

MOVE-IT MOUNTAIN

LEADER GUIDE

PASSPORT
to PEACE





Move-It Mountain Leader Guide

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WELCOME TO PASSPORT to PEACE

Passport to Peace is a one-week Vacation Bible School (VBS) curriculum designed to help children make peace a way of life. Peacemaking skills are essential for those who want to follow Jesus' way of peace. Children will be introduced to a variety of strategies for peacemaking and will practice those skills at VBS and at home.

Passport to Peace invites children to see every person as part of God's family and every interaction as an opportunity for peacemaking.

In a world that is too often divided by race, class, ethnicity, and country of origin, *Passport to Peace* is a reminder that the love of God and the way of peace transcend all borders and divisions. All are welcome in the family of God. Led by God's Spirit, we can all participate in creating a more peaceful world.

ARRIVAL (35 MIN) <i>Children start in small groups and then gather for worship.</i>	DESTINATIONS (90 MIN + SNACK) <i>Small groups rotate between three activity stations and have a snack.</i>	DEPARTURE (10 MIN) <i>Small groups debrief and then gather for worship and dismissal.</i>
Check In (10 min) (small groups) Boarding (10 min) (call to peace, songs, Peace Mission) Takeoff (15 min) (drama, peace talk, prayer)	Bible Beach (30 min) (Bible activities) Creator's Canyon (30 min) (art and science) Move-It Mountain (30 min) (active games) Snacks (15 min)	Check In (small groups) Boarding (call to peace, songs) Takeoff (blessing, dismissal)

Items you will need from the **VBS Starter Kit**:

- *Move-It Mountain Leader Guide*
- Move-It Mountain folder in the Music & Resource electronic files
- Move-It Mountain Area Poster
- Peacemaking Wheel Poster

The **Music & Resource electronic files** include a folder of teaching aids to accompany the leader's guide. Each Move-It Mountain leader should be given access to the relevant folder so as to print pages for the chosen activity. The Move-It Mountain folder includes the following:

- Day 5 Kindness Strips

Media Connections are included in each session and posted on the **Growing Up Catholic Pinterest** page for ease of use. Locate the "Passport to Peace" board (see below). The items are organized by day. Additional songs, decorating ideas, and offering-related videos are also included on Pinterest.

Get Connected!



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"Passport to Peace" board
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WELCOME TO MOVE-IT MOUNTAIN!

Get outside and play some active games! Physical activity is crucial in child development. Research has shown that active play in the natural world has many benefits, including physical health benefits, improved mood, and increased attention span.

Move-It Mountain is one of three 30-minute **DESTINATIONS** Stations following **ARRIVAL** (opening worship). Each Move-It Mountain session includes four active games and has three parts: Check In, Destinations, and Departure.

CHECK IN

Gather the children for a brief recap of the Bible story and provide instructions for the chosen games for the day. Because these are active games, it is essential to establish clear behavioral expectations and to explain the boundaries of the play area so that all children are safe.

DESTINATIONS

Choose from the game options. The At-a-Glance chart at the beginning of each session gives a summary of the type of game and activity level to help you decide which games to offer. Consider your group size, space, and number of volunteers. It's best to be prepared with more games than you think you will need. That way you have a backup plan if one of the games doesn't work for a group, or if there is a change due to weather or supervision.

Each game option includes "Talk About It" prompts to help the children connect the game to the Bible story and their own experiences.

DEPARTURE

Work together with the children to clean up materials in preparation for the next group. Then gather the children for a short prayer of blessing.

Each session plan also includes a **Bible background essay** to read in preparation for leading and an **At-a-Glance chart** to aid in planning.



SETTING UP

It's ideal if Move-It Mountain activities are done outside in a grassy area. An empty parking lot can also work, provided no cars are allowed to drive into it. Being outside is not possible for many churches, so games can also be played in a gymnasium or other large empty room. Make modifications to the games as needed based on your available space.

Although some activities require little setup, others may require preparation work, such as gathering supplies, printing items from the Music & Resource electronic files, or arranging the space in a particular way. Instead of purchasing new items for activities, check to see if you can get donations from church members.

There is a Move-It Mountain Area Poster. Use it to designate a gathering place where children will come for Check In and Departure. This will also be the place to have "Talk About It" conversations after each game. Post the Peacemaking Wheel Poster in this area. Refer to the strategies on the wheel if there are conflicts during the games.

Have field markers, such as cones, to set boundaries for some of the games. For example, if children will be playing tag in a field or parking lot, it will be important to mark boundaries. For tag and running games with a small group, a 20 x 20 ft / 6 x 6 m space is enough.

Depending on the weather, have a large cooler of water and cups available in case children get thirsty. Have first aid supplies on hand in case of injury.

CHOOSING ACTIVITIES

There are several factors to consider when choosing activities, including available supplies, the age of children in the group, the number of volunteer helpers, group size, available space, and length of time. If you know of children who have physical limitations, be sure to make modifications so that they can participate in the games.

Move-It Mountain activities are purposefully created to provide a variety of levels of engagement and energy. Activities are varied and include cooperative and competitive games. Provide a variety of activities throughout the week. It's important to note that any type of game can bring

about strong feelings and emotions. Post the Peacemaking Wheel Poster in your area, and if conflict arises while playing together, stop and talk about the strategies that children can use to make it a fun, safe, and peaceful environment for everyone.

Be prepared to redirect the group to a second or third game in case of rain or if the group is not connecting with the selected activity. It is best to have a backup plan rather than scrambling in the moment to come up with something different.

LEADING CONVERSATIONS

After playing each game, gather briefly near the Move-It Mountain Area Poster to discuss the experience. Discussion questions are provided in the "Talk About It" section of each game description. However, you know your group best! Feel free to take the conversation in a different direction. The goal is to help children connect their experiences with the Bible stories.

When leading conversations, never force children to answer, but invite them to share if they are comfortable. Ask open-ended questions, and refrain from asking questions that require a simple yes or no. If children stump you with a question or comment, thank them for their response, and let them know that you will do some research and get back to them. Be sure you follow through. This lets them know that they have been heard, and that you care about responding to their curiosity.



SAFETY

It is important to ensure the safety and well-being of all children in VBS, particularly during active games. Educate yourself about any safety protocols and policies that your church already has in place. If there is not a specific policy, discuss the following types of questions and make a plan with your VBS Director:

- How many volunteers should be on hand for supervision (one adult for every 5–10 children)?
- How will you keep track of which children have asthma, bee sting allergies, other allergies, or take medications?
- What safety supplies will you have, such as drinking water, a first aid kit, sunscreen, and cell phone?
- What happens when a child needs to use the restroom?
- If someone is injured, what protocol will you use to get help, inform parents, bring comfort, treat wounds, and record details of the incident?
- Is there a medical professional who can be on site to assist in case of injury?

Establish safety rules and clear expectations for children so they are mindful of their limitations and are cautioned about any potential issues. Adult leaders should demonstrate how to safely tag people. Tagging should be done with a gentle hand on the back, leg, arm, or shoulder. Depending on the amount of space and number of children, you may want to tell children to walk briskly instead of running.

Allow opportunities for children to drink water, especially if the activity requires high energy.

Being clear about your emergency protocol and the individual cautions of your children can prevent a minor injury from becoming a serious issue.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

Children may be hesitant to play one of the games. Do not force participation. Encourage and invite, but do not ostracize children or try to make them feel guilty if they don't want to participate. Children may be reluctant to participate for a variety of reasons, including being tired, anxious, hot, uninterested, or insecure. Some children struggle with physical activities and may be embarrassed about being slow or uncoordinated. One option is to invite them to participate in other ways, such as keeping score, being a referee, reading instructions, or setting up the playing field.

Offering a variety of activities, including some that are low energy, is one way to make sure that all children can participate. Another way to encourage participation is for adults to join in the games. Keep the atmosphere fun and light, reducing the pressure for children to keep up with their peers. You may want to avoid competitive games altogether. There are plenty of other options.

DAY 1

CAN WE TALK?

Scripture Text:

Acts 8:4–8, 26–40

Seed of Faith:

Peacemakers listen to and learn from people who are different.

Bible Essay:

Philip the Evangelist, as he is sometimes known, is introduced in the book of Acts as one of seven Jewish deacons to oversee the distribution of food to widows in the early church. (He is not to be confused with Jesus' disciple Philip.) He goes on to preach in a city in Samaria, spreading the good news of Jesus to all he meets. Jews and Samaritans were not on good terms, to say the least. But like Jesus, Philip preaches in Samaritan towns despite the animosity that exists. Many people believe in Jesus because of Philip's ministry there, which includes teaching, miracles, healings, and even exorcisms.

One day an angel sends Philip out to a desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza. He meets an official traveling from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship, back to his home in Ethiopia.

The official couldn't have been more different than Philip. This respected court official is the treasurer for Candace of Ethiopia and is wealthy enough to own his own scroll of Isaiah. Socially, he is well above Philip. Most people assume that he was Gentile, but this is unclear. Regardless of whether he was Jew or Gentile, he would have been an outsider, rejected and shamed because he was a eunuch. Because of the law of Moses, the eunuch would have been refused entry into the Jerusalem temple, despite his lengthy trip from Ethiopia.

The official invites Philip into his chariot to help him understand the Isaiah passage he is reading. Philip connects Isaiah 53:7–8 to Jesus, the Lamb of God who was despised and rejected and ultimately killed.

After Philip's explanation of the Isaiah text, the two men come to some water. The Ethiopian official asks a bold question with a life-changing answer: "What is to prevent me from being baptized?" The answer? Nothing! People may have kept him out of the temple, but he could not be kept out of the kingdom of God. Rejection, shame, and alienation have no place there.

This transformative message is critical for children: nothing can keep them out! There are no barriers to becoming part of God's family. All are welcome. This type of radical acceptance is the foundation of peaceful relationships. When we see ourselves—and everyone else—as created in the image of God and worthy of love and welcome, then the only response is to treat everyone with dignity and honor. With a foundation of respect and acceptance, we can then learn from one another and work together to create a more peaceful world.

DAY 1 AT-A-GLANCE



ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Read Acts 8:26–40 and the Bible essay for Day 1 on page 6 of this guide.
- Read through the Move-It Mountain session plan. Choose games to play, depending on the space, group size, and amount of time you have. Gather needed supplies.
- Communicate with volunteers about their roles and tasks.

SESSION PLAN

CHECK IN

Welcome the group and briefly review the Bible story, referring to the Bible story summary on page 6 as needed. Set behavioral expectations and give instructions about the chosen games for the day.

DESTINATIONS

Play one or more of the chosen games. Leave time at the end to return materials and prepare the space for the next group.

OPTIONS	TYPE	SUPPLIES	TO DO
SHARE THE GOOD NEWS	Cooperative Medium energy No preparation No cleanup		
CHARIOT RELAY	Cooperative High energy Minimal preparation Some cleanup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four or more chairs	Set up chairs in pairs, and mark off a starting line.
LISTEN UP!	Cooperative Listening skills Medium energy Minimal preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internet-connected device (optional)	Mark off an area to walk around in. Before children arrive, watch the video suggestion.
DIFFERENT AND THE SAME	Get to know you Cooperative Medium energy Minimal preparation No cleanup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two cones of different colors	

DEPARTURE

Gather the group and say a closing prayer. Pray:

God, thank you for this time together. Help us to spread peace as we listen to and learn from others this week at Vacation Bible School and at home. Amen.



DESTINATIONS

SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

God's word spreads from person to person. Pass a movement from person to person. Stand in a line shoulder to shoulder. The first person in line begins a movement that spreads through the rest of the line person by person, such as raising your arms above your head, squatting, clapping, rubbing your stomach, or jumping. Let each person have a turn being the first person.

After the group passes movements down the line, move from a line to a circle. One person begins a movement. When the movement has spread person to person halfway around the circle, the first person starts a new movement. See how well the group is able to pay attention to the right movement at the right time.

Talk About It

Philip listened to the man from Ethiopia and was able to help him by telling him the good news about Jesus. We can also spread the good news about Jesus by telling others about him. What are some things we could say about Jesus? How did Jesus care for people? (*healing people, welcoming and becoming friends with everyone, feeding crowds, teaching*)

CHARIOT RELAY

Divide the children into two or more teams. Make a "chariot" for each team by placing two chairs side by side. Have one person from each group be the "official" and sit in the chariot. The rest of the group lines up across the room or space. The first child in line, "Philip," can run and sit in the chariot with the official. Philip tells the official a predetermined good news message chosen by the leader, such as "Jesus lives!" "God is with you," or "Jesus came to show God's love." Then the official runs to the back of the line and Philip switches chairs to become the new official. Repeat until everyone has been both the official and Philip.

Talk About It

Philip shared good news with the Ethiopian man. What was it like to be the person saying the message of good news? What was it like to hear the message of good news? What are some different ways we can help others learn about Jesus? (*spoken words, written words, actions, Bible words*) Philip wasn't just helpful by telling the man about Jesus, but he also was a peacemaker by listening to him first. How could your actions tell others about Jesus?

Supplies

- Two chairs for each group

LISTEN UP!

Play a listening game called “Walk and Stop.” Mark off an area for children to move around. To begin, children will walk when you say the word *walk* and stop when you say the word *stop*. Once everyone is listening well and following directions, switch the directions. Children will stop when you say *walk* and walk when you say *stop*.

If children master this skill, add two new commands: *name* (children say their own name) and *clap* (children clap once together), but walk and stop are still reverse commands. If children are up for it, switch the commands for name and clap, so all four commands are switched with the other word. Everyone will get confused at some point, so laugh together and keep giving commands.

Option: To see an example, watch “Team-Building Games: Walk & Stop—Active Group Game to Inspire Good Listening and Reflex Skills” by Mark Collard (YouTube). A final set of commands includes the words *dance* and *jump*.

DIFFERENT AND THE SAME

Place two cones of contrasting colors on the ground. They should be far enough away that the children have room to move between them but close enough that anyone standing near them can hear the leader’s voice. Give directions using the prompts listed below. For example, say, “If you like cats better, move to the red cone, or if you like dogs better, move to the blue cone.” Pause to let the children run to the cone of their choice.

Different/Same Prompts

- Cats or dogs
- Night or day
- Snow or rain
- Hugs or kisses
- Apples or bananas
- Summer or winter
- Lions or tigers
- Sand or water

Talk About It

Listening is important! Philip listened to the Ethiopian man to know how to help him. Peacemakers listen to people who are different from them. Listening is not always easy. We sometimes hear confusing messages or get distracted by wrong information. What was easy about listening in this game? What was hard? How can we become good listeners like Philip?

Supplies

- Internet-connected device (optional)

Talk About It

Peacemakers listen to and learn from people who are different. God created us to be different, just like the many wonderful and different things in creation. What have you learned about your friends from this game? What questions could you ask if you wanted to learn more about them?

Supplies

- Two cones of different colors