

VBS 2023 DIRECTORS OVERVIEW BASE CONFERENCE PLAN

Purpose Statement

This conference plan is designed to train and equip new and experienced VBS directors to conduct Lifeway's *Twists & Turns* VBS.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2023 Administrative Guide*
- *VBS 2023 Directors Kit*
- *VBS 2023 Preschool Starter Kit: Babies-Kindergarten*
- *VBS 2023 Kids Starter Kit: Grades 1-6*
- *VBS 2023 Multi-age Starter Kit*
- *VBS 2023 Supersized Backdrop*
- *VBS 2023 Tablecloths*
- *VBS 2023 Supersized Postcards*
- *VBS 2023 Writing Paper* — One per conferee for notes
- *VBS 2023 Visual Pack* — Hang the VBS Scripture poster on the focal wall. Use the other posters as classroom decoration.
- Item 1: "Handout" — Print 1 per conferee and place in each chair before conferees arrive.
- Item 2: "Game Pieces" — Print and cut apart along the dotted lines. Place under chairs the before conferees arrive.
- Item 3: "Tetris" — Cut out each Tetris and tape to the legs of five chairs ahead of time.
- Colored construction paper — Create a game path on the focal wall using alternating colors of construction paper.
- 7 cardboard blocks or oversized Legos — Write one of the following distinctives on each block: *Gospel-centered, Trustworthy Content, For All Ages, In-depth Bible Study, Flexible and Customizable, Equips Parents, and Custom Music.*
- Tape
- Permanent markers
- Pens or pencils

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing the focal wall. Cover the focal with a *VBS 2023 Supersized Backdrop*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2023 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum, visuals, and other tabletop decorations.

Teaching Steps

1. **Welcome and Introduction** (5 minutes)
 - Play the *VBS 2023 Music for Kids CD* as conferees enter.
 - Welcome conferees. Introduce yourself and briefly share your experience as a VBS Director.
 - Ask conferees to raise their hands if they've ever had something unexpected happen at your VBS.
 - Comment: "We all have! The recreation leader calls out sick. The 3rd grade teacher doesn't show up. You come down with the flu. The power goes out. There will always be unexpected *Twists & Turns* we'll have to face as Directors, but today we will look at how we can plan and prepare for the expected and the unexpected for a successful VBS this year."

2. VBS Game Pieces (2 minutes)

- Explain that having a successful VBS doesn't just happen. It takes a lot of prayer, preparation, patience, and organization. Say: "As Directors, we know what all must be done to make VBS a success and it can be overwhelming thinking about all the hard work and all the moving pieces that it's going to take. Just remember, take it one piece at a time and one step at a time. Whether you're a rookie Director or a seasoned veteran, a smaller VBS or a large VBS, the Administrative Guide is designed to help you know what needs to be done every step of the way and when it needs to be done."
- Lead conferees to look for game pieces under their chairs. Comment: "During our time together, I will ask for game pieces we will place on the game board."
- Place the first game piece (Know Your Purpose & Theme) on the construction paper game board.

3. Purpose and Theme (15 minutes)

- Say: "Before any plans for VBS are made, it's important to start with the 'Why.'"
- Mention that everyone in this room loves VBS. It's fun and exciting and it brings a level of energy to the church like nothing else. Comment: "While those are all good things, those are byproducts of VBS. But that's not our 'Why.'"
- Ask conferees: "What's your why for VBS?"
- Lead the group through the seven distinctives of Lifeway's VBS that underscore why we do VBS. Stack one block on top of the other as you talk about each distinctive. Refer to page 5 of the Administrative Guide for more details.
 - 7 Distinctives of Lifeway's VBS:
 1. Gospel-centered
 2. Trustworthy Content
 3. For All Ages
 4. In-depth Bible Study
 5. Flexible and Customizable
 6. Equips Parents
 7. Custom Music
- Lead the group to read Psalm 25:4 together from the Visual Pack poster.
- Guide conferees to check their chairs for Tetris game pieces. Invite those who find one to read their daily content and then place their piece on the focal wall in order.
- Point out that every day of VBS will focus on the life and ministry of Jesus. Through the daily content, kids will discover that trusting Jesus as Savior and following Him changes the game!

4. The Game Plan (20 minutes)

- Lead conferees again to look for the next game piece (Start Planning) under their chairs and to place it on the game board. Ask the conferee with the game piece to read the "step" out loud.
- Direct the group to look at their handouts for the following steps:
 - #1 VBS Planning Calendar — Share that this step can be found on pages 11-13 of the Administrative Guide.
 - Mention that the most important part of planning for VBS is prayer. No amount of planning, organization, experience, or leadership has an impact on VBS like that of a group of people committed to praying over VBS before it even begins.
 - Refer to the first box on page 12.

- Direct conferees to pages 54-56 of the Administrative Guide. Highlight the following:
 - National Day of Prayer is May 21, 2023 (p. 54)
 - Prayer Strategies Before, During, After VBS (p. 55):
 - Enlist a prayer team.
 - Texting prayer list.
 - Share VBS prayer requests with your church.
 - Prayer Calendar (p. 56) — Distribute paper and digital copies to your church.
 - Share with conferees that there may be people in their churches who cannot serve due to health concerns, work, or other responsibilities, but everyone can participate through prayer.
 - #2 Create a Budget — Direct conferees to pages 14-15 of the Administrative Guide.
 - Say: “Creating a budget can be daunting, but the Administrative Guide is a great resource for budgeting.”
 - Determine Your Budget (p. 14) — There are three categories for budgeting: Before, During, and After VBS.
 - Sample Budget Forms (p. 15)
 - #3 Choose Your Format — Direct conferees to page 16 of the Administrative Guide.
 - Highlight the following:
 - Age groups, space, budget, volunteers, and participants
 - Format varieties
 - Begin planning 6-9 months out
 - Ask questions such as, “What worked well last year?” and “What didn’t work as well last year?”
 - #4 Make a Schedule — Turn to pages 17-23 in the Administrative Guide.
 - Highlight the following:
 - Sample schedules for varying age groups. Ask volunteers to share their VBS schedule with the group.
 - 5-day/3-hour schedules vs. abbreviated schedules
 - Start planning 6-9 months out.
 - #5 Order Curriculum — Turn to pages 24-30 of the Administrative Guide.
 - Highlight the following:
 - VBS is available for anyone. Curriculum is available for preschool through adults.
 - Choose resources to best fit the needs of your VBS.
 - Start purchasing curriculum 4-6 months out.

5. Pick Your Team (10 minutes)

- Lead conferees to look for the next game piece (Enlist & Train). Invite the conferee with the correct game piece to place it on the game board.
- Say: “VBS cannot happen without leaders, but leaders are only as good as they are trained and equipped.”
- Turn to page 31 of the Administrative Guide. Highlight the following:
 - **Pray:** First and foremost, start with prayer. As mentioned earlier, some people may not be able to participate as a volunteer during VBS, but they can commit to praying.

- **Plan:** Start enlisting volunteers 4-6 months before. After determining the schedule, format, and rotations, figure out how many volunteers you'll need. Share the schedule, needs, and expectations with volunteers as you recruit.
- **Share:** Explain leader qualifications, expectations, and goals for VBS.
 - Provide job summaries (physical and digital copies) during enlistment.
- **Ask:** Ask potential volunteers individually. Think and pray about who in your church could successfully fill volunteer roles.
- **Train:** Equip and train volunteers for success. The Administrative Guide provides a training plan on pages 33-40 and PowerPoints on the CD-ROM.
 - Remind conferees that gospel conversation training is crucial as these conversations could happen at any time during the week. Equip all volunteers to be ready when the opportunity presents itself.
 - Encourage volunteers to attend any local associational training as well.
- **Appreciate:** Show support and appreciation to volunteers. Refer to the printable files on the CD-ROM/digital downloads for specific leader appreciation ideas.
 - Invite volunteers to share their own ideas for volunteer appreciation.

6. Promote and Publicize (10 minutes)

- Lead conferees to look for the next game piece (Promote & Publicize). Invite the person who has the game piece to read the next step aloud and place it on the game board.
- Turn to pages 41-44 in the Administrative Guide. Comment: "Like other parts of the planning process, promoting your VBS early and often is crucial. Many families start making summer plans at the beginning of the year. Getting the VBS dates out to your church and community early is a big win."
- Say: "On page 42 of the Administrative Guide, you'll notice that promotion is broken down into two parts; Church Promotion and Community Promotion.
 - Church Promotion — Briefly overview the 7 steps of church promotion.
 - Community Promotion — Briefly overview the 6 steps of community promotion.
- Invite volunteers to share personal examples of promotion success.
- Briefly overview the Promotion Calendar and Promotion Ideas on pages 43-44.

7. Registration (10 minutes)

- Ask conferees to look for the next game piece (Register Participants). Ask the person with the game piece to read the step aloud and place it on the game board.
- Turn to pages 45-48 of the Administrative Guide and overview the 4 steps of registration.
- Say: "The registration process can be one of the most stressful parts of VBS for Directors and parents. We need a lot of information but want to capture as much information as possible without it being a burden for parents. Over the next few minutes, we're going to look at 4 ways to make registration as smooth as possible."
 - **Enlist a team.** Say: "Teamwork makes the dream work and that certainly applies to registration." Suggest Directors enlist a group to oversee registration and plan to double or triple your registration team on the first day.
 - **Set a registration goal.** Set a goal to have 80% of your participants pre-registered before the first day of VBS. This will help minimize stress on Day 1.
 - **Think of portable options.** Clipboards, iPads, or computers on a rolling cart are great options.
 - **Review all registration information.** Details matter. Be sure that every participant has completed his/her registration information. Safety and security,

allergies, and pick-up at the end of the day are some of the most important details you don't want to miss! This also helps follow-up go smoother.

- Explain that there are two main pieces of VBS registration: Pre-registration and Registration. Define the two and offer the following tips and suggestions:
 - Pre-registration: Capturing information on each child/family before VBS
 - Determine the “must have” information that is needed for each participant/family.
 - Keep your church policies and procedures in mind.
 - If possible, have both a paper and digital pre-registration option such as KidEvent Pro (details on p. 47).
 - Registration at VBS: Capturing information on each child/family onsite when they arrive for VBS.
 - Put a strong registration team in place that is trained and equipped to handle a high volume of “walk-ups.”
 - Refer to the previous year’s VBS “walk-up” registrations as a ballpark idea of how many to prepare for.
 - Remember that for people who don’t attend your church, registration is likely going to be the first interaction they have with your church. Be sure to make a good first impression by having a solid plan and a well-equipped registration team.

8. The Game Isn't Over (10 minutes)

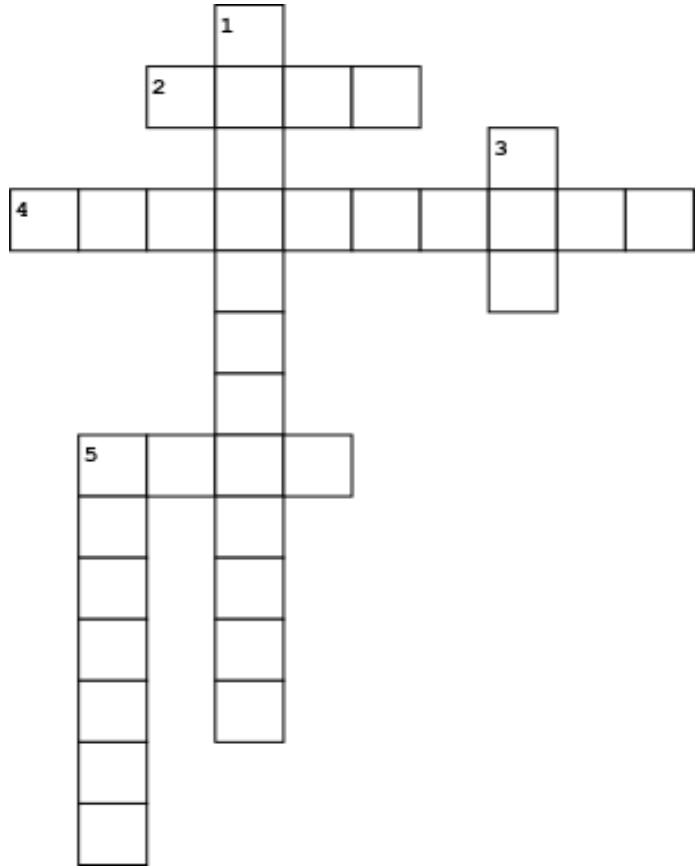
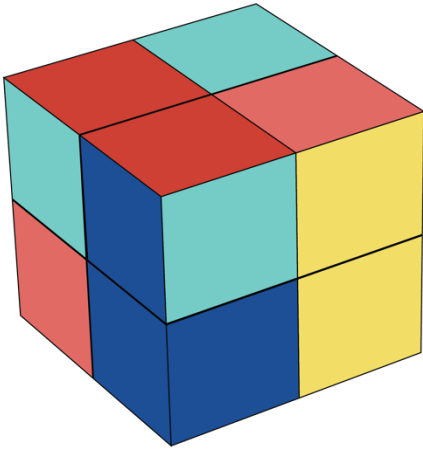
- Ask the conferees to look for the last game piece (Continue the Connection). Invite the conferee with the game piece to place it on the game board.
- Say: “As tired as we all are on the last day of VBS, all we feel like doing is taking a nap. But VBS doesn't end on the last day of VBS. As mentioned earlier, VBS builds a lot of momentum so having a plan in place for immediate follow-ups is crucial to continue the momentum.”
- Refer conferees to page 49 for best practices on continuing the connection. Walk through the following tips for follow up.
 - **Enlist a follow-up director.** This should be someone who has no other responsibilities during VBS other than building relationships. The follow-up director may even be unable to serve the week of VBS, but is available in the days and weeks after VBS.
 - **Embrace a relationship-building approach to follow up.** Follow up is about much more than a postcard ... it's about relationships. Say: “When you look at follow up through the lens of relationship instead of a task, it changes your entire perspective on follow up.”
 - **Train.** Training church staff and VBS volunteers to be intentional with parents during the week of VBS is a huge advantage for follow up.
 - **Bridge VBS with other ongoing programs for kids in your church.** Having church staff and key leaders involved from regular church programming provides familiarity when they come back to your church. A familiar face can be a big encouragement to parents and kids.
- Ask: “What follow-up strategies have worked well for you?” Allow volunteers to share from their experiences.
- State: “According to research, your retention rate is highest when you follow up within 48 hours. Follow up within 24 hours averages an 85% return rate while a 7-day follow up averages only a 15% return rate.” Impress on conferees the importance of acting quickly and putting their follow-plan into action as soon as VBS ends.

- Explain the “3 Touchpoints in 3 Days” strategy. Turn to page 51 and overview the following tips:
 - **Make it personal.** Phone calls, home visits with goody bags, and handwritten notes go a long way. Say: “It’s one thing to send a generic postcard, but when a handwritten note from the child’s teacher arrives in the mail addressed to the child, it’s a game changer!”
 - **Put them at ease.** Providing service times and drop-off and pick-up details like check-in information and room numbers can take away a lot of the stress new families feel when visiting a new church.
 - **Make it relational.** An invitation to come back is nice, but an invitation to come back from someone they know from VBS, school, or their neighborhood makes an invitation more appealing.
 - **Involve the church staff.** Share guest updates and contact information with staff for follow up.
 - **Plan to follow up again.** Have a plan in place to follow up again after a family visits your church for regular services.
- Say: “Churches do different types of VBS celebrations, from family nights, musical dramas, and more. There are many different strategies, but the most important thing is to provide an opportunity for the families of your church to connect with unchurched families.”
- Ask: “What kind of VBS Celebration do you do? Have you had positive results?”
- Highlight a few of the VBS Celebration ideas on page 53 of the Administrative Guide.

9. Closing (3 minutes)

- Thank conferees for coming. Mention that as VBS Directors, they will surely face twists and turns. But remind them that whenever they feel overloaded and stressed, they should go back to the “Why.”
- Lead the group to say the VBS motto again: “Jesus Changes Everything.” Mention that our prayer this year ought to be that kids would know and believe that motto to be true in their lives.
- Close in prayer, asking God to help conferees as they plan, prepare, enlist, and train. Ask God to bless them, their VBS, their churches, their communities, their leaders, and their participants. Pray that through all the details, budgets, decisions, volunteers, and participants God would receive all the glory.

VBS Directors Overview

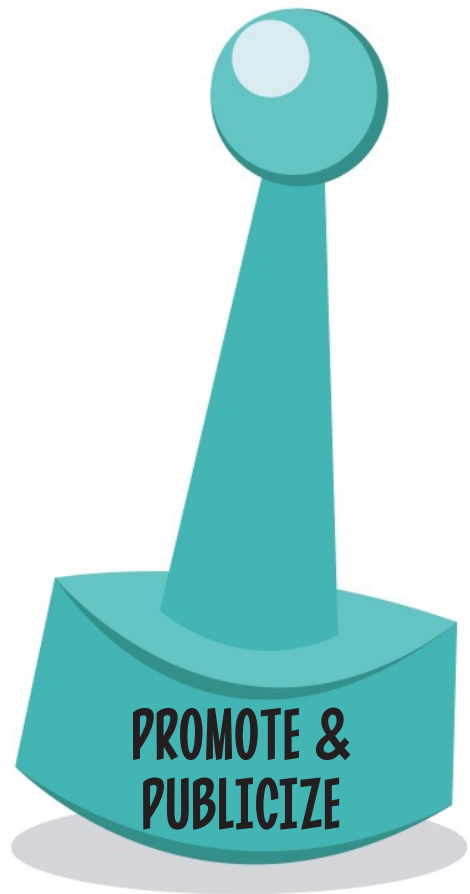
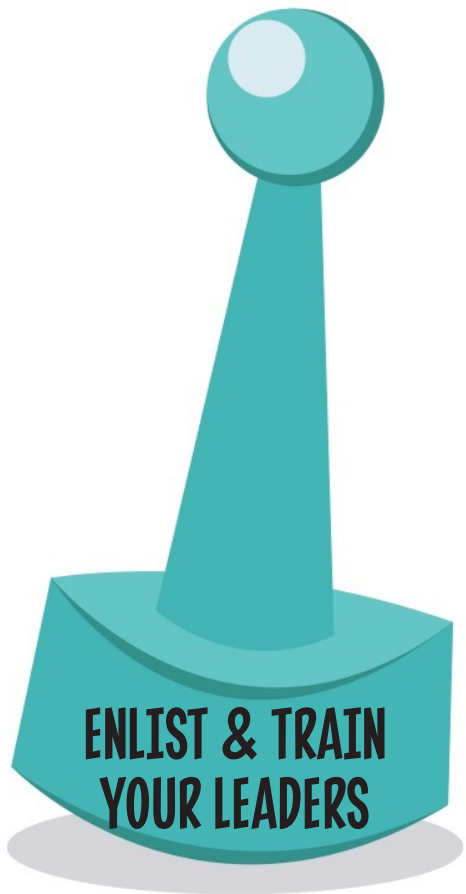
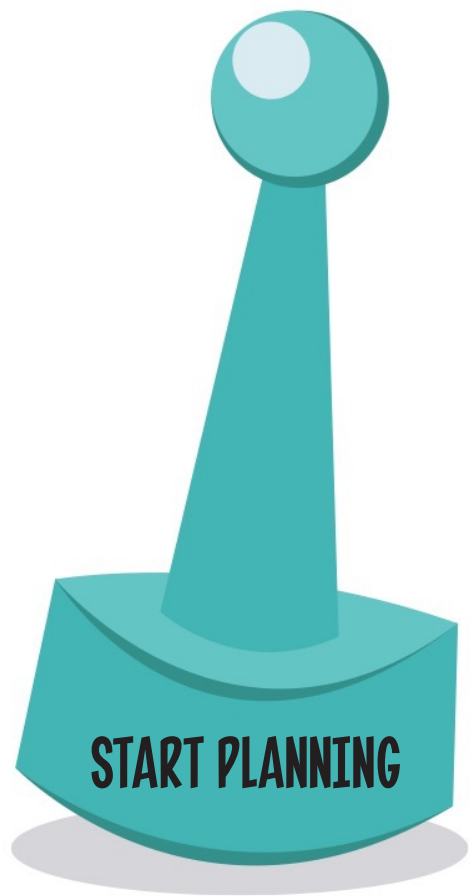
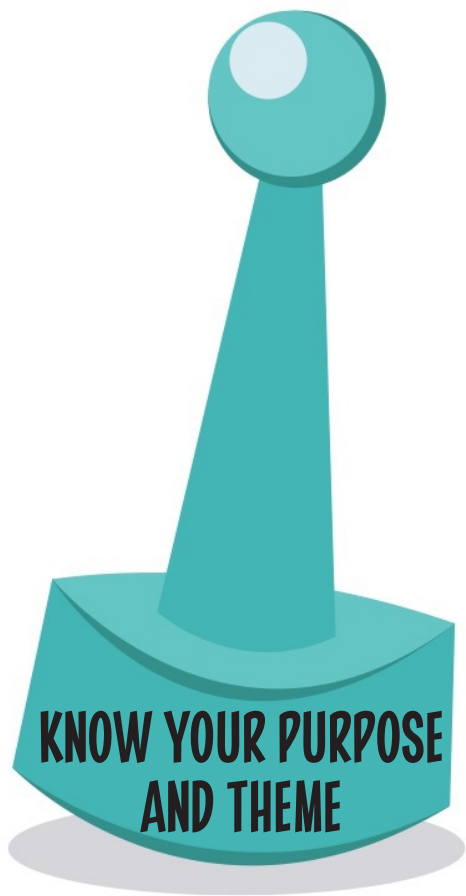


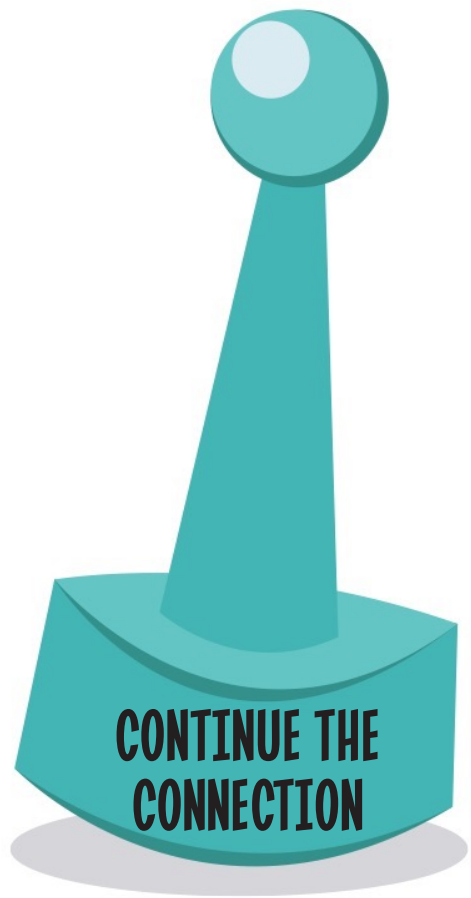
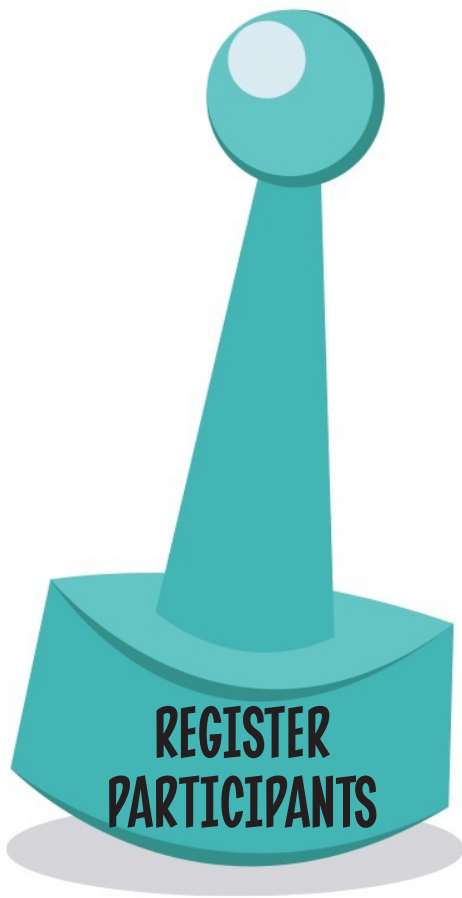
Across

- 2. Enlist
- 4. The Game isn't Over
- 5. Strategy

Down

- 1. Sign-ups
- 3. Purpose
- 5. Get the word out





Day 1: Jesus Is Holy	Jesus
Bible Story: Peter Followed (<i>Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-11</i>)	

Day 2: Jesus Is Trustworthy	
Bible Story: Peter Walked to Jesus on the Water (<i>Matthew 14:22-33</i>)	

Bible Story: Peter Spoke Boldly about Jesus (<i>Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-11</i>)	Day 4: Jesus Is Worth Following
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Day 3: Jesus Is Forgiving Bible Story: Peter Denied Jesus and Was Restored (<i>Luke 22:31-34,54-62; John 18:15-18; 21:1-19</i>)	
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Day 5: Jesus Is for Everyone Bible Story: Peter Told Cornelius about Jesus (<i>Acts 10</i>)	
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