies. Toddlers may not be able to communicate this information. If you are choosing other snack options, be mindful of small foods that may be choking hazards (e.g., hot dogs, nuts, marshmallows, raisins or dried fruits, hard or very chewy candies, chunks of cheese or fruit,

and popcorn). Some “big kid” snacks are safe for toddlers. You may want to serve smaller portions of those. See the snack guide for more details.

Decide who will prepare the snacks—teachers or the snack team—and decide if you are serving one or two snacks per day. And, of course, remember to wash hands and pray before eating.

Thematic Snack Ideas

Day 1

Kingdom Cookies

- ☐ 1 c. butter, softened
- ☐ 1½ c. sugar
- ☐ 2 eggs
- ☐ 2 t. vanilla extract
- ☐ 2 c. flour
- ☐ ⅓ c. baking cocoa
- ☐ ¾ t. baking soda
- ☐ ½ t. salt
- ☐ Vanilla icing, 1 T. per half cookie

Cream the butter and sugar, then add eggs one at a time. Beat in vanilla. Combine the next four ingredients and gradually add to the creamed mixture. Cover and chill for one hour or more. Roll into 1-inch balls and place on an ungreased baking sheet 3 inches apart. Bake at 350° F for 12–15 minutes or until the edges are firm. Cool before icing. Use store-bought icing or search the internet for “vanilla icing recipe” to make your own. Ice half of each cookie.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Look at your kingdom cookie. Do you remember how many kingdoms there are? [Pause](#). Two! One is God’s kingdom, and one is the enemy’s kingdom. Which side is the good kingdom? [Take responses](#). Which side is the bad kingdom? [Take responses](#). Let’s thank God that we can be part of his good kingdom and for this food.

A Few Twos

Serve two of a few items, such as two crackers, two small pieces of cheese, and two small pieces of fruit.

TEACHING TIE-IN

How many crackers do you have? [Take responses](#). Let’s count them. How many pieces of cheese? [Take responses](#). Of fruit? [Take responses](#). Do you remember how many kingdoms there are? [Take responses](#). Two! Let’s thank God for his good kingdom and for this good snack.

Day 2

King’s Cups

- ☐ 1 can frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- ☐ 1 can frozen fruit juice concentrate, thawed
- ☐ 1 carton fresh strawberries (cut into tiny pieces)
- ☐ Several bananas (cut into tiny pieces)
- ☐ 2 cans peaches (cut into tiny pieces)
- ☐ 1 can pineapple tidbits (cut into tiny pieces)
- ☐ Plastic spoons and small plastic cups, 1 of each per child

This is like the big kids’ version, but uses a smaller cup and less “slushy” per cup.

Make the frozen concentrates according to package directions. Put the orange juice and the fruit punch in a mixing bowl. Cut the fruit into tiny pieces and add to the mixture. Fill small cups half full of mixture and cover with foil. Freeze. Take out before VBS begins so they will be a slushy, smoothie-like consistency when serving. Test one the day before so you know how much in advance they need to come out of your freezer.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We’re having a king’s cup. Would you like to be a king or queen? [Take responses](#). Do you know who the greatest king ever is? [Take responses](#). Yes, God! Let’s thank him for being the King of kings and for this food.

Fruit Tarts

Make or buy a favorite medieval food—small fruit tarts or pies. An easy way to make semi-circle fruit pies is to flatten small canned biscuits, put pie filling on half the biscuit, fold over, press ends together, and bake. (Or, you may want to just serve some kind of canned or fresh fruit.)

TEACHING TIE-IN

We have a yummy fruit snack today that we can thank God for. Do you remember who ate fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? [Take responses](#). Yes, Eve. God made fruit for us to enjoy, but there was just that one tree Adam and Eve were not supposed to eat from. Let's thank God for his rules and for this snack.

Day 3

Dragon Munchies

- ☐ Dragon nails: Cone-shaped corn snacks, approximately 5 per child
- ☐ Dragon fireballs: Baked cheddar cheese ball snacks, approximately 5 per child
- ☐ Dragon tongue: Fruit on a roll, a 4-inch section per child

TEACHING TIE-IN

Dragons lived long ago with people. They had scales and nails and long tongues. Let's pretend our food is dragon scales and nails and tongues. And let's thank God for dragons and for our food.

King's Scepters

- ☐ Pretzel sticks, 2–3 per child
- ☐ Baked cheddar cheese ball snacks

Put a cheese ball puff on the end of each pretzel stick, which acts as a scepter.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Do you remember the name of the king who was a boy when he started? It was King Jo [\(have them shout out the name\)](#). Yes, King Josiah! He wanted to do right and obey God!

Day 4

Mini Pizza Shields

- ☐ 1 4x4-in square of pizza dough or Pillsbury mini pizza crust (in pop-open cans)
- ☐ 1 heaping T. pizza sauce
- ☐ 1 heaping T. mozzarella cheese
- ☐ Mini pepperoni slices for topping

Preheat oven according to package directions. Cut packaged pizza dough or crust into 4x4-in squares. Bake. Then use a sharp knife to shape the square into a shield. Or, for a simpler version, use a large cookie cutter (4 or 5-inch) to cut circles in the dough. Spread a heaping tablespoon

of sauce on each one, followed by mozzarella cheese. Add pepperoni slices to resemble the decoration on a medieval shield. Place on a baking sheet and bake until bubbly.

TEACHING TIE-IN

This pizza shield reminds me of a part of God's armor—the shield of faith. The shield of faith protects us! Let's thank God for giving us this special, invisible shield and for this fun snack.

H Is for Helmet

Give each child five honey wheat braided twist pretzels and a napkin or small plate. You may want to bag these ahead of time and put all the baggies in a helmet, such as a football helmet. Pass out the pretzels and have the kids shape them into an uppercase H.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Let's make the letter H out of our pretzels. [Demonstrate how to do it and have them do so](#). The letter H stands for helmet. We learned about the helmet of salvation today, didn't we? God wants us to wear our invisible helmet to guard our minds. Let's thank God for giving us the helmet of salvation and these pretzel sticks.

Day 5

Moat Floats

- ☐ Blue-raspberry soft drink (like Minute Maid blue raspberry), 4–6 oz. per child
- ☐ Vanilla ice cream, 1 small scoop per child
- ☐ Small cups, 1 per child
- ☐ Small straws that bend, 1 per child

This is a smaller version of the big kids' Moat Floats. Put a small scoop of ice cream in each small cup and keep chilled in the freezer until ready to serve. Pour the soft drinks right before serving, and insert a straw or half-straw in each cup.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Our treat today is called a moat float. A moat was a big hole that was filled with water that went around a castle to help keep enemies away from the castle and everyone inside safe. Let's thank God for caring for us and for this yummy snack.

Popsicle Swords

Give each child a popsicle. You may want to put a small cup or part of a cup on the popsicle stick under the popsicle to catch melting drips.

TEACHING TIE-IN

This popsicle reminds me of a part of God's armor—the sword of the Spirit. The sword of the Spirit is God's Word. Let's thank God for this good treat and for giving us his Word (the Bible).

— DAY 1 —

The Two Kingdoms

BIBLE PASSAGES

Creator King and Prince of Darkness
Genesis 1; Ephesians 6:10–11

LESSON FOCUS

We're in a battle between two kingdoms—
God's good kingdom that runs on
truth and the enemy's bad kingdom that
runs on lies.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

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

VERITAS VERSE

Put on the whole armor of God.
Ephesians 6:11

RHYME TIME

Of two, only one is true!

ANIMAL PAL

Winifred (“Winnie”) the Warhorse

Today's Exploration Stations

- Discovery Center: Kingdom Cards
- Touch Table Wet: Make It Clean!
- Touch Table Dry: Two Kingdoms Sandcastles
- Dramatic Play: Inside the Castle
- Coloring Corner: Ephesians 6:11

Today's Lesson at a Glance

INTRODUCE IT!

- Two Kingdoms Contrasted
- Song 1: “I’m in the Lord’s Army”

TEACH IT!

- Puppet Pal—The Battle’s On
- Song 2: “The Kingdom Keepers”

APPLY IT!

- Part 1: Animal Pal Review
- Part 2: Veritas Verse
- Part 3: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Genesis 1, John 18:37–38, and Ephesians 6:10–18 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on absolute truth and the two kingdoms, visit AnswersVBS.com/keeperfaq.
- Pray.

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).

Exploration Stations

See page 12 for setup and decorating instructions for each station, as well as ideas for additional stations.

Discovery Center: Kingdom Cards

MATERIALS

- ☐ Kingdom Cards
- ☐ Poster board
- ☐ Dark marker
- ☐ Light colored marker or colored pencil

PREP

Photocopy the patterns on white cardstock and cut into cards. Draw smiley faces lightly on the back of the good cards and frowny faces on the back of the bad cards. Draw a thick, dark line down the middle of the poster board to divide it in half. Write at the top of the left side “Good Kingdom” with a smiley face. Write at the top of the right side “Bad Kingdom” with a frowny face.

DIRECTIONS

Students put the cards either on the “Good Kingdom” side or the “Bad Kingdom” side. When done, flip over each card to see if they are in the right spots using the smiley or frowny faces for self-checking.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Today we’ll learn that there are two kingdoms. God’s kingdom is good, but the enemy’s kingdom is bad.

Touch Table Wet: Make It Clean!

MATERIALS

- ☐ Touch table with tarp underneath
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Baby shampoo or bubble bath
- ☐ Extras: bath toys, plastic dishes, washcloths, dish scrubbers

PREP

Partially fill the touch table with water. Make suds with baby shampoo or bubble bath. Add the extras.

DIRECTIONS

Wash the toys and dishes to make them clean.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We don’t want anything dirty or bad on our dishes or toys, so we clean them. The enemy’s kingdom is full of bad things like lying and being mean. But God’s kingdom is clean and pure; it doesn’t have anything bad in it.

Touch Table Dry: Two Kingdoms Sandcastles

MATERIALS

- ☐ Touch table with tarp underneath
- ☐ Wet wipes for cleanup
- ☐ Play sand, available at hardware stores (make sure it’s marked “play sand”)
- ☐ Water spray bottle for wetting down sand
- ☐ Extras: small buckets, shovels, cups, scoops, LEGO bricks
- ☐ Printed pictures of simple sandcastles

PREP

Put the play sand on the table and spray it with water to add moisture. Place the extras into the sand. Post pictures of sandcastles for inspiration.

DIRECTIONS

Help the children copy some of the picture ideas to build their own sandcastles. Or you can direct two groups to each build one.

TEACHING TIE-IN

The Bible says there are two kingdoms—a good kingdom of light and truth and a bad kingdom of darkness and lies. Who leads the good kingdom? God. Who’s the leader of the bad kingdom? Satan, the enemy.

Dramatic Play: Inside the Castle

This station, which will be a big hit, can be as low-key or as elaborate as you like.

MATERIALS

These will be used all week. Choose from the following, depending on your situation.

Note: Set out only part of the castle supplies the first day and add in new items each day.

- ☐ Play costumes (e.g., aprons, crowns/tiaras, play armor sets, princess dresses)
- ☐ Small broom and pails
- ☐ Stick horses or half pool noodles
- ☐ Crates or large baskets
- ☐ Little table, chairs, decorated chair for a “throne”
- ☐ Small rocking chair
- ☐ Baskets or wooden bowls
- ☐ Silver or clear plastic cups
- ☐ Play food (e.g., eggs, cheese, fruit, bread)

PREP

Gather costumes and other play items you will use today. Search directions online for how to make “pool noodle horses” if you want to make fun horses for this center.

DIRECTIONS

Children will dress up and pretend to be knights, servants, kings, and queens using the play items.

TEACHING TIE-IN

It's fun to play kings and queens, isn't it? Do you know who's the greatest King over all kings? Jesus, God's Son, is the King of kings. There's no other king like him!

Royal Pavilion Coloring Corner: Ephesians 6:11

This station will be used all week. Just add the new coloring sheet each day.

MATERIALS

- ☐ [Day 1 Memory Verse Coloring Sheet](#)

- ☐ Markers or crayons in a wooden bowl or metal pail
- ☐ Optional supplies: stickers, glue sticks and items to glue onto the coloring sheet (e.g., foil, cotton balls, pom-poms, feathers, and tissue paper).

PREP

Print the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE COLORING SHEET** (one per child). Gather optional supplies.

DIRECTIONS

Kids will color the sheet, then glue on additional items or add stickers, if desired.

TEACHING TIE-IN

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

Introduce It!

TWO KINGDOMS CONTRASTED (5–10 minutes)

Prep: Prepare your costumes. Cut apart the **GOOD KINGDOM/BAD KINGDOM POSTERS** and attach them to the wall. Print one copy and cut apart the **TWO KINGDOMS CONTRASTED CARDS**. Attach tape or mounting putty to the back of each card and put them in number order.

Teacher 1: Greetings, one and all! I'm ___, the trainer here in the strongest part of the castle. It's called the keep. Can you say that with me? Repeat "keep." We'll meet here every day to learn about kings, kingdoms, and some special armor God gives us to put on as we battle for the greatest king, Jesus.

Teacher 2: Good morrow! I'm ___, and I'm excited to open God's Word, the Bible. Hold up the Bible. It tells us about two spiritual kingdoms.

Teacher 1: Right! There are two kingdoms, but they're very different. One is good, and the other is bad.

Teacher 2: Hey, the kids can help us learn what the two kingdoms are like!

As you show each pair of **TWO KINGDOMS CONTRASTED CARDS**, have the kids shout out which kingdom each card goes with. Quickly attach the cards under the appropriate posters.

Show the first card. The ruler of the good kingdom is God. Attach this card under the **GOOD KINGDOM POSTER**. Show the second card. Satan is the ruler of the bad kingdom. He's not our friend. He's the enemy of anybody who loves God. Attach under the **BAD KINGDOM POSTER**.

- God is for us. Good. The enemy's against us. Bad.
- God loves us. Good. The enemy hates us. Bad.
- God is kind. Good. The enemy's mean. Bad.
- God is all-powerful. Good. The enemy is *not* as powerful as God. Bad.
- God always tells the truth. Good. The enemy lies. Bad.
- God always keeps his promises. Good. The enemy breaks his promises. Bad.

Teacher 1: As you can see, God is an amazing king and ruler of the good kingdom! The enemy is not!

Teacher 2: The Lord Jesus is the perfect king. I want to be part of God's good kingdom.

Teacher 1: In the days of kings and castles, the knights went out to fight for their king. Now, everyone who's part of God's kingdom must fight against sin. We want to obey our king, the Lord Jesus. Let's sing about being in the Lord's army.

Song 1: I'm in the Lord's Army (medieval style)

Explain the terms in the song and how a knight would have done these things. Or, sing in the traditional way. Both versions are on the Simple Songs CD.

VERSE

I may never march to the castle keep
(March in place.)

Ride in the tournament (Ride a horse, holding a spear in one hand.)

Shoot at the battlement
(Draw a bow and shoot an arrow.)

I may never sword fight the enemy
(Swing sword.)

But I'm in the Lord's army
(Point to yourself and then to God.)

Yes, Sir (Cross your arm over your chest in a knight's salute.)

CHORUS

I'm in the Lord's army
(Point to yourself and then to God.)

Yes, Sir (Do a knight's salute.)

I'm in the Lord's army
(Point to yourself and then to God.)

Yes, Sir (Do a knight's salute.)

Repeat verse.

- ☐ Good Kingdom/Bad Kingdom Poster
- ☐ Two Kingdoms Contrasted Cards
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Medieval costumes for teachers
- ☐ Mounting putty or tape

✦ Think of fun names for yourselves: Princess Katherine the Curly-Haired, Lady Betty of Boston, Crispin of the Woods, Gwendolyn the Glad, Albert the Silly, etc.

✦ The Bible is listed just once daily in the supply list but is used throughout, so keep it handy and marked to the correct passages ahead of time.



✦ Mounting putty or tape is listed just once daily, but is used throughout each lesson.

✦ If working as co-teachers, decide ahead of time each day who will be doing what.

- ☐ "I'm in the Lord's Army" song
- ☐ "The Kingdom Keepers" song
- ☐ MP3 download or Simple Songs CD (12-0-141)
- ☐ MP3 or CD player

Song 1: I'm in the Lord's Army (traditional)

VERSE

I may never march in the infantry
(March in place.)
Ride in the cavalry (Ride a horse.)
Shoot the artillery
(Clap and shoot right hand forward.)
I may never zoom o'er the enemy
(Put arms out to fly.)
But I'm in the Lord's army—Yes, Sir
(Salute.)

CHORUS

I'm in the Lord's army
(Point to yourself and then to God.)
Yes, Sir (Salute.)
I'm in the Lord's army
(Point to yourself and then to God.)
Yes, Sir (Salute.)
Repeat verse.

Teach It!

PUPPET PAL—THE BATTLE'S ON (5 minutes)

- ❑ Good Kingdom/Bad Kingdom Posters
- ❑ Day 1 Rhyme Time Poster
- ❑ Knight Posters
- ❑ 2 copies of Day 1 Puppet Script
- ❑ Boy or girl puppet and puppet stage
- ❑ Clipboard
- ❑ Mini sword (large craft stick covered in foil)

✂ The puppet can be dressed in a small VBS T-shirt. To make a small T-shirt, photocopy, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the logo and tape it to a baby-sized T-shirt.

✂ If you want to get snazzy, use a quick musical introduction and exit when it's time for the puppet to come and go.

Prep: Tape one **PUPPET SCRIPT** inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference. Make the mini sword. Check the *Craft Guide* for directions. Mount the boy and girl **KNIGHT POSTERS** on the wall—these will be used all week.

Each day, the puppet pal will introduce or teach a portion of the lesson. Decide who will be the puppet, and figure out when you need to leave the previous teaching so you will be positioned in time for the start of the puppet pal time. If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist a volunteer ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a trunk with the lid flipped up, or just stand and work the puppet. (It's fine if your lips move. No need to be a ventriloquist.)

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

Your puppet should come out from behind the stained glass window in the puppet stage. (See *Decorating Decisions*.) When the puppet is entering, hold your arm back and down and have the puppet take three steps up, getting higher each time, until the puppet is out and visible. When exiting, turn the puppet toward you and take three steps down until out of sight.

Teacher: Let's talk more about the two kingdoms with our puppet friend. Our puppet's name is Christian (or Christy if a girl). Let's all call for him (her) together. Do so.

Puppet: Come up waving a mini sword as if pretending to sword fight someone.

Teacher: Hi there, Christian. What're you doing?

Puppet: Oh, I'm pretending to be King Arthur!

Teacher: Was he the boy who pulled a sword out of a stone?

Puppet: Yes! I read how he grew up and became a great king who fought enemies in England.

Teacher: I know that story. King Arthur and his knights of the round table lived in a kingdom called Camelot.

Puppet: Yep! The good kingdom fought against the bad kingdoms. King Arthur and his knights were really brave! One knight even killed a dragon! Pretend to stab at a dragon.

Teacher: That's exciting! But you know King Arthur's just a story, right?

Puppet: I know.

Teacher: But did you know the Bible says there really *are* two kingdoms—God’s good kingdom and the enemy’s bad kingdom?

Puppet: What do you mean? *Stops sword fighting.*

Teacher: Well, the Bible tells us how everything in the beginning was all good. There was only one kingdom.

Puppet: What happened?

Teacher: An enemy named Satan got the first people to disobey God. This ruined the good kingdom on earth. So now there are two kingdoms. *Point to the GOOD KINGDOM/ BAD KINGDOM POSTERS you used earlier.* The good one’s ruled by God, and the bad one’s led by the enemy.

Puppet: Are they in a battle?

Teacher: Yep. You were pretending just now, but there’s a real battle going on. We can’t see it, but it’s really happening.

Puppet: Should I be scared of this battle? *Duck down and hide.*

Teacher: Not at all if you’re on God’s side—’cuz the Bible says God’s side wins!

Puppet: *Keep hiding.* You mean no one can beat God? Not even Satan?

Teacher: That’s right. God’s all-powerful. No one can beat God.

Puppet: *Come back up.* Wheew! That’s good to know.

Teacher: And only one kingdom’s good and kind and true.

Puppet: *Ask the children:* Do you know whose kingdom is the good kingdom?

Children: God’s kingdom!

Teacher: Yes! God is great, and his kingdom is good!

Puppet: Hmm. So there are two kingdoms, but only one is true—God’s!

Teacher: *Hold up the DAY 1 RHYME TIME POSTER.* Yep! “Of two, only one is true!”

Puppet: *Ask the children:* Can you say that with me? “Of two, only one is true.” *Repeat together.* That’s a great thing to remember.

Teacher: All who love and obey God become part of his good kingdom. *Point to the KNIGHT POSTERS.* And God gives each one a special set of clothes called the armor of God to help them every day. We’ll talk more about that this week.

Puppet: Hmm. They’re kind of like knights in shining armor—kingdom keepers! Hey, kids, let’s sing a song about God’s kingdom keepers. *Have the puppet sing with the kids, moving with the music.*

Song 2: THE KINGDOM KEEPERS (To the tune of “The Ants Go Marching”)

The kingdom keepers march for God,
hurrah, hurrah
(March in place, lift up your hands on
“hurrah.”)

The kingdom keepers march for God,
hurrah, hurrah
(March in place, lift up your hands on
“hurrah.”)

God gave us armor we will wear
(Tap head, tap shoulders, tap waist,
tap feet.)

Satan’s kingdom better beware
(Put fists up in a fighting stance.)
And we all go marching on
(March in place.)

For the Lord—who is strong—and has won
(Point up, flex your biceps, and lift hands
in a victory “V.”)

Huzzah! Huzzah! Huzzah!
(Shout and point up on each word.)

Repeat, adding a fourth Huzzah! at the end.

Puppet: Huzzah! Thanks for singing with me, kids. I’ll see you tomorrow! Bye!



- ☐ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster
- ☐ Armor of God Sticker Sets (12-0-078)



- ☐ Theme Verse Poster
- ☐ Day 1 Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Optional: Toddler Student Guides
- ☐ Supplies for chosen activities from Part 2 and Part 3
- ☐ Optional: Memory Verse music and player



✂ The front page of each day's student guide is a review of today's lesson. The back page of the student guide matches this section in the teacher guide.

Apply It!

PART 1: ANIMAL PAL REVIEW

Review is important—it helps the lesson “stick.” Share the **DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER** to summarize the teaching of the day. Show the Armor of God sticker sets (available to purchase from AnswersVBS.com), one set (child and armor stickers) per child. This week, children will add armor pieces as they learn about them. For now, write the name of the child on the papers.

Some knights rode on warhorses, like Winifred here. These horses were strong and didn't get tired easily during a battle. Winnie reminds us that we're in a battle between two kingdoms: God's good kingdom and the enemy's bad kingdom. Just as these knights had to trust their horses to carry them faithfully through battle, we must trust in our Creator God, who made us and takes care of us.

With each question, have the kids whinny like a horse and shake their heads (mane) “yes” if the answer is yes and shake their head “no” if it is no.

1. Are there two kingdoms? Yes—shake head “yes” and whinny.
2. Is one kingdom good and one kingdom bad? Yes—shake head “yes” and whinny.
3. Does the enemy rule the good kingdom? No—shake head “no.” Who rules over the good kingdom? God!
4. Does the Bible always tell the truth? Yes—shake head “yes” and whinny.
5. Is the bad kingdom as strong as the good kingdom? No—shake head “no.” Remind them that God is the most powerful, kind, and loving ruler of all. No one is like him.
6. Is the enemy mean and a liar? Yes—shake head “yes” and whinny.

Use any remaining time to complete the following ideas. These ideas are also on the back of the student guides. Send the student guides home each day as a fun review. Encourage the kids to do the Go and Do sections by asking them which ones they did and how it went each day.

Supplies for this section are not listed in the supply list on the back cover since they will vary depending on the activities you choose, so decide what you will do and add them to your supply list accordingly.

PART 2: VERITAS VERSE

Note: The word “veritas” means “truth is mighty and will prevail” or simply “true, trustworthy.” It was a word used in the Middle Ages and is still used today. Remind the children that every Bible verse is true, trustworthy, and mighty.

Today's Verse: Put on the whole armor of God. Ephesians 6:11

Try the following challenge, using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference and the Memory Verse music if you have it.

Challenge: Practice the verse several times, pretending to put on armor while you're saying it.

PART 3: GO AND DO

1. God is the ruler of the good kingdom. How many good things can you think of? Tell him thank you for all good things.
2. Play a game of opposites. A grown-up says one word, then the child says the opposite. Examples: good, bad; laugh, cry; up, down; in, out; smile, frown; happy, sad; light, dark. What are the two opposite kingdoms you learned about in VBS? (God's good kingdom and the enemy's bad kingdom)
3. With someone's help, check AnswersVBS.com/keeperkids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Which kingdom do I want to be part of?