



MISSION BRIEFING

Toddler

ACCESS
GRANTED

TEACHER
GUIDE



AnswersVBS

SPY U

Course Overview

Theme Verse: Psalm 86:10

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	
Title	Uncovering Counterfeits	Finding Fingerprints	Collecting Clues	Cracking Codes	Hot on the Trail	
Bible Passages	1 Kings 18:20–39	Various Scriptures	Various Scriptures	Luke 15:11–32	Mark 12:28–34; Revelation 3:15–16	
Lesson Focus	God is unique because he is the only true God. Today, we'll uncover counterfeit gods and discover the God of the Bible.	God is unique because he is one God in three persons. Today, we'll be on the lookout for those persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.	God is unique because he himself came to earth to rescue us. Today, we'll be challenged to admit, believe, and forever receive him.	God is unique; he is beyond description! Today, we'll crack codes to track down some of his attributes.	God is unique because he wants to have a personal relationship with us. Today, we'll learn our mission to keep God as our first love.	
Apologetics Content	There's only one true God. All others are counterfeits.	The Trinity is a reality but also a mystery.	The biggest difference between Christianity and other religions is who Jesus is.	God's character is like no other.	Unlike other religions, our God is about relationship. He is loving and personal.	
Commit This to Memory	1 Kings 18:39	2 Corinthians 13:14	John 17:3	Psalm 145:8	Mark 12:30	
Daily Cipher	1 True God	3 in 1	God Cares 4 U	God Is . . .	Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength	
Animal Pals	Camo the Mimic Octopus	Loop the Sugar Glider	Scout the California Sea Lion	Gracie the Kunekune Pig	Homer the Homing Pigeon	
Exploration Stations	Discovery Center	Only One	Your Very Own Prints	On the Lookout	Crack the Code Memory Game	Hot or Cold
	Wet Sensory Table	Elijah and the Prophets of Baal	Baptized in the Jordan	Sink or Float?	Pig Pile	I Spy Water Fun
	Dry Sensory Table	Fire on Mt. Carmel	Fingerprint It!	Rescue Mission	Secret Sand Messages	Finding Clues
	Dramatic Play	Spy Time	Spy Time	Spy Time	Spy Time	Spy Time
	Coloring Corner	1 Kings 18:39	2 Corinthians 13:14	John 17:3	Psalm 145:8	Mark 12:30
Truth Sleuth Science	God Is There—Just like Air	A Unique God and a Unique Me	Clear Clues	Color-Coded Messages	God's Important Instructions	
Truth Sleuth Crafts	Octopus in Disguise Elijah Puppet Play Set	Sugar Glider Puppet Trinity Pom-Pom Badge	Swimming Sea Lion Gospel Magnifier	Pom-Pom Piggy One True God Binoculars	Pigeon Mask I Spy Shaker	
Fast Action Games	Clever Cover-Up Bubble Challenge	Trinity Toss Sugar Glider Follow the Leader	Sea Lion Swim Pool Pandemonium	Piggies in the Pen Color-Coded Cards Relay	Hot or Cold Hot on God's Trail	
Top Secret Snacks	Fake Fries	Pudding 1-2-3	Mini Magnifying Glass	Pigs in a Blanket	Mini Mystery Muffins	
	One Bite World Wonder: Asia	One Bite World Wonder: Africa	One Bite World Wonder: South America	One Bite World Wonder: Europe	One Bite World Wonder: Australia	
Cool Contests	Mystery M&M's	Secret Signals	Devise a Disguise	Code Cracking Bible Challenge	Mission Money Mania	



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Toddler Teacher Guide

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Your Mission

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to train special agents around the world to detect counterfeit religions and to know, love, and live for the one and only God.

At *Spy U*, the latest from Answers VBS, kids will be in training to become agents for the one true God. In this jam-packed week, the cadets will be trained in the following areas:

- Uncovering counterfeit gods and recognizing the only true God—the God of the Bible
- Finding that God is unique—one God in three persons
- Collecting clues to reveal how to become a child of God
- Cracking codes to discover attributes of God
- Discovering that God is not distant but personal, wanting to be their first love

Excitement and adventure await from the first minute of the day when everyone gathers for the **All Agents Assembly**, which includes entertaining intros, catchy songs, a Mission Moment, and prayer.

Then the cadets rotate through four fun sites:

Mission Briefing at Spy U HQ, where God's Word is taught in hands-on ways.

Fast Action Games, where training challenges of the utmost fun are mastered.

Top Secret Snacks, where top level treats vanish in a hurry.

Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts, where cadets engage in hands-on science activities and crafts.

After training and mission assignments are completed, cadets regroup for the closing assembly, which includes more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. The drama takes place in International City, a place that has drifted away from following the one true God. The Truth Mission Force is sent in to expose the truth about God. Agents Jordan Trace, Alex Cipher, and Riley Gizmo find foes in unlikely places as their assignment takes them through unexpected twists and turns.

All this adds up to one great, high-impact week! Ready, agents? Do you copy? The world awaits!

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-charts, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

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

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

Your Role

Your role as the teacher (Agent) is outlined in the following pages and includes planning and preparing the daily 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.

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

Frequently Asked Questions

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

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.

Cadets: Groups of children (individual classes) named after countries (Truth Team Canada, Truth Team Japan, etc.). They will “graduate” from *Spy U* at the end of the week and earn the title of “Junior Agents.”

Truth Team Leaders: Group leaders who guide the cadets from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.

Mission Briefing: The Bible and apologetics lesson time happening at *Spy University HQ*.

Agents: Teachers at *Spy U*.

Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts: Rotation site where crafts are made and science activities are explored.

Top Secret Snacks: Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

Fast Action Games: Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

Operation: Missions, Music, and Memory Verses:

Rotation site where kids can spend additional time learning songs and memory verses and hearing about missions.

Commit This to Memory: Time to learn and practice the daily Bible verse.

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 Toddler Teaching Tips

1. Pray and study God's Word. That is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of opening his Word and sharing it daily with the children, so be well prepared. "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the [downloadable resources](#). 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 are listed next to each activity.
 - » The "teacher says" portion is bold.
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 switch easily.
6. 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.
7. Ask your assistants to help man the Exploration Stations each day. Post the directions and teaching tie-ins at each station every day as easy references for your helpers.
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 can come up from a puppet area if there are two of you to do the puppet skit. If you're working alone, the puppet can come up from behind a trunk or suitcase with the lid flipped open.
9. Dress in spy-themed clothes, such as a black T-shirt and pants. You can also wear the T-shirt and hat available from AnswersVBS.com.
10. 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, such as adding a small animal pal stuffie to different pockets. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
11. Call the children by name as you interact with them. Name tags help with this.
12. Think safety. Read the [Child Safety Precautions](#) for more information.
13. 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.
14. Use your Bible throughout the lessons at the appropriate times. Bookmark the passages for quick access. 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. 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 even 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—Teach the kids that when a teacher says something, they should reply with something else. Practice the following ideas so kids know your expectations for responding:

Teacher: I spy

Kids: With my little eye

Teacher: Mission

Kids: Possible

Teacher: Crisscross (as they sit and cross legs)

Kids: Spy boss

Teacher: Jesus loves me

Kids: This I know

Teacher: For the Bible

Kids: Tells me so

Teacher: God is good

Kids: All the time

Teacher: And all the time

Kids: God is good

If You're Listening—Say, “If you're listening, put your hands on your head. If you're listening, stomp your foot,” and so on. See how fast everyone catches on.

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, kids should be completely quiet.

Soft Talk—Start talking about something important very softly or in a whisper. Kids will often quiet down 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 are wearing black like an undercover agent, line up. Now, if you're wearing red, 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 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 schedule, 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 is 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. For example, “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 everyone else is busy. 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 unique and is a 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. Understanding how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see characteristics of children in general and then characteristics of Toddlers, ages 2–4 years, specifically.

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics:

- They are born sinners (Romans 3:23).
- 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.

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 materials.
- 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.
- 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, Wet Sensory, Dry Sensory, Dramatic Play, and 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 Decisions section for specifics on setting up the Dramatic Play area as a spy safe house with a brick wall backdrop and lots of spy-themed gadgets. Decorate the Coloring Corner to look like a hideout.

For the Sensory Tables, use small wading pools or large, under-the-bed storage containers, partially filled with water or other materials. Place them on a plastic tarp or tablecloth to catch spills. Post the [Station Name Signs](#) and leave copies of the directions and teaching tie-ins for assistants to reinforce.

Lesson Time

The Bible lesson time (Mission Briefing) is divided into three sections:

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

The lesson time works best with a two-person team. One person serves as Teacher One and the other as Teacher Two, who is also the puppet player. Decide ahead of time who will do what. If teaching alone, either find someone to help with the daily puppet script or work the puppet yourself, using a suitcase with the lid flipped up. Have the puppet appear from behind the lid.

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	All Agents Assembly—Opening
9:15–9:40	Exploration Stations (Session 1)
9:40–10:05	Mission Briefing Bible Time
10:05–10:30	Fast Action Games
10:30–10:45	Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts (Session 1)
10:45–11:00	Exploration Stations (Session 2)
11:00–11:20	Top Secret Snacks and Rest Time
11:20–11:35	Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts (Session 2)
11:35–11:55	All Agents Assembly—Closing
11:55–Noon	Return to Room/Dismissal

Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! The contemporary memory verse songs are produced by Seeds Kids Worship (ESV) and the traditional memory verse songs are produced by Majesty Music (KJV). Both are available with the Music Leader Download, included with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. The songs feature the full verses. (Pre-Primaries and Toddlers are taught condensed versions of these

verses.) If you choose to use these songs, we suggest using them during the memory verse time in each lesson. The memory verse songs and the theme songs are together on one student CD. Student CDs in packs of 10 are available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (Contemporary—1240610; Traditional—1240620). Streaming options are available at AnswersVBS.com/streaming.

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. Purchase these items from AnswersVBS.com.

Simple Songs: The songs referenced throughout this guide that are for Pre-Primaries and Toddlers may be streamed on your personal device from AnswersVBS.com/streaming. They are also available on a separate Simple Songs for Kids CD (1241410). You may want to purchase a CD for each child.

Student Guides: These daily, age-appropriate take-home papers feature a lesson review activity, the memory verse, and a suggested verse review game. The “Go and Do” section 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 (1240740)

- Toddler KJV (1241350)

Spy Training Manuals: These fun, interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses, along with a place to stamp (1240930) attendance. Check with your VBS director to find out when to give these to the kids. They can receive them at any time during the first day. 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 (1240900)
- Pre-Primary/Toddler KJV (1241380)

Spy U Map and Stickers: Use these sticker sets as a fun review of each day’s teaching.

- Pack of 10 sets (1240780)

Bookmarks: Pass these bookmarks out at the end of Bible time or at the end of the day. These are available in packs of 10.

- Gospel—(1240760)—Day 3
- God Is . . .—(1240770)—Day 4

Special Needs

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (1240530) 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

It's no secret that boys and girls alike love a spy theme! So use your creativity along with the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations. A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories.



Key Decorating Elements

Classroom Set

Each day, the cadets will gather in the Mission Briefing room at Spy U HQ where God's Word is taught. To serve as a focal point for the teaching, create a set with a high-tech aesthetic. Use bold colors, geometric designs, a world map, and international wall clocks. You can also add screens and keyboards. See the Resource Download for [clip art images](#). Construct your backdrop using sheets of corrugated cardboard, rigid foam insulation, or your classroom wall.

Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to making your own classroom set, a scene setter is available for purchase (1241260 or 1241360). For the paper scene setter, simply mount the panels onto a rigid material using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples, and prop them up. Or you can attach them directly to a wall with mounting putty, Mavalus tape, or double-sided tape on top of painter's tape. For the fabric scene setter, use the grommets and fishing line to hang it from the ceiling or from a PVC frame



Exploration Stations

Toddler classes enjoy Exploration Stations, which include a dramatic play area, a sensory table with water, a sensory table with dry materials, a discovery center, and a coloring corner. Further information about these stations can be found in the lessons but check below for details on how to set up the dramatic play area and coloring corner.

Spy Time Dress-Up

Your Spy Time dress-up area should resemble the inside of a spy safe house. First, designate a corner of your room, then cover the walls with a brick wall scene setter or paper. Make a Who's Who? chart to place on the wall. Add yellow caution tape or red yarn "laser beams" to the walls. On another wall, make a blind by accordion-folding a large sheet of construction paper and adding a ribbon to the bottom to be the pretend "pull." In the center of the space, add a child's table and chairs with tech-type stuff, like old computer keyboards, cell phones, and remote controls. Other possible items to place around the area include play magnifying glasses, passports, play money, clipboards, play cameras, binoculars, papers, and file folders. Place dress-up clothes in a box and mark them with [Confidential](#) or [Top Secret](#) labels. Finish the room with other items, such as backpacks, briefcases, and play suitcases with travel stickers on them.



Hideout Coloring Corner

In another corner of your room, fashion a hideout space using a pop-up tent or a super sturdy table against the wall that they can get under. Spread a large tablecloth or sheet over the table so it drapes to the floor. For a door, pull back

an edge of the tablecloth/sheet and fasten it open with a large binder clip. Inside the hideout, cover the floor with a blanket and place daily [Memory Verse Coloring Sheets](#) along with coloring and decorating supplies.

Additional Exploration Station Ideas

- ❑ **X Marks the Reading Spot**—Make a cozy reading spot with an X on the floor. Place a basket nearby with a variety of children's books, including children's picture Bibles and books about the one true God.
- ❑ **Art Agents**—Have assorted art supplies available for cadets to make their own creations. Suggested materials include paper, markers, ribbon, craft sticks, recycled small boxes, paper towel tubes, and plastic containers. Suggest making pretend spy gadgets—watches, binoculars, cell phones, etc.
- ❑ **Examine the Evidence**—Set this up as a science/nature center where the cadets can carefully observe various items. Powers of observation are important for cadets in training. Provide kid-safe magnifying glasses.
- ❑ **Planes, Trains, and Automobiles**—Set up some mini spy-like cars and play tracks. Add in play helicopters, trains, police cars, and other mini play vehicles for fun chases.
- ❑ **Flannel Board Fun**—Provide a flannel board with people and items from each day's Bible lesson.
- ❑ **Play Dough**—Play dough is always a favorite, so feature a station with it all week, adding thematic supplies (e.g., cookie cutters and plastic toys) that have to do with the day's teaching: Day 1 (only one God) #1 and cross cookie cutters; Day 2 (the Trinity) triangle cookie cutters; Day 3 (the gospel) fruit and snake cookie cutters; Day 4 (prodigal son) pigs and people cookie cutters; Day 5 (loving God with all your heart) heart-shaped cookie cutters.

PLAY DOUGH RECIPE

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| ❑ 2 c. flour | ❑ 2 t. oil |
| ❑ ½ c. salt | ❑ Food coloring |
| ❑ 2 c. warm water | ❑ Optional: glitter |
| ❑ 4 t. cream of tartar | |

Mix the first five ingredients in a saucepan. After blended, mix in food coloring. Stir over low to medium heat until the dough is formed and is no longer sticky. Remove from the pan and knead until smooth, adding the glitter if desired. After it has cooled, store in an airtight container.

- A** **“Affirmative”**—yes
Aka—also known as
- B** **Birdwatcher**—name for a spy in British Intelligence
Bug—listening device
- C** **Compromised**—when an operation or agent is uncovered
“Copy that”—I heard and understood the message
- D** **Dead drop**—a secret location where materials can be left and retrieved
“Do you copy?”—Are you there? Do you understand?
- E** **Ears only**—information too confidential (secret) to be written down
Expats—people who live in a country other than where they grew up
Eyes only—documents too confidential (secret) to be talked about
- F** **Flaps and seals**—using tools to open letters, read them, and replace them without tearing the envelope
FYEO—for your eyes only
FYI—for your information
- G** **Gather intelligence**—collect information
- H** **Hijack**—unauthorized seizure of a vehicle, person, or system
HQ—headquarters
- I** **Infiltrate**—to secretly gain access to a secure area
Informant—someone who provides information about another person’s secret actions
- J** **Julius Caesar code**—used by Julius Caesar and commonly called the Caesar cipher, which replaces each letter of the alphabet with another letter that is a fixed number of spaces away
- K** **Keyboard cipher**—a code made by shifting fingers on a keyboard by a fixed number of spaces and typing from that position
- L** **Listening post**—site where audio surveillance from bugs and other devices can be heard
- M** **MI5**—the United Kingdom’s intelligence agency that covers domestic affairs
MI6—the United Kingdom’s intelligence agency that covers foreign affairs
Mole—a double agent
- N** **“Negative”**—no
Neutralize—to make a spy ineffective by foiling their plans
- O** **Op**—operation
“Over and out”—goodbye
0100 hours—one o’clock in the morning
- P** **Pocket litter**—items in a spy’s pocket that verify their assumed identity
- Q** **Q gadgets**—legendary, imaginative spy tools often disguised as everyday objects
- R** **Ring**—a network of spies or criminals
Rolled-up—when an operation goes wrong and/or an agent is taken into custody
- S** **Sanitize**—to delete information in a document
Swim—to travel
- T** **“That’s classified”**—that’s private information
Troll operative—an online spy who creates confusion and conflict in the online platforms of other countries
Turn—to force or convince a spy to work against their country as a double agent
“10-4”—okay
- U** **U-2**—the world’s most famous spy plane
- V** **Virus**—malicious computer code meant to disrupt or extract information from the targeted system
Voice-scanning software—technology that uses your voice as a password and is strong enough to even tell identical twins apart
- W** **Walk-in**—a defector who enters a spy office to give intelligence information in exchange for something
- X** **X-ray vision**—advanced technology that allows you to see through walls or containers
- Y** **Year of the Spy**—1985, the year that an unusually high number of spies were caught working in the United States
- Z** **Zephyr**—a high-altitude surveillance system

Fast Action Games

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. The outdoor location should be enclosed so no one wanders off. If you don't have a safe area, use tarp-covered 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.

For game time, use the following suggestions or other options from the Game Guide, such as the Pre-Primary games. It's also fun to repeat favorites throughout the week.

Themed Game Ideas

Day 1

Clever Cover-Up

Prep: Gather a variety of hats, sunglasses, scarves, etc.

Class Time: Begin with the teaching tie-in, then have the children put on disguises and line up across the front of the room. Ask: "Who is the real (child's name)?" The one whose name was called should remove the disguise. Make a big deal about finding the real person, then let that child help you guess who the others are. Optional: Take turns with only two or three children in disguise. Ask the other kids who they think is the real (child's name), then have that child remove the disguise.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Sometimes spies have to wear a disguise. That means they dress up so people can't see who they really are. Today, we're learning that there is only one real God. But there are also things that might seem like they are a god but are really fakes. The more we know God from the Bible, the easier it will be to see right through those fake disguises!

Bubble Challenge

Prep: Gather liquid bubbles.

Class Time: Share the teaching tie-in, then have the children gather around the area. Blow bubbles and have kids try to pop them before they touch the ground.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Spies have to be quick. They need to be ready to run or hide. Being quick takes practice. So we're going to practice that today. But remember, it also takes practice for us to be quick to know when we hear lies about who God is. Only God's Word, the Bible, can be completely trusted to always tell the truth about the one true God.

Day 2

Trinity Toss

Prep: Gather three Hula-Hoops and at least three beanbags or (optional) splash balls.

Class Time: Share the teaching tie-in. Have one or more children at a time toss three beanbags each, one bag into each hoop. As they toss, help them recite: "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."

Optional: On a hot day, have the children make a circle around a wading pool filled partway with water. As you toss splash balls into the pool, recite the persons of the Trinity together while the kids enjoy getting splashed.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Spies love mysteries! A mystery is something that we can't quite figure out. God's Word tells us that he is one God in three persons! And that's a mystery we can't understand. But God is so much greater than we are, he understands himself—the Trinity is who God is. Let's practice remembering this important truth about God—he is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—three persons in one.

Sugar Glider Follow the Leader

Prep: Set up an obstacle course using Hula-Hoops, boxes, baskets, and other objects.

Class Time: Share the teaching tie-in. Have the children line up and follow you through the course. Spread your arms out like a sugar glider as you "glide" (jump and run) from hoop to hoop and around obstacles.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Today, we'll pretend to glide like Loop the sugar glider. Like a sugar glider, we each have special fingerprints that are one of a kind—different from anyone else's. God is one of a kind too! No one is like our God. He is one God in three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Say that with me. *Do so.*

Both craft and science activities can make great connections to the spiritual themes being taught. This hands-on fun time, which includes both crafts and science, helps the children really connect with what they're learning.

Young children need simple crafts and activities that are fun to touch and explore. More prep needs to take place so the children are left with simply decorating, attaching stickers, gluing, and exploring.

Decide who will be in charge of preparing the craft and science materials (craft/science leaders, Toddler teachers, or someone else). As with all materials used with Toddlers and young preschoolers, carefully ensure that all items are nontoxic and are not choking hazards.

Plan two craft times a day or one craft and one science time. (Be prepared to skip one or both if the children need more rest time.) Have fun and use these activities to reinforce the big themes of the week.

Thematic Crafts

Some basic items are not listed in supply lists below, such as a paper cutter, scissors, glue, stapler, ruler, etc.

Glue sticks sometimes do not adhere well to some materials. So for some gluing, pour a small amount of glue into a plastic bowl or plate for children to share. Provide small paintbrushes or cotton swabs for spreading.

Day 1

Craft 1—Octopus in Disguise

Gather the following supplies:

Per child: 1 paper cup; 2 wiggle eye stickers; one 10-inch length of narrow curling ribbon; eight 10-inch lengths of crepe paper streamer

To share: Variety of colored tissue paper; sea creature stickers, Mod Podge or glue/water mixture, small paintbrushes

Prep: Cut the ribbon and crepe paper streamers according to measurements given. Tear the tissue paper into small pieces. For each cup, poke two holes in the bottom about 1 inch apart. Push each end of the curling ribbon into one of the holes from the bottom. Flip the cup upright, pull the ribbon ends through, and tie them in a knot. On the outside, pull the ribbon back for a hanger loop. Pinch both pieces of ribbon together about halfway up the loop, then fold a small piece of tape around them to keep the ribbon upright and out of the way.

During class: Have the kids glue the tissue paper pieces onto their cup, overlapping the tissue like a collage. Spread glue on the *inside* of the cup rim and stick on one end of each streamer piece, overlapping them evenly around the rim. Have kids add eyes on one side of the cup. Add sea creature stickers to the streamers. For a finished look, paint over the tissue on the cup with Mod Podge or glue/water mixture. Allow to dry. Optional: To



add "motion" to the arms, fold and glue some streamers to themselves to make them look like they're bending or glue part of one or two to the outside of the cup.

TEACHING TIE-IN

We're learning about disguises today. The mimic octopus is great at disguising itself by changing colors. We also learned that fake gods can be disguised to seem like the one true God. They don't have any power because they are not real.

Craft 2—Elijah Puppet Play Set

Gather the following supplies:

Per child:

1 **Elijah Puppet Pattern**; 1 short 4-ounce foam cup or snack bowl; 12–14 gray, brown, tan, and/or black 1½-inch pom-poms or gray, brown, tan, and/or black tissue paper (see Prep)

To share: Orange and yellow tissue paper, white cardstock, crayons

Prep: Print the **ELIJAH PUPPET PATTERNS** on cardstock and cut them apart. Tear the orange or yellow tissue paper into random pieces, about 3–5 inches long. **Note:** Pom-poms can be choking hazards for Toddlers, so choose tissue paper if working with two-year-olds or preschoolers who are still putting things in their mouths.

During class: Have the kids glue the pom-poms or crumpled tissue paper onto the cup/bowl in rows around the sides, leaving the top empty. Spread glue on the top and stick on pieces of orange and yellow tissue paper. Make some tissue pieces stand up to look like a fire. Color the



Thematic Science

Day 1

God Is There—Just like Air

Gather the following supplies:

To share: One or two balloons, an electric fan, a hand fan, and some liquid bubbles

Prep: None

Introduction: How many of you know what air is? Put your hand in front of your mouth and blow. [Do so](#). Do you feel that? That's called air. Have you ever seen leaves on a tree move on a windy day? Air does that. Our bodies need air. Take a deep breath. [Do so](#). Hold it! Now blow it out. When you breathe, air goes into your lungs and back out. We can't see air, but we can feel it and see what it does when it blows around. This reminds us of what God is like. We can't see him, but we know he's there. The Bible tells us God is omnipresent. Say that with me. [Do so](#). That means God is everywhere all the time. We can't see God, but we can feel his comfort and joy that he gives to his children. And we can see how he gives us good things and helps us each day. Let's do some experiments to remind us that just like air, God is there, even though we can't see him.

Directions: [Do the following to show the children different ways we can notice air: Blow up a balloon partway and tie it shut, then let the kids feel the air by pushing on the balloon; blow up another balloon and let the air out; turn on a fan and wave the hand fan to feel the air move; blow a few bubbles, explaining that you fill the soapy water with air when you blow into the liquid.](#)

Day 2

A Unique God and a Unique Me

Gather the following supplies:

Per child: 1 piece of plain paper, magnifying glass, wet wipe

To share: [Big Fingerprints Poster](#), washable fingerprint ink pads

Prep: None

Introduction: We've been learning about the one true God. He is unique. That means there is no one else like him. God is three persons in one: God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Did you know that God made each of you unique too? No one else is exactly like you. You even have unique fingerprints. Look at your fingers. Do you see the little swirly lines? Those are your very own fingerprints. No one else has fingerprints just like yours! Our fingerprints are all different, but they always have certain shapes. [Show the BIG FINGERPRINTS POSTER](#). One shape

is called an arch. That's when the lines go up and back down, like an arch on a bridge. Some of you might have loop lines on your fingers. These look kind of like a slide. And some of us have whorl-shaped fingerprints with lines that go round and round, like a cinnamon roll. Let's be like spies now and make prints of our fingers. We'll look at them closely to see which shapes we have.

Directions: [Using the ink pads, help children make fingerprints on their papers](#). Look at your prints through the magnifying glasses, then check out the poster to see which shape you have. You can also look at each other's fingerprints.

Day 3

Clear Clues

Gather the following supplies:

Per child or to share: Magnifying glasses; several small items with details to magnify, such as flowers, pine cones, feathers, fruits, etc. If possible, gather enough of the same objects for each child to have one.

Prep: None

Introduction: When spies try to figure something out, they may look for clues with a magnifying glass. When you look at something carefully through a magnifying glass, it looks bigger so you can clearly see all the tiny parts that you couldn't see before. Looking at things carefully this way helps spies find the most clues that will help them on their mission. Our mission is to learn about the one true God from the Bible. When we read the Bible and listen to it carefully, we can find clues about God and why Jesus came to rescue sinners. Let's practice looking closely at some small objects—first with just our eyes, then with a magnifying glass.

Directions: [Have the children sit in a circle on the floor or at a table. Pass around an object \(or hand out 1 per child\). Talk about the obvious things they notice. Pass out a child-safe magnifying glass to each child. Help the children look through their magnifying glass at the object. Talk about the small details they can clearly see but couldn't see before.](#)

Day 4

Color-Coded Messages

Gather the following supplies:

To share: [God Is . . . Poster](#), fun foam shapes in a variety of colors (several per child)

Prep: Print the [Code Illustrations Pattern](#)

Introduction: Did you know that we use codes all the time? Here are some things we see every day that use codes to make them work. [Show the CODE ILLUSTRATIONS](#)

Top Secret Snacks

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.

Day 1

Fake Fries (per child)

- ☐ 1 small apple
- ☐ 1 tbsp. strawberry jam
- ☐ Lemon juice and water
- ☐ Sprinkle of cinnamon sugar
- ☐ 1 fry paper (buy online or restaurant supply store)
- ☐ 1 small condiment cup
- ☐ Crinkle cutter



Cut the apple using the crinkle cutter to make it look like french fries. Mix a small amount of lemon juice and water. Lightly dip apple slices in the lemon juice/water mixture to prevent browning and let dry. Dust apples with cinnamon sugar and serve in a fry paper. Place strawberry jam in a condiment cup on the side.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Pray before eating. What does our snack look like? **Take responses.** Now, what does it taste like? **Have everyone take a bite.** **Take responses.** Well, it looks like french fries and ketchup, but it's actually apples and jam! That was a funny trick, huh? Today, we're learning about the one true God. Sometimes people are tricked into believing that there are lots of gods, but that's not true. Let's shout out, “One true God!” as loud as we can to remind ourselves that we may have been tricked by our snack today, but we don't want to ever be tricked into thinking there are other gods! **Do so.**

Day 2

Pudding 1-2-3 (12 servings)

- ☐ 1 large 6-ounce box of each of the following instant puddings: butterscotch, vanilla, and chocolate
- ☐ 7–9 c. milk (check pudding box for specific amount)
- ☐ Clear punch cups and spoons (1 of each per child)
- ☐ Plastic wrap



Make each kind of pudding according to package directions. Layer the puddings in clear punch cups—about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for each layer, starting with chocolate, then vanilla, then butterscotch on top. Cover with plastic wrap and chill. Serve one cup per child.

TEACHING TIE-IN

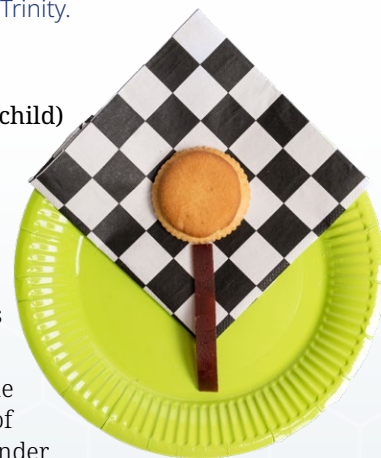
Pray before eating. Here's a riddle for you: Who is one but also three? Answer: The Trinity! Who knows who the Trinity is? **God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We have one cup of pudding but three different flavors. God is one but also three persons. We know our three-in-one God is true because the Bible says he is! This pudding is not meant to be an analogy for the Trinity; all analogies fall short of demonstrating the Trinity.**

Day 3

Mini Magnifying Glass (per child)

- ☐ 1 Ritz cracker
- ☐ $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. frosting
- ☐ 1 Nilla wafer
- ☐ 1 small strip of fruit leather
- ☐ Optional: Magnifying glass

Spread frosting on the center of the Ritz cracker and place the Nilla wafer on top. Cut a strip of fruit leather and slide the tip under the Ritz to create a magnifying glass look-alike.



TEACHING TIE-IN

Pray before eating. Does anyone know what our snack is supposed to look like? **Take responses.** Have you ever heard of a magnifying glass? **Show one to the children.** Magnifying glasses are special tools spies use to make little things look really big. Our snack today looks like a magnifying glass!



Day 1

Uncovering Counterfeits

BIBLE PASSAGE

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
1 Kings 18:20–39

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique because he is the only true God. Today, we'll uncover counterfeit gods and discover the God of the Bible.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

There's only one true God. All others are counterfeits.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

"The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God."
1 Kings 18:39

DAILY CIPHER

1 True God

ANIMAL PAL

Camo the Mimic Octopus

Today's Exploration Stations

- Discovery Center: Only One
- Wet Sensory Table: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
- Dry Sensory Table: Fire on Mt. Carmel
- Dramatic Play: Spy Time
- Coloring Corner: 1 Kings 18:39

Today's Lesson at a Glance

INTRODUCE IT!

- Puppet Pal—Operation One True God
- Song 1: "Our God Is Big"

TEACH IT!

- Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
- Song 2: "My God Is So Great"

APPLY IT!

- Part 1: Animal Pal Review
- Part 2: Commit This to Memory
- Part 3: Go and Do

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read 1 Kings 18 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on false religions/gods and the one true God, visit AnswersVBS.com/spyufaq.
- Pray.

Devotion 1: One True God

For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God. Psalm 86:10

Imagine the confusion. Four hundred fifty prophets of Baal are limping about their altar, crying out and asking for their god to answer them by fire. The answer they receive? Utter silence. No response. They're doing everything they can to show their sincerity, to the point of harming themselves, and their god seemingly doesn't care. The confusion and desperation must have been palpable as the hours dragged on.

Then the scene shifts to Elijah. The odds are against him—450 to 1. Baal has 450 prophets desperately interceding beside a dry altar. The Lord has just Elijah and a sopping-wet altar. Yet, with the odds stacked against him, Elijah's simple prayer of faith gives us a glimpse into how God-focused he was: He asks that the Lord answer by fire so that the people may know who is God. He is zealous for God's glory and for the people to see that there is no contest between God and Baal. It's not as if there were two good options in the final "god matchup" and he didn't really know who would win. It's not like commentators couldn't agree on who was the better god. No, when Yahweh shows up, there is no contest. All competition is blown away. In fact, there is no competition. He alone is God.

In many ways, our culture is similar to what Elijah encountered. Instead of Baal, we have idols of all types—from the literal idols of Hinduism and Buddhism to the heart idols that people worship, like success, money, or romance. As one Christian figure wrote, our hearts tend to be idol factories (Calvin). We today still need the truth Elijah demonstrated in ancient times—the Lord alone is worthy of our worship and allegiance, and loving him with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength is the only way to find peace and meaning in this chaotic, idol-filled

world. Metaphorically, we will limp along as the prophets of Baal did until we bow the knee to the one true God.

As we share the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal with the children under our care today, let's remind ourselves that the God of Elijah who answered by fire is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. We too serve the God who is there and who isn't silent (Schaeffer). In a world that is peppered with confusion about who has the final authority in our lives and where truth can be found, this is an immense comfort: The one true God is alive and well, and he is still at work in our world. We can pray like Elijah that the people in our spheres of influence would know that he alone is God. Consider the words of the hymn "God Only Wise" by Walter Chalmers Smith in 1867 as you prepare your heart to serve the Lord today.

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.

Exploration Stations

Discovery Center: Only One

MATERIALS

- ☐ Bin with a filler such as Easter grass or rice
- ☐ Various small objects in different colors with some spy-themed (e.g., fun foam hearts, toy spy-looking cars, dark sunglasses, a watch, small magnifying glasses, crayons, an old cell phone, etc.)
- ☐ Number 1 toy magnet or the numeral 1 written in red and laminated if possible

PREP

Put the filler in the bin and add in a variety of items in various colors so they are hidden. You can have more than one of certain objects, but if you do, each one should be a different color. Make a list of each object and its color for your reference.

DIRECTIONS

Refer to your list of hidden objects as you ask cadets to find them. Place the objects in a row as they are found. When all objects are lined up, share the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Sometimes spies need to find things that are hidden. You all did well and found all the objects—even the number 1. Today, we're talking about how there is just one true God. Let's say, "One True God!" together. [Do so.](#)

Wet Sensory Table: Elijah and the Prophets of Baal

[For the sensory activities, use a large, shallow, plastic container or an "official" sensory table.](#)

MATERIALS

- ☐ Empty sensory table with tarp underneath
- ☐ Water in a bucket with small plastic cups
- ☐ Lincoln logs (plastic wood pieces) or Duplo blocks, two small plastic bulls, plastic little people

PREP

Start with the sensory table dry and empty. Have the supplies ready.

DIRECTIONS

Cadets reenact the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal found in 1 Kings 18:20–39 as you talk them through it step-by-step. They can pour the water in at the right time. End with the teaching tie-in.

TEACHING TIE-IN

Elijah showed everyone that what they thought were gods weren't really gods at all. They were fakes. Elijah's God is the only true God. We learn about him in the Bible. He's a good, powerful, loving God.

Dry Sensory Table: Fire on Mt. Carmel

MATERIALS

- ☐ Empty sensory table with tarp underneath
- ☐ Crumpled up red, orange, and/or yellow tissue paper

PREP

Hide the crumpled up tissue paper in clumps around the area.

DIRECTIONS

Share the teaching tie-in, then have the cadets find the tissue paper and bring it to the sensory table to make a pretend fire with it—big or little. If time, they can rehide the tissue paper.

TEACHING TIE-IN

While Elijah told the prophets of Baal that there's only one God, God sent a fire from heaven and burned up all the wood and the offering. God showed he can do anything because he is God—the only God.

Dramatic Play: Spy Time

MATERIALS

[This station can be as simple or elaborate as you like. Leave it set up all week. Add in new items each day. Choose from the following or add in your own ideas. Make sure all items are safe for Toddlers.](#)

- ☐ Brick wall backdrop and decorations as listed in [Decorating Decisions](#)
- ☐ Child-safe props or spy gear (e.g., magnifying glasses, steno pads, old cell phones/telephones, watches, passports, play laptops or old computer keyboards, clipboards, play cameras, binoculars, play suitcases, briefcases, backpacks, or old lunch boxes spray-painted silver or black)
- ☐ Spy dress-up items (e.g., small trench coats or children's dark sport coats, dark sunglasses, black ball caps or hats, international clothing and hats, other spy-type clothes)
- ☐ Black suitcase or a copy paper box or plain corrugated cardboard box with the words "Top Secret" or "Confidential" stamped or stickered on it—use to keep costumes in
- ☐ Small table ("base") to keep spy supplies on

PREP

Set up the area as a "spy safe house." The costumes can be borrowed, made, or bought from thrift stores or garage sales. Put the costumes in the suitcase or cardboard box. Put the supplies on a small table that serves as "base."

Note: You may want to put travel stickers on the suitcases, briefcases, or cardboard boxes. Also, you may want to put out only part of the supplies today, adding new ones each day. The kids enjoy discovering new things daily.

◆ Theme Memory Verse Poster

◆ False Gods Poster

★ Day 1 Puppet Script (2 copies)

- Bible or children's Bible
- Agent costumes for teachers
- Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape for posters
- Briefcase
- Boy or girl puppet and disguise
- Clipboard

🌐 Download [these items](https://www.answersvbs.com/spyresources) from [AnswersVBS.com/spyresources](https://www.answersvbs.com/spyresources) (Resources > Teaching > Toddler).

🌐 The puppet can be dressed in a small black T-shirt or a VBS T-shirt. To make a small VBS T-shirt, print, cut out, and laminate a color copy of the VBS logo and tape it to a baby-size T-shirt.

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

🌐 Think of fun names for yourselves: Agent Angie, Truth Sleuth Stanley, Operator Oscar, Wise Spy Susan, Detective Dan, Super Spy Sally.

🌐 The Bible and the mounting putty (aka sticky tack) are listed just once daily in the supply list but are used throughout each lesson.

🌐 Be familiar with the lesson but don't memorize it. Place it on a clipboard to use as a reference.

🌐 If working as co-teachers, decide daily which parts of the lesson each of you will be responsible for.

Introduce It!

Puppet Pal—Operation One True God (5 minutes)

Study your lessons each day and know them well but feel free to say things in your own way. An **EDITABLE VERSION** of each lesson is available to download. Slides of the teaching posters are also available.

Prep: Prepare your set backdrop and costumes. Mark Psalm 86 in your Bible and put it in the briefcase. Tape one **PUPPET SCRIPT** inside the puppet stage and attach the other to a clipboard for reference. Dress the puppet in either a VBS T-shirt or some other spy gear (see sidebar Teaching Tip). Have an item to use as disguise, such as a hat covering part of his face or a pair of dark sunglasses. Make up hand motions for the theme memory verse.

Each day, the puppet pal will teach part of the lesson or reinforce what the kids hear. It's always a favorite, so try to include it even if you have to cut something else.

Decide which teacher will be the puppet and figure out when you need to leave to be positioned for the start of the puppet pal time. It is assumed that Teacher 2 will be the puppet but adjust lines as necessary if not.

If you don't have a teaching assistant or co-teacher, enlist someone ahead of time to work the puppet each day. If you're alone, have the puppet come up from behind a suitcase 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 use either a boy or a girl puppet named Charlie (Charles for a boy, Charlene for a girl). The puppet also has a code name—Agent Lookout. 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.

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 1: Welcome, spy cadets. We're glad to see you here at Spy University, also known as Spy U. I'm Agent ____.

Teacher 2: And I'm Agent _____. We're members of the Truth Mission Force, a specially trained team of Christians living all over the world. We find fake gods and teach people about the one true God, who is the treasure of the world.

Teacher 1: We have a special verse from the Bible to learn. Take your Bible out of your briefcase, open to the marked spot, and read Psalm 86:10. As cadets, your first assignment is to learn this verse! Let's stand and practice it now. Teach the hand motions while pointing out the words on the **THEME MEMORY VERSE POSTER**.

Teacher 2: We'll call you cadets for now, but by the end of the week, you will graduate from Spy U and be Junior Agents!

Teacher 1: The case we'll be working on together is called "Operation One True God." Can you say that with me? Do so. Every day, you'll have a mission briefing right here to learn more. In today's briefing, we'll learn how to find fakes.

Teacher 2: Let's put on our spy gear so we can get started. I've got a hat and sunglasses. And . . . where did it go? Look around for the missing gear. Hmm. Maybe it's back there. I'll go look for it. Exits to prepare for the puppet.

Teacher 1: Wait for a moment, tapping fingers, etc. Okay. Well, cadets, I guess we'll just have to pretend to put on our spy gear. Proceed to pretend putting on gear. Let's start with our hats and our sunglasses. And how about a backpack full of super-spy stuff.



★ Download from [AnswersVBS.com/spyresources](https://www.answersvbs.com/spyresources).

◆ Find in your teacher kit.

Puppet: Come up with a disguise on, looking around furtively.

Teacher: Surprised by the puppet. Hey, what's going on? Who are you?

Puppet: Whisper. I'm your friend Charlie. But . . . (look around again) my code name is Agent Lookout.

Teacher: Oh! Hi, Agent Lookout. Are you on the lookout for bad guys?

Puppet: Uh-huh! I'm wearing my new disguise so people won't know who I really am. How do you like it?

Teacher: Your disguise is great. I didn't know it was you at first. It's good to be on the lookout for bad guys. But there's something even more important to be on the lookout for.

Puppet: What's that?

Teacher: Fake gods, also called false gods.

Puppet: Fake gods? But there's only one true God, right?

Teacher: Right! But some people make up fake gods that are in disguise. They seem a lot like the real God, but they aren't. They're just make-believe.

Puppet: How do we know what the real true God is like?

Teacher: We learn about him in the Bible.

Puppet: Are there other real gods?

Teacher: Nope! There's only one true God. But many people believe in fake gods and worship them instead of the God of the Bible.

Puppet: What do these fake gods look like?

Teacher: Well, they can look like people or things. But they're all just made up. Show the **FALSE GODS POSTER** and point to each section as you mention it. Here are some examples. The Greeks made up gods with names like Zeus and Poseidon. But they were not perfect or good.

Puppet: The one true God is perfect and good. I know that from the Bible! What about that picture of animals?

Teacher: Some people worship animals. Point to the poster. But animals aren't gods. The true God made them. He also made all the other things in nature, like the sun and the stars. They are not gods.

Puppet: How about statues? Are they gods?

Teacher: Point to the poster. Nope! Statues can't be gods. They aren't even alive. They're just made of stone or wood. A statue may look like a person, but no person is a god. Only God is God!

Puppet: What are those buildings?

Teacher: Point to the poster. Those are called temples and pyramids. There are lots of them around the world. People built them as houses for fake gods. But none of them have to do with the true God. The only true God is the one we learn about in the Bible.

Puppet: Yeah! And he's the only one who is big and great and good.

Teacher: That reminds me of a song called "Our God Is Big." Do you want to sing it with us, Charlie?

Puppet: Sure! Make the puppet sing and move with the music.

Song 1: Our God Is Big

Sing to the tune of "Right In, Right Out."

CHORUS

Our God is big, he's great, he's good (Open arms wide on "big," pump them over head two times on "great" and "good.")

He's caring all the time

(Cross arms over chest and pulse them three times, on "car-," "all," and "time.")

Our God is big, he's great, he's good (Open arms wide, pump them over head twice.)

He's caring all the time (Cross arms over chest and pulse them three times.)

He is the only God, the only one that's true (Put up one index finger and sway it back and forth.)



★ "Our God Is Big" song

★ "My God Is So Great" song

☐ Stream the songs or use the Simple Songs for Kids CD

☐ Device to play songs

★ Download from AnswersVBS.com/spyuresources.

◆ Find in your teacher kit.

There are two songs introduced in each lesson. If some of the songs seem too long or you're running short on time, you may want to repeat the favorites. Also consider playing the songs in the background during other activities so they become familiar.

- ♦ **Elijah Poster**
- ♦ **Day 1 Cipher Poster**

- ☐ Play money
- ☐ Real money bills
- ☐ 9 x 13 baking pan
- ☐ 1 bowl (see Prep)
- ☐ 10–12 craft sticks
- ☐ 2 small plastic bulls or pictures of bulls (laminated)
- ☐ Pitcher of water
- ☐ Oven mitt (red/orange if possible)
- ☐ Lots of pony beads (any colors)

Our God is big, he's great, he's good
(Open arms wide, pump them over head twice.)

He's caring all the time (Cross arms over chest and pulse them three times)

Repeat

Puppet: Whew! That was great. You know what? I need to learn more from my Bible so I can tell which is the one true God and which ones are false gods in disguise. See ya tomorrow! *Waves and exits.*

Teacher: Bye, Agent Lookout! Just like Charlie said, cadets, we should all be on the lookout for the one true God.

Teach It!

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal (10 minutes)

Prep: Cut apart the posters. Fold up the answer on the **DAY 1 CIPHER POSTER**. Lay out the supplies as follows to use as you tell the account. Put the 9 x 13 pan on a table where the children can gather around. Place the bowl upside down in the middle of the pan for the mountain. It should have a little height and be flat-bottomed (e.g., flat-bottomed stainless steel mixing bowl). Place the other supplies near the pan: craft sticks, plastic bulls, pitcher of water, oven mitt, pony beads, and the box lid. Mark your Bible at 1 Kings 18, then point to it during the lesson.

Teacher 1: Charlie said he was going to look in his Bible to learn about God. Let's do that too. It's the best place to find out about the one true God.

Teacher 2: *Runs in waving some play money.* I'm back! I'm back!

Teacher 1: Did you find your spy gear?

Teacher 2: No, I didn't. But look what I did find! *Excitedly shows off the money.*

Teacher 1: Let me see that. *Looks it over, then hands it back.* Uh, you know that's fake money, right?

Teacher 2: What?! Are you sure?

Teacher 1: Remember, we're agents of the Truth Mission Force, and we must be able to find fakes. I'm sorry to say that you found fake money. This is what real money looks like. *Show a real bill.*

Teacher 2: Aww. It looks almost like the real thing. But I guess it's not.

Teacher 1: Fake money is false. That means it isn't real, so it won't work like real money. It's just pretend. Sorry about that.

Teacher 2: Just like fake money isn't real, there are also fake gods that are not real. Some people use things like trees and cows and statues to worship these fake gods! We know fake gods aren't real because the Bible says there is only one true God. Let's point up to God and shout, "One God!" *Do so.*

Teacher 1: *Have the children move where they can see the pan and bowl on the table.* Let's find out more from God's Word, the Bible.

Teacher 2: *Open your Bible to 1 Kings 18.* Long ago, there was a man named Elijah who loved and worshipped the true God. God told Elijah to take an important message to a king named Ahab.

Teacher 1: Ahab was a bad and wicked king. He believed in a fake god called Baal (*pronounced "Bail"*). Elijah told Ahab he had sinned (done wrong) because he worshipped the fake god Baal. This did not please the real, true God.

Teacher 2: But King Ahab didn't listen, so Elijah said they would have a contest. "Tell the people in Israel," he said, "to meet at the mountain called Mount Carmel." *Point to the bowl.* We'll pretend this bowl is that mountain.

Teacher 1: Elijah also told Ahab to bring all the men (called prophets) who worshipped the false god Baal. And guess what! There were a lot of them—450! Let's pretend these beads are the men. *Scatter a bunch of beads in the pan at the base of the bowl.*

Teacher 2: Now remember, this was a contest. On one side, were the prophets who worshipped Baal. Guess how many people were on the other side. *Hold up one bead.* Just one—only Elijah all by himself, against all the others!

Teacher 1: So all the prophets of Baal came to Mount Carmel. When the contest began, both sides got a big animal called a bull (hold up the bulls)—one for Elijah and one for the 450 prophets. The prophets went first in the contest. Elijah told them to put their bull on a pile of wood. Put 5–6 of the craft sticks on top of the bowl and put the bull on top of that.

Teacher 2: Normally, when people back then put an animal on a pile of wood, they would start a fire to burn it up. But Elijah told them not to start a fire. Instead, they were supposed to call on their god to start the fire. If Baal was a real god, he would be able to start the fire himself.

Teacher 1: So all the prophets called out to their fake god, Baal, to send fire. They shouted and danced around all day long. And what do you think happened? Nothing! Their god was fake and couldn't do anything.

Teacher 2: Finally, it was Elijah's turn. Let's take away all the prophets of Baal and put just Elijah in. Take the bowl out, empty the pan into the box lid, then put the bowl back in. Put just one bead in the pan to represent Elijah. Elijah built an altar out of stones and put wood and his bull on top. Add the other craft sticks and the other bull on top of the upside-down bowl. Then Elijah did something surprising. He dug a ditch, like a big hole, all the way around the altar and poured water all over everything—three times! Let's count to three. Gently pour water over the sticks, then around the base of the bowl three times. There was so much water, it filled up the ditch and got everything wet.

Teacher 1: Wait a minute. Cadets, when someone builds a fire, do they soak the wood with water first? No! A fire won't start if the wood is wet and soggy.

Teacher 2: That's true. But that's what Elijah did. Now, there were lots of people watching. Elijah wanted to show everyone that the one true God was the only one powerful enough to burn up the bull—even when it was soaking wet!

Teacher 1: Elijah prayed, "God, I've done what you asked me. Now show these people that you are the one true God."

Teacher 2: Show the ELIJAH POSTER. Can you guess what happened? Tell them to imagine the oven mitt is fire from heaven and use it to grab the bull from above as you say the following: God sent fire down, and it burned up that soaking wet bull and the soaking wet wood and even the wet stones of the altar! It also licked up all the water in the ditch! Let's cheer for God! Do so.

Teacher 1: When everyone saw what God did, they fell down and cried out, "The LORD—he is God! The LORD—he is God!" Let's say that together. Do so.

Teacher 2: All the people could see that Baal was a false god. There is only one true God in the whole wide world, and God's one true book, the Bible, tells us all about him.

Teacher 1: The one true God is big and powerful, and he is also loving. God loves you so much and wants you to be part of his family. Isn't that awesome?

Teacher 2: Now, cadets, let's see if we can figure out this secret message as a special reminder of what we just talked about. Show the DAY 1 CIPHER POSTER. Have the answer folded up so they can't see it. Help them decode the top part, then fold down the answer.

Teacher 1: Great job, cadets. This is an important message: There is only one true God. Let's sing about our one true God right now!

Song 2: My God Is So Great

CHORUS

My God is so great, so strong, and so
mighty (Flex arm muscles.)
There's nothing my God cannot do
(Shake head and hands "no.")
My God is so great, so strong, and so
mighty (Flex arm muscles.)
There's nothing my God cannot do
(Shake head and hands "no.")
The oceans are his
(Make ocean waves with hands.)

The mountains are his
(Make mountain peaks with arms.)
The stars are his handiwork too
(Sway arms back and forth over head.)

My God is so great, so strong, and so
mighty (Flex arm muscles.)
There's nothing my God cannot do—for
you (Shake head and hands "no," then
point out to the kids.)

Repeat



Gospel Opportunity



◆ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

- Spy U Maps and Camo Stickers, 1 per child

Each day, children will add one animal pal sticker to their maps. If you have a large group, don't put names on the maps—this saves time passing them out until they take one home on the last day.



◆ Theme and Day 1 Memory Verse Posters

- Optional: Student Guides and supplies
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Spy Training Manual

The front page of each day's student guide is an overview of today's lesson. The back page matches Parts 2 and 3.



Supplies for this section are not included 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 any items to your supply list accordingly.

Apply It!

Part 1: Animal Pal Review

Take a couple minutes to summarize the lesson with the **DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. Use any or all of the questions below. Pass out the Spy U Maps and Camo Stickers (available to purchase from AnswersVBS.com), one set per child. Have them put on today's animal pal. Collect them.

Let's take a look at our animal pal poster to remember what we talked about today. What kind of animal is our animal pal? A **mimic octopus**. And what's our mimic octopus' name? **Camo**—short for **camouflage**. Camouflage means an animal's color can blend in so no one can see it very well, like a disguise. Camo the octopus can look like other animals. That reminds us that sometimes people worship false gods that can look like the real God, but they are only fakes. There's only one true God.

Continue reviewing with the following questions. Be sure to give the correct answer for any "no" questions. Have the kids do a floppy wave of their arms like a mimic octopus if the answer is yes and be still if it is no.

1. Yes or no: Does fake money work just like real money? No—stay still. Things that are fake, or false, are not the same as the real things.
2. Yes or no: Can Camo the octopus fake it and look like other animals? Yes—wave arms. He can fake looking like other animals, just like false gods can fake looking like the one true God.
3. Yes or no: Is there only one real God? Yes—wave arms.
4. Yes or no: Should people worship fake gods instead of the real God? No—stay still. Only God in the Bible is the one true God.
5. Yes or no: Does the Bible tell us about the one true God? Yes—wave arms.

Part 2: Commit This to Memory

Today's Verse: The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God. 1 Kings 18:39

Practice the verse several times using the **DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference and playing the song from the memory verse music if you have it.

Challenge: Move like a mimic octopus, waving your arms as you say the verse.

Tomorrow's Verse: Jesus Christ . . . God . . . Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

Try the challenge again, this time with tomorrow's verse. You may also want to practice the week's theme verse, using the **THEME MEMORY VERSE POSTER** as a reference.

Part 3: Go and Do

In the remaining time, complete one or more of the following ideas in class. These are also on the Toddler Student Guides and can be done at home.

1. Pretend to be a secret spy. Choose three or four objects and ask someone to hide them for you to find.
2. Ask a grown-up to read a make-believe story to you. Then ask them to read something true from the Bible. (True accounts about Jesus' time on earth are in the first four books of the New Testament.) Everything in the Bible is true, not make-believe.
3. Pray and thank God for being our big, strong, loving, and good God.
4. Ask a grown-up to help you check AnswersVBS.com/spyukids for more fun information!

Ask yourself this question: Do I want to believe in a fake God that isn't real or the one true God who loves me?