



VBS (What's the B For?) ©
Vacation Bible School Curriculum
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VBS (What's the B For?)

Welcome to VBS! Those letters stand for Vacation Bible School, of course. But some lovably clueless characters are about to arrive at the church with some...other ideas.

Don't worry—the confusion will get straightened out eventually! Then, everyone will learn that the Bible is at the very *center* of VBS.

And the goal of this curriculum is to bring its wisdom into the everyday lives of children. We meet kids where they are, starting out with *their* issues, struggles, and concerns. How can they lean on Jesus to navigate the ups and downs of life? We show them how Jesus speaks directly to them through the Sermon on the Mount. Here are four important elements:

1. The main teachings are conveyed through exciting and engaging stories.

Some children listen attentively during a Bible lesson. Others...not so much. But *all* children are delighted by skits and puppet shows. So that's how VBS (What's the B For?) © conveys its most important teachings. Four adorably relatable characters will arrive at VBS—each with an issue they're struggling with. The children will watch as their stories unfold (first in a live skit, and then in puppet versions of the characters**), as they receive biblical advice to handle problems. For older kids, you might skip the Puppet Show and offer a cool (biblically-aligned) Escape Room!

2. This curriculum is designed for everyone—not just children.

There's a 5-day Student Guide for teens (written in breezy, conversational language) and a 5-Day Parent Guide to email to parents, tuck into backpacks, or use in an adult class.

3. Teens (and/or drama-loving adults) will WANT to volunteer at this VBS.

VBS (What's the B For?) © aims to incorporate the Youth Group as much as possible. Teens will want to participate as volunteer actors, puppeteers, and puppet makers. Students who serve will have a blast in the weeks preceding VBS, as they practice the fun skits and puppet shows during already-scheduled Youth Group meetings. This VBS is designed to create highly desirable volunteer jobs for young people who like to have fun.

4. This scalable program can be as robust or spare as you want it.

It's a comprehensive curriculum with 7 station options (not counting snacks!). Choose all or some of the unique options like an Escape Room, a Puppet Show, a Puppet Making station, etc.

**If the church wants to opt out of staging the puppet show, you could do the Bible Lesson Station instead. Only one teaching volunteer would be needed for that station.

Director's Guide Overview

Welcome to VBS (What's the B For?) ©. This Vacation Bible School curriculum provides all the materials for a 5-day, 3 ½ hour VBS program.

Opening Time and Skit, Page 13

Begin the program in the main meeting room with a few welcoming remarks and a skit. Each skit teaches a biblical lesson that relates to a real-life problem children experience. You might also use the Opening Time to practice songs kids learned the previous day in Music Station. When Opening Time concludes, age-specific groups of children will cycle through 5 - 7 stations.

Puppet Show Station (PreK—Grade 3, plus kids with special needs), Page 60

Each day's puppet show will reinforce and carry on the biblical lesson that was introduced during the skit. Afterwards, a VBS volunteer leads the children in a discussion about the show.

Escape Room Station (Grades 4 and 5), Page 132

Older children have just 20 minutes to solve puzzles and crack codes to escape!

Creative Arts Station, Page 97

This is a time of puppet-making and role play. Each child will make one of four sock puppets that correspond to the ones in the shows. During the first two days of VBS, the Creative Arts Station is all about making the puppets and creating personas for them. In the last three days at the Creative Arts Station, the puppets are used in role play activities aimed at spiritual formation.

Recreation Station, Page 104

Children participate in active games—with an intentional emphasis on spiritual formation. The volunteers will look for ways the VBS lessons can be taught in real time. They'll be given the tools to coach the kids as character-forming opportunities pop up.

Music Station, Page 115

Through music and rhythm, the children will learn the five key Bible verses and themes that correspond to the lessons. All original music is included.

Bible Lesson Station, Page 124

If you don't have enough volunteers to put on a skit AND a puppet show, you can swap in this Bible Lesson Station (or the Escape Room Station), which is run by just one volunteer.

Closing Time, Page 157

All gather in the main meeting room for songs and a joyful review of the day's fun.

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Volunteer Requirements

To host VBS (What's the B For?) © in its ENTIRETY, you need roughly 40-50 volunteers per 100 kids. (BUT you can scale up or down based on the size of your program. You get 7 stations' worth of material—YOU CHOOSE which ones you want to use.) For 100 kids:

- ☐ 10-20 shepherding volunteers (2 per crew)
- ☐ 7 volunteers to act in the Opening Skit (2 roles are non-speaking)
- ☐ 1 volunteer to work the sound station
- ☐ 4 volunteers to act as puppeteers in the Puppet Show (up to 20 can participate)
- ☐ 2 Escape Room volunteers
- ☐ 3 Creative Arts Time volunteers
- ☐ 3 Recreation volunteers
- ☐ 2-3 Music volunteers

How VBS (What's the B For?) Handles the Volunteer Recruitment Challenge

1. This program is aimed at both kids (who learn) and teens (who learn AND serve as actors, puppeteers, puppet makers, etc.). Up to 1/2 of the volunteers might be teens.

The teens' involvement is twofold.

- Student materials are included to LEARN the VBS themes during youth group.
- The skits and puppet shows are designed for teens to BUILD COMMUNITY during rehearsals and SERVE during VBS week in a truly fun way.

Asking Youth Group teens to commit to an acting or puppeteer role is also a way to mentor them in spiritual formation. Acting is fun, but it's also a responsibility. No doubt there will be opportunities to teach teens about honoring commitments to one another and to God.

Not enough "drama kid" types in your youth group? Middle and high schools are brimming with teens who want chances to act. Youth group kids can invite "drama kid" friends to participate.

2. You can also do a scaled-down version that requires fewer volunteers.

The skit and puppet show rehearsals for this VBS will allow young people to connect in a fun way. But to host a VBS with fewer people and less prep, you can skip the puppet shows and do the Bible Lesson station instead. Or do the Escape Room if you have older kids. These stations require just one or two volunteers and much less prep.

VBS (What's the B For?)

5-Day Teaching Summaries



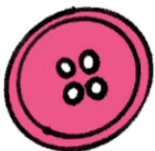
Teaching Summaries Overview

This is a summary guide of the teachings in VBS (What's the B For?) ©—one page for each day's teaching.

You might use this guide each morning at the start of VBS to quickly orient yourself to the day's main ideas and themes. Urge your volunteers to look over each day's main teachings, so they can be prepared to answer kids' questions. You could also review them daily as a group.

If you forgo the Puppet Show Station (and implement the Bible Lesson Station instead), you can use these summary materials to supplement that teaching.

You can also give these one-page summaries to the parents, so they have a quick reference to look over before their kids ask them questions!



Teaching Summary Day 1

The Bible Shows Us How to Live

Bible Verse: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

In the opening skit, the new “students” (Bougine Bird, Blink the Bear, Bailey the Beagle, Queen Bee) learn that the Bible answers some of the most important questions you’ll ever ask. Who created the world? Why are you in it? Do you have a purpose? What’s the right way to live?

In the Bible, we learn that God loves us, and that He DESIGNED each of us to be a part of His story. Reading the Bible shows us how to live our best life. The teacher, Mrs. Featherbottom, explains that there are many paths to take in this life, which means there are lots of different ways to live. But God designed us to follow Him on His path. That means drawing close to Jesus so that we can start living the way Jesus lived. Jesus calls this “the narrow path.”

How do we follow Jesus on the narrow path?

Every day we make choices about how we want to live. As we make those choices, it’s helpful to remember who we are and why we’re here.

Who are we? And why are we here?

We are God’s children. God created us to love and guide us. He has a purpose for each of us.

How are we supposed to live?

There are many paths to follow in this life. There are many choices we can make about how to live. But we were made to follow God on HIS path.

What does it mean to follow God’s path?

- In the Bible, we learn that God’s son Jesus came to earth Himself to show us that path.
- When we draw close to Jesus, He transforms our hearts and guides us on this path.
- His death on the cross was the ultimate demonstration of following God’s path. (Through this sacrifice, Jesus made a way for us to return to the Father’s presence.)
- Following God’s path involves “dying to self”—choosing God’s way over our own. (The Holy Spirit plays a big role in helping us here!)
- Jesus urges us to follow Him on the NARROW path, which leads to a full life.
- Jesus said the WIDE path (not following God) leads to destruction.

Teaching Summary Day 2

Bougine's Struggle: Love of Material Things

Bible Verse: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19-21

In the opening skit, Bougine loses her beloved candy jewelry. Devastated, she says it was the ONLY thing that made her happy. Mrs. Featherbottom says that according to Jesus, Bougine won't find true happiness from things that don't last. That's not what God created her for. Rather, He made her so she could know Him and love Him—just like He knows and loves her.

And Jesus doesn't want people to have to live in a world where their jewelry gets stolen, either! He's working to re-make the world into the place it was MEANT to be—a place where people care for one another in love. Bougine can ask God to use her in this mission. He will joyfully include her in His world-restoring operation.

How can WE get in on God's world-changing work?

There's a way that God MEANT for us to live, and we can learn about it by drawing near to Jesus. As we do, God changes us into people who think and act like Jesus did.

How do we live the way we were meant to live?

- We focus on God through Bible reading, fellowship, worship, service, prayer, etc.
- As we emulate Jesus in our daily lives, God transforms us and guides our actions.

How did Jesus live?

- He loved His Father and talked to Him all the time.
- He trusted that the Father loved HIM and would always care for Him.
- He cared for other people, because He knew THAT'S what His Father wanted.

Training to be like Jesus is hard, because caring for others doesn't always come naturally. But God didn't design us to do it on our own. He wants us to ask for His help. This connection to God is a heavenly treasure, and it's wonderful. You can ask God for the power to love others like Jesus does. He will help you! THAT'S how God makes the world a better place—the place it was meant to be. God would love to help EVERYONE to become more like Jesus.

Teaching Summary Day 3

Bailey's Struggle: Winning is EVERYTHING

Bible Verse: "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built a house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been built on the rock." Matthew 7:24-25

Winning his big game is so important to Bailey that when his team loses, he is devastated. In the skit, Mrs. F tells Bailey that Jesus Himself warns us about building our hopes on anything OTHER than solid rock. Dominating on the baseball field is a great goal, but it's not THE goal.

Mrs. F offers Bailey a different approach: Imagine he has 2 missions. One is winning games. The other mission? Being part of God's mission to set things right in the world.

When hard situations pop up on the baseball field, Bailey can ask himself, "Where is God showing me opportunities to treat others as Jesus would?" As Bailey draws close to God, He will guide him to treat the losing team with dignity, to help a hurt teammate, or to comfort someone being teased. Bailey can depend on God's power to direct and help him.

When Bailey made baseball the most important thing, was he building on solid rock?

No. Winning at baseball is a good goal, but it's not an outcome you can depend on. Sometimes your team will lose, or sometimes you'll strike out (or drop the ball, or get hurt, etc.). But that's OK, because we all have a more important mission, anyway.

Jesus said that a wise person builds their house on solid rock. What does that mean?

To build your house on solid rock is to live your life with God and for God. He invites each of us to join in His work of making the world a better place. This looks different for everyone. In Bailey's case, he spends a lot of time on a sports field. So God would work through Bailey there.

Here are some ways that you can "build your house" on solid rock:

First, draw close to God through activities like studying the Bible and fellowship with other Christians. You will find that God loves you, hears your prayers, is with you every moment, and wants you to ask for His help. Second, consider how God looks at your circumstances. God is always looking for ways to help and care for others. Ask God for help in joining Him in this work, and talk to Him about it. A lot. Third, go about doing the things you love to do (all of our gifts come from God) while always watching for God and trusting Him to guide you.

Teaching Summary Day 4

Blink's Struggle: Anxiety

Bible Verse: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Blink the Bear is worried that Queen Bee won't let him be her friend, and that he will end up being alone. Mrs. F reminds Blink that he has an all-powerful God who loves him and longs to give him everything he needs (including friends). Blink should ask God for the things he needs.

But Blink might be mistaken about what he needs. What Blink really needs is to focus on his purpose: To know and love God—and to show people what God is like. Jesus was always working with His Father to change the world. If Blink was focused on HIS purpose, He would be focused on showing a lot of kindness to the sad or needy people around him.

Jesus called this “seeking God's kingdom.” That means drawing close to God so that He can use us in his world-restoring operation. Eventually, the world will be a place where Jesus is the king, and God's children follow His rules. Blink can participate as God brings His kingdom!

What are some things we can do when we feel anxious?

- We can remember that we have a loving God.
- We can ask Him for the things we need. He wants to help us!
- We can relax and know that He will provide.

But sometimes when we are anxious, it's because we're not focusing on the right thing.

What should we be focused on?

Jesus says we should focus on “seeking God's kingdom.” So, we draw near to God and allow Him to fill our minds with His thinking. He might direct us to notice:

- A sad or lonely person who could use someone to talk to
- Someone who needs help getting something done
- A person who's hungry and needs food

We don't always feel like helping others. Sometimes we think, “I know God would want me to do that, but I don't feel like it.” When we feel that way, we may need to take some time to focus on Him. God has a way of moving our hearts in the direction He wants them to go!

Teaching Summary Day 5

Queen Bee's Struggle: Pride

Bible Verse: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12

Queen Bee walks around like this is HER world, and everyone else just lives in it. Naturally, all the talk this week about partnering with God and seeking HIS kingdom has made her feel left out. Mrs. F breaks the news that God designed her to follow HIS lead, not the other way around.

God designed us to live in the world a certain way, and that way can be summed up as: "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (AKA The Golden Rule).

The gospel message is delivered during this final day of the skit: Jesus carried out the Golden Rule in the ultimate way when He died on the cross for us. We humans have rebelled against God, bringing death into the world and separating us from our Father. But Jesus took our sins upon Himself, died, and rose again—all to make a way for us to be with the Father again. To be saved, all we have to do is accept this gift and trust Him. During Closing Time, Queen Bee prays to accept Jesus, and children are encouraged that they can do the same if they choose to.

We follow the Golden Rule, because our closeness to Jesus draws our hearts toward others.

At VBS this week, we've been learning about ways to "seek first God's kingdom." What does that mean?

Jesus is re-making the world into the place God designed it to be, a place where humans care for one another with love. As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, we naturally find ourselves wanting to join Him in this work. God's kingdom is a place where everyone's eyes are trained on God, who encourages us to live by the Golden Rule.

Is it easy to live by the Golden Rule?

No! In fact, it's SO hard that if we just try to do it on our own, we'll fail. We need God's help to cultivate generous and loving hearts. We can use some of the tools we learned in VBS this week to do that. For example:

- We can get to know Jesus and what He was like.
- We can do the things Jesus did.
- We can ask, "What's my MAIN mission?"
- We can ask, "What would I want if I was such-and-such person?" and then do it.
- We can remember to ask God for help (over and over again).

VBS (What's the B For?)

Skit Scripts



Opening Skits Overview

At VBS (What's the B For?) ©, the skits are the first of two main teaching times.

You'll need 7 volunteers:

- ☐ 1 adult/older teen volunteer to play Mrs. Featherbottom
- ☐ 4 teen volunteers to play skit roles
- ☐ 2 teen volunteers to play non-speaking roles
- ☐ 1 volunteer to work the sound system

You'll need the following costumes, props, and equipment:

- ☐ Flamingo costume for Bougine. VBS Director's choice but here's an example.
- ☐ Bear costume for Blink. VBS Director's choice but here's an example.
- ☐ Beagle costume for Bailey. VBS Director's choice but here's an example.
- ☐ 3 Bee costumes for Queen Bee/friends. VBS Director's choice but here's an example.
- ☐ Banana costume for the guest star on Day 2. Here's an example.
- ☐ Giant ring pop. Here's an example.
- ☐ Candy jewelry. Here's an example.
- ☐ A few flowers (real or fake)
- ☐ Baseball and glove
- ☐ Yellow and black striped t-shirt
- ☐ Four stools for "students" and a lectern for Mrs. F
- ☐ Sound system to play the musical tracks
- ☐ 5 wearable microphones
- ☐ Projector/screen to project the logo for VBS (What's the B For?)

You'll need the following stage decorations:

- ☐ 4-6 large bundles of helium balloons (or a few balloon arches)
- ☐ 6-10 large beach balls
- ☐ 2 bicycles
- ☐ 1-2 bubble machines blowing bubbles
- ☐ 1 bench
- ☐ 2 boomerangs
- ☐ Any other items that start with the letter B (giant inflatable teddy bears, toy boats, bunches of bananas, butterflies, bells, etc.)

Tips for the Skit Actors

Acting is about more than just memorizing lines, but it's also not rocket science! Here are some general tips to give to your skit actors, to help them put on their best performance.

- **Project.** Make sure that even the kids sitting in the back of the room can hear you.
- **Go big.** All your movements and expressions should be exaggerated. Again, think about the kids in the back. You want them to instantly see and understand how you're feeling, even from a distance.
- **Speak more slowly than in real life—and enunciate.** Practice speaking your lines animatedly but slowly. Speak in a way that even a three-year-old can understand. (There very well may be three-year-olds in the audience!)
- **Wait a beat to deliver your lines.** Allow your castmate's lines to land before you deliver yours. If they deliver a joke, be aware that you may have to wait a little longer as the audience laughs.
- **Face the audience.** Even when you're conversing with another character, always try to be at least partly positioned toward the audience. This is called "cheating out," and it's necessary so the audience can hear you and see your face.
- **Rehearse your lines until they're second nature.** When you find yourself in front of an audience, nerves are natural. But if you REALLY know your lines and can recite them in your sleep, they'll come to you even when you're nervous.
- **Spread out on the stage.** Keep in mind what you look like as a group. You're acting for everyone in the audience, not just the kids sitting on the right or left.
- **Keep moving.** For the duration of the skit, you should be a bundle of upbeat energy. Any chance you have to be DOING something, do it. When someone else is talking, make a show of paying attention by nodding (or widening your eyes or tapping your chin like you're thinking about what they're saying).

Skit Script Day 1

The sanctuary/main meeting room is decorated with items that start with the letter B. The logo for "VBS (What's the B For?)" is projected on a giant screen.

Sound: Play the main theme song, "What's the B For?" (Track 1) as children enter.

Pastor welcomes campers and gives an opening blessing, announcements, etc.

Mrs. Featherbottom enters.

PASTOR:

Here's one of the VBS teachers now! Good Morning, Mrs. Featherbottom!

MRS F:

Good Morning!

PASTOR:

Isn't this great? The church looks B-eautiful, doesn't it? Can you guess what all of the things on this stage have in common?

MRS F:

(unsure)

Um, well, let's see...

(walks around the stage, pointing at items)

I see some balloons...and some beach balls...and two bicycles...

(continues to name items)

PASTOR:

Yes, yes! But what do they all have in common?

MRS F:

I think I know, but...

(to audience)

Does anyone out there want to tell me?

PASTOR and MRS F give audience members a chance to give the answer.

PASTOR:

That's right! They all start with the letter B.

MRS. F:
But why?

PASTOR:
We told the decorators to get the church ready for VBS this week.
But they didn't know what the "B" stood for. So, they filled the stage with all the things they
THOUGHT it might be!

MRS F:
(*confused*)
Yes, but...we KNOW what the B stands for.
VBS stands for Vacation BIBLE School.
The B is for BIBLE.

PASTOR:
Yes, WE know that. And don't worry, I'm sure everyone ELSE knows that, too.

MRS F:
I hope so. Hey, shouldn't my class be here by now?

PASTOR:
Oh, they must be on their way.
(*begins to exit*)
Have a great week, Mrs. Featherbottom!
(*exits*)

Sound: Cue the music to "Bougine" (Track 2).

BOUGINE enters from the back of the sanctuary/meeting room. Wearing a bright pink feathered boa and lots of candy jewelry, she sashays up the center aisle along with the beat of the music. As she goes, she shows off her giant candy ring to children along the way. It's preposterously big, and she's very proud of it.

Sound: Music ends when she reaches the stage.

BOUGINE
(*exuberantly*)
I'm here! Am I the first bird to arrive? Where are all the other birds?

MRS F
(*confused*)
The first...bird?

BOUGINE

Yes. This is VBS, right? Vacation BIRD School?

MRS F

No, I think you're mistaken—

BOUGINE

(indignant, parks hands on hips, speaks slowly)

Oh, I know what this is about. You think I'm not a REAL bird.

MRS F

No, that's not it—

BOUGINE

(with attitude)

Well, let me tell you something. Flamingoes ARE birds. Just because you don't see us flying around everywhere *(motions with her wing)*, that doesn't make us any LESS AVIAN. We CAN fly, you know.

MRS F

That's not what I meant. Of course you're a real bird.

BOUGINE

(still indignant, speaking quickly)

Feathers? *(Points to the boa around her neck)* Check.

Beak? *(Points to beak.)* Check.

Pointy little bird legs? *(Points to one leg and then the other.)* Check! Check!

MRS F

Of course! What I meant is that VBS doesn't stand for Vacation BIRD School. It stands for—
(Mrs. F is drowned out by the next song.)

Sound: Cue the music to "Blink the Bear" (Track 3).

BLINK enters from the back of the sanctuary/meeting room and cautiously makes his way down the center aisle. He is visibly shy and keeps covering his face with his hands. VBS volunteers along the way must offer gentle encouragement to coax him up the aisle and up on the stage.

Sound: Music ends when he reaches the stage.

BLINK

Hi, I'm Blink the Bear. I'm here for VBS.

MRS F

Welcome, Blink. We're happy to have you.

BLINK

(looks Bougine up and down)

Why is there a BIRD here at Vacation BEAR School?

MRS F

Oh—oh! No! This isn't Vacation BEAR School.

BLINK

(alarmed)

What?! But my mom just dropped me off here!

MRS F

Well, we're glad she did but—

BLINK

(worried)

She said we would be doing BEAR things, like searching for honey and...and... practicing growling. GRRRRR! See? I was already trying it out in the car on the way over here!

MRS F

You won't need that...particular skill here.
But we'll be doing lots of other fun things—

BLINK

Ooooooh, now I'm worried.

MRS F

Don't be worried! You'll be fine here.

BLINK

(fearful)

What if I get hungry?

MRS F

We have snacks.

BLINK

(fearful)

Thirsty?

MRS F

We have drinks.

BLINK

(fearful, fretting)

What if I get hot? Does your AC work properly? I'm covered in fur, you know!

MRS F

The temperature is nice and cool.

BLINK

But where AM I? What IS this place?

BOUGINE

Yes, what IS this place?

MRS. F

So, this is actually Vacation—

(Mrs. F is drowned out by the next song.)

Sound: Cue the music to "Bailey the Beagle" (Track 4).

BAILEY enters from the back of the sanctuary/meeting room, energetically pumping his fist in the air. He races up the center aisle, stopping along the way, saying, "Hi-Five!" to kids and slapping palms.

Sound: Music ends when he makes it to the stage.

BAILEY

(Energetic, dancing on his feet)

Boy, I am one pumped beagle! So excited for Vacation BEAGLE School!

(looks at Bougine's giant ring pop)

Whoa! Cool ring! It looks like a TROPHY!

BOUGINE

(pleased with herself)

You like it?

(She holds up the ring.)

I won it when I got first place in the Miss Flamingo Pageant.

BAILEY

Flamingo? What's a BIRD doing at Vacation BEAGLE School?

MRS F

No, no. It's actually NOT—

(Mrs. F is drowned out by the next song.)

Sound: Cue the music to "Queen Bee" (Track 5).

QUEEN BEE enters from the back of the sanctuary/meeting room, walking regally up the center aisle. She is followed by BUSY and BEBE, who wordlessly imitate her every move. When she laughs, they laugh. When she gives a queenly wave, they do the same.

Sound: Music ends when they reach the stage.

QUEEN BEE
(serenely, like a queen)
I've arrived.
(waits a beat)
Queen Bee.
(She extends her bent wrist to be kissed.)

MRS F, BAILEY and BLINK look at each other, not sure what to do. Then Bailey quickly steps forward to kiss QUEEN BEE'S hand.

QUEEN BEE
(glancing around nonchalantly)
Where are the other bees?
Are they in another room?
Are you the wait staff?

MRS F
(frustrated)
Let me guess. You think this is Vacation BEE School. Am I right?

QUEEN BEE
Well, isn't it? These are my wannabe friends, by the way. BUSY and BEBE.
(to BUSY and BEBE)
Wave hello.

BUSY and BEBE wave hello.

BLINK
(confused)
They're...wannabe friends?

QUEEN BEE
I haven't decided if I like them yet.

BLINK
Could I be your wannabe friend?

QUEEN BEE
(waits a beat, side-eyeing BLINK)
I'll think about it.

BLINK's head falls forward in disappointment.

MRS F
(exasperated)
All right, all right! Everyone listen up! This is NOT Vacation BEE School. Or Vacation BEAR School. Or Vacation BEAGLE School. Or Vacation BIRD School.

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
(all together)
Where ARE we?!!!

MRS F
This is Vacation BIBLE School.

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, and QUEEN BEE exchange dumbfounded looks.

MRS F
You do know what the Bible is, don't you?

BOUGINE
(with false confidence)
Of course! It's a...it's a book, right?

BAILEY
Oh, yeah. Uh, I don't read a lot of books. My baseball team has our championship game coming up this week, so I've been spending all my time practicing.
(He swings an invisible bat.)
Go Dawgs! We're the BEST team.

QUEEN BEE
(dryly)
I heard the Hornets were better.

BAILEY makes a shocked and disgusted face, and QUEEN BEE shrugs in response, but MRS F speaks up quickly...

MRS F

The Bible is actually a COLLECTION of books, written over a period of about 1,500 years.

QUEEN BEE

(yawns)

Do these books explain how to make honey? Or how to sting people who get in your way?

(pokes BLINK, who jumps)

If not, BEE school might have been more productive.

(shrugs)

MRS F

Actually, the Bible answers some of the most important questions you'll ever ask.

Who created the world?

Why are you in it?

Do you have a purpose?

What's the right way to live?

BAILEY

So, the Bible's like an instruction manual for me?

MRS F

Well, no. It's a true story whose main character is God, not you.

(pauses, taps her head to think)

But God loves you, and He DESIGNED you to be a part of His story. Reading the Bible shows you how to live your best life.

BOUGINE

(prances around the stage)

I'm already living my best life.

QUEEN BEE

Same.

BOUGINE

Has everyone seen my candy ring?

(walks to edge of stage to show the kids in audience)

MRS F

You know, there are many ways to live your life, many paths to take.

But you were built to follow God on HIS path.

QUEEN BEE

(with an eye roll)

I have no clue what that even means.

MRS F

Well, you're here this week to learn what it means. Why not give the Bible a try?

BLINK

(alarmed)

But I don't have a Bible!!

No one told me to bring a Bible!!

MRS F

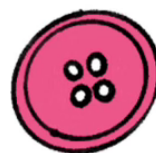
It's OK. I'll read to you from mine.

Sound: Cue the music "VBS (What's the B For?)" song and play as the groups exit for their first stations.

MRS F

Looks like it's time to go to our first activity. Follow me, class.

MRS F exits stage left, with class following her.



Skit Script Day 2

Sound: Cue music to “What’s the B For?” (Track 1).

A person in a banana costume (could be played by a Youth Director) dances on stage in a silly way for 20-30 seconds, and waves at the audience. Then, he/she notices something...There’s a giant candy ring and some candy necklaces on a stool. He/she picks them up and shows them to the audience, pointing at it and making excited faces. He/she looks left. He/she looks right. He/she puts a finger to his/her mouth to signal “be quiet.” Then he/she exits with the jewelry, on tiptoe.

Sound: Cue music to “Bougine” (Track 2).

MRS. F enters, followed by BAILEY, QUEEN BEE, BUSY, BEBE, and BLINK (in that order). BAILEY is tossing a baseball and catching it with his baseball glove. QUEEN BEE carries a flower in one hand, and with the other she waves at the audience like the Queen of England. BUSY, BEBE, and BLINK also each have a flower, and they trail behind her, mimicking the regal wave. MRS F takes her place behind the lectern while the others stand in front of their stools, dancing to the music.

Sound: End the music.

BAILEY remains standing and tosses a baseball in the air. BLINK, and QUEEN BEE sit on stools while BUSY and BEBE sit at QUEEN BEE’s feet. QUEEN BEE, BUSY, BEBE, and BLINK are twirling their flowers and sniffing them.

MRS F

Good morning, class! Welcome back to VBS.

BAILEY

(continuing to toss baseball in the air)

Oh boy—oh boy—oh boy—oh boy—oh boy—oh boy—oh boy!!!!

Guess where I’m going after VBS today, Mrs. Featherbottom!

MRS F

Don’t tell me...Vacation BASEBALL School?

BAILEY

Ha ha! No! But you’re close!

(tosses the ball again)

Today’s my baseball team’s big championship game!

We've been winning all season.
We won SO MANY games, we made it to the FINAL CHAMPIONSHIP!
(hops up and runs around in a mini-circle, pumping the air)

MRS F
Congratulations, Bailey! Your team must be very good.

BAILEY
(does an end zone style victory dance)
The BEST! I can't wait to get my hands on the trophy!
After we win, I'll bring it tomorrow to show you!

MRS F
OK, great! In the meantime, let's put the ball and glove under your seat and sit down
(BAILEY sits.)
And *(sighs as she notices all the flower-twirling)*...What do the REST of you have there?
Flowers?

QUEEN BEE
(raises her flower in the air)
It's a begonia—with a B. Because apparently EVERYTHING around here has to start with a B.
The others nod and shrug.

BLINK
Queen Bee picked a flower outside.
So WE ALL picked a flower, too.

QUEEN BEE
(sighs)
It's so pretty. I wish I had more than just one.

BUSY, BEBE, AND BLINK scramble to offer her their flowers. She accepts them, forming a bouquet and sniffing it.

MRS. F
(exasperated)
The flowers need to be put away, too.
Everyone take your seats, please.

MRS F waits while QUEEN BEE puts the flowers away and all take their seats. Suddenly, some loud sobs can be heard from offstage.

MRS. F

Is that...Bougine?

BOUGINE enters with a dramatic flourish, wailing in dismay. The other students jump up with looks of shock and concern.

BOUGINE

(dramatically upset, with the back of her hand to her forehead)

I SUPPOSE it's me, though really I'm just a SHELL of myself!

I can't find my candy jewelry anywhere!

BAILEY

Whoa, what happened to it?

BOUGINE remains standing while the other students retake their stools.

BOUGINE

(extremely distressed)

I must have put it down somewhere but I don't remember where!

And then someone must have STOLEN it!

BOUGINE dissolves into more loud sobs.

MRS. F

Oh, Bougine. I'm so sorry.

BOUGINE

My candy jewelry was my treasure.

It was the ONLY thing that made me happy!

MRS. F

Oh, no. You might feel that way right now.

But candy jewelry is just earthly treasure.

There are much better treasures than candy jewelry!

BAILEY

(stands up)

Totally! Like winning the championship game!

(sits down)

MRS. F

No, Bailey. That's not what I meant.

Do you remember what we learned yesterday, Bougine?

About WHO created us, and WHY we're here in the world?

BOUGINE

What does that have to do with my jewelry?

MRS. F

Well, you were saying that your jewelry was the only thing that made you happy.

BOUGINE

It WAS!

MRS. F

But the truth is, God made you, and HE knows what you need to be TRULY happy.
And it's not candy jewelry.

BOUGINE

Because candy jewelry can get destroyed?

MRS. F

Yes! Candy jewelry doesn't last.
You could misplace it, or someone might steal it.
Or, you could leave it outside, and insects might eat it.

BOUGINE, BAILEY, AND BLINK all turn and look at QUEEN BEE accusingly.

BOUGINE

(gasps)

Queen Bee?!?!?!?

QUEEN BEE

(dismissive)

Oh, please. I'm too busy MAKING sweet stuff to STEAL it.

BOUGINE, BAILEY, AND BLINK all nod agreeably, murmuring "That's true." and "Oh, right. Honey." and "Honey's good, too."

BOUGINE

I just wish I could remember where I left my jewelry!

BANANA GUY peeks his head out from a slit in the curtain behind them and waves at the audience. None of the actors see him.

MRS. F

(to the audience)

Has anyone out there seen someone who looks suspicious?

As the audience calls back to look behind her, MRS. F leans closer to them and puts her hand to her ear as if she's trying to hear. The other actors all do the same.

MRS. F
What did you say? He's behind me?

The actors turn to look, but BANANA MAN quickly disappears behind the curtain before the actors can see him.

MRS. F
(to the audience)
I don't see anyone. Maybe you guys should get your eyes checked.
Do you think you might be seeing things?
What did you see, anyway?
What?! A life-sized banana?!?!

BOUGINE
(disbelieving)
Seriously? A giant banana?
Come on.

The actors listen as the audience calls out that it WAS a giant banana. As they are listening to them, BANANA MAN appears again through a slit in another side of the curtain. When the audience alerts her to his presence, they listen carefully and then turn slowly...missing him again. BANANA MAN disappears behind the curtain.

MRS. F
All right, everyone.
Thanks for trying to help, but we need to get back to our lesson now.
Class, please sit down.

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, and QUEEN BEE return to their stools and BUSY AND BEBE return to their spots on the floor at QUEEN BEE's feet.

MRS. F
(shaking her head)
We really have to move on.
(to audience, rolling her eyes and doing air quotes on "banana")
But if anyone sees this life-sized "banana," just let us know.
Now, as I was saying...

BANANA MAN enters stage left, tiptoeing in slowly, then stopping while still out of MRS. F's sightline. The crowd will no doubt call this to MRS. F's attention. (If they don't, have a VBS teacher do it.) MRS. F turns, sees him, and angrily waves him over.

MRS. F

(miffed)

Get over here, Giant Banana!

Looking sheepish, BANANA MAN reluctantly walks over to MRS. F.

MRS. F

Giant Banana, did you take something that didn't belong to you?

BANANA MAN holds up the remains of the candy jewelry, which has been almost completely eaten. BOUGINE gasps loudly and runs to BANANA MAN, grabbing the remains of her jewelry.

BOUGINE

You ATE my jewelry!!!!

MRS. F

(angrily, to BANANA MAN)

That was a very poor choice you made!

Now go tell your mother what you did!

BANANA MAN shakes his head vehemently.

MRS. F

I don't want to hear it.

Turn around right now and go tell her what you did.

BANANA MAN turns and exits, dejected. BOUGINE returns to her stool but remains standing. She begins to wail again.

MRS. F

Bougine, I'm so sorry about your jewelry.

But the truth is, you won't find true happiness from things that don't last.

That's not what God created you for.

BOUGINE

What DID He create me for?

MRS. F

I'm so glad you asked!

God made you so that you could know Him and love Him—just like He knows and loves YOU!

That's a heavenly treasure.

You can talk to Him and ask Him for help when you have problems.

And you can team up with Him as He makes the world a better place.

BOUGINE
That sounds good.

MRS. F
It's more than good, it's—

BOUGINE
But I'd rather have my candy jewelry back.

BOUGINE sits down on her stool, looking dejected.

MRS. F
Right now you do. But I bet you'll change your mind.
Yesterday at VBS, we learned that Jesus came to earth and showed us how to live God's way.
Remember?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
(flashing a thumbs up)
Yes!

MRS. F
Living God's way means caring about other people—
even more than you care about your own stuff.
And...that's not always easy to do.

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
(flashing a thumbs down)
No!

MRS. F
But God helps us!
When you get to know Jesus, your thinking starts to change.
And you start wanting the same things that God wants.

BAILEY
(stands up)
To do things God's way, we start by learning about Jesus?
(sits down)

MRS. F
Yes!

QUEEN BEE

(*stands up*)
Like...reading about Him?
And praying to Him?
(*sits down*)

MRS. F
Yes!

BLINK
(*stands up*)
And then we start doing the things Jesus did?
(*sits down*)

MRS F
That's right. And one thing Jesus always did?
He depended on His Father.
He knew that He could ask his Father for whatever he needed.

BOUGINE jumps up, tapping her forehead, because this has sparked a thought.

BOUGINE
Do you think Jesus asked for candy jewelry?

MRS F
Hmmm. I don't know.
Jesus could ask for anything he wanted.
But do you know what Jesus really wanted?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
No, what?

MRS F
Jesus really wanted to help sad and hurting people.
He felt sorry for people who have to live in a world where thieves break in and steal from us,
and where the things we love get destroyed.

BOUGINE
(*big emotion, walks to edge of stage to announce this*)
I'm sad about that, too! Jesus wanted to help people...like me?

MRS F
Yes!

BOUGINE

And God gave Him that power?

MRS. F

Yes! And Bougine, YOU can ask for the power to help others, too.

God changes the world through his children.

Your VBS teacher will tell you more about this later today.

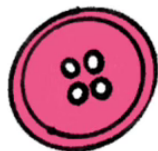
Sound: Cue music to "Bougine" (Track 2).

MRS. F

Sounds like it's time to start our day!

Follow me, class!

MRS. F exits, followed by BOUGINE, BAILEY, BLINK, QUEEN BEE, BEBE, and BUSY.



Skit Script Day 3

Sound: Cue the music to “Bailey” (Track 4).

MRS FEATHERBOTTOM enters, followed by BOUGINE, QUEEN BEE, BEBE, BUSY, and BLINK (in that order). BLINK is wearing a bee-like, black and yellow striped T-shirt. He’s clearly trying to fit in with QUEEN BEE, BEBE, and BUSY—who are all naturally striped in black and yellow. MRS. F takes her place behind the lectern while BOUGINE, QUEEN BEE, and BLINK take their stools. BUSY and BEBE sit at QUEEN BEE’S feet.

Sound: End music when all are in their spots.

MRS. F

Good morning, class. Welcome to Day 3 of VBS.

BOUGINE, QUEEN BEE, and BLINK

Good Morning, Mrs. Featherbottom!

MRS. F

Looks like we’re all here except for Bailey.

I guess he’s running late.

BLINK tiptoes over to MRS F and speaks to her outside of the others’ hearing. BOUGINE, QUEEN BEE, BEBE, and BUSY silently mime a conversation among themselves.

BLINK

Hey, Mrs. F! How do you like my shirt?

MRS. F

It’s great—it looks very nice on you, Blink.

BLINK

See how I look just like Queen Bee?

I was really worried that she wouldn’t like me.

But I think this shirt might help!

(dances around in a circle)

MRS. F

I see. So, you’re still hoping she’ll let you be her friend?

BLINK

Yeah, I've been so anxious about it!
But I think she's starting to warm up to me!
(hugs himself happily)

MRS F

How so?

BLINK

Well, yesterday I asked her what her favorite sweet treat was.
And she said, PEZ.
(pronounces it pezzzzzzzz like a bee would, really enunciating and drawing it out)

MRS F

(confused, trying to catch on)
OK...and?

BLINK

And THEN I said, "What do you think of Gummi Bears?"
And she said, "I guess I like them, too."
(pauses for dramatic effect)
And Gummi Bears are...BEARS!
(jumps up and down)

MRS. F

Right. Sounds like she...likes bears then.

BLINK does a happy leap in the air and runs back to his stool, while MRS. F shakes her head.

BAILEY enters, slow-walking in with his chin on his chest. He takes his stool but doesn't lift his head.

MRS. F

Hello, Bailey.

BAILEY doesn't answer.

MRS. F

You...are you OK there, buddy?

BAILEY

(on the brink of tears)
Not really.

MRS. F

All right. I was going to ask how your championship game went yesterday, but I think I can tell from the way you're acting that—

BAILEY

(wails hopelessly)

We LOST!

(falls to the floor and curls up in a ball)

MRS F walks over, extends her hand and helps BAILEY up. BAILEY remains standing.

MRS. F

I'm so sorry. I know how hard you practiced, and how excited you were about winning.

BAILEY

It was all I ever wanted!
I feel like my whole life has collapsed!

MRS. F

I'm sure it does feel that way.
Baseball can be hard sometimes.
Even when you love it.

BAILEY

I DO love it!
But not when I LOSE!

MRS. F

But one team always DOES lose, right?
Every time the game is played.
Let's see if our friends know what that's like.
(to the audience)
Everyone out there, have any of YOU ever lost a game?
If so, could you quietly raise your hand?

MRS. F gazes out at the audience.

MRS. F

See, Bailey? You're not alone.

BAILEY

(extremely upset)
It still stinks!
Oh, HOW can I go ON?

BAILEY returns to his stool.

MRS. F
(to BOUGINE, BLINK, and QUEEN BEE)
Do any of you have any advice for Bailey?

QUEEN BEE
(stands up, taps her chin, thinking)
He could be more like me.
I didn't care WHO won that silly game.

BAILEY buries his face in his paws and wails.

QUEEN BEE
(sitting back down)
I'm just saying...if he didn't CARE so much, he wouldn't be so upset.

MRS. F
That's...not helpful, Queen Bee. But...
I do understand what you're saying.
In fact, Jesus himself warns about building our hopes on anything OTHER than solid rock.

BAILEY
What do you mean?

MRS. F
Well, Bailey. Your main mission was to win the game, right?

BAILEY
Right.

MRS. F
But what if you had TWO missions?
And winning the game wasn't the MAIN one?

BAILEY
What would my MAIN mission be?

MRS. F
(pauses, takes a breath)
OK, hear me out.

BAILEY

I'm listening.

MRS. F

Baseball can be hard, right?

Just like life can be hard.

But God is always working to help His children with the hard stuff.

Your MAIN mission is...to be part of God's work.

BAILEY

You're saying...God would let me join Him in HIS mission?

To make the world a better place?

MRS. F

Yes!

BAILEY

(jumping up, getting heated)

I can't even win a BASEBALL game!

And you think God wants ME to help him make the world a better place?!

(dejected, sits down)

I don't think I can do it.

MRS. F

Oh, Bailey. God doesn't NEED your help.

But He loves you. He likes being with you.

And He can work THROUGH you if He chooses to.

(to audience)

What do you guys think?

Do you think God could use Bailey to make the world a better place?

Clap your hands if you think so.

VBS leaders in the audience lead the children in applause.

MRS. F

Thank you! You can stop clapping now!

BAILEY

Thanks, guys!

OK. But what should I do?

MRS. F

Well, Bailey. Your mission, should you choose to accept it...

Sound: Cue the "Mission Impossible" theme and play for 10-15 seconds.

All actors will dance and/or make action hero poses to the music. When the music ends, all sit down except BAILEY.

MRS. F

(when music ends)

OK, we really didn't need music for this, but thank you.

As I was saying...

BAILEY

(excited)

Yes, Mrs. Featherbottom?

MRS. F

You start this mission by getting to know God.

He's super-powerful, super-loving, and you're His beloved child!

Bailey clasps his hands above his head and shakes them in a victorious gesture.

MRS. F

And when you're on the baseball field, remember that He's there with you.

Ask Him to show you someone who might need your help.

BAILEY

So...God will tell me my mission?

MRS. F

Probably not in words.

But as you go about your day, pay attention to what's going on around you.

BAILEY

Got it. Pay attention.

(makes a show of looking around)

MRS. F

Sooner or later, something will happen that you could probably help with.

BAILEY

Like what?

MRS. F

Well, name a hard thing that happens in baseball.

BAILEY

Losing a game!!!

MRS. F

Right. And you know what it feels like to lose.
So, if you're around someone who just lost a game, what could you do?

BAILEY

I could tell them, "I know how it feels."

MRS. F

Yes! Anything else?

BAILEY

I could stop myself from rubbing it in his face.
I could tell other kids not to make fun of him.

MRS. F

Does getting made fun of happen a lot in baseball?

BAILEY

Yeah, like when someone makes a mistake.
They get teased.

MRS. F

(sighs)

That's another reason baseball can be hard.
Think about your main mission in THAT situation.
Imagine that Jesus was guiding you.
How might you make baseball less hard for someone who's being made fun of?

BAILEY

If someone strikes out, or drops the ball, I could tell him it's OK.
I could tell him I like being his teammate.

MRS. F

You know what, Bailey?
I think you were MADE for this mission!
THIS is how God works in the world.
Through His children, like you.

BAILEY

(enthusiastic)

OK! That sounds amazing!
(pauses, thinks)

But Mrs. Featherbottom? I still want to win games, though.

MRS. F

I want you to win, too, Bailey.
I wish you well in BOTH your missions.

BAILEY

Thanks!

Sound: Cue music to "Bailey" (Track 4).

MRS. F

Sounds like it's time to go. Follow me, class!

MRS. F exits, followed by BAILEY, BOUGINE, BLINK, QUEEN BEE, BUSY, and BEBE.



Skit Script Day 4

Sound: Cue the music to "Blink" (Track 3).

QUEEN BEE, BUSY, and BEBE enter with QUEEN BEE, who is miming like she's talking animatedly to the other two.

Sound: End the music when they reach mid-stage.

QUEEN BEE stands in the center with BUSY and BEBE on either side. They listen as she talks.

QUEEN BEE

And I said, "How could YOU win the spelling bee?

You're not even a BEE!"

(BUSY and BEBE laugh.)

She was so mad!

She made a beeline straight back to her mom!

(BUSY and BEBE laugh.)

BLINK enters and nervously walks over to the group.

BLINK

Hi, Queen Bee!

QUEEN BEE

Hi.

BLINK

What are you all talking about?

QUEEN BEE

Oh, just bee stuff.

BLINK

Like what?

QUEEN BEE

Well, you're not a bee, so...

BLINK

Could you tell me anyway?

QUEEN BEE

(angrily)

Um, NO. Because it's none of your BEESWAX.

Now buzz off!

BLINK runs across the stage and hides behind MRS. FEATHERBOTTOM's lectern.

QUEEN BEE, BUSY, and BEBE exit.

MRS. F, BOUGINE, and BAILEY enter. BOUGINE and BAILEY take their places.

MRS. F walks to the lectern, where she finds BLINK crouched down.

BLINK

(getting up)

Oh, thank goodness you're here!

I'm so worried, and I don't know what to do!

MRS. F

Hi, Blink. Sure, what's going on?

BLINK

I'm having major anxiety about this QUEEN BEE thing.

I only have two days left of VBS.

Two days left to convince her to be my friend.

MRS. F

OK...and what happens if you don't?

BLINK

If I don't, then she won't be my friend!

MRS. F

And?

BLINK

If she won't be my friend, then NO ONE will want to be my friend!

MRS. F

Oh, that's probably not—

BLINK

And if NO ONE will be my friend, then I'll be ALL ALONE!

BLINK begins jumping back and forth from foot to foot and shaking his paws at the wrists—all out of nervous anxiety.

MRS. F
OK, OK. Deep breaths.

BLINK stops bouncing and begins deep breathing.

BLINK

Mrs. Featherbottom, could you excuse me for a minute?

MRS. F
Uh...OK.

BLINK takes off running while shaking his paws in the air maniacally. BAILEY and BOUGINE stand up and watch intently, with concern, as BLINK runs off the stage, up one aisle, back again, up the other aisle, all the while shouting, “Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! “Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! “Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! “Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!”

BLINK returns to the stage and his place next to MRS F.

MRS. F
Do you...feel better now?

BLINK
Yep.

MRS. F
Blink, I think we need to talk about your fears, OK?

BLINK
OK

MRS. F
You're afraid of not having friends.
And I get it.
We all need friends, right? At least one friend.

BLINK
Right.
Someone to talk to...
Someone to spend time with...

MRS. F

Absolutely.

Now, let me tell you something else that's true.
God knows that you need friends.

BLINK

He does?

MRS. F

Yes. And He LOVES you.
And He wants to give you the things you need.

BLINK

So...I should ask God for friends?

MRS. F

You should ask God for EVERYTHING you need.

BLINK

Can I ask God to make Queen Bee like me?

MRS. F

You can ask God for anything.
But God knows what you really need.
He only gives you things that are GOOD for you.
Things that He knows you need.

BLINK

I need Queen Bee to be my friend!

MRS. F

Do you, Blink?
Because I'm not so sure about that.
Do you remember what Bailey learned yesterday?

BAILEY

(jumping off his stool)

I do! I remember!

MRS. F

(laughing)

OK Bailey. What did you learn?

BAILEY

I learned that winning baseball games isn't my MAIN mission.

God has a different main mission for me.

(Strikes a superman pose with hands on hips.)

He wants to work through me to change the world!

To make things better!

(sits down)

MRS. F

That's right!

You know what, Blink?

God wants YOU on that mission, too.

BLINK

God wants ME?

MRS. F

Yes.

BLINK

But what can I do?

I'm just an adorable bear whose mom dropped him off here at VBS.

MRS. F

Oh, Blink, you're not JUST anything.

God created you!

God loves you!

God is CRAZY about you!

MRS. F walks to the edge of the stage to address the audience.

MRS. F

Hey, everybody out there!

If you think God loves Blink, clap your hands!

VBS teachers in the audience lead the children in giving Blink a round of applause.

BLINK

Oh, OK.

(gives the audience a grateful thumbs up and bows)

Thank you!

MRS. F

(to audience)

Thank you! You can stop clapping now!
(to Blink)
You have a purpose, Blink—a reason God created you.
Do you know what that purpose is?

BLINK
No! Tell me!

MRS. F
Your purpose is to know and love God—and to show people what God is like.
That's what Jesus did when He was on earth.
And He wants you to do that, too.

BLINK
But how?

MRS. F
Well, it's different for everyone.
For example, Bailey's purpose is to show others what Jesus would be like if He was a
baseball-playing beagle.

BAILEY jumps up, swings an invisible bat, does a funny victory dance, and sits back down.

BLINK
And my purpose?

MRS. F
Is to show others what Jesus would be like if He was an adorable bear who just got dropped off
at VBS!

BLINK
So...stand around and look adorable?

MRS. F
Hmmm. I think...if Jesus was an adorable bear at VBS, he would do His best to show a lot of
kindness to people who needed it.
Jesus was always working with His Father to change the world.

BLINK
I want God to use ME to change the world!

MRS. F
(laughs)
Jesus called this "seeking God's kingdom."

That means helping to make the world the way it's meant to be, with God as the king.
A place where God's children follow God's rules.

BLINK

OK! I can do that!

(pauses, taps his chin to think)

But Mrs. Featherbottom?

I also need a daily nap.

And lots of snacks.

And...a couple months off in the winter.

For hibernation.

MRS. F

Jesus knows what you need, Blink.

He says that if you seek God's kingdom FIRST, He'll make sure you get all the other things you need, too.

BOUGINE

Oh, we know that verse!

We learned a fun chant to remember it!

MRS. F

Great! Let's hear it!

BOUGINE and BAILEY

(chanting song from Track 00)

Seek first

(Clap Clap)

His kingdom

(Clap Clap)

That's where God dwells

(Clap Clap Clap)

These things

(Clap Clap)

Will be given

(Clap Clap)

To you as well

(Clap Clap Clap)

BAILEY

Blink, want to try it with us?

On the second verse, you stomp your feet!

BLINK
OK, I'll try!
(*Blink stands next to BAILEY and BOUGINE*)

BOUGINE, BAILEY, and BLINK
(*chanting song from Track 6*)
Seek first
(*Stomp Stomp*)
His kingdom
(*Stomp Stomp*)
That's where God dwells
(*Stomp Stomp Stomp*)
These things
(*Stomp Stomp*)
Will be given
(*Stomp Stomp*)
To you as well
(*Stomp Stomp Stomp*)

BLINK
Hey, that's a great way to remember it!
Thanks, Mrs. F!

MRS. F
You're welcome.
And I'm going to pray for you today, that God might bring a new friend into your life.

Sound: Cue music to "Blink" (Track 3).

MRS. F
Sounds like it's time to go. Follow me, class!

MRS. F exits, followed by BOUGINE, BLINK, and BAILEY.

Skit Script Day 5

Sound: Cue music to “Queen Bee” (Track 5).

MRS. F enters and takes her place at the lectern. She’s followed by BOUGINE, BLINK, and BAILEY—who are all carrying candy jewelry (either necklaces or bracelets). They jump around, twirling the jewelry.

Sound: End music when all the students have reached center stage.

MRS. F
Good morning!
Welcome to the final day of VBS!

BLINK
(still dancing around, shows off jewelry)
Look what we got, Mrs. Featherbottom!

BAILEY
(tossing jewelry and catching it)
Bougine gave out candy jewelry!

BOUGINE
(still dancing)
My parents got it for me to celebrate the last day of VBS.
I offered some to QUEEN BEE, too.
But she said she only likes REAL jewelry.

MRS. F
(looking at BLINK and BAILEY)
Well, you’ve certainly made these two very happy!

BOUGINE
Lots of things made me happy this week.
Like, I found out that God will guide me to live His way!
(points up)
And He’ll give me the power to do it!

MRS. F
Yes, He will!

BAILEY

And I found out that God will give me another mission.
One that's better than just winning baseball games.

MRS. F

He will!

BLINK

And I learned that God will show me how to make the world a better place.

MRS. F

Also true.

BOUGINE

(holding up a bag of candy jewelry)

Mrs. Featherbottom?

There are some other kids I'd like to give this candy jewelry to.
Can I go do that?

MRS. F

Sure. Go ahead.

BOUGINE

Blink and Bailey, will you help me hand them out?

BLINK and BAILEY

OK!

BOUGINE exits, dancing, followed quickly and joyfully by BLINK and BAILEY.

They cross paths with QUEEN BEE, who enters with her usual royal walk, followed by BEBE and BUSY. She crosses the stage and walks straight to MRS. F.

BEBE and BUSY follow. Halfway there, QUEEN BEE stops and turns to face the wannabes.

QUEEN BEE

(puts out hand to stop the wannabes)

Wait here.

QUEEN BEE resumes walking. BEBE and BUSY resume following.

Again, QUEEN BEE stops and turns to face the wannabes.

QUEEN BEE
I SAID to wait there.
(points to where she told them to wait)

BEBE and BUSY look at each other in confusion and don't move. QUEEN BEE shakes her head, turns the wannabes around, and gently pushes them back to center stage.

QUEEN BEE
Wait HERE.
Or, better yet...
You may go sit on the floor.

BEBE and BUSY look at her and then the audience with shocked faces.

QUEEN BEE
(points to the floor by her stool)
Over THERE.

BEBE and BUSY sit down. QUEEN BEE crosses the stage and stands by MRS. F.

QUEEN BEE
Mrs. Featherbottom, may I speak to you privately?

MRS. F
Of course, Queen Bee.
(They take a few steps to the side.)
What's on your mind?

QUEEN BEE
I'm feeling left out.

MRS. F
YOU'RE feeling left out?

QUEEN BEE
Yes.

MRS. F
You have an entourage.
(waits for a reply but doesn't get one)
Everyone wants to be your friend.
(points to the wannabes)
You're never NOT with friends.

QUEEN BEE
I'm feeling left out BY GOD.

MRS. F
What?! Queen Bee!
God would NEVER leave you out.

QUEEN BEE
Look, Bougine and Blink and Bailey keep talking about how God is using them to change the world.

MRS. F
That's true.

QUEEN BEE
Well, that leaves ME in the world the way it IS.

MRS. F
Ah, I see.

QUEEN BEE
That's why I feel left out.

MRS. F
Oh, Queen Bee.
The world the way it is...well, it IS changing.
God is changing it through His children.
God's kingdom IS coming.

QUEEN BEE
But I'm a QUEEN!
I LIKE the world the way it is!

MRS. F
I can see why you might feel that way.
But even for a queen, this world isn't...perfect.

QUEEN BEE
But I'm in charge!
Everyone bows to me!

MRS. F
Well, God gave you some wonderful leadership qualities.

QUEEN BEE turns and looks at BEBE and BUSY, who stretch their arms in her direction longingly. She raises a hand in the air to indicate they should stay where they are.

MRS. F

(shaking her head)

But Queen Bee, God designed you to follow HIS lead.

It's God's world, not yours.

And when you do things YOUR way, you're rebelling against Him.

You're grieving His heart.

QUEEN BEE

(becoming upset)

What?...No!

I don't want to grieve God's heart!

Does God hate me?

MRS F

Are you kidding me?

He absolutely ADORES you.

And He has amazing plans for you to flourish in this world.

Your life could be so much better, Queen Bee.

QUEEN BEE

BETTER than it already is?

MRS. F

Yes, because there's another way to live—the way you were DESIGNED to live.

QUEEN BEE

How was I designed to live?

MRS. F

The way you were designed to live is...

(stops, thinks)

Actually, Jesus sums it up nicely in the Bible.

In Matthew 7:12.

That verse goes—

Several VBS Music Volunteers enter, running.

VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEER #1

Would you like us to sing that verse for you?

MRS. F looks around, confused.

MRS. F
(perplexed by their sudden appearance)
Uh, where did you come from?

VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEER #2
We've been here all week!
And today, we're teaching the kids the song for Matthew 7:12.

VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEER #1
Would you like to hear it?

MRS. F and QUEEN BEE glance at each other, shrug, then nod yes.

VBS MUSIC #2
One, two, three!

All VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEERS
(singing song from Track 10)
So in everything / do to others what / you would have them do to you/
For this sums up / the law and prophets /
Now let's go paddle a canoe!

MRS. F
Uh...I don't think that last line is right?
But otherwise...great job.
Thanks.

VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEER #1
You're welcome!

VBS MUSIC VOLUNTEERS wave to the audience and exit, running.

MRS. F
Anyway, that's a direct quote from Jesus.
Well, the FIRST part.
We call it the Golden Rule.

QUEEN BEE
So...treat others the way you would like to be treated?
That's what Jesus did?

MRS. F
Yes.

QUEEN BEE
How did Jesus want to be treated?

MRS. F
Well, I can't speak for Jesus.
But I imagine He wanted to be treated like we all do.
With love and kindness.

QUEEN BEE
(*sadly*)
I don't always treat people with love and kindness.

QUEEN BEE turns and looks at BUSY and BEBE.

QUEEN BEE
(*to BUSY and BEBE*)
Hey, you two! You can sit on the chairs if you want.
I shouldn't have made you sit on the floor.

With comedic uncertainty, BUSY and BEBE slowly rise and take the chairs. As they're doing this, QUEEN BEE encourages them by saying things like "It's OK" and "I won't get mad."

QUEEN BEE
(*her sinfulness is dawning on her*)
Oh, what have I done? I've been terrible! Awful!
I've been doing the OPPOSITE of the Golden Rule!
I'm the WORST!

QUEEN BEE sinks to the floor in despair.

MRS. F
OK, wait! Listen, I'm not going to tell you that you haven't been...pretty terrible.

MRS. F pauses and raises a comedic eyebrow at the audience.

MRS. F
But please don't think you're alone.
We've all made a mess of things on earth, rebelling against God.
And that separated us from Him.
But Jesus paid the ultimate price to bring us back.
He died on a cross for our sins—yours and mine.
He made a way for us ALL to be with God again.
And to live HIS way.

QUEEN BEE

(nodding)

Right—His way.

So, if I want to change...I need to start following the Golden Rule?

MRS. F

Well, actually...if you really want your life to change—

QUEEN BEE

I do! What do I need to do?

MRS. F

Well, you've already done half of it.

QUEEN BEE

I have?

MRS. F

You just said you feel sorry for doing and saying lots of wrong things.
Things that aren't loving and kind.

QUEEN BEE

(sighs)

Yeah.

MRS. F

Now, all you have to do is ask Jesus to forgive you.
He'll do it, no questions asked.
And then, He'll do something else.

QUEEN BEE

What? What will Jesus do?

MRS. F

As you get to know Him, He'll make you WANT to follow the Golden Rule.
And He'll give you the power to live it out.

QUEEN BEE

OK, and that means...

(pauses to think)

I'm invited, too?

To change the world with God?

MRS. F
You are SO invited, Queen Bee.
Everyone's invited to help God change the world.

QUEEN BEE
You mean, everyone whose name starts with a B.

MRS. F
What? No.

BOUGINE, BLINK, and BAILEY enter, running. They're twirling their candy necklaces in the air and dancing happily.

QUEEN BEE
Bougine starts with a B.
Blink starts with a B.

MRS. F
Right, but Jesus didn't say—

QUEEN BEE
Bailey starts with a B.

MRS. F
(gesturing to QUEEN BEE)
Right, and Bee starts with a B.
(sighs)
Jesus loves ALL the B's.
BUT He loves all the OTHER letters, too.

QUEEN BEE
But He loves B's the best.

MRS. F
No! He loves us ALL!

Sound: Cue music to "Queen Bee" (Track 5).

MRS. F throws her arms up in the air and shakes her head.

MRS F
It's time to go. BUT...He loves ALL of us, OK?

QUEEN BEE

OK!

MRS. F

Follow me, class!

MRS. F exits, followed by BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE, BUSY, and BEBE, who all wave goodbye as they leave the stage.

VBS (What's the B For?)

Puppet Show Scripts



Puppet Show Overview

The Puppet Show station is the second main teaching time. The puppet show will be repeated up to five times, once for each crew of students coming through. It's followed by a "circle time" activity, in which a VBS volunteer leads the children in a Q&A discussion about what they saw.

The Puppet Show Station requires 5 volunteers:

- ☐ 1 adult/older teen volunteer to play the "VBS Teacher" role (not a puppet!)
- ☐ 4 teen volunteers to play puppet roles

A note on volunteers:

Ideally, the VBS Director will draw these volunteers from the youth group. If more than four youth group members want to participate as puppeteers, the roles can be divided up among the five days of VBS. Theoretically, there are 20 roles on offer, but only four are required. The lines don't necessarily have to be memorized, since volunteers can read the script behind a curtain, and the VBS Teacher can be holding a clipboard with the script.

The Puppet Show requires 4 DIY puppets (plus one extra on Day 4):



Blink the Bear, Queen Bee, Bougine Bird, Bailey the Dog

The puppet-making instructions are in the "Creative Arts" section.

To create a DIY puppet “theater,” you’ll need:

- ☐ 84-inch tension rod, or or any long pole
- ☐ Wide curtain (such as shower curtain)
- ☐ Scissors and masking tape
- ☐ 2 sturdy tables

Cut the curtain to desired height. The length will depend on if the puppeteers want to stand behind it, sit behind it, or kneel behind it. Thread the rod/pole through the top of the curtain. Affix the end of the rod/pole to a sturdy table on either side, either using tension or strong tape.

The shepherding volunteers who bring the children in will be responsible for discipline. Set expectations (watch quietly, hands to yourselves) and be clear about potential consequences (disturbing others leads to having to sit out in the hall with some of the volunteers).

When the show is over, the shepherd volunteer will ask the children to sit in a circle so they can discuss the show they just watched. Use the discussion questions provided.

Differentiation for 4th and 5th graders

For the nine and ten-year-olds, you might skip the Puppet Show altogether and offer them the Escape Room station instead.

Alternatively, you could simply use the puppet show scripts differently for older kids. The VBS volunteers could put on the puppet show on Day 1. See how these older children react. Do they think they’re too old for puppet shows? If so, try one of the following options for the rest of the week:

Option 1

On Day 2, ask for four children from the class to put on the puppet show for their classmates. Repeat on Days 3 - 5, making sure every child has had a turn to perform.

Option 2

On Day 2, ask for four child volunteers to read the scripts aloud in a Reader’s Theater exercise. Repeat on Days 3 - 5.

Puppet Show Script Day 1

BAILEY, BOUGINE, and BLINK enter. BOUGINE is wearing several candy necklaces around her sock puppet neck, and she is singing her "Bougine" song exuberantly.

BAILEY

Whoa! Bougine! Nice necklaces!

BOUGINE

Aren't they gorgeous? And they're delicious, too.

BLINK

Those are CANDY necklaces? You're so lucky!

BLINK and BAILEY move in close to BOUGINE to inspect them.

BOUGINE

(jumping away)

Hey! Get back!! I didn't say you could TOUCH them!

BAILEY

Couldn't I just sniff it? We dogs like to sniff things!

BAILEY tries to sniff jewelry, while BOUGINE withdraws even further.

BOUGINE

Nope, no sniffing! This jewelry is very precious to me.

BLINK

OK, but...what if disaster strikes?

Like a tornado or hurricane, and we don't have any food?

Would you share your candy necklace with us THEN?

BOUGINE

Absolutely not! It's mine.

BLINK

Even if we were STARVING?

BOUGINE

You know what? YOU'RE not even allowed to LOOK at it.

Turn your head that way!
(*BOUGINE motions in the other direction.*)

BLINK turns his head in the other direction. Then he slowly turns it back again to peek at her.

BOUGINE
I saw that!

BLINK quickly turns his head in the other direction. Then he slowly turns it back again to peek at her again.

BOUGINE
I SAID no looking!!!

VBS TEACHER enters.

VBS TEACHER
Hello class! My name is _____.
I'm going to be your VBS teacher for this activity.
Let's see...who's here?
Hello Bougine!
(*BOUGINE says hi*)
Hello Blink!
(*BLINK says hi*)
Hello Bailey!
(*BAILEY says hi*)

VBS TEACHER
Hey, where's Queen Bee?

BAILEY
She's always last to arrive.
You know, so she can make her ROYAL ENTRANCE.
(*shakes his head slowly*)

QUEEN BEE enters.

QUEEN BEE
I've arrived.

BOUGINE, BLINK, and BAILEY bow in QUEEN BEE's direction.

VBS TEACHER
Hello Queen Bee!

QUEEN BEE

Hi.

VBS TEACHER

Now that we're all here, let's get started.

Today we're going to talk about making choices.

Can anyone give me an example of a choice we might have to make?

BAILEY

Yeah, I got one.

We have to CHOOSE whether or not to share our things.

BLINK

Yeah, like maybe if we had a candy necklace, would we CHOOSE to let others look at it?

BOUGINE

Well, we also have to CHOOSE whether or not to get right up in someone's face and make them feel uncomfortable!

VBS TEACHER

Right. Those are...strangely specific choices you're mentioning.

But yes.

Every day we make choices about how we want to live.

QUEEN BEE

I have one. I'm always having to CHOOSE who gets to be my friend. It's exhausting.

(Puppet falls to the side in exhaustion and then jumps up again.)

VBS TEACHER

Right, OK. Anyway...As we make choices, it's helpful to take a step back and remember who we are and how we got here.

BLINK

I'm Blink, and my mom drove me here.

VBS TEACHER

That's right, but I meant in a more general sense.

Who are we? We are God's children.

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, AND QUEEN BEE say "Ahh!" and nod their heads.

VBS TEACHER

And why are we here? God created us in order to love and guide us.

He has a purpose for each one of us.

BAILEY

Oh, right! Mrs. Featherbottom talked about this!

BOUGINE

She said that there are many paths to follow in this life.
But we were made to follow God on HIS path.

BLINK

(shaking, darting around)

But how can we find that path?
I don't know what that path is!

VBS TEACHER

Don't worry, BLINK. God will always help you.
In fact, He came to earth Himself to show us that path—or, well, His son Jesus did.
Jesus showed people how to live God's way.

QUEEN BEE

So, what is God's way?

VBS TEACHER

Well, we learn about it in the Bible.
(picks up Bible and shows it)
Jesus spent three years teaching people how to make good choices.
Many of his teachings are recorded in a famous talk he gave, which we call the Sermon on the Mount. Can you say that?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
The Sermon on the Mount

VBS TEACHER

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that making good choices is like walking on a narrow path.

BLINK

Because you follow right behind God?

VBS TEACHER

Right. God always walks straight towards what's right and good.
And we follow Him on that narrow path.

BLINK

But what if we veer off course?
Go left or right?
(zigs and zags)
What if we DON'T make good choices?

VBS TEACHER
Actually? On our own, we CAN'T always make good choices.
We need Jesus to help us.
That's why Jesus wants us to stay right behind Him on the path, nice and close, so He can help
us make good choices.

BLINK
That sounds easy.

VBS TEACHER
It does sound easy, but it can actually be tricky.
See, there are many, many OTHER choices we can make.
There are MANY BAD options to choose from.
Jesus calls all those ways the WIDE path.

BAILEY
And Jesus doesn't want us to walk on the wide path?

VBS TEACHER
No. He wants you to stay close to Him.
He says that the NARROW path leads to a full life.
But the WIDE path leads to destruction.

BOUGINE
What if you don't MEAN to veer off the narrow path?
Like maybe you don't FIT on the narrow path, because you're carrying so much stuff?

VBS TEACHER
Well, I guess sometimes you have to leave your stuff behind.

BOUGINE
Hmmm. I don't like the sound of that.

VBS TEACHER
I understand, Bougine.
Sometimes good choices might mean giving up some things.
And that doesn't SEEM good in those moments.
But that doesn't mean they're NOT good choices.
And Jesus will always help you when you stay close to Him.

BLINK
I'm getting confused.
Can you give me an example?

VBS TEACHER
I bet some examples will come up in the next few days.
Don't worry, Blink.
We'll learn more tomorrow.
Now who's ready to go to our next activity?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
I am!
I am!
I am!
I am!

VBS TEACHER
All right, class. Follow me!

VBS TEACHER exits, followed by BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, and QUEEN BEE.





Day 1: Puppet Show Discussion Questions

- ☐ When Bougine came out, what was she wearing? [candy necklaces]
- ☐ Which of the other puppets noticed what she was wearing? What did they do? [Blink and Bailey noticed and came close to admire it]
- ☐ Bougine loves her jewelry, and she didn't want anyone coming near it. We all have things we really love, and that's OK. Does anyone here own something they really love and don't want anyone else to touch? [answers may vary]
- ☐ Bougine didn't want anyone to even COME NEAR her jewelry, but some classmates DID come near it. So, she had a choice to make. She could either let them come close and admire her jewelry, or she could tell them to stay away. What choice did she make? [She tells them to stay away]
- ☐ When Bougine chose not to let anyone come near her necklace, her classmates had a choice to make. They could say, "That's OK. We don't need to touch it." Or, they could make her feel bad for not sharing. What did they do? [They tried to make her feel bad for not sharing]
- ☐ Do you think they ALL could have made better choices? How? [Yes, answers may vary]
- ☐ Then the VBS teacher talked about making choices. She explained that there was something we should remember when we have a choice to make. Can anyone tell me what we should remember? [It helps to remember who we are and how we got here. We are God's children, and God created us in order to love and guide us]
- ☐ There are lots of different ways to live in this world. How can we learn how to live God's way? [By drawing close to Jesus, learning how He lived in the world and seeking His help.]

- ☐ We learned that God came to the earth in the form of Jesus, and He spent three years teaching people how to make good choices. What did Jesus say making good choices was like? [Making good choices is like entering through a narrow gate and walking on a narrow path]
- ☐ Can we make good choices on our own? [No.]
- ☐ Then how can we do it?! [We follow Jesus' lead, staying close behind Him as we walk along the path. He will help us make good choices.]
- ☐ What did Jesus say making bad choices was like? [Making bad choices is like entering through a wide gate and walking on a wide path]
- ☐ It's pretty clear that Jesus wants us to stay on the narrow path. But EVERYONE veers off the path sometimes. If you veer off the narrow path, will God still love you? [Yes!]
- ☐ If you made a bad choice, what do you think you should do? [Draw close to Jesus. He will show you the way]





Puppet Show Script Day 2

VBS TEACHER enters.

VBS TEACHER
Hmmm...where is everybody?

BOUGINE pops up.

BOUGINE
Here I am!

VBS TEACHER
Hi, Bougine!

BLINK and BAILEY pop up.

BLINK and BAILEY
Hello!

VBS TEACHER
And here's Blink and Bailey! Hi you two!
(pauses, looks around)
So now we're just missing—

BOUGINE, BLINK and BAILEY
(all turn their heads to the left)
Queen Bee

QUEEN BEE enters from the left, making her slow and regal entrance.

QUEEN BEE

I've arrived.

VBS TEACHER

Great! The gang's all here. What have you been learning today?

BOUGINE

Well, first I learned that candy jewelry isn't such a wonderful treasure.

Well, it IS—but it doesn't LAST.

VBS TEACHER

Yes, I see you're not wearing ANY jewelry today.

BLINK

Bougine's jewelry got destroyed.

BAILEY

That's why candy jewelry ISN'T such a great treasure.

It doesn't last.

Puppets all sadly and slowly shake their heads from side to side.

BOUGINE

But Mrs. Featherbottom said that there's a better treasure that DOES last.

BAILEY

Oh, yeah! The better treasure is knowing God—and talking to Him all the time, and asking Him for the things you need.

QUEEN BEE

(turns to BOUGINE)

So Bougine, are you going to talk to God—and ask HIM for more candy jewelry?

BAILEY and BLINK nod their heads in excitement.

BOUGINE

I was going to.

But then Mrs. Featherbottom told me about Jesus.

HE asked God for power to change the world.

And...I think I want to ask for that, too.

VBS TEACHER

You're going to ask God for the power to change the world?

BAILEY
I'm DEFINITELY gonna ask God for that!
I want Him to give me a cape, too!
And I want the power to fly around and pick up bad guys and throw them in the river!

BAILEY darts from side to side excitedly.

VBS TEACHER
Oh, Bailey. You don't need a superhero cape to change the world.
And you don't need to fly, either.

BOUGINE
I already know how to fly.

QUEEN BEE
Yes, you've mentioned that.
Several times.

VBS TEACHER
I'm guessing you all want to change the world into a place where people are kind to each other,
right?

BOUGINE
Right.

VBS TEACHER
A place where people help each other and share with one another.
And NOT a place where people steal jewelry.

BOUGINE
Yes!

VBS TEACHER
Jesus wants that, too!
And He wants to start with you.

BOUGINE
What? But I didn't steal any jewelry!

VBS TEACHER
I meant that He wants to start with ALL of you.
Not just you, Bougine.

QUEEN BEE
I didn't steal any jewelry, either.

BAILEY
Me, neither!!

BLINK
Me neither!

VBS TEACHER
No, you didn't.
But you want to change the WHOLE world, right?
Not JUST get rid of jewelry thieves?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE
(nodding)
Right.

VBS TEACHER
And that's what God wants.
You see, there's a way that God MEANT for us to live
And if we spend time with Jesus, He will show us how to live that way.

BOUGINE
How do we spend time with Jesus?

VBS TEACHER
We read about Him in the Bible.
We talk to Him.
We sing songs to Him.
We listen to our parents and teachers when they talk about Him.
As we do these things, Jesus can change the way we think.

BLINK
How does He do that?

VBS TEACHER
Well, let's see.
Jesus was always sharing His things.
So you might find yourself wanting to share YOUR things, too.
Jesus can change your heart.

BOUGINE
He can change my HEART?! How does he get in there?

VBS TEACHER
Anything is possible with God.
Jesus did really hard stuff.
He was always helping people and
being patient with them, even when they weren't being kind.

BAILEY
Woooft. That does sound hard.
Too hard for me.

VBS TEACHER
It IS too hard for you—without God's help.
But that's where God's treasure comes in.
The treasure that's better than candy jewelry.
Do you remember what it was?

BAILEY
It's being able to talk to God!
And to ask Him for the things you need.

VBS TEACHER
Right. And if we need God to make us patient and kind, we can ask for that.
And He will help us.

QUEEN BEE
But why would I want to do THAT?

VBS TEACHER
Because THAT'S how God makes the world a better place—the place it was meant to be.
Imagine if everyone asked Jesus for the power to live like Him.
If EVERYONE was sharing and helping others, Bougine wouldn't have to worry about someone
stealing her jewelry, would she?

BAILEY
But just because WE'RE acting kind, that doesn't mean other people will.

VBS TEACHER
That's true. But you can talk to God about that, and ask Him to help those people, too.
And many times, when other people see YOU acting kind, they want to be kind, too.

BOUGINE
Even jewelry thieves?!

VBS TEACHER
Maybe. God would love to help EVERYONE to become more like Jesus.
That's how He changes the world.

BOUGINE
Starting with me?

VBS TEACHER
Yes! Starting with each one of you!

BAILEY
Starting...now?

VBS TEACHER
Why not?
Let's start now!
Come on, class!
It's time to go to our next activity!

VBS TEACHER exits, followed by puppets.





Day 2: Puppet Show Discussion Questions

- ☐ When the teacher asked what Bougine was learning in VBS, she said she learned something about candy jewelry. What did she say she learned about candy jewelry? [It doesn't last]
- ☐ Does Bougine like living in a world where thieves can steal your things? [No]
- ☐ She ALSO learned that there's a better treasure that DOES last. What's that treasure? [The better treasure is knowing God—and talking to Him all the time, and asking Him for the things you need]
- ☐ God is always with us, and we can talk to Him and ask Him for help. What did Bougine want God to give her the power to do? [the power to change the world]
- ☐ In order to change the world, we ALL need to ask God to help us live the way that God MEANT for us to live. Who showed us how to live God's way? [Jesus]
- ☐ Imagine if everyone asked God to help them to be kind and generous. Would the world be different? Would it be better or worse? [Yes, better]
- ☐ When Bailey heard about trying to do things God's way, he thought it might be too hard. Do you ever feel like that? [Answers may vary]
- ☐ Actually, it IS too hard for us to do things God's way—at least by ourselves. There's someone we need to stay close to in order to get help. Who do we need to stay close to? [Jesus]
- ☐ What are some ways to stay close to Jesus? [We read about Him in the Bible. We talk to Him. We sing songs to Him. We listen to our parents when they talk about Him.]

Puppet Show Script Day 3

VBS TEACHER enters and looks around.

VBS TEACHER
Hmmm, where is everybody?

BOUGINE and BLINK pop up.

BOUGINE and BLINK
We're here!

VBS TEACHER
Oh, hello, Bougine! Hi Blink!

QUEEN BEE enters from the side and walks over.

QUEEN BEE
(regally)
I've arrived.

VBS TEACHER
Hi Queen Bee!
(looks left and right)
Where's Bailey?

BOUGINE, BLINK, AND QUEEN BEE look left and right.

BLINK
(to TEACHER)
He's on his way.

BOUGINE
(to TEACHER)
Oh, but listen.

Whatever you do, DON'T bring up his baseball game.

QUEEN BEE
(to *TEACHER*)

Definitely not.
Unless you ENJOY endless blubbing.

BLINK
(to *TEACHER*)
His team lost.

BAILEY enters from the side and walks over.

VBS TEACHER
(*overly cheerful*)
Hi Bailey! How was your...

BOUGINE, BLINK, and QUEEN BEE vehemently shake their heads "no."

VBS TEACHER
Your...uh, BREAKFAST this morning?

BOUGINE, BLINK, and QUEEN BEE nod their heads "yes," then turn toward BAILEY.

BAILEY
(*sighs*)
My breakfast was fine.
And it's OK—you don't have to avoid asking about my game yesterday.
We lost.

VBS TEACHER
I heard. I'm sorry about that.

BAILEY
I really wanted to win.
But I also really want something else now.

VBS TEACHER
What else do you want?

BAILEY
Mrs. Featherbottom told me about it.
Did you know that while I was at work trying to win the game, God was also at work?

VBS TEACHER

Well, I know that God is always with us.
But tell me what you mean.

BAILEY

God Is always working to make the world a better place to be.
And if I stay close to Him, He'll let me help with that—on the baseball field.

VBS TEACHER

How are you planning to help?

BAILEY

I'm ALREADY doing it.
That's why I was late just now.

BOUGINE

I saw you talking to your teammate, Colin.

BAILEY

Yeah, Colin was sad about us losing the game.

VBS TEACHER

And you were comforting him?

BAILEY

Yes. I told him that we really have TWO missions.
And only ONE of those missions is to win games.

BOUGINE

Right, and the other is to join God in HIS mission.

BAILEY

And THAT mission's actually most important.
So we don't need to be THAT upset about losing the game.

VBS TEACHER

That's very wise, Bailey.
It reminds me about something Jesus once said.
(pauses to think)
He was talking about where to build a house.

BOUGINE

What did he say?

VBS TEACHER

Well, He said if you build a house on solid rock, then it won't fall down.
Even if rain and wind beat against it, it will still stand.
Joining with God in HIS mission is like building a house on solid rock.

QUEEN BEE

When all Bailey cared about was winning the game, it was like he built a house on sand.

BLINK

That's so true!
When his team lost, he collapsed.
Just like a house built on sand.

BAILEY

But when I realized I had a different, more important mission, I was able to get up and go on.

VBS TEACHER

Right! And build your new "house" on solid ground.
Whenever you team up with God, you're on solid ground.
Do you know why?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE

Why?

VBS TEACHER

Because God loves us so much that He will always, always care for us.
There's nothing more solid than God's love.
You might lose a sports game, but you will NEVER lose God's love.
Got it?

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, QUEEN BEE

Got it!

VBS TEACHER

(looks at watch)

Thanks for a great talk, guys! I'll see you later!

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, and QUEEN BEE each say "Goodbye!" and pop down and out of sight. VBS TEACHER exits.

Day 3: Puppet Show Discussion Questions

- ☐ When Bailey arrived today, what was the teacher careful NOT to mention? [He lost a game]
- ☐ Why was she being so careful around Bailey? [He was very upset about losing]
- ☐ Why can baseball be hard? [Answers may vary]
- ☐ Raise your hand if you've ever played a sport. Which sport have you played? [Answers may vary]
- ☐ Do you ever find that playing a sport can be hard sometimes? What are some things about it that can make it not fun? [Answers may vary]
- ☐ Winning the game was Bailey's only mission. When his team lost, how did he feel? [Sad]
- ☐ Mrs. Featherbottom told him that he could have TWO missions. One mission could be trying to win the game. But he could also have a more important, MAIN mission. What was that? [Being used by God to make the world a better place]
- ☐ Bailey said he was already starting to be part of God's MAIN mission. It was the reason why he was late. What was he doing? [He was comforting his teammate Colin]
- ☐ Bailey was still upset about losing the game. But now, he wasn't quite as upset. Why do you think that is? [Because he had another mission that was more important]
- ☐ The teacher talked about building your house on the rock. What did Jesus say about building your house on a rock? [No matter what happens, it won't fall down]
- ☐ At first, all Bailey cared about was winning. Was that like building his house on rock, or was it like building his house on sand? Why? [Sand. When he lost, he felt like he'd lost everything]
- ☐ Then Bailey changed and started thinking about a different MAIN mission. He joined up with God to make baseball better for everyone. How was this like building your house on a rock? [Whenever you team up with God, you're on solid ground. You might lose a sports game, but you will NEVER lose God's love]

Puppet Show Script Day 4

VBS TEACHER enters and addresses the audience.

VBS TEACHER

Hello! Welcome!

Guess what? There's a new student visiting us today!

Mrs. Featherbottom told me to look out for a bear with a green bow.

(looks left and right)

I guess I'll go and see if I can find her.

Be back in a minute!

BAILEY and BOUGINE pop up.

BAILEY

Hi Bougine!

BOUGINE

Hi Bailey!

BAILEY

I guess we're the first ones here.

BOUGINE

Should we sing a song while we're waiting for the others to get here?

BAILEY

Oh, yeah! One, two, three...

BAILEY and BOUGINE begin chanting "Seek First His Kingdom" (Track 00), loud and offkey.

BAILEY punctuates the words with woofs, while BOUGINE punctuates the words with tweets.

BLINK pops up and joins in the singing. He punctuates the words with grrr's.

BABETTE (new bear with green bow) pops up over on the side. BABETTE looks around quickly, then pops back down again.

QUEEN BEE enters and joins the others in the chanting (with buzzes).

BABETTE pops up AGAIN, over on the side. BABETTE looks around quickly, then pops back down again. All stop singing.

BLINK
Hey, did you see someone over there?

QUEEN BEE
Yeah, some random kid.

BLINK
Where'd she go?

QUEEN BEE
Who knows?
Who cares?
She doesn't belong in OUR class.

BLINK heads in the direction where BABETTE was. BABETTE pops up again. They nearly bump into each other.

BABETTE
Aaaaaa!!!

BLINK
Aaaaaa!!!

BABETTE turns and quickly begins to exit.

BLINK
Wait! Stop!

BABETTE stops and turns back to look at BLINK.

BLINK
Do you need help? You look lost.

BABETTE
(shyly)
I'm new. My mom just dropped me off.
(looks left and right)
And I don't know where to go.

BLINK
Well, OK...maybe I could help you?

BABETTE

You could?

BLINK

Well, I know the teacher.

Stay right there!

BLINK begins looking for the teacher by walking a little to the left, then a little to the right.

BLINK

(looking left and right)

Teacher! Oh, Teacher!

VBS TEACHER enters.

VBS TEACHER

I'm right here, Blink.

I was busy looking for this visiting student who—

Oh! Here you are!

BABETTE nods shyly and hides behind BLINK.

VBS TEACHER

We were expecting you!

We're so glad you're going to join our class for the day.

What's your name?

BABETTE makes a loud whispering sound in BLINK's ear.

BLINK

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(to the VBS TEACHER)

She says her name is Babette.

VBS TEACHER

Welcome, Babette.

Bailey, Bougine, and Queen Bee, would you three please go tell Mrs. Featherbottom that I found the new student?

BAILEY, BOUGINE, and QUEEN BEE

OK!

BAILEY, BOUGINE, and QUEEN BEE pop down and out of sight.

BABETTE makes a loud whispering sound in BLINK's ear again.

BLINK

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(listening as BABETTE whispers)

Uh-huh.

(to the VBS TEACHER)

Um, so Babette says she's worried.

She's sad that she doesn't know anyone.

And also, she's worried that she won't have anyone to sit with at snack time.

VBS TEACHER

Hmmm.

(to BABETTE)

Babette, would you excuse us for a minute?

(to BLINK)

Could you come over here so I can talk to you?

(beckons BLINK with her finger)

BLINK crosses to be standing closer to the VBS TEACHER, while BABETTE waits where she was.

VBS TEACHER

So, Blink.

Remember we said that God likes to use His children to make the world a better place?

I think this might be a moment when He could use YOU.

BLINK

What?! Cool! How?

VBS TEACHER

Well, over here we've got a scared, sad student who's feeling worried about being new.

And...do you remember when Mrs. Featherbottom talked about your purpose?

BLINK

My purpose is to know and love God, and to make Him known to others.

VBS TEACHER

Right. So what would Jesus be like if He was Blink right now?

BLINK

He would...try to help Babette?

VBS TEACHER

I think so.

She seems to feel comfortable talking to you.

So you might be the best person to help.

BLINK

I do know what it's like to be nervous.

VBS TEACHER

You do.

BLINK

And I already made sure the snacks here are good for bears.

And that the air conditioning's working.

I could tell her that.

VBS TEACHER

You could.

BLINK

And I could sit with her at snacktime, so she has a friend.

VBS TEACHER

That would be very kind.

BLINK

THAT's how God makes the world a better place?

VBS TEACHER

Yes. Jesus calls it "seeking God's kingdom."

God is the king, and He often uses His children to show His love.

BLINK

Children like me? I can make God's kingdom come?

VBS TEACHER

Yes, with God's help.

You can ask Him for the power to be a good friend to Babette.

And He will give it to you.

BLINK

OK!

(looking up)

Heavenly Father, please give me the power to make the world better!

Please give me the power to be a good friend to Babette!

VBS TEACHER

All right, get to it then!

BLINK moves back over to BABETTE.

BLINK

Hi.

BABETTE

Hi.

BLINK

Um, so...

(looks over at VBS TEACHER, who nods encouragingly)

I was wondering...

Would you like to sit with me at snacktime?

BABETTE

Really? Yes!

I would love that.

BLINK

And I can show you how to get around, too.

I've been here for a while, so I know where to go.

BABETTE

Thank you.

BLINK

I can be your friend, if you want.

BABETTE

My friend?

(excited)

I have a friend?!

BLINK
If you want.

BABETTE
I have a friend!!!!
(jumps around excitedly)

BLINK
OK, so I'll show you around then.
Now, do you have any food allergies?

BABETTE
Um...

BLINK
Because if you do, I know the snack lady.
She's really nice and she'll help you.

BLINK
(starts walking)
Also, are you worried about getting too hot?
Well, don't.
I've had MANY conversations with the guy in charge of the air conditioning.
I'll be the first to know if it breaks!

VBS TEACHER
All right, you two. It's time to go.

BLINK
OK! Follow me, Babette! I'll show you everything!

BLINK and BABETTE exit, followed by VBS TEACHER.

Day 4: Puppet Show Discussion Questions

- ☐ There was a new student who was visiting the class today. Who was it? [Babette]
- ☐ How was Babette feeling about being new? [scared]
- ☐ Have you ever felt like that? [answers may vary]
- ☐ Why do you think Babette only talked to Blink? [answers may vary]
- ☐ Why do you think Blink was just the right person to help Babette? [he knows what it's like to feel scared in a new place]
- ☐ What does it mean to seek God's kingdom? [Drawing close to Jesus so God can use you to make the world a better place—a place where our loving God is the king who rules and reigns]
- ☐ Jesus tells us to seek God's kingdom, and the things WE need will be given to us as well. How did Blink seek God's kingdom? [He asked God for the power to be a good friend to Babette]
- ☐ Did God give Blink something HE needed as well? [a friend]
- ☐ In today's puppet show, was Blink feeling worried about HIMSELF? [no]
- ☐ Why not? [Blink was too busy seeking God's kingdom to worry about the situation with Queen Bee]
- ☐ What kinds of things do you worry about? [answers may vary]
- ☐ What can you do when you want to stop worrying? [talk to a trusted adult, ask God to help with the thing that's making your worry, change your focus to seeking God's kingdom]

Puppet Show Script Day 5

VBS TEACHER enters and looks around.

VBS TEACHER
Hmmm, I guess I'm the first one to arrive!
(looks left and right)
Bougine?
Bailey?
Blink?
Anyone here yet?

QUEEN BEE pops up next to VBS TEACHER.

QUEEN BEE
Hello.

VBS TEACHER
(surprised)
Queen Bee! You're here...first!

QUEEN BEE
I'm practicing the Golden Rule.

VBS TEACHER
I see.

QUEEN BEE
I asked myself, if I was the teacher, what would I want?
Then I thought, Well, if I was the teacher, I would want to see as MUCH of my favorite student
as possible.

VBS TEACHER
My...favorite student?

QUEEN BEE
Which would be ME. Obviously.

VBS TEACHER

Aah, yes. Well, I try not to have favorites—

QUEEN BEE

Oh, you don't have to pretend.

No one else is here.

And I know the truth.

(pauses)

It's me.

VBS TEACHER

Well, Queen Bee.

I do love having you here.

BLINK, BOUGINE, and BAILEY pop up.

BLINK

Hello!

VBS TEACHER

Hi Blink!

BOUGINE

Hello!

VBS TEACHER

Hi Bougine!

BAILEY

Hello!

VBS TEACHER

Hi Bailey!

QUEEN BEE

Oh, Bailey, I'm glad you're here.

I wanted to tell you something.

BAILEY

What did you want to tell me?

QUEEN BEE

(mechanically)

Go. Dawgs.

BAILEY
(*confused*)
Thanks.

QUEEN BEE
I thought to myself, if I was Bailey, what would he want Queen Bee to say to him? So....
Go. Dawgs.

BAILEY
Yeah, I mean, the game's over now.
But thanks...for the sentiment.

QUEEN BEE
(*dryly*)
Oh, right. You lost.
That was a pity.

BAILEY
It's OK. We gave it all we had
And we're pretty good, so I bet we'll have another shot at the championship next year.

VBS TEACHER
That's a great way to look at it, Bailey.

QUEEN BEE
And Blink, I have something to say to you, too.

BLINK
(*quickly looks left and right*)
I'm sorry, am I standing too close to you?
Do you need your space?
I know you like your space!

QUEEN BEE
No. I was just thinking to myself, if I was Blink, what would I want Queen Bee to do for me?

BLINK
You...what?

QUEEN BEE
And I thought, Blink would probably like to be Queen Bee's friend.
Would you like to come to my house later on today?

BLINK

Your...house?
(*turns to VBS TEACHER*)
Who is this...and what have you done with Queen Bee?

VBS TEACHER
(*laughing*)
No, Blink. That IS Queen Bee.
She's just practicing the Golden Rule.

QUEEN BEE
In fact, you're all invited.
Bougine, you can use some of my honey to make more candy jewelry.

BOUGINE
Oh, wow! I would love that!

QUEEN BEE
Yes, I knew you would.
Queens know these things.

VBS TEACHER
Queen Bee, you DO know a lot of things.
(*QUEEN BEE nods vigorously.*)
But... you don't know EVERYTHING.

QUEEN BEE opens her mouth in a gasping gesture. Then she closes it and vigorously shakes her head.

VBS TEACHER
All I'm saying is, we ALL need God's help.
Even YOU need to ask for God's help.

QUEEN BEE
(*aghast*)
Why would I need help?

VBS TEACHER
Well, sometimes it's not easy to follow the Golden Rule.
You're doing all right so far. But you might hit a snag.
THAT'S when you need to remember that God wants you to spend time with Him.
So He can help you.

BAILEY
And I can ask Him for help with my MAIN mission.

VBS TEACHER

You can!

BLINK

And / can ask for His help to do the things Jesus did, like caring for others.

VBS TEACHER

That's true!

I'm so glad I got to meet all of you this week!

God really is changing the world.

I feel like I'm watching it happen right before my eyes.

BAILEY

Can we sing one last song before we go?

VBS TEACHER

Of course! One, two, three...

BOUGINE, BLINK, BAILEY, and QUEEN BEE

(singing, Track 00)

So in everything

Do to others what

You would have them do to you

For this sums up

The law and prophets

Now let's go paddle a canoe!

VBS TEACHER

Um, OK...I don't think that last part is right.

But...good job singing!

Now say goodbye, everybody!

All say "Goodbye!" to the audience, pop down, and disappear.

Day 5: Puppet Show Discussion Questions

- ☐ Were you surprised that Queen Bee showed up first today? Why? [She usually made everyone wait for her to arrive]
- ☐ What rule was Queen Bee practicing? [The Golden Rule]
- ☐ What is the Golden Rule? [Do unto others as you would have them do to you]
- ☐ How did Queen Bee practice the Golden Rule with Bailey? [She said, “Go Dawgs” because she knows that baseball is important to him]
- ☐ How did she practice the Golden Rule with Blink? With Bougine? [She invited Blink over, and she told Bougine that she could use some of her honey to make more candy jewelry]
- ☐ How did Blink and Bougine react when Queen Bee practiced the Golden Rule on them? [surprised and happy]
- ☐ Think of someone in your life, like a friend or family member. What would it look like to practice the Golden Rule on them? [answers may vary]
- ☐ Is it easy to practice the Golden Rule on some people and harder to practice it on others? [yes]
- ☐ What can you do if you need help practicing the Golden Rule on someone? [ask God for help]

VBS (What's the B For?)

Creative Arts



Creative Arts Station Overview

When children see puppet shows, they often want to take part themselves. At this VBS, each child will get to make his or her own sock puppet during Creative Arts Station. They will have a choice of making a bird, a bear, a beagle, or a bee. Making sock puppets is easy! Instructions are provided on Day 1, and YouTube is full of instructional videos.

Then, the VBS volunteers will tap into the kids' enthusiasm for puppet play by using the puppets to engage in some spiritual formation exercises (getting to know one another through the puppets, memorizing Scripture, and role-playing Christlike-ness).

While sock puppet making is fairly straight-forward, schedule a VBS workday ahead of time for volunteers to get the socks ready for the children. If the puppeteers are teens from the Youth Group, this work day can happen during a previously scheduled Youth Group meeting.

You'll need:

- ☐ 2 - 4 volunteers

More than 4 people might want to volunteer in this really fun station. The more, the merrier!



Blink the Bear, Queen Bee, Bougine Bird, Bailey the Dog

Day 1: Let's Make Some Puppets!

You'll need:

- ☐ **A fuzzy, chenille sock for each child.**
Use an online wholesaler to buy fuzzy socks in bulk. You can buy them for about \$1/pair. So you'll pay about \$60 per 120 socks.
- ☐ **Craft foam sheets for mouths (red or black) and colored paper (pink) for tongues**
- ☐ **Supplies for eyes (pom poms, foam balls, googly eyes)**
- ☐ **Supplies for other features (feather boas, felt, pipe cleaners, yarn, buttons)**
- ☐ **Hot glue guns and craft fabric glue**
- ☐ **Scissors**
- ☐ **Plastic Solo cups** – to use as stands to display the finished puppets while they dry

1. Before the children arrive, get puppet "bodies" ready in four colors. Basically, you're adding a mouth to each sock:

- Place the sock heel side down.
- Squeeze a Solo cup to make an oval shape, and trace the oval onto a red or black craft foam sheet. Make some of them diamonds (ie, beak-shaped) for bird puppets.
- Cut out the oval (or diamond). Cut it in half (at the shorter part).
- With a glue gun, glue both halves of the foam oval to the top of the toe end of the sock. Leave a few cm of space between the halves. Leave a little bit of sock at the end.
- Slide your hand into the sock and close the top part over the bottom part. Work the mouth to make sure you did it correctly. Each child gets a sock with a mouth glued in.

2. When kids arrive, have four completed puppets (bird, bear, beagle, bee) on display (on Solo cups). Ask each child to choose which type they want to make, then give them the craft supplies needed for that type of puppet. Have several pre-cut beagle ears and bear ears out of felt.

3. Allow the children to personalize their puppets. Depending on the type of animal they choose, the adornment choices will be self-explanatory. Leave puppets in the classroom.

Tips:

- Have each child put their hand in the puppet, so you can mark where the eyes, etc. should be with a marker before they glue them on.
- When the kids are done gluing, VBS volunteers can use a hot glue gun to better secure the eyes, ears, noses, etc. after the children have left.

Here are some alternative methods:

- This method uses felt-covered cardboard (instead of craft foam) to make the mouth.
- This method turns the sock inside out and glues a cardboard mouth inside.

Day 2: Let's Give The Puppets Personalities!

Activity: Students will have a chance to finish/enhance their puppet using the remaining craft supplies. Then they will create a persona for their puppet, filling out a little questionnaire. Volunteers will write the younger children's answers for them.

VBS volunteer says: "Yesterday you got to make your puppet. Today, you get to decide what your puppet is like. Is your puppet just like you, or different from you? It's time to answer some questions to give your puppet its personality."

Print out one questionnaire for each child.

Younger Children Questionnaire

What's my puppet's name?

What's my puppet's favorite color?

What's my puppet's favorite food?

What's my puppet's favorite thing to do?

What's my puppet afraid of?

What makes my puppet happy?

What makes my puppet sad or scared?

Older Children Questionnaire

What's my puppet's name?

What's my puppet's favorite food?

What's my puppet's favorite thing to do?

What's my puppet afraid of?

What makes my puppet happy?

What makes my puppet sad or scared?

What's my puppet's favorite video game?

What's my puppet's favorite/least favorite subject in school?

What movie has my puppet watched five times?

What's my puppet's favorite superhero?

Does my puppet know any jokes?

Keep the questionnaires and the puppets in the classroom when the children leave.

Day 3: Let's Get to Know Everyone's Puppets!

Activity: The children will sit in a circle and get to know one another through their puppets. This week, they are learning that Jesus values relationships. Getting to know one another enables children to have opportunities to practice the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).

VBS volunteer says: "This is a time to get to know one another's puppets. I'll go first and tell you about my puppet, and then we'll go around the circle so everyone has a chance to introduce his/her puppet."

- The VBS volunteer begins by showing the group his/her puppet and telling three to five facts about the puppet from the questionnaire. Then begin with the child to their left or right. If a child doesn't want to participate, they can just say "pass." Or, a VBS volunteer can "speak" for their puppet, using the questionnaire the child filled out.
- As time allows, you can go around the circle a second time, asking each child, "In what ways are you similar to your puppet, and how are you different?"
- As time allows, go around the circle a third time and ask, "Which of the puppets in the puppet show do you like best, and why?"

Keep the puppets and questionnaires in the classroom when the children leave.

Day 4: Let's Use the Puppets to Memorize a Bible Verse!

Activity: The VBS volunteers will lead a Bible verse-learning game that involves the puppets.

The VBS volunteer says: "Today our puppets are going to learn a Bible verse together."

- Choose a verse from one of the five passages we're learning this week in VBS. For example, you might use, "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (For younger kids, use a shortened version of the verse, such as "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Repeat this shortened verse so each child/puppet gets to say a word.)
- Children (with their puppets) sit in a circle. A VBS volunteer will give each child a word or snippet from the Bible verse. For example, the volunteer would give the first child the word "store." The second child would be given the words "up for." The third child would be given the word "yourselves." And so on, in order, around the circle. Then the VBS volunteer says, "When I point to you, make your puppet say your word."
- The VBS volunteer points to each child around the circle, prompting them to make their puppet say the word. Tell the children they can do this in a funny puppet voice.
- Go around the circle a second time. This time, don't point to each child—just tell the children to say the word when it's their turn.
- Do this one more time for good measure.
- Then, tell the children to get up and move to another spot around the circle. Time to say the verse again! Can they remember who goes first, who goes second, etc., now that they're not sitting in order? Encourage the children to help one another's puppet—if a puppet doesn't remember to speak, can the others remind them?
- Can the group say the verse again without pausing? How fast can they do it?

Keep the puppets in the classroom when the children leave.

Day 5: Let's Use the Puppets to Act Out The Golden Rule!

Activity: A VBS volunteer will lead an exercise in which children pair up to practice the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) through their puppets.

VBS volunteer says: "Today we're going to teach our puppets the Golden Rule. This was Jesus' teaching that we learned about today in Matthew 7:12. Who can tell me what the Golden Rule is? [Wait until you get a correct answer and repeat what the Golden Rule is.] We're going to let the puppets try out the Golden Rule, two at a time."

- Two VBS volunteers stand in front of the group with their puppets.
- Point to the two puppets that the volunteers have brought with them. Ask the group, "Do you remember these puppets' names? What do we know about them?" Remind the children about the two puppets based on their puppet personality questionnaires. (For example, we know that Puppet A's favorite food is chocolate ice cream, and that he's afraid of spiders, etc.)
- Tell the volunteer with Puppet A, "How would Puppet A act out the Golden Rule with Puppet B? Please show us."
- Then ask the volunteer with Puppet B to do the same for Puppet A. The volunteers will have the puppets say or do something kind for one another based on their particular likes, acting out the Golden Rule. (For example, Puppet B might say, "Want to come over and have some chocolate ice cream with me? I know it's your favorite.")
- When that pair of puppets is done, invite two children up with their puppets. Repeat the process, asking the group what they remember about *these* puppets. Give the two children a turn to act out the Golden Rule. Keep going until all children who want a turn have had a turn.

VBS (What's the B For?)

Recreation Station



Recreation Station Overview

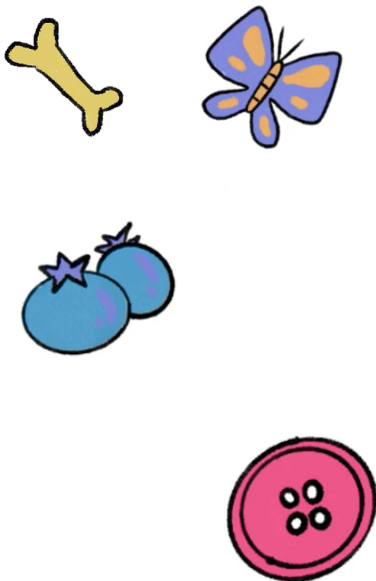
The recreation station games are designed to be played outside or in a gym. Each day has two game options to choose from. The VBS volunteer is provided with opening words to share about the game and how it relates to what the children are learning.

In the other stations, the children are being exposed to biblical lessons and learning Jesus' way of handling problems. These games are a great opportunity to put those lessons and teachings into action.

In some cases, the games are designed to encourage the children to work together as a group, rather than competing against one another. This builds empathy and social cohesion.

In other cases, the games will pit teams against one another. Some children will quickly fall into the "winning is everything" mentality. VBS volunteers can gently pull these children aside and remind them about what Bailey is learning this week. (His shadow mission is winning, but his main mission is joining God in His work to make the world a kinder, more loving place.)

Read through all the game suggestions before the week begins. You might prefer to swap out different games on different days if they work better for your particular group.



Recreation Day 1: B Is For Bean Bag

Choose one of these two games.

You'll need:

- ☐ 20 bean bags (Games 1 and 2)
- ☐ 20 small paper plates (Game 1)
- ☐ 20 large paper plates (Game 1)
- ☐ 2 fabric tunnels (Game 2)

Game 1: Bean Bag Target

Set up:

- Mark a line on the ground with chalk or tape.
- Several feet beyond the line, place about 30 paper plates. Some are dessert-sized plates. Others are jumbo-sized plates.
- Write "100 points" on the dessert plates and "10 points" on the jumbo plates.

VBS volunteer says:

"Today we're learning that the Bible teaches us how to make good choices. Jesus told his followers, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the path that leads to life, and only a few find it."

"A lot of times, it can feel harder to follow God and walk on the narrow path, and easier to walk on the wide path. But if we draw near to Jesus, He will help us follow the narrow path—and that's the path that leads to blessings."

"In this game, we're going to stand behind a line, toss bean bags and try to hit targets. The SMALL plates represent the narrow path and the LARGE plates represent the wide path. If you want to earn the most points, which plates do you want to hit?" [the small plates] Let's see how many points can you earn in 10 minutes."

Activity:

- Have the children spread out, all standing right behind the line.
- Each child gets 3 bean bags.
- When you shout, "Go!" they can start tossing bean bags onto plates. Start the timer for 10 minutes.

- The kids can keep tossing until the timer goes off.
- The shepherding volunteers can help the younger kids count their points.
- When the timer ends, ask the children how many points they earned. Who earned the most points?
- If there's time, play again for 5 or 10 minutes.

Game 2: Narrow Path Relay

Set up:

- Mark a line on the ground with chalk or tape.
- Several feet beyond the line, place two fabric tunnels next to each other.
- On the other side of each tunnel, walk five paces and drop six bean bags on the ground. (There should be enough bean bags for each child on each of two teams.)

VBS volunteer says:

"In this game, we'll have a relay race that includes a tunnel—a narrow path. Two teams will be trying to be the first to collect all the bean bags on the other side of their tunnel. One of the teams is going to win the game, and one of the teams is going to lose. I know you ALL want to win, and you might get frustrated if it's looking like you're not going to win. You might be tempted to get irritated with a teammate who isn't going fast enough, or you might get mad at the other team."

"It's OK to want to win, but your MAIN goal during this game is to have fun while encouraging one another. No matter how you feel, you want to support and care for the people around you. I'm going to be looking for examples of kids who HELP each other instead of being mean. That's what walking along the narrow path is all about."

Activity:

- Divide the children into two teams.
- Line each team up in a single file behind the tape line.
- When you shout "Go!" the first child on each team runs to the tunnel, crawls through, grabs one bean bag, crawls back through the tunnel, runs back and tags the next teammate in line.
- The first team to retrieve all their bean bags wins.

Recreation Day 2: B Is For Balloon

Choose one of these two games.

You'll need:

- ☐ Several balloons or beach balls

Set up: None.

VBS volunteer says:

"Today we're learning about Bougine. What happened to her in the skit? [*She lost her prized possession, candy jewelry.*] That candy was her treasure! But Jesus says, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.' In our rec time today, we're going to play a few games where we pretend that a balloon is our treasure in heaven. We want to protect it! We don't want it to fall on the ground and get dirty!"

Game 1: Extreme Keepy Uppy

Divide the class into groups of three or four. Each group gets a balloon or beach ball. They need to work together to keep the balloon or beach ball up in the air. Count each time someone hits the balloon and aim to make it to 20, then 50. Once they get the hang of it, start adding balloons. Can the group keep 3 balloons up at a time? Five balloons?

For older children, ask if they can clap five times before hitting the balloon. Or, can they twirl in a circle before hitting the balloon and still keep it up in the air?

Game 2: Connected Keepy Uppy

Children form a circle and hold hands. A VBS volunteer throws a balloon or beach ball into the circle. The group tries to keep the balloon or beach ball from touching the ground without letting each others' hands go for as long as possible. Can they make it for a full minute? Three minutes? Ten?

For this game, you could also divide the group into smaller hand-holding circles.

Recreation Day 3: B is for Beeline

Choose one of these two games.

You'll need:

- ☐ 25 hula hoops (Games 1 and 2)
- ☐ Masking tape (Game 1)
- ☐ 16 bean bags (Game 2)

Game 1: Rock Paper Scissors Beeline Game

Set up:

Place 11 hula hoops on the ground in a straight line. Drop another 10 hula hoops in a line that intersects the first line at the center hula hoop. You'll have a cross shape with four even legs. Put four bean bags in the outermost hula hoop of each leg.

VBS volunteer says:

"Today we're learning about Bailey the Beagle. Why was he upset? [*His team lost.*] Mrs. Featherbottom told Bailey he actually has two missions. Trying to win his game was one mission. What was the second mission? [*To be used by God as He works to make the world a better place.*]

"We're about to play a game where there are four teams. One of the teams is going to win the game, and three of the teams are going to lose. I know you ALL want to win, and you might get frustrated if it's looking like you're not going to win. You might be tempted to get irritated with a teammate who isn't going fast enough, or you might get mad at the other teams."

"It's OK to want to win, but your MAIN goal during this game is to have fun while encouraging one another. No matter how you feel, you want to support and care for the people around you. I'm going to be looking for examples of kids who HELP each other instead of being mean."

Activity:

- Divide the group into four teams. Each team lines up behind one of the hula hoop lines (at the four outer ends of the cross).
- Set a timer for 10 minutes.

- The first kid on each line begins to hop toward the center, from one hoop to the next, until he/she reaches the center. Then he/she must start hopping down one of the other lines (go right, left or straight). He/she keeps hopping until he/she reaches the end of that line, where he/she can “steal” a beanbag from the other team, turn around, hop back, and drop it in his/her team’s hula hoop.
- Of course, as he/she hops along, he/she will come across other players in his/her path. Each time this happens, the two players must do a quick game of rock/paper/scissors. The winner gets to continue on the path. The loser must return to the end of his/her team’s line, and the next team member gets to start hopping. If he/she is holding a stolen bean bag and loses at rock/paper/scissors on the way back, he/she must return the bean bag before rejoining his/her team’s line.
- The winning team has the most bean bags at the end of 10 minutes.

Game 2: Barracuda Crossing

Set up:

- Draw or tape a long line on one end of the field/room and another parallel to it at the other end.
- Line up several hula hoops just inside the first line.
- The critical thinking game calls for the children to cross the empty space between the two lines by only stepping inside hula hoops as they go.

VBS volunteer says:

“In this game, your MAIN mission is to work together and help one another to accomplish a goal. The way you win is by making sure everybody else wins, too.”

Activity:

- Have all the children gather behind the first line.
- Tell them, “Imagine that the area between these two lines is a lake full of biting barracudas. As a group, you need to all cross over to the other side. That means EVERYBODY has to get to the other side—not just you. The object is to help each other cross.”
- The children start on “dry land,” behind a line marked by chalk or tape. There are several hula hoops lined up along the line. Children are “safe” from the barracudas as long as they are inside the hula hoops. They need to move across the space without anyone stepping outside of the hula hoops. How will they do it?
- They win when every child makes it to the other line and “dry land” again.
- The number of hula hoops used depends on the age of the children. For the youngest groups, make it easier by having at least one hula hoop per child. For older kids, offer less hula hoops.

Recreation Day 4: B Is For Bend

Choose one of these two games.

You'll need:

- ☐ 20-25 Hula hoops

Game 1: Hula Hoop Pass

VBS volunteer says:

"Today we're learning about Blink the Bear. How was he feeling today at VBS? [*Worried.*] Mrs. Featherbottom told Blink that he has a purpose, and he should concentrate on that instead of worrying. What's Blink's purpose? [*To show others what Jesus would be like if He was an adorable bear who just got dropped off at VBS*]"

"As we play our game today, let's remember OUR purpose. How would Jesus act if he was YOU, here at VBS during Recreation Time? [*Care for others, etc.*] Let's keep this in mind as we play."

Activity:

- Children hold hands in a circle.
- Hang a hula hoop around the neck of one child.
- The goal is to move the hula hoop all the way around the circle without letting go of one another's hands. This video demonstrates.
- To make this more challenging, add a second hula hoop.

For older children, divide the group into two circles, and compete to see which circle of children can get the hoop around the fastest.

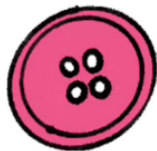
Game 2: Hula Hoop Twister

Set up:

- Scatter 20-25 hula hoops around the room, all close enough that they are within a few inches of each other.

Activity:

- Each child starts by standing inside a hula hoop circle.
- When you say “Go!” they begin walking around, leaving their hula hoop circle and entering another one.
- When you say “Stop,” everyone must have a foot in two different hoops.
- Multiple children can have a foot inside the same circle, but everyone **MUST** have two feet in different circles.
- Try it again, and everyone must have two feet in different circles **AND** a hand in one of those circles.



Recreation Day 5: B is for Balance

Choose one of these two games.

You'll need:

- ☐ Three of the same object that starts with B (Game 1)
- ☐ 2 inflatable flamingo ring toss games (Game 2)

Set up: None.

VBS volunteer says:

"Today we're learning about Queen Bee. Mrs. Featherbottom told Queen Bee what Jesus said in Matthew 7:12, which we call the Golden Rule. What is the Golden Rule? [*Treat others as you would want to be treated.*] When we're playing our games today, I'm going to be looking for examples of kids who practice the Golden Rule."

Game 1: B-lay

- Divide the class into two teams and form two lines.
- Have a relay race in which each team member has to cross the room/yard while balancing something that starts with B on his/her head.
- It could be a bucket. It could be a book. It could be a banana.
- He/she crosses the space and back again, and then hands it off to the next person, and so on, until the final person makes it back to the starting point.

Some kids will have a harder time with this than others. Some might reach up and hold onto the object to keep it from falling. Others might cry, "He/she's cheating!" This is an opportunity to take the frustrated child aside and gently review the Golden Rule. Ask them "How might that child be feeling right now?" Ask, "If you were that child, how would you want to be treated?"

Game 2: Bougine's Ring Toss

- Divide children into three teams, and each team lines up behind a line of tape.
- One child in each group stands several paces beyond the line and wears an inflatable flamingo on his/her head. They can also hold the flamingo in their hands
- Set a timer for three minutes.
- The child at the front of each line tosses an inflatable ring onto the flamingo's beak.
- The child wearing the flamingo can help their team by dipping their head toward the ring.

- When the first child has had a turn, he/she moves to the back of the line, and the next child takes a turn.

Which team gets the most rings on their flamingo's neck within three minutes? Do it again, allowing different children to be the "flamingos." Repeat as many times as there are kids who want to be the flamingo!



VBS (What's the B For?)

Music Station

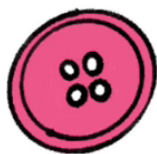


Music Overview

At the Music Station, the children will participate in rhythm activities to help them learn each day's key Bible verse.

Child development experts are big fans of musical rhythm activities—which boost cognitive and social development, language processing, motor skills and social cohesion.

Before VBS starts, listen to the songs several times and make yourself familiar with each song's rhythms and the easy hand motions that go with them. Also make sure your sound system is working properly.



Music Day 1: Enter Through the Narrow Gate

This is a musical activity to learn Matthew 7:13-14.

Set Up:

Write the lyrics on a white board or poster board.

Use Track 00 for the music.

Activity:

Play this simple song for the children to learn. They're going to sing it several times in various (sometimes silly) ways. To help the children remember the words, demonstrate by bringing your hands together when the song says "narrow" and "small"—and apart when the song says "wide" and "broad."

Enter through
The narrow gate
The narrow gate
The narrow gate
Enter through
The narrow gate
The path is straight!

Wide is the gate
And broad is the road
That leads to destruction

Small is the gate
And narrow the road
That leads to life

After singing it through twice, the VBS volunteer says, "How many ways can we sing this song?"

- Can you sing it in a deep voice?
- Can you sing it in a high squeaky voice?
- Can you sing it like a robot?
- Can you sing it with your tongue stuck to the roof of your mouth?
- Can you sing it while hopping on one foot?
- How fast can you sing it?

Music Day 2: Heavenly Treasure

This is a musical activity to learn Matthew 6:19-21 with hand motions.

Set Up:

Write the lyrics on a white board or poster board. Use Track 00 for the music.

Lyrics:

Do NOT store up /
For yourselves /
Treasures on earth /
For yourselves /

Where moths and vermin /
They destroy /
Where thieves break in /
And steal your toys

'Cause here's what Jesus says

For where your treasure is/
Your heart will be also
For where your treasure is/
There your heart will be too

For where your treasure is/
Your heart will be also
For where your treasure is/
There your heart will be too

But DO store up /
For yourselves /
Treasures in heaven /
For yourselves

Where moths and vermin /
DON'T destroy /
Thieves DON'T break in /
And steal your toys

But here's what Jesus says
Repeat chorus

Hand Motions

Wagging finger
Wagging finger
Make a circle over head
Make a circle over head

Wiggle fingers like creepy crawlies
Wiggle fingers like creepy crawlies
Shake head with hands over ears
Shake head with hands over ears

Cupping hands over mouth

Sign language symbol for treasure
Make a heart with fingers over heart
Sign language symbol for treasure
Make a heart with fingers over heart

Sign language symbol for treasure
Make a heart with fingers over heart
Sign language symbol for treasure
Make a heart with fingers over heart

Nodding head
Nodding head
Pointing up
Pointing up

Wiggle fingers like creepy crawlies
Wiggle fingers like creepy crawlies
Shake heads with hands over ears
Shake heads with hands over ears

Cupping hands over mouth
Hand motions for chorus

Music Day 3: Wise Man Built His House on a Rock

This is a musical activity to learn Matthew 7:24-27 with claps and stomps.

Set Up:

- Write the lyrics on a white board or poster board. For young non-readers, draw pictures next to the verses like a house, rain, floods, and wind.
- Use Track 00 for the music.

Lyrics:

The wise man built his house on the rock (stomp with the beat throughout)
And the rain fell (two claps on “rain fell”)
And the floods came (two claps on “floods came”)
And the winds blew (two claps on “winds blew”)
But it did not fall (stomp with the beat throughout)

The foolish man built his house on the sand (stomp with the beat throughout)
And the rain fell (two claps on “rain fell”)
And the floods came (two claps on “floods came”)
And the winds blew (two claps on “winds blew”)
And the house fell down (stomp with the beat throughout)

Everyone who hears, who hears, who hears (clap with the beat throughout)
These words of mine, of mine, of mine (clap with the beat throughout)

It's time to choose, it's time to choose (stomp with the beat throughout)
Will you win, win, win? (stomp with the beat throughout, thumbs up sign)
Will you lose, lose, lose? (stomp with the beat throughout, thumbs down sign)

Repeat all over again.

Music Day 4: Seek First His Kingdom

This is a chant song to learn Matthew 6:33. Use Track 00 for the music/beat.

Set Up: Write the lyrics on a white board or poster board.

Activity:

- Teach the children the chant, which is punctuated with a different sound/motion each time. Start with clapping, then stomping, etc.
- Continue the chant but change the punctuation. Ask how Bougine, Blink, Bailey and/or Queen Bee would chant it—i.e. bird sound/motion (“Tweet Tweet”), dog sound/motion (“Woof Woof”), bee sound/motion (“Buzz Buzz”), bear sound/motion (“Grrr, Grrr”).
- For older kids, divide into groups, and each group can chant simultaneously but with different punctuation sounds.

Seek first
[Clap Clap]
His kingdom
[Clap Clap]
That’s where God dwells
[Clap Clap]

These things
[Clap Clap]
Will be given
[Clap Clap]
To you as well
[Clap Clap]

Seek first
[Stomp Stomp]
His kingdom
[Stomp Stomp]
That’s where God dwells
[Stomp Stomp]

These things
[Stomp Stomp]
Will be given
[Stomp Stomp]
To you as well

Music Day 5: The Golden Rule Song

This is a silly song/game to memorize Matthew 7:12.

Set Up:

- Write the song lyrics on a white board or poster board. Leave the final line blank.
- It will read:

“So in everything /
Do to others what /
You would have them do to you /
For this sums up /
The Law and the Prophets /
????????????????????.”

- Use Track 00 for the music/beat. Make sure all volunteers are familiar with it.
- Use the shepherding volunteers to help today.

VBS Teacher says:

“Today in the skit, Queen Bee learned the Golden Rule. We’re going to sing a song that sums it up. I wrote the lyrics on the board here, but I left the final line blank. Can you guys guess what the last line is? Let’s divide into three groups to do this, and then we’ll come back together, and each group can have a turn singing what you think it is.”

Activity:

Break into three groups (each led by a VBS volunteer) and disperse to a different corner of the room. Set a timer and take five minutes to learn the song. The volunteer leader will teach his/her group how to sing the song with a particular suggested ending (see below). If the kids in the group want to make up their own final line, that’s OK as long as it’s appropriate.

- Volunteer 1 will teach his/her group:

“So in everything / do to others what / you would have them do to you / for this sums up /
the Law and the Prophets / **Let’s go paddle a canoe!**

- Volunteer 2 will teach his/her group:

So in everything / do to others what / you would have them do to you / for this sums up /
the Law and the Prophets / **And pandas love bamboo!**

- Volunteer 3 will teach his/her group:

So in everything / do to others what / you would have them do to you / for this sums up / the Law and the Prophets / **Where's my bowl of stew?**

The groups will come back together, and the VBS Teacher will invite each group to sing their version of the song. (Each group's VBS volunteer can carry most of the singing, but try to make sure the kids learn their group's final line.)

VBS Teacher says: "Very creative and funny! But none of those are right! Go try again!"

Once again, each group disperses to a different corner of the room. Set a timer and take three minutes to learn the song.

- Volunteer 1 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
Oops! I just spilled shampoo!
- Volunteer 2 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
Now please get off my shoe!
- Volunteer 3 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
I love to play the kazoo!

The groups will come back together, and the VBS Teacher will again invite each group to sing their version of the song.

VBS Teacher says: "You made me laugh, but none of those are right! Go back and try again!"

Once again, each group disperses to a different corner of the room. Set a timer and take three minutes to learn the song.

- Volunteer 1 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
My favorite letter is Q!
- Volunteer 2 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
Sneezy says, "Achoo!"
- Volunteer 3 will teach his/her group the same song, but now the final line is:
Trains they go choo-choo!

The groups will come back together, and the VBS Teacher will again invite each group to sing their version of the song.

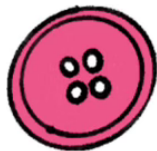
VBS Teacher says:

"Well, none of those were correct. But I did love hearing you sing the song so many times. The last line of the song is actually the verse number, so I can always find it in the Bible."

VBS Teacher writes the last line on the board and then invites the whole class to sing the correct version of the song together:

“So in everything / do to others what / you would have them do to you / for this sums up / the Law and the Prophets / Verse 7:12 Matthew”

If there's time left, invite kids up to the front one at a time to sing the song solo. Or they can sing any of their favorite songs from the week!



VBS (What's the B For?)

Bible Lesson Station

(This is an alternative to Puppet Show Station.)

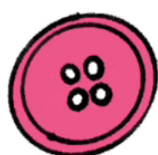


Bible Lesson Station Overview (Alternative to Puppet Show Station)

Ideally, you would have a large enough crew to run VBS (What's the B For?) in its entirety. But if a lack of volunteers requires you to eliminate the puppet show, its lessons can be conveyed by a single volunteer in a Bible Lesson station.

As a reference, supplement these teachings with the lesson summary materials at the beginning of this guide.

You could also *add* this Bible Lesson Station if you'd like to have a longer VBS.



Bible Lesson Day 1

Bible Verse: “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

Set up:

- Write out Matthew 7:13-14 on a whiteboard or on a poster board.
- Create two parallel paths with painter’s tape that stretches across the room. The path on the left is two feet wide, while the path on the right is simply a long line made from a single strip of tape.
- Ask a VBS volunteer to stand at the end of the narrow path, holding stickers.

Activity: Children will take turns moving along each path in a single file.

- Tell them to follow the line leader along each path, making sure to STAY ON THE PATH.
- Pick a different child to be the line leader for each pass through.
- As each child gets to the end of the narrow path, the VBS volunteer gives them a sticker. The children get nothing at the end of the wide path.

Each time the children move along the path, instruct them to do it in a different way:

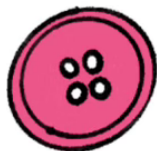
- Walk along the wide path.
- Walk along the narrow path.
- Hop along the wide path.
- Hop along the narrow path.
- Hop ON ONE FOOT along the wide path.
- Hop ON ONE FOOT along the narrow path.
- Walk backwards along the wide path.
- Walk backwards along the narrow path.

Have the children sit on the floor so you can talk about what they just learned.

Questions for discussion:

- Can anyone guess why we practiced walking along two paths today? [Because in the Bible, Jesus talked about walking along two paths. He said that when you trust in Him, He will help you to live God’s way, making good choices. That’s like walking along a NARROW path.]

- When you walked on the narrow path and on the wide path, which was one easier and which was harder to stay on the path? [Narrow path is harder.]
- When you walked along the narrow path, you had to pay attention, right? You had to look down at your feet to make sure you weren't falling off the path. In order to make good choices, you have to pay attention to Jesus. But what happened when you got to the end of the narrow path? [Got stickers.]
- What happened when you got to the end of the wide path? [Got nothing.]
- Here's what Jesus said about the wide and narrow paths. [Read the passage.]
- Walking along the narrow path means loving other people like Jesus loved people. What are some ways that Jesus loved others? [Taught people and children, healed the sick, gave food to the hungry, gave sight to the blind, etc.]
- What are some ways that you can show love to others? [Answers will vary.]



Bible Lesson Day 2

Bible Verse: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” Matthew 6:19-21

Set up:

- Write out Matthew 6:19-21 on a whiteboard or on a poster board.
- Collect 20-50 extra large toy coins (3 times the number of kids in your largest group). Cover half with pictures of earthly treasure and half with pictures of heavenly treasure. Scatter around the room.
- The coins with earthly treasure will have pictures of: various toys, jewelry, cars, clothes
- The coins with heavenly treasure will have pictures of: a person putting a Bandaid on a friend's hand, a person happily singing from a hymnal, a person hugging someone, a person helping a fallen-down person get up, a person reading the Bible, a person saving a cat from a tree, a person carrying another person's heavy bags, etc.
- Put two treasure chests on the floor in the front of the room. (Any cardboard boxes will do.) Write “earthly treasure” on one box and “heavenly treasure” on the second box.

Activity:

- Tell the children they are going to be searching for treasure. They can each pick up three coins. Tell them to sit down when they each have three.
- Remind the children what Bougine learned in the skit about earthly treasure and read to them what Jesus says about this in Matthew 6:19-21.
- Explain that they will work together to sort their coins into the correct treasure box.
- Invite the children up to the front, one at a time. They'll show the group their coins and describe the photos on them. As a group, decide whether the coins should go in the earthly treasure box or the heavenly treasure box.

Questions for discussion:

- Will this treasure last forever? Heavenly treasure = YES, Earthly treasure = NO
- Can this treasure get stolen or broken? Heavenly treasure = NO, Earthly treasure = YES
- Do I have to work hard to keep this treasure safe? Heavenly = NO, Earthly = YES
- Can I still have this treasure when I go to Heaven one day? Heavenly treasure = YES, Earthly treasure = NO

For 4th and 5th graders:

- Hide the coins out of sight throughout a larger area for a more difficult treasure hunt.
- Lead a discussion about what they personally consider to be earthly treasure vs heavenly treasure.

Bible Lesson Day 3

Bible Verse: “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built a house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been built on the rock.” Matthew 7:24-25

Set up:

- Write out Matthew 7:24-25 on a whiteboard or on a poster board.
- Set two wide plastic bins on a low table. Put a brick in one. Put a mound of slightly moistened sand in another.
- Make 2 small houses out of Magna-Tiles (or Legos/Duplo Blocks). Place one house on the brick and one on the mound of sand.
- Fill a pitcher with water.

Activity:

- Start by asking the group why Bailey the Beagle was so upset today. [Losing game.]
- Remind them what Mrs. Featherbottom told him: Jesus warns us about building our hopes on anything OTHER than solid rock.
- Read Jesus’ words from Matthew 7:24-25.
- Tell the group that you’re going to try it out and see for yourself.
- First pour half the water on the house on the brick, and then the other half on the house on the sand. The house on the rock will stand firm and the one on the sand won’t.

Questions for discussion:

- In the skit, all Bailey cared about was winning his baseball game. Was that like building his house on rock, or was it like building his house on sand? Why? [sand]
- How did Bailey feel when he lost the game? [devastated]
- Then Mrs. Featherbottom suggested that Bailey change his thinking. She said winning at baseball was a good mission but he had another mission, too. In fact, that other mission was his MAIN mission. What was that? [He could be used by God as He makes baseball better for everyone.]
- How is focusing on THAT mission like building your house on a rock? [Joining with God in HIS mission is always the solid choice. Our faithful God can be trusted to hold us up like nothing else can.]

Bible Lesson Day 4

Bible Verse: “Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Set up:

- Write out Matthew 6:33 on a whiteboard or on a poster board.
- Place a transparent toy container on the floor.
- Scatter B-letter toys of various sizes (toy Boats or Buses, Barbies, Balls, teddy Bears, Blocks) on the floor around it. Include a full Bucket of very small toys, like Legos.
- Make sure all of the toys fit in the container (as long as the small toys go in first).

Activity:

- Review with the children what Blink learned in the skit today. Mrs. F suggested that instead of worrying about Queen Bee, he could focus on helping to make the world the way it's meant to be, with God as the king—a place where God's children follow God's ways.
- Tell the children that Jesus called this “seeking God's kingdom.” He told us that if we seek God's kingdom FIRST, all the other things we need will be given to us as well.
- Tell the children, “Imagine we are going on a trip, and we want to bring ALL these toys. But they have to fit in this bin.”
- Pour the bucket of Legos in first, and then invite the children to help you put all the toys in the bin. Ask, “Can we fit all our toys?” [The toys WON'T fit due to the Legos taking up half of the room.]
- Suggest trying again, this time putting the large toys in first, then the medium-sized toys and finally pouring the Legos in last. It will all fit now.

Questions for discussion:

- We couldn't fit everything the first time. What did we do differently the second time, when we were able to fit everything in the bin? [Put the big items in first]
- In our Bible verse today, what did Jesus say we should seek first? [God's kingdom]
- Jesus said, “Seek first his kingdom, and all these things will be given to you as well.” When we put the big, important items in first, we were able to fit the small items as well.
- What are some ways to seek first God's kingdom? [Spend time learning about and being with Jesus through Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, singing, etc.]

Bible Lesson Day 5

Bible Verse: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 7:12

Set up:

Have supplies ready for a Golden Rule craft.

- Wooden craft flamingo ornaments (write VBS (What’s the B For?) and date on the back)
- Wooden craft bear ornaments (write VBS (What’s the B For?) and date on the back)
- Wooden craft bee ornaments (write VBS (What’s the B For?) and date on the back)
- Wooden craft beagle ornaments (write VBS (What’s the B For?) and date on the back)
- Washable paint
- Paint brushes
- Craft embellishments (gems, glitter, ribbons, tiny flowers, feathers)

Activity:

- Review with the children what Queen Bee learned in the skit today. Mrs. F explained to her that she was designed to live like Jesus and by His words in Matthew 7:12, a.k.a. The Golden Rule.
- Tell the children that they are going to practice the Golden Rule through a craft project today.
- Explain that they will be making a Christmas ornament, but not for themselves. They will be choosing someone to make the ornament for, and this will affect the decisions they make as they create the ornament.

Questions for discussion:

- Who will you make an ornament for? (A parent? A grandparent? A sibling?)
- Which of the four animals would this person like best? Choose to make THAT ornament.
- What colors do you think this person would like? Choose those colors.
- Which embellishments do you think this person would like? Choose those.

Escape Room Station

B is for Breakout!



Escape Room Station Overview

The Escape Room Station is a VBS station designed for older children (Grades 4 - 5). It's a room where children are "locked in" and given puzzles to solve, games to play, and codes to decipher in order to find their way out.

The door doesn't need to be literally locked! To keep the vibe fun and non-threatening, you might leave it wide open and use criss-crossing tape in fun colors to block the top third of the doorway. Post a large "ESCAPE ROOM!" sign above the entrance and smaller signs around it with "warnings" like: "Once you enter, you'll have to crack codes and decipher clues to get out!!!"

When the children arrive each day, gather them at the door to hear instructions before they begin. Each day's puzzles and code-cracking games are designed to be completed well within the 20-minute time allotment. If/when the children solve all their challenges, they've "escaped." Of course, they need to stay at the station until the allotted time is up. If there's time left over, have puzzles (like word searches) available for them to focus on during the remaining few minutes.

In most cases, the children must give a password, passcode phrase, or Bible verse to the door keeper in order to leave. Since each day's challenges correspond to the characters in the skit, the children might give this word/phrase to that day's character (Bougine, Blink, etc.), who might stand in the doorway and playfully block it until the kids offer the secret word/s. If that's not possible, the children can speak the word/s to the VBS Teacher.

A list of items you'll need for each day's Escape Room activities is provided. Consider adding various other objects (lamps, pillows, toys, home decor items) as decoys to keep the children guessing where the next clue might be.

Escape Room Day 1: "What's the Secret Passcode?"

You'll need:

- ☐ Bright-colored, wall-safe tape
- ☐ 20+ books
- ☐ Poster board to make a big jigsaw puzzle
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Scrap paper and pencils
- ☐ 3+ area rugs

Set up:

- Before the kids arrive, use bright-colored, wall-safe tape to create a line that starts at the door and goes around the room (including up and down the walls), twisting and turning and doubling back again until it lands at a spot where there's a sign on the wall. Post this "starting point" sign:

Wait until everyone is gathered here before you read the rest of this message, which is hidden under the flap below.

[The following poem is taped under a flap of cut-out construction paper.]

**To start your search to find the pass code
Around this room you all must look.
The first clues to help you learn it
Are hidden inside a bunch of _____.**

Finish this rhyming poem, and then search where it says.

- Draw the words, "Look under rugs" on poster board and cut it up into 12 jigsaw puzzle pieces that must be fitted together to read the message. Hide one jigsaw puzzle piece inside each of 12 books and leave them around the room.

- Place area rugs around the room.
- Under some of the rugs, place several slips of paper (enough for every child) that say:

Want a hint about the pass code?
It's not ONE word, but FOUR!
You've got to learn ALL of them
To exit out the door.

For more info about the code
Into the Bible you must dive.
Flip through the pages until you get
To Matthew Chapter 5.

- In several Bibles, insert a slip of paper at the start of Matthew 5. The paper should read:

Can you decode the secret message in this letter? Once you do, tell it to Mrs. Featherbottom and you can escape!

Dear VBS students,

This week, Mrs. Featherbottom is going to teach us lessons from a famous talk that Jesus gave. Also, some very interesting things are going to happen to our friends whose names all start with the letter b. Maybe you'll learn some cool things, too!

Love,
Your VBS Teacher

[Pass code to escape is: Sermon on the Mount]

Escape Room Day 1 Script

VBS Teacher says: Welcome to the VBS Escape Room!

You know what that means, right? We're locked in here! The only way we can escape is by telling Mrs. Featherbottom the pass code. We have 20 minutes to figure out what that pass code is. But don't worry—there are lots of clues in here that will help us.

First of all, you should know that the secret pass code is literally hidden SOMEWHERE IN THIS ROOM.

Second of all, KINDNESS is very important inside an escape room like this one. As we try to find clues and solve puzzles, we share with one another and help one another, so everyone can find the pass code TOGETHER.

Where will we find it? Start by following the narrow path. It will lead you to a sign, which will give you further directions.

The children will follow the tape to the "starting point sign," which will direct them to look in books. They will see several books throughout the room, scattered about on tables and shelves. Inside 10 - 12 of these books, the children will find large jigsaw pieces made of cardstock. Try to have enough pieces that there's one per each child. When they put those jigsaw puzzle pieces together, they will form a poster with the message: LOOK UNDER RUGS.

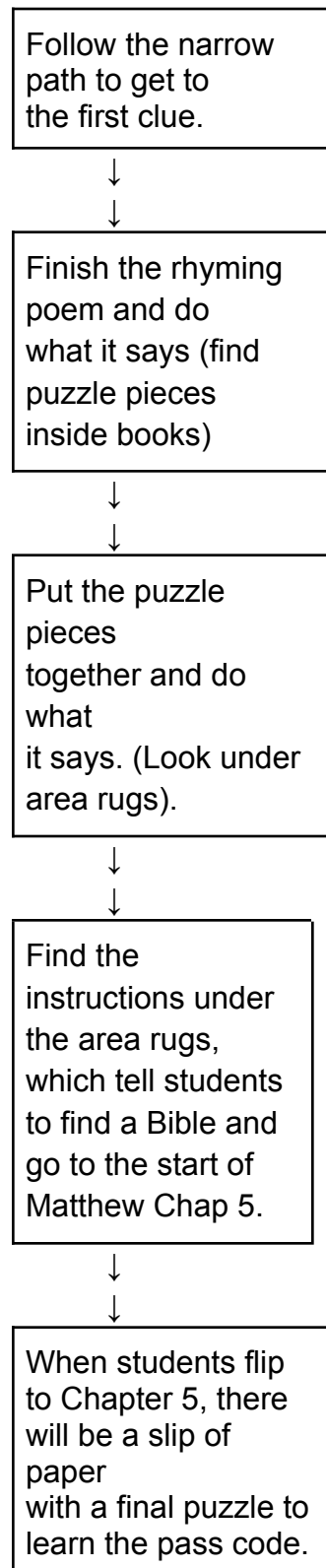
Have small area rugs scattered around the room. Several slips of paper (enough for each child) will be hidden beneath various rugs. The slips all have the same message, which directs them to open a Bible to Matthew Chapter 5.

You will have already placed a clue inside several Bibles at the start of Matthew 5. So when the children find that chapter, they will also find the slip of paper that contains a secret message. When they decode that message, they will know the pass code to escape!

Have scrap paper and pencils available so the children can work out the message.

If the children figure out the pass code before the allotted station time is over, tell them they've earned their freedom but must wait until class time is over to leave. Distribute a word search puzzle to work on as they wait.

Quick and easy flowchart for the Escape Room VBS Teacher:



Escape Room Day 2: "Where's the Candy Bracelet?"

You'll need:

- ☐ Several strands of yarn
- ☐ 20 index cards or slips of paper
- ☐ Pencil or pen for each child
- ☐ Artwork with dark backgrounds (could be posters, drawings, etc.)
- ☐ 2 blacklight flashlights
- ☐ Highlighter pen
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ 1 Candy bracelet

Set up:

- Print out 10-20 paper clues, add a hole punch, and tie a strand of yarn to each. Tape the other end of the yarn to the ceiling, so the clues are hanging down at kid-level. Have enough so every child gets one. Half of the clues will be marked Clue #1 and half will be marked Clue #2. Here is what the clues say:

Clue #1:

Can you decode this "missing letters" message?

God made yo o that you could know Him and lov Him—just like He knows and loves YOU! You can talk to Him and ask Him or he p when you h ve problem . And you can team up wit Him to he p others as He makes the world a better place where people learn to do the r thing.

Write the secret code here:

[Answer: The first paragraph's code will say: USE FLASHLIGHT]

Clue #2:

Can you decode this “missing letters” message?

Jesus really wanted to help sad and hurting pe_█ple. He felt sorry for people who have to live i_█ an im_█perfect world where th_█eves break in and steal, and where the ni_█e things we love get des_█royed. So when Jesus asked His father for things, he _█sually asked fo_█ th_█ power to to help people like you.

Write the secret code here:

[Answer: The second paragraph's code will say: ON PICTURE]

- Adorn the walls with lots of artwork on a dark background. (You can do crayon drawings to keep things simple, or put up posters of items that start with the letter B.)
- On two of the pictures, use a yellow highlighter pen to write “Look under a table.” On the dark background, it will only be visible if you shine a blacklight on it.
- Tape a message under the table. The message will tell the children where to look to find the candy bracelet. It might be, “Ask your teacher to look in her pocket!”

Escape Room Day 2 Script

VBS Teacher says: Welcome back to the VBS Escape Room!

That means...we're locked in here AGAIN! But this time, in order to get out, we need to help Bougine Bird with something. You see, she lost her precious candy bracelet SOMEWHERE IN THIS ROOM! We can't leave this room until we find it!!!

Children will immediately see 10-20 paper clues hanging from the ceiling by yarn.

As you can see, the first two clues are just "hanging around." There's one for everyone. You can pick either Clue #1 or Clue #2, then go to the table marked Clue #1 or Clue #2. Do what your clue tells you to do, and when you finish, help the others at your table to find the answer.

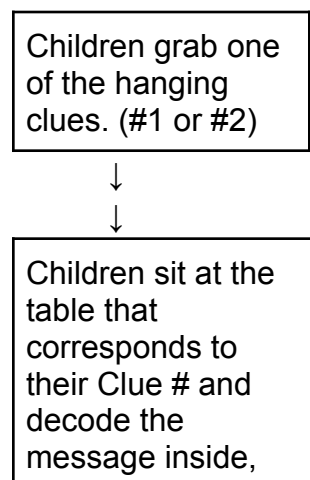
When both groups have finished solving their code, tell the children at the two tables to put their clues together. It will form the message, "Use flashlight on picture."

At this time, give one blacklight flashlight to each group. The children will flash the light on the various pictures on the wall. On two of the posters with dark backgrounds, the black light will pick up this message: LOOK UNDER A TABLE.

When children look under the tables, they will find the same message taped under all the tables: It might say, "Ask the VBS Teacher to look in her pocket."

When the children find the bracelet, congratulate them for figuring out how to "escape" today. If time remains, give them a puzzle to work on during the remaining minutes.

Quick and easy flowchart for the Escape Room VBS Teacher:



helping others at
their table to
decode it as well.



Table #1 and Table
#2 put their clues
together to create
the message: "Use
flashlight on
picture."



VBS teacher gives
one blacklight
flashlight to Table
#1 and a second
blacklight flashlight
to Table #2. The
children go around
the room, flashing
the light on all the
various pictures
until they find the
one with the
invisible ink
message.



When they find the
hidden message, it
says, "Look under
a table."



All the tables have
the same
message taped
underneath:
"You'll find the
candy bracelet..."

Escape Room Day 3: "What's That Sound?"

You'll need:

- Smartphone / tablet to play VBS songs
- 10 strands of yellow yarn, exactly 6 inches
- 10 strands of blue yarn, exactly 9 inches
- 10 strands of red yarn, exactly 12 inches
- Several rulers
- 10 -15 envelopes and paper
- Bibles
- Two palm-sized rocks

Set up:

- Play VBS song, "Bailey," on a phone or tablet and position it next to the opening clue, which says:

How long is the yellow yarn?

I really wish I knew.

Is it shorter than 12 inches

But longer than two?

How long is the blue yarn?

It's the second # in this clue!

Do you have something to measure it?

Any old ruler will do.

How long is the red yarn?

Add it to the other two.

The sum of all three numbers

Is the one you must pursue!

- Drape the yarn strands over tables, chairs, desks, shelves, hanging from walls, etc. Have several available, plenty for all the children.
- Write numbers on envelopes in bright-colored markers. Any number will do. A few of the envelopes will be marked with the number 27.
- Inside envelopes with # 27, place a slip of paper that says: "What is the last word in Matthew 7:24? Can you find it in this room?" Inside all the other envelopes, write messages like "Wrong envelope! Try again!" or "God loves you, but this envelope will get you nowhere!"
- Hide two rocks in hard-to-find spots. Under each one, tape this message to the bottom: "What's the name of Bailey's baseball team? To get out of this room, make a sound that goes with that team name."

VBS Escape Room Day 3 Script

VBS Teacher says: Welcome back to the Escape Room! To get out of here today, you have to make a specific type of SOUND. It's your job to figure out what that sound is.

Speaking of sounds, do you hear any sounds right now? Follow the sounds you hear to get to your first clue.

"Bailey's Song" will be playing on a phone or tablet. Next to the phone/tablet, they will find the opening clue. It will ask them how long various yarn strands are. When the children look around the room, they will see several strands of colored yarn strewn around in various spots—draped over tables, chairs, desks, shelves, hanging from walls, etc.

Have several rulers lying around. The children must measure a red yarn, a blue yarn, and a yellow yarn, and add up those three numbers. Make sure you have enough yarn strands scattered around for everyone to get a chance to measure.

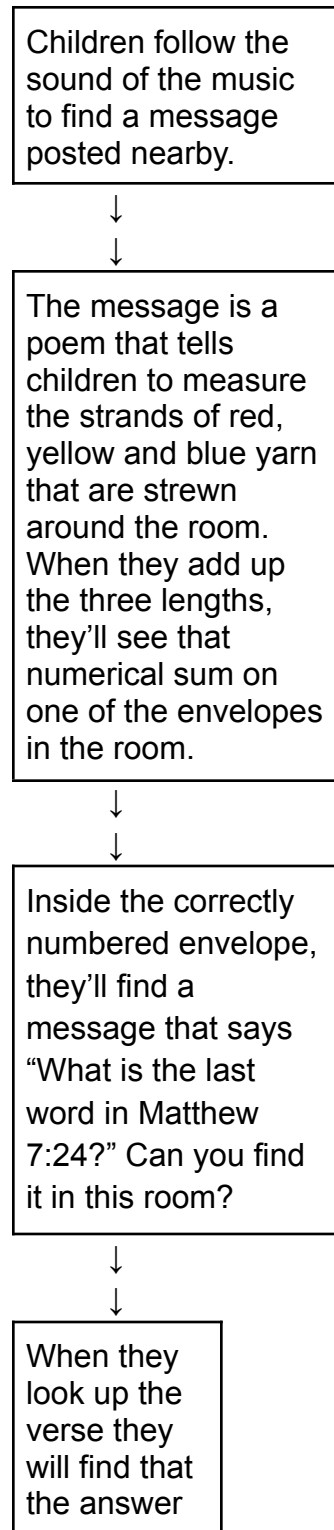
There are also several envelopes throughout the room (you might tape them to the walls), and each has a brightly colored number on it. The children need to find the envelope marked with the number 27, which is the sum of the three measurements. (If you have a lot of children and want several to find the right envelope, have many envelopes with the same number, including several with the number 27.)

If the children open up any of the other envelopes, they'll find funny messages that tell them it's the wrong envelope. Inside the envelopes with the sum 27, they'll find a message that says "What is the last word in Matthew 7:24?" Can you find it in this room?

The last word is "rock," and when the children find one of the rocks (have several hidden within the room so that lots of children can find one), it will have this message written on the bottom: "What's the name of Bailey's baseball team? To get out of this room, make a sound that goes with that team name." [Answer: Dawgs, so children have to make a barking sound to get out of the room.]

When the children make a barking sound, congratulate them for figuring out how to "escape" today. If time remains, give them a puzzle to work on during the remaining minutes.

Quick and easy flowchart for the Escape Room VBS Teacher:



is "rock."
They will
search for a
rock.



On the bottom
of the rock is
a question:
What's the
name of
Bailey's
baseball team
and what
sound does it
make?

Escape Room Station Day 4: "What's the Word?"

You'll need:

- ☐ 1 box / container that [can be locked with a padlock](#)
- ☐ 1 five-digit [combination lock](#)
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ White crayon
- ☐ Water paint, paint brushes, cups for water, and paper towels
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Index cards in various colors

Set up:

- Tape a tiny message high up on the wall (out of children's reach) that says, "The code to the lock is the abbreviation of Blink's favorite Bible verse."
- Write the following clues on different-colored index cards (each one a different color) and hide them around the room (or tape them to the walls).
 - Blink's favorite verse is in the 11th book of the New Testament.
 - Blink's favorite verse comes from a letter that was written to people in a place that starts with P.
 - Blink's favorite verse is in Chapter # _____. (It rhymes with door.)
 - Blink's favorite verse starts with the word "Do."
 - There's a word in Blink's favorite verse that is also a national holiday.
 - Blink's favorite verse is numbered 6 and 7.
 - Blink's favorite verse was written by a man named Paul.
- Create the following message. In the blank space, write the number 5 in white crayon.

The password you need to escape this room can be found inside the Bible. It is a word in Blink's favorite verse that starts with a "p" and has _____ letters.

(You must paint over that blank space with water paint to read the FULL message.)

- Inside a box, put 20 copies of this message (enough for everyone).
- Lock it with the combination lock.
- Set up a water painting table with paint, brushes, cups of water, and paper towels.
- Have several Bibles on hand.

VBS Escape Room Script Day 4

VBS Teacher says: Well, here we are once again—trapped in this room! This time, Blink the Bear needs to hear a special password.

We've got this, right? We just follow the clues and solve the puzzles until we find what we need! There's just one problem. Today, our biggest clue is inside this LOCKED box!

Show the children the box with the lock.

We need the 5-digit code for the combination! Any idea what it might be? Let's see...it's 5 digits—should we try B-L-I-N-K? Let's do it!

You try BLINK, and it doesn't work.

Does anyone else have a guess of what it might be?

Let children try different combinations.

Hey, does anyone see that teeny tiny slip of paper that's taped to the wall over there? Maybe that will help us?

Pluck the paper off the wall and read it to the class: "The five digit code is the abbreviation for Blink's favorite Bible verse."

Does anyone know Blink's favorite Bible verse? Yeah, me neither.

But we can work together to figure out what it is! There are clues hidden all around this room! I'll divide you into pairs, and each pair needs to find and bring back ONE clue. (Hint: The clues are all on index cards.)

Then return to this spot, put ALL the clues together, and consult the Bible. Together, we can figure out Blink's favorite Bible verse.

Once you've found the verse, the code to the lock is the first two letters of the word that starts the verse, then the chapter number, and then verse numbers. So it should be 2 letters and 3 numbers. Now, go find some clues!

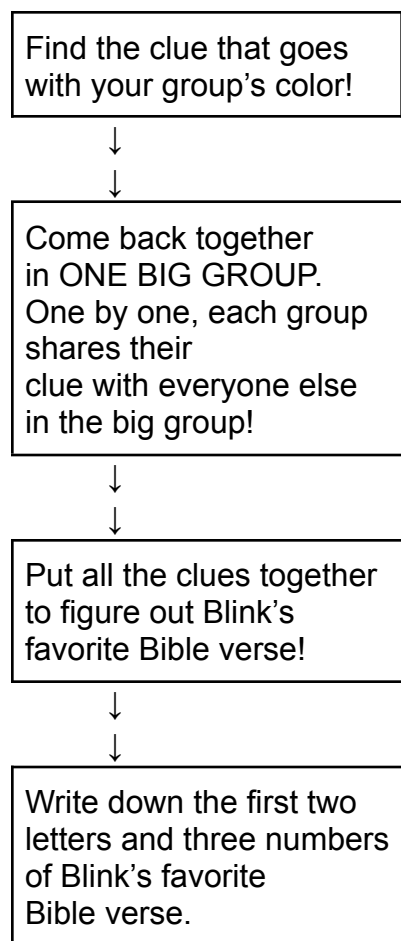
The children will look around the room and retrieve the seven index cards. When they share their clues, they will find that Blink's favorite verse is Philippians 4:6-7, so they enter PH467 to open the box.

Inside the box, the children will find several copies of a message (enough so each child gets one). The message will have a blank space in it. They must paint over the blank space with water paint to read the whole thing.

The number 5 will be written in white crayon in the white space. It won't show up until the children paint over it. Once they do, they can go to their Bible, find the verse, and locate the word that starts with "p" and has FIVE letters. The password to escape is PEACE.

Congratulations on figuring out the password! You are free to go—AFTER you return the water painting supplies to the bucket/sink to be cleaned.

Quick and easy flowchart for the Escape Room VBS Teacher:





Enter those two numbers
and three digits into
the lock to open the box.



Inside, you'll find
Instruction sheets.
EVERYONE gets one.
Do what they say. (Paint
over the blank space in
the message to find out
the complete message.)
The paint will reveal that
they need to find the
5-letter word that starts
with "P" in Blink's
favorite Bible verse.
That's the password!

Escape Room Station Day 5: "What's That OTHER Verse?"

You'll need:

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Deck of playing cards
- ☐ several potted plants (at least 2)
- ☐ Bibles

Set up:

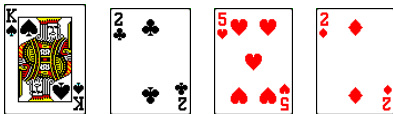
- Post the opening riddle prominently on the wall. Print it on a sheet of paper with a beehive design.

Following clues
Is not that hard
Start by collecting
All the index cards!
Each card holds a letter
Of the phonetic alphabet.
Bring them to a table!
Get ready, get set!
Arrange them in order,
And a word you will get!

- Post a chart with the phonetic alphabet.

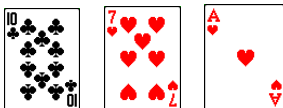
A Alpha	B Bravo	C Charlie	D Delta	E Echo
F Foxtrot	G Golf	H Hotel	I India	J Juliet
K Kilo	L Lima	M Mike	N November	O Oscar
P Papa	Q Quebec	R Romeo	S Sierra	T Tango
U Uniform	V Victor	W Whiskey	X X-ray	Y Yankee
Z Zulu				

- On nine index cards, write with blue marker on the front and with black marker on the back:
 - Front: Lima / Back: To
 - Front: Echo / Back: find
 - Front: Victor / Back: the
 - Front: India / Back: next
 - Front: Tango / Back: clue
 - Front: India / Back: look
 - Front: Charlie / Back: under
 - Front: Uniform / Back: a
 - Front: Sierra / Back: plant
- Hide the index cards around the room.
- Place these playing cards and the following note under the first potted plant:



Add up these cards (hint: Kings = 10), and you'll get the CHAPTER # you need. Put this clue together with the other two clues, and you'll have the full verse. Go find it in the Bible, and tell Queen Bee what it says!

- Place these playing cards and the following note under the second potted plant:



Add up these cards, and you'll get the VERSE # you need. (Hint: Aces = 1) Put this clue together with the other two clues, and you'll have the full verse. Go find it in the Bible, and tell Queen Bee what it says!

VBS Escape Room Day 5 Script

VBS Teacher says: In the skit today, Queen Bee learned a very important verse: “So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

But did you know that there is ANOTHER verse—a verse in the Old Testament—that sounds a lot like this one? If you want to escape from this room, you need to find THAT verse! Figure out what it is, look it up in the Bible, and tell Queen Bee what it says. She’ll let you escape, I promise! Ready to start? Buzz on over to the beehive!

When the children read the opening clue, they will be directed to find the nine index cards that are hidden throughout the room. On the front of the index cards are words from the phonetic alphabet used by the military—each stands for a letter. Don’t tell this to the children, but have the phonetic alphabet chart hanging where they can see it.

When the cards are in the correct order, they will spell out the word, “Leviticus.” Someone will probably notice (and if they don’t, point it out) that there’s also a word written on the back of each index card. When the children turn the cards over, a message will lead them to their next clue: “To find the next clue, look under a plant.”

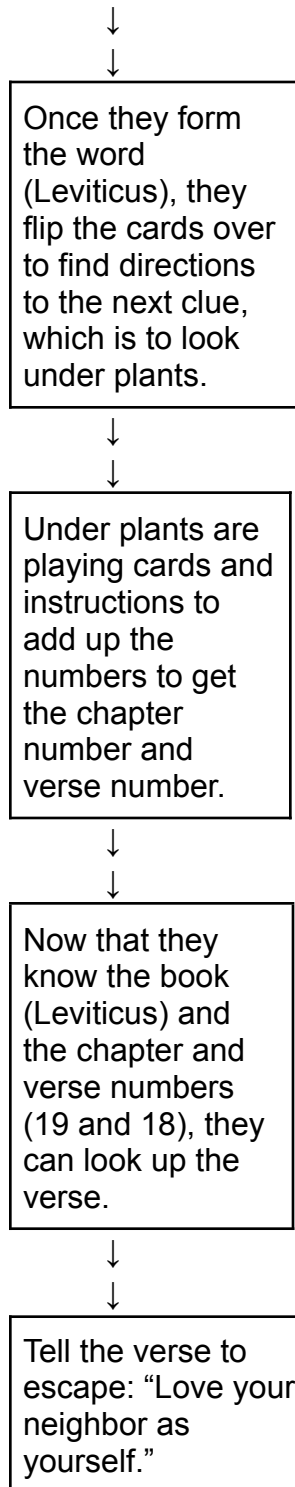
Under the plants, they will find playing cards, and when they add up the numbers on the cards, they will get the CHAPTER # and the VERSE #.

When the children put the three clues together (Leviticus + Chapter 19 + Verse 18), they can go to the Bible and find the verse they need to say to escape.

[Answer: The main part of the verse you’re looking to hear the children say is: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”]

Quick and easy flowchart for the Escape Room VBS Teacher:

They read the instructions on the beehive-shaped paper, which tell them to find all 9 index cards and arrange them in order to form a word.



VBS (What's the B For?)

Closing Time



Closing Time Overview

During Closing Time, all the groups return to the sanctuary/main meeting room to review lessons learned and sing songs. Make sure the music and sound board volunteers are on hand. When Closing Time is over, dismiss the children to their classrooms for pickup.



Closing Time Day 1

Set up:

- Have VBS music playing as kids enter.
- Project the lyrics for “Enter Through the Narrow Gate.”

VBS Director:

- Welcome all the children back to the sanctuary.
- Say, “Let’s talk about what we learned today. Can you name a character we met?”
[Walk around the audience and give kids a chance to answer.]
- Ask, “What was something the characters learned today?”
[Walk around the audience and give kids a chance to answer.]
- Say, “In the skit today, Mrs. Featherbottom told her class that there are many ways to live your life—many paths to take. Jesus came to earth and spent three years teaching people how to make good choices. He said that making good choices is like walking on a narrow path. If we follow Jesus on His path, staying close to Him, He’ll help us to make good choices.”
- Ask, “Did anyone learn a song about a narrow path or a narrow gate today? Did you learn how to sing it in lots of different ways?”
- Invite the music volunteers to help lead. Say, “Let’s sing the song together.”
- Ask, “Can you sing it in a deep voice? Can you sing it in a high squeaky voice? Can you sing it like a robot? Can you sing it with your tongue stuck to the roof of your mouth? Can you sing it while hopping on one foot? How fast can you sing it?”
- Congratulate the kids on their singing and dismiss them to their classrooms for pickup.

Closing Time Day 2

Set up:

- Have VBS music playing as kids enter.
- Project the lyrics for “Heavenly Treasure.”

VBS Director:

- Welcome all the children back to the sanctuary.
- Say, “Let’s talk about what we learned today. First of all, what happened to Bougine and her candy jewelry?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Ask, “What was something that Bougine learned today?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Say, “In the skit today, Mrs. Featherbottom explained that candy jewelry is an earthly treasure, and it doesn’t last. But God made Bougine—and all of us—for so much more than that! Jesus tells us not to store up earthly treasures. He wants us to have heavenly treasure—the peace and happiness and power that comes from loving Him and having Him love us.”
- Ask, “Did anyone learn a song about heavenly treasure today? Did you learn how to sing it with hand motions?”
- Invite the music volunteers to help lead. Say, “Let’s sing the song together.”
- Congratulate the kids on their singing and dismiss them to their classrooms for pickup.

Closing Time Day 3

Set up:

- Have VBS music playing as kids enter.
- Project the lyrics for “Wise Man Built His House on a Rock.”

VBS Director:

- Welcome all the children back to the sanctuary.
- Say, “Let’s talk about what we learned today. First of all, why was Bailey so upset when he came to VBS today?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Ask, “What was something that Bailey learned today?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Say, “In the skit today, Mrs. Featherbottom explained to Bailey that when he plays a baseball game, he really has TWO missions. And only ONE of those missions is to win a game. The other one is to join God as He uses you to make the world a better place! Joining with God in HIS mission is like building a house on solid rock. Whenever you team up with God, you’re on a solid rock, because God loves us so much that He will always, always care for us. There’s nothing more solid than God’s love.”
- Ask, “Did anyone learn a song about building on solid rock today? I heard a lot of stomping and clapping coming from the music station. Can you show me how you did it?”
- Invite the music volunteers to help lead. Say, “Let’s sing the song together.”
- Congratulate the kids on their singing and dismiss them to their classrooms for pickup.

Closing Time Day 4

Set up:

- Have VBS music playing as kids enter.
- Project the lyrics for “Seek First His Kingdom.”

VBS Director:

- Welcome all the children back to the sanctuary.
- Say, “Let’s talk about what we learned today. Blink had a bit of a crisis. What happened to him?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Ask, “What was something that Blink learned today?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Say, “In the skit today, Mrs. Featherbottom told Blink that when he’s feeling worried, he can always ask God for the things he needs. She also told Blink that God made him with a purpose—to know and love God—and to show people what God is like. That’s what Jesus did when He was on earth. And He wants Blink—and all of us—to do that, too. When we draw close to Jesus, He helps us to do the things He did, helping and caring for others. That’s how He makes the world the place it was meant to be. A place where people follow God’s ways. That’s called ‘seeking God’s kingdom.’”
- Ask, “Did anyone learn a chanting song about seeking God’s kingdom today? Can you show me how you did it?”
- Invite the music volunteers to help lead. Say, “Let’s do the chant together.”
- Congratulate the kids on their singing and dismiss them to their classrooms for pickup.

Closing Time Day 5

Set up:

- Have VBS music playing as kids enter.
- Project the lyrics to “The Golden Rule Song.”

VBS Director:

- Welcome all the children back to the sanctuary.
- Say, “Let’s talk about what we learned today. Queen Bee learned the verse, Matthew 7:12. That’s what we call the Golden Rule. Can anyone tell me what the Golden Rule is?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Ask, “What are some ways you can practice the Golden Rule?”
[Give some kids a chance to answer.]
- Say, “Practicing the Golden Rule is hard to do on our own. But if we belong to Jesus, He promises to help us. Remember, Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross. All we have to do is ask for His forgiveness, and our sins are paid for! When we accept what Jesus did for us, He gives us the power to live His way.”
- Queen Bee, who’s sitting in the audience, will call out: “Excuse me, may I come up on stage please?” Queen Bee will be invited up on stage, where she will say, “I decided I want to belong to Jesus. I want Him to change my heart and my life. Want to pray with me? [Folds hands and bows head] Dear Jesus, I am sorry for all the bad things I’ve said and done. I know that You died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I want to accept what You did for me! Please take away my sins, Jesus!” Tell Queen Bee that Jesus will give her the power to follow the Golden Rule, and that she can return to her seat. Tell the audience that anyone can do what Queen Bee just did, and invite them to tell a parent or someone they love if they want to do this, too.
- Ask, “Did anyone learn a song about the Golden Rule today? Did you figure out the last line? Let’s sing it now.”

- Invite the music volunteers to help lead. Say, “Let’s sing The Golden Rule Song together.”
- If time allows, sing some of the other song favorites from the week.
- Congratulate the kids on their singing and dismiss them to their classrooms for pickup.

Transitions: "B" Animal Yoga Poses

There may be moments when kids have extra energy and need somewhere to direct it. Or, you might finish an activity 5 minutes early and need something to do to fill the time. When that happens, the VBS volunteer can say, "It's time for some 'B' Animal Yoga Poses!" Each one takes about a minute.

This activity could also be its own station if you need to stretch your VBS running time.

Bougine Bird Pose

This is a variation on the flamingo pose.

- Find a focus point straight ahead for balance.
- Reach up with one arm to make a tall flamingo's neck.
- With the other hand, grab your other foot behind you.
- Draw your foot toward your bottom.
- Stand tall and hold for 3 - 5 slow breaths.
- Do a little hop.
- Switch legs and do it again on the other side.

Bailey the Beagle Pose

This is a variation on the downward dog pose.

- Start on your hands and knees.
- Exhale and lift your knees away from the floor, straightening your legs.
- Your heels will be lifted off the floor.
- Push your heels downward.
- Hold for 1 - 3 slow breaths.
- Relax and try that again for 5 - 10 breaths.

Queen Bee Pose

This is a variation on the butterfly pose.

- Sit with a tall spine.
- Bend your knees.

- Bring the soles of your feet together.
- Hold your feet with your hands.
- Gently flap your knees up and down like wings of a bee.
- Hold for 3 - 6 breaths.

Blink the Bear Pose

This is a variation on the bear walks pose.

Start on your hands and knees.

Spread your fingers wide on the floor.

Tuck your toes under your ankles.

Press your hips up to the sky.

Move onto your tippy toes.

Walk like you're a bear for a count of 10.

Rest for 3 breaths.

Repeat.

VBS (What's the B For?)

Parent Guide



Instructions for Parent Guide

This optional 5-Day Parent Guide was written for parents of children attending VBS (What's the B For?) and for adult volunteers. It can be used in a number of ways. A few options:

- Make it available digitally or as a handout to parents and encourage them to read it for their own enrichment.
- Make it available digitally or as a handout to adult volunteers and strongly encourage them to read it. No one wants to over-burden volunteers with mandatory homework, so just let them know that this optional content can help them as children ask questions.
- Use this guide as discussion materials for an adult Sunday school class during the five Sundays leading up to VBS. Make sure that adult volunteers know that this class is happening!

Parent Guide DAY 1: B is For Bible

VBS stands for **V**acation **B**ible **S**chool. But at this particular VBS, there will be some funny misunderstandings. Some attendees will be misinformed about what the B stands for.

Is it Vacation BIRD School? Vacation BEAR School? Vacation BEAGLE School? Vacation BEE School?

No! Once the confusion is cleared up, the students will settle in to learn some important life lessons from the BIBLE.

Why We Study the Bible

The theologian C.S. Lewis wrestled with competing ideas for several years before landing on Christianity as the guiding force in his life. In his essay collection, The Christian in the Real World, Lewis recalled being asked, "Can't you lead a good life without believing in Christianity?"

His answer was matter-of-fact.

"Christianity claims to give an account of facts, to tell you what the real universe is like," he replied. If you believe these ARE the facts, it naturally follows that the Bible's view on how to lead a good life is the correct one.

There are a lot of competing notions about how to conduct oneself in the world. The meaning of goodness itself is up for debate. But once Lewis recognized the ultimate truth of the Bible, his way forward was clear. "Knowledge of the facts must make a difference to one's actions," he explained.

VBS (What's the B For?) stands in agreement that the Bible teaches us how to live in the world as it actually, factually is.

The Main Idea of the Bible

God created everything, and gave humans the job to co-rule the world with Him. But humans rebelled against Him, and their actions led to a broken world, full of sin and suffering. So, God sent Himself in the form of Jesus to live the life humans were meant to live—and then to die and rise again as a means of rescuing humans and restoring the world to the just, peaceful and joyful place it was meant to be. One day, Jesus will come again, ushering in a new heaven and a new earth, all under His reign.

What It Means to Be Christian

This restoration process is happening now. As pastor Tim Keller put it in The Reason for God, "To be a Christian today is to become part of that same operation."

Of course, you can reasonably look around and say, "The world still looks broken to me."

Why is that? "Some of the wisest thinkers of today's church have cautiously concluded that as God's kingdom comes, it isn't God's will to bring it all at once," says New Testament scholar N.T. Wright in his book, Matthew for Everyone. "We couldn't bear it if he did. God is working like an artist with difficult material."

That "difficult material" is us—people. We face a lot of problems, and even when we try to live a good life, we tend to make a mess of things.

But our ever-present, abounding-in-love God is intimately involved in the circumstances of our lives. He's given us His valuable teachings to follow. And for those who believe, His spirit is with us—every moment of the day and night—to help us put His ways into practice.

Biblical Lessons at VBS (What's the B For?)

Jesus knows each of us intimately and knows our personal struggles. At VBS this week, four "students" will each experience a particular struggle.

- **Bougine Bird struggles with the lure of materialism.** She LOVES her candy jewelry and puts great stock in it...which will lead to disaster.

- **Blink the Bear struggles with anxiety.** He's worried that his needs won't be taken care of this week.
- **Bailey the Beagle struggles with disordered priorities.** Winning is everything to him, so NOT winning his big baseball game will lead to total despair.
- **Queen Bee struggles with the pride of position.** She gets all her worth from being, well...the "queen bee" among her friends. But it's a precarious position.

Jesus has wise advice for each of these students, all of which comes from The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7). Each day at VBS, we'll take on a different issue, and Jesus will weigh in with His teaching. The passages we'll study are: Matthew 7: 13-14, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 7:24-27, and Matthew 7:12.

Jesus' approach to solving each student's issue can very broadly be described as "seek first God's kingdom." When we switch our focus to drawing close to Jesus, we begin to lean on Him daily to enable us to live His way. And this makes us better equipped to deal with the circumstances life throws at us.

This week, the children will learn that the Bible is relevant to their lives because in it, Jesus talks about some of the very issues they're facing. As they grow close to Jesus, His power and wisdom will guide them in dealing with these issues. In fact, Jesus Himself will do the heavy lifting.

Of course, adults also struggle with the lure of materialism, anxiety, disordered priorities, and pride. Luckily, Jesus has sound advice for all of us. So, as the children learn the basics, adults can go a little deeper with the study materials provided each day.

The kids might actually like the idea of a vacation school about bears or beagles. But a Vacation BIBLE School will equip them with tools to solve problems in their everyday lives. And with funny skits and puppet shows, this VBS will be plenty of fun, too.

Applying It

1. In VBS this week, the children will learn about four characters, each facing his/her own struggle.
 - Which of these struggles do you relate to most?
 - Which do you think your child relates to most?
2. This week, students will explore ways to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.
 - What might this look like in your personal, daily circumstances?
 - What might this look like in your child's daily circumstances?
3. Which of these topics might you focus on as you pray for your child this week?
4. All of this week's teachings come from The Sermon on the Mount. There's an excellent podcast series on this topic from "The Bible Project."

Parent Guide DAY 2: Bougine Bird

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 6:19-21

Meet Bougine—a posh flamingo who really values the possessions, experiences, and comforts that come with wealth. After winning the Miss Flamingo Pageant, she flaunts the giant candy ring she received as a reward. She won't let anyone touch, taste, come near, or even *smell* them.

Jesus has a gentle, loving warning for Bougine.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on EARTH, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in HEAVEN, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

We All Want Something

Of course, it's human nature to want things. And Jesus doesn't say *we shouldn't*. As Tim Mackie from The Bible Project puts it, "The language of reward is a prominent theme in Jesus' teaching. And He doesn't see it as bad to live your life now in hope for some future reward or honor."

But Jesus points out that it's not a smart plan to want something that won't last.

In the VBS skit, Bougine will learn this lesson when someone steals her prized candy jewelry, and then the thief tosses it all outside—where moths and vermin will destroy it. She will be devastated.

This is an example that children can relate to, but it's really a place holder for those material things in our lives that we value and work for—a latest-model smartphone, a comfortable car, a trendy wardrobe, a gorgeous home, an exciting vacation.

Whatever our personal earthly treasures are, we value them so much that they can begin to feel necessary. If we don't get to have them, we're frustrated. And if we do, we're disappointed when they turn out to be fleeting.

Jesus suggests that we aim for a different treasure.

God's Idea of Rewards

This OTHER treasure—the kind that “thieves, moths and vermin” can't touch—is exponentially better than the things we want. And He doesn't want us to miss out on THAT.

What treasure is that?

Most people assume He means the indescribably amazing things that Christians will experience after they die. He DID tell the crucified thief on his right: “Today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

But there's good reason to think that when Jesus says “treasure in heaven,” he's ALSO referring to a reward here and now.

Over and over, Jesus tells people that there's a way of BEING in the world—this world—that's different from the way most people are experiencing it. He's inviting people to bring their lives into proper alignment with ACTUAL reality.

And what reality is that?

“It is nothing less than God himself and the wonderful society of his kingdom even now interwoven in my life,” writes Dallas Willard in The Divine Conspiracy.

In other words, it's walking through our days WITH God, the actual Creator of All Things. It's knowing that we have His personal, loving attention on us and on every detail of our lives NOW. It's having a constant, ongoing life connection with Him.

An Even GREATER Reward

Also, it's much more than that. See, He's DOING something about the thieves and rust and all the rest that threaten our treasures. And He wants US to join Him.

It will come as no surprise to you that our lives on earth are not what they were meant to be. Pain, suffering, disease, wealth disparities, conflict, natural disasters, and death—they are all part of the deal. No doubt, you have your own personal trouble you're dealing with.

According to the Bible, humankind brought this extreme distress upon the earth through rebellion against God and one another. Generation after generation of peoples' selfish actions have led to this natural consequence: a whole lot of suffering.

But God is actively working to set things right. How? First and foremost, Jesus (who is God Himself, in human form) entered into our suffering.

Through His incarnation, suffering, and death on the cross, God paid the price for our human sinfulness. Now, instead of continuing the cycle of rebellion and consequences, we can start anew.

The Invitation

Of course, the world continues to be broken. But even so, God's plan is unfolding. He's bringing his rule and reign to earth as it is in heaven, and He's inviting us to be part of it.

Would Bougine rather have candy jewelry—or would she rather be partners with the God of the universe, allowing Him to work through her as He eradicates the evil that threatens all good things (candy jewelry included)?

Well...honestly, she might need a minute.

Will she have to loosen her grip on the earthly treasures she longs for? That's a tough sell for us materialistic, comfort-seeking earthlings. Even if it's the right way, it doesn't FEEL that way.

WANTING heavenly treasure (instead of material comfort and security) doesn't come naturally. Even if we long to change our earthly thinking, this kind of heart transformation is divine work. Meaning: God's got to do it.

We do play a part, though. Our end of the deal is twofold: (1) We spend time being with Jesus, and (2) We intentionally start putting Jesus' loving, God-trusting ways into practice—asking Him for help as we do it.

Then comes God's part: He will gradually transform our thinking and all that we value and consider important. It may sound impossible, but here's another thing the Bible says: "All things are possible with God" (Matthew 19:26).

What Bougine Needs

THIS is the answer to Bougine's despair: She needs to switch her focus to a much more valuable treasure, namely, a relationship with God Himself. As she does, she'll start to want what God wants. And she'll begin to see the candy jewelry for what it is—something that won't satisfy her in the long run.

"What is most valuable for a human being...is to be a part of this marvelous reality of God's kingdom now," says Dallas Willard.

Did you hear that, Bougine? That's our actual reality. And it's MARVELOUS.

You just need to start living it.

Applying It

1. We all have our own personal idea of an earthly treasure.
 - What's yours?
 - What's your child's?
2. When you seek heavenly treasure, you prioritize your relationship with God. It's a change of focus to something better.
 - What's an example of how you might do that in your life?
 - How might you help your child to do that?

3. Is your child being affected by society's materialistic focus? According to this recent survey, over 70% of kids are. Ask your child about Bougine Bird at VBS today.
- What happened to her? [Her candy jewelry was stolen.]
 - Did Bougine's treasure last? [No.]
 - The children learned that there's a better treasure. What is that? [Knowing God, talking to Him all the time, and asking Him for the things you need.]
4. WANTING heavenly treasure (instead of material stuff) doesn't come naturally to children OR adults. To begin moving through our lives like Jesus would, we have to TRAIN ourselves to see the world differently.

Here's an excellent book about training yourself to see the world differently:
Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God by Dallas Willard

Parent Guide Day 3: Bailey the Beagle

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 7:24-27

Meet Bailey, the enthusiastic sports fanatic whose baseball team is playing in the championship game THIS WEEK! Bailey is pumped and on a mission to win the big trophy, talking about it incessantly for two days straight. Then, on the third day of VBS, Bailey slow-walks in, head hanging low. The team lost. Devastation!

Bailey is a passionate bundle of energy. But channeling ALL of his passion into winning at baseball turned out to be a poor choice—like building a house on sand.

Here's Jesus' message for Bailey:

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built a house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish person who built a house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The Perils of Passion

Some children can feel so passionate about a game or sport that if/when they lose, the loss feels crushing.

But Bailey's baseball dreams are also a stand-in for ANY all-consuming passion that we think is worth all our time and effort—but doesn't prove a solid investment in the end.

Depending on where we are in life, we may be building our happiness on any number of exciting goals. It might be getting into our dream college, performing well in a fulfilling career, attracting the perfect partner, having a strong marriage, earning accolades in the

arts or sporting worlds, bringing change through social activism, or some other dream that drives us forward.

Usually it's a good and worthy objective. But NOT when we build our whole lives and identities on it. How do you know if you've done that? Think about how you would feel if you don't get the thing you're working toward. Does your heart drop in your chest at the mere thought? You may be building your house on sand.

Two Missions

Bailey was shattered when his mission—winning the championship trophy—wasn't accomplished. Of course he was, since that dream was all he had. But what if winning in baseball wasn't his primary mission?

In his book When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box, the pastor John Ortberg points out that in a sense, we always have two missions. Whatever goal we're working toward at the moment is our SHADOW mission—and not actually the primary one.

Bailey's shadow mission is to give his team everything he's got. His goal is to win the championship game, and with hard work and a positive attitude, he might just do it!

But Bailey's PRIMARY mission is actually something else.

Why? Because there's something bigger going on than just baseball.

See, things AREN'T exactly ideal here on earth. You can see it all over the place, even in Bailey's favorite sport. Yes, baseball is inspiring, uplifting and fun. But also...pitchers get injured and get angry, outfielders fumble the ball and get teased, batters have slumps and are tempted to cheat. In baseball, as in life, problems abound.

God's world wasn't MEANT to be brimming with problems, and God certainly didn't cause them. The good news is that He hasn't abandoned humans to deal with these problems on our own. In fact, He USES them to grow us and develop our character to be more like His son.

But first, players like Bailey need to recognize how life in God's world works. If Bailey's whole heart and soul is set on winning the game, he's building his identity on unstable ground. Eventually, one of two things will happen. He will either be crushed by defeat, or he'll have a hand in causing someone else's crushing defeat.

But what if Bailey's PRIMARY mission was different? What if it was to become the person God created him to be? And to be used by God in HIS mission to set things right in the world?

God is actively restoring the world to the place He intended it to be, and He invites us to join Him. God could use Bailey to participate in His work on the baseball field.

Mission Possible

Imagine what it would look like if Bailey readjusted his missions.

- Bailey will practice and train hard to win the game, because he'll NEVER stop wanting to win.
- Bailey will ALSO spend time getting to know God's loving ways and praying that God would show him opportunities to join Him in His work—the main mission.

See, God is right there on the baseball field, too—and He takes care of players dealing with baseball's challenges. He most often does this work through His children. If Bailey has this main mission in front of mind, he'll be ready when God sends him an opportunity to care for others as Jesus would.

As Bailey focuses on Jesus, Jesus Himself will inspire Bailey's thoughts and actions towards others.

With this PRIMARY mission in mind, Bailey may be disappointed by the negative aspects of the game, but he's not crushed. Losing a game is actually something he can use in his main mission. How?

- Bailey can take a lesson from the experience of losing: "Now that I know what it feels like, God can use me to comfort others who lose. The next time I win and others don't, I will show empathy to those struggling with loss."
- Rather than being ruffled by bad calls from the ump, or an opposing team member who cheated, Bailey will remember to ask himself, "What's the PRIMARY mission?" The answer is to love God and others the best he can, and to let God handle those who struggle to do the right thing.

With a focus on this PRIMARY mission, you know that you don't have the weight of winning (either mission) on your shoulders. Here's why:

- You'll want to succeed in the SHADOW mission, but you won't be overly stressed about it. You'll know it's not the most important mission.
- You'll want to succeed in the PRIMARY mission, but you'll know that God is in charge of that one. In fact, you'll know that sometimes you WILL fall short and forget to carry out your primary mission. And that's OK, because God never, ever, ever stops loving you.

This is what it means to build our house on rock and not sand. The rock is God himself, who is always ready to strengthen us, guide us, comfort us, and forgive us when we go astray.

What's the solution to Bailey's devastation? Switch missions.

Applying It

1. Is there an area of your life that's so important to you that a negative outcome would feel devastating? How might you downgrade this passion to a shadow mission?
2. Ask your child about Bailey the Beagle at VBS today.
 - What happened to Bailey? [His team lost/he was sad.]
 - Mrs. Featherbottom told Bailey he actually had TWO missions. What was the other one, besides winning the game? [Being available to God as He uses Bailey on the

baseball field, making baseball better for everyone—for those who lose, for those who get hurt, etc.]

3. To learn more about having two missions, consider reading the following book: John Ortberg's When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box.

Parent Guide Day 4: Blink the Bear

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 6:25-34

Meet Blink, an adorable, anxiety-ridden bear who isn't sure about being dropped off here at VBS. What if he gets hungry? Or thirsty? What if he spills something on his shirt? What if the air conditioner breaks, and it gets really, really hot in here? He's covered in fur, you know!

When you're a little kid who lacks life experience, new and scary situations can pop up all the time. Since children don't have much control over their lives, they often try to control what small things they can. Blink is constantly second-guessing the adults who ARE in control—which means he walks around with an anxious, unsettled spirit.

Jesus has some words of comfort for Blink:

"Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

A Seemingly Impossible Command

Don't worry? For many of us, this may be one of the toughest commands in the Bible. (It's also the most frequently repeated one.)

While a LACK of life experience can make children feel anxious about the future, adults often have the opposite issue. Life experience itself (the troubling kind) can make us feel anxious about what's coming next.

Obviously, Jesus knows all about the things that cause us stress. ("Each day has enough trouble of its own.") And still He tells us not to worry.

NOT doing something is hard, but elsewhere in Scripture, God tells us what to do
INSTEAD.

"Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand...and cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:6-7)

The author Linda Dillow cites that verse in her book, Calm My Anxious Heart.

Then she writes, "What does it mean to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God? It means to have total trust in God alone...It involves yielding to God as the Blessed Controller of every situation that's causing me anxiety."

And if the trustworthy, faithful, all-powerful, abounding-in-love God is in control, then...OF COURSE He will provide for our needs. If we're feeling anxious about it, we ought to ask ourselves, "Do I trust Him or don't I?"

The Root of Anxiety

But...there's also another reason why Blink is anxious.

See, Blink hasn't figured out his purpose yet. He hasn't figured out the way he's meant to BE in the world. At VBS, he wants to fit in, and he's really hoping that Queen Bee will deign to be his friend. That seems like a good goal—it certainly FEELS good when she gives him even a scrap of attention. But it feels terrible when she ignores him, which makes him worry even more!

Here's what Jesus knows: What Blink THINKS he needs isn't actually what Blink needs. Blink is anxious and worried about obtaining something that won't bring him true satisfaction. Blink needs to figure out his true purpose.

What's Blink's true purpose? What's yours?

Here it is: To know God and to make Him known through the way you live your life.

Here's how the author and Bible teacher Anne Graham Lotz describes it in her Bible study, Jesus in Me:

"If you're a teacher, your purpose is to show others what Jesus would be like if He were a teacher. If you're a doctor, your purpose is to show people what Jesus would be like if He was a doctor...If you're an attorney, a realtor, a parent or grandparent, your purpose is to bring God glory by allowing other people to see what Jesus would be like in that situation...Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in steadfast resolution to know God and to make Him known wherever you are and in whatever you're doing."

Then, she adds, you can relax—and trust Him to be with you as you go.

Blink Can Relax!

What's Blink's purpose? To show others what Jesus would be like if He were an adorable bear who just got dropped off at VBS.

If Jesus was Blink, would He waste time trying to get Queen Bee to like him? No, he'd be focused on His Father in heaven.

Jesus would "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness." That's what Jesus did when He was on earth, and He didn't do this alone. He was in partnership with His Father. In everything He did, He had a minute-by-minute dependence on His Father. Jesus wasn't anxious because:

- He was laser-focused on knowing and loving His Father and making Him known.
- He depended on the Father to guide Him in this mission.
- He had zero doubt that the Father was with Him every second—listening, helping, comforting, leading, and LOVING Him.

Here's what happens when you focus on knowing and loving God: God starts to work through you. Imagine if that's how Blink approached his life.

Here at VBS, Blink's focus on God might lead him to notice those classmates who are feeling left out. That God focus might give him the confidence and empathy to be a friend to those who need one. His Jesus-directed heart might lead him to ask, "Does the teacher

need help picking up the balls at the end of recreation?" Or: "Can I help the snack volunteers by clearing this table when I'm done eating?"

In the meantime, he KNOWS the Father will take care of HIS needs.

At VBS, Blink will naturally start to put Jesus' commands into practice, because Jesus Himself will inspire this. And Blink will experience something amazing. He'll begin to understand his purpose, and he'll stop worrying about earning Queen Bee's friendship.

And as it turns out? THAT'S when Queen Bee's friendship is given to him as well.

Applying It

1. What is currently causing you to worry? Do you believe that the all-powerful, all-loving God of the universe can help if you ask for it? In your stressful situation right now, what would it look like to yield to God as the Controller of your circumstances?
2. What is your child most fearful about?
3. Ask your child about Blink the Bear at VBS today.
 - What happened to Blink? [Worried that Queen Bee wouldn't be his friend.]
 - Who can Blink always ask for help when he's worried? [God]
 - What's Blink's purpose? [To show others what Jesus would be like if He was an adorable bear who just got dropped off at VBS]
 - Does Blink need to worry about Queen Bee? [Not if he's focused on his purpose—he's too busy being used by God to help others!]
4. For further reading about casting your cares on God, check out [Calm My Anxious Heart](#) by Linda Dillow.

Parent Guide Day 5: Queen Bee

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 7:12

Meet Queen Bee, the popular mean girl who reigns supreme over her judgmental clique of wannabes. She has an eye roll and a snarky remark for anyone she doesn't deem worthy of her time. Queen Bee has power, and she relishes it. Her exalted social status is all she needs. Or so she thinks.

The "queen bee" is a popular movie and TV trope, but she's also a stand-in for anyone who's "made it" playing by the world's rules.

Jesus loves Queen Bee with an unshakeable love. He's designed her in His own image for a purpose, and He pursues her with wise words about how she OUGHT to be operating—according to her true design.

Here's Jesus' message for Queen Bee:

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

The Heart of Jesus' Teaching

This is the Golden Rule, a mainstay principle since ancient times in the field of ethics. The idea is simple: You put yourself in someone else's shoes and ask, "What would I want if I was him or her?" Then you treat them accordingly.

In his book, Love Walked Among Us, author Paul E. Miller describes it this way: "Using our natural tendency toward self-preoccupation, Jesus gently turns self-awareness on its head...The Golden Rule is a simple prescription for 'unselfing.'"

Jesus ends His command with "for this sums up the Law and Prophets."

In other words, it's a one-sentence summary of the entire message of Scripture. It's God's main idea, the point of the story. It's how we're supposed to be living our lives.

A Broken Rule

But putting others first is NOT the model most people are currently following.

Walk into any gathering place—a high school cafeteria, a corporate boardroom, the lobby of a luxury hotel—and you will find people sorted into a status-based hierarchy. Those on top tend to be the most attractive, the most powerful, the wealthiest, the most successful, etc. Generally, they're NOT the ones serving others.

Of course, there is plenty of kindness and generosity in this world. But it exists alongside a value system that goes against God's ideal.

The ideal was Eden, a place where God appointed humans to rule creation in harmony and oneness with the divine will.

The story of the EXILE from Eden is a picture of where we've landed today.

"[It's] an image of the human rulers charting an independent course," says The Bible Project's Tim Mackie. "They want to establish another type of kingdom. It's contested space down here on the land, in the biblical story."

Queen Bee has achieved great success in this world. She is that person who "has it all," and many wish they could be like her. It's fitting that she's a queen, because the kingdom of this world is working well for her in many ways.

But at a certain point during VBS week, she will realize that she is not living the way that she was designed to live. She was designed for the Golden Rule. We all were. This is God's ideal, and we should never stop striving for it.

Here's the sad problem: The Golden Rule doesn't come naturally to her—or any of us.

Consider Jesus' illustration of the Good Samaritan, who treats a hurt stranger as HE would want to be treated. It's a costly gesture. He must give away his time, his money, and his comfort. He risks being misunderstood, as passersby might assume that he was the one

who harmed the man on the road. He risks the loss of reputation among his own people, who wouldn't condone helping an Israelite.

Now, if you hear this story and imagine yourself as the hurt stranger, this lesson probably goes down a little easier.

Jesus says that those who are being oppressed by the world's value system (the poor in spirit, the meek, etc.) are blessed. Why? Since the world's way hasn't worked for them, they can more easily accept the story's lesson and see the need to live God's way.

Conversely, the Golden Rule can be EXTRA hard for someone like Queen Bee—whose exalted social status comes with some pretty great earthly rewards. Queen Bee HASN'T been oppressed by the world.

But she hasn't been free to serve her main purpose, either. She hasn't gotten to experience the joy of being aligned with God, and being used by Him as He brings His kingdom rule to the world.

She needs to start living God's way, too. In His eyes, we all stand on level ground—equally unable to reach this ideal. We all fall hopelessly short.

The Good News

But all is not lost!

"Jesus told the bad news so that people could hear the good," writes Miller. "For instance, when the tax collector [the biblical author Matthew] saw the bad news about himself, he was able to stop pretending, and God forgave him. Our helplessness is the door to the knowledge of God."

At VBS, Queen Bee gets some bad news: Despite her royal name, she doesn't rule the world (not even close). But this opens the door to the good news.

What's the good news?

Jesus Himself lived out the Golden Rule, literally putting Himself in our shoes. He became incarnate and lived His life as a human, perfectly keeping all of God's commands. Then He died on a cross to bring forgiveness and healing to all of us who couldn't do it for ourselves.

And now?

Jesus is gradually restoring His kingdom rule, through His people, and He wants Queen Bee to be part of His kingdom.

"God's will and purpose is in the process of being realized on earth, [and] it's taking place through humans," says Mackie. "Jesus proclaimed that He was the human who was bringing in a new era of God's kingdom, and He invited His followers to see themselves as participating in the arrival of God's will and reign."

Do we live out the Golden Rule perfectly? No, but the door to the knowledge of God has been opened to us. We know the correct path to follow, so we can begin to draw close to Him and put His way into practice.

And Jesus hasn't left us alone, just "trying our best" to love others like He does. We actually aren't capable of living this way by our own effort. We need a divine helper, and we have one! The Holy Spirit comes alongside us as an advocate, transforming and empowering us through His abiding presence.

Jesus urges us to get to know Him better, and to ask for His help (over and over again as we walk with Him) in living like He did. And He promises to give us that help.

Queen Bee will have to give up some of the power she's cultivated as a VIP in this earthly realm. But she will be trading it in for friendship with an ALL-POWERFUL God. Jesus Himself will stay with her, moment by moment, for all eternity.

Who needs to be a queen when the King of the Universe is in your corner?

Applying It

1. In your personal circumstances, where have you seen the difference between God's value system and the world's?
2. What bad news about yourself might you have to accept before you can move forward and enjoy His good news?
3. When you try and fail to live out the Golden Rule, what do you do? How might you encourage someone else in this situation?
4. Ask your child about Queen Bee at VBS today.
 - Mrs. Featherbottom told Queen Bee about the Golden Rule. What is that? ["In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."]
 - How did Queen Bee begin to follow the Golden Rule? [She knew that Blink would want her to be his friend, so she became his friend.]
5. For further discovery about living according to God's value system, read *A Praying Life: Connecting with God in a Distracting World* by Paul E. Miller.

VBS (What's the B For?)

Student Guide



Student Guide DAY 1: B is for Bible

VBS stands for **V**acation **B**ible **S**chool. But at this particular VBS, there will be some funny misunderstandings. Some attendees will be misinformed about what the B stands for.

Is it Vacation BIRD School? Vacation BEAR School? Vacation BEAGLE School? Vacation BEE School?

No! Once the confusion is cleared up, the students will settle in to learn some important life lessons from the BIBLE.

Why Study the Bible?

The kids who come to **VBS (What's the B For?)** are here because their parents dropped them off. It's probably one summer activity among many—yet another camp that fills their time while school is out.

You, too, have probably been introduced to Bible study as one activity among many—one that's unrelated to your math homework, your friendship dramas, and your part-time job.

The characters depicted in the drama at **VBS (What's the B For?)** are "students" who are going to find out that actually, the Bible is ABOUT the rest of their lives, outside of church. It shows them how to interpret and react to their life circumstances—including the challenges they face.

What life challenges are YOU facing? Friendship issues? Money issues? School issues? Love life issues? Do you ever find yourself getting stressed out? Unsure of what to do? Angry, sad, guilty, disappointed?

List the top 3 issues you're grappling with right now.
Be specific.

The theologian C.S. Lewis suggests that many of our problems are exacerbated by the fact that we're not living the way we're meant to. Why not? Because we're not seeing the world the way it actually is.

"Christianity claims to give an account of facts, to tell you what the real universe is like," Lewis wrote in his essay collection, The Christian in the Real World. If you believe these ARE the facts, it naturally follows that the Bible's view on how to lead a good life is the correct one.

And NOT knowing these facts can lead to NOT living the way you're meant to. "Knowledge of the facts must make a difference to one's actions," he explained.

There are a lot of competing notions about how to conduct oneself in this life. There's even a lot of debate over what it means to be "good." This study approaches the Bible with the belief that it teaches us how to live in the world as it actually, factually is.

What Are the Actual Facts?

The Bible says that our ever-present, abounding-in-love God is intimately involved in the circumstances of our lives. He's given us His valuable teachings to follow. And for those who believe, His spirit is with us—every moment of the day and night—to help us put His ways into practice.

Do you have a hard time believing that God is involved in the circumstances of your life today? If so, why do you think that is?



Why The Facts Are So Hard to Believe

There are many challenges to believing that God is with us, ready and willing to enter into our daily circumstances and interact with us. A really big one? God is silent and invisible.

A theoretical example: Your soccer coach is very much here and in your face—maybe unfairly benching you or discouraging you in some way. Meanwhile, God is...silent and invisible. How is this vague presence you've been TOLD about supposed to comfort/guide/instruct you, when the coach is right here, maybe even yelling in your face?

This is why Christian faith is so hard, and why so many people give it up. But the Bible explains that this isn't how things were meant to be.

We were MEANT to be in an ongoing, face-to-face relationship with God. But human rebellion (wanting to do things our own way) broke the connection. This happened many, many generations ago. By the time you were born, you were already steeped in an innate tendency to sin. And you came into a world that's been devastated by sin's consequences.

When Jesus died on the cross, he restored our relationship with the Father. For those who believe, we will one day be in His physical presence again. (An indescribable gift based on a profound sacrifice!)

Until that day, while we're still here on earth, God IS with us. But only through His spirit. Which is...yep, silent and invisible.

So here we are:

- Your mean coach is very real to you, while your loving Creator seems distant and silent.
- You're under pressure to get good grades, while your loving Creator seems distant and silent.
- You're dealing with the insanity of an ongoing popularity contest at school, while your loving Creator seems distant and silent.

The good news:

While Jesus was on earth, He showed us how to operate in this world, even with a faulty God connection.

The slightly-less-good news:

This does take some work on our part.

What We Have To Do

We don't have to work to gain salvation—Jesus did that for us. The work WE do is learning how Jesus behaved in the world and intentionally emulating Him, so that we can become more like Him.

Here are the main things Jesus did:

- He learned about God the Father and His ways.
- He accepted that God the Father absolutely **ADORED** Him.
- He constantly asked the Father to help Him.
- And then he lived out God's ways, **TRUSTING COMPLETELY** that the Father would guide and help him (even though the Father was mostly silent and invisible).

Jesus lived with constant struggles and stresses. For months, powerful people would sling insults in His face, while suffering/sick people continually asked Him for help. As He faced all this, His father was mostly silent and invisible. But Jesus was joyful.

The difference between Jesus' way of living and ours? He was 100% focused on those four bullet points above. As a result, he just **KNEW** that He had the God of the Universe in His corner, at every moment. And He simply focused on doing what the Father wanted.

How would it change the way you approach your life if you just KNEW that you had the God of the Universe in your corner, at every moment?

Biblical Lessons at VBS (What's the B For?)

Jesus knows each of us intimately and understands our personal struggles. At VBS this week, four "students" will each experience a particular struggle.

- **Wanting, wanting, wanting...THINGS**
Bougine Bird struggles with the lure of materialism. She LOVES her candy jewelry and wants more...which will lead to disaster.
- **Struggling with anxious thoughts**
Blink the Bear struggles with anxiety. He's worried that his needs won't be taken care of this week.
- **Being disappointed when things don't go your way**
Bailey the Beagle struggles with an over-the-top passion for baseball. NOT winning his big game will lead to total despair.
- **Jostling for social position**
Queen Bee struggles with the pride of position. She gets all her worth from being, well...the "queen bee" among her friends. But it's a precarious position.

Which of those four topics is one you can relate to?

The Bible addresses all of these issues. What's the first step in dealing with them correctly? Take some time to learn what Jesus has to say about them.

Jesus has wise advice for each of these students, all of which comes from The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7). Each day at VBS, we'll take on a different issue, and Jesus will weigh in with His teaching. The passages we'll study are: Matthew 7: 13-14, Matthew 6:19-21, Matthew 6:25-34, Matthew 7:24-27, and Matthew 7:12.

Jesus' approach to solving each student's issue can very broadly be described as "seek first God's kingdom." When we switch our focus to drawing close to Jesus, we begin to lean on Him daily to enable us to live His way. And this makes us better equipped to deal with the circumstances life throws at us.

As the children learn the basics, we can go a little deeper with the study materials provided each day. Here, you'll get some facts about how to live your life the way it's MEANT to be lived. Then, it's up to you to decide what to do with them!

Student Guide Day 2: Bougine Bird

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 6:19-21

Meet Bougine—a posh flamingo who really values the possessions, experiences, and comforts that come with wealth. After winning the Miss Flamingo Pageant, she flaunts the giant candy ring she received as a reward. She won't let anyone touch, taste, come near, or even *smell* them.

Jesus has a gentle, loving warning for Bougine.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal."

We All Want Something

Of course, it's human nature to want things. And Jesus doesn't say we *shouldn't*. As Tim Mackie from The Bible Project puts it, "The language of reward is a prominent theme in Jesus' teaching. And He doesn't see it as bad to live your life now in hope for some future reward or honor."

But Jesus points out that it's not a smart plan to want something that won't last.

In the VBS skit, Bougine will learn this lesson when someone steals her prized candy jewelry. She will be devastated.

This is an example that children can relate to, but it's really a placeholder for any of the material things in our lives that we value.

What's your version of candy jewelry? Is it one of the following, or something else?

☐ Smartphone and/or other tech gadgets

- ☐ Trendy clothes
- ☐ Cool sneakers
- ☐ Posh digs
- ☐ Exciting vacation
- ☐ Pricey coffee runs
- ☐ Something else: _____

How do you feel when you don't get the thing you want? Or if you have it but lose it?

Name something you wanted, but the joy it gave you turned out to be fleeting.

God's Idea of Rewards

Material things aren't evil. But when it comes to what we "store up," Jesus suggests that we aim for a different treasure.

This OTHER treasure—the kind that "thieves, moths and vermin" can't touch—is exponentially better than the things we want. And He doesn't want us to miss out on THAT.

What treasure is that?

Most people assume He means the indescribably amazing things that Christians will experience after they die. He DID tell the crucified thief on his right: "Today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43)

But there's good reason to think that when Jesus says "treasure in heaven," he's ALSO referring to a reward here and now.

Over and over, Jesus tells people that there's a way of BEING in the world—this world—that's different from the way most people are experiencing it. He's inviting people to bring their lives into proper alignment with ACTUAL reality.

And what reality is that?

"It is nothing less than God himself and the wonderful society of his kingdom even now interwoven in my life," writes Dallas Willard in The Divine Conspiracy.

Here's how Bougine (and frankly, a lot of other people) approaches life:

I want this, that, and the other thing. I'll do what I need to do to get them. And when I do, I'm happy! Until I want the next thing...

Here's how Bougine COULD approach life:

I walk through my days WITH God, the Creator of All Things. His personal, loving attention is on me and on every detail of my life NOW. I have a constant, ongoing life connection with Him, and this leads me to want what He wants. Amazingly, I always, always have what I need!

Let's play a game of "Would You Rather."


Would you rather have...

- An unlimited Amazon gift card that allows you to buy anything you want, whenever you want it?

OR

- A personal, constant, ongoing life connection with the God of the Universe?

Be honest! (No one will see your answer but you.)



It's not an easy choice! An unlimited Amazon gift card could get you practically anything your heart desires. Whereas...a connection with God sounds like a vague concept that may or may not really benefit you in a concrete way.

The fact is, we don't HAVE to make an all-or-nothing choice. God doesn't necessarily ask us to give up material things. He just wants us to make our connection to Him our first priority.

An Even GREATER Reward

See, there's actually a larger story unfolding around us—one that's a lot more profound than our quest to obtain stuff.

It will come as no surprise to you that our lives on earth are not what they were meant to be. Pain, suffering, disease, wealth disparities, conflict, natural disasters, and death—they are all part of the deal. No doubt, you have your own personal trouble you're dealing with.

But the Bible says that God is actively working to set things right. He's bringing his rule and reign to earth as it is in heaven, and He's inviting us to be part of it. He wants to do this THROUGH you and me.

Of course, we won't be much use to God if we're busy being enthralled by EARTHLY treasure. How do we change what our heart longs for? Honestly, we can't. Not without divine intervention.

WANTING heavenly treasure (and NOT wanting material comfort and security) is impossible for us to achieve on our own. This kind of heart transformation is divine work. Meaning: God's got to do it. The good news is that He will! We do play a part, though.

Our end of the deal is twofold: (1) We spend time being with Jesus, and (2) We intentionally start putting Jesus' loving, God-trusting ways into practice—asking Him for help as we follow Him.

Then comes God's part: He will gradually transform our thinking and all that we value and consider important. It may sound impossible, but here's another thing the Bible says: "All things are possible with God" (Matthew 19:26).

Let's consider Bougine's experience. At VBS, she gets into a conflict with Bailey and Blink, because they get too close to her candy jewelry. Her precious physical possession is the thing that drives her.

The thing that drove Jesus? Relationships with others. That's how He's fixing the world.

Now, imagine if Bougine knows this about Jesus, because she's been spending time drawing close to Him. More specifically:

- She's been learning how Jesus feels about HER. (He flat out adores her, is with her every moment, and longs to lead her in a joyful life.)
- She's also been filling her mind with the way that Jesus sees the world. Because "relationships with others" is something that drives Jesus, this starts to become Bougine's first priority, too. That kind of thing actually happens when the Holy Spirit begins to work in a person.

If this happened, she'd probably still desire the candy jewelry. But she'd see the jewelry as less important than showing kindness to Blink and Bailey. She might even see the jewelry as a tool to nurture those relationships, rather than harm them.

- She might stop to consider how flaunting her jewelry makes her friends feel.
- She might let her friends have a turn wearing it.
- She might even give it to her friends, if they were in need.

What Bougine Needs

THIS is the answer to Bougine's despair: She needs to switch her focus to a much more valuable treasure.

"What is most valuable for a human being...is to be a part of this marvelous reality of God's kingdom now," says Dallas Willard.

That's Bougine's actual reality. And it's MARVELOUS. She just needs to start living it.

Student Guide Day 3: Bailey the Beagle

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 7:24-27

Meet Bailey, the enthusiastic sports fanatic whose baseball team is playing in the championship game THIS WEEK! Bailey is pumped and on a mission to win the big trophy, talking about it incessantly for two days straight. Then, on the third day of VBS, Bailey slow-walks in, head hanging low. The team lost. Devastation!

Bailey is a passionate bundle of energy. But channeling ALL of his passion into winning at baseball turned out to be a poor choice—like building a house on sand.

Here's Jesus' message for Bailey:

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise person who built a house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish person who built a house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

The Perils of Passion

Some children can feel so passionate about a game or sport that if/when they lose, the loss feels crushing. But Bailey's baseball dreams are also a stand-in for ANY all-consuming passion that we think is worth all our time and effort—but doesn't prove a solid investment in the end.

What exciting goal are you working toward?

- ☐ Success in sports
- ☐ Success in the arts (music, drama, art, etc.)
- ☐ Academic success
- ☐ Acing the SATs

- ☐ Saving up enough money to buy something you really want
- ☐ Befriending a certain person/people
- ☐ Winning a scholarship to college
- ☐ Bringing some societal change through social activism
- ☐ Other: _____

We all have good and worthy objectives that we strive toward. But we run into problems when we build our whole lives and identities on them. How do you know if you've done that? Think about how you would feel if you don't get the thing you're working toward. Does your heart drop in your chest at the mere thought? You may be building your house on sand.

Two Missions

Bailey was shattered when his mission—winning the championship trophy—wasn't accomplished. But what if winning in baseball wasn't his primary mission?

In his book When the Game is Over, It All Goes Back in the Box, John Ortberg points out that in a sense, we always have two missions. A PRIMARY mission and a SHADOW mission.

In Bailey's case, winning at baseball is actually his SHADOW mission. Why? Because there's something bigger going on than just baseball.

As you've no doubt noticed, things aren't exactly ideal here on earth. You can see it all over the place, even in Bailey's favorite sport. Yes, baseball is inspiring, uplifting and fun. But also...pitchers get injured and angry, players fumble the ball and say cruel things, opposing teams win and rub it in the losers' faces. Maybe they even cheat. In baseball, as in life, problems abound.

The good news is that God hasn't abandoned humans to deal with our problems on our own. In fact, He USES them to grow us and develop our character to be more like His son. There is a PRIMARY mission in progress—Jesus' mission to restore the world by restoring you and me.

Joining Jesus' Mission

Jesus invites us to join His mission.

But first, players like Bailey need to recognize how life in God's world works. If Bailey's whole heart and soul is set on winning the game, he's building his identity on unstable ground. Eventually, one of two things will happen. He will either be crushed by defeat, or he'll have a hand in causing someone else's crushing defeat.

Bailey's been focusing on his shadow mission of winning at baseball. But what if his PRIMARY mission was to become the person God created him to be? And to be used by God in HIS mission to set things right in the world?

Here's something to know about God: He will use your passion and ambition (and especially the struggles that come with it) to grow you into a fantastic person. And as He does so, He will use you—with all of your unique gifts and qualities—in His work restoring the world to the place He intended it to be.

Mission Possible

Imagine what it would look like if Bailey readjusted his missions.

- Bailey will practice and train hard to win the game, because he'll NEVER stop wanting to win.
- Bailey will ALSO spend time getting to know God's loving ways. And he will ask God to show him opportunities to join Him in fixing this broken world—the main mission.

See, God is right there on the baseball field, too—and He takes care of players dealing with baseball's challenges. He most often does this work through His children. If Bailey has this main mission in front of mind, he'll be ready when God sends him an opportunity to care for others as Jesus would.

How does this happen? As Bailey focuses on Jesus, Jesus Himself will inspire Bailey's thoughts and actions towards others. Yep, Bailey's primary mission has a SUPERNATURAL component.

With this PRIMARY mission in mind, Bailey may be disappointed by the negative aspects of the game, but he's not crushed. Losing a game is actually something he can use in his main mission. Some examples:

- Bailey can take a lesson from the experience of losing: "Now that I know what it feels like, I have a chance to make the world better. The next time I win and others don't, I will show empathy to those struggling with loss."
- Rather than being ruffled by bad calls from the ump, or an opposing team member who cheated, Bailey will remember to ask himself, "What's the PRIMARY mission?" The answer is to love God and others the best he can, and to let God handle those who struggle to do the right thing.

What would it look like if YOU had this primary mission in mind (loving God and others as best you can) while continuing with your other, shadow mission?



With a focus on this PRIMARY mission, you know that you don't have the weight of winning (either mission) on your shoulders. Here's why:

- You'll want to succeed in the SHADOW mission, but you won't be overly stressed about it. You'll know it's not the most important mission.
- You'll want to succeed in the PRIMARY mission, but you'll know that God is in charge of that one. In fact, you'll know that sometimes you WILL fall short and forget to carry out your primary mission. And that's OK, because God never, ever, ever stops loving you.

This is what it means to build our house on rock and not sand. The rock is *God* himself, who is always ready to strengthen us, guide us, comfort us, and forgive us when we go astray.

What's the solution to Bailey's devastation? Switch missions.

Student Guide Day 4: Blink the Bear

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 6:25-34

Meet Blink, an adorable, anxiety-ridden bear who isn't sure about being dropped off here at VBS. What if he gets hungry? Or thirsty? What if he spills something on his shirt? What if the air conditioner breaks, and it gets really, really hot in here? He's covered in fur, you know!

When you're a little kid who lacks life experience, new and scary situations can pop up all the time. Since children don't have much control over their lives, they often try to control what small things they can. Blink is constantly second-guessing the adults who ARE in control—which means he walks around with an anxious, unsettled spirit.

Jesus has some words of comfort for Blink:

"Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

A Seemingly Impossible Command

Don't worry? For many of us, this may be one of the toughest commands in the Bible.

Can you relate to any of the following?

- Being stressed about an upcoming test, because you already did poorly on previous tests in this class.
- Being anxious about a friend or relationship struggle.
- Worrying about an audition or try-out because you didn't make the team/squad/troop the last time you tried.

What's something you're stressed about right now?

Obviously, Jesus knows all about the things that cause us stress. ("Each day has enough trouble of its own.") And still He tells us not to worry.

NOT doing something is hard, but elsewhere in Scripture, God tells us what to do
INSTEAD.

"Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand...and cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

In other words, bring God into it. Tell Him about it. Ask for help.

This isn't easy, because anxious thoughts are powerful and can be all-consuming. And talking to God about the Stressful Thing is most likely NOT going to miraculously calm your racing heart. But here's what it will do: It will get you into the habit of going to God with your needs.

How many times a day do you ask God for help? _____

God actually wants you to ask for His help ALL the time. There aren't many positive sides to stressful situations, but this is one: They get you in the habit of asking God for help. It's one of the most important habits you can develop.

Now, as for the Stressful Thing itself? An ongoing life connection with God can help with that.

Let's take this example: You're worried about an upcoming audition or sports try-out. Your fears are legitimate, because there are only a certain number of spots.

But you also know that your all-powerful Father who ADORES you is working for your good. You can't see the whole picture, so you don't know what form that good will come in. All you know is that you can trust Him. Whatever happens will ultimately come out for your good.

As you go into the situation, here's what you know:

- You may get the role/position/spot you want.
- You may not get it.

Here's what you ALSO know:

God is working out His perfect plan for you. Of course, you will do your best. But there's no need to stress about it, because you can trust Him with either outcome.

What if you DON'T get what you want?

- God might be training you in the process of accepting disappointment and coming through it as a stronger person—a skill you will definitely need in life.
- God might have another opportunity for you that you can't see right now.
- God might know something you don't know about the team/squad/troop, and He is protecting you in some way.

Consider the Stressful Thing you are currently dealing with. How might it be slightly less terrifying, knowing that you can't see the whole picture, but God can, and whatever happens will ultimately come out for your good?)



The Root of Anxiety

But back to Blink...

There's also another reason why Blink is anxious.

See, Blink hasn't figured out his purpose yet. He hasn't figured out the way he's meant to BE in the world. At VBS, he wants to fit in, and he's really hoping that Queen Bee will deign to be his friend.

Here's what Jesus knows: What Blink THINKS he needs isn't actually what Blink needs. Blink is anxious and worried about obtaining something that won't bring him true satisfaction. Blink needs to figure out his true purpose.

What's Blink's true purpose? What's yours?

Here it is: To know God and to make Him known through the way you live your life.

Here's how the author and Bible teacher Anne Graham Lotz describes it in her Bible study, Jesus in Me:

"If you're a teacher, your purpose is to show others what Jesus would be like if He were a teacher. If you're a doctor, your purpose is to show people what Jesus would be like if He was a doctor...If you're an attorney, a realtor, a parent or grandparent, your purpose is to bring God glory by allowing other people to see what Jesus would be like in that situation...Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in steadfast resolution to know God and to make Him known wherever you are and in whatever you're doing."

What's YOUR purpose?

Blink Can Relax!

What's Blink's purpose? To show others what Jesus would be like if He were an adorable bear who just got dropped off at VBS. How does Blink fulfill this purpose? He starts by drawing near to Jesus.

Drawing near to Jesus means spending time learning about Him and looking to Him for guidance. The more Blink does this, the more he'll begin to view his circumstances from Jesus' perspective. For example, if Jesus was Blink, would He waste time trying to get Queen Bee to like him? Nope, he'd be focused on His Father in heaven, and all the ways he could help in His work here at VBS.

Jesus would "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness." That's what Jesus did when He was on earth, and He didn't do this alone. In everything He did, He had a minute-by-minute dependence on His Father. Jesus wasn't anxious because:

- He was laser-focused on knowing and loving His Father and making Him known.
- He depended on the Father to guide Him in this mission.
- He had zero doubt that the Father was with Him every second—listening, helping, comforting, leading, and LOVING Him.

Imagine if that's how you approached your life. In the midst of friend drama, dating issues, money struggles, and grade anxiety, imagine if you made an effort to focus on God first and foremost—and on living your life like Jesus would if he was in your shoes.

Keep in mind, this isn't about just TRYING to be like Jesus. When you focus on Him, you make yourself available to His heart-transforming power. God Himself will guide your thoughts and actions.

Also, you can be sure that Jesus knows what you're going through. He dealt with all kinds of problems:

- Rejection by others
- Squabbling among His friends
- High pressure situations
- Lack of a home

- Everything that the Satanic forces of evil threw at him!

So... you can definitely ask for His help with every plot twist life throws at YOU. You can even ask Him to help you to believe that He is with you—silent and invisible as He may be. Because...He IS with you!

Sometimes He guides you through the words of Scripture. Sometimes He speaks to you through the kind actions of another person. Sometimes He gives you a feeling of peace. The more often you focus on Him, the more likely you'll begin to notice His presence.

Consider the day or two ahead of you. What are you facing? Write down something that makes you feel stressed, and then jot down some ideas on how you might focus Jesus before, during, and after the Stressful Thing.



Student Guide Day 5: Queen Bee

Sermon on the Mount teaching: Matthew 7:12

Meet Queen Bee, the popular mean girl who reigns supreme over her judgmental clique of wannabes. She has an eye roll and a snarky remark for anyone she doesn't consider worthy of her time. Queen Bee has power, and she relishes it. Her exalted social status is all she needs. Or so she thinks.

The "queen bee" is a popular movie and TV trope, but she's also a stand-in for anyone who's "made it" playing by the world's rules.

Jesus loves Queen Bee with an unshakeable love. He's designed her in His own image for a purpose, and He pursues her with wise words about how she OUGHT to be operating—according to her true design.

Here's Jesus' message for Queen Bee:

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

The Heart of Jesus' Teaching

This is the Golden Rule, a mainstay principle since ancient times in the field of ethics. The idea is simple: You put yourself in someone else's shoes and ask, "What would I want if I was him or her?" Then you treat them accordingly.

In his book, Love Walked Among Us, author Paul E. Miller describes it this way: "Using our natural tendency toward self-preoccupation, Jesus gently turns self-awareness on its head...The Golden Rule is a simple prescription for 'unselfing.'"

Jesus ends His command with "for this sums up the Law and Prophets."

In other words, it's a one-sentence summary of the entire message of Scripture. It's God's main idea, the point of the story. It's how we're supposed to be living our lives.

A Broken Rule

But putting others first is NOT the model most people are currently following.

Walk into any gathering place—a school cafeteria, for example—and you will find people sorted into a status-based hierarchy. Those on top tend to be the most attractive, the most powerful, the most socially successful, etc. Generally, they're NOT the ones serving others.

Of course, there is plenty of kindness and generosity in this world. But it exists alongside a value system that goes against God's ideal.

In your personal circumstances, where have you seen God's Golden-Rule-based value system acted out—and where have you seen the world's?



Queen Bee has achieved great success. It's fitting that she's a queen, because the kingdom of this world is working well for her in many ways. She doesn't "do for" others; others serve her.

But at a certain point during VBS week, she will realize that she is not living the way that she was designed to live. She was designed for the Golden Rule. We all were. This is God's ideal, and we should never stop striving for it.

Here's the sad problem: The Golden Rule doesn't come naturally to her—or any of us.

Consider Jesus' illustration of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), who treats a hurt stranger as HE would want to be treated. It's a costly gesture. He gives away his time, his money, and his comfort to help someone he doesn't know.

What's your visceral reaction to the story of the Good Samaritan?

- ☐ That's what I would have done. I'd be the Good Samaritan!
- ☐ I know the Samaritan was great, but I'm not sure I would be that selfless. I'd like to think I would be!
- ☐ That was some over-the-top kindness—an impossible example to follow.

Or, do you hear the story of the Good Samaritan and imagine yourself as the hurt stranger? If so, this lesson probably goes down a little easier for you than it does for someone like Queen Bee.

Jesus says that those who are being oppressed by the world's value system (the poor in spirit, the meek, etc.) are blessed because they can more easily see the need to live God's way.

Conversely, the Golden Rule can be EXTRA hard for someone like Queen Bee—whose exalted social status comes with some pretty great earthly rewards. Queen Bee hasn't been oppressed by the world.

But she hasn't been free to serve her main purpose, either. She hasn't gotten to experience the joy of being aligned with God, being used by Him as He brings His kingdom rule to the world.

Jesus' message here is for anyone who puts a lot of stock in achieving Queen Bee-dom. Whether you're already a Queen Bee, or keenly trying to become one, you're NOT moving in the direction God wants to point you in. And you're missing out.

The Good News

But all is not lost!

"Jesus told the bad news so that people could hear the good," writes Miller. "For instance, when the tax collector [the biblical author Matthew] saw the bad news about himself, he was able to stop pretending, and God forgave him. Our helplessness is the door to the knowledge of God."

At VBS, Queen Bee gets some bad news: Despite her royal name, she doesn't rule the world. But this opens the door to the good news.

What bad news about yourself might you have to accept before you can move forward and enjoy His good news?



What IS the good news?

Jesus Himself lived out the Golden Rule, literally putting Himself in our shoes. He became incarnate and lived His life as a human, perfectly keeping all of God's commands. Then He died on a cross to bring forgiveness and healing to all of us who couldn't do it for ourselves.

And now?

Jesus is gradually restoring His kingdom rule, through His people. It's a kingdom where God is training His children to live by the Golden Rule.

"God's will and purpose is in the process of being realized on earth, [and] it's taking place through humans," says Tim Mackie of The Bible Project. "Jesus proclaimed that He was the human who was bringing in a new era of God's kingdom, and He invited His followers to see themselves as participating in the arrival of God's will and reign."

Do we live out the Golden Rule perfectly? No, but the door to the knowledge of God has been opened to us. We know the correct path to follow, so we can begin to draw close to Him and put His way into practice.

And Jesus hasn't left us alone, just "trying our best" to love others like He does. We actually aren't capable of this by our own effort. We need a divine helper, and we have one! The Holy Spirit comes alongside us as an advocate, transforming and empowering us through His abiding presence.

Jesus urges us to get to know Him better, and to ask for His help (over and over again as we walk with Him) in living like He did. And He promises to give us that help.

So, when you try and fail to live out the Golden Rule, what do you do? How might you encourage someone else in this situation?



Queen Bee will have to give up some of the power she's cultivated as a VIP in this earthly realm. But she will be trading it in for friendship with an ALL-POWERFUL God. Jesus Himself will stay with her, moment by moment, for all eternity.

Who needs to be a queen when the King of the Universe is in your corner?

VBS Prep Checklist

Here's a checklist of tasks to accomplish in the weeks leading up to VBS (What's the B For?). This curriculum nurtures children ages 4-10 during VBS week.

VBS (What's the B?) *also* provides content to engage tweens, teens, and adults during the five weeks prior to the kickoff. This checklist includes optional tasks to complete if you choose to do this more robust, church-wide program. Ignore these tasks if you're just doing the VBS week itself!

12 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Announce during the Sunday service AND at Youth Group that you have an exciting opportunity for tweens/teens to be actors/puppeteers in the VBS skits and puppet shows. Interested people can email you.
- ☐ Give the exact dates that actors must be available (plus weekly rehearsals).
- ☐ If you have a history of low participation in your youth group, ask the tweens/teens you know to spread the word among friends or on social media.
- ☐ Identify a volunteer to direct the skits and puppet shows. (This may be the Youth Group leader. It could also be a college-age teen, a parent of tweens/teens in the church, or a drama-loving church member.)
- ☐ Order VBS supplies from the lists provided in each station section of this guide.
- ☐ Order skit props, costumes, puppet supplies, etc.
- ☐ Order T-shirts.
- ☐ Use church bulletin and social media to publicize VBS and begin to register church kids.

10 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Cast the skit and puppeteer roles. Be canny about selecting people you believe will put their heart into it, learn their lines, have transportation, etc.
- ☐ Distribute the scripts and urge actors and puppeteers to begin learning their lines.
- ☐ Give the Youth Group Director the VBS Student Guide.
- ☐ Give the Adult Sunday School Director the VBS Parent Guide.
- ☐ Open VBS registration to all kids.

8 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ At Sunday service, announce an upcoming Adult Sunday School class that will tackle the issues being taught at VBS this year. The theme: “Materialism. Anxiety. Disordered Priorities. Pride. How Jesus addresses these four issues in the Sermon on the Mount.”
- ☐ Coordinate with the Youth Group Director. Ask, “Would you like to cover these themes during Youth Group in the five weeks preceding VBS?” Ask, “Can the youth group devote specific meetings to VBS skit/puppeteer prep? Which dates?”
- ☐ Schedule a table read for skit actors this week.
- ☐ Afterwards, email all actors and puppeteers: “Be reviewing your scripts!”

6 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Begin weekly, 30-minute skit practices (preferably during Youth Group meetings).
- ☐ Begin every-other-week puppeteer practices (preferably during Youth Group meetings).
- ☐ Work together with the Youth Group Director to schedule a VBS work day for puppet making. Or, schedule a church-wide VBS workday.
- ☐ Check to make sure you’ve received all your supplies. Reorder if necessary.

5 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Adult Sunday School studies Day 1 of Parent Guide (“Intro to VBS Themes”).
- ☐ Youth group devotes this week’s meeting to Day 1 of the Student Guide.
- ☐ Skit actors have their weekly, 30 min rehearsal (preferably during Youth Group).
- ☐ Create a volunteer signup sheet and send out your call for VBS volunteers.

4 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Adult Sunday School studies Day 2 of Parent Guide content (“Materialism”).
- ☐ Youth group devotes this week’s meeting to Day 2 of the Student Guide.
- ☐ Skit actors have their weekly, 30 min rehearsal (preferably during Youth Group).

3 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Adult Sunday School studies Day 3 of Parent Guide content (“Anxiety”).
- ☐ Youth group devotes this week’s meeting to Day 3 of the Student Guide.
- ☐ Skit actors have their weekly, 30 min rehearsal (preferably during Youth Group).
- ☐ Host a volunteer training. Send your volunteers the materials they need to prepare.
- ☐ Encourage the teen volunteers to read the Student Guide and adult volunteers to read the Parent Guide.

2 weeks prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Adult Sunday School studies Day 4 of Parent Guide content (“Disordered Priorities”).

- ☐ Youth group devotes this week's meeting to Day 4 of the Student Guide.
- ☐ Skit actors have their weekly, 30 min rehearsal (preferably during Youth Group).
- ☐ Host another VBS workday if needed for decorations, etc.
- ☐ Collect all the food needed for the Snack Station.
- ☐ Get the supplies ready for the VBS Prayer Station. Publicize the upcoming prayer station in the bulletin and on social media. Open it this week or next.

1 week prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Adult Sunday School studies Day 5 of Parent Guide content ("Pride").
- ☐ Youth group devotes this week's meeting to Day 5 of the Student Guide.
- ☐ Skit actors have their weekly, 30 min rehearsal (preferably during Youth Group).
- ☐ Make sure all the tech requirements (mics, etc.) are met.
- ☐ Triple check that you have all your decorations and props ready.
- ☐ Email parents of VBS attendees with all the details they need (pickup and drop off info, what to wear, etc.) Send parents a link with the Parent Guide. Also send them the songs and encourage them to play the songs in the car for their kids.
- ☐ Open the VBS Prayer Station.

Weekend prior to kickoff:

- ☐ Skit actors have dress rehearsal and run sound checks.
- ☐ Decorate the church.
- ☐ Email parents with all the details about VBS again.

Morning of:

- ☐ Gather volunteers 45 minutes before kickoff time for last-minute instructions and prayer.

Prior to VBS Kickoff: Prayer Station Activity

What's the single most important element when implementing VBS (What's the B For?)? The Holy Spirit's empowerment! He strengthens those carrying out His work and leads the way.

During the week or two heading into VBS, as you seek God's guidance and power, give church members a dedicated space and time to partner with Him in specific, guided prayers. This church-wide prayer opportunity will be at the forefront of the VBS's outreach effort.

Set up: Create a series of prayer stations within a large room, in several rooms, or along a path outside the church. At their leisure, people can move from station to station, receiving specific direction and prayer prompts. Make sure to have seating options or pillows/mats for those who choose to kneel.

Post a sign at the entrance of the VBS Prayer Stations area letting people know that this is a quiet place of prayer, and the five stations will take 15-30 minutes to complete. Offer several windows of time when the prayer stations will be available. Encourage participation!

At each station, fill a basket with slips of paper and post a sign that invites prayer participants to take a slip from the basket and follow the directions.

Prayer Station 1: Be Still and Know

The slip of paper will read:

At this station, enter a time of prayer by reflecting on God's love and power.

"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with singing." – Zephaniah 3:17

Spend 3 minutes using a breath prayer. (See below.) Be attentive to any thoughts or images that may come to mind as you enter into this time with God. Calmly and continually recapture stray thoughts and bring your mind back to Him (or bring Him in on those thoughts).

Inhale: You're here with me.

Exhale: Quiet me with your love.

Continue for as long as you need. When you're ready, move to the next station.

Prayer Station 2: Pray for the Community

Post a sign with a map of your community like this one:



The slip of paper will read:

At this station, choose an area on this local map. It might be a particular school, a school district, or a specific neighborhood. Ask that God's transformational power might sweep through this place. Pray this Scripture over the people there:

"May [God] give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe." – Ephesians 1:17-19 NIV

When you're ready, move to the next station.

Prayer Station 3: Bless the Children

At this station, each slip of paper in the basket contains the first name and the age of a child who will be attending VBS. (Don't include last names to protect privacy.) The slip of paper will read:

At this station, you'll pray for a child who is attending VBS. Here's the name and age of the child you have the privilege of praying for this week: _____.

Pray Jeremiah 24:7 for this child.

"I will give _____ a heart to know that I am the LORD." – Jeremiah 24:7 ESV

Continue to pray for the child as God prompts you. Next, pray Jeremiah 24:7 for that child's family.

When you're ready, move to the next station.

Optional: Place a basket with 5-inch ribbon strips in various colors. Provide Sharpie pens. Post a sign inviting prayer recipients to write the name of the child they're praying for on a ribbon and tie it to something at the station. It could be a plant, a tree, a wire strung along a wall, or a window blind. The ribbons demonstrate that our prayers are real, tangible, palpable. They don't just go into the ether! God hears and responds to every one.

Prayer Station 4: Bless the Volunteers

The slip of paper will read:

At this station, you'll pray for a volunteer who is serving at VBS. Here's the name of the volunteer you have the privilege of praying for this week: _____.

You may or may not know the burdens this volunteer is carrying and the needs of his/her heart. But you know that this person is carrying *something*, and Jesus knows this, too. Jesus encourages us to "seek first His kingdom," and He will take care of the rest.

Pray Matthew 6:33 (below) for _____, who is indeed "seeking God's kingdom" during VBS week. Ask God to bless this volunteer abundantly.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." Matthew 6:33 NIV

When you're ready, move to the next station.

Optional: Offer participants a basket of small, smooth rocks and allow them to write the volunteer's name on the rock with a Sharpie or paint pen. They can drop the rock into a clear vase or pitcher. Alternatively, you can repeat the ribbon activity here, with different-colored ribbons for the volunteers.

Prayer Station 5: VBS (What's the B For?) Themes

The slip of paper will read:

At this final station, choose one of the four issues that will be discussed during VBS (What's the B For?). Jesus addresses each one with his life-giving words in the Sermon on the Mount. Which one do you personally struggle with the most?

- Materialism (or Financial Burden)
- Anxiety
- Disordered Priorities (Putting Something Before God)
- Pride

Seek God's help and wisdom as you hand this issue to Him—and then turn your focus to "seeking first His kingdom." Read the following passage and reflect on what Jesus might be saying to you:

"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet *it did not fall*, because it had its foundation on the rock." – Matthew 7:24-25

Pray as you feel led. As you complete this time with God, remember to pay attention in the coming days and weeks. God often answers prayer in unexpected ways and on His own timetable—but never forget that He is with you always.

Note: Periodically check the baskets to make sure you continually have plenty of strips of paper available.