And he said to them,
“Go into all the world and proclaim
the good news to the whole creation.”
Mark 16:15

A Multiyear Vacation Bible School Curriculum
written by Jodi Bobbitt
First Christian Church, Greeley, Colorado
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Thanks first to God and to the many faithful and sprit-filled Disciples of Christ in Argentina who showed me how to live within the presence and love of God every day. I hope to share some of what you showed me about simple and sincere faith in a God that is indeed everywhere and in every moment.

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Thanks to the staff and volunteers of Global Ministries for your belief that through God and working together, we can make a positive and profound difference in the world.

And finally thanks to my family for sharing in the journey.

*Jodi*

*Tim, Jodi, Nathan, and Joshua Bobbitt*
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INTRODUCTION

God’s Love Is Everywhere! is a Vacation Bible School program that helps children visit a different mission site each day. The last day of VBS is a study of the local congregation and its mission and outreach projects. This will need to be personalized for your congregation and town. More countries can be added to explore each year, but the last day always centers around a local mission project.

The basic schedule and decorations can be reused each year and added to as desired. All materials can be printed out and are ready to use. They can also be adapted to the special needs of your congregation. For example, older youth and adults can participate in their own program in which they “visit” the same countries as the younger students.

The websites for Global Ministries and Church World Service have a lot of helpful information, including missionary letters and videos, for sharing the experience with all ages.

Have fun as children and adults alike learn about becoming a Global Mission Church!

♥ Director’s Guide
♥ Mission Crew
♥ Curriculum
♥ Supporting Materials
♥ References and Helpful Websites
Read what children at First Christian Church in Greeley, Colorado, shared about their VBS experience with God’s Love is Everywhere!

♥ The best part was working really hard at the Food Bank. It felt good to help other people.

♥ It was fun tasting new foods, especially croissant rolls with dulce de leche.

♥ Making the spinning tops was my favorite thing because I learned that I could make a fun toy out of old CDs and glue-bottle tops.

♥ The songs were a lot of fun, especially the one from Africa where we used our drums.

♥ I liked helping to make the snacks. S’mores were my favorite.

♥ I liked learning about different places in the world. I didn't know there was a Family Village Farm in India where kids and adults without homes can help each other and become a family.

♥ The games were awesome! I especially liked the water park made out of PVC pipe with holes in it. We could take it apart and put it back together however we wanted and then hook it up to the hose. I liked getting wet.

♥ I liked being able to help the kids in Haiti. I’d like to meet them.
Be creative. There are plenty of ideas, but no set program.

There are also guides for each group of volunteers:

♥ **Assembly Leader(s)**
♥ **Cooking**
♥ **Crafts**
♥ **Games**
♥ **Music**
♥ **Preschool**
♥ **Science**
♥ **Small Group Leaders**
♥ **Snack**
♥ **Story/Family Time**

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through sharing multi-sensory activities and stories
- Experience different cultures and ideas through traditional games, crafts, music, stories, science, and cooking as well as tasting new foods
- Recognize the church as a welcoming place
- Share the fun of being at church together
- Understand that God is present in all places, and we can learn from the faith of our neighbors throughout the world

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Determine dates, times, and rotation schedule that will work best for your church.
- Choose countries to be studied.
- Decide which rotations your VBS will have. For example, combine family time with the opening assembly or with snack or story time.
- Print out specific guides for each volunteer. Include them in a folder with a schedule, fast facts from countries, and themes for the week.
- Ensure the safety and comfort of each child. Encourage each child to participate in their own way, but don’t force active participation. Encourage parent participation as well.
- Determine where daily monetary offering will be given and if other items such as canned food or books for local outreach will be collected.
- Communicate plans, problems, and successes with pastor(s) and other leaders.
- If possible, invite a guest speaker to talk about the country being visited. This can be one of the best parts of sharing and learning in this curriculum. It is well worth the effort.
- Advertise on the church website; put up an outdoor sign (can be reused each year by replacing the dates); have post cards to pass out in the neighborhood and for church members to share with family and friends.

**IDEAS**

- Create an inviting atmosphere with decorations and music.
- Look through multicultural activity books at the library and check out Internet resources.
- Plan a multicultural celebration during your regular worship and/or the evening of the final day of VBS. Include a meal for an evening celebration.

**DECORATIONS**
- Sign for outside
- Flags from countries being visited
- Suitcases with fun bumper stickers
- Maps
- Tour agency posters
- Clocks with times from various time zones
- Large map – purchase one or consider painting one on a bed sheet; use it to mark the destination country of the day and as a backdrop for opening assembly

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**
- Prepare worksheets for each country being studied. Have a cover sheet with information on each country, including a map, flag, some interesting facts, names of missionaries, ministries, and partners, and some words in the language spoken there.
- Consider other media as well: Free-Puzzles.net (make your own word search), PrintableMaps.net, Enchanted Learning.com, and others. And of course, Globalministries.org and CWSGlobal.org (Church World Service) have great resources.
Be creative. There are plenty of ideas, but no set program.

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Celebrate God’s presence through worship and gathering activities
- Experience different cultures, ideas, and scriptures
- Learn some basic facts about the country being “visited” each day, including our partner organizations associated with Global Ministries
- Recognize the church as a welcoming place
- Share the fun of being at church together
- Identify that God’s love is everywhere!

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure the safety and comfort of all children.
- Encourage all children to participate by modeling your enthusiasm.
- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Dress the part of a mission explorer, tour guide, or wear a traditional dress of the destination country of the day.
Coordinate songs and music with music rotation leader.
Consider showing videos when appropriate.
Consider a unique dance move for each day.
Invite youth to present word, scripture, and question of the day.

OPENING ASSEMBLY

Collect offering by dancing it to the collection area.
Help children imagine a very long plane ride by having them close their eyes. Name specific areas that will be crossed over, such as oceans, mountain ranges, continents, etc. Explain what they see as they disembark.
Mark each daily destination on the large map.
See page 32 of *Journey to India* from Global Ministries’ *Kids-to-Kids VBS Curriculum* for further ideas.

CLOSING ASSEMBLY

Keep it simple; intersperse some music, briefly review the day and memory verse, encourage one group to share each day, and include a prayer.
Remember that this may be some children’s (and parents’) first experience with worship.
Children can march down the flag representing the day if desired, or it can be displayed in another way.
Children may like saying the Lord’s Prayer to end each day.
Preschool children may benefit from being escorted to a more secure setting for parent pick-up (i.e., a classroom) if a large hall is being used for the assembly/group time. They can begin their day by being signed-in at this same location.
Be creative. There is no set cooking program. This rotation can involve hands-on food preparation or snacks can be mostly made ahead and shared. This can be a separate rotation or it can be combined with snack time.

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through being in the kitchen together and through hands-on discovery
- Experience different cultures and ideas through traditional recipes and cooking together

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Encourage each child to participate in some way.
- Make the snack for each group to eat during the snack rotation.
- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Supervise cooking volunteers.
- Ensure safety of each student with regard to hot and sharp items.
- Ensure cooking area is cleaned up each day.
- Review list of food allergies prior to VBS and each day with kids prior to beginning activity in cooking area.

**IDEAS**

- Consider making food that can be sent home; let the snack rotation leader know if there will be no snack provided by the cooking rotation on any certain day.
- Kids enjoy using butter knives or kitchen scissors to cut food, which generally works well and is safer.
- Some kids are more adventurous with new foods than others. Invite them to try it, and remember we are not trying to feed them (unless you are serving a meal at your VBS), so it doesn’t really matter if they eat it or not.
- Look through kid-friendly multicultural recipe books at the library for ideas.
- Snacks can focus on the country, scripture, or word for the day. Fruit and country-specific breads make great snacks.

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
Crafts

Be creative. There is no set craft program.

Objectives

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through arts and crafts
- Experience different cultures and ideas through arts and crafts
- Share the fun of hands-on crafts with others by placing more emphasis on creating crafts than on finished projects
- Experience creating new projects with previously used/recycled items

Responsibilities

- Collect supplies needed for craft projects.
- Ask church members to collect needed items such as wire hangers, milk jugs, or old CDs.
- Prepare parts of projects ahead of time as needed.
- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Supervise craft volunteers.
- Ensure craft area is cleaned up each day.
- Ensure crafts are labeled with each child's name so they can take them home when completed. Crafts can be one-day projects or multi-day projects.
- Prepare appropriate crafts for each age group at VBS.

Ideas

- Play quiet music in the background while working on crafts.
- Display famous or not-so-famous artwork from the selected country.
- Look through multicultural art/craft books at the library for ideas.
There are many websites that might be helpful including EnchantedLearning.com and ActivityVillage.co.uk.

Use as many recycled materials as possible, as this fits the theme and will save you money. Kids are amazed at what can be made with “garbage” and this promotes creativity and ingenuity!

Crafts can focus on the country, scripture, or word for the day.

SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS

- Monday –
- Tuesday-
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –

T-shirt design using permanent marker and rubbing alcohol; make sure you have good ventilation
Be creative. There is no set games program.

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience God’s presence through movement and play
- Experience different cultures and ideas through games
- Share in recreation and learn the importance of teamwork

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Assemble supplies for each game/activity prior to children's arrival.
- Have a plan for inclement weather.
- Prepare appropriate games for each age group.
- Supervise volunteers and ensure game area is cleaned up each day.
- Clearly explain each activity and guide children in playing safely.
- Encourage each child to participate and consider having an alternative activity such as sidewalk chalk available.
- Ensure the safety of each child.
IDEAS

- Look through multicultural game books at the library for ideas.
- Games can focus on the country, scripture, or word for the day.
- Create an obstacle course or relay using objects that relate to the daily theme.
- Activities that can be adapted to any country or culture include bubbles, sidewalk chalk, and “painting” outdoor surfaces with water.

SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –

Water games are easy and fun!
Be creative. There are plenty of ideas, but no set program.

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:
- Experience the presence of God through music
- Experience different cultures and ideas through music
- Share the fun of music with others
- Learn songs from the designated country in the native language or other songs appropriate to the theme

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Lead singing during opening and closing worship.
- Learn and teach songs (movements) to youth helpers.
- Find music and, perhaps, videos from countries being studied.
- Assist with dramatic presentations as needed.
- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Supervise music volunteers.
- Create a praise band if possible.
- Begin singing and/or music as soon as the first person arrives.
- Ensure music area is cleaned up each day.
Include songs that are used in worship and at church camp as this helps to make church services a familiar and welcoming place. It may also help to liven up worship services after VBS!

This could be a half rotation in which children could share a snack together after the music portion is complete. In this case a song prayer of thanks for food would be good.

**IDEAS**

- Consider rhythm games, singing, hand motions, instruments, dancing, marching, ribbon waving, and puppets.
- Play music from other countries or that relate to the theme.
- Look through multicultural music books and CDs at the library.
- Look for songs and videos on the Church World Service and Global Ministries websites.

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
Be creative. There is no set preschool program.

**OBJECTIVES**

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through sharing multisensory activities and stories
- Experience different cultures and ideas through traditional games, crafts, music, stories, science, cooking, and trying new foods
- Recognize the church as a welcoming place
- Share the fun of being at church together and begin to form relationships with the adults and children present

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Ensure safety and comfort of each child.
- Recruit and supervise volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s). Ask parents to consider volunteering for a day or more.
- Encourage participation of each child, but don’t force active involvement.
- Consider which rotations/activities are appropriate for this age group; you can take the children to those centers or have the rotation leaders bring the activities to the preschool room.
- Plan alternate activities for the preschool group when rotations are not appropriate for their age group.
- Consider combining snack with story time.
- Allow plenty of time for organized as well as free play.

*Preschool group includes ages 3-5 (must be toilet-trained)*
IDEAS

- Create an inviting atmosphere in the classroom; consider music, decorations, books, games from other countries, etc.
- Look through preschool multicultural activity books at the library.
- Speak with a preschool teacher for ideas, resources, and advice.
- Consider having parents drop off and pick up preschool children in the classroom rather than the assembly hall so each child is accounted for prior to joining the large assembly.
- Great preschool activities that can be adapted to any culture/country include salt dough or clay creations, bubbles, sidewalk chalk, water color painting, or simply painting outside with plain water.

SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
Be creative. There is no set science program.

OBJECTIVES

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through experiments, relationships, and sensory experiences
- Begin to discover the relationship between God’s world and God’s people
- Discover God’s amazing creation with hands-on activities
- Learn about specific wonders in the countries or areas studied

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prepare experiments and hands-on sensory activities that illustrate the country, scripture, or word for the day.
- Include the children as much as possible. The more they can participate, the better.
- Look through library books on children’s science activities for ideas.
- Find teachers and other experts in science to help create this rotation.
- Bring in items from the natural or scientific world that help illustrate themes from the day or week.
- Decorate the room with science equipment (such as beakers filled with brightly colored water).
- Allow children to ask questions and interpret experiences in their own way.
- Encourage creativity, critical thinking, and exploration.
- Present the idea that God’s world is amazing.

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
Be creative and treat the children in your group as a family.

**FAMILY GROUPS**

- Approximately 10 kids (multiage or all the same age) make up a group.
- Have a color, name, or homemade flag for each group.
- You may also use carpet squares, mats, bed sheets, tents, throw rugs, large sheets of cardboard (works well for a graffiti board), or other ideas for your group area (home base).
- Each group will have a home base and will meet there each morning. The children will be introduced to the day’s theme and culture before progressing through the day. Check [GlobalMinistries.org](http://GlobalMinistries.org) for recent updates on missionary stories, partner organizations, and opportunities/news.
- Plan activities for each day (see below for ideas).

**GETTING ACQUAINTED GAMES**

- **Spider Web** – Children throw a ball of yarn from player to player saying one thing about themselves; progress to saying something they like about the person receiving the yarn.
- **Name Game** – Have each person say their name and something they like that begins with the same letter. There are many variations.
- **Yard Stick Lift** – Have each person tie a piece of yarn a bit above the ½-way point of the yardstick. Ask one person to try to lift the stick straight up from the bottom on the floor. They can’t do it. Have two people try. Maybe they can do it. Now have everyone try. Wow, it works! What if one person lets go? We all have to work together to get the job done.

- **Can Do Cans** – Children write/draw what they have learned and how they can share God’s love or help others. Put them in a can labeled “Can Do Can.”

- **Follow the Leader** – Everyone does what the designated leader is doing.

- **Prayer Tree or Chain** – Children write or draw a prayer to add each day.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- See page 47 of *Journey to India* from Global Ministries’ [Kids-to-Kids VBS Curriculum](https://www.globalministries.org) for a listening guide.

- Assist with making and using VBS books/journals/passports for each student.

- Hand out name tags at the start of each day and collect them at the end of the day.

- Have a variety of school supplies available for each home base to use in various activities.

- Present the idea that children in each country have the same kinds of feelings, hopes, dreams, and concerns as they do. Discuss how their lives might also be different (environment, poverty, illiteracy, family, respect of elders, school, playtime, etc.).

- Present local greeting, traditions, history, climate, flag; look at maps.

- Review Bible verse/lesson point, memory verse.

- Ensure all students get to each rotation safely and on time. Assist rotation leaders by participating in each rotation activity along with the children.

*God’s Love Is Everywhere!* ~ page 25
Encourage each child to learn the names of the other children in the group.

Pray each day using different prayer methods, including having children repeat lines said by leader, encourage every child to say one thing for which they are thankful, have one person pray while others have their heads bowed, or all pray with their hands up in the air.

**REMEMBER**

The relationship you form with the children in your family group could be the first way someone comes to understand the love God has for them and each of us!
SNACK

The cooking rotation may prepare a snack for each day. Depending on how you organize the rotations, the snack and cooking rotations can be combined, and the storytelling time can also be combined.

OBJECTIVES

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience the presence of God through sharing a snack together
- Experience different cultures and ideas through traditional recipes and trying new foods

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Snack may be combined with another rotation such as music, story, family time, or cooking. Past experience suggests having snack after, rather than before, music or story is preferred.
- Speak with cooking rotation staff to ensure you have an appropriate plan to deliver snack.
- Ensure any service ware (plates, bowls, napkins) needed is available.
- Recruit volunteers in cooperation with VBS director(s).
- Supervise snack volunteers.
- Ensure the safety of each student with regard to hot/warm foods.
- Ensure snack area is cleaned up each day.
- Review list of food allergies prior to VBS and each day with kids prior to beginning snack.
- Prepare a jug of water with cups for the games area.

**IDEAS**

- Play music in the background while eating.
- Create a fun atmosphere with tablecloths, placemats, eating on floor, or traditional meal settings such as a tea party.
- Consider delivering the snack to the preschool age group.

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
STORY/FAMILY TIME

Be creative. There is no set story program. This can be a separate rotation, combined with snack, or a story told at the opening assembly.

OBJECTIVES

Children will be encouraged to:

- Experience God’s presence through stories, relationships, and sensory experiences
- Celebrate Jesus’ gift of storytelling
- Experience different cultures and ideas through story
- Share the mission stories of their church
- Identify and begin to understand who “your neighbor” is by hearing stories about our partner churches and organizations

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Dress the part and include props as appropriate. Brightly colored shawls or leis are welcome gifts from India, for example. Learn a few words in the native language.
- Learn the story so you can speak without a script.
- Welcome children as special visitors from another country.
- Show video clips from the Global Ministries website or use other appropriate media.

A family group listens to a guest speaker from our local Global refugee center – one of the best experiences of VBS!

Dress up as a native of the country of the day
- Play music from the country being studied that day.
- Plan activities such as simple games.
- If you are representing a country yourself, try to meet someone who has been to that country and speak to them about their experience. Focus on positive experiences and mission stories to share with children.

**IDEAS**

- Consider mats, carpet squares, or other seating for children.
- Check out [GlobalMinistries.org](http://GlobalMinistries.org) for recent updates on missionary stories, partner organizations, and opportunities/news.
- Invite a guest speaker to share with the children.
- Pray each day using different prayer methods, including having children repeat the lines said by the leader; each child says one thing for which they are thankful; one child prays for the group; all pray with arms folded on their shoulders, or up in the air.

**SPECIFIC COUNTRY IDEAS**

- Monday –
- Tuesday –
- Wednesday –
- Thursday –
- Friday –
Mission Crew is an opportunity for our oldest VBS students (4\textsuperscript{th} and 5\textsuperscript{th} graders) to put everything they have learned into action. VBS Leaders will take them to a local service organization where they will be able to offer help and support. There are many possibilities, including the ones listed below. Your community will probably have others as well.

**POSSIBLE MISSION CREW SITES**

- Retirement Facility
- Food Bank
- Homeless Shelter
- Humane Society
- Community garden
- Multicultural Center or Market

Each participant will need an additional permission slip in order to travel to the Mission Crew site. A permission slip can be created specifically for VBS Mission Crew, or churches can use one developed previously for other youth functions.

Information about Mission Crew should be included in the *Letter to Parents* or in a separate note to parents.
SAMPLE WEEKLY UNITS WITH DAILY THEMES

Units can be mixed and matched to suit your particular needs and resources.

♥ **Go Global** (Extended Themes)
  - Colombia
  - Congo
  - India
  - Argentina
  - Our Community

♥ **World Tour**
  - Israel/Palestine
  - Kenya
  - Japan
  - Haiti
  - Our Community

♥ **Latin American Adventure**
  - Nicaragua
  - Brazil
  - Costa Rica
  - Guatemala
  - Our Community

♥ **Travels with the Apostle Paul**
  - Syria (Damascus)
  - Turkey (Ephesus)
  - Greece (Corinth)
  - Italy (Rome)
  - Our Community

♥ **Where Have You Seen God?**
  - Acts of Service
  - Unexpected Places
  - In Others
  - In Creation
  - In Ourselves

♥ **Our Community**
  - Somalia
  - Burma
  - Mexico
  - Cuba
  - Our Community

♥ **Jonah (Create Your Own Unit)**
  - Israel
  - Tarsus, Spain
  - Mediterranean Sea
  - Nineveh, Iraq
  - Our Community
# Supporting Materials

## Documents for Director and Leaders
- Argentine Adventure.pdf
- Daily Schedule.doc
- Global Hymn Resource.pdf
- Leader Roster.doc
- Picnic Sign.doc
- Rotation Charts.doc
- Table Sign.doc
- Units and Daily Themes.doc
- VBS Logo Editable.pub
- VBS Logo Generic.gif
- VBS Wish List.doc

## Documents for Children and Parents/Guardians
- Evaluation.doc
- Letter to Parents.doc
- Name Tags.doc
- Name Tags.pub
- Passport-Journal.doc
- Picnic Invitation.doc
- Picnic Reminder Stickers.doc
- Post Card.doc
- Post Card.pub
- Registration Form.doc
REFERENCES AND HELPFUL WEBSITES

ActivityVillage.co.uk
This site has over 10,000 pages of free children's activities.

CWSGlobal.org
Church World Service has several videos on YouTube that could be used during assembly time or story time. They also have a lot of good information for children, older youth, and adults.

EnchantedLearning.com
This site has Spanish words and phrases that can be used to make a matching game as well as maps, flags, and placemats in Spanish.

Free-Puzzles.net
Personalize a word search and/or crossword puzzle using words from VBS.

GlobalMinistries.org
Journey to Colombia, Journey to Congo, Journey to India, and other country specific stories and information are available. There are also some great resources for special giving opportunities.

KidActivities.net
Country themes offer ideas for art, crafts, games, and snack recipes.

PBS.org/JourneytoPlanetEarth
Journey to Planet Earth is a current PBS series that dramatizes new ways of looking at the delicate relationship between people and the world they inhabit.

PrintableMaps.net
This website has fantastic maps of each continent.

The World Factbook
Sponsored by the CIA, this site has facts, maps, flags, and more for all countries.