

DIRECTOR GUIDE



PASSPORT
to PEACE



Director Guide

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Project Directors: Paul Canavese, Joan L. Daggett

Writer: Chrissie Muecke

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

Consultants: Ruth Kamau, Darla Kay Deardorff

Designers: Kerri Hiebert, Merrill Miller

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CATCH THE VISION

Overview & Goals	3
Children's Faith Formation	4
Cultural Sensitivity	4
Bible Outline	5
Bible Memory	5
Bible Background Essays	6-10
Daily Schedule	11
A Day in <i>Passport to Peace</i>	12-13
Early Childhood Overview	14
Peace Mission.....	15

GET READY

Ordering Information.....	16
Music & Electronic Files.....	17
Planning Checklist	18-19
Staffing Overview	20
Leader Assignment Cards	21-23
Volunteer Needs	24
Orientation for Staff and Volunteers.....	25
Publicity and Outreach.....	26
VBS Dedication	26
Registration	27
Setting Up.....	28
Decorating.....	29

DURING VBS AND BEYOND

Tips for the First Day	30
Record Keeping.....	30
Making VBS a Safe Place	31
General Discipline Tips	32
Planning Snack Time	33-35
Invite Children to Grow in Faith.....	36
Invite Families to Grow in Faith.....	37
<i>Passport to Peace</i> Closing Program	37
After VBS.....	38
Adaptations for a Midweek Program.....	39
Adaptations for a Weekend Retreat	40

CATCH THE VISION



Goals of 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. The Catholic Church has more than one billion members in the world from all different walks of life, cultures, and countries. We as leaders and members are also challenged to continue learning and practicing our peacemaking skills, especially as our society becomes more polarized and we come into contact with more people who may not always think or act like us. This week we will introduce children to a variety of strategies for peacemaking and will practice those skills at VBS and at home.

The curriculum begins with the story of Philip and the Ethiopian official, encouraging children to listen to and learn from people who are different. In Jesus' parable of the sheep and goats, Jesus calls us to care for those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, naked, strangers, and prisoners. The story of Abigail reminds us that we can creatively work to keep everyone safe. Isaac provides an example of someone who refused to respond to conflict with violence. The final story shows a Samaritan man acting as a loving neighbor to a person who had been physically harmed. Through these stories, children learn that there are many opportunities and ways to live as peacemakers. *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.

Goals of Passport to Peace

- **Become peacemakers**
 - Answer Jesus' call to peacemaking
 - View all people as part of God's beloved family
 - Learn and practice strategies for conflict resolution and managing one's emotions
- **Make peace a way of life**
 - Use spiritual practices that contribute to inner peace
 - Develop friendships with people who are different
 - Use peacemaking strategies at home, school, and in the community

Passport to Peace is structured using a travel theme. Each day begins with **ARRIVAL**, which includes **Check In** (small group activities), **Boarding** (call to peace, songs, and Peace Mission), and **Takeoff** (Bible story drama, peace talk, prayer).

Children will then rotate through three **DESTINATIONS**. These three activity stations include **Bible Beach** (Bible activities), **Creator's Canyon** (art and science activities), and **Move-It Mountain** (active games). A snack could be offered during this time.

DEPARTURE 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, 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 and other parish activities. Intentional faith formation experiences, such as VBS, help children grow in their understanding of God's love for them.

Key elements of faith formation found in *Passport to Peace*:

- **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, 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 DESTINATIONS 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 peacemakers every day. See page 36 for more information.

Cultural Sensitivity

Passport to Peace seeks to celebrate and honor countries and cultures around the world in all their complexity and beauty which is fitting for the Catholic Church, which transcends national boundaries and cultures. In any exploration of cultures, it is far too easy to inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes, contribute incorrect information, or misrepresent some aspects of places or groups of people. Remember that individuals are so much more than one identity, as Jesus so frequently demonstrated with his ability to connect with people of different religions and ethnic backgrounds. In the end, he showed us that it is "we," not "us versus them." Help children see our common shared humanity instead of talking about "those people" in other places. Explore what we may all have in common as well as the rich diversity found in our own local communities.

As you plan for VBS, take extra time when considering how to decorate, what books you read or videos you show, and how to talk about different places in the world. Think about what group(s) are being privileged through the materials and images you choose and whose voices are missing. Then seek ways to include diverse perspectives and voices.

In the electronic files, there is a booklist that has several articles and a website to provide further guidance about book selection.

The decorating section on page 29 in this guide provides some questions to consider as you decide how to decorate.

Whenever possible, consult with someone in your parish or community who is from the places you want to highlight. They may have resources or ideas for how to respectfully present information about that area of the world.

OUTLINE

	SESSION TITLE	STORY SUMMARY	PATH TO PEACE
1	Can We Talk? Acts 8:26–40	Two men from different countries, races, social class, and religious backgrounds meet on the Jerusalem-Gaza road. Philip was sent there by an angel, while the Ethiopian official was traveling from Jerusalem back to his home country of Ethiopia. Philip and the official discuss the scriptures. Philip explains the good news about Jesus to him. The official asks to be baptized and Philip baptizes him.	Peacemakers listen to and learn from people who are different.
2	Do You See What I See? Matthew 25:31–46	Jesus tells a parable of separating people like sheep and goats for judgment. The sheep are welcomed into the kingdom because they have cared for Jesus when he was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison. The sheep wonder when they have seen this. Jesus answers that whenever they care for the least of his brothers and sisters, they care for him. The goats are told that when they fail to care for others, they fail to care for Jesus.	Peacemakers notice the needs of others and seek to help.
3	I Have an Idea! 1 Samuel 25:1–35	David and his men are hiding near the fields of Nabal, a rich and selfish man. David's soldiers help protect Nabal's flocks. Nabal insults David's soldiers by excluding them from a feast. David calls for war. But Nabal's wife, Abigail, quickly makes a plan. She loads food on her donkeys and goes out to speak to David. She apologizes for Nabal's behavior. David accepts Abigail's gifts and calls off the fighting.	Peacemakers act creatively to keep everyone safe.
4	Trouble in the Neighborhood Genesis 26:12–33	Isaac digs wells in a dry land. His crops and flocks prosper, but the neighbors grow jealous and fill up the wells. So Isaac moves away and digs new wells. The new neighbors also quarrel over the water, so Isaac moves again. God promises to be with Isaac and his family, and Isaac worships God. King Abimelech realizes God is with Isaac, and they feast together and promise not to hurt each other.	Peacemakers respond to conflict without using violence.
5	The Road Less Traveled Luke 10:25–37	A lawyer asks Jesus how to receive life with God. Jesus asks what the law says. The lawyer says to love God and one's neighbor and then asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells a story about a robbed, wounded traveler. A priest and a Levite pass by without helping. But a Samaritan stops, takes the man to an inn to recover, and pays his bill. Jesus tells his listeners to go and do the same.	Peacemakers take action when people have been hurt.

Bible Memory

The Bible memory passage for grades K–5 is taught during Bible Beach, one of the **DESTINATIONS** stations. 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.*

Grades K–5:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

—Matthew 5:43–44

Early Childhood:

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."

—Matthew 5:9

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 (a man who was castrated). 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. As Pope Francis continually emphasizes, all are welcome. No one should ever be turned away from Jesus! 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 2

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

Scripture Text:

Matthew 25:31–46

Seed of Faith:

Peacemakers notice the needs of others and seek to help.

Bible Essay:

Prior to today's Bible story, Jesus calls out the religious leaders for not practicing what they preach. In all their rule-following, they were "neglecting the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith" (Matthew 23:23). Jesus then goes on to tell his disciples a series of parables ending with this judgment scene of the sheep and the goats before the Son of Man.

In this scene, no one is judged by what they believe. There are no required statements of faith or tests of biblical knowledge. Rather the focus is on acts of compassion. Righteousness is linked to concrete actions on behalf of those who are in need. Seemingly small decisions—to help or not help, to share or not share, to welcome or ignore—turn out to matter greatly. Interestingly, everyone is surprised and confused by this judgment scene. The "blessed" and "accursed" had no idea that their action—or lack of action—had eternal significance.

What's perhaps most striking about this passage is that Jesus identifies himself with "the least of these who are members of [his] family" (Matthew 25:40). This is not a moralistic admonition to be nice to people, but an invitation to be in relationship with Jesus in unexpected ways. Do you want to know Jesus better? Share a meal with someone who is hungry. Welcome a new person to your community. Spend time with someone who is sick. Visit someone in prison. Get close to the very people you might not normally interact with or notice. That's where you'll find Jesus.

Children are often told to love Jesus, but many probably wonder exactly how to do that. They can't see or touch Jesus because he lived on earth thousands of years ago. Matthew 25 offers a concrete way that children can love Jesus—by loving the people around them. Some children are fairly attuned to the needs of others. They notice when someone is upset or needs a friend. They share a snack with the person who forgot to bring one. Other children will need support to notice these things. Younger children might not pay much attention to what is happening to others—not because they are cold or uncaring—but simply because they are focused on their own lives. This is a great opportunity to encourage children to simply look around and to pay attention to the experiences of others. And if they see someone who has a need, they can look for a way to help.

Day 3

I HAVE AN IDEA!

Scripture Text:

1 Samuel 25:1–35

Seed of Faith:

Peacemakers act creatively to keep everyone safe.

Bible Essay:

David has fled from the wrath of King Saul and is living out in the Judean hills with several hundred followers. David's followers are described as "everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented" (1 Samuel 22:2). They have been providing protection to local shepherds, including Nabal's shepherds, although Nabal is unaware of this at the time. And so it is that David feels justified in asking Nabal for food for him and his men at Nabal's shearing day celebration.

Nabal doesn't know David and assumes he's trying to take advantage of him. Nabal's refusal to share food sends David into a rage. David vows to kill every male connected to Nabal! David is often held up as a hero of the faith, a "man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). But David is a complex person who wavered between being wise, generous, and considerate *and* being rash, vindictive, and manipulative. What was it exactly that angered him so much? Was he really that hungry? Was he insulted that Nabal assumed he was an escaped slave? Whatever it was, he tells 400 of his men to put on their swords, and they start toward Nabal's house.

Abigail, the wife of Nabal, hears about these events from her servant. She steps in with quick thinking and lots of food. She stops David on the road, bows down in front of him, and gives him the prepared food. She convinces him to turn back from his plot to get revenge on Nabal, telling him that he does not want to have the death of innocent people on his conscience. David agrees and praises her for keeping him from bloodshed. He and his men go away in peace. Abigail has kept her entire household safe.

While intervening in potentially violent situations is not a task for children, there are many ways that children can be creative problem solvers in situations that involve conflict or disagreements. *Passport to Peace* VBS provides a host of strategies that children can add to their peacemaking "toolbox." There are 16 peacemaking strategies on the Peacemaking Wheel Poster and five "Peace Inside" strategies from Bible Beach that will help children manage their own strong emotions. As children learn and practice these strategies, they will grow in confidence and wisdom as peacemakers. They will be able to act quickly and effectively to keep themselves and others safe.

Day 4

TROUBLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Scripture Text:

Genesis 26:12–33

Seed of Faith:

Peacemakers respond to conflict without using violence.

Bible Essay:

A bit of context is helpful as we approach the story in Genesis 26. Before Abraham's death, he "gave all he had" to his son, Isaac (25:5). Because of his father's obedience, God gives Isaac a blessing reminiscent of the one given to Abraham in Genesis 12. Isaac follows in the path of his father and prospers.

Even though there is famine in the land, God tells Isaac not to take his family to Egypt but to remain in Gerar, the land inhabited by Philistines. Given his vast wealth, flocks, and servants, Isaac is a formidable figure—a chieftain with considerable power and might. It is not surprising that the Philistines and their king, Abimelech, are intimidated by him. "Go away from us; you have become too powerful for us" (26:16).

And so, Isaac does. He moves into the valley of Gerar and reopens the wells dug by his father. Isaac's presence rattles nearby herders, and they contest his rights to the water. Isaac moves again, reopening another well dug by his father. In time, the Philistine neighbors complain, and Isaac moves again. This time, no one comes to quarrel over the water, and Isaac names the well Rehoboth, which means "room." Isaac then goes to Beersheba, where God blesses him once more. Isaac builds an altar there and pitches his tent.

Abimelech comes to Isaac again, this time with his advisor and military general, but not looking for a fight. "We see plainly that the Lord has been with you," he tells Isaac (26:28). Abimelech requests that they agree to live in peace and not harm one another. Isaac responds by preparing a feast for his visitors. The next morning, they make an agreement, and Isaac sends them on their way.

Why didn't Isaac confront his neighbors? After all, he had the legal rights to the wells and the power to enforce them. Was Isaac simply avoiding conflict? If so, he would not be the first one to do so! It is common to hope that a conflict will go away if we just ignore it. Yet Isaac's response to the trouble with his Philistine neighbors goes beyond ignoring the problem. In this case, Isaac is the one who has power, but he chooses to relinquish it.

Isaac's refusal to respond with violence invites his neighbors and, ultimately, the king to choose peace. This story shows children an alternative to responding with harsh words or hurtful actions in times of conflict. As a peacemaking strategy, walking away from disagreements can give everyone a chance to cool off and think without harming relationships. Choosing to walk away provides an opening for everyone to respond differently.

5

Day 5

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Scripture Text:

Luke 10:25–37

Seed of Faith:

Peacemakers take action when people have been hurt.

Bible Essay:

While we tend to focus on the action within the parable of the good Samaritan, it is important to listen to the conversation surrounding its telling. A lawyer asks questions to test Jesus. The back-and-forth between the two men leads to a story and a final question.

In Jesus' time, the trip from Jerusalem to Jericho was a dangerous trek with rocks and caves lining the steep road. Robbers could easily hide among the rocks and ambush weary travelers. We are not given any details about the man who was robbed and beaten. That he is stripped of his clothes provides the listener with no clue to his ethnicity or religion. He is another human being beaten and left for dead.

The others on the road that day are well identified. Two are religious leaders who passed by the injured man on the other side of the road. Why didn't they stop to help? No reasons are given in the story itself. Some argue that a concern for impurity laws might have led them to walk on by. However, they are headed not toward the temple in Jerusalem to perform their religious duties but away from it.

The third man, a Samaritan, is moved with compassion for the injured man. At this point in the story, the crowd and the lawyer probably lean in to listen more carefully as Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies. Jesus goes into detail about the Samaritan's actions toward the injured man. The Samaritan bandages the man's wounds, pours oil and wine on them, puts the man on his animal, and takes him to an inn where he cares for him. The next day, the Samaritan pays the innkeeper to care for the man with a promise to pay more if needed.

Jesus concludes the story by asking the lawyer which of the men acted as a neighbor to the injured man. "The one who showed him mercy" (Luke 10:37) is the lawyer's reply, perhaps not wanting to acknowledge that the hero was a Samaritan. Jesus affirms his answer with a command to act with that same compassion.

Who is my neighbor? The man posing this question was essentially asking Jesus whom he had to love. Jesus' story reveals that we are called to love everyone, even the people we least want to love! Being a peacemaker means having compassion and a willingness to help people—whether or not they are Catholic or belong to our church or believe what we believe, or even if they are people we might want to avoid! Jesus' story invites children and us to see all people as neighbors worthy of love, respect, and kindness.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each day of *Passport to Peace* has three main sections: **ARRIVAL** (opening worship), **DESTINATIONS** (activity stations), and **DEPARTURE** (closing worship). Each day is designed for **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.

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)

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 & Registration: _____

ARRIVAL (gathering in small groups): _____

ARRIVAL (large group worship): _____

DESTINATION Station 1: _____

DESTINATION Station 2: _____

DESTINATION Station 3: _____

Snack: _____

DEPARTURE (closing worship): _____

Dismissal: _____

Modified Schedules

2 HOURS:

ARRIVAL: 25 minutes

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

DEPARTURE: 10 minutes

1½ HOURS:

ARRIVAL: 20 minutes

DESTINATIONS: 20 minutes per activity station
DEPARTURE: 10 minutes

1 HOUR:

ARRIVAL: 15 minutes

DESTINATIONS: 15 minutes per activity station

A DAY IN PASSPORT TO PEACE

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 ARRIVAL

Before children arrive each day, clearly designate and mark a space for each small group using a different Small Group Sign (electronic files).

Check In

As children arrive each day, they will begin the day in small groups led by an adult Small Group Leader in the worship space. This is an important time for leaders to connect with children in their assigned group, for 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 Peace Tickets and Peacemaker Passports from the electronic files or on pages 51–55 of the *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*. These tickets tell the leaders exactly what to do with the children. 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.

Boarding

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 Call to Peace, Peace Mission, and Peace Talk questions. There is also a folder with MP3 versions of seven songs, song motions, and chord charts. The songs are as follows:

- “Power of Peace”
- “Peacemaker”
- “God Is Bigger”
- “Our God Is Good”
- “Walking the Ways of Peace”
- “Give Us Your Peace”
- “May Your Kingdom Come”

The Peace Mission time encourages children to spread peace in the community or the world. Three options are explained in detail on page 15 in this guide, as well as in the “Peace Mission” Resources file in the Director’s Guide electronic files. There are ideas for a visual display to track your progress if you collect an offering as well as video and book suggestions. Many of these media connections are pinned on the Growing Up Catholic Passport to Peace Pinterest board for ease of use.

Takeoff

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

Overview of DESTINATIONS

Each day during **DESTINATIONS**, children rotate with their Small Group Leader through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, and Move-It Mountain. At each station, children will participate in activities that help them extend and experience the Bible story presented during **ARRIVAL** (opening worship). Assign an order for how groups should rotate through the three stations. Several small groups could be together at the Bible Beach Station, several could be at the Creator's Canyon Station, and several could be at the Move-It Mountain Station. If you will have more than 50 children, you will likely want to have two Bible Beach Stations, two Creator's Canyon Stations, and two Move-It Mountain Stations running simultaneously so they aren't crowded. Refer to pages 34–35 of this guide for how to incorporate a 15-minute snack time during **DESTINATIONS**.

Destination Station 1: **Bible Beach**

Children will review and retell the story that was presented during the drama. Two story-telling options are provided to allow for different learning environments, abilities, and ages. Wondering and discussion questions follow the story as well as activities from the *Peace Passport* student booklets and a Bible memory activity. Three **DESTINATIONS** 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 Music & Resource electronic files have a variety of printable documents for Bible Beach.

Destination Station 2: **Creator's Canyon**

Children will explore the themes of the Bible story through three open-ended art projects and two hands-on science explorations. On Days 1–4, art project options are found in the *Peace Passport* student booklet. These include a paper airplane, pinwheel, spinner, and lantern. 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.

Destination Station 3: **Move-It Mountain**

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 Move-It Mountain. The At-a-Glance Chart indicates types of games or activities and the amount of preparation and number of supplies required.

Overview of DEPARTURE

At the end of the **DESTINATIONS** time, children return to the worship area to sing, pray, and get stamps in their *Peace Passport* student booklet. Preschool children will have a Take Home Ticket each day from their *Peace Express* student booklet.

OVERVIEW OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Early Childhood portion of VBS is designed to meet the developmental needs, interests, and pacing of children ages 4–5. It is intended to be self-contained, though you may choose to include the Early Childhood group in the opening worship time for children in grades K–5. This would allow them to see the dramatic presentation of the Bible story.

The Early Childhood session is structured with a train theme rather than an air travel theme, so the organization of the day and the decorations and emphasis are somewhat different. Their time is divided into **CHECK IN**, **ALL ABOARD**, **STATIONS**, and **DEPARTURE**.

CHECK IN

There are four main components in Check In: Peace with Friends (“get to know you” activity), Peace with God (songs and prayer), Peace Inside (strategy for developing inner peace), and Offering.

ALL ABOARD

Children will hear an interactive retelling of the Bible story, respond to “Peace Talk” wondering questions, see a puppet skit about a modern-day peacemaking situation, learn a Bible memory passage, do activities from the *Peace Express* student booklet, and have a snack.

STATIONS

There are three activity stations each day. Each activity includes “Talk About It” prompts to help children connect the activity with the Bible story and their own experiences. If you have several leaders, the station activities can be done as rotations. This would mean setting up activities in different areas and having children rotate between them. A leader would need to be at each area to coordinate and supervise each activity.

- **Creator’s Canyon Station:** Three arts-and-crafts activities are provided for each day.
- **Move-It Mountain Station:** Three active games are provided for each day and are designed to be done outside if you have adequate space and supervision. These could also be adapted for smaller indoor spaces.
- **Discovery Desert Station:** Each day also includes two sensory explorations. One is a train station activity focused on a different country each day. There is also a list of Media Connections to use as you see fit.

DEPARTURE

Each session concludes with a song and prayer. The Take-Home Tickets from the *Peace Express* student booklets are sent home along with any artwork from the day.

PEACE MISSION

Peace Mission options include an offering project and two activities that help children share messages of peace with people in the community or around the world. Choose what will work best for your setting and what you feel will help children grow as peacemakers. Communicate the decision to the Worship and Drama Leader(s) so they know how to plan the opening worship time.

The “Peace Mission” Resources in the Director’s Guide supporting files contain detailed information about the three options as well as ideas and templates for a visual display.

Peace Mission 1: Financially support an organization doing peace work.

Choose a local, denominational, or international organization that is involved in peacemaking. There are a variety of suggestions in the “Peace Mission” Director’s Guide supporting files. During opening worship, show a video or pictures to help children see where the chosen organization is located, what it does, and who it serves. Many organizations provide pictures or videos on their websites or on YouTube.

Create a visual offering display that will keep children up to date of your progress throughout the week. The “Peace Mission” Resources file (electronic files) has ideas and templates that can be used for the display.

Peace Mission 2: Spread peace around the world.

Choose an online pen pal organization. Provide postcards for each small group to decorate during opening worship. Send these peace messages on behalf of the children. If anyone in your parish has friends or relatives who are doing service work in another country, you could also have children make peace messages to send there. The “Peace Mission” Resources file includes several books about cross-cultural pen pals which you may want to read during opening worship.

Peace Mission 3: Spread peace in your community.

Provide each person with a “Peace Mission” Dove (electronic files). Each day, children can draw, write, or color another section of the dove. At the end of the week, send the finished peace doves to another local parish, senior living center, hospital, nonprofit organization, or business. You may want to include a financial donation as well. There are several alternatives (making origami doves or cranes, writing messages on stones) if you do not want to make doves. The goal is to share a message of peace with people in your community.

GET READY Ordering Information

You can order additional items through the GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com website. Use the following checklist for purchasing necessary materials:

A set of all posters is included in the VBS physical starter kit. You can buy additional posters or print them yourself from the electronic files:

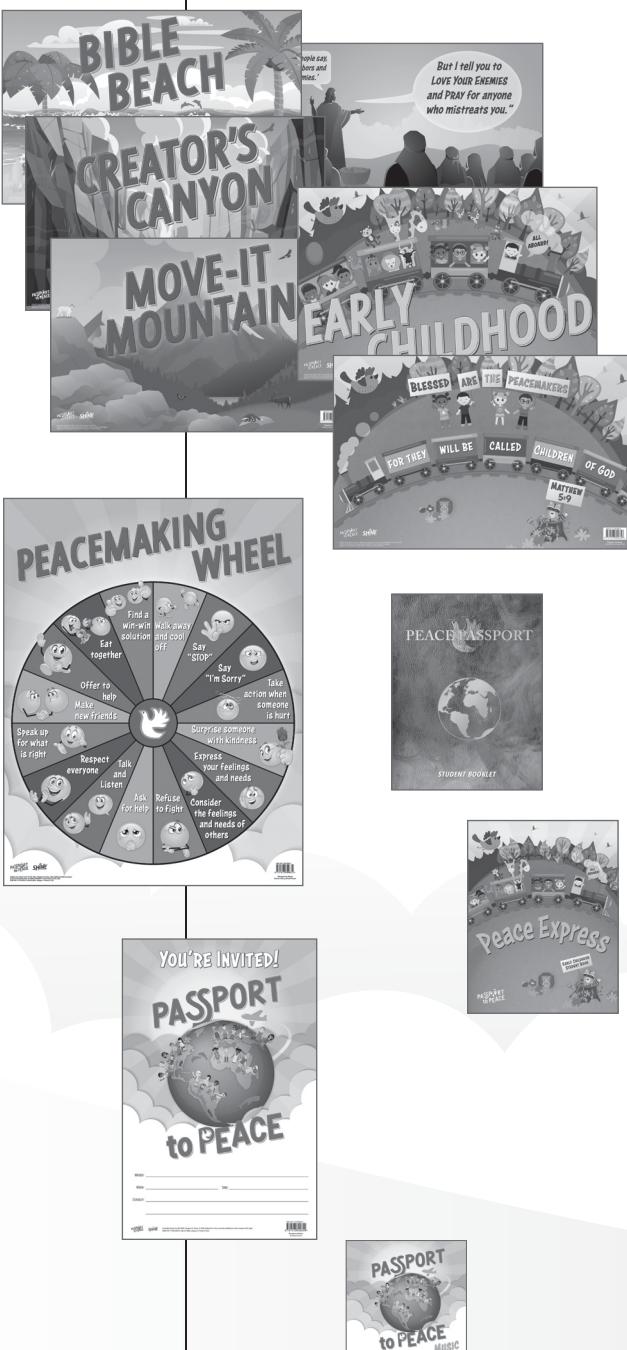
- The **Area Poster Pack** contains four decorative posters for the Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain, and Early Childhood areas. You will need more if you have more than one of each area.
- Bible memory verse posters** are available for Early Childhood and older children.
- Use **invitation posters** for promotional purposes.
- The **Peacemaking Wheel Poster** can be used in all the activity areas and in Early Childhood. This poster includes 16 peacemaking strategies for children to use during and after VBS.

Child booklets are not reproducible and must be purchased from us. Samples are included in the physical starter kit and a full preview is in the electronic files.

- Peace Passport** is a booklet for children in grades K–5 and will be used each day during the Bible Beach activity station. It is a must for each child and Bible Beach Leader. Have extra copies available for children who join VBS after the first day.
- Peace Express** is a booklet for children ages 4–5. It contains illustrated Bible stories, activities, and family activities. It also contains daily Take-Home Tickets. These tickets contain activities for families to do together. You will need one for each child and Early Childhood Leader. Have extra copies available for children who join VBS after the first day.

Music resources may be used during your event and by your leaders in preparation at no additional cost. If you want families to take the music home with them, you need to purchase it:

- Music MP3 download cards or CDs** are available for purchase in affordable bulk quantities so children can bring home the music from the week to share with their 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 for quick reference.

DIRECTOR	MUSIC	WORSHIP & DRAMA
"Peace Mission" Resources Supplies and Donations List Compiled Booklist Staff Orientation PowerPoint Leader Assignment Cards Customizable Registration Form and Waivers Attendance Record Name tags "Peace Mission" Resources Logos (in separate folder)	Seven MP3 songs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Power of Peace" • "Peacemaker" • "God Is Bigger" • "Our God is Good" • "Walking the Ways of Peace" • "Give Us Your Peace" • "May Your Kingdom Come" Chord chart for each song Song motions for each song Song Lyrics PowerPoint Sing-along videos <p><i>The Technology Coordinator will need access to this folder.</i></p>	"Call to Peace" Demonstration Video Five Worship PowerPoints (one per day) Days 1-5 Peace Doves Drama Scripts Small Group Signs Days 1-5 Peace Tickets and Peacemaker Passports <p><i>The Technology Coordinator will need access to this folder.</i></p>
EARLY CHILDHOOD	CREATOR'S CANYON (ART & SCIENCE)	BIBLE BEACH (BIBLE ACTIVITIES)
Days 1-5 Peace Puppets Days 1-5 Maps Day 2 Feelings Faces Day 2 "Clothe Me" Figure Day 2 "Food and Drink" Tags Day 3 Donkey Template Day 3 Story Figures Day 4 Story Well Day 5 Story Cards Day 5 Bandage Day 5 "Kindness Book" Template	Days 1-5 Peace Banner Words Day 1 "Countdown to Peace" Plane Example Day 2 Peace Pinwheel Example Day 3 "Peace Inside" Lantern Example Day 4 Peace Spinner Example Day 4 Well Craft Day 5 Stained Glass Peace Dove Day 5 "World of Peace" Puzzle Day 5 "Remembering Peace" Game Clues	Day 2 "Food for You" Game Day 3 Blessing Cards Day 4 Wells Game Day 5 Accordion Booklet
MOVE-IT MOUNTAIN (ACTIVE GAMES)	PUBLICITY & OUTREACH	
Day 5 Kindness Strips	Save the Date Flyer Customizable Bulletin Insert Customizable Letter to Families Invitation Postcard Send-Home Parent Pages Social Media Banner/Header	

DIRECTOR'S CHECKLIST

4–5 months before

- ❑ Choose an Assistant Director to work with you to coordinate and lead VBS planning.
- ❑ Read through the *Passport to Peace* 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 a Peace Mission from page 15 and gather supplies as needed.

3 months before

- ❑ Choose Small Group Leaders, Worship & Drama Leaders, DESTINATIONS Leaders, 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 (in the electronic files) in your bulletin. Contact all volunteers who sign up on the insert.
- ❑ Reach out with social media posts, the Save the Date flyer, and/or postcards.

6–8 weeks before

- ❑ Place the invitation poster from the VBS physical kit in your church and in a public community location. Order or print 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 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 electronic files (songs, chord charts, song motions, videos). Give the Drama Leader access to dramas (electronic files).
- ❑ Distribute leader guides to DESTINATIONS staff (Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain). Give leaders access to all relevant teaching aid material from the electronic files.
- ❑ Visit the “Growing Up Catholic: *Passport to Peace*” Pinterest page for additional resources. Share links with leaders and volunteers.
- ❑ Order *Peace Express* student booklets for Early Childhood, *Peace Passport* student booklets for grades K–5 children, and music MP3 cards/CDs to send home.
- ❑ 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 dedication and/or VBS announcement with the pastor or liturgy committee (page 26) for one or more upcoming Masses.
- ❑ Plan a *Passport to Peace* Closing Program (page 37).
- ❑ 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 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 “Peace Mission” Resources (electronic files).
- ❑ Conduct rehearsals for the drama.

2 weeks before

- Copy the Days 1–5 Peace Tickets and Peacemaker Passports (pages 51–55 in *Worship & Drama Leader Guide* or electronic files).
- Create a Small Group Sign for each group of children (electronic files).
- Make name tags or print them from the electronic files.
- Remove and cut apart the Take-Home Tickets from each *Peace Express* student booklet and organize the cards by day.
- Check books out of the library for use in the various DESTINATIONS. See the *Passport to Peace* Booklist (electronic files).
- Conduct rehearsals for the drama.

Week of VBS

- Hold a VBS dedication during a Sunday 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 “Peace Mission” Resources (electronic files).
- Set up small-group areas for ARRIVAL. Set out a Small Group Sign (electronic files) and name tags (electronic files) for each group as well as a set of Days 1–5 Peace Tickets and Peacemaker Passports (pages 51–55 in *Worship & Drama Leader Guide* or electronic files).
- Set up the three DESTINATIONS Stations: Bible Beach, Creator’s Canyon, Move-It Mountain (page 30).
- Decorate the worship area, Early Childhood room(s), and all DESTINATIONS 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 33–35).

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 if relevant.
- Keep records as described on page 31.
- Meet briefly with staff after Day 1.
- Offer encouragement to volunteers each day.
- Post daily announcements in a prominent place.
- Send home Parent Pages and Take-Home Tickets.
- Prepare for staff recognition.
- Prepare Student Participation Certificates.
- Prepare for the *Passport to Peace* Closing Program (page 37) and publicize it to families.

After VBS

- Collect leader guides.
- Clean up 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 38).

STAFF OVERVIEW

Director and Assistant Director

The Director and Assistant Director coordinate and organize VBS and provide support to volunteers during VBS week. This team will be familiar with the entire curriculum and will be responsible for decisions related to leaders, orientation, content, facilities, publicity and promotion, registration, and supplies.

Leaders for ARRIVAL (Opening Worship) and DEPARTURE (Closing Worship)

The following leaders are needed for opening and closing worship:

Small Group Leaders

Leaders are needed for each small group of children. Their primary role is to greet children as they arrive at Bible school, lead small group discussions, and accompany their group during ARRIVAL (opening worship). Small Group Leaders also travel with their designated group to the DESTINATION Stations and provide support to the DESTINATIONS Leaders as needed. They will accompany their group during DEPARTURE (closing worship) and help dismiss children at the end of the day.

Worship & Drama Leaders

The following leaders will take part in leading worship and drama during ARRIVAL and DEPARTURE:

- **Worship Leader** welcomes children to worship, introduces the daily theme, explains “Peace Talk” questions following the drama, dismisses children to DESTINATIONS Stations and at the end of closing worship.
- **Music Leader** works with the Worship Leader to choose songs, finds musicians, coordinates the music team (if applicable), and leads singing.
- **Drama Leader** finds actors, gathers and coordinates props, plans and leads rehearsals before VBS, and coordinates the drama.
- **Technology Coordinator** prepares projection equipment and coordinates and manages technology resources to be used during worship.

Leaders for DESTINATIONS

The following leaders are needed for the DESTINATIONS Stations:

- **Two Creator's Canyon Leaders** prepare and lead a 30-minute art and science station for each day, with activities related to the daily theme. The second leader serves as a co-leader or assistant.
- **Two Bible Beach Leaders** prepare and lead a 30-minute session each day that includes retelling the Bible story, Bible memory activities, and extension activities in a student booklet. The second leader serves as a co-leader or assistant.
- **Two Move-It Mountain Leaders** prepare and lead a 30-minute active outdoor games and activities related to the daily theme. The second leader serves as a co-leader or assistant.

Leaders for Early Childhood

Two or more leaders are needed to organize, plan, and lead a self-contained Early Childhood group. These leaders will function as guides and spiritual mentors for the four- and five-year-old children. They will set up the Early Childhood areas, lead age-appropriate music and worship, and plan and lead activities for this age group as outlined in the *Early Childhood Leader Guide*.

MIDWEEK PROGRAM PLAN

You can adapt *Passport to Peace* to be used for a 10-week midweek program. Here is an example of a plan, though you may need to make adjustments to suit your needs. Sessions are one hour each.

Session 1: Can We Talk? (Day 1 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (30 minutes):** Day 1 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission, Day 1 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*)
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **one** activity station: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (10 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 2: Can We Talk? (Day 1 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (15 minutes):** Day 1 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission
- **DESTINATIONS (40 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **two** activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 3: Do You See What I See? (Day 2 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (30 minutes):** Day 2 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission, Day 2 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*)
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **one** activity station: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (10 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 4: Do You See What I See? (Day 2 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (15 minutes):** Day 2 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission
- **DESTINATIONS (40 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **two** activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 5: I Have an Idea! (Day 3 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (30 minutes):** Day 3 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission, Day 3 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*)
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **one** activity station: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (10 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 6: I Have an Idea! (Day 3 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (15 minutes):** Day 3 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission
- **DESTINATIONS (40 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **two** activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 7: Trouble in the Neighborhood (Day 4 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (30 minutes):** Day 4 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission, Day 4 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*)
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **one** activity station: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (10 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 8: Trouble in the Neighborhood (Day 4 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (15 minutes):** Day 4 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission
- **DESTINATIONS (40 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **two** activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 9: The Road Less Traveled (Day 5 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (30 minutes):** Day 5 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission, Day 5 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*)
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **one** activity station: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (10 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

Session 10: The Road Less Traveled (Day 5 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (15 minutes):** Day 5 Peace Ticket, songs, Peace Mission
- **DESTINATIONS (40 minutes):** Divide into three groups, each doing **two** activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather for closing worship.

WEEKEND RETREAT PLAN

Passport to Peace can be used during a weekend retreat as children's programming or as intergenerational activities during a church retreat weekend. Sessions are based on 90 minutes.

Friday Evening: Can We Talk? (Day 1 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (25 minutes):** Gather the large group for Day 1 Peace Ticket, songs, Day 1 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*).
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes each):** Rotate groups through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather the large group for a closing song.

Saturday Morning: Do You See What I See? (Day 2 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (25 minutes):** Gather the large group for Day 2 Peace Ticket, songs, and Day 2 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*).
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes each):** Rotate groups through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather the large group for a closing song.

Saturday Afternoon: I Have an Idea! (Day 3 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (25 minutes):** Gather the large group for Day 3 Peace Ticket, songs, and Day 3 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*).
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes each):** Rotate groups through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather the large group for a closing song.

Sunday Morning: Trouble in the Neighborhood (Day 4 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (25 minutes):** Gather the large group for Day 4 Peace Ticket, songs, and Day 4 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*).
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes each):** Rotate groups through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather the large group for a closing song.

Sunday Afternoon: The Road Less Traveled (Day 5 materials)

- **ARRIVAL (25 minutes):** Gather the large group for Day 5 Peace Ticket, songs, and Day 5 Drama (see *Worship & Drama Leader Guide*).
- **DESTINATIONS (20 minutes each):** Rotate groups through three activity stations: Bible Beach, Creator's Canyon, Move-It Mountain (see guides).
- **DEPARTURE (5 minutes):** Gather the large group for a closing song.