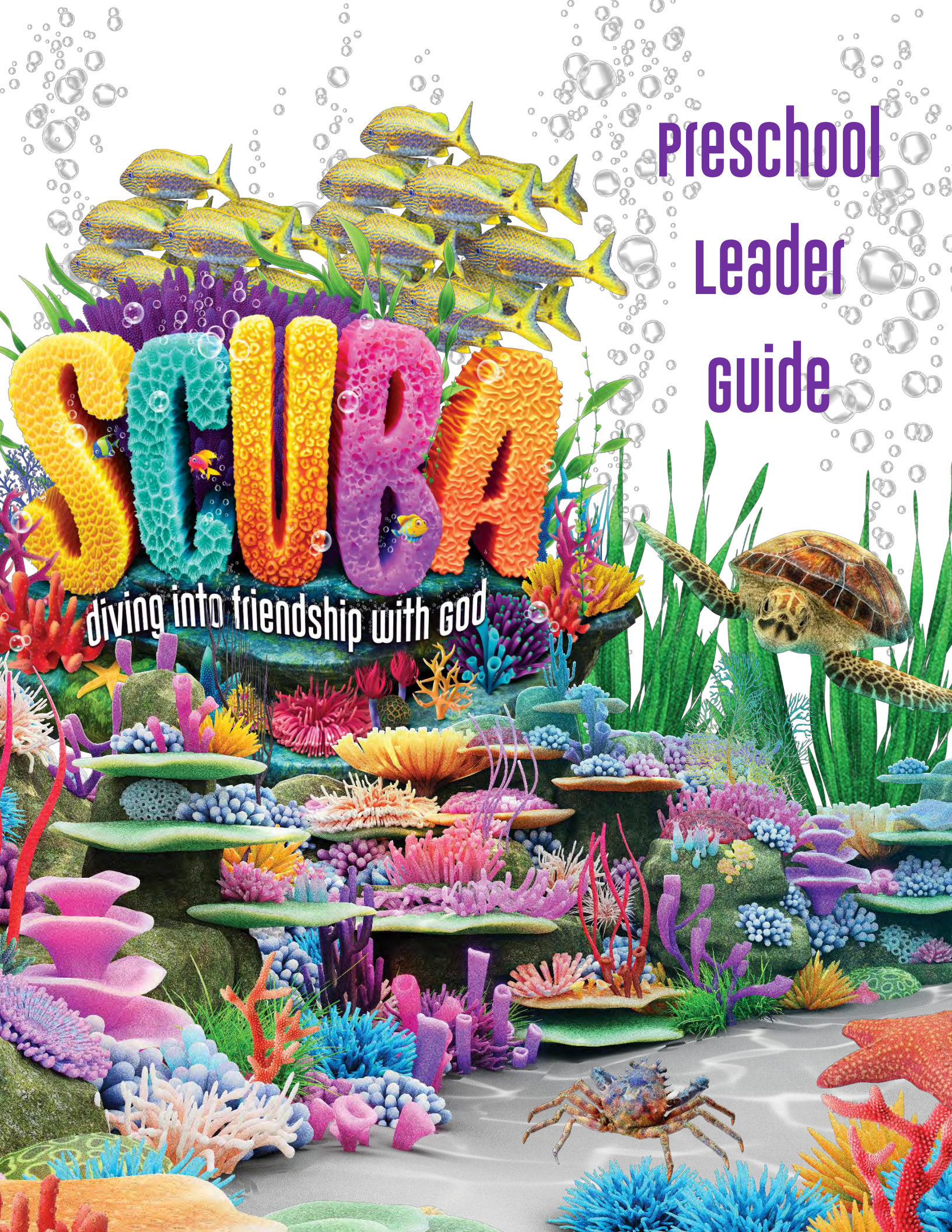
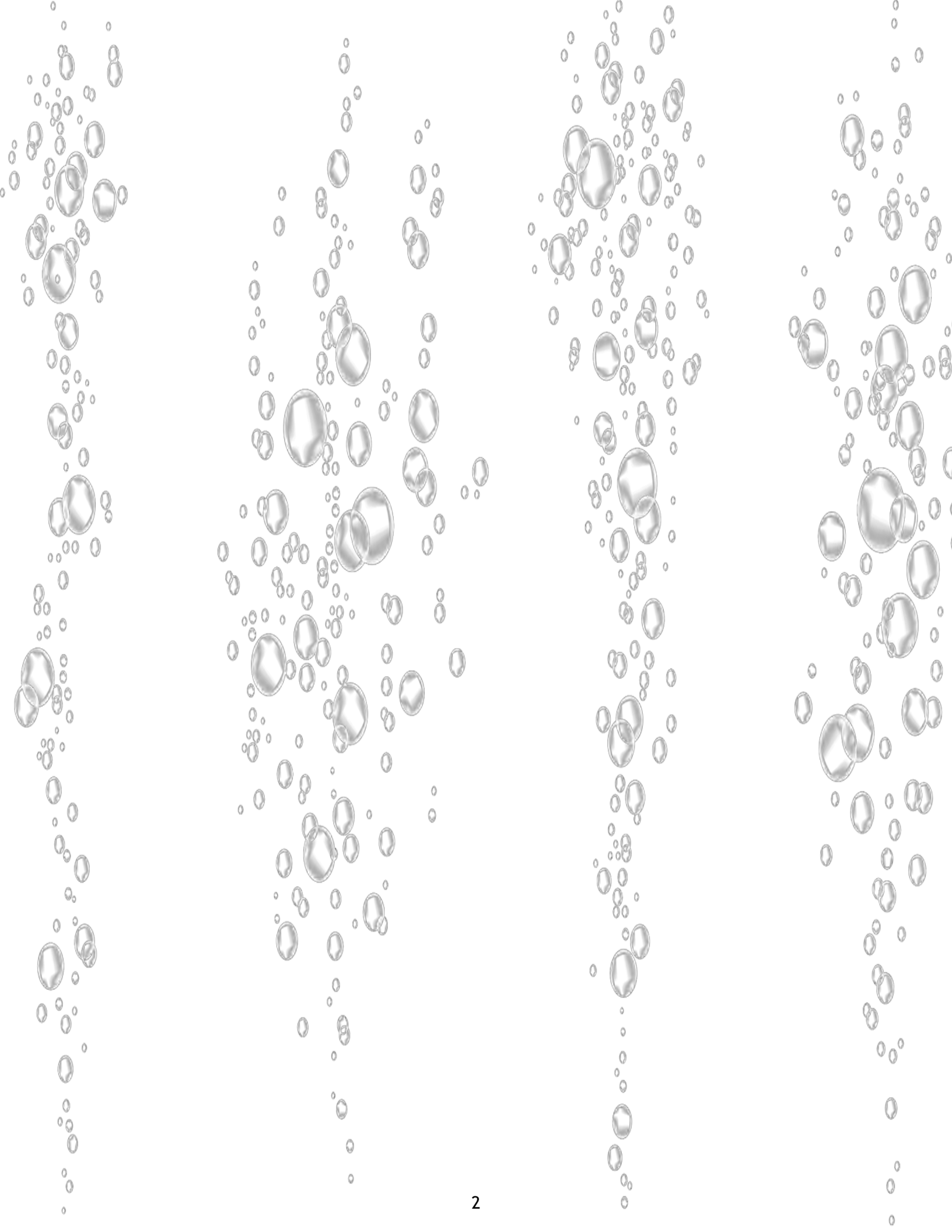


preschool Leader guide

diving into friendship with god





Welcome!

Kids will launch on a cosmic quest where they'll have a blast experiencing God's Word, digging into surprising and authentic discoveries in the Imagination Station and singing fun songs. "Stellar" rockets kids on an out-of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun.

So, what should you do first? Pray! Start praying for the children God will bring to McGregor, for the families they represent, for Kingdom impact, and for all the volunteers involved, including you, for lives to be changed, hearts to be touched, and His message to be received, all for His glory.

What is next? Complete the online training (teamvbs.com) and carefully read through your VBS leader guide so that you can best prepare to receive His children, keep them safe, and engage them in His truths. You will want to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures, carefully review the stories in preparation to teach the children, look over the nightly schedule, Bible story, verse, games, and activities.

You will also want to connect with your co-teachers ahead of time to coordinate schedules and plan accordingly. If you do not know who you are serving with or in what room, please contact Candace Furiosi at candace.furiosi@mcgregor.net.

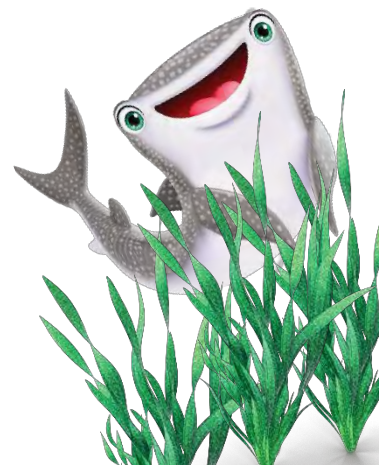
Below are a few more things to note about VBS:

VBS Registration

- Preschool Care is available for children of volunteers who do not meet the minimum age requirement during VBS week. You must register them by **May 22** to reserve a spot by providing your information at the end of your training session.
- Please pre-register your older children online by **May 28**.
- We appreciate your willingness to serve with us during VBS. We know that it can also be difficult to be able to be in your place on time if you have school-aged kids. We want to offer to deliver your children, **BUT you must register them in Activity Room B upstairs for 1st - 4th graders, and F209 for 5th graders** so that they can attend VBS and enjoy it with their friends. Please let Candace Furiosi know if this is something that would help make your VBS volunteer time easier for you to be ready to receive your Crews as they arrive. We will be happy to put you on the list to take care of.

VBS Times

- Be in place at 5:30PM on Monday and no later than 5:50PM on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.
- Preschool Care (those under 3) will open at 5:15PM on Monday and 5:45PM on Tuesday through Thursday for those younger than 3.
- Drop-off for all other classes begins at 6:00PM.



T-Shirts

- When you complete your training by **May 27**, you will receive a free VBS 2023 t-shirt.
- After you have read through the leader guide and watched the online training video, make sure to answer the review questions and submit your t-shirt size, so that you can pick up your VBS t-shirt from the Younger Preschool Counter starting May 10. We need 1 week from when you complete training to have the shirts ready in preschool for you.
- Pre-ordering for children's shirts is available online when you register your children and is strongly encouraged, as there will be limited quantities available during VBS week. Shirts are \$15 sizes Youth or Adult S – XL, Adult 2XL, 3XL and 4XL are \$18.

HeBrews Café

- For your convenience, HeBrews will be open on Main Street in the Hope Building nightly from 4:30PM to 7:00PM with VBS family-friendly menu items available for purchase.

Family Night

- The whole family is invited Friday night at 6:15PM in the Fellowship Hall.
- Preschool and Children's Worship Teams will lead a fun-filled evening of music and drama to wrap up the week.
- We will also learn the winner of the mission challenge and finish with ice cream on Main Street for everyone.

If you have any questions about the material covered or would like more information, contact our team at 239-689-2603.

As always, we are grateful to be serving alongside you,

Your Preschool Ministry Team

Ministry Description for Preschool VBS Leaders

VBS is an exciting and energetic experience for children and teachers alike. But before the first decoration is hung or the first child is greeted, take a moment to think about the purpose of VBS...

- To meet and reach families in our community who otherwise might not hear the Word of God
- To teach preschoolers Bible truths and to lay a foundation for future spiritual growth
- To help preschoolers apply Biblical principles in their lives
- To grow personally as you meditate on each day's personal Bible study and prepare to teach

Responsible To:

- Preschool Ministry Director

Relates Closely With:

- Greeter/Director Team, Children, Parents, other VBS Team Members

Purpose:

- To reach preschoolers and their families by serving as the front-line minister to a small group of children during Vacation Bible School

Responsibilities:

- Exude Christ-like attitude
- Arrive early and be prepared each night for class
- Be sure to make each child feel welcome as they enter your classroom
- Lead preschoolers in rotation of activities each night
- Pay special attention to parents and kids to create a comfortable environment where they will be receptive to the Gospel message
- Model Christ's love to all preschoolers and families

Time and Length of Commitment:

- Approximately 30 minutes prior to VBS to watch training video.
- June 12, 2023, from 5:30PM until 8:30PM
- June 13– June 15, 5:50PM until 8:30PM

Training:

- Online VBS Volunteer Training: <http://teamvbs.mcgregor.net>

Special Qualifications:

- Passion for Preschoolers
- Teachable Spirit
- Team Player

Helpful Tips

Pre-VBS Notes

Make sure to exchange information with the other teachers in your room.

Plan accordingly...

- How to coordinate drop-off and pick-up of your own children to ensure there is always a teacher in the room.
- Who will be in class early to set up and be ready for the children?
- Who will greet the children at the door?
- Who will begin the Opening Activity each night?
- Who will lead the prayer time?
- Who will introduce the story?
- Who will clean-up?
- Who will do the wrap-up time?

Classroom Activities

Your room will be equipped with an opening activity, Music CD, game, and closing activities that help reinforce the Bible story. Please use these activities in lieu of toys - this will save you valuable time at the end of the evening!

Missions Project

Boys will compete against Girls to see who can raise the most money for Missions. *Our VBS offering this year is going to support an orphan-care organization called Family Legacy Missions International, working in Zambia, Africa. Family Legacy owns and operates 21 Christian schools throughout the capital city of Lusaka, and it is through these schools that they provide an education, medical care, discipleship, counseling, and a hot meal every day to vulnerable and orphaned children. They serve 11,000 vulnerable children in these 21 schools! Family Legacy also owns and operates a 100-acre full-time residential care facility for the most vulnerable children in our program that need a safe place to stay for a while. They currently serve an additional 500 children at this facility.*

Our VBS offering will be put toward the specific need of providing new school uniforms for the children who need them the most. Every \$20 we raise will buy a new uniform for a child, including a dress shirt, a warm sweater, dress pants for the boys, and a dress/skirt for the girls.

Check-In & Pick-Up Procedures

- One teacher should be stationed at the doorway during check-in and pick-up.
- Parents will check their children in at the counter.
- Children may only be picked up in the classroom. Please ask parents to meet you back in the classroom if you encounter them while on rotations.
- Children must be picked up by an adult (age 18 or older) who shows the teacher the appropriate matching tag. If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up, please guide the person to a director.
- Please match the tag of the person picking up the preschooler with the tag on the child. If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up, please guide the person to a director.



Interaction with Children

- Communicate positively. Enthusiasm is contagious!
- Children should sit next to, not in the laps of, teachers.
- Join in and be a Christ-like model for your class. Have fun! Sing and do the motions in worship time.
- Discipline stems from discipleship. Sad choices are a ministry opportunity for you to redirect children to a positive behavior. Please refrain from yelling or negatively touching a child. Seek a director's assistance if you need help.

Quick Tips for Getting Their Attention

- Clapping Patterns: To gain children's attention, try clapping patterns. Clap twice, and then invite them to clap with you, repeat until entire class is clapping along. The older the class the more intricate patterns you can try with them.
- Whisper: If you can hear (teacher's name) pat your belly (or other motion). Wait a second and repeat the movement or select another one. Quickly, most of the class will join you in the movement and give you the desired attention!
- Sing it out: You can utilize opera voices to ask kids to do things; they think this is so funny!

Travel Between Rotations

- Do a head count before leaving each rotation, as you are walking to the next rotation, and when you arrive at your destination.
- Use a walking rope to transition between activities or a transition strategy such as walking down the hall with bubbles and duck tails. (Please do NOT use the "Fingers on the wall" or line up against the wall method to keep your class in line.)
- Be sure all classroom items and children's belongings are left in the classroom.
- **Ask parents to meet you back in the classroom if you encounter them while on rotations.**

Restrooms

- Restrooms are in the classrooms and in the main hallways of the JOY Building. For your protection, males are not to take girls to the restroom or change diapers. If using the hallway restrooms, male leaders can monitor children in the hallway while other female leaders assist in the restrooms. When assisting in the classrooms, leave the door open.
- Only two preschoolers of the same gender should be allowed in the classroom restroom at one time. A teacher should supervise at the door, while remaining in full view of another teacher. A teacher should never be alone in the restroom with a child.

Safety Issues

- In the event of an emergency, such as a power outage, severe weather storm, or any other threatening situation, a director will notify you and your class to return immediately to your classroom or another designated location.
- If anything, out of the ordinary occurs, an Incident Report must be filled out. (*This includes things like bumps, trips, pushing a friend, anything that leaves a mark, child was scared or upset for any reason.*) Incident Reports should be signed by the teacher, then a director, and finally the parent. The parent receives the yellow copy. This is our means of communicating with the parents and provides a record for future reference if needed.

End of The Night

- As children leave, make sure each child has their personal belongings.
- Before you leave, make sure to do a clean-up: wipe off tables/counters, spray and stack chairs, and place extra supplies on the counters. Spray any items in your room such as blocks, or other items that will be used again the next night and leave them to dry. If there is anything extra you need for the following evening, please notify your Director and we will do our best to provide those items.

TEACHERS:

- Reset Room
 - Place daily supplies back in their designated cubbies where they are labeled by the door
 - Place the extra supplies back in the paper bag and bring to your Director and pick up the next night's bag. (if it's not on the map in the cubie, it goes back in the bag)
 - Wipe Down and spray Counters / Tables
 - Fill water jugs in the fridge with the filtered water out of the sink faucet in room
 - Fill out room supply needs (on the back of the nightly checklist) if you need anything for the next night and give to your director as you check out each night.
 - Take evening room checklist to your director to complete your evening.
 - Have a great evening! Get some rest, we want you ready and rested for the energy that these kids will bring each night.

DIRECTORS:

- When teachers are gone, do a quick sweep of your rooms to make sure everything is put back and cleaned for the next night.
- Give Candace the nightly checklist/room supply needs from each room that you have collected.
- Have a great evening! Continue to pray for the week and for God to do great things.
-

CELL PHONES

- Cell phones are a great thing to help us keep in touch with loved ones. At Monumental VBS we want to give our children our full attention and love to show them how much God loves them.
- Cell phones should be turned off or on silent and put away in a purse, cabinet, or kept in your pocket for the duration of the evening.
- Each rotation has a director that will be keeping track of time, so you don't have to worry about when to head to the next rotation.
- NO PHOTOS – it is important to keep the privacy of our families and children in mind. Please do not take any photos of any children. Even if they are your own, there are others in the background that are not. We will have a professional photographer taking photos for us that week.

Weekly Overview

	Overview	Bible Story	Opening Activity	Closing Activity
MONDAY	<p>Bible Point: God is a friend who's real.</p> <p>Bible Verse: "We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:69)</p>	 <p>Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18-19)</p>	<p>Frogfish Finder</p> 	<p>Curly Coral</p> 
Tuesday	<p>Bible Point: God is a friend who loves.</p> <p>Bible Verse: "Just as I have loved you, you should love each other." (John 13:34)</p>	 <p>Bible Story: God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 1-3)</p>	<p>Jonah's Fish Spitter</p> 	<p>Fish Tummies</p> 
Wednesday	<p>Bible Point: God is a friend we can trust.</p> <p>Bible Verse: "I am leaving you with a gift – peace of mind and heart." (John 14:27)</p>	 <p>Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)</p>	<p>Calm Seas Bottles</p> 	<p>Seal Stuffies</p> 
Thursday	<p>Bible Point: God is a friend forever.</p> <p>Bible Verse: "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying," *John 11:25)</p>	 <p>Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18-20)</p>	<p>Waylon the whale shark</p> 	<p>Friendship Bands</p> 

Nightly Schedule by Age Group

YOUNGER PRESCHOOL ROOMS: H101. H102. H103. H104. H105. H106. H107. H108.

5:50-6:00 Teacher Arrival & Classroom set-up

**Teachers are encouraged to be in place by 5:30PM on Monday.*

6:00-6:20 Children Arrive/Opening Activity

6:25-6:50 Story Time in H100

6:55-7:20 Worship Time in the J.A.M.

7:25-7:50 Sticky Scripture in J100

7:55-8:15 Closing Activity in the room

OLDER PRESCHOOL ROOMS: H115. H116. H118. H119. H120. H121. H122. H124. H125. H126

5:50-6:00 Teacher Arrival & Classroom set-up

**Teachers are encouraged to be in place by 5:30PM on Monday.*

6:00-6:20 Children Arrive/Opening Activity

6:25-6:50 Worship Time in the J.A.M.

6:55-7:20 Sticky Scripture in J100

7:25-7:50 Story Time in H100

7:55-8:15 Closing Activity in the room

COMPLETED KINDERGARTEN ROOMS: J201. J202. J203. J204. J205.

5:50-6:00 Teacher Arrival & Classroom set-up

**Teachers are encouraged to be in place by 5:30PM on Monday.*

6:00-6:20 Children Arrive/Opening Activity

6:25-6:50 Sticky Scripture in J100

6:55-7:20 Story Time in H100

7:25-7:50 Worship Time in the J.A.M.

7:55-8:15 Closing Activity in the room



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.

Opening Activity – Frogfish Finder

Supplies:

- Frogfish Finder Kits* (1 per preschooler)
- markers
- paper fasteners (brads) (1 per preschooler)

Activity:

Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Frogfish Finder.



SAY Today we met Tad. Tad is a frogfish! Frogfish change colors to help them hide in the things around them. Let's make frogfish that change colors!

1. Give each preschooler the solid piece from the Frogfish Finder Kit.
2. Help preschoolers tear the two circles apart.
3. Have preschoolers use lots of different colors to completely color in the plain circle.
4. When preschoolers are done coloring, Leaders can write kids' names on the backs of the circles. Then leaders can punch out the fish shape and help kids use paper fasteners to secure that circle on top of the piece kids colored.
5. Kids turn the circles so their fish keep changing colors!

SAY If you swam near a frogfish, you might not even know it! They blend in with the coral and rocks around them—like they're hiding! You may not see them, but they're really there! Frogfish remind us that God is a friend who's real. (Thanks, God!)



Closing Activity – Curly Coral

Supplies:

- foam dessert plates (1 per preschooler)
- chenille wires (regular - 4, fat - 3, and special - 5)
- colorful straws
- scissors (for Leaders only)
- permanent markers (for Leaders only)
- “Coral Reef” picture (In VBS File)



Activity:

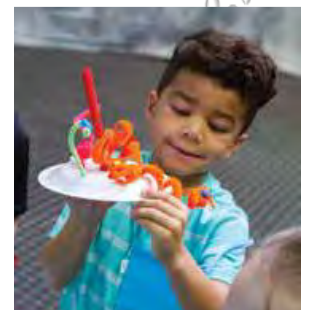
Before kids arrive, cut the straws into small bead-size pieces. Make a sample Curly Coral.

SAY We’re exploring what it’s like under the ocean! When you think of the ocean, you might think of the color blue. But there are actually a lot of different colors under the sea! God made so many colorful fish and beautiful coral reefs! Coral reefs are full of amazing plants God made! Show the “Coral Reef” picture. Let’s make pretend coral reefs so we can see some ocean color.

1. Give each preschooler a foam plate, and have Leaders write kids names on the top of the plate.
2. Have kids curl and bend chenille wires and stick them into the bottom of their plates.
3. Kids can also add pieces of colorful straws on the chenille wires.
4. As kids work, Leaders can cut some chenille wires and straws to shorter lengths so kids can have variety in the height of their coral.

SAY Our coral is pretty, but it isn’t real. But it reminds us of something God made that is real. Motion to the “Coral Reef” picture. Our friend God is amazing! God is a friend who’s real.

(Thanks, God!)



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.

Opening activity – Jonah’s Fish Splitter

Supplies:

- 8- to 12-ounce sturdy paper cups (1 per preschooler)
- balloons (1 per preschooler)
- Fish Scale Stickers*
- large adhesive-backed googly eyes (2 per preschooler)
- duct tape (for Leaders only)
- pompoms (3 per preschooler)
- permanent markers (for Leaders only)
- scissors (for Leaders only)



Before preschoolers arrive, make your own Jonah’s Fish Splitter.

Cups will be pre-assembled (cup cut and balloon attached already) for each child.

SAY When Jonah disobeyed God, God still loved him. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and that saved Jonah’s life. Then the fish spit Jonah out! Let’s make fish that can spit Jonah out.

1. Have kids add googly eyes to the outside of their cups.
2. Show kids how to decorate the outsides of their cups with Fish Scale Stickers.
3. Leaders can label the insides of the cups with kids’ names.
4. Kids place a pompom “Jonah” in the cup.
5. Show kids how to pull back the balloon tie and then let go to launch Jonah out of the fish.

SAY God saved Jonah even when Jonah disobeyed. God is a friend who loves. *(Thanks, God!)*



Closing activity – Fish Tummies

Supplies:

- quart-size resealable plastic bags (1 per preschooler)
- craft foam sea animals (5 per student)
- clear hair gel
- blue food coloring (for Leaders only)
- glitter
- seaweed pieces (plastic fish tank pieces)
- spoons
- duct tape (for Leaders only)
- permanent markers (for leaders only)



Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Fish Tummy.

SAY Today we learned about Jonah. Jonah disobeyed God. But God still loved Jonah! God saved Jonah from drowning by sending a big fish to swallow Jonah. I wonder what it looked like inside the fish's tummy! Let kids tell what *they* think they'd see inside a fish's tummy.

SAY Let's make some gooey Fish Tummies!

1. Have Leaders write preschoolers' names on bags.
2. Preschoolers can choose some foam pieces to put in their bags.
3. When kids are done, Leaders will squeeze or spoon some hair gel into the bags, then add a couple of drops of blue food coloring. There should be enough gel to be ¼- to ½-inch thick when the bag is sealed and lying flat. If desired, add some glitter.
4. Leaders will then duct tape over the seal to make sure kids can't open the bags.
5. Allow time for preschoolers to play with their bags. They can lay the bags on a table and move the gel and foam pieces around by pressing on the bag.

SAY Even when Jonah was in the fish, God still loved Jonah. God is a friend who loves. *(Thanks, God!)*

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.

Opening activity – Calm Seas Bottles

Supplies:

- 16-ounce bottles with lids (1 per preschooler)
- Tidal Tablets* (1 per preschooler- loaded in bottled already)
- vegetable oil
- funnels
- pony beads (5 per student)
- foam sea animals (5 per student)
- water (use sink in classroom- use plastic cup to fill bottle)
- glitter
- duct tape (for Leaders only)
- permanent markers (for Leaders only)



Before preschoolers arrive, make your own Calm Seas Bottle.

SAY Today we learned how Jesus calmed the stormy sea! Sometimes the ocean gets stormy, too. Let's make an ocean in a bottle. This is one sea that we can calm down.

1. Have kids put foam fish, pony beads, Tidal Tablets, and glitter into their bottles . Leaders should put kids' names on the bottom of the bottles.
2. Each child can hold the funnel while a Leader fills the child's bottle about three-fourths full of water. Then have the Leader fill the bottle the rest of the way with oil.
3. Leaders duct tape the lid on each bottle. (This keeps kids from opening the bottles.)
4. Let preschoolers play with their bottles by shaking them or tilting them back and forth and then letting the waves settle.

SAY Being in the middle of the sea during that storm was probably scary for Jesus' friends!

ASK What's something that's scary for you?

SAY When we feel scared, God is a friend we can trust. (Thanks, God!)

Closing activity – Seal Stuffies

Supplies:

- adult-size white socks (1 per preschooler)
- fiberfill
- black washable markers
- rubber bands
- scissors (for Leaders only)

Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Seal Stuffie.

SAY Today we met Fisher, our seal Buddy! Seals are so cuddly, and the babies trust their moms to care for them. Seals remind us that God is a friend we can trust. (Thanks, God!)

1. Have preschoolers fill socks with stuffing, stopping around the ankle. Encourage kids to stuff, stuff, stuff—making their seals nice and fat!
2. Leaders can help preschoolers wrap rubber bands around the ankle to seal in the stuffing.
3. Leaders can also cut off the excess sock, leaving a small tail. They can cut a slit down the middle to make the tail into two fins.
4. Let preschoolers add a nose and eyes to their seals, and then have Leaders add kids' names.

SAY Seals like Fisher remind us that God is a friend we can trust. (Thanks, God!) Whenever you need to trust God, give your stuffy a hug to help you remember!



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.

Opening activity – Waylon the Whale Shark

Supplies:

- Waylon the Whale Shark Kits* (1 per preschooler)
- washable white paint
- small paper plates (1 per student)
- cotton swabs (1 per student)
- red chenille wires (1/2 per student)
- googly eyes (2 per student)
- pens (for Leaders only)



Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Waylon the Whale Shark. Pour washable white paint onto paper plates. (Student sharks will be preassembled for classes – students will just add eyes, mouth, and paint)

SAY Today we met Waylon, our whale shark Buddy! Whale sharks live really long lives. Even though they don't live forever, they remind us that God is a friend forever. (Thanks, God!)

1. Leaders write kids' names on the back side of the circle in the Waylon the Whale Shark Kit.
2. Kids punch out the two small holes on the circle. Preschoolers each put the ends of a red chenille wire through the holes and bend the ends to make Waylon's mouth.
5. Have kids attach googly eyes above the mouth.
6. Let preschoolers dip cotton swabs in white paint and make white dots all over their whale sharks.
7. Set the sharks aside to dry.

SAY When you get home, you can put your craft somewhere special to remind you that God is a friend forever. (Thanks, God!)

Closing activity – Friendship Bands

Supplies:

- chenille wires (1 per preschooler)
- pony beads (2 fish beads per student, 5 beads with cross per student, 10 regular pony beads)
- snack-size resealable plastic bags (1 per preschooler)
- scissors (for Leaders only)
- permanent markers (for Leaders only)



Snack bag will be loaded with chenille wire and beads per student ahead of time. Just pass out a bag per student.

Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Friendship Band.

Show kids your Friendship Band.

SAY God is a friend forever. *(Thanks, God!)* Sometimes friends wear matching wristbands to show they are friends. Let's make friendship wristbands to remind us that we're friends of God!

1. Have preschoolers string beads onto chenille wires.
2. When kids are done, Leaders can help kids twist the chenille wires onto their wrists.
3. Leaders can cut off any excess wire.
4. If any kids don't want to wear their wristbands, Leaders can put them in resealable bags they come in and label them with kids' names.

SAY When we believe in Jesus, we can celebrate that God is a friend forever. *(Thanks, God!)*

**Thank you for
Serving with
us at VBS!**

