

# DIRECTOR



**LEADER GUIDE**



# Director Guide

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

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

# COURSE

## Day 1 Creation

## Day 2 Corruption and Catastrophe

**Bible Passages**

All Is Good  
Genesis 1

All Sin  
Genesis 3, Genesis 6-9

**Memory Verses**

Genesis 1:1

Psalm 14:3

**Animal Pals**

Eden the Green Parrot

Tox the Blue Poison Dart Frog

**Apologetics Focus**

Examining how it all began—man's ideas or God's Word?

Examining the reality of a global flood

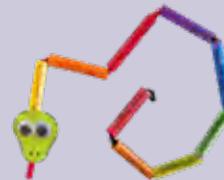
**Tree-mendous Crafts**



Face Planter



My Bug Jar



Straw Serpent



Rainy Day Rain Gauge

**Tree-mendous Science**

Order Disorder

Stack the Layers

Fallen Foliage

Catastrophic Eruption

**Rainforest Recreation**

Jungle Obstacle Course  
Sea and Sky Tag

Tox Tag  
Rainy Relay

**Canopy Café Snacks**



Dirt Dessert



Forest Fruit



Serpent Snack



Tree Treat

**Cool Contests**

Guess the Beetle Bugs

Team Spirit Day

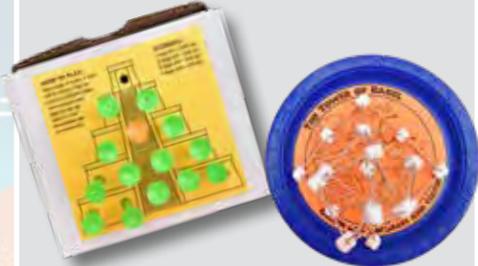


# OVERVIEW

## Day 5 Consummation

## Day 3 Confusion

## Day 4 Christ and the Cross

<p><b>All in Confusion</b> Genesis 11</p>	<p>Savior for <b>All</b> Who Believe Various Scriptures</p>	<p><b>All</b> Is Good Again Revelation 21-22</p>
<p>Genesis 11:9</p>	<p>John 1:12</p>	<p>Revelation 21:4</p>
<p>Scatter the Silverback Gorilla</p>	<p>Rose the Pink River Dolphin</p>	<p>Bliss the Bird-Wing Butterfly</p>
<p>Examining where the people groups came from</p>	<p>Examining the need for a Savior</p>	<p>Examining how it turns out in the end</p>
 <p>Tricky Triangle Game    Toothpick Tower</p>	 <p>Christmas Ornament    Easter Diorama</p>	 <p>7 C's Bracelet or Necklace    Beautiful Butterfly</p>
<p>Skin-Deep    Tower Test</p>	<p>Don't Eat Me!    Ring Around a Tree</p>	<p>Cycling in the Jungle    Good Again</p>
<p>Confusing Competitions Babel Bricks</p>	<p>Capture the Gifts Cross Kickball</p>	<p>Seven C's Splash Coconut Launch</p>
 <p>Shades of Pudding Parfaits Wacky Mixed-Up Trail Mix</p>	 <p>Gospel Goodies    Nativity Nibbles</p>	 <p>7 C's Boats    Colorful Bites</p>
<p>yaD sdrawkcaB</p>	<p>Seven C's Scavenger Hunt</p>	<p>Mission Money Mania</p>



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### *Director Guide*

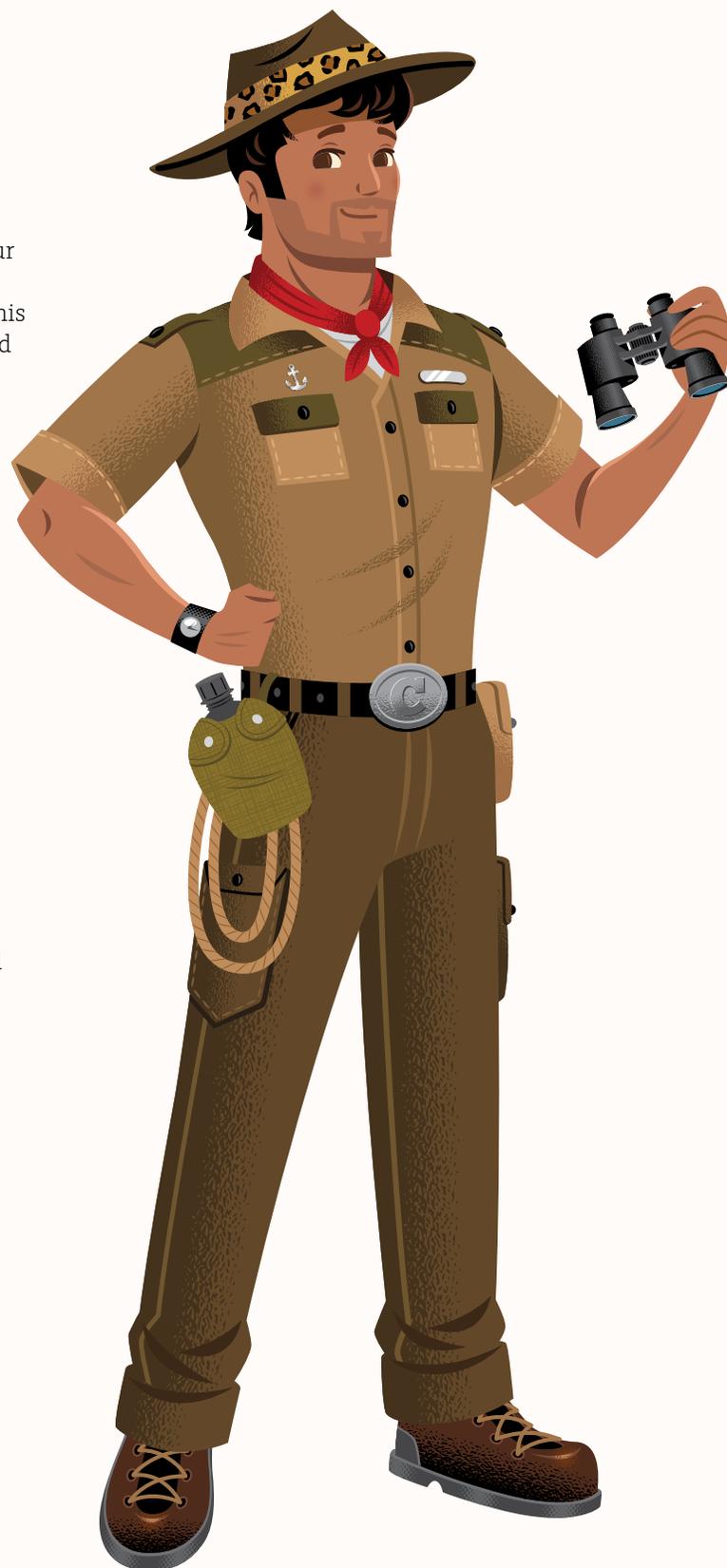
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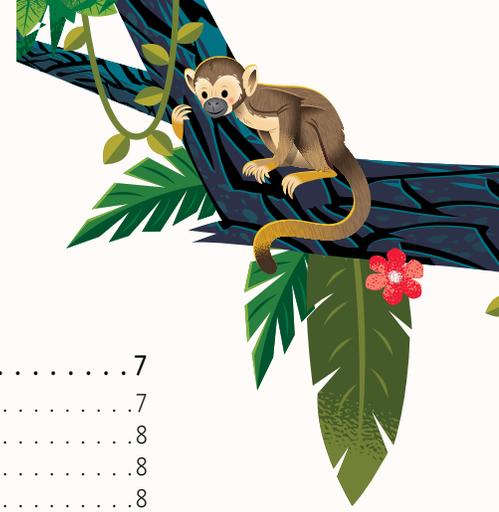
Project Coordinator: Stacia McKeever  
Writers: Amy Quinn, Randy and Barb Witt  
Editors: Ryan Freeman, Sarah Zornes  
Interior Design: Diane King  
Cover Design: Jon Seest  
Illustrator: Paul Agner  
Photographer: Susie Jarvis

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## OVERVIEW

# IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE!

*Listen!* Can you hear a howler monkey screeching and insects buzzing? *Look!* Do you see a sloth hanging from a tree and a jaguar crouching, ready to pounce? *Smell!* Is that the aroma of tropical flowers wafting through the air? *Touch!* Do you feel soft grass under your feet and gentle rain on your skin? *Taste!* Is that delicious milk from a coconut and exotic spices from the rainforest?

Join us in a world of wonder that will delight our senses while captivating our hearts and minds at *The Great Jungle Journey: An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation*. We will cruise through jungle rivers, making stops at seven ports of call along the way—each starting with a C. These represent seven key biblical events—the 7 C's of History.

**Day 1: Creation**—Our first C takes us back to the beginning of time and the creation of the universe when it was all good. Did the universe start with a big bang, or did God create it?

**Day 2: Corruption and Catastrophe**—Next, Adam sinned, which affected his descendants, who were so wicked that God sent a global flood as judgment for their sin.

**Day 3: Confusion**—The fourth C checks out the events that began at the tower of Babel. Can this be where all the people groups originated from?

**Day 4: Christ and the Cross**—At these stops, we realize once again that man is sinful and needs a Savior. Hallelujah, God provides one in his Son!

**Day 5: Consummation**—The last C shows the thrilling conclusion to history when all goes back to very good again, and—best news ever—God wins against sin and Satan.

Excitement and adventure await from the first minute of each day when kids meet in travel groups. The groups gather at the **Jungle Jam Assembly**, a high-energy beginning that includes wacky intros, lively songs, a Mission Moment, and prayer.

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

**Rain or Shine Bible Time**, where God's Word is taught in creative, hands-on ways.

**Tree-mendous Science and Crafts**, where kids make jazzy jungle crafts and explore God's amazing world with science experiments.

**Canopy Café Snacks**, where travelers go bananas, munching on tropical treats and eats.

**Rainforest Recreation**, where kids rumble in the jungle with some wet and wild games.

**Travelers' Missions, Music, and Memory Verses**, where kids sing songs, learn their memory verses with fun games, or go in-depth with the Mission Moment featuring Children's Hunger Fund.

Finally, everyone heads back to the **Jungle Jam Assembly** for the closing, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. This follows a jungle river cruise that plans to make stops at different ports of call but faces a catastrophe that affects the plan, resulting in lots of unexpected rainforest adventures.

Prepare to swing into the fun as we head out on our jungle river cruise. See you in the rainforest!

## Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place, and why are we still at it by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-chart, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

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

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

## Your Role

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

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

## Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *The Great Jungle Journey* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit [AnswersVBS.com/junglefaq](http://AnswersVBS.com/junglefaq).

## Terms to Know

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

**Travel Groups/Travelers:** Groups of children (individual classes) named after jungle animals, such as Bengal Tigers, Butterflies, Toucans, or Howler Monkeys.

**Group Guides:** Group leaders who lead the travelers from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.

**Rain or Shine Bible Time:** Bible and apologetics lesson time in the jungle.

**River Guides:** Teachers of the Rain or Shine Bible Time.

**Tree-mendous Science and Crafts:** Rotation site where crafts are made and science experiments are explored.

**Canopy Café Snacks:** Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

**Rainforest Recreation:** Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

**Travelers' Missions, Music, and Memory Verses:** Rotation sites where kids can spend additional time learning songs, memory verses, and missions.

**Memory Verse:** Daily Bible verse to learn.

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

**Toddlers:** 2–4-year-olds.

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

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

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

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

# Top 20 Tips for the VBS Director

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

1. Pray and study God's Word. "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). You *will* be busy, so keep in mind that the busier you get, the more you need to pray and study! God will multiply your time if you give him your best.
2. Read through the various guides thoroughly and early. Become familiar with the Digital Resources, which contains clip art, logos, printable and customizable versions of the forms mentioned throughout this guide, and more. If you're a first-time director, ask previous directors and VBS veterans what's been done in the past. It helps to receive counsel! At the same time, don't be afraid to try something new.
3. Check out the web address listed on page 8 for great articles on the teaching at *The Great Jungle Journey*. This is a good resource for you and a good reference for volunteers or parents who have questions.
4. Many hands make light work. Be careful not to overextend yourself. Delegate areas of responsibility to people and allow them the joy of serving, even if it is not quite how you would do it.
5. When working with people, there most likely will be conflicts. Resolve conflict with prayer and gentle answers based on principles from God's Word. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).
6. Have a backup plan for games in case it rains and you need to be inside all day.
7. Have fun. Directing your VBS should be a joy for you. At the same time, though, remember you are in a spiritual battle with an enemy who will try to throw darts your way. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).
8. Label file folders or electronic file folders with different areas of VBS, and use these to file ideas and suggestions.
9. Help your church catch the significance of this event by sharing that VBS is a huge, God-given opportunity to reach many with the gospel of Christ.
10. Get enough sleep and exercise.
11. Make people feel loved, appreciated, and needed.
12. Communicate well. Make announcements, require attendance at the training workshops, send emails, and keep everyone informed.
13. Be enthusiastic! Your excitement is contagious and makes others want to be in on the fun.
14. When deciding on the ages to include in your VBS, keep in mind that this VBS is written to appeal to not only young children but also older elementary kids. It has real answers from God's Word for real issues all kids face.
15. Be the *director*. Don't commit to teaching or any other VBS leadership role during VBS week. Stay as free as possible to greet, encourage, and troubleshoot.
16. Carry a cell phone or walkie-talkie with you during VBS week so you can be reached throughout the building.
17. Prepare two containers for each group leader. See page 34 for more information.
18. Soon after VBS is over, survey the staff so you can make improvements for next year.
19. Keep a list of answered prayers and praises. Share your list with others.
20. After VBS is finished, continue to pray for God to grow the seeds he planted and to bring more fruit over the next months. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

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

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

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

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

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

**[Twitter.com/answersvbs](https://twitter.com/answersvbs)**

# Terrific Trivia Tidbits

Jungle. Rainforest. What's the difference? A jungle is land covered with dense foliage and typically refers to the ground or understory layer of a tropical rainforest. Rainforests can be temperate or tropical (tropical rainforests are featured in this VBS) and encompass a variety of different vegetation layers, from the understory to the canopy. This trivia includes facts from jungles as well as from tropical rainforests more generally.

Now—time for a question. Do you know what the largest jungle in the world is called? The Amazon jungle (more properly called the Amazon rainforest). It's almost as big as the whole US!

Use this and the following trivia tidbits (also available on the [Resource Download](#)) to start thinking about our fun theme—the tropical rainforests of the world and their jungles—as well as our spiritual theme—the 7 biblical C's of history. These fun facts can be shared ahead of time at staff meetings with adults and teens or during the week of VBS with the kids. Use them at arrival and dismissal times or during any downtime between rotations.

## Part 1: General Information

- Do you ever wear a belt around your middle? God made the earth with a type of “belt” around its middle. It's called the equator. That's where tropical rainforests with jungles are found.
- Weather forecast today in the tropical rainforest? Warm and rainy. Tomorrow's forecast? Warm and rainy. The next day's? Warm and rainy. And on, and on, and on.
- Hungry? There's plenty of food to be found in jungles, such as bananas, pineapples, cinnamon, peppers, oranges, coffee beans, guava, cashews, and many other foods.
- God designed various leaves in the rainforest to help in different ways. There are leaves with drip tips that allow water to run off the tips. This keeps the leaves dry and free of mold. Other leaves act like mini “buckets” that gather water. Each is uniquely made by God.
- Guess what you call one banana? A finger. How about a whole bunch attached together? A hand.
- If you've ever imagined swinging on a vine through the jungle, just know there really are thick, rope-like vines in the jungle called lianas, and many animals do swing on them.
- Speaking of vines, strangler fig vines coil around a tree and eventually “strangle” the tree to death.
- Have you heard of cloud forests? They are cool rainforests higher up on mountains that are frequently covered by low-level clouds.
- The largest river in the world is the Amazon River. It can be brown, black, red, green, white, or blue, depending on the sediment content and depth.
- Ever heard of killer plants? Tropical pitcher plants found in Southeast Asia kill bugs, and sometimes larger pitcher plants catch lizards and rats!
- The word *rainforest* was invented around 1900 to describe a forest that grows in constantly wet conditions.
- Indigenous people sometimes use poison-tipped arrows to hunt. Where do they get the poison? From poison dart frogs!
- Do you like taking hot showers or cold showers? If you visit a jungle, it often feels like you're standing in a hot and steamy shower.
- Pretend you're standing in the rain. Because rainforests have really thick foliage, drops of rain can take 10 minutes to reach you on the forest floor!
- Do you like the smell of flowers? There's one you won't like for sure, and that's the Rafflesia that grows in the jungles of Southeast Asia. As the biggest flower in the world, it's three feet (90 cm) across and smells like rotting meat, thus its other name—the corpse flower.
- Feeling sick? Many of the medicines we use today originate from plants in the jungles and are used to treat conditions such as asthma, arthritis, malaria, heart disease, and even cancer.
- Glow-in-the-dark mushrooms? Yep, they're a thing in the rainforest! God gave some living things the ability to make their own light, which is called bioluminescence.
- There are areas of jungles that are so difficult to reach they remain largely untouched. Wonder what's in there?
- Organisms that live on other plants are called epiphytes, and they like to hitch a ride on hosting plants. Epiphytes don't need soil to grow but instead get their nutrients from the air, water, and debris—thus their nickname of air plants.
- Chocolate . . . growing on trees? Cacao seeds grow in the jungle, and that's where chocolate comes from.
- Hide and seek. Because there are so many tangled trees and vines in the jungle, animals have lots of places to hide from predators.
- Guess which continent doesn't have jungles. Did you guess Antarctica? Jungles can be found on every other continent.
- Check out these jungle plant names: Lobster Claws, Monkey Brush, and the Walking Palm.
- Only 6% of the world is covered by rainforests, but over half of all species live there.

## Part 2: Animal Information

- Would you freak out or think it's cool to see an Amazon giant centipede that is a foot long? Bird-eating tarantulas the size of dinner plates? A rhinoceros beetle the size of a baseball? You can find them all in jungles.
- Ribbit! Most of the world's frogs live in jungles, including some crazy-looking ones like glass frogs, tomato frogs, the Surinam horned frog, and the hairy frog.
- Most chill animal? Maybe the sloth. It spends its days hanging upside down on branches, slowly eating leaves and sleeping. It moves so slowly it may grow algae on its fur, making it appear a fuzzy green color.
- Here's a clever invention. The orangutan of the Southeast Asian rainforests makes his own hat out of leaves! God gave him that ability to cool himself down from intense heat and to be protected from rainforest downpours.
- What's one of the loudest animals in the rainforest? The howler monkey. God gave it an enlarged hyoid bone in its throat which makes its calls especially loud. You can hear it echoing through the jungle three miles away.
- Stick out your tongue. Now try to touch your eyelid with it. Okapis have such long tongues they can actually lick their own eyelids.
- Guess what group of animals you'll find the most of in the rainforest. Did you say insects? It's estimated that 2.5 million insect species live in the Amazon jungle alone. Add in the other jungles of the world, and you've got yourself a lot of insects!
- Which jungle cat has the strongest bite? The jaguar. It can bite straight through the thick shell of a turtle.
- Some animals' feet never touch the forest floor! They live their whole lives up in the trees.
- Wanna meet a freaky big frog? Then check out the Goliath frog. It's the biggest frog in the world at over 12 inches (30 cm) in length and seven pounds (3 kg) in weight, making it bigger than some house cats. Any ideas why they nicknamed it the Goliath frog?
- How's this for creative? When it's curled up, the bird-dropping crab spider looks like . . . bird droppings! It even smells like them.
- If you want to see the world's smallest bear in the wild, head to the jungles of Southeast Asia where the sun bear lives. It's about half the size of the American black bear.
- At the Black Ivory Coffee business in Thailand, about 20 elephants that live in the jungle are fed coffee beans. When they go to the bathroom a day or so later, their waste is harvested and made into one of the most expensive coffees in the world—Black Ivory Coffee.
- Ants that explode? Yep! If they feel threatened, they squeeze their muscles really hard. That makes them explode! They leave a harmful, sticky goo behind.
- God designed the basilisk lizard with feet that enable it to “walk” on water. Because of that, it is sometimes called the Jesus lizard.
- Have you ever tried to bite off more than you can chew? Leaf-cutter ants bite off so many leaves it's incredible. They actually carry the leaves around—almost 50 times their weight! That would be like a person carrying the weight of about three large men in his teeth!
- Zap! Watch out for electric eels if you end up in a South American jungle river. They can grow to be eight feet (2.4 m) long and give a jolt that is strong enough to knock a horse off its feet. They aren't real “eels” but instead are knifefish.
- Do you like bright-colored birds? Some of the most beautiful, colorful birds in the world live in jungles, such as the toco toucan, scarlet macaw, Amazon kingfisher, and the ruby-throated hummingbird.
- Who's the king of the jungle? It's often thought to be lions, but lions typically don't live in jungles. Many tigers do though.
- Did you suck your thumb when you were a baby? Baby elephants suck their trunks.
- What's the largest rodent in the world? A mouse? A rat? Nope, it's a capybara. They can weigh up to 150 pounds (68 kg) and stand at two feet (60 cm) tall. Now that's one big rodent!
- What is the world's strongest bird of prey? The forest-dwelling harpy eagle. Even though they are birds, they eat mammals as big as sloths and monkeys. One look at their faces and you might be intimidated too!
- Is it true that piranhas eat humans? They usually eat animals and plants. While they can be aggressive toward people, it would be highly unlikely they would attack a full-grown adult. Keep your hands inside the boat though!

# Ferociously Fun Jokes

## Animal Pal Jokes and Riddles

### Day 1 Animal Pal Jokes—Parrot

- Why did the parrot's mom go to the elementary school?  
*For a parrot-teacher conference.*
- What did the parrot say to the waitress after he ordered his food? *"Just put it on my bill."*
- What did the parrot say when the monkey made fun of him? *"Toucan play that game."*
- What did the teacher say to the parrot who wasn't prepared for her speech? *"Just wing it!"*
- What's a parrot's favorite material? *Polly-ester.*

### Day 2 Animal Pal Jokes—Poison Dart Frog

- What's a poison dart frog's favorite drink? *Croak-a-cola.*
- What's a poison dart frog's favorite place to work? *IHOP.*
- Why was the poison dart frog crying? *Because he was so unhappy.*
- What do you get when you cross a frog and a rabbit? *A bunny ribbit.*

### Day 3 Animal Pal Jokes—Gorilla

- Why are gorillas the best fighters? *Because they know King Kong Fu.*
- What's a gorilla's favorite cookie? *Chocolatechimp.*
- What's a gorilla's favorite fruit? *Ape-ricots.*
- Why does the gorilla like to shop at Amazon? *Because he's a Prime-ate.*
- How does a gorilla get down a flight of steps? *He slides down the banana-ster.*

### Day 4 Animal Pal Jokes—Pink River Dolphin

- What's a pink river dolphin's favorite country to visit? *Fin-land.*
- What do pink river dolphins take when they get a cold? *Vitamin Sea.*
- What did the pink river dolphin tell his mom when he broke her favorite vase? *"I didn't do it on porpoise!"*
- What did the dolphin's mom say after he got a haircut? *"You look fin-tastic!"*

### Day 5 Animal Pal Jokes—Butterfly

- How did the caterpillar know he was in love? *He had butterflies in his stomach.*

- What's a butterfly's favorite type of government?  
*A monarchy.*
- What do you call a friendly caterpillar? *A social butterfly.*
- Why wasn't the butterfly invited to the dance? *Because it was a moth ball.*

## Miscellaneous Jokes and Riddles

- What's a rainforest dweller's favorite dessert? *A pie-thon.*
- How do you get to know a modern spider? *Check out his web-site.*
- What's a rainforest dweller's favorite Christmas song? *Jungle Bell Rock.*
- What's an anaconda's favorite subject in school? *Hissss-tory.*
- What do you call a sick alligator? *An ill-igator.*
- Why do hummingbirds hum? *Because they don't know the words.*
- Where do tigers go to work out? *The jungle gym.*
- Where do monkeys go to get flowers? *The rain-florist.*
- What plant can you hold in your hand? *A palm tree.*

## Knock Knock Jokes

- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Iguana. *Iguana who?*  
Iguana go to VBS. Want to come?
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Leaf. *Leaf who?*  
Leaf me alone, please.
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Gorilla. *Gorilla who?*  
Gorilla me a steak, please!
- Knock knock. *Who's there?*  
Water. *Water who?*  
Water you waiting for? Come to VBS!

## Tongue Twisters

- A pack of pretty parrots pitter-patter.
- Monkeys make mud pies many Monday mornings.
- Crowds of crawly critters creep along the crooked creeks.
- A million messy monkeys love to mambo.
- Skunks shun summer sunshine.

# Jungle A to Z

## A

acacia ant, Amazon, anaconda, Asian arowana fish, armadillo, army ant, assassin bug, Atlas moth

## B

basilisk lizard, beetle, bioluminescent mushrooms, bird-eating spider, black agouti, blue morpho butterfly, Borneo, Bornean elephant, bromeliad

## C

cacao bean, caiman, cannonball tree, canopy, capybara, cashew, chicle tree, chimpanzee, clearwater, cloud forest, coconut, Congo, corpse lily, crab spider

## D

dogfish, dolphin (pink), downriver, dragonfly

## E

electric eel, elephant beetle, emerald boa, emergent layer, epiphyte, equator, exploding ant

## F

fer-de-lance snake, fern, fig tree, forest floor, fruit-eating bat

## G

giant anteater, giant otter, giant stink bug, gibbon, golden lion tamarin, goliath beetle, gorilla

## H

harpy eagle, Hercules beetle, hoatzin, hornbill, howler monkey, hummingbird

## I

ibis, insect, iguana

## J

jaguar, Jatoba tree, jumping spider, jungle

## K

Kapok tree, keel-billed toucan, kingfisher, kola nut

## L

lantern bug, leafcutter ant, leaves, leech socks, lemon, lemur, leopard, liana vine, lime

## M

macaw, manatee, mango, matamata, moss, mother-of-pearl butterfly

## N

nettles, night monkey, ninja slug

## O

ocelot, oil palm, okapi, orangutan, orchid

## P

palm grass, pangolin, papaya, parrot, passion flower, peccary, philodendron, pink river dolphin, pitcher plant, piranha, poison dart frog, prayer plant, pygmy marmoset

## Q

Queen Alexandra's bird-wing butterfly, queen's wreath, quetzal, quinine bark

## R

rain, rainforest, rain poncho, red-eyed tree frog, rosy periwinkle, river cruise, rubber tree

## S

scarlet macaw, silverback gorilla, skiff, sloth, spiny katydid, stingray, strangler fig tree, Sumatran tiger, sun bear, sunlight, Suriname toad

## T

tamandua, tapir, tent-making bat, tomatoes, tonka bean, tropical

## U

ubos fruit tree, umbrella bird, undergrowth, understory layer

## V

vampire bat, vanilla bean, violin beetle

## W

walking palm, walking stick, waterfalls, Wellington boots, whip scorpion, whitewater, window-pane butterfly, woolly mouse opossum

## XYZ

Xylopia brasiliensis tree, yam, yapock, zebra plant, zorro

# Top 20 Tips When Working with Children

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

1. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day, and always be ready with smiles, giggles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure all staff are aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.)
2. Learn names. It makes children feel important and loved to be called by their name. Make sure visible name tags are always on each child.
3. Keep it moving. Children have short attention spans.
4. Use active learning. The more children can actively be involved in the learning process, the more they will retain.
5. Be all there! Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care during VBS. Listen to them and care for them.
6. Eliminate downtime. Find activities to do when you have a few free minutes so all time is being used in a fun and productive way. Practice memory verses, share Terrific Trivia Tidbits and jokes (Ferociously Fun Jokes), play impromptu review games, or ask fun conversation starters (page 75).
7. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions on page 52. Ensure there are always at least two unrelated adults with the children at all times.
8. Be thematic. Get the kids enthused and excited about participating in the daily contests. Children love costumes, fun cheers, songs, and anything that goes with the theme, so dress to reflect a jungle cruise.
9. Walk worthy. Be an example in both word and deed. Children need to see authentic Christianity, so make sure you are walking the walk and not just talking the talk.
10. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes act up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
11. Be aware of age-level characteristics. With younger children, activities need to be hands-on, concrete, short, and simple. Older children love to talk and are processing and questioning information. Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you.
12. Challenge them. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to learn their memory verses and song lyrics. At the same time, encourage in them a true love for the Lord and his Word.
13. Pray. Before, during, and after VBS, be a faithful prayer warrior for the children in your care.
14. Be organized. Read through all training information, ask questions, and faithfully prepare any materials for which you are responsible.
15. Be a team player. Children do not need to hear negative words from their leaders. If you are frustrated or upset, take it to the Lord, but do not complain or get angry in front of the children.
16. Remember to take bathroom breaks. The younger the children, the more important this is!
17. Maintain order. Children like order! Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
18. Build team spirit. Work as a team rather than allowing cliques to develop. Everyone should be an important member of the team.
19. Use guided conversation. Be alert and ready to turn conversations to spiritual matters. Build upon what the children are learning throughout the VBS day.
20. Be prepared to lead a child to Christ. Attend the Gospel Presentation Workshop to be equipped should God give you the awesome opportunity to talk to a child about Christ.

# Age-Level Characteristics

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

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

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

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

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

## TODDLERS (2–4 YEARS OLD)

### Physical Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

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

### Emotional/Social Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

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

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

### Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

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

## PRE-PRIMARIES (4–6 YEARS OLD)

### Physical Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

- Pre-Primaries like to play hard, so keep them moving with short, simple games and activities. They may need to sit and rest for a brief time after active play.

### Emotional/Social Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

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

### Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Pre-Primaries talk a lot and ask a lot of questions, including questions about God. They understand that sin is disobeying God. They need a lot of guidance in tasks but can also follow a simple series of directions. They have an attention span of approximately five minutes. They enjoy doing new things and hearing stories and songs. They're not always able to tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They're developing attitudes toward right and wrong and can do basic memory work.

#### Takeaways for Us

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

## PRIMARIES (6–9 YEARS OLD)

### Physical Characteristics

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

#### Takeaways for Us

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

### Emotional/Social Characteristics

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl and boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the team and want adult and teacher approval.

#### Takeaways for Us

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

## Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete rather than abstract or symbolic thinkers. They're learning to read. They need active learning. Their attention span is growing. They understand the consequences of their actions. They can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

### Takeaways for Us

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. Becoming a child of God, or being in God's family, is a more concrete way to express the same concept, as they will understand what it means to be in a family.

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

## JUNIORS (9–12 YEARS OLD)

### Physical Characteristics

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

### Takeaways for Us

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

### Emotional/Social Characteristics

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

sarcasm. As they head into puberty, they may experience mood swings.

### Takeaways for Us

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

### Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

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

### Takeaways for Us

- Ask thought-provoking spiritual questions. They are thinking and like to talk. Be there for them as a safe person to bounce thoughts and ideas off of.
- Listen well and pray with them.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking children to read out loud unless they volunteer or you know they can read well.
- Allow them to act out lessons. Most Juniors enjoy this active involvement.

- Give them opportunities to be involved in missions or service projects.
- Challenge them to ask God to help them grow in their love for him and his Word. Help them set up Bible-reading plans and encourage them to memorize passages of Scripture.
- Make sure to walk the walk and not just talk the talk. They can spot inconsistencies, so it's important to walk worthy.
- Show interest in each child, helping them sense your care and interest in them.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

# Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

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

## Attention Getters

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

- » **Teacher:** Chimpanzees!  
**Kids:** Everybody freeze!
- » **Teacher:** 1, 2, 3, 4  
**Kids:** Elephants, tigers, monkeys galore!
- » **Teacher:** Pitter-patter, pitter-patter  
**Kids:** Raindrop, raindrop
- » **Teacher:** Crisscross (they cross their legs)  
**Kids:** Watch for crocs!
- » **Teacher:** Rain  
**Kids:** Forest  
**Teacher:** Rain  
**Kids:** Forest  
**Teacher:** Shh!

**Rainstorm**—Make the sound of a rainstorm that starts softly with a light rain and gets louder. Start by having everyone rub their hands together, then snap their fingers to get a little louder, then clap their hands (not in rhythmic clapping), then slap their hands on their legs, then stomp their feet. Go in reverse to get back to a light rain.

**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.

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

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

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

## Lining Up and Walking Through the Building

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

- » “If you are wearing red, line up. Now, if you’re wearing blue, line up.”
- » “If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up.”
- » “If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up.”

- » “If your first name starts with A–L, line up. Now, if your first name starts with M–Z, line up.”
- » “If you are quiet, line up.”

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

- » “Let’s be mice and walk as quietly as we can.”
- » “Let’s be robots. No talking—just stiff movements.”

## Proactive Tips

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Keep Them Busy**—If there is any downtime, fill it with something productive! This could occur while waiting for the next rotation or the assembly to begin, if craft time ends a few minutes early, etc. Use the time to practice

team cheers, ask questions, or go over memory verses in fun ways (make up motions, make them into a rap, etc.). You may also want to play a quick game, like one of the following.

- » **Stone Face**—Have a competition to see which child can hold a frown for the longest without cracking a smile.
- » **I Spy**—Look for jungle things to spy out.
- » **Simon Says**—Simon can say Bible-themed things, like read your Bible (hands in front of you making a book), pray (praying hands), tell others (cup hands around mouth), go to church (make a church with a steeple out of your interlocked hands), etc.
- » **Quiet Mouse**—Have a competition to see who is the quietest in line.
- » **Follow the Leader**—Play the normal version or a jungle river cruise version. A jungle version uses rainforest animals and activities, like the following:
  - Fly like a scarlet macaw (bird).
  - Crouch like a jaguar.
  - Crawl like a Goliath birdeater spider.
  - Swim like a piranha fish.
  - Run like a basilisk lizard (running upright).
  - Slither like an anaconda, the world's largest snake.
  - Flutter like a blue morpho butterfly.
  - Jump like a red-eyed tree frog.
  - Trek through the jungle in your Wellington boots.
  - Kayak on the Amazon River.
  - Climb a tree to see a sloth.

## Calming Rowdiness

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

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

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

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

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

## PRIORITIES

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

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

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

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

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



## Praying for Your VBS

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

# Top 10 Tips for a VBS Prayer Ministry

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

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



# Staff Devotions

## Devotion 1: God Is the Good Creator

*The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. Psalm 145:9*

For a few moments, imagine yourself strolling through a section of the garden of Eden. This beautiful abundance of flora and fauna was just declared by the Creator to be “very good.” The creation was a manifestation of the goodness of the Creator. In your mind’s eye, how does this original paradise reflect the goodness of God?

Do the flowers fill the air with glorious fragrances? Do the serpents hanging from the trees fill you with delight at their bright colors and silky smooth skin? Do you gently stroke the thick fur of the large bear to your right? Do you gasp in awe at the towering sauropod as he lumbers past?

Contrast this with the view that Carl Sagan held about God and his creation:

“If God is omnipotent and omniscient, why didn’t he start the universe out in the first place so it would come out the way he wants? Why is he constantly repairing and complaining? No, there’s one thing the Bible makes clear: The biblical God is a sloppy manufacturer. He’s not good at design, he’s not good at execution. He’d be out of business if there was any competition” (Carl Sagan, *Contact* [New York: Pocket Books, Simon & Schuster, 1985]).

In Sagan’s Eden, the flowers God created prick you with thorns when you bend over to inhale their fragrance. The serpent slithering past your feet inspires a fearful shriek. The lion creeping up behind the lamb suddenly takes a bite out of it. And the dinosaurs are nowhere to be seen because they died out millions of years ago.

What important factor did Carl Sagan fail to take into account? *He believed that the world we live in today is the world God originally created. He didn’t understand that we now live in a fallen world—a world that has been corrupted with sin. His view has been colored by the belief that the world is millions of years old and that the fossil record—filled with evidence of death, disease, suffering, and thorns—is a record of the way things have been for the past several million years.*

Carl Sagan isn’t alone in viewing the Creator this way. Media mogul Ted Turner and even Charles Darwin himself

are just a few of the many who can’t comprehend the goodness of God because of what they see today.

Although all of creation shouts, “There is a God!” (Romans 1:20), it has been marred with our sin.

Read Psalm 33:5. In what ways do you see the love of God still reflected in his creation?

In what ways do you see the effects of our sin?

Think about how you represent the all-good Creator to those in your care. For example, are the “design features” you share with your children reflective of a good God or a fallen creation?

As you present today’s C, do so in a way that emphasizes the goodness of God. His original creation was complete and “very good.” It was full of life, peace, and joy. He provided light for us to see by (day 1), air for us to breathe (day 2), vegetation for us to eat (day 3), majestic arrays of stars to study before bed (day 4), abundant fauna for us to enjoy (days 5–6), and a creation for us to care for. He created for his glory.

Read Psalm 107:1, 15, and 119:68, as well as this Puritan prayer about the infinite goodness of the Creator.

King of glory, divine majesty,  
Every perfection adorns thy nature and sustains  
thy throne;  
The heavens and earth are thine,  
The world is thine and its fullness.  
Thy power created the universe from nothing;  
Thy wisdom has managed all its multiple concerns,  
Presiding over nations, families, individuals.  
Thy goodness is boundless;  
All creatures wait on thee;  
Are supplied by thee;  
Are satisfied in thee.

How precious are the thoughts of thy mercy and grace!  
How excellent thy lovingkindness that draws  
men to thee!

—Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision*  
(Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2005), 216.