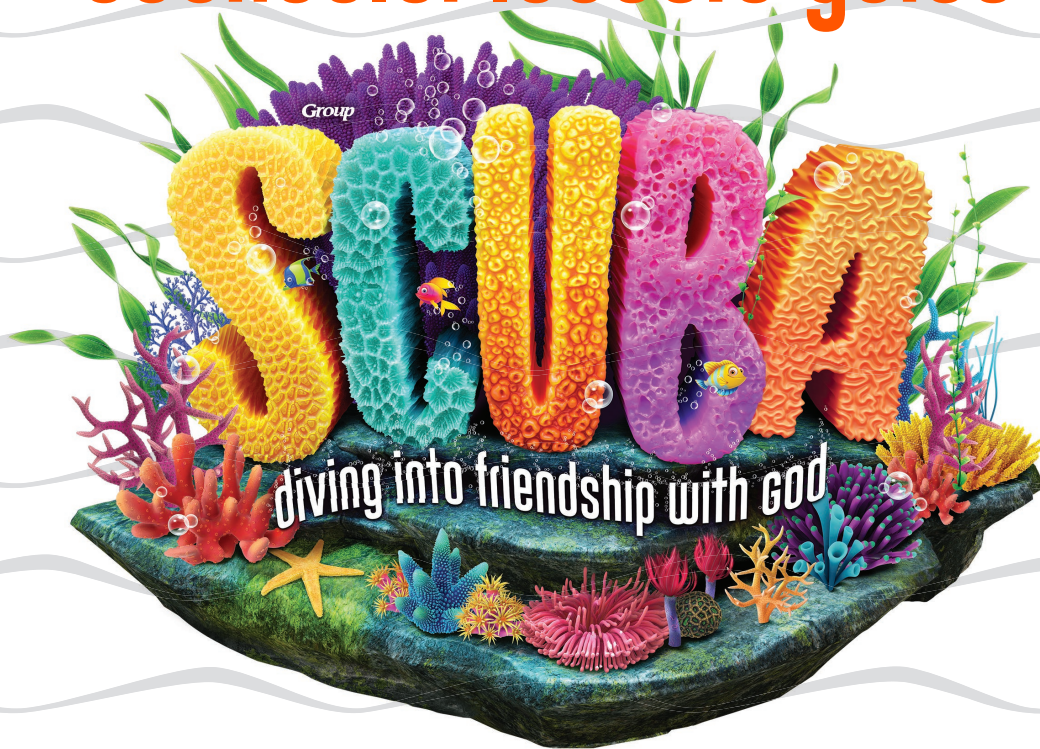




counselor leaders guide



for online training go to: <https://teamvbs.com>



schedule overview

Monday-Thursday, 1st-4th Grade

- 6:00 PM Doors Open, get to know the kids, play a fun “get to know you” game.
- 6:15 PM Homeroom/First Rotation
Bible/Hope Theater or H-219/220
Imagination Station/H-208A or H-208B
- 6:50 PM Fin-tastic Rally/Fellowship Hall
- 7:35 PM Final Rotation
Bible/Hope Theater or H-219/220
Imagination Station/H-208A or H-208B
- 8:15 PM Parent Pick-up, 4th graders MUST have a “Permission to Leave” form to meet their parent at a different location and to pick up a sibling.

Monday-Thursday, 5th Grade

- 6:00 PM Doors Open, check in at Faith Gym, get to know the kids, play a fun “get to know you” game (like the one in the Imagination Station book).
- 6:15 PM Bible F-209
- 6:50 PM Fin-tastic Rally/Fellowship Hall
- 7:35 PM Imagination Station, Games/F-209, Faith Gym
- 8:15 PM Parent Pick-up, Kids must have a “Permission to Leave” form to meet their parent at a different location
- 6:15 PM **Friday Family Night, you are not responsible for your crew, but a great time to show them you care by being there!**

the crew family

Every member of your mixed-age Crew adds something to every activity!

I've just completed first grade. I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to be the best. I can help encourage my Crew to be the best it can be.



I've just completed second grade. I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I want everything to be fair. I can help make sure we all take turns and treat one another fairly.



I've just completed third grade. I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to be challenged. I can help younger members of my Crew with challenging projects.



I've just completed fourth grade. I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to ask questions. I can help my Crew ask questions to make sure we understand what we're learning.



I've just completed fifth grade. I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to make choices. I can help Crew members with tasks and help the Crew Leader guide everyone in showing God's love.



God is a friend who's real.

Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18–19)

Bible Verse: “We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:69)

Diving Into the Bible

A harsh drought plagued Israel for years due to the wicked deeds of idol-worshipping King Ahab. Finally, to show God's existence, God's prophet Elijah summoned 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to Mount Carmel. The prophets built an altar, then prayed to their false god, Baal, for fire. For hours the hundreds of prophets prayed, shouted, and even cut themselves. But no one answered. Then Elijah built a simple stone altar and dug a trench around it. Servants poured water on his altar again and again. Elijah prayed, “O Lord, answer me...so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God.” Instantly fire came from heaven and burned up Elijah's sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil! God—the only true God—answered.

Yet Elijah's triumph soon turned to terror as Queen Jezebel swore she'd have Elijah killed. The prophet fled into the wilderness, where hunger and depression wore him down. God appeared, not in a flash of fire but in a gentle whisper. The one true God answered again.

Connecting With Kids

Like Elijah, kids swim in a culture increasingly resistant to any one source of truth. Today's kids doubt the integrity of the Bible. They're dubious about the church. And many view the idea of one true God as judgmental and exclusive. The kids at your VBS really *can* understand what Elijah faced—living in a world that embraced countless false gods and warred against God's truth! Fundamentally, when we believe God is *real*, the existence of God gives us hope. Belief in one true God grounds us, providing stability and firm footing through life's ups and downs. Today, root kids in the truth that the one amazing, powerful God really and truly desires a friendship with them!



Why It Matters

Elijah experienced the reality of God through fire, and later in a whisper. This passage can help kids who are questioning the truth of a God they can't see or hear.

Invitation: John 1:12 says, "But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." Have you received Jesus as your Savior? Have you believed that He is the only way to heaven and placed Him as the Lord of your life? You may not understand what that means and that is OK, it might make more sense to you by the end of the week. But some of you might want to talk to someone and if you do, we have counselors here that can share with your how to have a life with Jesus as your Savior.

God is a friend who loves.

Bible Story: God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 1–3)

Bible Verse: “Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” (John 13:34)

Diving Into the Bible

When God told Jonah to go preach to the people of Nineveh, Jonah jumped on the first ship...headed in the *opposite* direction! He'd likely heard of the Ninevites' reputation for cruelty. In Jonah's estimation, these people didn't deserve to hear about—or experience—God's love. But God had other plans. He sent a big fish to swallow the reluctant prophet. Deep inside the fish's belly, Jonah finally submitted to God's will. God forgave Jonah, then used him to deliver a warning to the people of Nineveh. As soon as the people heard Jonah's message, they stopped their evil deeds and asked for God's forgiveness. God lovingly forgave an undeserving people, demonstrating his heart of mercy for *all*.

Connecting With Kids

Jonah seems to have viewed the Ninevites as unredeemable—so sinful that they were unworthy of God's salvation. When do you first remember a feeling of shame or unworthiness? For many of us, the sense of being unlovable came as a child when we'd disobeyed, been caught in a lie, or disappointed an adult. Perhaps caring friends or family members demonstrated Christ-like forgiveness, modeling unconditional love! Unfortunately, plenty of kids who come to your VBS won't have experienced genuine love and forgiveness. Today is a great day to immerse kids in God's overwhelming love for *all* people. Joyfully share the truth that a friendship with God means we are loved—and so are those we don't think are lovable.



Why It Matters

Jonah didn't think the people of Nineveh deserved God's mercy. Jonah's attitude can challenge kids to think about who *they* may doubt God could love.

The invitation: John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." Have you accepted God's gift of eternal life that comes from believing that Jesus died to pay the price for your sins? If you understand what this means and desire to talk to someone, we have counselors in the room.

God is a friend we can trust.

Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)

Bible Verse: “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.” (John 14:27)

Diving Into the Bible

After a long day of teaching along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus gave his followers instructions to cross to the other side of the water. The disciples put their backs into rowing, while Jesus, weary from the long day, quickly fell asleep. Before long, a sudden storm blew in. Gale-force winds stirred up powerful waves that broke over the side of the boat. Jesus’ friends panicked! What if the wind tipped the boat over? What if the boat filled up with water and sank? How could Jesus sleep through all this? In terror, the disciples woke Jesus up. Jesus commanded the wind and waves to be silent and still...and they obeyed! An immediate calm settled over the waters.

Connecting With Kids

What storms are kids at your VBS facing? Divorcing parents? Loneliness? Bullying? Food insecurity? A child may even be trying to navigate relationships with *others* who are facing challenges. At times, kids may feel like Jesus’ disciples, asking where Jesus is when hardships swell into a tidal wave of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. What a comfort to know we have a trustworthy friend nearby! God is a friend we can trust to comfort, guide, listen, and love us. Today, bring peace (just like Jesus did!) as you explore with kids what it means to have a trustworthy friend in God.



Why It Matters

Jesus commanded wild wind *and* waves to be still, showing his power and his ability to bring peace. This passage shows kids they can trust God when life’s troubles crash around them.

Invitation: Romans 10:9 & 10 says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." There are counselors here if you want to talk about making a decision.

God is a friend forever.

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18–20)

Bible Verse: “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.” (John 11:25)

Diving Into the Bible

Betrayed by a friend, accused by religious leaders, and arrested by the Temple guards, Jesus’ future seemed grim. The religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat, a liar, and a blasphemer...and apparently the crowds demanding his crucifixion agreed. His hurried trial ended in a death sentence—one usually reserved for criminals. Jesus died on a cross, under a sign mocking him as King of the Jews. His fearful friends scattered, leaving two men who’d followed Jesus from afar to prepare his body for burial. Jesus’ lifeless body lay in a borrowed tomb, sealed behind a heavy gravestone. It seemed like the end...but was it?

Three days later, Jesus’ friends discovered the stone had been moved and the tomb was empty! Jesus’ body hadn’t been stolen or moved—Jesus appeared repeatedly to his followers! They saw him, felt his breath, and touched the wounds on his hands! Jesus turned the end into eternity!

Connecting With Kids

Jesus’ followers felt they’d lost their closest friend forever. Kids have felt that, too. Friends come and go. They move away, discover new interests, make new friends, or sometimes just abandon us. The idea of “forever” seems impossible. Yet God had something surprising in store! Jesus’ death wasn’t the end—it was just the beginning of a friendship that will last into eternity! God always has been and always will be—he is forever! And even better, his love for us is forever, too! Things like sadness, loneliness, and worry won’t last forever. Today, share the exciting news that a friendship with God is one that will never ever end!



Why It Matters

Jesus died on a cross, paying the price for the sins of the world once and for all. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, kids can have a forever friendship with God.

God loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Jesus died and took the punishment for all the wrong things we do. But Jesus is stronger than death, and He came back to life! Jesus wants to be our friend forever. When we ask Him to, He’ll take away the wrong things we’ve done and fill our lives with His love. Jesus will always be with us and will help us make right choices. When we believe in Jesus and ask Him to forgive us, someday we’ll live with Him forever in heaven.

