

DIRECTOR GUIDE

Overview

| DAY | TITLE & SCRIPTURE | STORY SUMMARY | SPARK FOR CHANGE |
|-----|--|---|---|
| 1 | How Is This Possible? <i>Nicodemus</i> John 3:1–17 | A Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask him about the amazing signs Jesus was doing. Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. Jesus compared this new birth to the blowing of the wind and told Nicodemus about God's great love for the world, believing in the Son of man, and having eternal life. Those who do what is true come into God's light. | Changemakers ask questions. |
| 2 | Who Will Fix It? <i>Five Friends</i> Mark 2:1–12 | When Jesus was preaching, some people carried a paralyzed man to see him. When they could not get through the crowd, they dug through the roof and lowered the man into the house. Jesus saw their faith and forgave the man's sins. The scribes present cried, "Blasphemy!" Jesus asked which was easier—to forgive or to heal. Jesus healed the paralyzed man, revealing his authority to forgive as well. The people were amazed and glorified God. | Changemakers work together to solve problems. |
| 3 | Will There Be Enough? <i>Early Church</i> Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37 | The early church demonstrated commitment and unity as they shared a common life. After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, an ever-increasing group of people listened to the apostles' preaching and ate and prayed together. People who owned possessions sold what they had and gave the money to the apostles, who then gave the money to those in need. Everyone in the community had enough. Many who saw this joined the community of Jesus' followers. | Changemakers respond to the needs of others. |
| 4 | What Are We Building? <i>Peter and Cornelius</i> Acts 10 | In Caesarea, a Roman believer named Cornelius received a vision to send for Peter in Joppa. Peter received a vision of his own in which he heard a voice telling him to eat without worrying about what was allowed by Jewish law. When Peter went to Cornelius, Peter realized the meaning of his vision was that the message of Jesus was for more than the Jews. He shared the good news about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. | Changemakers build bridges. |
| 5 | Can You Imagine? <i>A New World</i> Isaiah 65:17–25 | Isaiah describes a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. God will rejoice in the people. There will be no more weeping. All people will live long, healthy lives. People will build houses and plant crops and have what they need. God will be close by, answering before people call. People will enjoy the fruits of their labor; predators and prey will eat together. | Changemakers create a new kind of world. |

BIBLE MEMORY

Early Childhood:

You are the light of the world.
—Matthew 5:14a (NRSV)

Grades K–5:

You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)

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Director Guide

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Credits for *Director Guide* and Director electronic files:

Writer: Chrissie Muecke

Editors: Colleen Smith, Paul Canavese, Chrissie Muecke, Joan L. Daggett, Rachel Nussbaum Eby

Designer: Merrill Miller

Illustrations: Images not otherwise credited are from Getty Images.

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Catch the Vision



Welcome to *Changemakers Lab*, an interactive Vacation Bible School where children learn that everyone can make a difference in the world! The five Bible stories in this curriculum explore examples of people who experienced and brought about change in the world around them. These people provide a model for asking hard questions, working together to solve problems, reaching across differences, caring for all people, and imagining a new world. Through worship and drama, Bible study, STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, art, math), and active games, children are invited to see and experience the transforming love of God. Grounded in God's love, children can use their unique gifts to make a difference wherever they go!

Goals of *Changemakers Lab*

- Children will see and experience the transforming love of God.
- Children will ask questions, make observations, and work together to solve problems.
- Children will discover and share creative ways to make a difference in the world through words and actions.

Changemakers Lab is structured using a science theme. The opening part of the day is called **IMAGINE**, which includes **Spark Lab** (small group activities) and **Changemakers Lab** (large group worship time that includes a changemakers chant, songs, offering, Bible skit, questions for conversation, and prayer).

During **INVESTIGATE**, children will rotate through three activity stations including **Bible Lab** (Bible activities), **STEAM Lab** (science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities), and **Action Lab** (active games). A snack could be offered during this time.

TRANSFORM is the closing time of joint worship and includes songs and a blessing.

This curriculum provides everything you need to implement a successful VBS program, no matter the location, group size, or budget. This guide gives an overview of all aspects of the curriculum. Refer to the individual leader guides and electronic files for detailed information about each area. Choose activities and make any necessary adaptations that will work best for the children in your program.

VBS is a wonderful way to inspire children and families to love and follow Jesus. We're so glad you've joined us!

Children's Faith Formation

We believe that faith formation is a lifelong process of developing a relationship with God. This relationship is nurtured within the family and faith communities at Sunday Mass, through the Sacraments, and other parish activities. Intentional faith formation experiences, such as VBS, help children grow in their understanding of God's love for them. This curriculum recognizes that the faith of children often grows quietly, in ways that are not readily seen, as children absorb and ponder the meaning of biblical stories.

Key elements of faith formation found in *Changemakers Lab*:

- **Relationship building:** As children arrive at VBS each day, Small Group Leaders guide children in activities designed to build community and create a feeling of belonging.
- **Gathered worship:** Children of all ages gather to sing, pray, and participate in a Peace Mission, and watch a dramatic presentation of the Bible story.
- **Spiritual practices:** Spiritual practices, such as music, Bible memorization, and different ways of praying, are included each day.
- **Centrality of the Bible story:** The Bible story is shared and explored in multiple ways each day—through drama, scripture memorization, hands-on activities, music, full-body movement, writing, art, and reflection.
- **Wondering questions:** Children are invited to reflect on the Bible stories using open-ended wondering questions. These questions show a respect for children's interpretations and their ideas.
- **Discovery-based learning:** Activities in the INVESTIGATE Stations promote creative, discovery-based learning.
- **Child-centered approach:** Activities are child-centered and attend to individual learning styles. The curriculum materials anticipate the diversity of needs that children have.
- **Invitation to grow in faith:** Children are challenged to love God, follow Jesus, and live as change-makers every day. See page 36 for more information.

Bible Outline

| DAY | TITLE & SCRIPTURE | STORY SUMMARY | SPARK FOR CHANGE |
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| 1 | How Is This Possible? <i>Nicodemus</i> John 3:1–17 | A Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask him about the amazing signs Jesus was doing. Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. Jesus compared this new birth to the blowing of the wind and told Nicodemus about God's great love for the world, believing in the Son of Man, and having eternal life. Those who do what is true come into God's light. | Changemakers ask questions. |
| 2 | Who Will Fix It? <i>Five Friends</i> Mark 2:1–12 | When Jesus was preaching, some people carried a paralyzed man to see him. When they could not get through the crowd, they dug through the roof and lowered the man into the house. Jesus saw their faith and forgave the man's sins. The scribes present cried, "Blasphemy!" Jesus asked which was easier—to forgive or to heal. Jesus healed the paralyzed man, revealing his authority to forgive as well. The people were amazed and glorified God. | Changemakers work together to solve problems. |
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| 4 | What Are We Building? <i>Peter and Cornelius</i> Acts 10 | In Caesarea, a Roman believer named Cornelius received a vision to send for Peter in Joppa. Peter received a vision of his own in which he heard a voice telling him to eat without worrying about what was allowed by Jewish law. When Peter went to Cornelius, Peter realized the meaning of his vision was that the message of Jesus was for more than the Jews. He shared the good news about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. | Changemakers build bridges. |
| 5 | Can You Imagine? <i>A New World</i> Isaiah 65:17–25 | Isaiah describes a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. God will rejoice in the people. There will be no more weeping. All people will live long, healthy lives. People will build houses and plant crops and have what they need. God will be close by, answering before people call. People will enjoy the fruits of their labor; predators and prey will eat together. | Changemakers create a new kind of world. |

Bible Memory

The Bible memory verse for grades K–5 is taught during opening worship and reinforced during Bible Lab, one of the activity stations during **INVESTIGATE**. Preschool children will learn their verse during their group time. *If you prefer, feel free to use a different translation than the one suggested in this guide.*

Early Childhood:

You are the light of the world.
—Matthew 5:14a (NRSV)

Grades K–5:

You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)

1

Day 1

How Is This Possible?

Scripture Text

John 3:1–17

Spark for Change

Changemakers ask questions.

Story Summary

A Jewish leader named Nicodemus came to Jesus at night to ask him about the amazing signs Jesus was doing. Jesus talked to Nicodemus about being born of the Spirit. Jesus compared this new birth to the blowing of the wind and told Nicodemus about God's great love for the world, believing in the Son of Man, and having eternal life. Those who do what is true come into God's light.

Bible Essay

The Bible is regarded by many as a book of answers, but it might more accurately be a book of questions. Throughout scripture, faithful people like Moses, Gideon, Jeremiah, and Mary all ask questions of God in the face of startling circumstances. Questions were also a key part of Jesus' ministry. Jesus is asked something like 183 questions in the four Gospels—most of which he does not directly answer. Instead, Jesus frequently responded to questions by asking *more* questions. He asks more than 300 unique questions throughout Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John!¹

Questions—not always with answers—are welcome, essential, necessary, and vital to follow Jesus. And though Jesus doesn't answer all our questions, he never ignores, belittles, or dismisses an honest query. We see this in Jesus' nighttime encounter with Nicodemus. Nicodemus, like Jesus, was regarded as an answer man—he was a religious scholar and leader. He was the expert; if anyone should have answers about what God wanted and what God was up to in the world, it's a Pharisee like Nicodemus!

Yet when Jesus started doing things no one had ever seen (in John 2, we see how Jesus turned water in wine and cleared the temple of moneychangers), Nicodemus finds himself bursting with questions. And so he visits Jesus at night. Perhaps he doesn't want to be seen. Perhaps he feels embarrassed that a scholar like him needs to ask questions of a small-town preacher.

Still, Nicodemus feels confident Jesus is going to give him answers: "Rabbi," he begins, "we know that you are a teacher who has come from God" (John 3:2). But what Jesus has to say about wind, birth, new life, God's kingdom, water, and the Spirit shows Nicodemus that learning at the feet of Jesus means not receiving answers, but more questions.

Just as the specific questions and answers of this extended dialogue befuddled Nicodemus, they might feel confusing to us, and especially to children. As you read this story with your group, you don't need to dwell on or delve into the exact theological content of each question (feel free to breathe a sigh of relief!). Instead, this story offers a great introduction to some very good news: the One who came to show us God's great love for the whole world (John 3:16–17) doesn't judge our questions, but welcomes them with open arms, day or night. After all, Jesus changed the world by asking lots of questions—that's a great starting point for our changemaking journeys too!

"An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it."

—Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #183

1 Martin B. Copenhagen, *Jesus Is the Question* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2014), xviii.

Day 2

Who Will Fix It?



Scripture Text

Mark 2:1–12

Spark for Change

Changemakers work together to solve problems.

Story Summary

When Jesus was preaching, some people carried a paralyzed man to see him. When they could not get through the crowd, they dug through the roof and lowered the man into the house. Jesus saw their faith and forgave the man's sins. The scribes present cried, "Blasphemy!" Jesus asked which was easier—to forgive or to heal. Jesus healed the paralyzed man, revealing his authority to forgive as well. The people were amazed and glorified God.

"In the family the healthy and the sick stand by one another. Young and old speak up for one another. They try to solve problems together. The individual experiences his own uniqueness and, at the same time, his interconnectedness with others. A 'culture of peace,' which the world is still seeking, is based on the family."

—Pope John Paul II,
4/17/1998

Bible Essay

This story takes place in Capernaum, a fishing village of about 1,500 people. Most of Capernaum's residents were trying to get to the same place at the same time: a house where Jesus, the quickly-becoming-famous healer, was reported to be teaching. It's a scene both familiar and painful to anyone who's ever been stuck in rush-hour traffic or witnessed the crush of screaming fans and paparazzi making it impossible for a celebrity to move.

Stubbornly attempting to nose their way through the crowd are five friends: four friends are holding the corners of a mat and the fifth is curled up on it. The word for "mat" here refers to a type of sleeping mat used specifically by the poor. It could be rolled up during the day to make room in the one-room houses in which they lived. If they had to travel, it became a suitcase, rolled up with whatever food and clothes the person had inside.² But for this man the mat was not just his bed or suitcase; it was his only hope of getting around. That is, if he was lucky to find others willing to help transport him.

It would be difficult to navigate a tight crowd and get anywhere close to Jesus on two feet. So imagine what it would be like for four people to try to maneuver through while carrying a grown man who *can't* use his two feet! When the solid wall of people seems unending, the friends face a dilemma: should they continue to try to inch through the crowd, or give up and go home, maybe trying to reach Jesus earlier on another day? The friends reject both options. Instead, they choose creativity. Climbing above the crowd, they claw through the layers of moss, branches, and dirt making up the home's roof. Roofs, even today, are meant to keep out unwanted elements—rain, snow, dirt, animals, and intruders. Yet the friends work together to break through a barrier intended to keep them out and reach the person they most need.

How does Jesus respond? He doesn't send the friends away or tell them to wait their turn. Instead, he honors their faith, perseverance, and unrelenting hope. Jesus sees what they need—not just physically, but emotionally, spiritually, and socially. In Jesus' day, sickness was widely considered to be caused by sin. By first pronouncing the man on the mat to be forgiven, Jesus made it clear to the whole crowd that the man's condition was *not* his fault. Jesus not only restores him to his feet, he puts him back on equal footing with his neighbors. More than one change is made because of the five friends' creative refusal to give up!

² Bruce Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), Kindle Locations 3123–3130.

3

Day 3

Will There Be Enough?

Scripture Text

Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–37

Spark for Change

Changemakers respond to the needs of others.

Story Summary

The early church demonstrated commitment and unity as they shared a common life. After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, an ever-increasing group of people listened to the apostles' preaching and ate and prayed together. People who owned possessions sold what they had and gave the money to the apostles, who then gave the money to those in need. Everyone in the community had enough. Many who saw this joined the community of Jesus' followers.

Bible Essay

The first chapters of the book of Acts unfold in a time of rapid change for Jesus' followers. After Jesus' ascent into heaven (Acts 1:1–11), his followers prayed together, chose new leaders, and waited for the Holy Spirit to come (Acts 1:12–26). The wait only lasted 10 days. When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, Peter preached a sermon so powerful that thousands of new people became followers of Jesus (Acts 2:1–41). A group of approximately 120 was transformed into a community of thousands almost overnight.

Numerical growth was not the only change to the group. The coming of the Holy Spirit transformed the lives of Jesus' early followers in visible, tangible ways. They were challenged to build relationships and share meals not just with intimate friends but with the powerful and the outcast, the accepted and rejected alike. They had to learn to follow not just the teaching of the Torah (the first five books of the Old Testament), but also the teaching of Jesus and his apostles.

Above all, they were treating their possessions differently. As Professor Margaret Aymer points out, if some of Jesus' followers had so much that they could sell excess possessions while others still "had need," then their faith practice had not, to this point, addressed the deepest divisions of economic and social classes.³ Now their faith would impact even these areas, with believers making sure that everyone in their growing community had enough.

Barnabas is a great example of this transformation. Barnabas was a Levite, which means he descended from a priestly class and lived a more comfortable life than most. Yet Barnabas chose to give up that comfort when he realized that some in his new family of faith lacked basic essentials. Owning land was a rare and immensely valuable accomplishment; for Barnabas, it was not as valuable as caring for those around him as part of Jesus' community.

These passages may sound idyllic to us, but these shifts in wealth—like all changes—were difficult. The very next chapter of the early church's story (Acts 5) relates a heartbreaking tale of people who remained afraid to share and fully offer themselves to the community. Though that's not a story to be read with children, it's important to note that change is hard. Figuring out how to care for others and making the necessary sacrifices to do so can be scary. Yet being a changemaker means moving beyond our hesitancy and fear to trust God and one another, even with our possessions.

"[Jesus] exhorts us not to keep to ourselves the gifts that God has given us, but rather to use them generously for the good of others, especially those most in need of our help. It is not simply a matter of sharing the material goods we have, but putting our skills, time, love, presence and compassion at the service of others."

—Pope Leo XIV, 8/10/25

3 See Aymer's full commentary here: <https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/fourth-sunday-of-easter/commentary-on-acts-242-47-3>.

Day 4

What Are We Building?



Scripture Text

Acts 10

Spark for Change

Changemakers build bridges.

Story Summary

In Caesarea, a Roman believer named Cornelius received a vision to send for Peter in Joppa. Peter received a vision of his own in which he heard a voice telling him to eat without worrying about what was allowed by Jewish law. When Peter went to Cornelius, Peter realized the meaning of his vision was that the message of Jesus was for more than the Jews. He shared the good news about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles.

“We are followers of Christ. Christ goes before us. The world needs his light. Humanity needs him as the bridge that can lead us to God and his love. Help us, one and all, to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace.”

—Pope Leo XIV, 5/8/25

Bible Essay

As Acts unfolds, change continues fast and furious in the early church.

Stephen, a deacon appointed to care for the poor, is killed for proclaiming Jesus’ radical love. Still, Jesus’ love continues to reach and transform people throughout Acts 8 and 9: Samaritans, an Ethiopian, a participant in Stephen’s murder, and even a disciple named Tabitha, who was raised from death.

It’s clear that something new is developing. But change, though exciting, is often accompanied by conflict. The next section of Acts shows the church navigating the complexity of rapid change. Scholar John Holbert calls Acts 10–15 “one of the crucial sections of the New Testament, crucial for the early church and equally crucial for our own time.”⁴ At Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter proclaimed that God’s Spirit being poured out means all people will have visions and dream dreams; but Peter didn’t realize what exactly “all” meant, or how disruptive these visions would be.

Over the course of today’s story, the expansiveness of “all” becomes clear. A vision comes to Cornelius, a non-Jew who had been seeking to learn more about God. Cornelius is Italian, not Judean; Gentile, not Jewish; and a soldier working for Rome in its occupation of Israel. He’s an outsider in every way. Still, God sees the desires of Cornelius’ heart and commissions him to help God cross and tear down barriers. A vision instructs Cornelius to send for Peter, a stranger who is staying 40 miles south, and Cornelius courageously acts on the vision.

Peter receives a vision too. It’s easy to fixate on the strange sheet filled with animals that Peter, as a devout Jew, has not been allowed to eat. Only eating certain foods had long been an important part of Jewish identity to help them remember they were set apart as a special community for God. But less important than the contents of the sheet is the wider change the vision announces: barriers that have long existed between groups are being torn down by the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit seeks to connect—not separate. And Peter, one of Jesus’ closest friends, discovers he has the capacity to change and grow: “I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis” (Acts 10:34 GNT).

When Peter and Cornelius meet in response to their visions, they help build a bridge to a changed future, one where vastly different people become family through the transforming love of Jesus. Hearts and minds are changed and turned toward one another. How might our world be changed if more people caught this vision today?

⁴ John Holbert, “A Redefinition of Our World: Reflections on Acts 11:1–18,” <https://www.patheos.com/progressive-christian/redefinition-world-john-holbert-04-22-2013>.

5

Day 5

Can You Imagine?

Scripture Text

Isaiah 65:17–25

Spark for Change

Changemakers create a new kind of world.

Story Summary

Isaiah describes a vision of a new heaven and a new earth. God will rejoice in the people. There will be no more weeping. All people will live long, healthy lives. People will build houses and plant crops and have what they need. God will be close by, answering before people call. People will enjoy the fruits of their labor; predators and prey will eat together.

Bible Essay

Our final passage this week takes us back to the future. As we move back into the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah points us toward a future beyond anything we've known—the future God desires for this world and its inhabitants. Isaiah's vision was written in the years after God's people returned home from a long exile in Babylon. Two generations after returning, the Israelites were still struggling to rebuild. Though incremental progress had been made, much of Jerusalem was still in ruin and hopes for a better future seemed to wane each day.

As the people were perhaps tempted to stop expecting better for their lives or their world, God whisks them forward to the future God has in mind. It is a time full of as much creativity as God showed in the first days of Genesis. This time, however, instead of creating out of nothing, God creates by saying no to the things that are broken about human existence on earth. No to weeping. No to cries of anguish. No to death before a person has had a chance to live out their days. No to children being harmed. No to building things only to see them snatched away. No to destruction of any sort. These are things that God will not accept and demands that God's people not accept either.

In place of all of these things God gives us a new vision: one of God rejoicing, God creating, and God delighting. God answering before the people even call, hearing before the people even speak. As God does this, the people will not be bystanders but active, creative participants: they will build and plant and eat with joy. Even the animals will reflect the new relationship between Creator and creation.

When the world around us seems hopelessly broken, it's easy to lose faith that God will ever fulfill God's promises. But Isaiah's vision encourages us to look beyond our stunted expectations to what God is still committed to doing in this world. We are invited to work toward this vision even as labor continues to frustrate, to yearn toward it even as we still live with grief. This scripture promises that God is still creating, and we are invited to be co-creators with the God who is committed to making all things new! Though this can be difficult for adults who have seen more of the world's ugliness, Isaiah's vision can capture the imagination of our young and bright children, whose capacity for creativity is still expansive. They can lead the way and help us imagine into being God's changed world of justice, love, and peace!

“[B]e careful, because to change does not mean following the fashions of the moment, but converting one's own way of being and thinking, starting from the attitude of wonder when faced with what does not change, yet is always new! Wonder is the antidote to repetitive habit and self-centredness. Wonder leads you forward, it makes you change, it makes you go forward.”

—Pope Francis, 10/31/22

Daily Schedule

Each day of *Changemakers Lab* has three main sections: **IMAGINE** (opening worship), **INVESTIGATE** (activity stations), and **TRANSFORM** (closing worship). Each day is designed to last **2½ hours** but could easily be adapted for a longer or shorter time frame. Factor in the amount of time it will take children to move from location to location.

| IMAGINE (35 min) Children start in small groups and then gather for worship. | INVESTIGATE (90 min + snack) Small groups rotate between three activity stations and have a snack. | TRANSFORM (10 min) The large group gathers for worship and dismissal. |
|---|---|---|
| Spark Lab (10 min) (small groups) Changemakers Lab (25 min) (large group, songs, offering, drama, questions, prayer) | Bible Lab (30 min) (Bible study) STEAM Lab (30 min) (science, technology, engineering, art, and math activities) Action Lab (30 min) (active games) Snack Time (15 min) | Changemakers Lab (10 min) (large group, songs, sharing) Dismissal |

Plan Your Daily Schedule

Write down the starting and ending times for each part of VBS. Consider the amount of time it will take children to move from one location or activity to another.

Total length of VBS: _____

Arrival and Registration: _____

IMAGINE (opening worship)

SPARK LAB (gathering in small groups): _____

CHANGEMAKERS LAB
(large group worship): _____

INVESTIGATE

BIBLE LAB: _____

STEAM LAB: _____

ACTION LAB: _____

Snack: _____

TRANSFORM (closing worship): _____

Dismissal: _____

Modified Schedules

2 HOURS

IMAGINE: 25 minutes

INVESTIGATE: 25 minutes per activity station
+ 10 minutes for snack

TRANSFORM: 10 minutes

1½ HOURS

IMAGINE: 20 minutes

INVESTIGATE: 20 minutes per activity station
TRANSFORM: 10 minutes

1 HOUR

IMAGINE: 15 minutes

INVESTIGATE: 15 minutes per activity station

A Day in *Changemakers Lab*

Each child is assigned to a small group of five to ten children, depending on the number of Small Group Leaders you have. Children can be grouped by grade or the groups could be multiage.

Overview of IMAGINE

Before the children arrive each day, clearly designate and mark a space for each small group using a different Spark Sign from the electronic files. Decorate these areas as science labs.

Spark Lab

As children arrive each day, they will begin the day in small groups led by an adult Small Group Leader in the worship space. Group leaders should plan to arrive 10 minutes early so that they are seated in their group location before the children begin to come into the worship space. This is an important time for leaders to connect with the children in their assigned group, for the children to build friendships with each other, and to introduce the day's theme. Each group leader will need a set of Days 1–5 “Spark Lab” Instructions in the electronic files or on pages 49–50 of the *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*. These instructions tell the leaders exactly what to do with the children.

Changemakers Lab

All small groups gather for worship. There is a Worship PowerPoint for each day in the electronic files. It includes slides for all aspects of worship, including the Changemakers Chant, song lyrics, offering, and Changemakers Chat questions. There is also a folder with MP3 versions of seven songs, song motions, song motion videos, Changemakers Chant video, and lead sheets. The songs are as follows:

- “We Are Changemakers”
- “Standin’ On the Rock”
- “Jesus Come Soon”
- “Send Out Your Spirit”
- “One for You and One for Me”
- “Sing Amen!”
- “Our God is Here”

The suggested offering project involves donating money to support an organization that is working to bring positive changes in your community and/or beyond. More details are available on page 15 in this guide, as well as in the Offering Display file in the Worship & Drama folder in the electronic files. There are ideas for a visual display to track your progress.

Children watch a drama of a Bible story, discuss the story in their small groups using Changemakers Chat questions, and close with a prayer. The questions are on the Worship PowerPoint for each day in the electronic files.

Overview of INVESTIGATE

Each day during INVESTIGATE, children rotate with their Small Group Leader through three activity stations: Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, and Action Lab. At each station, children will participate in activities that help them extend and experience the Bible story presented during IMAGINE (opening worship). Assign an order for how groups should rotate through the three stations. Several small groups could be together at the Bible Lab, several could be at the STEAM Lab, and several could be at the Action Lab. If you will have more than 50 children, you will likely want to have two of each lab station running simultaneously so they aren't crowded. Refer to pages 33–34 of this guide for how to incorporate a 15-minute snack time during INVESTIGATE.

Station 1: Bible Lab

Children will review and retell the story that was presented during the drama. Wondering and discussion questions follow the story as well as activities from the *Changemakers Lab Book* and a Bible memory activity. Three **Explore** activities and a list of Media Connections (books and online resources) are intended to help children deepen their understanding of the Bible story and themes. The electronic files have a variety of printable documents for Bible Lab.

Station 2: STEAM Lab

Children will explore the themes of the Bible story through STEAM projects and explorations. Each activity includes “Talk About It” prompts to help children connect the activity with the Bible story and their own experiences. The electronic files have a variety of templates and other materials for the activities.

Station 3: Action Lab

Children will get outside and play active games related to the Bible story. (Games can also be played inside as needed.) Each game includes “Talk About It” prompts to help children connect the game with the Bible story and their own experiences. The electronic files have a variety of printable documents for Action Lab. The At-a-Glance Chart indicates the types of games or activities and the amount of preparation and number of supplies required.

Overview of TRANSFORM

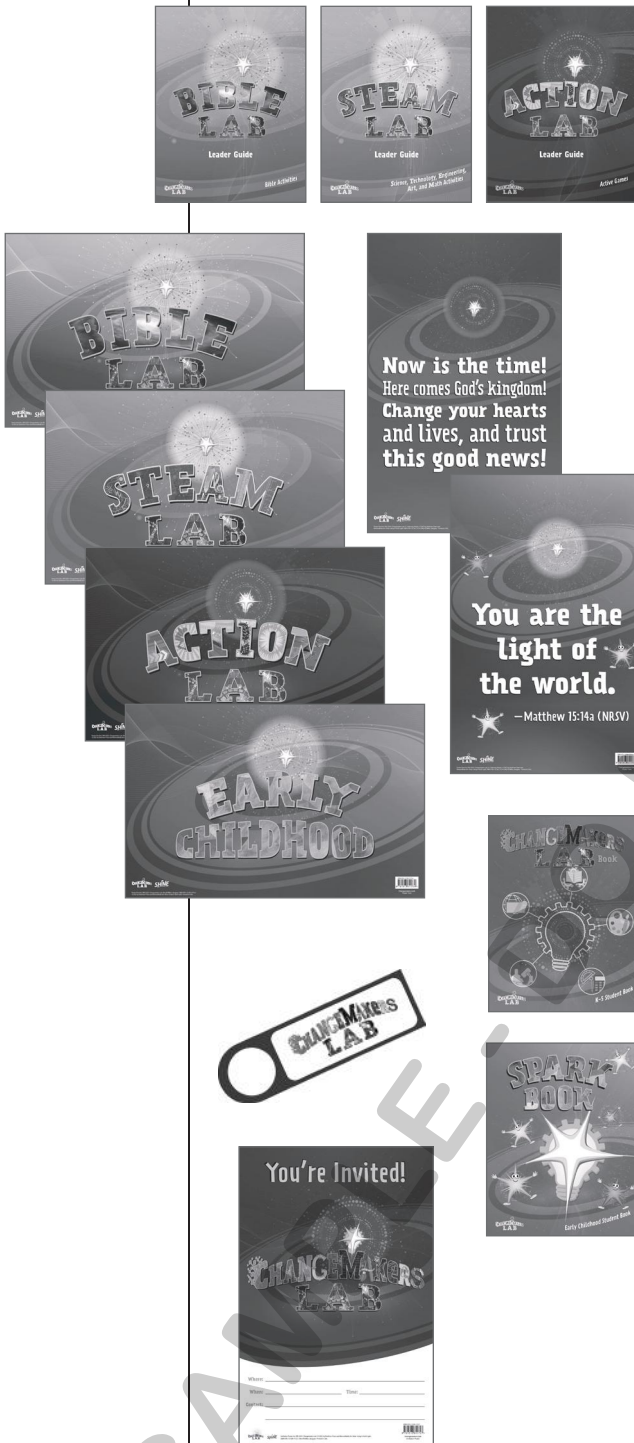
After visiting each INVESTIGATE Station, children return to the worship area to sing, discuss what they learned, and receive a blessing. Distribute Changemaker Challenge Cards, pages 19–22 in the *Changemakers Lab Book*, so children can share what they have learned with their families and apply the content to their lives.

Get Ready

Ordering Information

Use the following checklist for purchasing necessary materials:

- ☐ Extra **Bible Lab**, **STEAM Lab**, and **Action Lab Leader Guides** are needed if you are planning for more than one of each INVESTIGATE Station.
- ☐ The **electronic files** contain seven songs, lead sheets, song motions, song motion videos, Changemaker Chant video, a Worship PowerPoint for each day, printable files for every activity station, logos, name tags, drama scripts, Offering Display, templates, Leader Assignment Cards, an attendance record, a book list, and a letter to families. They are included as a download with starter kits, but also available on a USB drive as an add-on. *Note: The songs from the electronic files cannot be duplicated and given to children.*
- ☐ **Posters** can be purchased separately, including four decorative posters for the Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, Action Lab, and Early Childhood areas (purchase additional sets if you have more than one of each area); Bible Memory Posters for Early Childhood and one for older children; and Invitation Posters.
- ☐ **Changemakers Lab Book** is a booklet for children in grades K–5 and will be used each day during the Bible Lab activity station. We highly recommend purchasing one for each child and Bible Lab Leader. It includes take-home Changemaker Challenge Cards, pages 19–22. Have extra copies available for children who join VBS after the first day.
- ☐ **Spark Book** is a booklet for children ages four to five. It contains illustrated Bible stories, activities, and family activities. It also contains daily take-home Changemaker Family Cards, pages 13–14, which contain activities for families to do together. We highly recommend purchasing one for each child and Early Childhood Leader. Have extra copies available for children who join VBS after the first day.
- ☐ **VBS MP3 Download cards** and **VBS Music CDs** are available for purchase in bulk quantities so children can take home the music from the week to share with their families. The music album cannot be duplicated to give to families.



Music & Resource Files

The Electronic Files contain essential materials to make your VBS a success. Included are a folder for the Director, a folder for Worship & Drama, a folder for music, and a folder for each activity station. Email the relevant content to each leader. The chart below shows all the resources in the electronic files for quick reference.

| DIRECTOR | STEAM LAB (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math Activities) |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering Display • Supplies and Donations List • Compiled Booklist • Staff Orientation PowerPoint • Leader Assignment Cards • Customizable Bulletin Insert • Customizable Letter to Families • Customizable Registration Form and Waivers • Attendance Record • Name tags • Logos • Website Banner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 Tree Silhouette • Day 1 "Quirky Creatures" Diode and Battery Assembly • Day 2 "Spark for Change" Puzzle • Day 3 Community Cards • Day 3 Goods and Services Tokens • Day 4 House Template • Day 4 Slime Recipes • Day 5 "Plan It!" Cards |
| BIBLE LAB (Bible Activities) | ACTION LAB (Active Games) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 Questions Cube • Day 3 Early Church Story Cards • Day 4 Human Bingo • Day 5 Storytelling Pictures • Day 5 Storytelling Dream Bubble | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 New Life Scenes • Day 2 Scavenger Hunt Checklist • Day 3 "Make the Right Move" Cards • Day 4 Meandering Maps • Day 4 "This or That?" Cards • Day 5 Vision Phrases |
| WORSHIP & DRAMA | EARLY CHILDHOOD |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changemakers Chant video • Song Lyrics PowerPoint • Five Worship PowerPoints (one per day) • Offering Display • Drama Scripts (PDF and Word) • Spark Signs • Days 1–5 "Spark Lab" Instructions <p><i>The Technology Coordinator will need access to this folder.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 Heart Template • Day 1 Star Templates • Day 1 Constellation Maps • Day 2 "Five Friends" Headband • Day 2 Animal Cards • Day 3 Story Props • Day 3 Robe Template |
| MUSIC | |
| <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Song motion videos • Seven MP3 songs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "We Are Changemakers" ◦ "Standin' On the Rock" ◦ "Jesus Come Soon" </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ "Send Out Your Spirit" ◦ "One for You and One for Me" ◦ "Sing Amen!" ◦ "Our God is Here" </div> <div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Songbook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Lyric song sheet ◦ Lead sheet for each song ◦ Song motions for each song <p><i>The Technology Coordinator will need access to this folder.</i></p> </div> | |

Director's Checklist

4–5 months before

- ☐ Choose an Assistant Director to work with you to coordinate and lead VBS planning.
- ☐ Read through the *Changemakers Lab* curriculum.
- ☐ Read the timeline for Publicity and Outreach on page 26 of this guide and determine how you will promote your VBS.
- ☐ Select the date and time for VBS and reserve space.
- ☐ Estimate the number of leaders needed (page 20).
- ☐ Choose an organization for your offering project (page 15).

3 months before

- ☐ Choose Small Group Leaders, Worship & Drama Leaders, **INVESTIGATE** Leaders (Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, Action Lab), Early Childhood Leaders, and other volunteers.
- ☐ Determine meeting spaces and create a map showing locations.
- ☐ Order extra leader guides as needed.
- ☐ Put the Bulletin Insert (electronic files) in your bulletin. Contact all volunteers who sign up on the insert.

6–8 weeks before

- ☐ Post invitation posters in your church and in a public community location. Order more as needed.
- ☐ Open preregistration.
- ☐ Distribute registration information and letters to families (electronic files).
- ☐ Divide students into groups as registrations are received.
- ☐ Create student lists and write names on the Attendance Cards (electronic files).
- ☐ Set the date and time for staff orientation.
- ☐ Give the Early Childhood Leader the *Early Childhood Leader Guide* and access to all related music and teaching aids material (electronic files).
- ☐ Give the *Worship & Drama Leader Guide* to the relevant staff. Give the Worship Leader access to the daily Worship PowerPoint so that it can be customized as needed. Give the leader access to all music-related

materials in the electronic files (songs, lead sheets, song motions, song motion videos, Changemaker Chant video). Give the Drama Leader access to dramas (electronic files).

- ☐ Distribute leader guides to **INVESTIGATE** Leaders (Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, Action Lab). Give the leaders access to all relevant teaching aid material from the electronic files.
- ☐ Visit the “Changemakers Lab” board on the *Growing Up Catholic* Pinterest page for additional resources. Share links with leaders and volunteers.
- ☐ Order *Spark Books* for Early Childhood and *Changemakers Lab Books* for grades K–5 children.
- ☐ Review the Supplies and Donations List (electronic files) and contact people who may want to contribute in that way.

4 weeks before

- ☐ Plan a VBS blessing and/or VBS announcement during Mass with the pastor or liturgy committee (page 26).
- ☐ Plan a *Changemakers Lab* Closing Program (page 36).
- ☐ Print and distribute the Leader Assignment Cards to all leaders and volunteers (electronic files).
- ☐ Hold a staff orientation. See page 25 and the Staff Orientation PowerPoint (electronic files).
- ☐ Finalize the volunteers for all VBS responsibilities (page 24).
- ☐ Schedule a time with a custodian or other helpers to move furniture before and after VBS.
- ☐ Share estimated attendance numbers with the Early Childhood Leader and Snack Coordinator so snacks can be planned.
- ☐ Create an offering project visual as needed. See Offering Display (electronic files).
- ☐ Conduct rehearsals for the drama.

2 weeks before

- ☐ Copy the Days 1–5 “Spark Lab” Instructions (pages 49–50 in *Worship & Drama Leader Guide* or electronic files).
- ☐ Create a Spark Sign for each group of children (electronic files).

- ☐ Make name tags or print them from the electronic files.
- ☐ Remove and cut apart the Changemaker Challenge Cards, pages 19–22, from each *Changemakers Lab Book* and the Changemaker Family Cards, pages 13–14 from each *Spark Book*, and organize the cards by day.
- ☐ Check books out of the library for use in the various **INVESTIGATE** Stations. See the *Changemakers Lab Booklist* (electronic files).
- ☐ Conduct rehearsals for the drama.

Week of VBS

- ☐ Hold a VBS blessing during Mass (page 26).
- ☐ Hang up decorative area posters to designate each area.
- ☐ Set up the stage for dramas.
- ☐ Set up the offering display as needed. See Offering Display (electronic files).
- ☐ Set up small-group areas for **Spark Lab**. Set out a Spark Sign (electronic files) and nametags (electronic files) for each group as well as a set of Days 1–5 “Spark Lab” Instructions (pages 49–50 in *Worship & Drama Leader Guide* or electronic files). If using tables, decorate each table to look like a science lab.
- ☐ Set up the three **INVESTIGATE** Stations: Bible Lab, STEAM Lab, Action Lab (page 28).
- ☐ Decorate the worship area, Early Childhood room(s), and all **INVESTIGATE** Stations (pages 28–29).
- ☐ Check in with all leaders to see what needs they have.
- ☐ Be sure all technology needs are addressed.
- ☐ Prepare snacks (pages 33–34).

During VBS

- ☐ Plan and organize drop-off and registration procedures for each day.
- ☐ Meet with staff 30 minutes before VBS begins each day to pray together, go over last-minute details, and answer questions.
- ☐ Count the offering and update the offering display daily.
- ☐ Keep records as described on page 30.
- ☐ Meet briefly with staff after Day 1 to debrief about the start of VBS.
- ☐ Offer encouragement to volunteers each day.
- ☐ Post daily announcements in a prominent place.
- ☐ Prepare for staff recognition.
- ☐ Prepare Student Participation Certificates.
- ☐ Prepare for the *Changemakers Lab* Closing Program (page 36) and publicize it to families.

After VBS

- ☐ Collect the leader guides.
- ☐ Clean up the spaces used and let teachers know where to return extra supplies.
- ☐ Arrange to return furniture to its original location.
- ☐ Send thank you notes to each leader and volunteer or plan another way to acknowledge leaders (page 37).
- ☐ Provide feedback to the Pastoral Center about the VBS materials at GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com (More > Leave Feedback).

**You are the
light of the world.
Let your light shine
before others,
so that they may see
your good works
and give glory
to your Father in heaven.**

—Matthew 5:14a,16 (NRSV)