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Howdy, Partner!

Grab your bandana, dust off your boots, and get ready to mine for *true* gold as we head to the Old West in Answers in Genesis's *Gold Rush: Discovering the Rock of Ages*.

As we blaze a trail into the heart of gold territory, we'll uncover exciting Bible discoveries about Jesus, answering such questions as:

- What did Jesus claim about Himself?
- How do we know Jesus is the only way to heaven?
- How was Jesus's birth and life unique?
- How was Jesus's death and resurrection unique?
- How has Jesus impacted science, the arts, education, and so much more?

Each action-packed day begins at the **Gold Rush Rally**, a high-energy gathering complete with wacky intros, lively songs, a missions moment, the Nugget of Truth time, and prayer.

It's then off to rotate through four fun sites:

- Dig into God's Word and uncover eternal truths at the **Discovery Mine Bible Time**.
- Create **24-Karat Crafts** while making keepsake treasures.
- Enjoy some **Lip-Smackin' Snacks** eating great Old West grub.
- Experience **Rip-Roarin' Recreation** at the Stampeders' Stations, the Old West relays, and other active games.

Finally, everyone gathers together once again for the closing **Gold Rush Rally**, where there's more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama—a zany comedy taking place in an Old West mining town. You'll meet Otis, Theodore, Miss Sadie, Petunia, and Dr. Marvel as they live and learn together in Discovery City, where there's always something new to discover about Jesus.

Yes-siree! This VBS is teeming with truth and with treasure, so let's dig in!

Our Goal

If you asked the children of your church and community how they felt about the Bible, what would their response be? Would they consider the Word of God relevant to their lives and interesting to learn from? Or would it seem irrelevant and trumped by "science"?

A recent survey¹ by America's Research Group² revealed that an alarming number of young people³ are leaving the church after they graduate because their questions about the Bible had not been answered. Respondents indicated that Sunday School materials were shallow and irrelevant. Of those polled, 86% had begun to question the Bible by their high school years. Of those who said they did not believe all the accounts in the Bible are true, 82% cited doubts about the Bible's authority or its trustworthiness.

We trust that the Lord will use this VBS to help reverse this sad trend by equipping today's children with the answers they seek. We have designed *Gold Rush* to provide solid Bible-based teaching, delivered in a fun and entertaining way, that counters the misinformation about the Bible and science that children encounter daily.

¹ Britt Beemer poll commissioned by Answers in Genesis.

² America's Research Group, Ltd., is a full-service market and behavioral research firm offering expertise in all phases of survey research, from questionnaire design to final report preparation.

³ These were people now in their twenties who regularly attended an evangelical church as they were growing up. The poll was nationwide.

Your Role

Your role as director is outlined in the following pages. This is *your* guide. Read it carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! God is about to use you and your ministry to impact lives. Let's dig in to *Gold Rush*!

Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *Gold Rush* may be new to you. For a list of articles on the life and person of Jesus Christ, please visit www.answeringgenesis.org/go/Jesus-Christ.

Terms to Know

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here is a concise list of some of the most common terms to know.

- **Discovery Teams:** Groups of children (individual classes) named after Old West people or items, such as the Miners or the Forty-Niners. Check page 11 for name ideas.
 - **Team Leaders:** Workers who lead the Discovery Teams from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.
 - **Discovery Mine Bible Time:** Bible and apologetics teaching time.
 - **Truth Tellers:** Teachers of the Discovery Mine Bible Time.
 - **24-Karat Crafts:** Rotation site where crafts are made.
 - **Lip-Smackin' Snacks:** Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.
 - **Rip-Roarin' Recreation:** Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.
 - **Precious Gold:** Memory verse.
 - **Nugget of Truth:** Daily time during the opening Gold Rush Rally when Jesus's impact on science, the arts, education, and so much more will be shared in an interesting way.
 - **Toddler Miners:** 2–4-year-olds.
 - **Pre-Primary Miners:** 4–6-year-olds, or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.
 - **Primary Miners:** 6–9-year-olds, or children who have completed grades 1–3.
 - **Junior Miners:** 9–12-year-olds, or children who have completed grades 4–6.
- For multi-age K–6th Discovery Teams, it is recommended to use the material for the Primary Miners.

Top 20 Tips for the VBS Director

Whether you're a first time recruit or a seasoned director, here are some tips just for you.

1. Pray and study God's Word. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). You *will* be busy, so keep in mind that the busier you get, the more you need to pray and study! God will multiply your time if you give Him your best.
2. Read through the various guides thoroughly and early. Become familiar with the Director's Resource CD-ROM, which contains clip art, logos, printable and customizable versions of the forms mentioned throughout this guide, and more. If you're a first time director, ask past directors and VBS veterans what's been done in the past. It helps to receive counsel! At the same time, don't be afraid to try something new.
3. Check out the web address listed on page 6 for great articles about the life and person of Jesus Christ. This is a good resource for you and a good reference for volunteers or parents who have questions.
4. Many hands make light work. Be careful not to overextend yourself. Delegate areas of responsibility to people and allow them the joy of serving, even if it is not quite how you would do it.
5. Build a team spirit within your own family so VBS will not seem like just *your* project, but theirs, too. Include them in discussions and preparations.
6. When working with people, there *will* be conflicts. Resolve conflict with prayer and gentle answers based on principles from God's Word. "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1).
7. Have a backup plan in case the weather turns nasty and you need to be inside all day.
8. Have fun. Directing your VBS should be a joy for you. At the same time, though, remember you are in a spiritual battle, with an enemy who will try to throw darts your way. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).
9. Label file folders with different areas of VBS, and use these to file ideas and suggestions.
10. Help your church catch the significance of this event by sharing that VBS is a huge, God-given opportunity to reach many with the gospel of Christ.
11. Get enough sleep.
12. Make people feel loved, appreciated, and needed.
13. Communicate well. Make announcements. Require attendance at the training workshops. Send emails. Keep everyone informed.
14. Be enthusiastic! Your excitement is contagious and makes others want to be in on the fun.
15. When deciding on the ages to include in your VBS, keep in mind that this VBS is written to appeal to not only young children, but older elementary, too. It has real answers from God's Word for real issues all kids face.
16. Be the *director*. Don't commit to teaching or any other VBS leadership role during VBS week. Stay as free as possible to greet, encourage, and troubleshoot.
17. Carry a walkie-talkie or cell phone with you during VBS week so you can be reached throughout the building.
18. Prepare two bins for each Team Leader. See page 24 for more information.
19. After VBS is over, survey your staff so you can make improvements for next year.
20. Keep a list of answered prayers and praises. Share your list with others. Continue praying, even after VBS is finished, for God to grow the seeds He planted and to bring more fruit over the next months. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Nifty Nuggets of Info

Did You Know . . . ?

- Gold is the first metal mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 2:11) and is also the most frequently mentioned metal in the Bible.
- Billions of tons of gold are in the ocean (eight times more than has been found on land), but there's no way to get it out at this point.

Use these fun and fascinating facts, along with the ones below, to get your mind thinking about our fun theme (Gold Rush) and our spiritual theme (Jesus). These tidbits can be shared at staff meetings with adults and during the week of VBS with kids. They are available on the Director's Resource CD-ROM and can be used at arrival and dismissal time or during any down time while kids wait to get to their next rotation.

Part One: Gold Rush Information

- If gold fever struck ya, there was no easy way to get to California, but there were two difficult ways—by land or by sea. By land meant traveling for six months across the country in a covered wagon. By sea meant sailing around the tip of South America and up to California, or taking a short cut through the Isthmus of Panama.
- About 100,000 people raced to California in 1849 to find gold. They were nicknamed the Forty-Niners. Many more came later.
- Tough travels: One in twenty travelers heading west over land died on the trail. Sometimes the travelers would dig a grave in the path of the covered wagons, so the wagons could roll right over the grave to flatten it.
- Cup of java, anyone? On the trail, everyone drank coffee—even children—because the water tasted so bad. But since coffee was so hard to come by, the pioneers made it last as long as possible or replaced it with chicory, which was found growing wild along the way.
- How were eggs kept from cracking while in covered wagons? They were packed in barrels of flour and cornmeal.
- What are buffalo chips? Well, they sure don't taste like potato chips. And they sure don't smell good. That's because they are the droppings from buffalo. Travelers on the trail used them instead of firewood since they couldn't find wood on the prairies.
- Wake up, sleepy head! The day started on the trail at 4 a.m. with a rifle shot.
- Did you know you can have seasickness even when you aren't on the sea? The travelers heading west sure did. The motion of the covered wagons made many sick.
- Let's see what you think of this recipe from the trail. Grind up grasshoppers, mix with water and cornmeal, and pan fry. Ground Grasshopper Cakes. Yum!
- How much would you pay for a glass of water? Some Forty-Niners paid as much as \$100 for one glass of water on the trail.
- Strange, but true: There was rush hour traffic even on the way out West. So many people were trying to get to California, there was a continual stream of wagons wanting to be at the front of the line. Those in the back ended up eating dust that the other wagons kicked up.
- Watch out! It was such a rush to get to the gold fields that once you made it to California, you might have gotten trampled by the other miners stampeding the city.
- If you don't like cleaning your room or taking a bath, you would have liked being a gold miner. They only changed their bed sheets once a month, and they slept in their clothes and boots.
- Brrr! It could get really cold at night in parts of the West. If it was a cold night, people would sleep with one of their dogs (called a one dog night.) If it was colder, it was a two dog night. If it was freezing cold, it was a three dog night.
- Ouch! Doctors and dentists were few and far between in the Old West, and they usually weren't trained, so every emergency was handled the same way—hold you down and yank hard.
- Don't try this at home! Common remedies of the times included rubbing against a dead person if you had a wart or eating mashed snails if you had an illness called diphtheria.
- Have you seen an elephant? If you were at a circus, you probably wouldn't want to leave until you had seen one. The gold miners felt the same way about gold. They didn't want to leave the gold fields without seeing the elephant (some gold).
- Gold is hard to destroy. When discovered, King Tut's tomb, buried for thousands of years, revealed a perfectly kept golden throne, coffin, and death mask. An ancient mummy was even found with a perfectly kept mouth of gold dental work.

- Just 1 ounce of gold can be drawn out into a wire about 50 miles long!
- Wow! You may not realize it, but there's probably gold beneath your feet right now. It's found in most soils and dirt around the world but in such tiny amounts that it's not worth digging up. Then again, you may want to try!
- Blast off! Did you know gold is used on spacecraft, jets, and astronauts' helmets because it cuts down on glare and heat from the sun?
- Open wide and say ahhh! Next time you need a filling, ask the dentist if he uses gold. It is used because it stays germ-free and good as new.
- Wanna go digging? 80% of the gold is still in the earth.
- Yuck! In medieval Europe, powdered gold was mixed into drinks to try to help people's sore limbs feel better.
- What a find! The first time gold was officially discovered in California was in 1842 when a guy dug up a wild onion and found a bunch of gold nuggets attached to it.
- That's one stranger I'd like to meet! The largest gold nugget ever found weighed close to 200 pounds and was named The Welcome Stranger. It was mined in Australia!
- Who's minding the gold? The biggest amount of gold is stored under New York City in a vault at the Federal Reserve Bank. It holds a whopping \$147 billion worth of gold. The hard rock under the city is strong enough to hold the vault and all the gold in it.
- Did you know a glass of gold weighs 19 times more than a glass of water?
- Hawaii and Kentucky are the only two states in the United States not to have had commercial gold mines.
- The name *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*. It means "The Lord Saves."
- What day was Jesus born? If you said December 25th, you may or may not be right. The Bible doesn't tell us the exact date, so we don't actually know.
- Many people groups use a calendar dividing history in two: before Jesus's birth (BC = Before Christ) and after Jesus's birth (AD = *Anno Domini*, Latin for "in the year of our Lord").
- How about those shepherds! The first people to be told about Jesus's birth were the shepherds. They were thought to be the lowliest profession. Jesus showed He cares for *all* people by announcing His birth first to shepherds.
- Was Jesus a shepherd, a miner, or a carpenter as He grew up? A carpenter.
- Which book of the Bible has the most prophecies about Jesus? Isaiah. Chapters 52–53 alone list more than 20, which Jesus fulfilled.
- You may know that Jesus died and rose again. Amazing! But did you know that after He rose from the dead, He was seen by many people? The Bible records eleven times people saw Him before He went up to heaven!
- Check it out: There are no descriptions in the Bible of what Jesus looked like while He lived on earth.
- Do you know who the Angel of the Lord is? The Angel of the Lord often appeared in the Old Testament to people such as Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, and Elijah. Any time you read the phrase "the Angel of the Lord," that refers to Jesus (when He appeared to men before He came to earth as a baby)!
- The Beginning and the End: That is one of the many names of Jesus. If you think back as far as you can, Jesus already was. If you think ahead into the future as far as you can, Jesus always will be. There never was a time or will be a time when Jesus didn't exist.
- Do you think Jesus is God or man? Get ready to be amazed, because the answer is both!

Part Two: Jesus, the One and Only

- Who was older than His mother and the same age as His Father when He was born? Jesus!
- Did you know that even though Jesus was born He was never created? That's because He *was* the Creator (Colossians 1:16–17) and has always been.

Knee-Slappin' Sillies

Jokes

- What did the mama buffalo say when her son left for college?
"Bison."
- What key did the miner have that wouldn't open doors?
A don-key.
- What bank doesn't have any money?
A riverbank.
- What sleeps with its shoes on?
A horse.
- Why did the prospector wave a piece of paper on the riverbank?
He was fanning for gold.
- Why did the doctor take the miner's temperature?
He thought he had gold fever.
- Why did the real estate investor take his business elsewhere?
He said it was badland.
- What's the cheapest horse to buy?
A quarter horse.
- What do you call a dog that collects rocks?
A rock hound.
- What did the naughty brother snake say to his sister?
"Don't be a rattle-tail."
What day of the week is best to make flapjacks?
Fri-day.
What side of an apple fritter is the left side?
The part that isn't eaten.

Tongue Twisters

- Manly miners ride mad mules.
- The sun shines sometimes.

Knock-Knock Jokes

- Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Anita.
Anita who?
Anita gold pan and a pickaxe to get started with my mining.
- Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Dwayne.
Dwayne who?
Dwayne the pan and see if any gold is in there!
- Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Dime.
Dime who?
Dime to head west.
- Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Icy.
Icy who?
Icy a gold nugget in the bottom of the pan.

Fun Phrases

- Eureka! (I found it!)
- High tail it! (Leave quickly.)
- P'shaw! (Nonsense!)
- Better toddle! (Better be off.)
- Take a shine to (Like)
- Yea or Neigh! (Yes or no)

Gold Rush from A to Z

Imagine life during the Gold Rush. What words and images come to mind? Use this list to begin the brainstorming process and to create class names, word searches, and crossword puzzles (puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com).

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| A assay office (where the gold was weighed), antelope, apple pie order, axle grease (butter) | M mountain man, miner, muck, mule, mine shaft, maverick, marshal, mother lode, mule train |
| B blacksmith, bandana, burro, banjo, bedrock, bonanza (great gold discovery), bedroll, bison (buffalo), boom town | N nugget, necessary (outhouse), notions, no how |
| C claim, claim jumping, creek bed, coyote, covered wagon, circuit rider, cactus, cooper (barrel maker), creekin' | O outfitter, Oregon Trail, oxen, owl, ore |
| D donkey, dogie, dust storm, diggin', dynamite | P pyrite, panning, placer, prairie schooner, pickaxe, pay dirt, Pony Express, prospector, prairie dog |
| E eatin' irons (silverware), excavating, Eureka! (I found it!) | Q quartz, quilt, quicksand, quarter horse |
| F frontier, flapjacks, fiddle, Forty-Niners, fool's gold | R rattlesnake, ranger, rocker, rope, ruby |
| G gold dust, Gold Rush, gold pan, gold fever, ghost town, gems | S saddle, sourdough (experienced miner), stampeder, sluice, scout, shovel |
| H horse, harmonica, hitchin' post, hay bale, hard rock | T trapper, trailblazer, tumbleweed, Texas Ranger, tracker, togs (clothing) |
| I ingot | U undertaker |
| J jeans, jinglebobs (spurs), jerky, jackrabbit | V vaquero, vittles, varmint, veins of gold |
| K karat, Klondike Gold Rush | W wagon train, wagoneer, Wild West, wolf, wagon wheel, winnowing, Whoa! |
| L lizard | XYZ yarn (story), Yukon Territory, Yee-haw! |

Top 20 Tips When Working with Children

"Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" Matthew 19:13–14

1. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day, and always be ready with smiles, giggles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs. (Make sure all staff are aware of your church's appropriate touching policies.)
2. Learn names. It makes a child feel important and loved to be called by his name. Make sure visible nametags are always on each child.
3. Keep it moving. Children have short attention spans.
4. Use active learning. The more children can actively be involved in the learning process, the more they will retain.
5. Be all there! Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life, and focus your attention on the children under your care during VBS. Listen to them and care for them.
6. Eliminate down time. Find activities to do when you have a few free minutes so all time is being used in a fun and productive way. Play I Spy, practice memory verses, share Nifty Nuggets of Info and Knee Slappin' Sillies, play impromptu review games, or ask fun conversation starters.
7. Think safety. Read the Child Safety Precautions page. Ensure there are always at least two non-related adults with anyone under 18 years old at all times.
8. Be thematic. Children love crazy hats, fun cheers, songs, and anything that goes with the theme. Be ready to don a bonnet or miner's gear. Get them enthused and excited about participating in the daily contests.
9. Walk worthy. Be an example in both word and deed. Children need to see authentic Christianity, so make sure you are walking the walk and not just talking the talk.
10. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes act up in an effort to receive attention, even if it is negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
11. Be aware of age level characteristics. With younger children, activities need to be hands-on, concrete, short, and simple. Older children love to talk and are processing and questioning information. Be ready to give an answer for the hope that is within you.
12. Challenge them. Children generally rise to the level expected of them, so challenge them to learn their memory verses and song lyrics. At the same time, encourage in them a true love for the Lord and His Word.
13. Pray. Before, during, and after VBS, be a faithful prayer warrior for the children in your care.
14. Be organized. Read through all training information, ask questions, and faithfully prepare any materials for which you are responsible.
15. Be a team player. Children do not need to hear negative words from their leaders. If you are frustrated or upset, take it to the Lord, but do not complain or get angry in front of the children.
16. Remember to take bathroom breaks. The younger the child, the more important this is!
17. Maintain order. Children like order! Think through potential trouble spots in your day, and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
18. Build team spirit. Work as a team rather than allowing cliques to develop. Everyone should be an important member of the group.
19. Use guided conversation. Be alert and ready to turn conversations to spiritual matters. Build upon what the children are learning throughout the VBS day.
20. Be prepared to lead a child to Christ. Attend the Gospel Presentation Workshop to be equipped should God give you the awesome opportunity to talk to a child about Christ.

Director CD-ROM Contents

Helps	
Awards	Memory Verse Attendance Chart
	Marvelous Miner Award
	Visitor Award
Memory Verses	Junior Primary Memory Verses
	Pre-Primary Memory Verses
	Toddler Memory Verses
	KJV Junior Primary Memory Verses
	KJV Pre-Primary Memory Verses
	KJV Toddler Memory Verses
Registration Forms	Child Registration Form
	Nursery Letter to Parents (sample)
	Nursery Registration Form
	Registration Confirmation
	Volunteer Registration Form
	Worker Pledge
	Worker Pledge KJV
Workshops	Decision Card
	Gospel Workshop Invitation
	Leading a Child to Christ
	Leading a Child to Christ KJV
	Teacher Workshop Invitation
	Volunteer Workshop Invitation
Word Puzzles	Who is Jesus?
	Jesus's Teachings
	Jesus's Miracles
	Jesus's Fulfilled Prophecies
	Jesus's Resurrection
	Jesus's Resurrection KJV
	Names of Jesus
	Answer Key

Coloring Pages	
Forms	Budget Worksheet
	Caretaker Handbook (sample)
	Countdown Calendar
	Course Overview
	Daily Schedules
	Daily Schedules (KJV)
	Discovery Mine Room Schedule
	Director's Evaluation
	Director's Evaluation (submit by email)
	Job Descriptions
	Leadership Chart
	News Release
	Schedule
	Staff Devotions
	Staff Devotions (KJV)
	Team Leader Responsibilities
	Team Placement
	Team Room Assignments
	Team Roster
	Top 20 Tips Working with Children
	Top 20 Tips Working with Children (KJV)
	VBS Crew Chart

Decorations

Barrel
Buffalo
Cactus-short
Cactus-tall
Coyote
Donkey
Eagle
Grass and rocks
Grizzly bear
Horse
Mining cart
Mule
Owl
Pickaxe
Pine tree
Prairie dogs
Rattlesnake
Theme verse sign
Wagon wheel
Welcome display
Welcome sign
Wild turkey
Wolf

Gold Rush Gathering

Activities
Invitation
Tickets
Wanted Pattern
Face Painting Reference Chart
Photo Booth Pattern
Mule Pattern
Cactus Pattern
Poster

Promotional Helps

Clip Art Black-and-White
Clip Art Color
Logos

Presentation
images

Bible Verses
Bible Verses (KJV)
Backgrounds
Daily Phrases
Trivia