

Leading a Child to Christ



One of the greatest privileges of serving in VBS is helping children become members of God's family.

Pray for the children you teach and ask God to prepare them to understand and receive the good news about Jesus. Ask God to give you the sensitivity and wisdom you need to communicate effectively and to be aware of opportunities that occur naturally.

Because children are easily influenced to follow the group, be cautious about asking for group decisions. Offer opportunities to talk and pray individually with any child who expresses interest in becoming a member of God's family—but without pressure. A good way to guard against coercing a child to respond is simply to ask, "Would you like to hear more about this now or at another time?"

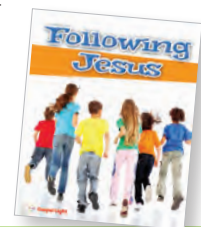
When talking about salvation with children, use words and phrases they understand; never assume they understand a concept just because they can repeat certain words. Avoid symbolic terms ("born again," "ask Jesus to come into your heart," "open your heart," etc.) that will confuse these literal-minded thinkers. (You may also use the evangelism booklet *God Loves You!*, which is available from Gospel Light.)



- 1. God wants you to become His child. Why do you think He wants you in His family?** (See 1 John 3:1.)
- 2. You and I and every person in the world have done wrong things. The Bible word for doing wrong is "sin." What do you think should happen to us when we sin?** (See Romans 6:23.)

- 3. God loves you so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross to take the punishment for your sin. Because Jesus never sinned, He is the only One who can take the punishment for your sin. On the third day after Jesus died, God brought Him back to life.** (See 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; 1 John 4:14.)
- 4. Are you sorry for your sin? Tell God that you are. Do you believe Jesus died for your sin and then rose again? Tell Him that, too. If you tell God you are sorry for your sin and believe that Jesus died to take your sin away, God forgives you.** (See 1 John 1:9.)
- 5. The Bible says that when you believe that Jesus is God's Son and that He is alive today, you receive God's gift of eternal life. This gift makes you a child of God. This means God is with you now and forever.** (See John 1:12; 3:16.)

There is great value in encouraging a child to think and pray about what you have said before responding. Encourage children who decide to become Christians to tell their parents. Give your pastor and the children's Sunday School teacher(s) their names. A child's initial response to Jesus is just the beginning of a lifelong process of growing in the faith, so children who make decisions need to be followed up to help them grow. The discipling booklet *Following Jesus* (available from Gospel Light) is an effective tool to use.



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Evangelism Opportunity



This symbol highlights special opportunities to explain the gospel message to children. Look for this symbol in the Tell the Bible Story section of each session.



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 **Gospel Light VBS**
Jesus Every Day![™]

Course Overview

Purpose: Discovering **God's Plan 4 U = Jesus!**
 Theme Verse: John 14:6–7

Session	1	2	3	4	5
					
	1 God's Plan: 2 MAKE Us!	2 God's Plan: 2 BE WITH Us!	3 God's Plan: 4 Us 2 KNOW Him!	4 God's Plan: 2 SAVE Us!	5 God's Plan: 2 LOVE Us 4-Ever!
Bible Story	The Creation Formulation Genesis 1:1—2:2	The Sin Separation Genesis 2:8–9, 15–17; 3:1–24	The Personification Revelation John 1:1–2,14; 5:1–9; 6:16–21; 11:57; 14:1–7	The Salvation Solution Luke 22—24:35	The Infinite Implementation Mark 16:15; Acts 1:1–11; 2:4,41– 47; 4:32–35
Q&A	Who made the world and who made me? God, who created the universe, made you and loves you.	What happens when I do wrong things? Sin separates you from God.	What is God like? When you read about Jesus in the Bible, you know more about God.	Why did Jesus have to die? Jesus died and rose again so that you can become a member of God's family.	So . . . now what do I do? You can live as God's child and show His love to others.
Spark Principle	Gravity When He made the world, God created all the scientific laws that govern it—laws like gravity.	Cause & Effect Whatever we do (a cause) has a result (an effect). Whenever we sin, the effect is separation from God.	Motion Objects at rest stay at rest until a force puts them in motion. People were stuck in sin until Jesus came and put God's plan in motion.	Transformation Transformations occur when something new is introduced to an existing object and changes the object. Jesus changes us.	Chain Reaction A series of events caused by the one before. Sharing God's love with others can start a chain reaction and go on and on and on!
Bible Verse	"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So God created man in his own likeness. He created him in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female." Genesis 1:1,27	"Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory." Romans 3:23	"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father also.'" John 14:6–7	"Christ died for sins once and for all time. The One who did what is right died for those who don't do right. He died to bring you to God." 1 Peter 3:18	"Lead a life of love, just as Christ did. He loved us. He gave himself up for us." Ephesians 5:2

Course Description

Lasers! Gyroscopes! Telescopes! Fusion, fission and chemical reactions!

At SonSpark Labs, explorers of all ages will find their imaginations spark to life as they research answers to universal questions by delving into the shadows of the ancient past, exploring scientific wonders of the present and even searching beyond—to an infinite future! The fun begins as you step into this astonishing world of God's plan for the people of His planet!

Each session focuses on one aspect of God's Plan for You = Jesus!, or GP4U = J!, as revealed through God's Word. Young scientists will participate in experiments and hands-on activities that help them get to know Jesus and God's plan of salvation. Kids will explore the answers to universal questions such as the following:



Who made the world and who made me? Session 1 will take kids on a whirlwind trip through Genesis to observe God's incredible creation. Kids will discover **God's Plan: 2 MAKE Us!**



What happens when I do wrong things? In Session 2, kids will find out how the sins committed by Adam and Eve affected all of history—including each of us today. Kids will be encouraged to know **God's Plan: 2 BE WITH Us!**



What is God like? In Session 3, kids will hear about the life of Jesus, the One God sent to bridge the separation created by our sin. Kids will learn that because of Jesus, they can experience **God's Plan: 4 Us 2 KNOW Him!**



Why did Jesus have to die? In Session 4, kids will learn that Jesus loves each one of them so much that He died and rose again so that they can become members of God's family. They'll be excited to discover the next part of **God's Plan: 2 SAVE Us!**



So . . . now what do I do? In Session 5, kids will learn what it means to live as a member of God's family—the expansion phase in **God's Plan: 2 LOVE Us 4-Ever!**

This summer, children will excitedly explore the amazing SonSpark Labs. They will trace God's life-changing plan as it's revealed from Creation to the present and on into the future. They'll find answers to life's most important questions. They will discover that God loves them and that through Jesus they can

be members of God's family and personally experience God's plan for each of us—God's Plan for You is Jesus!

GP4U = J!

Effective Teaching Tips

Preparation Is the Key

- Pray for God to prepare the hearts of your children—and yours, as well! Read the Heart Prep to prepare your heart and mind for the important work you will be doing.
- After each session, use the questions provided in the Daily Recap to carefully consider everything that took place during each session of VBS so that you will be better prepared for the next!
- Be prepared before each session begins. Have all materials ready for use so that you can focus your attention on the children, not on what you may have forgotten!
- Read through the entire session several times so that you know it well.
- Read the Bible Story as written, and also in your own Bible.
- Memorize the Bible Verse. When kids see that YOU know the verse by heart, it makes verse memorization seem doable and valuable.
- Know the Daily Plan and Q&A for each session, and use them to connect each activity to the session's Bible Story and Verse.
- Practice telling the Bible Story, selecting storytelling options that will keep kids actively engaged in learning.



Conversation Is an Art

- In addition to telling the Bible Story, be prepared to make good use of informal conversation before and after the story. Suggestions are provided for each session to help you focus these moments toward the Session Goals.
- Review the conversation suggestions provided. Think of ways you might tailor or build on these ideas to meet the needs of the children in your class. Write down any other ideas or questions you might ask, and keep them with you during the session. Listening to children's responses to your open-ended questions will help you discover what they know (or don't know) about a particular topic.
- Plan to listen to children as much as you talk. Look directly at the child who is talking. Demonstrate your interest by responding to the specific ideas the child expressed.
- Know each child's name and use it in positive, loving and affirming ways throughout the session. Look for times you can express praise and encouragement.
- Be sensitive to the different family situations in which children may live or with which they may be acquainted, and plan your conversation to be inclusive of all family situations.
- Stay with your children as they complete activities. Whenever possible, sit at children's eye level. They need to know that you are there, ready to help and ready to listen.
- Most importantly, pray for God to guide all your discussions with the children placed in your care.
- If you have a child acting disruptively, move near the child as you speak. Asking the child to answer a question can also help get the child back on track.

Decorating Your Center

A few simple decorations can transform an ordinary room into an exciting part of SonSpark Labs! Complete decorating instructions and patterns are available in *Lab Décor & More Theme Guide* and on the Decorating & Crafts Resources in the Reproducible Power Pack.

Decorating Tip

Lab Décor & More Theme Guide contains many more ideas and patterns than most churches will need. Evaluate and choose the ideas that are most appealing and workable for your situation.

Decorating Overview

First, review the decorating options available to you. The illustrations on the next page show you the different room décors for which we have provided instructions and patterns. But don't stop there.

If you have a great decorating idea of your own, go for it!

Next, consider the room where you will be leading activities, and then choose the décor that best suits your room, the activities you will be leading and the room you like the best!

Use a variety of real items, painted items or both! Along with backdrops, these items will create the atmosphere of your chosen room. For examples of colors to use for painting patterns, refer to the photos. For additional information, see the decorating clips found at gospellightvbs.com and MyVBSParty.com.

Decorating 1-2-3s

To make decorating for VBS even easier, we've organized all of our ideas according to ease of use. If you're short on time, the Level 1 and 2 ideas pack maximum fun into minimum effort. But if you're dreaming of transforming your room into a whole new world, Level 3 ideas will show you the way!

- 🕒 **Level 1** ideas include easy decorating options available from Gospel Light. They're ready-made decorations that we've prepared especially for SonSpark Labs VBS, as well as a couple of easy prop additions.
- 🕒 **Level 2** ideas include anything that you can gather or borrow. Whether you "shop" in your own garage, borrow from a friend or put a notice in your church bulletin, these items are sure to give your rooms added pizzazz.
- 🕒 **Level 3** ideas include ways to take decorating to the max! These include colorful backdrops, fun three-dimensional props and terrific patterns. If you've got the paint and the passion, these ideas are sure to take your VBS to the next level.

Want more? Then move on to **Level 4!** The forums at gospellightvbs.com, MyVBSParty.com and the Gospel Light VBS Facebook page are filled with posts from enthusiastic VBS directors and leaders just like you. They're always excited to share great decorating ideas they've come up with and eager to hear any ideas you'd like to contribute. And don't forget the decorating board for SonSpark Labs on Pinterest.



Dress the Part!

Make life in the lab come alive for your VBS kids! As leaders of the Bible Story Center, take on new lab names: Beaker Ben, Laser Liz, Microscope Mindy, etc. Dress in brightly colored T-shirts with graphic designs or lab coats you decorated yourself, decorate your room and play songs from the *Music & More CD*. You'll have as much fun as the kids—maybe more!



Kaboom! Chem Lab

A colorful chemistry lab is where kids can learn that God's Plan 4 U = Jesus creates the perfect solution for a great life!

Bio-Life Lab

Create a lab where God's living creations are investigated, examined and celebrated.



Phenomenal Physics Lab

What goes up must come down! The physics lab is where kids can learn about cause and effect in our world and how God turned our upside-down world right side up by sending Jesus!

Inventor's Lab

In this crazy inventor's lab, kids can show off their creativity with ingenious activities!



Bible Story Center Basics

You play a very important part in VBS, whether you are the leader in the Bible Story Center or a helper. As you prepare for each session, read the Heart Prep to get your heart and mind ready to lead children to the Bible truths. Then study the Session Goals. Knowing these goals helps you know each child will be learning during the session. Study the Bible Story Conclusion; this conversation gives you a natural opportunity to talk with kids about joining God's family.

The Bible Story Center is divided into two simple parts to help children learn important Bible truths: Tell the Bible Story and Apply the Bible Story.

Tell the Bible Story (15–20 minutes)

Through each Bible story, kids will learn about God's plan from creation of man (and woman!) to the formation of the first-century church—and beyond! Display Bible story posters from the *Bible Teaching Poster Pack* for children to see while listening to the story. (The Bible story posters are also available on the *ShowTime! Assemblies DVD* and on the *Decorating & Crafts Resources* in the *Reproducible Power Pack*.)

Telling the story in small groups is ideal, both for building relationships and allowing opportunity for interaction. But the story can also be told effectively to a large group—just make sure the storyteller is well prepared and animated. Seat additional helpers among children to guide behavior.

Story Starter

Introduce the Bible story with a quick and fun activity to help children connect everyday life with the Bible



story they are about to hear. Then give Bibles to children to use during the story. Begin each story with a brief prayer.

Bible Story

Each Bible story is written in language appropriate for first- to second-graders. (Note: If you are teaching a mixed age-level group, the version found in *TruthLab Bible Stories* for grades 3 and 4 is appropriate for both younger and older children.) During the story, volunteers answer quick involvement questions. This helps keep kids actively involved in the story.

Bring the Bible Story to Life!

Take kids beyond just listening to a story—help them LIVE it! Keep interest high by using the creative suggestions for involving them in the telling of the story. Even if you're new to storytelling, use these ideas to help you become a seasoned pro.

Conclusion

After the main story, summarize the Bible truths for your children. Relate the story to what they are learning about Jesus. Each story conclusion also offers an opportunity for evangelism.

Prayer

Each story ends with a silent and/or group prayer. Praying with your children helps them see the relevance of prayer in whatever they do.

Bible Story Skits

Instead of telling the Bible Story as written in this guide, have a team of volunteers come to each Bible Story Center and perform the Bible Story Skits found in *ShowTime! Assemblies*. PDF and RTF versions of the skits are available on Leaders' Resources in the *Reproducible Power Pack*. Older children may enjoy performing the skits themselves.



Apply the Bible Story (10–15 minutes)

Lead children in applying the Bible story and verse to their lives through discussion and the activities in the *Lab Journals*. Whether or not you choose to tell the Bible story in a small or large group, these life-application activities that facilitate discussion are best suited to be used by small groups. This time includes the following:

- Bible story review
- Bible verse discussion
- Life-application activity and discussion

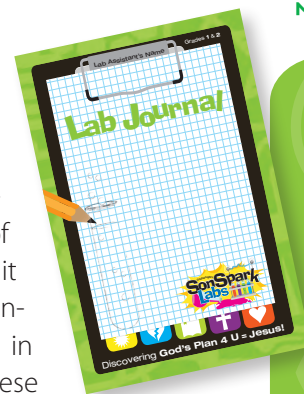
Active Review

An easy-to-do Active Review game is suggested as an option for each session. This game leads kids to answer the Bible story and life-application questions in an active way.

Lab Journal

These colorful and fun journals not only bring the theme to life but are also must-have keepsakes of your children's discoveries at SonSpark Labs! Get a copy of the *Lab Journal* and look through it to familiarize yourself with its contents. If you do not have time in your Bible Story Center to use these pages, use them as time fillers for children who arrive early or are waiting for parents to pick them up, during the Snack Center or at other times children finish activities early. You can also send these guides home with children as a way to extend Bible learning into the home.

The Bible story review and life-application activity pages are also available on Leaders' Resources in the Reproducible Power Pack. You can print out the pages or email them to families.



Lab Journal

This colorful and fun keepsake not only brings the theme to life but also provides an interactive way for kids to connect to the Bible content. There are fun activities to review the Bible story and for life application. Also, a prayer journal page for each session gives kids an opportunity to reflect on and respond to all they are discovering about God's plan.