

PARENT INFO FOR TRAINING CAMP 1

Sharing the good news of Jesus is a privilege that we have as believers. Young children are very open to accepting new things. What an awesome opportunity to impact the lives of children for eternity through VBS.

The Bible Story presented in Training Camp 1—Soccer—Shoes of the Gospel of Peace is about God leading Philip to find the Ethiopian man who is sitting in his chariot reading from the Book of Isaiah. This man was longing for someone to come and explain to him about the passage of Scripture he was reading. Philip was in the right place at the right time, by God's divine plan. Philip had the opportunity to explain to the Ethiopian man about Jesus—the very person who was being revealed in the prophecy written by Isaiah so many years before.

Your children may be like that Ethiopian man. Perhaps they have heard about Jesus' love for them but haven't ever accepted it personally. What a great responsibility is yours . . . to share with them about His love and show them how they can invite Him into their lives.

Your children may have questions about what they learned at VBS. Talk with them and review the Bible verses they learned. Kids love sharing new things and this is a great way to get involved and offer them encouragement.

Getting More from the Bible Story

The Bible passage for Training Camp 1—Soccer teaches children that they can wear the Shoes of the Gospel of Peace! The story of Philip is important because it shows them that the message of Jesus is for all people. Philip didn't walk the other way when he saw a Gentile (*the Ethiopian*). Instead he knew that God had brought him to this man for a reason. As your children learn to share the good news of Jesus, remind them that it is for all kinds of people. It doesn't matter if they seem spiritual or if they are rebellious. God loves them and sent His Son for them.

The Ethiopian man knew about the Bible and knew a promised Messiah would come. He just needed someone to tell him about Jesus. Your children or their friends may be in the same situation. They may need a positive experience with other Christian kids to decide that they really do need Jesus in their lives after all.

Take some time to explain the Gospel message. Just think, you can wear Shoes of the Gospel of Peace as you meet the needs of your children!



BIBLE VERSES

Preschool

NIV: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

—Romans 10:15

KJV: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace."

—Romans 10:15

Early Elementary and Elementary

(Early Elementary verse in **bold** type.)

NIV: "As it is written, '**How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!**'"

—Romans 10:15

KJV: "As it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!**"

—Romans 10:15

PARENT INFO FOR TRAINING CAMP 2

Making wise decisions can be hard for children. After all, so much is expected . . . it can be overwhelming at times! Children today are involved in many activities:

sports teams, music lessons, art class, even play groups! Their lives revolve around structure, yet at times they may feel overwhelmed by well-meaning, hard-to-live-up-to expectations.

The Bible story presented in Training Camp 2—Bicycling—is of Zacchaeus and his encounter with Jesus Christ. When Jesus met Zacchaeus for the first time in Luke 19:1-10, He found him way up in a tree, straining for a glimpse of this Man everyone was talking about. Zacchaeus was not a popular guy. After all, he was a despised tax collector. He probably had swindled money from just about everyone in town. Yet, Jesus purposefully sought him. He talked to this unpopular man and even went to visit his home! What a shock it must have been for unpopular Zacchaeus to suddenly be hosting Jesus! What is even more exciting is that Zacchaeus's life was changed! He no longer wanted to steal money from innocent people. He knew that wasn't a wise decision. Instead he decided to give back what he had stolen and made wise decisions that changed his future!

Getting More from the Bible Story

The Bible passage for Training Camp 2—

Bicycling—teaches children that they can make wise decisions. The story of Jesus and Zacchaeus will impact your children as they see that everyone is important. Children know that in their world not everyone is treated fairly or

given equal treatment. Jesus, however, made sure to treat Zacchaeus like he was someone who mattered. Even though Zacchaeus was a person often frowned

upon, Jesus made an effort to be with him. As a result, Zacchaeus changed his ways! He became a man who made wise decisions and left his former life of trickery and cheating behind!

The wise decisions that Zacchaeus made involved giving things up and making amends. Zacchaeus ended up going to everyone that he had cheated. He not only repaid them, but he gave them four times the amount he had stolen from them. He also gave half of what he owned to the poor. While his way of life may have changed, most importantly his life had been changed by Jesus for eternity.

Encourage your children to think about areas in their lives where they need to make wise decisions. It could be little things like being kinder to their siblings or big things like owning up to a situation that they have kept hidden from you or their teachers. It isn't always easy to make wise decisions, but the outcome of doing so can change their lives for the better, just as it did for Zacchaeus!



BIBLE VERSES

Preschool

NIV: "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve."

—Joshua 24:15

KJV: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

—Joshua 24:15

Early Elementary and Elementary

(Early Elementary verse in **bold** type.)

NIV: "Then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . **But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.**"

—Joshua 24:15

KJV: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve; . . . **but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**"

—Joshua 24:15

PARENT INFO FOR TRAINING CAMP 3

The world is a scary place for kids. Need proof? Turn on the evening news. Kids today have many issues to deal with: abductions, crime, fires, war, divorce, despair. It's no wonder many children sometimes feel hopeless and lost.

The Bible story presented in Training Camp 3—Softball—Breastplate of Righteousness tells how God protects Elisha from the enemy. Elisha was in danger. He was surrounded on all sides by vast armies looking to destroy him. God miraculously intervened on Elisha's behalf and blinded his enemies, saving Elisha. Your children will learn that they can trust God's protection. They don't need to be afraid. God is in control. He knows the things they face each day and He will be with them every step of the way.

Elisha looked at the armies surrounding him and told his servant not to be afraid. Elisha then prayed, for the Lord to open the servant's eyes so he could see. When the servant looked this time the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. (Taken from 2 Kings 6:16-17.)

Getting More from the Bible Story

The Bible passage for Training Camp 3—Softball—teaches children that they can put on the Breastplate of Righteousness and be protected! The story of Elisha and his servant is important because it demonstrates in such clarity the protection of God for His people. Kids will still

face hardships and are bound to be frightened at times, yet they can take heart because God will be with them.

You may want to speak to your children about their fears. Give them reassurance and read the Bible verse with them. Let them know that although bad things will happen on this earth because of sin, those who are followers of God can be assured that God is in control.

Take time to also share the things you are afraid of. Children often think that adults are immune to fears and that they have it "all together." By sharing your fears you can also share the hope you have in Jesus and His ability to guide your life as you trust in Him each day.



BIBLE VERSES

Preschool

NIV: "Be strong and courageous . . . for the Lord your God will be with you."

—Joshua 1:9

KJV: "Be strong and of a good courage; . . . for the LORD thy God is with thee."

—Joshua 1:9

Early Elementary and Elementary

(Early Elementary verse in **bold** type.)

NIV: "Have I not commanded you? **Be strong and courageous.** Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, **for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.**"

—Joshua 1:9

KJV: "Have not I commanded thee? **Be strong and of a good courage;** be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: **for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.**"

—Joshua 1:9

PARENT INFO FOR TRAINING CAMP 4

The Bible seems like such a big book that many kids are overwhelmed by it.

But VBS offers a great opportunity to show children that they can use God's Word to impact their lives! It applies to their lives today, to society today, even to the problems that they are facing today. God's Word is the Sword of the Spirit. It is how God "speaks" to people today. All of the answers are right there, in the pages they are holding in their hands. What a concept!

The Bible story presented in Training Camp 4—Field Hockey: Sword of the Spirit—is one of a young boy named Josiah who was made king. This boy was only eight years old when he stood out from the crowd and chose to follow God. He later was a young man when he helped Israel put God's Word first! He cleaned up the temple, rediscovered the Bible (*the Book of the Law*), and read it aloud to the people. How their hearts must have leaped inside them to hear God's Word read after so many years without it. How incredible for Israel to have a second chance to worship God in cleaned up surroundings!



BIBLE VERSES

Preschool

NIV: "All your words are true."

—Psalm 119:160

KJV: "Thy word is true."

—Psalm 119:160

Early Elementary and Elementary

(Early Elementary verse in **bold** type.)

NIV: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

KJV: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

—2 Timothy 3:16-17

Your children may have some knowledge of the Bible or have heard it read, but maybe they haven't personally applied it to their lives. Let your children know that they must embrace the Bible for themselves! It is for everyone! God has something unique to say to each person

attending VBS. They just need to open up their hearts and their Bibles and listen!

Getting More from the Bible Story

The Bible passage for Training Camp 4—Field Hockey—teaches children that they can use the Sword of the Spirit—the Bible! The story of Josiah is important because Josiah was a young person just like they are. He is a Bible hero that they can look up to and imitate. He had the courage to stand up for what was right and to get his people on the right track with God. He also had a deep respect for God's Word—something they also can strive to have. As your children take up the Sword of the Spirit, they are gaining a tool that can help them in every aspect of their lives.

Review the Bible verses with your children but also allow for a little quiet time so they can spend a few minutes in their Bibles. Remind them of

Josiah and his desire to seek God first.

PARENT INFO FOR TRAINING CAMP 5

Telling the truth . . . for some kids this is a no-brainer. But what children need to realize is that there is more to honesty than just "not lying." Honesty and telling the truth have to do with a lifestyle. They are more than just not doing wrong, they are standing up for what is right.

The Bible Story presented in Training Camp 5—Mountaineering: Belt of Truth—tells how Peter denies Jesus but later is given another opportunity to follow Him. Some children will identify with Peter, others might think poorly of him, but regardless what they think, your children need to see that what happened to Peter can happen to any one of us. Unless we stand firm, using the Belt of Truth to help us, any one of us can lose sight of our desire to follow Jesus.

The Belt of Truth is the part of God's armor that helps us truthfully follow Him. It's easy to carry many different kinds of armor, but the belt is what holds everything together and keeps it from getting loose. In Bible times, the belt was the piece of clothing that looked like a wide band. It was used to tuck the robe up so that people could walk easily. It also was used as storage, much like we use fanny packs today.



BIBLE VERSES

Preschool

NIV: "Speak the truth to each other."

—Zechariah 8:16

KJV: "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour."

—Zechariah 8:16

Early Elementary and Elementary

(Early Elementary verse in **bold** type.)

NIV: "Speak the truth to each other ... ; do not plot evil against your neighbor, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the LORD."

—Zechariah 8:16-17

KJV: "Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; . . . And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false

oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the LORD."

—Zechariah 8:16-17

Using the example of a belt was a simple way for the people to understand how important it was for everyday living. Today we can understand its importance too, and use it to help us "hold our lives together."

Getting More from the Bible Story

The Bible passage for Training Camp 5—Mountaineering—teaches children that they can climb to great heights. No matter how we might mess up in life, Jesus loves us and is willing to forgive us. The story of Peter (*John 21:15-19; Matt. 26:69-75*) shows that Jesus forgives our sin. When Jesus first saw Peter after His resurrection, He didn't bring up the fact that Peter denied Him but instead asked Peter to follow Him. Children learn they can also make amends, even after they sin. Children may benefit from a reminder about why exactly lying is never right. Even if we think we are lying to keep from saying something unkind, it is better just to say nothing at all.

Review the Bible verses with your children and help them see that everyone sins, but repentance from sin and forgiveness through Jesus' work on the cross is the

most important part of the Christian life!