

Abundance Orchard



**where faith grows
and hungry people
are fed**

Year 2: New Testament



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Abundance Orchard: Where Faith Grows and Hungry People are Fed

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Society of St. Andrew

gleaning america's fields ~ feeding america's hungry

Abundance Or char d

where FAITH grows and hungry people are fed



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We ask you to collect mission offerings at every session of your Vacation Bible School and to designate these offerings for Society of St. Andrew. Every 2¢ given will put one serving of healthy, nourishing food on the plate of a hungry person here in the United States. In this packet of materials, you will find more information about Society of St. Andrew and suggestions for promoting the mission offering and setting an offering goal (see page 39.)

Abundance Or char d is designed as a stand-alone, no frills Vacation Bible School, with up to five sessions, lasting 2-3 hours each, for older preschool and elementary-aged children. You will find plenty of suggestions for activities, stories, and service, all furthering each lesson's theme. You'll note that there are no gimmicks or gadgets or disposable, easily breakable items here. Society of St. Andrew strives to be a good steward of financial and environmental resources, and we know that for many congregations, traditional VBS materials can be cost-prohibitive. This curriculum can easily be adapted for use in Sunday Schools using the Rotation Model.

Year 2 Curriculum (2015) is focused on stories about food and eating in the New Testament. Each day's program is based on a different scripture passage and includes a thematically-connected memory verse.

This curriculum includes daily questions for preparation and reflection on the day's scripture passage. These questions are designed for VBS teachers and leaders, as a means of deepening faith through interaction with the scripture. You may also wish to use these questions as the basis for a daily VBS-connected Bible study for older youth and/or adults, lasting 60-90 minutes.

Be sure to look at the SoSA **VBS Pinterest Board** – ideas, inspiration, sources and instructions. www.pinterest.com/endhungerusa/vacation-bible-school/

Abundance Orchard 2015 Scope and Sequence

1 Breakfast



John 21:1-13

After his resurrection, Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples



I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. (Romans 1:8)

2 Lunch



Luke 19:1-10

Jesus has lunch with a tax collector



Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)

3 Dinner



Luke 10:38-42

Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends



Live in harmony with one another. (Romans 12:16)

4 Midnight Snack



Luke 11:5-13

Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor



Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you. (Romans 15:7)

5 Party!



Luke 14:15-23

Jesus tells a story about a big party



Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31)



Bible Story



Memory verse

J Leaders

No matter what size your congregation or VBS is, you simply need a lot of leaders! It's best to start the process with a planning team, meeting as early in the calendar year as you can manage. This planning team could be your whole church board, your Christian Nurture team or Christian Education Committee, a special *ad hoc* VBS task force, or simply a few friends who get together to start thinking about VBS.

Very early in the planning, this team needs to identify someone to be in charge of VBS: the VBS Director. This person is responsible for all the details, for seeing that materials and supplies are ordered, that publicity is done, that staff is recruited and trained, etc.

-  When you recruit your VBS director, don't downplay the amount of work involved and do offer lots of support!
-  Find out whether your congregation's policy requires that all teachers, leaders, and staff be members of the church and whether there is a time restriction (active members for six months or a year, etc.) Are there minimum age restrictions?
-  Follow your congregation's Child Protection policy / Safe Sanctuary policy in recruiting VBS staff. This is non-negotiable. Get the paperwork filled out for each person and do the background checks required by your congregation's policy. However large or small your congregation or your VBS, wherever your congregation is located, child safety is paramount!
-  Plan for at least three people (two unrelated adults and one teen helper or additional adult) to be with each group of children at all times.

Decide whether your VBS will be primarily **classroom-based** or primarily **center-based**. (See below.) A classroom-based VBS needs teachers who can do a little bit of everything, from storytelling to recreation to crafts and crowd control. A center-based VBS needs leaders with specific interests and expertise: some who love caring for and about children, some who are great with games and recreation, some who are crafty, some who are creative in the kitchen, some who tell stories, etc. Once this decision is made, you can recruit staff for specific responsibilities.

Center -Based VBS

Shepherds

Many Vacation Bible Schools have adults serving as classroom “shepherds,” providing care and continuity for children throughout the week of VBS, but without specific teaching responsibilities. All activities (Bible, Crafts, Music, Recreation, Snacks, Missions) are then center-based and led by Center Leaders, with each center in a different area of the building. Shepherds accompany the children to the center-based activities and provide extra hands and crowd control throughout the VBS day. This takes more leaders overall, but offers leaders the opportunity to focus in an area of greatest interest to them.

Modified Shepherds

Other Vacation Bible Schools modify the “shepherd” concept by having the shepherds lead the Bible storytelling segment for their assigned group each day, then accompany the children to their other, center-based activities.

Center Leaders

Center leaders are responsible for one activity only: recreation, snacks, missions, crafts, music, opening, or closing. They are responsible for this “center” each day of VBS. Children of all ages may rotate through their center in age-based groups, so they may have to plan adaptations for each day’s activity for children of varying abilities.

Classroom-Based VBS

Still other Vacation Bible Schools use the “traditional” classroom model. These have teachers and assistants who handle all aspects of the VBS day in a classroom setting. Possibly music, recreation, or snacks will be center-based and led by others. This uses the fewest leaders, but may create logistical issues for resources, if all the scissors or balls are being used by another class, for instance.

Many Vacation Bible School directors prefer a classroom-based model for preschool and kindergarten classes, but a center-based model for elementary classes.



Schedule

What Dates Should VBS Be Held?

For many school districts, summers are shorter and shorter each year. In some places, children of a single congregation may attend schools of multiple districts or with varying calendars. How do you choose the best dates?

Considerations:

1. Define your audience. Are you targeting just/primarily school-aged children (K-Gr. 5, for example) as participants, or will you have class(es) for preschoolers as well? What about middle schoolers/junior highs, senior highs, and adults? Is this primarily an extra Christian Education opportunity for those within your congregation, or do you have a strong commitment to evangelism, bringing in children/families from the larger community?
2. Are there transportation issues to be addressed?
3. When are children/participants potentially available? Look at all the school calendars and settle on 3-4 weeks, if possible, when every child who might attend is actually out of school.
4. Are there other Vacation Bible Schools in the area serving the same populations? If so, then you need to be sure that your VBS weeks are staggered (and that you're using different curricula) OR you need to think seriously about combining forces for a multi-congregation VBS effort.
5. When are your key leaders actually available? Look at your pool of key leaders, and find out which of those 3-4 possible weeks they are available. You might consider a free calendar survey tool like **Doodle** (*doodle.com*) to simplify the process.
6. Which one of your best options for key leaders is also best for potential staff (adults & teens) and children most likely to participate? If you can, narrow your choice to just two weeks and/or two timeframes that work for your leadership team, then run your survey again, notifying all in your congregation and neighborhood for their input.
7. Realize from the outset that not everyone will be able to participate in VBS each year. Assure yourself that you are making the best possible effort to be inclusive, set the dates, and move on.

Options:

You have LOTS of options! Here are just a few:

- Five days (Sunday – Thursday or Monday – Friday)
- Four days (Monday – Thursday)

- Four or five days + big celebration
- Morning, afternoon, or evening
- One morning or evening a week for five weeks (or more)
- As part of a summer camp / summer day care / conference / retreat
- One two-day weekend
- A single long day
- Summer Sunday School
- Spring Break or Fall Break
- Winter Break (week between Christmas and New Year's)

What Time Frame is Best for VBS?

Morning has been the “traditional” VBS time slot, with 9am-12noon, 9:30am-12noon, or 9am-11:30am being the most common schedules. If most adults in your community work outside the home, this can be a difficult VBS schedule. Other timeframes may work better for your situation.

When congregations choose an **evening** format for VBS, it is usually because that eases potential issues for adult leadership (work) and for parents (work/transportation). It is also a better choice if you are looking at whole-family VBS or whole-congregation (youngest to oldest) VBS. Often evening VBS formats necessitate considering a dinner or snack supper as the first segment of VBS. Some congregations offer a snack supper at 5:30pm, with VBS starting at 6pm; or snack supper at 6pm, with VBS starting at 6:30pm.

It's rarely realistic to plan for VBS to end after 8pm, so you may have to offer a compressed schedule, limiting activities – perhaps cutting out recreation and a separate snack time within the evening.

An evening format is difficult for preschoolers, so families including preschoolers may simply opt out, just because it is too disruptive to family routine.

Afternoon is generally a lower-energy time for children and adults alike. Preschoolers often take afternoon naps. Unless VBS is part of a summer camp or daycare or needs to follow a morning sports or community-based program that serves most of the same children as your VBS, afternoons are seldom the optimal choice.

In hotter climates, you'll want to limit outdoor time in the middle of the day.

We will hold Vacation Bible School on the following dates:

Our schedule will be:

How Should the Daily Schedule Flow?

Sample Schedule: Three-hour morning VBS

20 min.	All-VBS Opening	Greeting, Songs, Mascot introduces Bible story for the day Mission offerings received, Prayer, Dismissal to age-based groups
30 min.	Bible	Diving into the Bible story through interactive learning
30 min.	Crafts	Age-appropriate craft activities that support the Bible story and/or missions emphasis of VBS
20 min.	Music	Music & movement activities
30 min.	Recreation	Active games and structured activities that support the Bible story and/or missions emphasis of VBS
15 min.	Snacks	Foods that connect with the Bible story and missions emphasis
20 min.	Missions	Missions story and activity
15 min.	All-VBS Closing	Mascot re-caps the day, missions giving totals announced, announcements & info for next day, final song, prayer

Sample Schedule: Snack supper + 90 minute evening VBS

30 min.	Snack Supper	Either a sit-down or buffet style meal, or a grab & go heavy finger-food type snack
30 min.	Bible	Diving into the Bible story through interactive learning
30 min.	Crafts	Age-appropriate craft activities that support the Bible story and/or missions emphasis of VBS
15 min.	Missions	Missions story and activity
15 min.	All-VBS Closing	Mascot recaps day, Mission offerings received, Announcements & info for next day, Music, Prayer

The line to the left of certain activities (above) indicates that, for a center-based VBS, classes will be rotating among centers during this time.

Rotation schedules require a little more logistical coordination!

A Backdrops and Scenery

Gathering Area / Lobby / Worship Area

Many congregations like to decorate their building or worship area for Vacation Bible School. This is “Abundance Orchard,” so an orchard theme would certainly be appropriate!

Use the Abundance Orchard logo as your inspiration to create a backdrop of cardboard fruit trees, painted with tempera paints. Add a short stepladder or stepstool and some wooden fruit baskets or crates. Green indoor-outdoor carpeting or bathmats can create the “ground” under the trees.

The Society of St. Andrew’s mission is recovering fresh fruits and vegetables that just don’t quite meet the market standards – fruit that is too big or too small, the wrong shape or size or color, or perhaps has too many blemishes to be sold in the grocery store. With that in mind, invite people in your congregation to empty their mis-matched sock drawers and donate their clean used socks to your VBS. Colors, patterns, whatever! Roll each sock into itself and mold it with your hands to create “fruit” for your baskets, crates, and trees.



White and black socks might be slightly less useful as “fruit,” but these can easily be saved and re-purposed for other crafts during the coming months.



After VBS, put all the sock “fruits” into a bin or tote and save them for recreation activities in the future.

Designate one backdrop tree as your “missions” tree. Pin, tape, or tuck one piece of “fruit” (either sock fruit or construction paper fruit) on this tree for every dollar (or \$5 or \$10, depending on your missions offering goal and the size of your VBS) the VBS children donate to feed healthy food to hungry people through Society of St. Andrew. Watch the tree grow full of fruit as you move through the days of VBS!

Bible Storytelling Area

All of this year’s stories come from the New Testament. You will need a “country” scene, a “city” scene, and an “indoor” scene. Sample backdrop patterns are included in the Reproducibles section of this packet for the country and city scenes.



If you have room for two separate scenes, you could put the outdoor scene on one side of the room and the indoor scene along an opposite wall. Children, seated on the floor, could be asked to turn from one scene to the other as the narrative goes along.

For scenery purposes, then, you'll want to begin with a sky and desert-like backdrop, perhaps with some scrub brush painted at ground level and some distant hills. In front of the backdrop, place some large boulders (crushed newsprint, painted gray/tan).

For **Day 1**, use light blue bedsheets to create a "lake" in front of the backdrop. Frame the lake with a plant or two and a few "boulders." Put a "log" (paper towel or wrapping paper tube) cookfire in front of the lake. A rowboat and a fishing net would be great additions, if you have them available.

For **Day 2**, remove the bedsheet lake, and put a few cardboard homes in front of your outdoor scene. (Large appliance boxes, opened flat, are ideal for this purpose. Ask for these at any store that sells large appliances, like washers, dryers, stoves, dishwashers, and refrigerators.) On all but one home, the door can be painted onto the backdrop. On one home, use a box cutter to create a "working" door. Add one or more cardboard trees or a large ficus-type plant in front of the scene. At one edge, of the scene, create your "indoor" space, with a low table and large cushions for seating.

On **Day 3**, move your indoor space center stage.

For **Day 4**, make the cardboard home with the working door center stage.

For **Day 5**, return to the scene of **Day 3**, but add plants and fabrics and anything else you can think of to make the space look more ornate. Have thick bathrobes and costume jewelry for the party guests to put on.

Visit SoSA's VBS Pinterest page for more inspiration:
<http://www.pinterest.com/endlungerusa/vacation-bible-school/>

O VBS Mascots / Characters

Consider having an older youth or an adult dress in costume each day as part of the opening and closing VBS activities. This costumed individual can be a non-speaking mascot, who simply acts as a cheerleader, increasing enthusiasm for VBS, or can be a speaking character, who actually introduces the stories and memory verses each day of VBS.

You can purchase a costume, rent a costume, or invite a creative soul to make one for your VBS mascot/character.

Suggested Mascots/ Characters

- Sally the Spud
- Kerry the Carrot
- Robbie the Rutabaga
- Asa the Asparagus
- Farmer (name)
- Tomás the Tomato
- Gary the Grape
- Patrice the Peach
- Omar the Orange

1

Breakfast



John 21:1-13

After his resurrection, Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples, on the beach.



I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.
(Romans 1:8)

Background

Jesus' death has turned his disciples' lives upside down. Three years before, they left homes, families, and jobs to follow this charismatic rabbi, who preached and taught and healed, who spoke in riddles and had a knack for making people in authority angry. When Jesus spoke, his disciples knew in the core of their beings that he was the promised Messiah, and they were certain he would overthrow the Roman government and usher in God's promised Kingdom.

But it feels as though none of that has happened. At the time of the Passover, Jesus takes his disciples on a trip to Jerusalem, where things suddenly become chaotic and, almost before the disciples can imagine it, Jesus has been arrested, tried, and hanged on a cross. Their leader, the one they thought would be their Savior, is dead.

Simon Peter and the other disciples fear for their lives after Jesus' arrest. After his death, they hide away and grieve. Just a few days later, Jesus appears to a few of the disciples, and their despair and fear mingle with confusion—and hope and joy. But the truth is that they have no clue what is happening. They don't know what to make of their teacher who died, but now is alive, who sometimes is with them and sometimes is not. It is more than their human minds and hearts can comprehend.

So they struggle within themselves and with each other, knowing that decisions must be made and actions must be taken, but feeling utterly without the resources to decide and act. It is at this point that Peter gets up and says, "Forget this! I'm going fishing."

Fishing is what Peter has done from his youth. He and his friends know the boat, the water, the nets, the habits of the fish better than they know anything else in life. Fishing is the most routine thing Peter can do, really the only effort he can make toward restoring normalcy to his life. It is peaceful, calming, and restorative. But this night, though Peter and his friends row out to the best spot on the lake, there are no fish.

As morning dawns, a figure appears on the beach and commiserates with Peter and his friends that they've caught no fish. "Put the net down on the other side of the boat!" calls the man on the shore, "Then you'll catch some fish." It's a crazy thing to suggest, isn't it? But sure enough, just a few feet away are so many fish that the nets are

overloaded and begin to break from the heavy haul. That abundance, more than the disciples could ever have imagined, is what opens their eyes to Jesus. They recognize their Master as the figure on the beach.

In one way and another, the disciples make their way to shore. Jesus is there before them, waiting for them to arrive. And Jesus already has everything they need. The charcoal fire is hot, and the fish are ready to eat.

Preparation and Reflection for Teachers and Leaders

- Can you recall a personal experience when you felt your world was turned upside down? What strengths did you find inside yourself to move forward? What resources did you find outside yourself that made a difference? How was faith a help or a hindrance in your turmoil?
- How does routine activity help restore balance and normalcy when life is chaotic?
- Put yourself in the place of Peter and the other disciples after Jesus' death. What might you pray?
- How do you pray when you are at the end of your rope? Is that different from the way you pray when life is going well?
- Think of individuals or families or groups of people in your community whose lives are anything but routine right now. Choose one or many to bring before God in prayer. What is God calling you to do—is there an action you can take to share peace, help, wholeness, or health?
- Would it have been enough for Jesus simply to prepare breakfast for his friends? Why is the abundant catch of fish essential? What good news do you find in the nets filled to breaking?
- What does it mean to you that Jesus waits for the disciples to arrive and already has everything that they need? Can you believe that for yourself as well?
- How can you bring, show, or share God's abundance with others?



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Bible Storytelling: Day 1

Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples on the beach.

Jhn 21:1-13

See **Backdrops & Scenery** section of this Guidebook for suggestions for setting up a Storytelling Center. If you will have a Storytelling Center, consider having costumes available for the children to wear each day as you tell the story.

Costumes for children should be very simple. You're not putting on an elaborate play, just helping set the story's atmosphere. Dig into the costume closet for your congregation's Christmas play for tunics or bathrobes, or simply use lengths of plain fabric to drape over shoulders or to secure over heads with a stretchy headband or length of pantyhose knotted to fit a child's head.

The storyteller may wish to be more elaborately costumed, so that s/he can tell the Bible story as an actual character in the story.

Each day, the children will have a phrase or action that repeats throughout the story. Have a cue (pointing to children, a raised hand, etc.) that remains the same throughout the week, so that the children know that, on that motion, they do the phrase or action.

Today's scene: A shady spot at the lakeshore, with a backdrop of rolling hills and a blue bedsheet "lake," surrounded by a few paper boulders and plants.

Phrase/ action: Children make a swimming motion with their hands and say, "**Fish, fish, fish, fish,**" starting loudly and ending in a whisper.

Preparation: Read the Bible story thoroughly, so that you know it very well. Prepare yourself, using the **Background and Reflection Questions** for Day 1. Today, as the storyteller, you will be Peter.

Telling the Story:

(Walk into storytelling area and greet the children while standing. Ask the children to sit, and you sit as well.) Oh, hello. My name is Peter. I have lived all my life right on the shores of this lake, and all I ever wanted to do was fish. (CUE) "**Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.**" When I was little I would carve a pole from a stick and fish from the shore. By the time I was your age, my father was taking me out on his boat, and I was fishing with great big nets. When I grew to be a man, my brothers and I worked together in the boats. We'd fish all night and bring our boat full into the shore in the morning. After all the fish were sold, we'd head home to bed and sleep all day. In the afternoons, we'd clean and mend our nets and get ready to go back out in the water again, once it got dark. I love to eat fish, I love the smell of fish, I even dream of fish. (CUE) "**Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.**"

One morning, as my brothers and I returned to shore, we met a man named Jesus. He said the strangest thing to us: "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." (CUE)

“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.” At first we all laughed. Who ever heard of fishing for people? But Jesus waited and waited, looking at us without saying another word. Then WE did the strangest thing. We hopped out of the boat! We left it right there at the edge of the water, filled with the fish we spent all night catching. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”** We didn’t even try to sell those fish. The only thing we wanted to do was follow Jesus and learn his new kind of fishing. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”**

That was three years ago, and I haven’t been back in my own fishing boat in all that time, until last night. (*Lean forward, and speak in a loud whisper, as though you’re telling a secret.*) You see, last week my friends and I followed Jesus to Jerusalem. We thought it was going to be like a vacation. Boy, were we wrong. While we were there, Jesus was arrested! And they didn’t throw him in jail, they killed him! We were scared and sad. So very, very sad. We just thought that Jesus would always be with us.

(*Get up and begin pacing in front of the lake.*) My friends and I... You see... No, of course you don’t see. It has all been so very confusing lately! Jesus died. I already told you that, didn’t I? Well, yes. Jesus died. But now, he’s alive again. What? Did I really say that out loud? How can that be? Jesus was dead, but now he is alive? That’s as crazy as a giant fish swallowing Jonah! (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”** It’s good news, but it seems crazy! My friends and I, we think and we talk and we argue. We just can’t make any of this make any sense. And now, it’s like there’s this giant hole in our lives. We don’t know what to do with ourselves. We don’t even know what Jesus wants us to do. It’s so hard to figure all this out by ourselves!

Last night, in the middle of yet another argument with my friends, I finally had enough. I jumped up and said, “I’ve had enough!” And I came here, to do what I know best. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”** My friends came, too, and we fished all night long. We went out to the sweetest spot in the lake, and we lowered our nets. Time and time again, we put out the nets and we waited. Guess how many fish we caught? (*Allow a moment for children to guess.*) None! Zero. Zilch. Nada. Not a one. That has never, ever happened before, in all my years of fishing. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”**

But as the sun began to rise, we saw a man standing on the beach. He called out to us, and it sounded as though he was laughing at us. “You didn’t catch any fish last night, did you? Throw your nets out on the other side of the boat.” That’s just nuts. We fished all night and caught nothing, and now a stranger asks us to put our nets down just a few feet from where they were before? Fish swim. It’s what they do. If there were any fish, we would already have caught them, right? (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”**

We put the nets down in the water again, and it was a miracle! Instantly, the fish were jumping all over each other to get into our nets. Within just a few minutes, our nets were filled to overflowing, with so many heavy fish that the nets were straining from the weight of them all. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”** I looked to the shore, to that smiling stranger, and realized it was Jesus! Of course it was Jesus. Of course there were fish. (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish.”**

My friends and I hurried to shore. I had a VERY embarrassing moment, but you’ll have to read the story in your Bible to learn about it. And when we got right here, to this

very spot on the shore, Jesus was waiting for us. And where this fire ring is, Jesus already had fish cooking, and he had fresh bread, too. We ate together, and it was the best breakfast ever!

I think that what I had forgotten in all the confusion of this week is that Jesus is always waiting for us, for you and for me. Jesus is always glad to be with us, and Jesus already has everything that we need, just like the bread and the fish (CUE) **“Fish, fish, fish, fish, fish”** he prepared for me and my friends this morning.

And now I have a verse for you, from the New Testament, from Paul’s letter to the Romans. It reminds me how glad I am to know Jesus and how glad I am for you and for all of my friends. Can you say it after me: “I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.” **(Repeat.)** It comes from Romans 1:8. Let’s say our verse together again: **“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. Romans 1:8”**

(Remove your biblical head covering, so that you are no longer in character.) Now it’s your turn to think about the story you’ve just heard. *(As time permits, ask one or more of these questions, inviting, affirming, and discussing children’s responses.)*

- Have you ever been scared or worried?
- How do your friends and your family help you when you are scared or worried?
- What might you pray at a time like that?
- What are some ways that you can make a difference for people in our community or for children in your school who might be scared or worried?
- At first Peter and his friends couldn’t catch any fish at all. Then with Jesus’ help, they caught more than they could imagine. Why do you think Jesus wanted them to catch so many fish?

Thank you for visiting our Storytelling Center today. Let’s say our verse together again and have a prayer before you leave.

“I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you. Romans 1:8”

Let’s pray now. You repeat each phrase after me:

Leader: God, we are so glad that you care for us.

All: God, we are so glad that you care for us.

Leader: When we are worried or scared,

All: When we are worried or scared,

Leader: When we can’t figure out the right thing to do,

All: When we can’t figure out the right thing to do,

Leader: Help us remember that you have everything we need.

All: Help us remember that you have everything we need.

Leader: Amen.

All: Amen.

2 Lunch



Luke 19:1-10

Jesus has lunch with a tax collector



Love your neighbor as yourself.
(Mark 12:31)

Background

Tax collectors have a tough job in the ancient Roman world. They receive no salary, but take their pay out of the money they collect from the ordinary people. People dislike paying taxes then, as now, even though they like some of the things that taxes pay for, like roads and security. But what they dislike most is not having a set tax rate. They owe whatever the tax collector tells them they owe.

For a tax collector working in the Jewish communities, the situation is even worse, because the Jewish people chafe at Roman rule and long for independence. Coins with Caesar's face on them seem blasphemous, and the whole process of paying taxes feels like usury, which the Hebrew scriptures prohibit. Zacchaeus, the tax collector in today's passage, is described as "a son of Abraham," a Jew himself. His very choice of profession seems to indicate (to the proper Jews of his day) that he has turned away from his faith and his heritage.

You can read Zacchaeus' remark in Luke 19:8 either as Zacchaeus telling Jesus that he already treats people fairly and gives back to the poor, or that he is resolving to do so in the future. The tense used in the earliest manuscripts can be read either way. So Zacchaeus may or may not be "a sinner" as some in the story claim, but his profession certainly causes people to think the worst of him.

Those who grumble about Jesus eating with "a sinner" appear to believe either that only sinners would associate with other sinners or that Zacchaeus' sinfulness will somehow "rub off" on Jesus. They imply that Jesus is already himself a sinner or will become sinful by association.

In the final verse of today's reading, Jesus says that his mission is to "seek out and to save the lost." He puts the grumblers on notice that associating with sinners is what he is all about—and that Jesus is transforming sinners; they are not transforming him.

Preparation and Reflection for Teachers and Leaders

- Most of us have, at some point, felt ostracized, left out, shunned, or falsely accused. Spend a few moments reflecting on such an experience in your own life. If, today, you could face the person or persons who ostracized you, what would you say to them? Has that experience/have those experiences changed you? In what ways?
- When have you found yourself in the place of the “grumblers” in today’s passage? When have you been the person who turns away or leaves someone out?
- What are the risks of associating with people whom others ostracize? (Consider this for yourself, as a young person or adult, and consider it also for the children with whom you will be working at VBS.)
- What does the phrase, “The church is not a playground for saints, but a hospital for sinners,” mean to you?
- Scholars often speak of Jesus’ “preferential option” for the poor: his special concern for widows, orphans, strangers, the disabled, the landless, etc. In fact, Jesus often speaks in opposition to wealth. Yet Zacchaeus is a wealthy man. What is it about Zacchaeus that, in spite of his wealth, makes him a particular focus of Jesus’ concern?
- Zacchaeus tells Jesus about some changes he will make in his life and his business practices because he has met Jesus. What changes will you/would you make or have you made in your life because you’ve met Jesus?
- Read Matthew 5:43-44. “I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Have you ever tried that? What difference did it make? For you? For your enemies?
- How can you be the hands and feet of Jesus in reaching out to someone who is ostracized? Think of a specific situation and a response that you have made or can make, to make a difference.



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Bible Storytelling: Day 2

Jesus has lunch at the home of a tax collector.

Luke 19:1-10

See **Backdrops & Scenery** section of this Guidebook for suggestions for setting up a Storytelling Center. If you will have a Storytelling Center, consider having costumes available for the children to wear each day as you tell the story.

Costumes for children should be very simple. You're not putting on an elaborate play, just helping set the story's atmosphere. Dig into the costume closet for your congregation's Christmas play for tunics or bathrobes, or simply use lengths of plain fabric to drape over shoulders or to secure over heads with a stretchy headband or length of pantyhose knotted to fit a child's head.

The storyteller may wish to be more elaborately costumed, so that s/he can tell the Bible story as an actual character in the story.

Each day, the children will have a phrase or action that repeats throughout the story. Have a cue (pointing to children, a raised hand, etc.) that remains the same throughout the week, so that the children know that, on that motion, they do the phrase or action.

Today's scene: A city street, with a large tree; to one side (or in front of an indoor backdrop along another wall) a low table, with cushions for seating. Dishes on the table. A few small moving boxes.

Phrase/ action: Children turn their heads, shield their eyes, and say **"Ewwwww."**

Preparation: Read the Bible story thoroughly, so that you know it very well. Prepare yourself, using the **Background and Reflection Questions** for Day 2. Today, as the storyteller, you will be Zacchaeus.

Telling the Story:

(Greet the children at the door, inviting them into your home.) Oh, hello. My name is Zacchaeus. Won't you come into my house? I'm so glad you're here, because today has been such a special day, and I don't get company very often.

The truth of the matter is that no one comes over, because people just don't like me very much (CUE) **"Ewwwww."** At first I thought it was because I'm so short, but then I realized that people don't like me because of my job. I am... I am... Oh, all right. I'll just come out and say it. I am a tax collector. (CUE) **"Ewwwww."** That's right. I said I'm a tax collector. (CUE) **"Ewwwww."**

See, I knew you wouldn't like me either. Nobody likes tax collectors. Do you know what a tax collector does? I work for the Roman government, and my job is to take money from every family. (CUE) **"Ewwwww."** Come on, now. I take a certain amount

of money, so that everyone can share in building roads and having an army to defend us against foreign invaders. Those are things we need to have, right?

I visit all the houses. I count their sheep and their goats. I look to see how much stuff people have, and I decide how much they should pay in taxes. I keep a little for myself (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww.**” Come on, now. My family has to eat, too! I keep a little for myself, and I give the rest to the governor. Everybody thinks they pay too much in taxes, and everybody thinks I cheat them. (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww.**” Maybe I did; maybe I didn’t. But that doesn’t matter anymore! Let me tell you what has happened today.

I heard that Jesus was coming to town today. Here in Jericho, we’ve been hearing about Jesus for a while now. He’s a young rabbi or teacher from the village of Nazareth, and people say he talks as though he really knows God. He heals people who are sick, and when he explains the holy scriptures, everything makes sense. I knew I had to see him. I was so excited, I could hardly wait!

Some children came running down the street saying, “The rabbi is coming!” When I heard them, I left my desk and went out. But the crowd was gathering so fast, and I’m just so very, very short. I had to climb up in a sycamore tree by the side of the road, just to be able to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

Of course, I had no hope that I would actually meet the rabbi, but just to see him would have been enough. The children yelled that Jesus had entered the gates of the old city, so I knew he was near. I didn’t even care about the mean things that the people below me were saying about me. You know, the same things they always say, “There’s that liar and cheat, Zacchaeus the tax collector. He’s thinks he’s too good to stand in the crowd like the rest of us. Look at him up in that tree.” (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww.**”

You’ll never guess what happened next. Jesus stopped right in front of the tree I had climbed. And he looked up! He saw me and smiled. Jesus smiled at ME, the tax collector, as though he was glad to see me. But that’s not all! Jesus spoke to me, too. He said, “Zacchaeus, you climb down right now. I’m coming to your house for lunch!”

The important people in town heard him say that, and they tried to tell him not to come to my house. (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww.**” They said it would look bad if he did. They said I was sinful, and that if Jesus came to my house he would be sinful, too. (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww.**”

But Jesus did come to my house. He came right here and sat at the table with me, and we had the best conversation at lunch. I know that Jesus is special, and I know I want to follow him, too. Before he left, I told Jesus that I would give half of everything I own to the poor, and that, if I have cheated anyone (CUE) “**Ewwwwwww,**” I will pay them back four times what I took from them. See, I’m boxing up things to give away now!

It’s not that I want you all to like me; it’s that I want to follow Jesus and live the way Jesus teaches us to live. After lunch, Jesus put his hand on my shoulder and said, “Today, salvation has come to your house, Zacchaeus.” Today, I met the Savior! Today my life has changed!

Everything that happened to me today reminds me of a Bible verse I'd like to teach you. It's really, really important. **“Love your neighbor as yourself.”** It comes from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 12, verse 31. Will you say it with me? **“Love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:31.”**

(Remove your biblical head covering, so that you are no longer in character.) Now, let's talk about the story we heard. *(As time permits, ask one or more of these questions, inviting, affirming, and discussing children's responses.)*

- Have you ever felt left out, or have you ever felt that someone just didn't like you? How did that make you feel?
- What are some ways that you can be a friend to someone who feels left out?
- Zacchaeus said he would give half of everything he owned to the poor and give extra back to anyone he had cheated. When you try to make things better for someone you have hurt or cheated, that's called making amends. How have you made amends when you've done something wrong?
- Why do you think Jesus spent time with people like Zacchaeus, people that others thought were sinful or “bad”?
- Did spending time with people like Zacchaeus change Jesus? Did it change Zacchaeus? Do you think it changed the people who didn't like Zacchaeus?

Thank you for visiting our Storytelling Center today. Let's say our verse together again and have a prayer before you leave.

“Love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:31”

As we pray, repeat each phrase after me.

Leader: God, thank you for your son, Jesus.

All: God, thank you for your son, Jesus.

Leader: Who showed everyone that your love changes lives.

All: Who showed everyone that your love changes lives.

Leader: Open our eyes to see people who feel left out or unloved

All: Open our eyes to see people who feel left out or unloved

Leader: And help us treat them as neighbors we love.

All: And help us treat them as neighbors we love.

Leader: Amen.

All: Amen.

3 Dinner



Luke 10:38-42

Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends.



Live in harmony with one another.
(Romans 12:16)

Background

Jesus stops for dinner one evening at the home of Mary and Martha. (Though we can't be sure, we assume that these women are sisters, living in the village of Bethany, with their brother Lazarus. We meet this family also in the Gospel of John.)

It comes as no surprise to us that, in Jesus' day, certain jobs are reserved for men and others for women. And it certainly should not surprise us to find a woman in the kitchen, preparing the evening meal for Jesus. But this is not a story about comparing gender roles. Rather it is about hospitality, about being a neighbor, and about how worry separates us from God. This passage is, intriguingly, sandwiched between the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the teaching of the Lord's Prayer. So the questions at the forefront in this story are: What does it mean to be a neighbor? How should we welcome our neighbors? (And, even more specifically, how should we welcome Jesus?)

Mary and Martha have different approaches to hospitality. For Martha, it's important that the meal be cooked properly: perhaps that everything comes out of the oven at the same time; that there's enough food for everyone; that the table is properly set; the house is cleaned and vacuumed; and the children are neat, quiet, and in their rooms. Martha attends to her guests needs by seeing that everything is "right" for them. She takes a housekeeping approach to hospitality.

Mary, on the other hand, embodies the saying, "If you're coming to see me, come right on over. If you're coming to see my house, give me two weeks' notice." For Mary, hospitality is about spending time with the guests. She probably takes Jesus' cloak, washes his feet, and offers him the most comfortable seat in the house—swatting the cat off the chair and moving the newspapers to the side table in the process.

Martha's welcome is gracious. Mary's welcome is warm. Who's to say which is correct? To us, it seems a matter of taste. And perhaps it is to Jesus as well. What bothers Jesus is not that Martha is cooking a meal or setting a lovely table, but that Martha is so tied up with her preparations and her need to have everything "just so" that she is too distracted to be present with him. Jesus chastises Martha for her distraction and worry.

Preparation and Reflection for Teachers and Leaders

- Jesus prefers Mary’s welcome to Martha’s because, he says, Martha is worried and distracted. What other New Testament passages can you recall in which Jesus cautions against worries and distractions?
- How’s that working for you? Do worries and distractions ever separate you from God? Share an example.
- Put yourself in the place of Mary or Martha. How would you welcome Jesus to your home? What would you want him to see there? What questions would you ask him?
- What does hospitality mean to you? How do you demonstrate hospitality beyond simply welcoming people into your home—what other kinds of hospitality are there?
- Can you recall a personal experience where either showing hospitality or being shown hospitality was transformative for you?
- Re-read Matthew 25:31-46. In teaching about the Last Judgment, Jesus describes a more radical kind of hospitality expected of his followers—“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”
- To whom is God calling you to demonstrate hospitality? How can you/will you respond?
- Does showing hospitality require financial resources? How can one who has little show hospitality to others?



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Bible Storytelling: Day 3

Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends.

Luke 10:38-42

See **Backdrops & Scenery** section of this Guidebook for suggestions for setting up a Storytelling Center. If you will have a Storytelling Center, consider having costumes available for the children to wear each day as you tell the story.

Costumes for children should be very simple. You're not putting on an elaborate play, just helping set the story's atmosphere. Dig into the costume closet for your congregation's Christmas play for tunics or bathrobes, or simply use lengths of plain fabric to drape over shoulders or to secure over heads with a stretchy headband or length of pantyhose knotted to fit a child's head.

The storyteller may wish to be more elaborately costumed, so that s/he can tell the Bible story as an actual character in the story.

Each day, the children will have a phrase or action that repeats throughout the story. Have a cue (pointing to children, a raised hand, etc.) that remains the same throughout the week, so that the children know that, on that motion, they do the phrase or action.

Today's scene: A simple indoor scene, with a low table and cushions around it for seating. A few dishes. Consider having a vacuum cleaner, broom, dustpan, dustrag or feather duster, etc.

Phrase/ action: Children make a cleaning motion of choice (wiping or sweeping, for example) and sing a familiar cleaning song, such as: **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** *(For tune, do an internet search for “Barney clean up song”)*

Preparation: Read the Bible story thoroughly, so that you know it very well. Prepare yourself, using the **Background and Reflection Questions** for Day 3. Today, as the storyteller, you will be Martha.

Telling the Story:

(Motion hurriedly to get the children into the room and ready to listen.) Hurry up, hurry up! Come in quickly. Where have you been? This house is a mess! Please don't leave your things scattered on the floor like that. **(CUE) “Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** Really! To your room! Take everything to your room! Then hurry up and get back here. And wash your hands before you come back, too! I need your help in the kitchen!

(Sit down on a stool.) Oh, just let me catch my breath. I'm sorry. I've been moving so quickly all day long, and I know you weren't trying to be late or careless with your things. And I really could use your help in the kitchen later, but first, let's talk.

My name is Martha, and I live here, in this house in the village of Bethany, with my sister Mary and my brother Lazarus. Now, some people see things differently than I do, but, to me, being a good homemaker has always been just about the most important thing. (CUE) **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** If the house is clean and everything is put away where it belongs, then you just feel better. You’re not constantly losing things or being bothered by clutter. And besides, don’t you want the house to look just right when company comes over? I like to cook good meals, and it makes me happy to see the satisfied looks on everyone’s faces after we’ve shared dinner together.

Last night, Mary, Lazarus, and I had company over for dinner. It was our friend Jesus, the teacher, and several of his followers. Jesus is so special to us, and I wanted everything to be perfect! (*Burst into tears.*) Lazarus was working all day yesterday, and, of course, we don’t expect him to be much help around the house, anyway. But Mary! My sister Mary had me so mad, I could have spit fire. (CUE) **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** She spent the whole day just lollygagging around, doing nothing. Nothing! Whenever I needed her, she was nowhere to be found. As the day went on, I worked harder and harder—and I got more and more frustrated with Mary. (CUE) **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”**

Finally Jesus arrived, and I was so glad to have him in our home. It was such an honor that he would come to visit us! I would have given anything to be in the corner of the room where Jesus and the other men were talking, but I knew my place was in the kitchen, and I knew the best gift I could give Jesus was to make the best dinner I could. I was checking on the roast and starting to gather the serving plates, and I looked around for Mary, because I really, really needed her help. (CUE) **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** And just where do you think she was?

She was in the living room. In the living room! With the men! And not sitting quietly in the corner, either. She was sitting right at Jesus’ feet, talking and chattering just as if she had nothing better to do. I was furious! I peeked into the room, and I tried to call out to her in a loud whisper. She paid me no attention. I tried hollering at her. (CUE) **“Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.”** She still paid me no attention. I had reached my limit. (*Stand up, looking very irritated.*)

I hated to do it, but it had to be done. I walked into the living room, and I spoke to Jesus. “Jesus,” I said. “You tell my sister Mary she needs to be in the kitchen giving me a hand. You tell her she doesn’t belong out here. You tell her, (CUE) **‘Clean up, clean up, everybody everywhere! Clean up, clean up, sister Mary, do your share.’** I just knew that Jesus would put Mary in her place. Right? ...Right?

But that’s not what Jesus did. To be honest, he hurt my feelings a little. Jesus spoke to me, not Mary. He didn’t fuss at Mary at all. He said, “Martha, Martha. You are too worried about things that don’t really matter. You are so distracted being busy trying to

make everything just right that you have forgotten about me! I am here in your house, and I came to see you. Sit down, and let's spend time together."

I did sit down. And I did spend time with Jesus. I listened to what he said, and I was so glad we had time to pray together. But it is so hard to let go of my worries. And it is really, really hard to stop being angry with my sister. I don't suppose that you ever get angry with your brother or sister, or with a friend. Do you?

I have a Bible verse to share with you today. It comes from a letter that Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome a long, long time ago, when they were having trouble getting along with each other. Our verse says, "**Live in harmony with one another.**" Will you say it with me? "**Live in harmony with one another.**" It comes from Romans 12:16. Harmony is a musical word for sounds that are sweet together. To live in harmony means to get along with each other. Let's say it again, "**Live in harmony with one another. Romans 12:16.**"

(Remove your biblical head covering, so that you are no longer in character.) Now, let's talk about the story we heard. Martha, who told our story, wanted to make sure everything was just perfect for Jesus. Mary, her sister, just wanted to spend time with Jesus. *(As time permits, ask one or more of these questions, inviting, affirming, and discussing children's responses.)*

- What did Jesus tell Martha? Why do you think Jesus wants Martha to worry less?
- How do you get ready for guests in your home or your classroom? What are some times when you have guests come over?
- If Jesus came to your house, what would you want to show him? What questions would you ask Jesus? What would you be sure to do, to get ready for Jesus?
- What foods would you serve Jesus for dinner?
- Think of someone that you don't get along very well with. What can you do to "live in harmony" with them?
- Are meal times important times for your family? Every day meals, or just special ones, like birthdays and holidays?
- What is your favorite blessing to pray before eating?

Thank you for visiting our Storytelling Center today. Let's say our verse together again and have a prayer before you leave. "**Live in harmony with one another. Romans 12:16.**"

As we pray, repeat each phrase after me:

Leader: God, sometimes we get so busy

All: God, sometimes we get so busy

Leader: That we forget to think about you and to pray.

All: That we forget to think about you and to pray.

Leader: Help us to slow down,

All: *Help us to slow down,*

Leader: Remind us to pray.

All: *Remind us to pray.*

Leader: Show us how to live in harmony with one another

All: *Show us how to live in harmony with one another*

Leader: And be followers of Jesus every day.

All: *And be followers of Jesus every day.*

Leader: Amen.

All: *Amen.*

4 Midnight Snack



Luke 11:5-13

Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor.



Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you.
(Romans 15:7)

Background

In the ancient Roman world, and in Hebrew culture for centuries leading up to and beyond the time of Jesus, offering hospitality to guests is nearly imperative. Much more than simply a nice thing to do, extending welcome to strangers is a way to gauge friend vs. foe and to establish social position, following a particular set of customs and rules familiar to everyone in the time. The story that Jesus tells in our passage today touches expectations of both hospitality and neighborliness.

Travelers arrive late in the evening, perhaps unexpectedly, and their host is mortified to discover he has no food to serve them. Not offering food to guests is a terrible breach of protocol. It is considered a great rudeness and is likely to cause the host, at a minimum, significant social embarrassment. Should the travelers be enemies rather than friends, the consequences could be much worse for their host.

Midnight is no time for regret—and no time for cooking, either. The host weighs his options: is it better to be rude to the guests or to be a nuisance to his friends? Wisely, he chooses to run next door or across the street or through the meadow, getting to his friend's home as quickly as possible.

The complex rules of hospitality, though, apply only to welcoming strangers and people in power. Friends are friends, then as now. The host knocks on the door. He bangs on the door frame. He calls out for his friend, awakening her out of a deep sleep. While the neighbor prefers sleep and tries her best to send the host away, the banging and yelling is finally too much, so she gets out of bed, shares her food, and sends the host back home.

Jesus says it is like this with God. We don't need to follow a complex set of rules to welcome God as a stranger; rather we should relate to God as our friend and neighbor, confident that God will respond whenever we ask for what we need, just as the neighbor gives bread to her friend in the middle of the night.

It is not coincidental that this passage follows on the heels of Jesus' visit to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. It is separated from that visit only by Jesus' teaching on prayer. As Jesus tells Martha, our relationship with God is not about the rules. God simply wants to be with us.

Preparation and Reflection for Teachers and Leaders

- What does it mean to have or be a neighbor? How can you (do you) “love your neighbor as yourself”?
- This story, especially Jesus’ comments on it (Luke 11:9-13) speak volumes about our trust—or lack of trust—in God. “Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you.” In what ways is trusting God really that simple?
- In this country, millions of people do not have enough to eat. Asking, seeking, and knocking are not putting food on their tables and are not lifting them out of the conditions that cause them to be hungry. How would you explain this passage to someone who is hungry? Is it possible that we are God’s response?
- What rules (either real or ones you “feel”) get in the way of your relationship with others? Your relationship with God?
- In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches us to ask, “Give us the bread we need for today.” What is the bread that you need for today?
- C.S. Lewis said, “Relying on God has to begin all over again every day as if nothing had yet been done.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- At the end of this parable, Jesus talks about relationships between parents and children, focusing on the parents’ love for their child (“What parent would give a child a snake when the child asks for bread?”). As you prepare to teach this lesson, be aware of children in your group who may have difficult relationships with their parents: those who live with grandparents or other guardians; those who are in foster care; those who may have been removed from their parents’ homes by court order; and those whose parents are abusive, incarcerated, addicted, or mentally ill. Recognizing that parents sometimes do not act as Jesus describes here, how might you be sensitive to the needs and concerns of children with such life experiences?



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Bible Storytelling: Day 4

Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor.

Luke 11:5-13

See **Backdrops & Scenery** section of this Guidebook for suggestions for setting up a Storytelling Center. If you will have a Storytelling Center, consider having costumes available for the children to wear each day as you tell the story.

Costumes for children should be very simple. You're not putting on an elaborate play, just helping set the story's atmosphere. Dig into the costume closet for your congregation's Christmas play for tunics or bathrobes, or simply use lengths of plain fabric to drape over shoulders or to secure over heads with a stretchy headband or length of pantyhose knotted to fit a child's head.

The storyteller may wish to be more elaborately costumed, so that s/he can tell the Bible story as an actual character in the story.

Each day, the children will have a phrase or action that repeats throughout the story. Have a cue (pointing to children, a raised hand, etc.) that remains the same throughout the week, so that the children know that, on that motion, they do the phrase or action.

Today's scene: A town street, lined with cardboard box "homes," one of which has a working door.

Phrase/ action: Children pound their palm with their fist and say, "**Wake up!**"

Preparation: Read the Bible story thoroughly, so that you know it very well. Prepare yourself, using the **Background and Reflection Questions** for Day 4. Today, as the storyteller, you will be the unnamed host, needing bread for his guests in the middle of the night.

Telling the Story:

(Yawning, greet the children.) Oh, hello. It has been a very, very long night, and I am soooooo tired. **(CUE) "Wake up!"** I didn't get much sleep last night, because I had unexpected company. It was my cousin's nephew's girlfriend's brother's co-worker and his family. They came all the way from Bethsaida—all seven of them. We didn't know they were coming and... *(Zzzzz; begin to snore, as though you've drifted off to sleep)* **(CUE) "Wake up!"**

Oh, yes. And of course since we didn't know they were coming, we didn't know how many of them there would be. And we didn't know how late they would arrive, either. But it is our duty to welcome strangers. We must show hospitality, by letting them into our home, by washing their feet and offering them food and drink and a place to sleep. Why do we do that? Because it's the way we've always done things. Because God has asked us to welcome travelers. Besides, if we didn't welcome strangers, they would think

we were rude. We might offend them or make them mad. (*Zzzzz; begin to snore, as though you've drifted off to sleep*) (CUE) **“Wake up!”**

So my family and I, we had all gone to bed and were sleeping soundly. (CUE) **“Wake up!”** There was a loud knocking on the door, and all these people were standing there. I jumped out of bed and brought them into the house, of course. What else would I do?

I sent the kids to fetch water for washing their feet, and my wife went into the kitchen to prepare a midnight snack for them. But just a moment later, Deborah came out of the kitchen, looking very upset. She motioned me over and said, “We’re out of bread!”

Oh, no! This would never do! Maybe it was all a bad dream. Perhaps if I closed my eyes... . (*Zzzzz; begin to snore, as though you've drifted off to sleep*) (CUE) **“Wake up!”**

Sorry! We had to have bread. Without bread, we couldn’t serve the meal. And if we didn’t serve the meal, they’d go back and tell their co-worker, and he’d tell his sister, and she’d tell her boyfriend, and he’d tell his uncle, and HE would tell my Cousin Micah that we treated them badly. Before long, everybody, in all of Israel, would know that we were rude. That would be a disaster!

There was only one thing to do. Go back to bed. (CUE) **“Wake up!”** No. That wasn’t it. I ran to my neighbor’s house. At midnight! In my pajamas! I banged on the door, and I yelled: (CUE) **“Wake up!”** My neighbor told me to go away. I banged and yelled again. (CUE) **“Wake up!”** My neighbor said his wife and kids were all asleep, and he told me to go away. I kept on yelling. (CUE) **“Wake up!”** (CUE) **“Wake up!”** (CUE) **“Wake up!”** until finally my neighbor came to the door and gave me the bread I needed.

(*Remove your biblical head covering, so that you are no longer in character.*) Now, let’s talk about the story we heard. This was actually a story that Jesus told, of a man who had to ask his neighbor for bread at midnight. (CUE) **“Wake up!”** Jesus said that we don’t try hard enough to ask God for what we need, that we give up too soon.

Jesus said, “Don’t you know that God loves you? God loves you even more than your parents or your grandparents love you. If you ask your parents for a fish to eat, will they give you a snake instead? If you ask them for an egg, will they give you a spider? Of course not! So ask God for what you need, and God will help you.” Jesus said, “It’s just like you, when you need something right away and you go and knock on your neighbor’s door. Even if you wake them up (CUE) **“Wake up!”** and make them get out of bed, they will help you, because you are their neighbor. You are always welcome there.”

Our special verse for today reminds us that we need to treat others the way that God treats us. It also reminds us about our friend in today’s story who knocked and knocked on his neighbor’s door at midnight. It comes from Romans 15:7. “Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.” Will you say it with me? **“Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. Romans 15:7.”**

(*As time permits, ask one or more of these questions, inviting, affirming, and discussing children’s responses.*)

- What does it mean to be a neighbor?
- Our storyteller today knew that he could always count on his neighbor to help him. What person or people can you always count on?
- Are you always willing to share when a friend needs something? Why or why not?
- How do you know that God loves and cares for you?

Thank you for visiting our Storytelling Center today. Let's say our verse together again and have a prayer before you leave. **Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you. Romans 15:7."**

As we pray, repeat each phrase after me:

Leader: God, we pray for people who are strangers,
All: God, we pray for people who are strangers,

Leader: For children and grownups who worry
All: For children and grownups who worry

Leader: That no one will open the door or help them.
All: That no one will open the door or help them.

Leader: Help us be neighbors
All: Help us be neighbors

Leader: And welcome them, as Jesus welcomes us.
All: And welcome them, as Jesus welcomes us.

Leader: Amen.
All: Amen.

5 Party!



Luke 14:16-23

Jesus tells a story about a big party



Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. (*1 Corinthians 10:31*)

Background

Thus far, we've explored the idea of welcoming those who grieve, those whom no one likes, friends, neighbors, and strangers. Today's passage, the Parable of the Great Banquet, has God's welcome (and ours) extending to everyone, rich and poor, masters and servants, the healthy and the sick, people of all times and places. In God's kingdom, we shall all eat at the "Welcome Table."

Jesus tells the Parable of the Great Banquet while he is, himself, at dinner at the home of one of the leading Pharisees. Jesus talks about places of honor at the table and about who should be invited to eat. He says that the Pharisees' welcome—and ours—should be like God's: freely extended, without any expectation of return or repayment.

What one eats and drinks and with whom one eats and drinks are significant points of contention between Jesus and the Jewish leaders of his day. Repeatedly, throughout his ministry, Jesus chooses welcome over tongue-wagging, and presence over protocol. The open table Jesus demonstrates throughout his ministry is a place to celebrate restored relationships, foreshadowing the Eucharistic (Communion) table and mirroring, however dimly, the heavenly banquet we look forward to in God's kingdom.

In today's parable, the dinner host is not identified. The host is just someone who plans a dinner party for the usual guests: friends, family, business associates, and people of power and wealth. What follows, however, is entirely unexpected: the invited guests refuse to come! They make ridiculous-sounding excuses, leaving their host fuming. Neither cancelling the party nor re-scheduling it will do—the invited guests have been so rude, have so dishonored the host, and have strayed so far from the customs of the day in refusing the dinner invitation, that the host permanently scratches them off his social calendar.

So the host throws his hands in the air and says, "Why am I going to this much trouble to be hospitable to my friends and neighbors who simply turn their backs on me? Let me, instead, show hospitality to people who can never pay me back, to people who could never imagine being asked to eat at my table." He sends his servants out, telling them to gather everyone in, whoever they can find. His table becomes a great welcome table, where all are invited, where the surfaces are laden with food that will not run out, and the best wines are shared with the poorest people in town. And as the people pile in

for the party, the room seems to grow even larger, and the table gets longer. The host sends his servants out again and again, knocking on every door and peering into every street and alley to bring more people to the table, so that no one is left out, and so that the abundance he has prepared is shared with all.

Preparation and Reflection for Teachers and Leaders

- The host in Jesus' parable throws wide his doors and invites anybody and everybody to his banquet. What are the risks? The rewards?
- To whom would you have trouble extending a dinner invitation?
- Which roles or characters do you identify with in the parable (host, invited guests, servants, people brought in from the streets)? In what way?
- In Luke 14:12-14, the verses immediately preceding Jesus' telling of this parable, Jesus suggests to his own dinner host, a leader of the Pharisees, that hospitality extended only to those who can repay it, is not hospitality at all. What do you think Jesus means by this? Do you agree?
- If you could paint a picture of a "welcome table," what would it look like? Spend some time painting that picture, either with art materials, with word, or with song.
- How is God calling you to extend a welcome table?



Abundance Orchard: Where Faith Grows and Hungry People are Fed

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Society of St. Andrew

gleaning america's fields ~ feeding america's hungry

Bible Storytelling: Day 5

Jesus tells a story about a big party.

Luke 14:15-23

See **Backdrops & Scenery** section of this Guidebook for suggestions for setting up a Storytelling Center. If you will have a Storytelling Center, consider having costumes available for the children to wear each day as you tell the story.

Costumes for children should be very simple. You're not putting on an elaborate play, just helping set the story's atmosphere. Dig into the costume closet for your congregation's Christmas play for tunics or bathrobes, or simply use lengths of plain fabric to drape over shoulders or to secure over heads with a stretchy headband or length of pantyhose knotted to fit a child's head.

The storyteller may wish to be more elaborately costumed, so that s/he can tell the Bible story as an actual character in the story.

Each day, the children will have a phrase or action that repeats throughout the story. Have a cue (pointing to children, a raised hand, etc.) that remains the same throughout the week, so that the children know that, on that motion, they do the phrase or action.

Today's scene: A sumptuous table, filled with dishes and cups and bottles and food; perhaps some ribbons and streamers or other party decorations. Props: A large party invitation, something like a piece of card stock, heavy art paper, or tag board, with curlicued flourishes, reading "You are Invited!"

Phrase/ action: Divide the children into two groups. GROUP 1 shakes their heads "no," stomps their feet, makes a brushing away motion with their hand as though swatting at a fly, and says, "**No way. Un-uh. Not happening.**" GROUP 2 looks very excited, nods their head "yes," and says, "**Sure! I can't wait! Let's go!**"

Preparation: Read the Bible story thoroughly, so that you know it very well. Prepare yourself, using the **Background and Reflection Questions** for Day 5. Today, as the storyteller, you will be one of the dinner host's servants.

Telling the Story:

(As children arrive, be picking objects up from the table, as though you are cleaning following a party.) Hello, children. We've just had the most amazing evening in this house! There were so many guests at the party, and the food was incredible! Would you like me to tell you about it? **(CUE GROUP 1) "Sure! I can't wait! Let's go!"**

I am a servant here, and my master often has big parties and dinners. Very important people come to his parties and eat at his table. And just as often as we have people over for big meals here, we go to their homes to eat. It is an honor, a very big deal, in this

town to get an invitation to come to my master's house for a party. People can't wait to come over and be seen at my master's table.

Well, that is, until this week. My master planned a dinner party, a really, really big party for last night. He did all the things you do to get ready for a party. What kinds of things do you think he did? (*Invite children's responses, accepting and affirming their ideas for party preparation.*) All of those things sound great, don't they? **(CUE GROUP 1) "Sure! I can't wait! Let's go!"**

While the kitchen servants began to prepare the food and the house servants began the decorations, my master sent me and my fellow personal servants all over town. We knocked on the doors of all the fancy houses, and we invited all the important people to come to dinner. (*Show the party invitation you've prepared.*)

I was stunned, and so were my friends, the other servants, when we discovered that no one wanted to come to the party! **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."** Every door we knocked on, we heard another excuse. "Come to your party?" **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."** The first family I asked said they had just bought a piece of land outside of town, and they had to go look it over. I couldn't believe it! The party was at night. Nobody goes out to look at land at night! **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."**

The next family said they had just bought five pairs of oxen to plow their fields. They were sorry they couldn't come to the party, but they had to go out to plow. Are you kidding me? Plowing fields at night? And it's not even planting season, either. **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."**

And the next family? They said, "Oh, too bad. We just got married, so we don't feel like going to a party." It's great that they got married, but really! What kind of an excuse is that?! **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."**

I was getting really worried! I was afraid my master would be mad at me if no one came to the party. Maybe he would think that I didn't really invite anyone. But how embarrassing for my master, to plan a big party and have no one come! **(CUE GROUP 2) "No way. Un-uh. Not happening."**

The other servants and I told our master about all the excuses the important people made, and, boy, was he angry! I have never seen him so mad. But he was mad at those people he invited who were making excuses. I figured he would call the party off and have it another time, but the master surprised me. He said, "Forget all those people who think they are too important or too busy to come to my party. Go back out, and go down every street. Knock on every door and bring people out of the shops and fields. Anywhere you see people, stop and invite them to my party. I am opening my home to everyone. Make them welcome at my table!"

So we followed our master's instructions, and we invited everyone to the party—rich people and poor people, healthy people and sick people, old and young, friends and strangers, good people and bad people, absolutely everyone. And you know what? This time, people said, **(CUE GROUP 1) "Sure! I can't wait! Let's go!"**

When he started seeing all these people rushing down the street toward our front door, my master got the biggest smile on his face. He had never thought about opening his doors to everyone before. As they entered the house, he hugged each person and said, “I’m so glad you’re here. Thank you for coming to my house. Come share my joy!” Again and again, my master sent us back out into the town, to bring in more people, and they just kept coming! **(CUE GROUP 1) “Sure! I can’t wait! Let’s go!”**

Finally the house was full, and my master invited all the servants to come to the table, too. Can you imagine? Servants invited to the master’s table! We ate and laughed; we sang and told stories; we met so many new people; and everyone felt welcome. It was the best party ever, as everyone sat together at the welcome table.

Our special verse today is a bit longer, but I really like it because it tells exactly how I feel after the big dinner party: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” It comes from Paul’s first letter to the Christians in Corinth, chapter 10 verse 31. Let’s learn it in three parts. Repeat after me: “Whether you eat or drink” **(Repeat)**; “or whatever you do” **(Repeat)**; “Do everything for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31.” **(Repeat.)**

(Remove your biblical head covering, so that you are no longer in character.) Now, let’s talk about the story we heard. *(As time permits, ask one or more of these questions, inviting, affirming, and discussing children’s responses.)*

- That was quite a story! How would you feel if you had a party and no one wanted to come? What do you think you would do?
- There are many people today, even right here in our community, that live alone or that feel unwelcome or that others don’t care about them. What are some ways that our congregation can be more welcoming to them?
- How can you help someone who is new or who doesn’t have many friends feel more welcome in your school? How can you share joy?

Thank you for visiting our Storytelling Center today. Let’s say our verse together again and have a prayer before you leave. **“Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10:31.”**

As we pray, repeat each phrase after me:

Leader: Thank you, God, for caring about each one of us.

All: Thank you, God, for caring about each one of us.

Leader: Help us to care for others, too.

All: Help us to care for others, too.

Leader: Show us ways to make everyone feel welcome

All: Show us ways to make everyone feel welcome

Leader: And share your joy. Amen.

All: And share your joy. Amen.



Missions: Society of St. Andrew

Thank you for choosing to promote the feeding ministries of Society of St. Andrew through your Vacation Bible School and for making the Society of St. Andrew the recipient of your VBS mission offerings this week.

About Society of St. Andrew

The Society of St. Andrew (www.endhunger.org) began in Virginia about 36 years ago, with two pastors and their families, who covenanted together to live simply and to invite others to live simply as well. The families knew that hunger was a significant issue in this country, but they soon began to focus on the amount of food that goes to waste here in the United States every year and every day. They dared to wonder why people are hungry in our neighborhoods and our communities when so much food is simply thrown away or left to rot in fields. More than that, they dared to do something about it. They began to look for ways to connect farmers who had extra or unmarketable fruits and vegetables with agencies feeding the hungry. They began to engage volunteers in the hands-on, Biblical practice of gleaning: picking, digging, or gathering good food for hungry people.

Today the Society of St. Andrew gleans and distributes nourishing food all across the United States. In quantities ranging from a handful of peppers leftover at a farmers' market to millions of pounds of sweet potatoes remaining in a grower's warehouse at season's end, Society of St. Andrew connects people who care about hunger and food waste with opportunities to do something about it.

Since 1979, Society of St. Andrew has recovered and distributed more than 2.2 billion servings of food, reaching all 48 contiguous United States and the District of Columbia. Each year more than 30,000 volunteers, both people who are in need and people who have plenty, come together to glean fruits and vegetables in fields and orchards or to bag already harvested produce at a "Crop Drop."

The result of all those volunteers pitching in, spending a few hours getting dirty in a field and enjoying some fresh air and good exercise, is that healthy food reaches hungry people at a cost of about 2¢ a serving. In 2014 alone, Society of St. Andrew volunteers helped put 87 million servings of food on the tables of their neighbors in need!

Promoting Your Society of St. Andrew Mission Emphasis

In the Missions Center each day, you will present a story about Society of St. Andrew at work. There may be a problem-solving or hands-on activity for children as well, depending on your timeframe.

Some Vacation Bible Schools prefer to have the missions story each day as part of an all-VBS opening or closing segment and to receive offerings at the time the missions story is told.

You will need to decide whether missions offerings will be received each day at an all-VBS opening or closing time or whether children should bring their offerings to the Missions Center each day or simply bring them to their classroom. Wherever offerings are received, they should be received with thanksgiving and dedicated to God's use, with prayer.

Offering Containers

Free coin boxes may be ordered from Society of St. Andrew; please order one per participating family if you wish to use them. Order these at least three weeks before your VBS is scheduled to begin.



You may prefer to have children decorate donated cans (watch for sharp edges!) or make offering can covers, to save resources and to make the donation experience uniquely their own.

Offering Goal

The results of VBS offerings always tend to be greater if you encourage children to bring an offering every day and if you have a goal or an incentive. What is a reasonable goal varies greatly from place to place and situation to situation. In some congregations, a goal of 25¢ per child per day is a stretch. In other congregations, a goal of \$1.00 per child per day seems low. It's better to set a lower goal and breeze through it quickly (and then set another goal) than to have an unattainable goal.

Recognize that some families will be unable or unwilling to send offerings with their children and that other families will forget. Never make a child feel shamed, left out, or less valued than the other children if s/he has no offering to share.



You may wish to have extra change on hand, so that you can ask each child each day whether they have offering money and provide them change to share for the offering if they have none.

Review the Backdrops & Scenery section of this Guidebook (p. 10) for ideas for a "missions" tree.

Take-Home Materials

A black & white flyer describing Society of St. Andrew's work is included with this packet; a color version of the flyer is available for download from Society of St. Andrew's website at www.endhunger.org/vbs. Please send copies of this flyer home with children on Day 1 of VBS. This flyer is most helpful for teachers, leaders, helpers, parents, guardians, and older elementary children, to introduce the missions emphasis to them.

You can download a pictograph story (brief story with fruit/vegetable pictures substituted for some of the words) appropriate for younger children for copying and distribution from www.endhunger.org/vbs.

Mission Stories

At the back of this Guidebook, you will find five full-color photos of the Society of St. Andrew at work, getting healthy food to hungry people. On the reverse side of each photo is a story, telling where the food is coming from, where it's going, and who is helping to do the work. You will use one of these stories as your mission focus for each day. These photos (and other related ones) may be downloaded from the VBS page of Society of St. Andrew's website, for on-screen projection.

FUN IDEA: Once you decide which mission story/photo you will use each day, coordinate with your VBS snack team and ask them serve the fruit or vegetable from the story as one of your VBS snack foods that day.

Farmer Brown

Brief description: Former St. Louis Rams football player Jason Brown retired from the NFL and took up a new career, growing crops to feed hungry people. Farmer Brown invites the Society of St. Andrew to bring volunteers into his fields to glean the good food he grows and share it with those who need it most.

Harvest of Hope

Brief description: These young people are part of a Harvest of Hope work/study mission retreat. They learn about hunger and glean in fields, and they make a pledge and a plan to "do something" about hunger in their community when they get back home.

At the Farmers' Market

Brief description: All over the country, on any day of the week, there is healthy food left over at the end of the day at farmers' markets. Society of St. Andrew volunteers go to the markets and pick up that good food, taking it to nearby soup kitchens and shelters, so that it can be used to feed hungry people instead of being thrown away.

Backyard Bounty

Brief description: In Florida, fresh citrus fruit grows on trees in backyards and around office buildings. Often this fruit is simply left to rot on the trees, because the property owners don't want to pick or eat it. Society of St. Andrew volunteers go door to door, picking the fruit and sharing it with food banks that provide food to hungry people nearby.

Practice on the Field

Brief description: This high school football team took their practice to the field, literally! They gleaned sweet corn, picking over 30,000 ears of corn in just a couple of hours. The corn was shared with seniors throughout Tennessee.

Mission Activities

If your timeframe permits, choose one related mission activity for each group of children each day. Here are eleven suggestions.

Food Waste Quiz – available as a shortened online quiz from Society of St. Andrew’s website, www.endhunger.org, or as a longer quiz on CD/DVD from Lynette Johnson, Society of St. Andrew’s Director of Church Relations, at church@endhunger.org or 800-333-4597. This provides a series of photos of food that looks good, but is likely to go to waste; quizzes participants about why the food might go to waste; and then demonstrates how Society of St. Andrew provides an alternative to waste, but rescuing that good food to feed hungry people.

Skype with a Staffer – contact the Society of St. Andrew’s national offices (800-333-4597) to set up a Skype session with a SoSA staff member during your VBS week. Discuss this with the children at least a day in advance and make a list of questions they’d like to ask during the Skype session.

Soup Kitchen, Food Pantry, or Food Bank field trip – Visit an agency in your community that is feeding hungry people. If you have fresh or nonperishable food to share with the agency, take that with you (check with the agency first to see what kinds of food they will accept). Ask agency staffers how hungry people in your community can get fresh fruits and vegetables to eat.

Coin Cans – Paint and decorate or make & decorate paper covers for cans that can be shared with members of the congregation for their use in collecting spare change for Society of St. Andrew. Set a date for people to bring their change to worship (first Sunday of next month; next Sunday; second Sunday of every month, etc.). *[Seek the approval of your pastor, congregational board, or missions council/committee before suggesting or promoting an ongoing congregation-wide activity or donation program.]*

Community Gardening field trip – Visit a community garden or edible churchyard in your community, where food is being grown to share with those who are hungry. Talk to the garden or churchyard lead volunteer or staffer to plan a simple project that the children can do while they are there.

Gleaning or bag-making – Contact the Society of St. Andrew (800-333-4597) to see if there is a regional office in your state or whether gleaning is going on in your area. Sometimes SoSA needs help cutting or knotting mesh bags for future gleanings as well.

Soup Kitchen placecards – Make Bible verse or encouraging message placecards for a soup kitchen or feeding ministry in your community to use at an upcoming meal. *[Check with the agency first, to be sure this is something they could use, to determine quantities needed, and any restrictions on materials.]* A simple way to do this would be to cut unlined 3x5 index cards in half and write a message on one side. Take a supply of pinecones and several jars of colored tempera paints. Have children hold broad flat end of pinecone (end that attaches to tree) and dip the pinecone in paint, then place the pinecone on a metal or acrylic sheet to dry. Then invite children to sprinkle glitter over the painted,

wet pinecones. Once paint is dry, slide message card in between scales of the pinecone. Suggested messages:

“You are welcome at this table!”

“God loves you!”

“Blessings for this day”

“Do everything in love”

“You are special to God”

Healthy Foods / Not Healthy Foods posters – You’ll need old magazines and scissors, and possibly glue and posterboard. Ask each child to select a picture of a healthy food and an unhealthy food from their magazine and cut or tear out the picture. Younger children may need help with this. As a group, look at and talk about each picture and decide whether the food is good for you or not good for you (or just okay). Place each picture in a pile with pictures of similar foods. If you wish and time permits, have children glue pictures to posterboard to create Healthy Foods / Not Healthy Foods posters.

Over / Under / On – For Preschool through Grade 2. Show pictures of various fruits and vegetables, as you’d buy them in the grocery store and as they look prepared. Ask the children to tell you, for each fruit or vegetable how it grows. Does it grow under the ground or above the ground? Is the fruit or vegetable itself the plant, or does it grow on the plant? Do you eat what you see, or do you have to open or peel something to find the fruit or vegetable? Ask the children to match pictures of fruits or vegetables growing with the grocery store pictures and with the prepared food pictures. Then, talk about how fruits and vegetables might go to waste at each of those stages.

How Many Can You Name? – A game for children to name all the fruits and vegetables they can. You can either divide into teams, or simply have children shout (or take turns) naming fruits and vegetables, or you can play a sequential game: “I’m gleaning to feed hungry people, and today I’m picking _____” The next child would name the fruit or vegetable suggested by the first child and then another fruit or vegetable. Each child adds one more fruit or vegetable to the list.

Stone Soup – The Society of St. Andrew finds abundance where others see little and uses that abundance to feed God’s hungry people. The old story of Stone Soup (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stone_Soup) carries a similar theme: people are hungry because they see little and are unwilling to share. When a stranger comes to town and offers them a vision of abundance, all are fed. Read the story, listen to or sing a Stone Soup song (see Music section in this Guidebook, below), and make, eat, and share Stone Soup! The day before you will make Stone Soup, send a note home, asking each child to bring a vegetable from home on Stone Soup day.

Stella the Sweet Potato's Amazing Journey – This children’s book tells the story of Stella the sweet potato, left behind in the field when the other potatoes are harvested. She finds her purpose when she is gleaned to share with a hungry family. Available for \$7.00 from Amazon, proceeds from the sale of this book support Society of St. Andrew crop drops on the campus of Emory University in Atlanta.

i Additional Mission Theme

Suggestions for Younger Children

If your preschool and kindergarten classes will be classroom-based, you may include in your VBS schedule time for children to have free or directed play in theme centers within the classroom, such as home living, reading, blocks, etc.

Plan to have fruit and vegetable manipulatives and gardening tools for children to use in their classroom learning centers.

Your first and best options are always to ask within your congregation to have gently used items donated or to borrow items from a nearby preschool that is out of session. If you must purchase new items, here are some possibilities to consider:

Vegetables: <http://www.amazon.com/Childcraft-Vegetable-Manipulative-Counters-Set/dp/B0062TNR8K>

Fruit: http://www.amazon.com/Colorful-Fruit-Counters-Piece-CTU7111/dp/B001UG59LI/ref=pd_sim_sbs_indust_6/179-8038203-7663227

Farmers Market Color Sorting Set: http://www.amazon.com/Learning-Resources-Farmers-Market-Sorting/dp/B006RQ8TY0/ref=pd_sim_sbs_indust_10

Garden Fresh Salad Set: http://www.amazon.com/New-Sprouts%C2%AE-Garden-Fresh-Salad/dp/B00GG0RLSM/ref=pd_sim_t_9

Fruit & Veggie Tote: http://www.amazon.com/Learning-Resources-Sprouts-Picked-Veggie/dp/B00B2AYLYS/ref=pd_sim_t_11

Life-Sized Fruits & Veggies:

<http://www.discountschoolsupply.com/Product/ProductDetail.aspx?Product=27770>

Gardening tools: <http://www.gardeningwithkids.org/preschool-kids-tool-set.html>

Be sure to have finished arts and crafts projects available from the beginning of your VBS week, to use in the play centers in your preschool and kindergarten classrooms. Display a **VBS Quilt** on the wall. Have (empty) **Labeled Water Bottles, Friendship Bracelets**, and **Trivets** in the home living area for the children to use in their play.

Though most actual gardening projects for children require a lengthier season than a weeklong Vacation Bible School, you may find some useful ideas for your preschoolers and kindergartners at: http://eartheasy.com/grow_gardening_children.htm



VBS Music Guide

To the music leader: Our theme this year is God's abundant and, often unexpected, welcome. Abundance Or char d participants of all ages will consider physical and spiritual hungers during the course of the week, using New Testament stories about food and hunger.

- 1 Breakfast**
Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples on the beach (*John 21:1-13*)
- 2 Lunch**
Jesus eats lunch with a tax collector (*Luke 19:1-10*)
- 3 Dinner**
Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends (*Luke 10:38-42*)
- 4 Midnight Snack**
Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor (*Luke 11:5-13*)
- 5 Party!**
Jesus tells a story about a big party (*Luke 14:15-23*)

The mission focus for VBS is the Society of St. Andrew (www.endhunger.org), a faith-based nonprofit that engages children, young people, women, and men in hands-on mission, gleaning (picking, digging, or gathering) fresh fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry.

Following are MANY songs appropriate to accompany Abundance Or char d, along with links, wherever possible, to sources for the music. Choose among these or add others you prefer. All music chosen should reinforce the themes and stories of this year's VBS.

The week's theme song is, "***I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table.***" It's an African American spiritual that became an anthem for the Civil Rights movement in the United States during the 1960s. A quick internet search will provide many videos and recordings of this song, in a variety of musical styles, as well as access to sheet music for it. Suggested verses are on the next page of this music guide. Reinforce this song every day as you teach more words and possibly add motions to go along with it.

To this song, which participants of all ages will learn, add 1-2 other songs that the whole group will learn. Beyond that, work on 1-2 additional songs that are age-specific. For younger children, you'll want these to be action-songs (with motions or activity) or interactive songs (where the children suggest verse completions).

Copyright considerations prohibit Society of St. Andrew from printing lyrics or music to most hymns and songs. If you wish to copy or print copyrighted material, please be sure that your church has purchased the proper licensing (<http://www.ccli.com>).

Theme Song

I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table

(suggested verses—your VBS groups may choose to add or substitute others)

I'm gonna sit at the welcome table.
 I'm gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days. Hallelujah!
 I'm gonna sit at the welcome table.
 Gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days.

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table...

I'm gonna eat and drink with my Jesus...

I'm gonna join with sisters and brothers...

Here all the world will find a welcome...

We're gonna feast on milk and honey...

Other Appropriate Songs

All Who Hunger — Sylvia G. Dunstan

"All who hunger, gather gladly; holy manna is our bread."

The Faith We Sing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

© 1991, GIA Publications, Inc.

Amen, Siakudumisa — traditional Xhosa (South Africa)

"We praise your name, O God"

The Faith We Sing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

© 1996, General Board of Global Ministries

The Carrot Song — Mary Lu Walker

"Help Mr. Garret pull the carrot from the ground..."

Dandelions (Paulist Press, 1975)

The Best of Mary Lu Walker (Paulist Press, 1996)

<http://68.189.244.188/marluwalk/audio.htm>

Change My Heart — Mary Lu Walker

"Help me to realize that the hungry one is you."

Dandelions, Fireflies, and Rhubarb Pie (Upper Room, 1989)

The Best of Mary Lu Walker (Paulist Press, 1996)

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

Go and Tell — Ann F. Price

“Go and care about the world, ’cause we are the people of the church.”

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

© 1981, Ann F. Price

God’s Family — Patricia Shelly

“We get together to care for each other, to worship and learn how to follow God’s way.”

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

© 1977, Patricia Shelly

God’s People Help Each Other — Cindy Baize

“God’s people help each other, today and long ago.”

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

© 1982, Graded Press

Great is the Lord — Michael W. Smith and Deborah D. Smith

“Great is the Lord, by his mercy he proves he is love.”

The Faith We Sing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

© 1982, Meadowgreen Music Co.

I Will Give Thanks — Philip R. Dietterich

“I will give thanks to thy name, O Lord.”

Rejoice and Sing Praise (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977)

© 1969, Graded Press

I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me — African American spiritual

“I’m gonna live so God can use me anywhere, any time.”

Public domain

The Faith We Sing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

Lead Me, Jesus — Ted Creen

“Teach me, Jesus, to be loving. Your disciple I will be.”

Book of Praise #646 (Presbyterian Church in Canada)

[http://pateys.nf.ca/cgi-](http://pateys.nf.ca/cgi-bin/findtune.pl?tuneword=Lead%20Me%2C%20Jesus;detail=verbose)

[bin/findtune.pl?tuneword=Lead%20Me%2C%20Jesus;detail=verbose](http://pateys.nf.ca/cgi-bin/findtune.pl?tuneword=Lead%20Me%2C%20Jesus;detail=verbose)

Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley Grow — traditional

“First the farmer sows the seed...”

Public domain

http://www.makingmusicfun.net/htm/f_mmf_music_library_songbook/oats-and-beans-and-barley-grow-lyrics.htm

Praise Ye the Lord — J. Jefferson Cleveland

“Praise God on top of the mountains, praise God both day and night.”

The Faith We Sing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

© 1981, J. Jefferson Cleveland

Reach Out in Love — Sharon Dale

“Reach out in love, give your hand, your heart, your ev’rything the Lord did give you.”

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

© Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House

Shalom Chaverim — Traditional Israeli song

Public domain

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

Stone Soup — Mary Lu Walker

“Make us a kettle of soup from a stone.”

Share the Sunlight (K and R Music, 1981)

The Best of Mary Lu Walker (Paulist Press, 1996)

Stone Soup — John Forster and Tom Chapin

“All you need is what you’ve got.”

Mother Earth (1990 Limousine Music Co. & The Last Music Co., 1990)

<http://www.tomchapin.com/docs/lss.html>

Use It Up — Mary Lu Walker

“Use it up. Wear it out. Make it do. Do without.”

Dandelions, Fireflies, and Rhubarb Pie (Upper Room, 1989)

The Best of Mary Lu Walker (Paulist Press, 1996)

We are the Church — Richard Avery and Donald Marsh

“We are the church together.”

Rejoice and Sing Praise (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977)

© 1967-1972, The Avery-Marsh Songbook

We Love — Ann F. Price

“We love because God first loved us”

Rejoice and Sing Praise (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977)

© 1975, Graded Press

Welcome Table — African American spiritual

“We’re gonna sit at the welcome table one of these days, Hallelujah!”

Public domain

Psalms and Songs (Nashville: Graded Press, 1985)

Children Sing (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1972)

The Whole World is in God’s Hands

Public domain.

Make up your own verses to this, using vegetables and fruits.

R VBS Snacks Guide

To the snack preparers: Our theme this year is God's abundant and, often unexpected, welcome. Abundance. Our char d participants of all ages will consider physical and spiritual hungers during the course of the week, using New Testament stories about food and hunger.

- 1 Breakfast**
Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples on the beach (*John 21:1-13*)
- 2 Lunch**
Jesus eats lunch with a tax collector (*Luke 19:1-10*)
- 3 Dinner**
Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends (*Luke 10:38-42*)
- 4 Midnight Snack**
Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor (*Luke 11:5-13*)
- 5 Party!**
Jesus tells a story about a big party (*Luke 14:15-23*)

The mission focus for VBS is the Society of St. Andrew (www.endhunger.org), a faith-based nonprofit that engages children, young people, women, and men in hands-on mission, gleaning (picking, digging, or gathering) fresh fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry.



Each day, have available slices or pieces of a raw (or cooked) vegetable and a fruit. Try to make one of these something that would be familiar to most of those attending your VBS and make the other something that is a 'stretch'—something that may be new or different. Over the course of your 4-5 day VBS, offer 8-10 vegetable and fruit choices, so that the options are different each day.

The snack suggestions that follow come from the day's Bible story and reflect either in ingredients or intent the food described in the story and should be offered in addition to the fruits and vegetables described above.

Stewardship Suggestions:



In general, make stewardship of both the earth's and the congregation's resources a priority. Please try to limit the disposable items you use for snacktime. If at all possible, use washable cutlery, plates, napkins, and cups. Try to avoid the use of Styrofoam.

Consider children's home situations, and if feasible, encourage each child to bring a water bottle with their name on it to use during VBS.



Make sure that you have a plan for leftover food each day, so that nothing goes to waste. (Food banks and pantries are usually not able to accept prepared foods that do not come from commercial kitchens, but verify this with your local feeding programs.)

1

Breakfast

John 21:1-13

Jesus prepares breakfast for his disciples on the beach.

Verse: I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you.
(Romans 1:8)

Drink: water or grape juice

Food: pancakes or biscuits

Option: broiled fish; enough for each child to have several bites

2

Lunch

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus has lunch with a tax collector.

Verse: Love your neighbor as yourself.
(Mark 12:31)

Drink: milk, water, cool herbal or decaffeinated tea with mint

Food: pita triangles with a cucumber-yogurt dip, veggie cream cheese, or hummus

3

Dinner

Luke 10:38-42

Jesus has dinner at the home of his friends.

Verse: Live in harmony with one another.
(Romans 12:16)

Drink: milk, water, cranberry-pomegranate juice

Food: lentil or mixed bean soup with matzoh crackers

4

Midnight Snack

Luke 11:5-13

Jesus tells a story about a midnight visitor.

Verse: Welcome one another, as Christ has welcomed you.
(Romans 15:7)

Drink: water

Food: bread of several varieties, perhaps from several different cultures
(**Coordinate this snack with craft leaders, as bread making is one day's suggested craft activity.**)

5

Party!

Luke 14:15-23

Jesus tells a story about a big party.

Verse: Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.
(1 Corinthians 10:31)

Drink: white grape juice, carbonated water

Food: variety of fruits and vegetables, breads, and cheeses or meats
bread pudding, rice pudding, or tapioca



Recreation Guide

To the recreation leader: Our theme this year is God’s abundant and, often unexpected, welcome. Abundance Or char d participants of all ages will consider physical and spiritual hungers during the course of the week, using New Testament stories about food and hunger.

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- 5 Party!**
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The mission focus for VBS is the Society of St. Andrew (www.endhunger.org), a faith-based nonprofit that engages children, young people, women, and men in hands-on mission, gleaning (picking, digging, or gathering) fresh fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry.

Stewardship Suggestion:



Out of respect for those in our world—and our midst—who live daily with hunger, do not use real food in games or crafts unless the food will be eaten.



Preparation:

Four to six weeks before your Vacation Bible School, seek out persons with sewing skills in your congregation, and ask them to make “Pantyhose Potatoes” for use in your VBS games.

Depending on the size of your VBS and the games you intend to play, you may want two dozen or more of these potatoes.

Here is a step-by-step tutorial for making Pantyhose Potatoes:

<http://www.ikatbag.com/2009/02/how-to-make-pantyhose-potatoes.html>

Recreation Ideas:

Gardening

If your congregation has an on-site garden or if there is a nearby community garden, you might choose gardening as your recreational activity one day of VBS.

Fruit Basket Turnover

http://thisishowyouplay.org/wiki/Fruit_basket_turnover

Tomato, Tomato, Onion

(Duck, Duck, Goose using vegetable names)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duck,_duck,_goose

Hot Potato

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hot_potato_%28game%29

Potato Toss

Children stand in a circle and toss a pantyhose potato. The person who catches the potato must name a fruit or vegetable and quickly toss the potato to someone else.

Capture the Spud

(Capture the Flag, using pantyhose potatoes)

<http://www.wikihow.com/Play-Capture-the-Flag>

Steal the Spud

(Steal the Bacon, using pantyhose potatoes)

<http://spoonful.com/family-fun/steal-bacon-game>

Potato Hunt

For younger children. Hide pantyhose potatoes in the churchyard or play area, then give children a mesh bag and ask them to hunt for the potatoes. Variations: Hide a potato in the play area. (Society of St. Andrew volunteers glean – pick, dig, or gather – fruits and vegetables and place them in mesh bags. The mesh bags are weighed and taken to a food bank or food pantry, so the good food can be shared with hungry people.)

I Spy / Elf on the Shelf

Hide a pantyhose potato in a different spot each day of VBS and invite the children to look for it. You might choose to offer a prize for the first child to spot the potato each day, but this is not necessary.

Potato Pickup Relay

Divide the group into two or more teams. Each person on the team must complete a task: travel (walk, run, skip, hop, roll) to a distant point (50 feet or so), fill a plate with pantyhose potatoes and circle back to the start with the potatoes still on the plate. At the start, they pick up the next person in the line and, holding the plate together, return to the distant point, where the first person drops off and the second continues alone back to the start, with the potatoes to pick up the third person, etc.

Potato Relay Variants

- Children push the potato with their nose along the ground.
- Children pass the spud under their chins or in the crooks of their elbows.

J Arts & Crafts Guide

To the arts and crafts leader: Our theme this year is God's abundant and, often unexpected, welcome. Abundance Or char d participants of all ages will consider physical and spiritual hungers during the course of the week, using New Testament stories about food and hunger.

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Jesus tells a story about a big party (*Luke 14:15-23*)

The mission focus for VBS is the Society of St. Andrew (www.endhunger.org), a faith-based nonprofit that engages children, young people, women, and men in hands-on mission, gleaning (picking, digging, or gathering) fresh fruits and vegetables to feed the hungry.

Stewardship Suggestion:



Out of respect for those in our world—and our midst—who live daily with hunger, do not use real food in games or crafts unless the food will be eaten.

An Arts & Crafts supplies checklist is included on the next pages, to make your shopping and preparation easier.

Plan on covering tables with plastic drop cloths or table cloths that can stay in place throughout the week. Add newsprint each day, as needed to keep table surfaces intact. Old button-up men's shirts make excellent art smocks, useful for keeping kids paint & mess free. Plan to have as many shirts as you have children in your largest group or class.

Supplies Checklist – VBS Arts & Crafts

VBS Quilts (Optional Week-Long Project)

On Hand

Purchase

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 8" x 8" quilt patterns for each day (Reproducibles section) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Copier paper or, BETTER , cardstock (4 sheets per child) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple colors of construction paper |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> OR Several rolls (partially used is fine) of wrapping paper |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 22" x 28" tagboard (1 sheet per child)
[Also called railroad board or poster board] |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils, several |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Gluesticks (1 per child) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> OR Papier maché or decoupage paste |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Meat trays or pie pans, 1-2 per children's worktable |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponge applicator paint brushes, ½" or 1" brush width
(1 per child in art center) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Double-stick tape |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> OR Brass brads (8 per child) |

Water Bottle Labels

On Hand

Purchase

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> ½ liter (16.9 oz) bottled water, sealed (2-3 bottles per child) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Copier paper, cut in 2½" x 8 ½" pieces (2-3 pieces per child)
Consider pre-printing each label piece with a small note saying, " <i>Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church in Anytown, USA.</i> " Leave plenty of room on the label for the children's drawings, though. |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Crayons |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Double-stick tape, at least 2 rolls |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Ice chests & bagged ice (if children will distribute water) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> OR Copier-paper sized cardboard boxes (1 per case of water) |

Friendship Bracelets

ON HAND PURCHASE

- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic drinking straws, variety of shapes, diameters, and colors (6-8 per child) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Metallic elastic cording (About 2 yards for each preschool – Grade 2 child; about 8 yards for each older child)
[Papermart.com: 50 yard roll = \$5.50] |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 12" chenille stems (pipe cleaners)
[Michael's: Pkg. of 250 multicolored chenille stems = \$7.99] |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors, one pair per older elementary child |

Table Trivets—OPTION 1

ON HAND PURCHASE

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal paint can lids (from latex paint cans only, with paint completely cleaned off) or flexible plastic lids from food containers (coffee, shortening, or sugar container lids will work well); 1 per child |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Permanent markers, a few |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Masking tape, one or two rolls |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Plaster of Paris powder ("Kid" version at Walmart, 8 lbs = \$3.00) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 gallon utility bucket |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Wooden paint stirrers (a few, for stirring and leveling) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Translucent colored floral marbles, several colors
[Walmart, \$4.77/40 oz.] |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Powdered tempera paint or liquid acrylic paint (one color) for coloring Plaster of Paris while mixing it, if desired |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Felt or cork sheets or circles, to pad trivet bottoms |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> White glue ("school" or Elmer's type) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Small wire brush, one or two |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear acrylic fixative spray |

Table Trivets—OPTION 2

ON HAND PURCHASE

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> 4" or 6" glazed ceramic tile, 1 per child (about 25¢ at home improvement stores; look for open boxed or remaindered tiles) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun foam sheets (2-3 total) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Wine bottle corks (2 dozen or so) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Good adult scissors (1-2 pairs) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Hot glue gun with glue sticks |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Metal pie tins, several |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Absorbent paper towels, one roll |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Liquid acrylic craft paint in several colors (88¢/bottle at Walmart) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Felt or cork sheets or circles, to pad trivet bottoms |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> White glue ("school" or Elmer's type) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear acrylic fixative spray |

Bread Baking

ON HAND PURCHASE

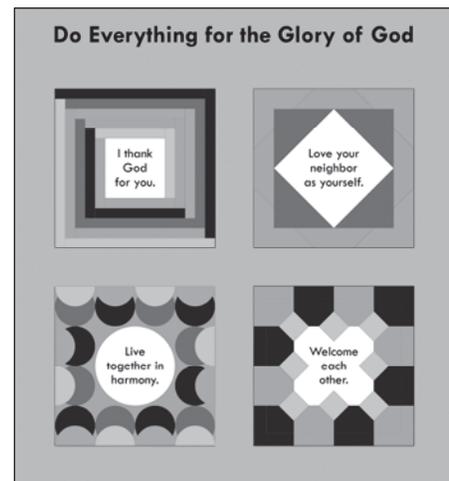
- | | | |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Glovies (disposable child-size food safe gloves)
[Pkg of 100 gloves = \$11.00 at Amazon] |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Bread doughs and bread ingredients, for a variety of quick and yeast bread (see project instructions) |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Baking sheets, pie pans, muffin tins, etc. |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> POSSIBLY: crockpot, deep fryer, tortilla maker, pancake griddle |
| _____ | _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> USEFUL: parchment paper (1-2 rolls) |

VBS Quilts: Optional Week-long Project

Cost: 56¢ per child (large tagboard for quilt background)

The optional quilt project provides a way for each child to have a lasting remembrance of their VBS week; each day they will add a quilt square featuring the day's Bible verse. This project is most appropriate for Grades 2-6.

Another option, if you like the idea, but don't wish to have children create the project, is to ask a quilter in your congregation to actually sew the four quilt squares out of fabric. The verses can be embroidered by machine or by hand, or added with computer-printed iron-on transfers. Add a new quilt square to a banner-type background each day during your gathering time, as you teach the day's Bible verse. This VBS quilt-banner can hang in your church building as a long-lasting reminder of the week.



Additional options would be:

- Substitute making just one of the days' quilt squares on a day where the other craft suggestions don't thrill you. Have the children color the design, stamp it, or use sand art instead of construction paper/wrapping paper.
- Choose the simplest pattern and have the children re-create it as a "stained glass" window. See the Society of St. Andrew's VBS Pinterest board for detailed instructions.
- Create the quilt in a much larger version in sidewalk chalk outside the church building. Draw outlines and write the day's verse in advance, and invite the children to fill in the quilt pattern.

Supplies:

- 8" x 8" quilt patterns for each day, photocopied onto copier paper or (better) cardstock (see Reproducibles section for patterns); one per child per day
- Multiple colors of construction paper or wrapping paper
- One piece of brightly colored 22" x 28" tagboard (also called poster board or railroad board) per child
- Pencils (several), for writing names on pattern sheets
- Glue sticks (at least one per child) – if quilt shapes are cut from construction paper OR
- Papier-maché or découpage paste (and art smocks or shirts!) – if quilt shapes are cut from wrapping paper. ***You'll need cardboard or cardstock 8" squares for the quilt block backgrounds to handle the moisture and weight of the paste.***
- Pie tins (for papier-maché or découpage paste), 1-2 per group of children
- Foam brushes (for use with paste), 1 per child
- Double stick tape OR (better) brass brads for attaching quilt squares to background at the final craft session

Advance Preparation:

Make one complete quilt for display and demonstration.

Pre-cut the following shapes from construction paper or wrapping paper:

½" x 7½" (20 strips per child) – Day 1

3" squares, cut in half on the diagonal (8 triangles per child) – Day 2

2" circles (12 per child); 2" circles cut in half (12 semicircles per child) – Day 3

2" squares (12 per child); 1" squares (8 per child) – Day 4

If children will be using papier-maché or découpage paste, make a clean-up plan, for getting children quickly to running water and washing hands without dirtying walls or clothing.

Craft Activity

1. Explain activity and its purpose to the children: *All week long at Vacation Bible School, you will be learning about people Jesus welcomed and people who welcomed others. Every day we will be learning special welcome verses from the Bible to go along with our stories. Each of you will make a quilt with a special square to help you remember each day of VBS and the Bible verse you learned.*
2. Help children put on smocks, paint shirts, or aprons, if you will be using them.
3. Show children the day's quilt square, reading the verse with them. Look at the design together, and show them the construction paper or wrapping paper pieces they will be using to make their quilt square. Show a photocopied sheet for the day, and help them see the shapes in the pattern.
4. Explain and demonstrate the process children will use to attach construction paper or wrapping paper to their pattern sheet (gluestick or paste, with foam brushes).
5. Assist children in selecting construction paper/wrapping paper shapes for the day, telling them how many to choose and inviting them to select a variety of colors.
6. Have each child write his/her name on the back of their 8" pattern before beginning to attach paper pieces!
7. Put completed quilt squares aside, on a shower curtain or plastic sheet (if you've used paste and they need to dry.)

Water Bottle Labels

Cost per label: free, with materials on hand

Cost for bottled water: about \$2.99 for 24 .5-liter bottles

While bottled water is not environmentally friendly, it can be life-saving for homeless individuals or outdoor laborers during the heat of summer. Children will create "welcome" labels to paste or tape on half-liter bottled water. These bottles will be shared, through an agency serving homeless persons in the community or at a park or on a street corner. Consider who might need bottled water most and how you might share it with



them. If it is not appropriate for VBS children to be involved directly in water distribution, ask someone who will be involved (a member of your congregation or a representative from the shelter, soup kitchen, or agency to come to your VBS' opening or closing session to receive the water bottles and say a few words about the individuals and families the agency serves.

Supplies:

- Bottled water (sealed); plan on an equivalent of 2-3 bottles per child
- Copier paper, cut in 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces; 2-3 per child (consider pre-printing each label piece with a small note saying, "Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church in Anytown, USA." Leave plenty of room on the label for the children's drawings, though!)
- Crayons
- Double-stick tape (possibly 2 rolls)
- Ice chests & bagged ice (if children will distribute bottles) OR
- Cardboard boxes (copier paper size) to hold labeled bottles for transport to agency

Advance Preparation:

Several weeks before VBS begins, consult your congregation's Mission/ Outreach team and ask their help in identifying a population that might benefit from a bottle of water on a hot summer day and an agency or means of distributing bottled water to them. Speak with an agency staff member or the person who will be in charge of distributing the bottled water, telling them about the project and inviting them to greet your VBS children on the day they'll be making the bottle labels.

NOTE: Leave the original water bottle labels on the bottles, placing the labels made by the children on top of the original labels. This is a precaution, since many food banks and food pantries require food to be in original packaging, for traceability.

NOTE: For safety reasons, be sure that you tell children NOT to write their last names on the labels they decorate.

NOTE: Don't use glitter, glue, or washable markers on these labels. Glitter will make the bottles uncomfortable to handle; both glitter and markers will rub off on the hands of the person drinking the water.

Craft Activity:

1. Explain the craft to the children.

This week we are talking about caring for others and making them feel welcome. Because it is summer, it is very hot outside nearly every day. People who are homeless or who work out of doors need extra water to keep them healthy in hot weather. We are going to provide bottled water to help people keep cool on hot summer days. [Explain about agency/process by which bottles will be distributed and who the recipients will be.]

We will be adding a special label to each water bottle that we share. You might want to write a Bible verse on the label or draw a design or a picture, something that shares happiness and love with the person who will drink the water in the bottle.

2. Show the children the labels you have pre-cut and read with them whatever message you have pre-printed on them. Invite the children to sit at craft tables and color the labels as they wish; announce how many labels each child may decorate.
3. Have adults and helpers circulate as children decorate the labels, using double stick tape to attach completed labels to bottles of water.
4. If children will be distributing water at a local park or on a street corner, have them put labeled bottles into an ice chest, with ice to cool the water before distribution. Otherwise, put labeled water bottles into cardboard boxes (copier paper size) for transportation to food bank, food pantry, or shelter.

Friendship Bracelets

Cost per bracelet: 3¢ (for 9" of elastic cording)

The week's focus on welcoming others, sharing joy, and being friends & neighbors, lends itself to making friendship bracelets, each as unique as its maker and shared with others. Children can make several, with instructions to share them.

Supplies:

- Plastic drinking straws (ask members of the congregation to save these for several weeks prior to VBS, so you have a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors available.
- Metallic elastic cording (50 yard roll available in a variety of colors for \$5.50 from Papermart; many other stores sell this cording at similar prices)
- (Optional) 12" chenille stems (Pack of 250, multicolored, \$7.99 @ Michael's)
- Scissors (one pair per child for older classes)



Advance Preparation:

For preschool and kindergarten classes, cut straws into a variety of lengths, none more than about 1½" long.

Cut elastic cording into 9" pieces, 3-5 pieces per child for preschool and kindergarten classes. Some children will be able to make only one bracelet, others will make several.

Make a few sample bracelets. Preschool and kindergarten children will simply string the beads onto the cording, with adults tying the ends. Elementary children may wish to try a more complicated beading strategy (see second illustration, above),

which will take more cording. Make one or two, so you can show the design & process, and so you'll know how much cording those bracelets will take.

***NOTE: Some children, particularly preschoolers, may not be able to work with the flexibility of the elastic cording. You may ALSO want to have long chenille stems (pipe cleaners) available for stringing the straw beads onto. BE SURE an adult fastens the stem ends and that the ends are tucked inside a straw bead, so that the wire doesn't poke a small wrist!

Craft Activity:

1. Explain the project and its purpose to the children.

This week we are talking about how Jesus welcomes everyone and is glad to see them, spend time with them, and eat meals with them. Today we are going to make friendship bracelets to wear and share, as a sign of our friendship and God's welcome.

After you have finished, exchange ONE bracelet with someone who is a good friend. Exchange ONE bracelet with someone you've met for the first time this week. Exchange ONE bracelet with someone who is older than you are. Exchange ONE bracelet with someone who is younger than you are. You may not make four bracelets. That's okay. Keep exchanging bracelets, though, because as you give bracelets to other children, they will give them to you!

2. Age Level Instructions

Preschool – Grade 2: Demonstrate stringing pre-cut beads onto elastic cording and/or chenille stems.

Middle – Older Elementary: Offer a few ideas for how beads might be strung onto elastic cording, then invite children to cut straws for the bracelets they will make. Pieces may need to be the same size for certain beading strategies to work (see second illustration, opposite).

Remind all children to share the bracelets they've made. Describe the sharing plan (above) again, after bracelet making is complete and before children leave the craft area.

Table Trivets

*Cost per trivet: 40¢ - 60¢ each, plaster of paris
25¢ each, 4" glazed tiles*

These decorative trivets can be used at mealtimes as a way of remembering God's "welcome table" and this week of Vacation Bible School.

Supplies:

OPTION 1: Plaster of Paris

- Metal paint can lids (with latex paint completely cleaned off!) or flexible plastic lids from food containers (approx. ¼" - 3/8" deep, and 4" – 6" diameter); one per child



****Large plastic coffee, shortening, or sugar container lids will work well*

- Permanent markers (for putting names on projects)
- Masking tape
- Plaster of Paris powder (“Kid” version at Walmart, 8 lbs./\$3.00. Plan on about 1 pound per child.)
- 2-5 gallon utility bucket, for mixing Plaster of Paris powder with water
- Protective dusk mask(s) for those mixing the Plaster of Paris
- Wooden paint stirrers (a few, for stirring and leveling)
- Translucent colored floral marbles, several colors (Walmart, \$4.77/40 oz.)
- Powdered tempera paint or liquid acrylic paint (for coloring Plaster of Paris while mixing), if desired
- Felt or cork, for trivet bottom
- White glue (“school” or Elmer’s type)
- Wire brush
- Clear acrylic fixative spray

OPTION 2: Glazed Tiles

- 4” or 6” glazed ceramic tile, 1 per child (home improvement store, about 25¢ each)
- Shape stamps (prepared in advance)
 - Fun foam sheets, 2-3
 - Wine bottle corks
 - Scissors
 - Hot glue gun
- Metal pie tins
- Absorbent paper towels (one roll)
- Liquid acrylic paint in several colors (88¢/bottle at Walmart)
- Felt or cork, for trivet bottom
- White glue (“school” or Elmer’s type)
- Clear acrylic fixative spray
- Newsprint
- Marker, masking tape

Advance Preparation:

Read all instructions and decide which option you wish to pursue (or whether you want younger classes to make one type of trivet and older classes to make the other).

OPTION 1: Ask members of congregation to save latex paint can lids or flexible plastic food lids (give examples of the type of lid that is the size you need when you put out the request). Emphasize that all donated lids need to be clean and free from paint or food.

1. Make a sample trivet or two, to get an idea of how the project will work and what the setting time is on the Plaster of Paris you’ll be using.
2. Prepare the Plaster of Paris mix according to package directions, then spoon or pour it into the form (metal or plastic lid) you’ve selected.
3. Use a paint stirrer to level the surface, then *gently* tap the plaster-filled form on a table top to bring air bubbles to the surface.

4. Press colored floral marbles into the Plaster of Paris quickly, before it sets, in a pleasing pattern or combination.
5. Use a flat board, cookie sheet, book, or other object to press down on the floral marbles and create a level trivet surface. Allow Plaster of Paris to dry.
6. When dry, leave metal form (paint can lid) on the bottom of the trivet, remove plastic form (food lid).
7. Use wire brush to gently brush excess plaster off sides and tops of marbles
8. Put cork or felt “feet” on the bottom of the trivet, and spray fixative on the top. Allow to dry overnight.



OPTION 2: Prepare shape stamps. Cut shapes (example: fish, star, heart, cross; several of each) out of fun foam. Glue each shape to the end of a wine cork. (Be careful with hot glue gun – it can melt the fun foam!)

Make a sample trivet:

1. Pour acrylic paint into a metal pie tin, lined with an absorbent paper towel. Use several colors of paint in different containers, if desired.
2. Dip a paint stamper you’ve made into one color of paint, then stamp onto the glazed tile.
(When children do this, they may need to practice stamping on newsprint, before stamping on tile.)
3. Repeat until you’re happy with the result, using additional shapes and colors.
4. Allow to dry. Add felt or cork feet to the bottom and spray fixative on the top.

NOTE: Concerned about mess? Permanent markers can be substituted for the entire paint/stamping process. You’ll want alcohol prep pads on hand to clean children’s hands after using permanent markers, though. Spray fixative on tile after using permanent markers, also.

Craft Activity:

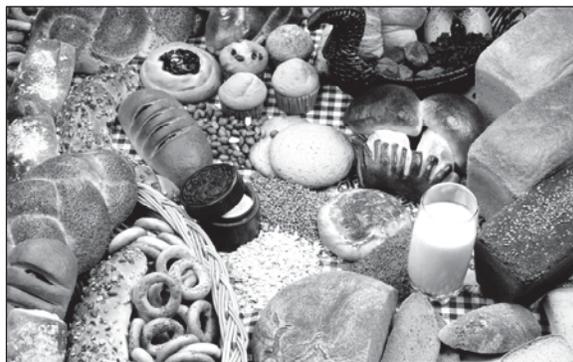
1. Explain the project and its purpose to the children: *Often when we have a meal, there is a food that is quite hot, maybe one that has just come out of the oven. To protect our table and to help keep our family and friends from getting burned on the hot dish, we may put it on a trivet. A trivet is just something that sits between the dish and the table. Today we are going to make trivets that you can take home, as a reminder of the mealtimes that you are learning about this week at Vacation Bible School.*
2. Show a completed trivet and the various materials that you used to make the trivet. If you are making Plaster of Paris trivets, have another adult or a teen helper mix the Plaster of Paris as you describe the project.
3. Explain the steps.
4. Have children affix their names (marker on masking tape) to the bottom of their trivet project before beginning paint stamping or adding plaster.

5. Assist children as needed in making or paint stamping their trivets.
6. After children have left the crafts area, have an adult or teen helper make sure the surface of Plaster of Paris trivets is flat. When all paint and plaster is dry, take the trivets to a well-ventilated area (preferably out of doors) and have an adult spray clear fixative over the top surfaces of all trivets.
7. Glue cork or felt to the bottom (or corners only) of each trivet, to protect table surfaces at home.

Bread Baking

Cost: 25/child for disposable gloves

Many of this week's stories involve bread, eaten and shared with friends, strangers, and Jesus. Set up one or more bread making stations in your kitchen or crafts area, where children can be involved in preparing bread that they may eat, take home, or share at an end-of-week celebration.



Supplies:

- Bread doughs and bread ingredients, for a variety of quick and yeast breads
- Baking sheets
- Possibly: crockpot, deep fryer, tortilla maker, pancake griddle
- Glovies (disposable food safe gloves for children: Amazon, \$11.99/100 gloves)

Advance Preparation:

Work with bread makers in your congregation, perhaps from several different cultures, to determine breads that children can be involved in making, from kneading a yeast bread (youngest children), to adding ingredients to a quick bread, to making drop biscuits, barley cakes or pancakes, churros, naan, tortillas, etc.

Depending on the size of your groups, plan on up to four breadmaking stations. Decide whether children will be able to rotate between the breadmaking stations during craft time, or whether they will be assigned a single station for the entire time block.

Invite bread makers to lead the children in this activity and talk with them about when this bread is eaten in the bread maker's home or culture. If the particular bread being made needs to rise or will have a long bake time, have samples of the bread prepared in advance, so that children can try it after they help make it.

Could some of the bread made by the children today be used in a closing communion celebration or at the communion meal during the congregation's next worship service?



Make a plan for Food Allergy Awareness:

Send home a note on the first day of VBS and ask your greeters to ask parents about food allergies as children arrive on the first day. It may be most effective to say, “On Thursday, we will be making breads during our craft time. Does your child have any allergies we need to know about?”

If any children are allergic to gluten, be sure you have at least one gluten-free bread option available to use with the class(es)/group(s) gluten sensitive children are in. (Don’t single out the child with allergies; rather adapt the activity for his/her whole group.)

Craft Activity:

1. Explain the project and its purpose to the children: *This week, we’ve learned a lot about people in the New Testament who shared meals with friends or who asked friends for help with meals. In every meal we’ve talked about this week, bread plays a very important part. Today we will be making different kinds of bread.*
2. Introduce the breadmaking stations and the breadmakers who will lead the day’s activities. Explain to children what they will do and how they will know where to go to take part.
3. Have children wash hands for food safety, then don disposable gloves. When they finish breadmaking, they should take off the gloves, then wash hands again.
4. Do not allow children to eat raw dough.



Patterns and Reproducibles

The following pages contain patterns and reproducibles
for **Abundance Orchard, Year 2**

- Scenery backdrop pattern – country
- Scenery backdrop pattern – city or town
- Reproducible quilt patterns (set of 4)
- Reproducible water bottle labels
- Reproducible Society of St. Andrew flyer (one sheet per participating family)
- Reproducible Society of St. Andrew pictograph story (one sheet per child in Preschool – Gr. 2)

White Cloud

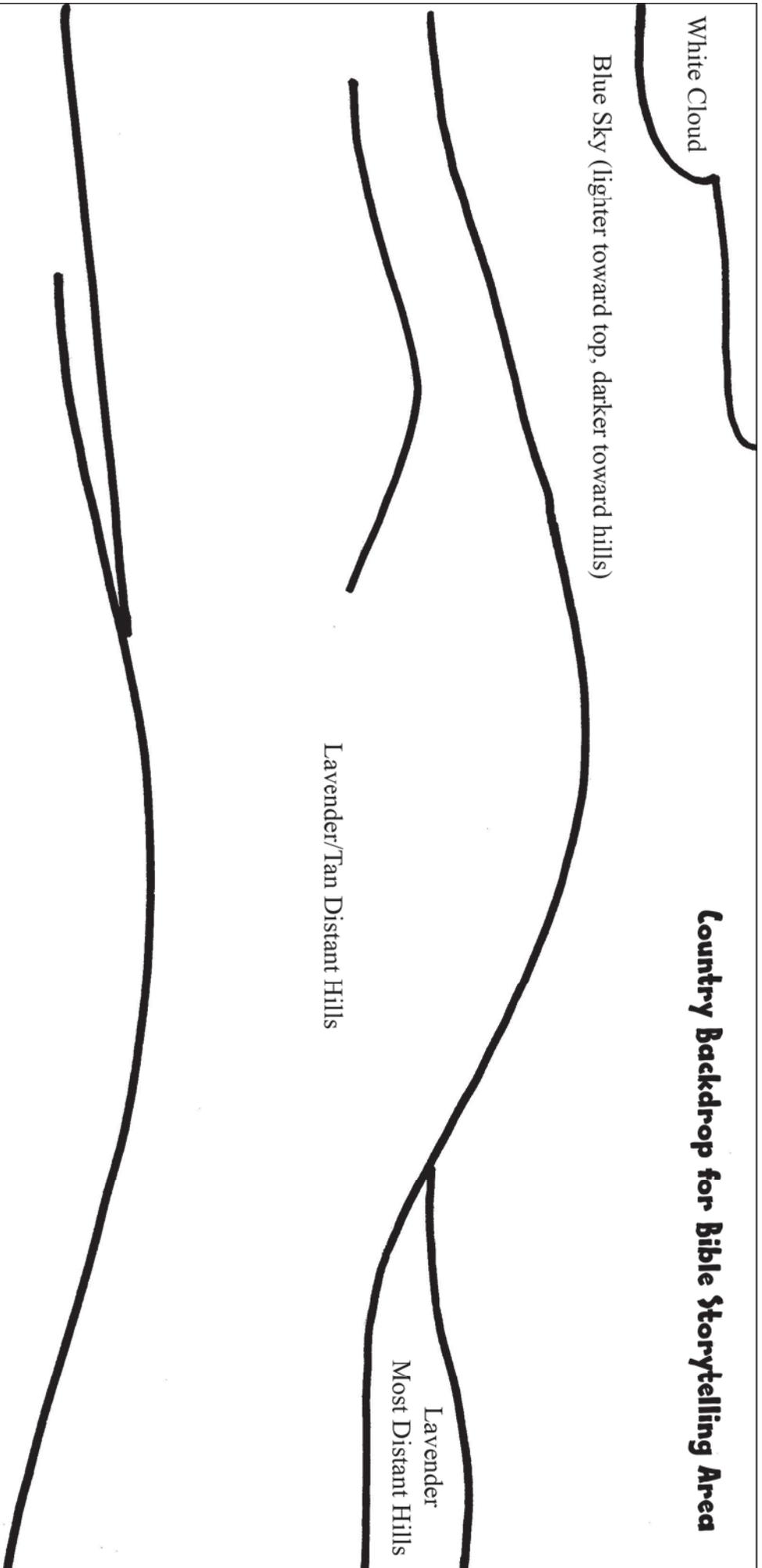
Blue Sky (lighter toward top, darker toward hills)

Lavender/Tan Distant Hills

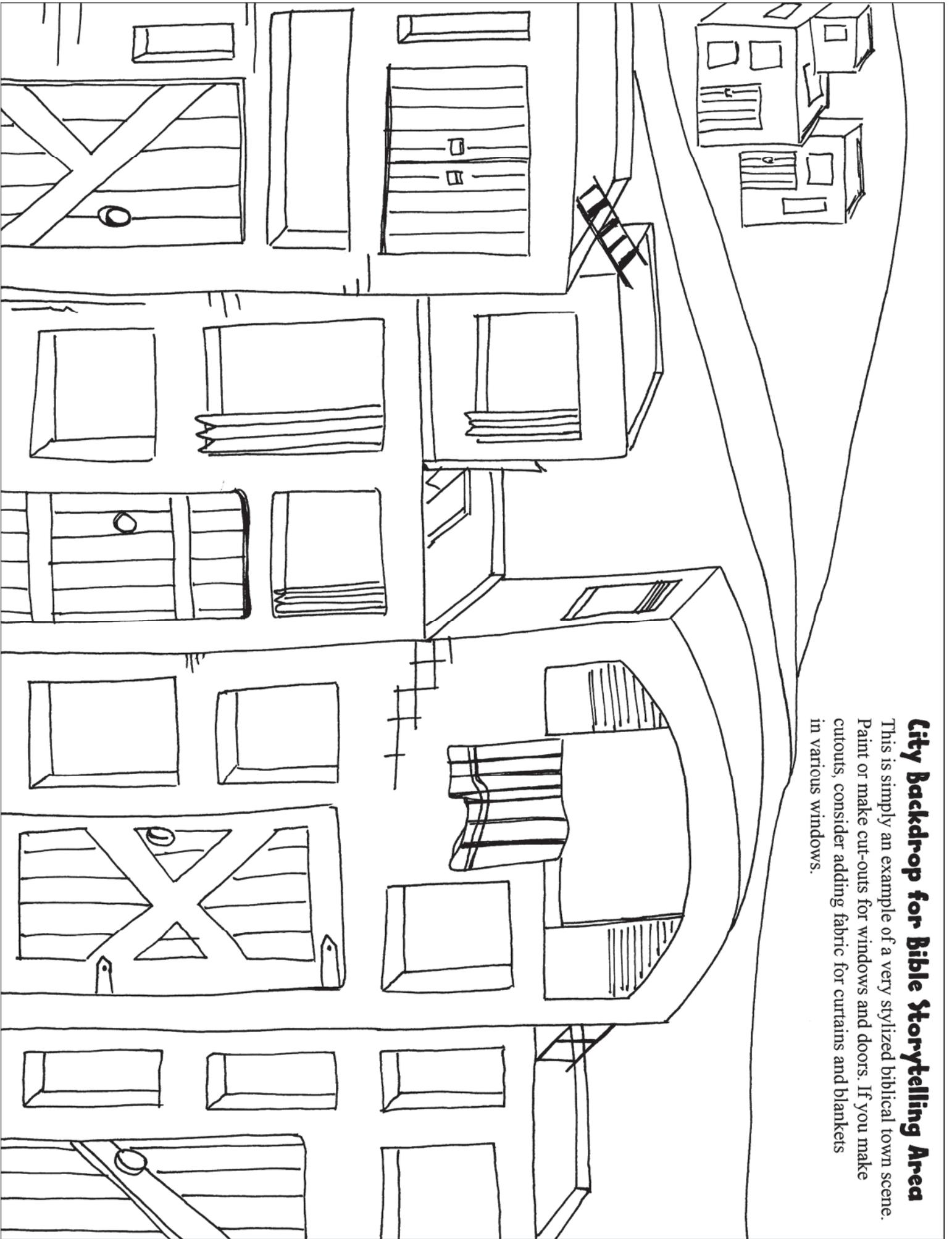
Lavender
Most Distant Hills

Tan/Gray Foreground

Country Backdrop for Bible Storytelling Area



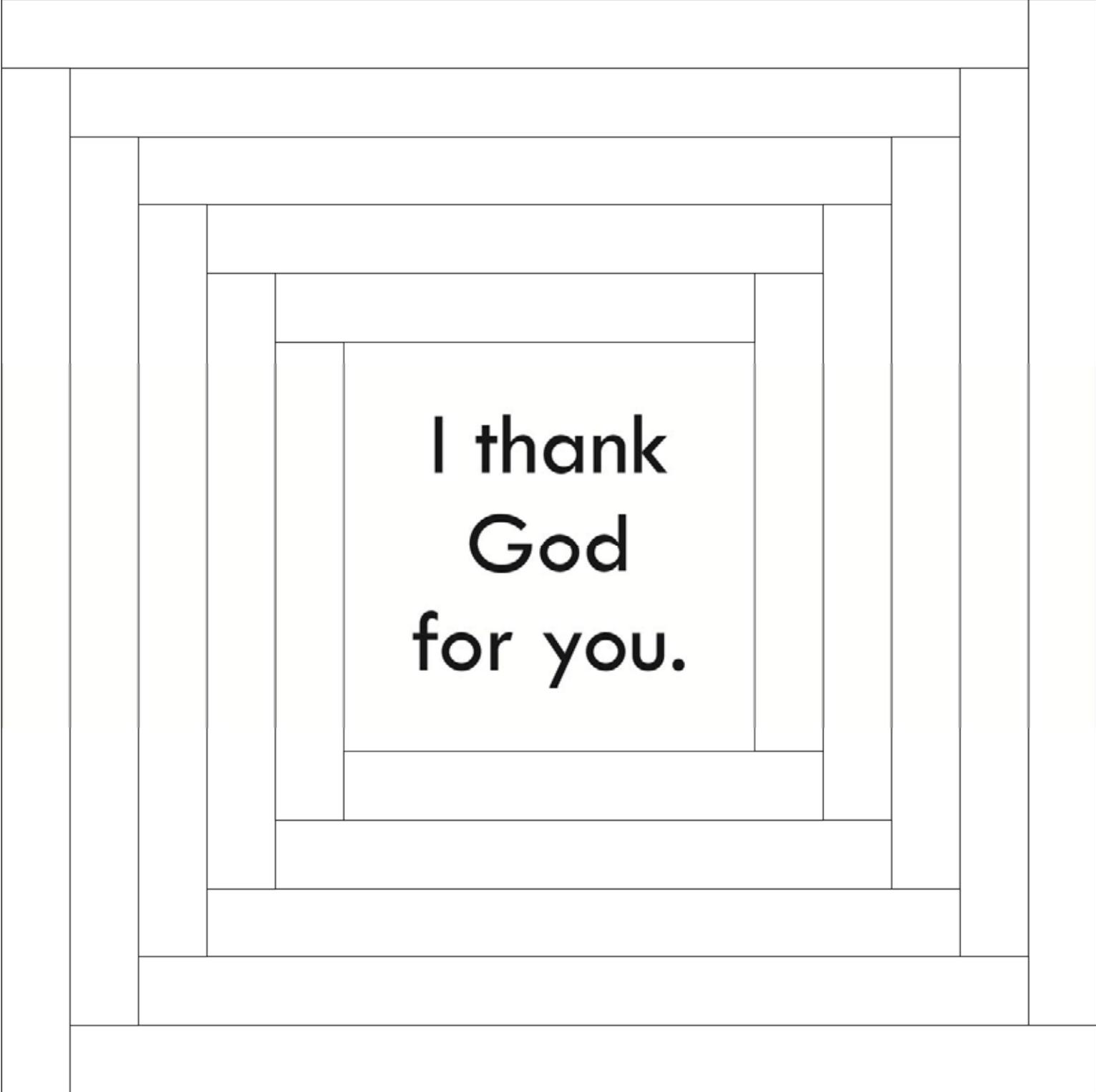
<-- Gray/Brown/Green Scrub Brush -->



City Backdrop for Bible Storytelling Area

This is simply an example of a very stylized biblical town scene. Paint or make cut-outs for windows and doors. If you make cutouts, consider adding fabric for curtains and blankets in various windows.

Quilt Pattern 1



I thank
God
for you.

The image shows a quilt pattern diagram consisting of a central square containing the text "I thank God for you." This central square is surrounded by a series of concentric rectangular borders. The borders are composed of various sized rectangular blocks, creating a stepped, architectural appearance. The entire design is enclosed within a thin black border.

Quilt Pattern 2

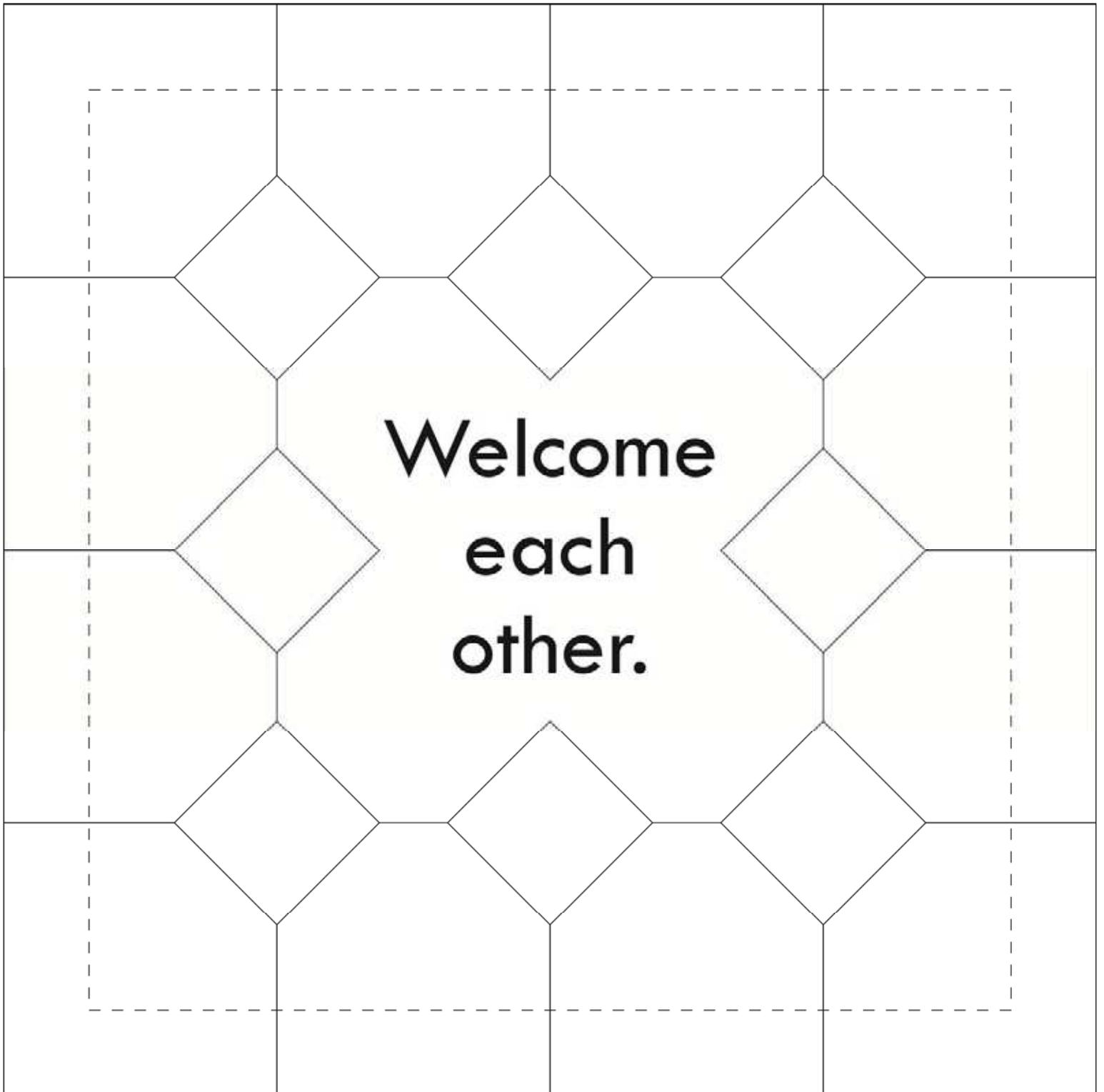


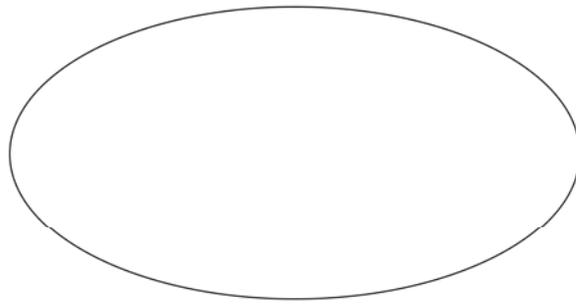
**Love your
neighbor
as yourself.**



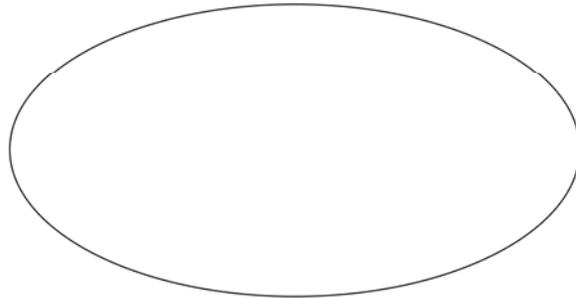
**Live
together in
harmony.**

Quilt Pattern 4

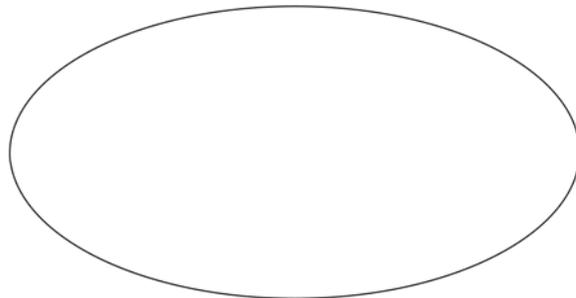




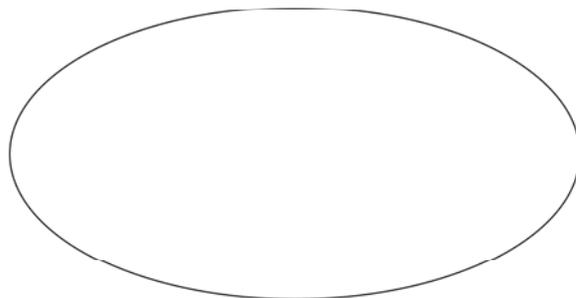
Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church — Anytown, USA



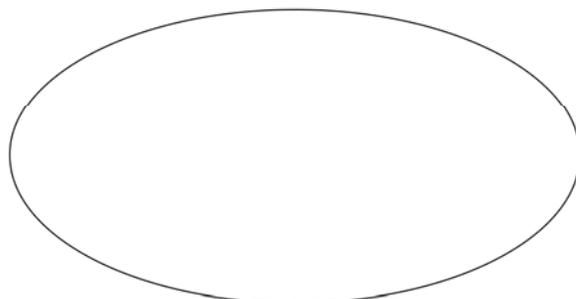
Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church — Anytown, USA



Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church — Anytown, USA



Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church — Anytown, USA



Shared with love by the children of XYZ Church — Anytown, USA

Volunteers of all ages work together to get healthy food to hungry people.



Society of St. Andrew

**GLEANNING AMERICA'S FIELDS
FEEDING AMERICA'S HUNGRY**

You can prevent waste & feed the hungry. It costs just 2¢ a serving

Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) addresses this crucial issue in two ways. In each, SoSA gathers up food that would otherwise be wasted. This fresh and nutritious food is then provided, at no cost, to food banks, pantries, and programs that feed or provide food to those most in need:

In the fields – SoSA mobilizes 30,000 to 40,000 volunteers each year to glean fields and orchards for remaining fruits and vegetables. Volunteers from all faith groups, civic organizations, schools, and universities gather food remaining after the harvest.

At the packing houses – food that is surplus, inconvenient size, or cosmetically imperfect, is transported by SoSA to agencies that feed the hungry. Otherwise, this food would have been sent to a landfill as waste.

Last year, the Society of St. Andrew shared 86.5 million servings of nourishing food.



The Best Food to Those Who Need it Most

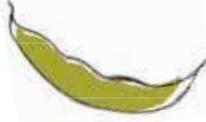
SoSA began in 1979 in the hills of Virginia and has grown into the largest field gleaning organization in the country. Working in a collaborative effort with thousands of farmers, tens of thousands of volunteers, and thousands of feeding programs in all 48 contiguous states, SoSA provides healthy food to those who have little or no access to it.

This nutritious, but excess, bounty is sent directly from the point of surplus (field or packing facility) to where it will be used, and is not stored in a warehouse. These remarkable and efficient programs have proven extremely successful at providing nutritious food to those who need it most.

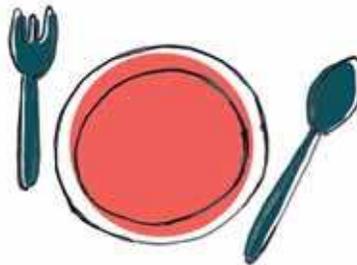
Your gifts make it possible!

www.EndHunger.org



We're in a  . There's  enough
food in the world to feed  the hungry,
but it's  hard to get the food to them.

We need your help to  hunger.



The Society of St. Andrew works to get excess food from farmers onto the plates of those in need. You can help through gleaning local farms, participating in food drops, or delivering food to shelters.
www.endhunger.org

Contact Us

3383 Sweet Hollow Rd.
Big Island, VA 24526-8517
800-333-4597

Designed by: Rachel Botts Schoenholz



Farmer Brown

After he retired from the game, former NFL football player Jason Brown wanted to make a difference in people's lives. He spent a lot of time thinking about ways that he could help people in need. Finally he decided that he would become a farmer and raise vegetables to share with hungry families.

Most farmers go to school to learn how to be farmers or they learn from their parents or grandparents who are farmers, too. But Mr. Brown learned how to farm in a modern way: he watched YouTube videos that offered good advice!

He planted acres and acres of sweet potatoes that could provide healthy vitamins and minerals for hungry children, young people and adults. But when his crops were grown, Mr. Brown needed help. He couldn't harvest all those sweet potatoes himself—there were just too many!

So Mr. Brown called the Society of St. Andrew, and Mrs. Page from the Society of St. Andrew was ready, with just the help Mr. Brown needed. Mrs. Page found hundreds of volunteers to come to Mr. Brown's farm, to dig and bag up the sweet potatoes Mr. Brown grew.

Then Mrs. Page talked to people who work at soup kitchens and shelters, food banks and food pantries. She asked them if they would like to have some of Mr. Brown's wonderful sweet potatoes to feed their hungry guests. Of course they would!

As long as there were sweet potatoes to glean, Mrs. Page and Mr. Brown worked together with the volunteers and the soup kitchens, food pantries, and other agencies to get the good food to the people who needed it most.

Because Jason Brown cared enough to do something about hunger, thousands of people have already enjoyed healthy food. And next year? Mr. Brown is planting even more vegetables to share!



Backyard Bounty

Do you like oranges? How about grapefruits or tangerines, tangelos, clementines, or satsumas, lemons, or limes? Many people in places like Florida, Texas, and California have citrus trees in their yards or neighborhoods, growing these kinds of fruits. They can eat fruit right off the tree!

Often, the fruit trees in people's yards grow way more fruit than their family can eat. They may pick what they can eat, but leave the rest on the tree. It would be easy just to let the fruit rot and fall to the ground for animals to eat.

But the Society of St. Andrew invites people to share their backyard fruit. If you live in Central Florida and have a citrus tree, you can call the Society of St. Andrew and tell them about it. Volunteers like these girls will come and pick the fruit!

This fruit looks a little brown, but that's just dirt and juice. It will wash right off, and these grapefruits will be delicious! More than a thousand Society of St. Andrew volunteers will glean several tractor trailer loads of citrus fruits in one growing season. All of this healthy, nutritious food is given to food banks and agencies that help families in need get good food to eat.

Can you guess when this fruit is picked? It's the middle of winter! That's just the "ripe" time for citrus!



Harvest of Hope

Every summer and fall, young people and adults from all over the country take part in Harvest of Hope work/study mission retreats with the Society of St. Andrew.

In the mornings, they go to fields or orchards, where they pick the good fruits or vegetables left behind after harvest. These beautiful fall apples may have been too small or too big for the grocery store. They may have too many blemishes or spots, or perhaps they fell onto the ground.

But big apples and small apples, apples with spots or creases, and even apples that have fallen onto the ground can still be tasty and healthy! And lots of people who can't afford to buy apples at the grocery store will be glad to eat these apples.

In the afternoons and evenings at Harvest of Hope, the young people and adults learn about hunger in the United States and around the world. They study the Bible to learn what God wants us to do to help others. They pray and worship and sing.

One day during Harvest of Hope, these girls will take the apples they've gleaned to a soup kitchen, where they'll bake them into an apple pie. Then they'll slice up that pie and serve it to guests at the soup kitchen—a very tasty treat!

Before they leave Harvest of Hope to go home, their youth group will make a plan to do something about hunger in their own community. They may raise money to fight hunger, or they may start a food pantry at their church. One youth group even figured out a way to save unopened milks and juices from their school lunchroom to share with a food pantry nearby!

Each year Harvest of Hope campers save and share more than a quarter of a million servings of fresh fruits and vegetables!



Practice on the Field

These Tennessee high schoolers go to football practice on the playing field at their school every morning in August, so they'll be ready to play hard when game season begins in September. One day, their coaches invited them to practice on a different kind of field—a corn field!

The farmer called the Society of St. Andrew when he had corn leftover. These were second and third ears on his stalks, that were just not pretty enough to sell in the grocery store. It was a perfect matchup when the football team volunteered to help!

36 players and 4 coaches headed for the field to pick corn left behind after harvest. They thought they would pick just a pickup truck full of corn in the morning. Boy, were they wrong! In just a couple of hours, they picked 28,050 POUNDS of corn, nearly 37,000 ears. They were hot and sweaty (and pretty dirty) after a morning of picking corn—very nearly as hot and sweaty and dirty as they'd have been if they had stayed at school for practice!

Hungry families and seniors across ten Tennessee counties had farm-fresh sweet corn to eat that night, all because these boys went from the football field to the cornfield.

Volunteers like these boys make a big difference through the Society of St. Andrew!



At the Farmers' Market

Have you ever been to a Farmers' Market? There are farmers' markets in most cities and towns. Farmers arrive early in the morning, with fresh fruit and vegetables they've grown in the country. At a parking lot or park, they set their produce on the back of their pickup truck or on tables. People from the city or town stop by and buy the farm-fresh produce they want to cook and eat.

At the end of the market, farmers often have good food that hasn't sold. They may not want to take it back home. This food could simply be thrown away, but farmers hate to waste good food! All over the country, every day, the Society of St. Andrew works with farmers at farmers' markets, sending volunteers like these young women to glean (gather) the food that's leftover at the end of the market day.

Sometimes the volunteers may just pick up a handful of fruits or vegetables. Other times, they may glean hundreds and hundreds of pounds of food! This is all food that was growing in the farmer's fields just a day or two ago, so it is very, very fresh.

Volunteers take the food to soup kitchens and shelters, where it can be cooked and used right away, providing healthy food for many, many hungry people. These Alabama gleaners have picked up jam (in the jars on the left) and fresh herbs (in the box in the middle of the photo). Can you find the peaches they have gleaned? What other kinds of fruits and vegetables do you see?