



CONCRETE & CRANES™

VBX® 2020 PRETEEN
BIBLE STUDY LEADER GUIDE

Sharing the Gospel With Kids

The word **gospel** means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



GOD RULES. The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16-17)



WE SINNED. Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



GOD PROVIDED. God sent His Son Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9)



JESUS GIVES. Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! (Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18)



WE RESPOND. We can respond to Jesus. The ABCs of Becoming a Christian is a simple tool that helps us remember how to respond when prompted by the Holy Spirit to receive the gift Jesus offers.

ADMIT to God that you are a sinner. The first people God created chose to sin and disobey God. Ever since then, all people have chosen to sin and disobey. (Romans 3:23).

Tell God you messed up and you are sorry for doing your own thing, and turning away from Him through your thoughts, words, and actions.

Repent, turn away from your sin. (Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9) Repent doesn't just mean turning from doing bad things to doing good things. It means turning from sin and even from your own good works, and turning to Jesus, trusting only in Him to save you.

BELIEVE that Jesus is God's Son and receive God's gift of forgiveness from sin. You must believe that only Jesus can save you, and you cannot save yourself from your sin problem—not even by praying to God, going to church, or reading your Bible. Your faith or your trust is only in Jesus and what He did for you through His life, death, and resurrection. (Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

CONFESS your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Tell God and tell others what you believe. If Jesus is your Savior, you are trusting only in Him to save you. Jesus is also Lord, which means He is in charge. You can start following Him and doing what He says in the Bible. You are born again into a new life and look forward to being with God forever. (Romans 10:9-10,13)

If you sense that children are under conviction from the Holy Spirit and would like to respond to the good news, spend some time counseling and praying with them individually. If you sense that a child is not ready to pray and respond in faith and repentance, continue to prayerfully teach him about Christ during the week.

VBS Scripture

- I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. *Philippians 1:6*
- Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. *Philippians 1:6 (KJV)*



VBS Motto

Jesus! Our strong foundation!

During VBS, preteens will discover that Jesus' love provides a foundation that will last. When the storms of life come, they'll need the One who will be with them to the end of the age. When anxiety sets in, they'll need the assurance that true worth comes from being a child of God, not from what other people think about them. When they feel unworthy, they can remember that Jesus loved them enough to die for them. They'll learn to be wise builders who continue in what they've learned and firmly believe. And they will discover that He who began a good work will be faithful to carry it on to completion. We're all a work in progress. Life is a hard hat zone. But just wait 'til you see what God will do!

Day 1 Foundation of Love—Jesus Chose Matthew

Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him. Matthew left everything behind and followed Jesus. Matthew hosted a banquet. Jesus and His disciples came to the banquet. The Pharisees complained and questioned why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus told the Pharisees that He came not for the righteous but for sinners. (Matthew 9:9-13)

Day 2 Foundation of Forgiveness—Paul's Redemption

Paul was chosen by God to bring the good news about Jesus to the Gentiles. He was arrested and later taken to King Agrippa to tell his story. Paul told how he used to persecute believers. But one day, on the road to Damascus, he saw a bright light and heard a voice speaking to him. The voice was Jesus. Paul obeyed Jesus' command and told people everywhere that Jesus is the Messiah. (Acts 26:1-29)

Day 3 Foundation of Worth—Jesus Prayed in the Garden

On the last night Jesus spent with His disciples, He went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. He asked His disciples to remain awake and pray while He went further into the garden. Jesus was distressed because He knew He was going to die on the cross to save people from their sins. Jesus returned to the disciples three times and found them asleep each time. The last time He told the disciples to get up and follow Him. Jesus knew the time had come to follow through with God's plan. (Matthew 26:36-46)

Day 4 Foundation of Promise—Jesus' Resurrection and Promise

On the Sunday after Jesus' death, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James went to the tomb. When they arrived, they saw that the stone had been rolled away and an angel was sitting on it. The angel told the women that Jesus had risen. He instructed them to go tell the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. Later the disciples traveled to Galilee, where they saw Jesus. The disciples received instructions from Jesus and the promise that He would be with them always! (Matthew 28:1-10, 16-20)

Day 5 Foundation for Life—Wise and Foolish Builders

Jesus told a parable about two builders. He said that everyone who heard His words and acted on them would be like the wise man who built his house on the rock. The house had a strong foundation and would stand against the wind and the rain. However, those who did not listen would be like the foolish builder who built his house on the sand. Once the wind and rains came, the house collapsed. If people listen and obey Jesus, they will have a strong foundation for whatever happens in their lives. (Matthew 7:24-29)

LOBL—Jesus Jesus transformed people through His love.

The Levels of Biblical Learning® is a tool that reflects levels of understanding at each age that follow how God designed children to learn. For more information visit www.lifeway.com/lobl.

Christ Connection—The foundation of the gospel is faith. Jesus lived a perfect life and died the death we deserve. By grace, God saves everyone who trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Building with Preteens

All Builders Have Unique Skill Sets

Preteens can appear to be constantly on the go and are experiencing growth spurts. They can memorize easily, think quickly, and solve problems for themselves. Many preteens enjoy sports, competition, and active games, yet they are worried about fitting in and rejection.

Preteens need you to remember that they develop at different rates. They do not all have the same skills and abilities. Plan activities that use gross motor skills, such as games, and fine motor skills, such as crafts. Give preteens choices whenever possible.

Understand How a Builder Thinks


Preteens seem slow to respond but are creative, imaginative, and curious. They are critical of themselves and others. They are beginning to question authority and expect perfection. Preteens experience emotional roller coasters and may exhibit oppositional behaviors at times.

Preteens need you to listen to and respect their ideas. They want to feel needed, accepted, and loved at church. Try to capitalize on the fact that preteens have a good sense of humor to deescalate any conflicts that may arise.

It's More Than a Building

Preteens can be sensitive to conviction from the Holy Spirit and are developing a value system based on their own understanding of biblical principles. They are beginning to apply the biblical truths they are learning in Bible study to their lives.

Preteens need you to openly answer spiritual questions using the Bible as your guide. They need you to model Christian attitudes and actions and be a Christian mentor.

NOTE: The  icon identifies an opportune time to share the gospel with preteens as led by the Holy Spirit.

Builders with special needs

Preteens with special needs may struggle with one or more of the following disabilities: physical, developmental/learning, behavioral/emotional, or sensory impairment. Physical disabilities affect a child's movement and motion. Learning disabilities impact the way children process and understand information. Behavioral and emotional disabilities are characterized by difficulties paying attention and building and maintaining relationships with peers and teachers. Sensory impairments include vision or hearing loss or impairments, feeding issues, tactile (touch) sensitivity, and spatial awareness difficulties.

Use the following accommodations or modifications to help preteens with special needs in your classroom:

- Make sure rooms are uncluttered and organized. Too many decorations in one area can distract preteens and cause anxiety, especially among those with attention related disabilities and sensory impairments. Ensure there are free and clear areas so those with mobility issues can easily walk or move through in a wheelchair.
- Provide oral instructions and repeat instructions as needed. Break down instructions for crafts, games, and other learning activities into smaller, manageable tasks. Preteens with learning and/or behavioral/emotional disabilities struggle when hearing several instructions at once. If possible, demonstrate how to complete tasks.
- When needed, find a buddy to work alongside the preteen. This will help to establish relationships, trust, and consistency. A buddy could be an extra adult helper or youth.
- Use a positive approach to feedback. It may be easy to feel impatient when dealing with preteens with behavioral or emotional disorders. Try to maintain a calm response despite any disruptive behaviors. Redirect the child's attention when needed.
- Allow movement breaks as needed. Preteens with autism and other developmental disabilities may need movement breaks after sitting and listening for a longer length of time.

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Day 1

Foundation of Love

What You Need to Know

Bible Story

Jesus Chose Matthew
Matthew 9:9-13

Bible Verses

Theme Verse: Philippians 1:6
Bonus Verse: John 15:9

Today's Point

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

Leader Devotion

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 preteens 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 preteen. As you show preteens 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 2

Foundation of Forgiveness

What You Need to Know

Bible Story

Paul's Redemption
Acts 26:1-29

Bible Verses

Theme Verse: Philippians 1:6
Bonus Verse: Romans 5:8

Today's Point

Jesus loves me regardless
of my sin.

Leader Devotion

In the previous session, 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 preteens. 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 preteens God will place in our groups this week?

Day 3

Foundation of Worth

What You Need to Know

Bible Story

Jesus Prayed in the Garden
Matthew 26:36-46

Bible Verses

Theme Verse: Philippians 1:6
Bonus Verse: John 15:13

Today's Point

Jesus chose to die for me.
Leader Devotion

Leader Devotion

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 preteens 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 preteens 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 preteens in your group.

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 preteens 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 4

Foundation of Promise

What You Need to Know

Bible Story

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

Bible Verses

Theme Verse: Philippians 1:6
Bonus Verse: Matthew 28:20b

Today's Point

Jesus will always love me.

Leader Devotion

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 5

Foundation for Life

What You Need to Know

Bible Story

Wise and Foolish Builders
Matthew 7:24-29

Bible Verses

Theme Verse: Philippians 1:6
Bonus Verse: 2 Timothy 3:14

Today's Point

Jesus' love is the foundation for the rest of my life.

Leader Devotion

How many times have you heard the parable of the wise and foolish builders? Or, did you sing a song about them while you were growing up? I don't know if I thought about the details of the parable or the words of the song or if I just experienced maniacal pleasure when "the house on the sand went SMASH!" But today, let's dig a little deeper into this parable. What does it mean?

Jesus often used parables to help His listeners understand a spiritual truth. It is interesting to notice first, WHEN did Jesus share this parable? In Matthew it comes after three chapters of Jesus' sermon on the mount, the longest continuous recorded series of teachings by Jesus. Luke also shares this parable, and it too comes at the end of his abbreviated account of the same sermon. Needless to say, Jesus was referring back to the wealth of spiritual teaching He had just shared with His listeners. Doesn't that make you think, "Wait! Then what did He say?" Jesus even began this parable with the word, "Therefore," a word that means to pay attention to what had previously been said. It might be a good time to reread the sermon for yourself and listen with your spiritual ears to what God can reveal to you.

In this final session of VBS, this parable also helps us encourage preteens to remember what they have learned from God's Word about who Jesus is, why He came, and what He taught us. The parable talks about wise and foolish builders. The words "wise" and "foolish" are not references to intellect. Rather, Jesus is saying those who listen to and obey His words are wise. Those who ignore them are foolish.

The Old Testament often depicted the wrath of God as a storm. Difficulties and tragedies in life are often

referred to as storms. Storms may also come in the form of spiritual attacks by the enemy. Either way, Jesus wanted His followers to know that those who hear His words and act on them will have the foundation necessary to withstand any storm.

As we look back at the truths we have studied this week, we know we can trust the solid foundation we have in Jesus. He loves us. We can't do anything to make Him love us more, nor can we do anything to cause Him to love us less. He loved us enough to die for us and He will keep His promise of love and constant presence. We may experience tiny storms today or major storms in the days ahead, but Jesus is our foundation and He will never be shaken. We may feel battered by the wind and rain. We may even have moments when we feel like life's storms have "smashed" us. But if we put our faith in Him, we can know our foundation is firm.

YOUR PERSONAL BLUEPRINT

1. Did you glance back over the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)? What are some foundational spiritual truths that help you feel secure?
2. What are some foundational spiritual truths you have helped preteens know this week?
3. Locate and read 2 Timothy 3:14 (today's bonus verse). Pray and thank God for the people in your life who have taught you spiritual truth. Pray for the preteens who have listened to you this week that the Holy Spirit will help them remember the truth from God's Word.