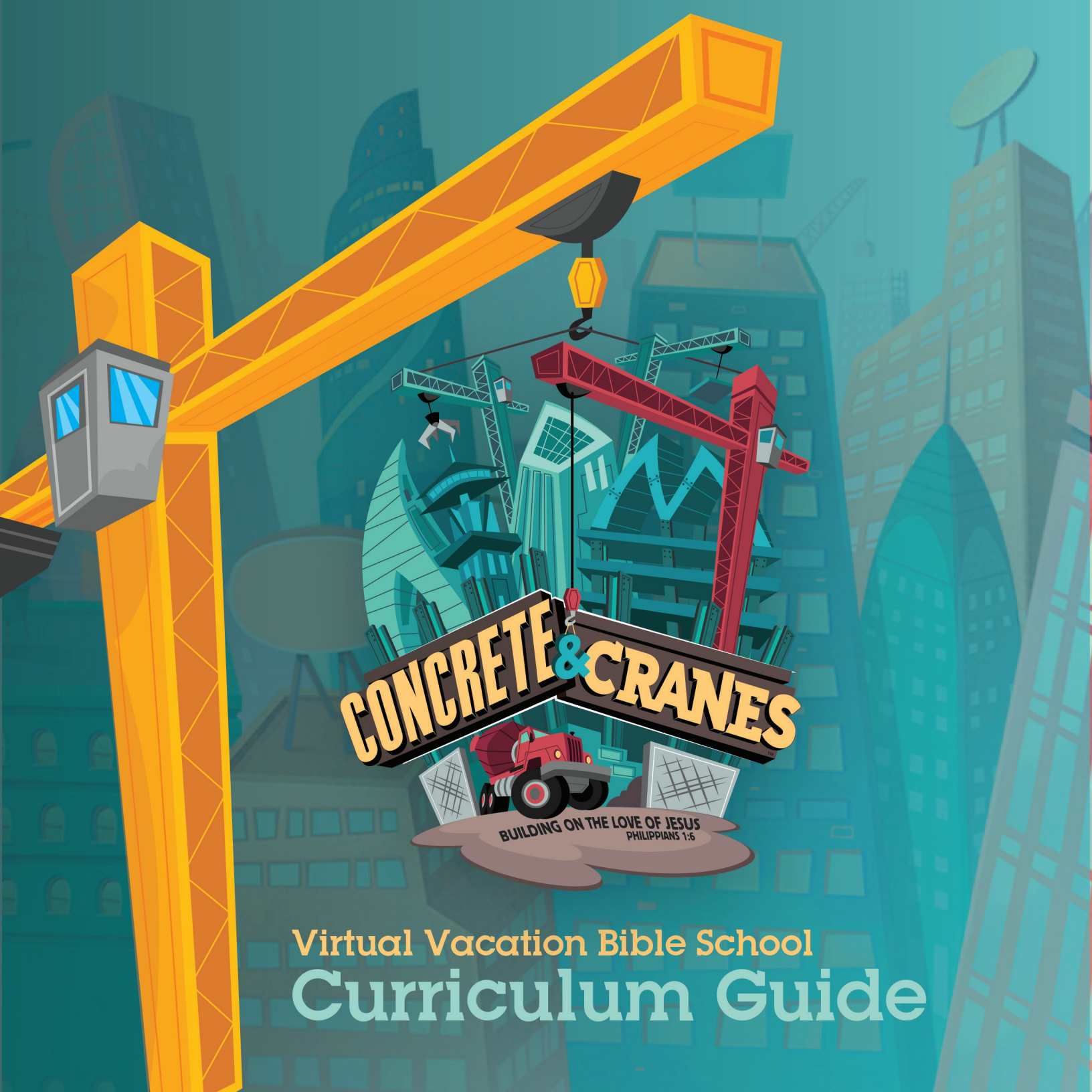




CONCRETE & CRANES

BUILDING ON THE LOVE OF JESUS
PHILIPPIANS 1:6

Virtual Vacation Bible School
Curriculum Guide

DAY 1 LEADER GUIDE

Foundation of Love

POINT

Jesus chooses to love me. I can't earn it.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Chose Matthew
Matthew 9:9-13

I have friends who work in offices where people come to pay taxes. Rarely do people bounce in excited to pay what they owe. They are required by law to pay and there are standards that tell how much to pay. Jump back in time to Matthew, a Jewish citizen paid by the enemy (Rome) to gather taxes from his own people, with full permission to pad his pockets by adding extra charges for personal gain. His circle of "friends" included others with the same lifestyle, all generally disliked by everyone else.

When Jesus approached Matthew's tax booth, He had already chosen some of His disciples. (They were with Him when He attended Matthew's dinner.) Matthew had possibly heard about the miracles this Teacher was performing. The only details we have of Matthew's call are that Jesus said, "Follow Me," and Matthew immediately left everything and followed Jesus. The next thing we read about is a dinner party hosted by Matthew. Luke called it a "grand banquet" (Luke 5:29). Matthew hosted Jesus, His disciples, and those whom he knew—other tax collectors and sinners. The Pharisees were horrified and didn't mind saying so. Jesus quickly answered that He had not come for those who were well but for the sick. He challenged them to think about the meaning of the scripture, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). Jesus knew the self-righteous Pharisees took pride in being church leaders and doing all the right things. But, Jesus emphasized that it is not what we do, but the intentions of our hearts that are important to God.

Other Gospels refer to Matthew as Levi when they recount the story. As Matthew writes his own Gospel, he chooses to call himself Matthew. Jews were often known by two or three names. Some commentators speculate that Matthew may have been a name given to Levi by Jesus in much the same way Simon was called Peter. Matthew means "gift of God." After living a life of forced payments, a free, treasured "gift" may have had special meaning for Levi, called Matthew.

Matthew did not seek out Jesus. Jesus met Matthew where he was. Matthew didn't earn this chosen spot. Jesus chose Matthew to follow Him. Following Jesus gave Matthew the opportunity to see firsthand what Jesus was all about. He documented that evidence in his writings, which point repeatedly to Jesus as the Messiah promised in Old Testament Scripture. Tax collector Matthew, whose secular job would have involved accurate record keeping, turned those skills into formatting a gospel of accurate record keeping proof. Jesus' love changed Matthew. It changes us too.

As you begin this week of VBS, the kids who cross your path will be carrying with them their own life circumstances. In their short lives, many have already known uncertainties, broken promises, and rejection. You have a beautiful opportunity to allow God to use you as He continues the good work He has started in each child. As you show kids God's love, you are shoring up that solid foundation on which future belief can be built.

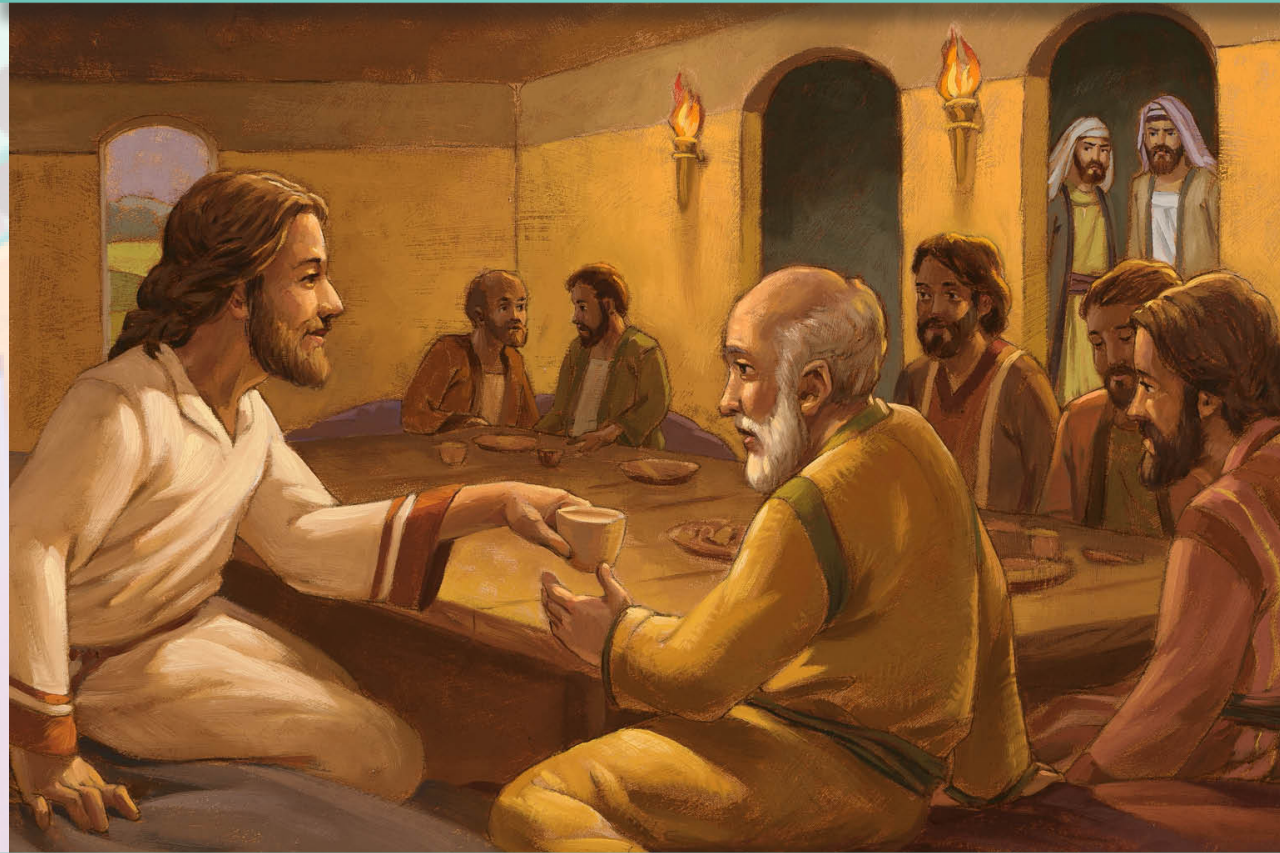
YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT

1. When did God first make you aware of your need for Jesus as Savior? Relive those moments in your memory and ponder how great a love the Father has for us.
2. Matthew immediately introduced his acquaintances to Jesus by having a banquet. What are ways you have found to share the love of Jesus?
3. Look up John 15:9 (today's bonus verse). What do you think it means to remain or continue in the love of Jesus?

DAY 1 SITE SUPERVISOR GUIDE

Jesus Chose Matthew

Matthew 9:9-13



Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at a tax booth. Matthew was a tax collector. Many people did not like tax collectors because sometimes they would steal money. But Jesus loved Matthew anyway. He said to Matthew, “Follow Me.” So, Matthew got up and followed Him.

While Jesus and His disciples were eating at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors, and other people who did wrong things, came to eat with them. When some teachers saw this, they asked Jesus’ disciples, “Why does Jesus eat with tax collectors and these other people?”

When Jesus heard this, He let them know that He came to show God’s love for everyone.

CONSTRUCTION CREW TIME

Show your child(ren) the picture of this Bible story; then ask each child to recall something they remember from the story or use the questions here to start the discussion:

“What was Matthew’s job?” (he was a tax collector)

“How did people feel about tax collectors?”
(They were not liked because they would sometimes steal money)

“What did Jesus say to Matthew?” (“Follow Me”)

“How did people feel about Jesus eating with sinners?”
(They didn’t like it; they thought Jesus shouldn’t be spending time with sinners)

Why did Jesus eat at Matthew’s house?”
(Jesus chose Matthew; Jesus didn’t come for those who were well but for those who are sick)

Help your child(ren) understand that Jesus loved Matthew. Then explain how Jesus chooses to love people. Next time we have coins in our hands we will remember today’s Bible story and remember that Jesus loved Matthew and he chooses to love everyone.

Explain that Matthew became one of Jesus’ disciples (best friends) and later wrote the book of Matthew in the Bible, which is the first book of the Gospel and the first book in the New Testament.

As each child is able, challenge them to open their Bible and find where the New Testament begins, find chapter 9 (big number) and then verse 9 (small number) and read verses 9-13. Read The Point to your children and then have them repeat after you. Then everyone say it in unison. The Point: “Jesus chooses to love me. I can’t earn it.”

PRAYER

Invite your children to make prayer hands and to repeat each line after you.

“Dear God, Thank you for your Son, Jesus
Who invited the disciples to follow Him.
Help us to hear Jesus’ words every day,
To obey and follow Him. Amen

BONUS VERSE

John 15:9 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

“As the Father has loved me, I have
also loved you. Remain in my love.”

DAY 2 LEADER GUIDE

Foundation of Forgiveness

POINT

Jesus loves me regardless of my sin.

BIBLE STORY

Paul's Redemption
Acts 26:1-29

In yesterday's lesson, the biblical truth focused on the fact that none of us are good enough to "earn" the love of Jesus. He chooses to love us. Period. Today we go to the other extreme to say that Jesus loves us regardless of our sin. You might be muttering under your breath, "But you don't know what I have done." Maybe not, but God does and He still loves you. Romans 5:8 says that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!

Three times in the book of Acts we can read about the conversion of Saul (his Aramaic name) or Paul (his Greek name). In this particular retelling, Paul had been arrested and brought before Felix, who left Paul in prison to "do the Jews a favor," until he was replaced by Festus. Festus also wanted to do the Jews a favor and tried to return Paul to Jerusalem. But Paul appealed to Caesar, which was his right as a Roman citizen. Several days later, King Agrippa and Bernice visited Festus, who told them about the prisoner, Paul. King Agrippa was intrigued and asked to see Paul and hear his story.

Paul was brought before King Agrippa and invited to speak. Paul described the day he and those traveling with him were on their way to Damascus. Paul had full authority from the chief priests to arrest those who proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. Suddenly, a light brighter than the sun appeared. The group fell to the ground. Paul heard the voice of Jesus speak to him. Jesus told Paul, "I am the one you are persecuting." Jesus also told Paul that he had been chosen to spread the news of forgiveness through Jesus to the Gentiles. Paul explained that he had been obedient to the vision and preached a message of repentance in Damascus, in Jerusalem, in Judea, and to the Gentiles.

Paul had done nothing to deserve being chosen by Jesus to share the good news. In fact, Paul later referred to himself as the worst of sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15) However, because Paul was obedient, God empowered him and used him in a mighty way to spread the gospel.

Have you ever met a person who had absolute confidence in his or her own opinion? Maybe you are one. Paul was definitely one of those types, even when what he believed was wrong. It took a "drop him in his tracks" moment to change his opinion. But, in God's perfect timing, Paul was shaken to his very foundation and then rebuilt into a confident spokesperson for Jesus Christ.

This week God has chosen you to share His good news with kids. The great Redeemer redeems our past and empowers us to do His will. Trust Him and His Holy Spirit to guide you as you teach.

YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT

1. The enemy often whispers in our ears reasons that we can't serve God. Tell God about it. The battle is His. He will fight for you. (Exodus 14:14, 2 Chronicles 20:17)
2. Why do you think Paul's obedience was so immediate? Why do you think we resist being obedient?
3. Look up Romans 5:8 (today's bonus verse). Because Jesus was willing to die for us while we were still sinners, how should we think about the kids God will place in our crews this week?

DAY 2 SITE SUPERVISOR GUIDE

Paul's Redemption

Acts 26:1-29



One day Paul was traveling on a road to a city named Damascus. He was going there because he did not like people who loved Jesus. Paul wanted to hurt them and put them in jail. But on his way, something amazing happened! Paul saw a light even brighter than the sun! It was so bright, it hurt his eyes and Paul could not see. He fell to the ground.

Paul heard a voice ask why he was hurting people. This scared Paul because he couldn't see anyone talking. Paul asked who the voice was. The voice answered, "I am Jesus." Jesus told Paul to go and tell people that God loves them. When Paul could see again, Paul obeyed Jesus, changed the way he lived, and he didn't hurt people anymore. He told people about what happened to him and that God loves them no matter what they have done.

CONSTRUCTION CREW TIME

Show your child(ren) the picture of this Bible story; then ask each child to recall something they remember from the story or use the questions here to start the discussion:

"Why was Paul going to Damascus?"

(Paul did not like people who loved Jesus; he wanted to hurt them and put them in jail)

"What happened on the road to Damascus?"

(Paul saw a bright light; it hurt his eyes and he could not see; he fell to the ground)

"What did the voice say?"

("I am Jesus" and to go tell people that God loves them)

"How did Paul's encounter with Jesus change him?"

(Paul could see again; he changed the way he lived and did not hurt people anymore)

"What did Paul do after having heard the voice of Jesus?"

(He told people what happened to him and that God loves them no matter what they have done)

Help your child(ren) understand that Jesus loved Paul even though Paul wanted to hurt Christians and put them in jail. Jesus loved Paul no matter what and He loves us no matter what. Next time we see a ray of light coming through the window or see the bright sun, we will remember today's Bible story and how Jesus loves us no matter what we do.

Explain that Paul was chosen by Jesus to share the good news. God used Paul in mighty ways to share the gospel throughout the land. Paul later wrote the book of Acts in the Bible, which follows the first four books of the New Testament (the Gospel).

As each child is able, challenge them to: open their Bible and find the New Testament. Say "Matthew, Mark, Luke and John" together. The next book of the Bible is Acts. Find chapter 26 (big number) and then start at the first verse read verses 1-20. Read The Point to your children and then have them repeat after you. Then everyone say it in unison. The Point: "Jesus loves me regardless of my sin."

Prayer: Invite your children to make prayer hands and to repeat each line after you.

"Dear God, Thank you for your Son, Jesus, who loved a sinner like Paul;
And loves us too, no matter what. Give us words to tell others about
Jesus every day. Amen

BONUS VERSE

John 15:9 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

"But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

DAY 3 LEADER GUIDE

Foundation of Worth

POINT

Jesus chose to die for me.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Prayed in the Garden
Matthew 26:36–46

In Matthew 26:24 Jesus explained that the events about to take place would happen “just as it is written.” Jesus knew that the Scriptures He often pointed to, pointed to Him. It boggles my mind that, during each story chronicled in the Gospels, Jesus was fully aware of what faced Him on the cross. Each amazing miracle story, each masterful parable, each phenomenal teaching moment could end with “and even in that moment Jesus knew He would take the punishment for those around Him.” He would die for the Pharisees who mocked Him, the disciples who struggled with their own belief, the people who followed watching for the next amazing miracle, and the crowds who clamored for more but would soon be incited to call for His crucifixion. It goes beyond that. You and I could be labeled with similar descriptions, and yet Jesus died for us. It causes John 15:13 to throb with meaning—No greater love.

Think about the kids in your group. Do some bounce in, full of confidence? Do some stride in with a “you owe me” attitude? Are there others who simply slink in, obviously trying to blend into the background? Many kids are never treated as if they have value or worth. How can they believe someone would die for them if those closest to them treat them as an irritation or nuisance?

We live in a world that, for all its effort to lift up various causes, fails to recognize the value of a single human being. The suicide rate among kids is on the rise. In our over-stimulated society, we fail to pause long enough to focus on the people we care about. But Jesus does. And He did. And it was the most difficult thing ever done in all of history. As the final hours drew near, Jesus fell facedown before the Father and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” The “cup” was a symbol of wrath and judgment in the Old Testament. Jesus knew the punishment for sin would be the ultimate in suffering physically, mentally, emotionally, and above all, spiritually. And yet, Jesus ended His prayer with, “not as I will, but as You will.” He prayed the way He taught us to pray: trusting the Father’s love and obedient to the Father’s will.

This is a sobering, heart-breaking, soul-rejoicing truth to contemplate. You will need discernment and the Holy Spirit’s guidance as you share this Bible passage in an age-appropriate way. Your leader guide will be a great help. But now, while you are reading the passage and praying, take time to really contemplate what Jesus did for you and the love He has for you. As you experience His love, it will become easier to allow that love to flow to the kids in your crew.

YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT

1. Have you ever thought about those moments in the garden when Jesus was praying? How does the weight of what He was facing make you feel?
2. How can you help the kids in your group feel valued and loved by Jesus?
3. Locate and read John 15:13 (today’s bonus verse). Which part of the verse speaks to you the most?



DAY 3 SITE SUPERVISOR GUIDE

Jesus Prayed in the Garden

Matthew 26:36–46



Jesus and His disciples walked to a place called Gethsemane. It was a garden near the bottom of a mountain. Jesus said to the men, “Sit here while I go pray.” Then Jesus told Peter and two other disciples, James and John, to go with Him.

Jesus became quiet. He began to think about the plan God had for Him and the things that would happen soon. Jesus told His disciples He was sad and wanted them to stay near Him. While Peter, James, and John waited, Jesus walked a little farther away. He fell down on the ground and prayed. Jesus asked God to help Him.

“Whatever You want, God, I will do,” Jesus said. Jesus walked back to the disciples. He found them sleeping. “Stay awake and pray,” Jesus said to the men. Jesus walked away again to pray some more. When He finished, He went back to the disciples. They were still sleeping!

So Jesus went to pray again. He asked God to help Him be ready to do God’s plan. When Jesus finished praying, He returned to His disciples. He told them to get up and leave the garden with Him.

CONSTRUCTION CREW TIME

Show your child(ren) the picture of this Bible story; then ask each child to recall something they remember from the story or use the questions here to start the discussion:

- “What was Gethsemane?” A garden where Jesus and his disciples went
- “What did Jesus go there to do? What did he tell Peter, James and John?” Pray; told disciples to stay near him
- “How was Jesus feeling?” He was thinking about the plan God had for Him and what would soon happen
- “What did Jesus pray?” “Whatever You want, God, I will do it.”
- “After Jesus prayed to God, how did he find the disciples?” They were sleeping

Help your child(ren) understand that God has a plan for Jesus and for everyone. We can pray and ask God to help us follow His plan. Next time we clap our hands together, think about prayer and remember today’s Bible story and how Jesus prayed about God’s plan for him.

Explain that part of the good work that God will complete is His plan for each of our lives. Remind your child(ren) that no matter who they are, God has a plan for them.

As each child is able, challenge them to: open their Bible and find Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. find chapter 26 (big number) and then find the verse 36 (little number). read verses 36-4. Read The Point to your children and then have them repeat after you. Then everyone say it in unison. The Point: “Jesus has a plan for me.”

PRAYER

Invite your children to make prayer hands and to repeat each line after you.

“Dear God, Thank you for your Son, Jesus, Who taught us to pray and trust in YouHelp us to come to You in prayer. Thank you that you have a plan for my life. Amen.”

BONUS

John 15:13 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

“No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.”

DAY 4 LEADER GUIDE

Foundation of Promise

POINT

Jesus will always love me.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus' Resurrection and a Promise
Matthew 28:1–10, 16–20

Today's biblical content ties together two passages that are often told as separate stories. However, as you read the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew in context, you will see the connection. Matthew's Gospel contains numerous firsthand accounts of the ministry of Jesus. Verses 1 through 10 describe the early Sunday morning events of the resurrection. At this point in history, women were held in very low esteem. In fact, the testimony of a woman was not considered valid at that time. Therefore, Matthew was taking a bold step by including the women's account of what happened. It points out that, regardless of public opinion, Matthew chose to report actual events.

The angel's declaration to the women pointed out the promise Jesus had already fulfilled—"He has risen, just as He said." Jesus is alive. Jesus had repeatedly told His followers what would happen to Him. Matthew recorded many of those statements. Check out Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; and 20:19. The details of the earthquake, the angel's appearance, and the guards' reactions emphasize the supernatural nature of the events that were taking place.

The angel invited the women to see the empty tomb for themselves. The angel then told the women to go quickly and tell His disciples the wonderful news and that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. The women did exactly as they were told. As they were leaving, Jesus appeared to them and spoke to them! Their immediate response was worship. Can you blame them? They had arrived that morning prepared to mourn, but the Son had truly risen. They could see Him and touch His feet. Jesus repeated the angel's instructions when He told the women to tell His brothers to meet Him in Galilee.

The intervening verses (11-15) share a side story of conspiracy between the chief priests and the guards, but as we move on to verse 16, notice that the 11 disciples did travel to Galilee, to the place Jesus had told them to go. When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped Him, even though some still had doubts. Our struggle to believe never diminishes Jesus' authority or power.

Verses 19–20 are often referred to as "The Great Commission." Jesus outlines the work we, as followers, are to do until His return. Go. Make disciples. But, with this command comes an amazing promise, "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Jesus said He would die, be buried, and arise on the third day—and He did. Jesus told His disciples He would meet them in Galilee—and He did. Jesus promises to be with us—and He is. Nothing is too small or too great that Jesus cannot keep His promises. Jesus proved His love by taking our punishment on the cross and He promises to never leave us.

YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT

1. Some of the disciples doubted. Do you struggle with doubts? What are they?
2. Jot down some verses from God's Word that help you combat those doubts. (Ask a trusted believer to help you discover verses if you aren't sure where to look.)
3. Read again Matthew 28:20b (today's Bonus Verse). What comfort and encouragement can you draw from this verse?

DAY 4 SITE SUPERVISOR GUIDE

Jesus' Resurrection and a Promise

Acts 26:1-29



After Jesus died and was placed in a tomb, a stone was rolled in front of the tomb to seal it. His friends Mary Magdalene and another woman named Mary went to visit the place where Jesus' body had been taken. There was an earthquake and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. The angel, who was dressed in white, rolled back the stone that had been placed in front of the tomb and sat on it. The angel told them Jesus is alive! Jesus was going to Galilee to see His disciples.

This was wonderful news. The women were so happy. They hurried to find Jesus' disciples to tell them the good news. Then Jesus met the women and said, "Good morning! Go tell My disciples to leave for Galilee. They will see Me there."

CONSTRUCTION CREW TIME

Show your child(ren) the picture of this Bible story; then ask each child to recall something they remember from the story or use the questions here to start the discussion:

"After Jesus died, what was done with his body?"

He was placed in a tomb and the stone was rolled in front

"Who did Mary and Mary Magdalene encounter at the tomb?"

An angel of the Lord who said Jesus was alive!

"Who did Mary and Mary Magdalene encounter on the road to Galilee?"

Jesus, who told the women to tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee

"What did Jesus instruct the disciples to do?"

"Go and tell everyone that Jesus is alive."

"What promise did Jesus make to His disciples?"

"I am with you always."

The women looked for the disciples and told them the news. When the disciples heard the women's message, they traveled to the mountain in Galilee where Jesus told them to go. When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped Him.

Then Jesus spoke to the men. He said, "Go and tell everyone about me. Teach people to do everything I have told you." Jesus told the disciples that they should tell people everywhere that Jesus is alive.

Help your child(ren) understand that Jesus promised the disciples, his friends, that he would always be with them always. Because of that promise, we can know that Jesus will always be with us. Next time we pick up a large rock, think about the stone that was rolled away from the tomb, and remember today's Bible story and how Jesus is alive!

Explain that Jesus' words are true and the Bible points to the one, true God who is both Jesus' Father in Heaven and ours. God loves us because He created us and He sent Jesus to teach us His ways. Remind your child(ren) that Jesus is with us always.

As each child is able, challenge them to: open their Bible and find Matthew, the first book of the New Testament. find chapter 28 (big number) and verses 1 and 16 (little numbers) read verses 1-10 and then 16-20, Read The Point to your children and then have them repeat after you. Then everyone say it in unison. The Point: "Jesus will be with me always."

Prayer: Invite your children to make prayer hands and to repeat each line after you.

"Dear God, Thank you for your Son, Jesus

Who is with me always.

Help us to be just like His disciples

And spread the good news that He is alive! Amen.

BONUS VERSE

John 15:9 Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

"But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."