



DAY 1

VBS
©ROCK BRIDGE



STELLAR SMALL GROUP

PRESCHOOL LEADER GUIDE

DURING STELLAR



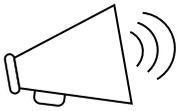
Get Crew Leaders involved!

Guide Crew Leaders to participate right along with kids. When Crew Leaders listen, get involved, and have fun, kids do too!



Call on kids to help.

Every day, allow kids who are paying attention to pass out supplies, read Scripture, or be your helper. Kids love feeling important and helpful!



Use an attention-getting signal.

Attention-getting signals let kids know when it's time to stop what they're doing and look at you. Examples include: **Leader:** "1, 2, 3... Eyes on me!" **Kids:** "1, 2... Eyes on you!"

Leader: "If you hear me, clap once!" (Clap once and wait.) "If you hear me, clap twice!" (Clap twice and wait.)

Leader: "Mission control to crew!"

Kids: "Ready for launch!" (Sit up straight and freeze like astronauts preparing for takeoff.)



Repeat the daily Main Point often.

Every activity focuses on one memorable Bible truth called the Main Point. Repeating the Main Point helps kids remember it and apply it to their lives after VBS.



Repeat expectations often and explain transitions.

Repeating expectations helps kids remember what is expected of them, creating a structured and positive learning environment. Clear transitions between activities prevent confusion and help kids shift their focus smoothly. When we take time to explain what's happening next, kids feel more secure and ready to engage.



Shine Jesus' light!

TOKENS

This year, our kids will participate in a Token Challenge! To recognize and encourage meaningful participation and positive behavior, we will be rewarding kids with tokens throughout VBS!

- **Who is giving out tokens:** All of our volunteers will receive tokens to reward kids as they catch them engaging well in VBS.
- **What are we doing with the tokens:** Kids will work together to reach an Overall Token Goal and receive a celebration on the last night of VBS! Tokens are used to reward kids for remarkable expressions of love, kindness, great listening, participation, and memorizing our Main Points and Bible verse!
- **When are we passing out tokens:** Immediately! We want to help kids connect their positive attitudes, behaviors, and participation with the reward of the token, so as soon as you see a behavior to celebrate, pass out the reward!
- **Where are we getting tokens from:** We will have tokens available for all volunteers at check-in each night. As we use up our stash, there will be designated spots to go to for more throughout the night.
- **How do we distribute tokens:** Our volunteers will keep their eyes and ears tuned in to our kids so they can immediately reward them with a token to celebrate what we want repeated! They will praise the specific behavior that earned the reward when we give them their token. For example:
 - Active engagement during each rotation
 - Invite kids to “Show Me What You Know!” and let them earn a token by sharing the memory verse, finishing the lyrics to a worship song, sharing today’s “Main Point”, etc.
 - Displays of the fruit of the spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, gentleness
 - Demonstrating good manners, listening attentively, and following instructions the first time they're asked
 - Being respectful to volunteers, peers, and the VBS environment.
- **When do kids turn in their tokens:** There will be buckets available at each rotation for kids to drop their tokens in. All tokens will be brought to the closing session and combined so we can see how we're progressing towards our goal each night!
- **Remember, the goal of using tokens is to reinforce positive behaviors,** encourage active participation, and create a fun and rewarding experience for all kids attending VBS. Thank you for your commitment to making VBS a memorable and impactful event!



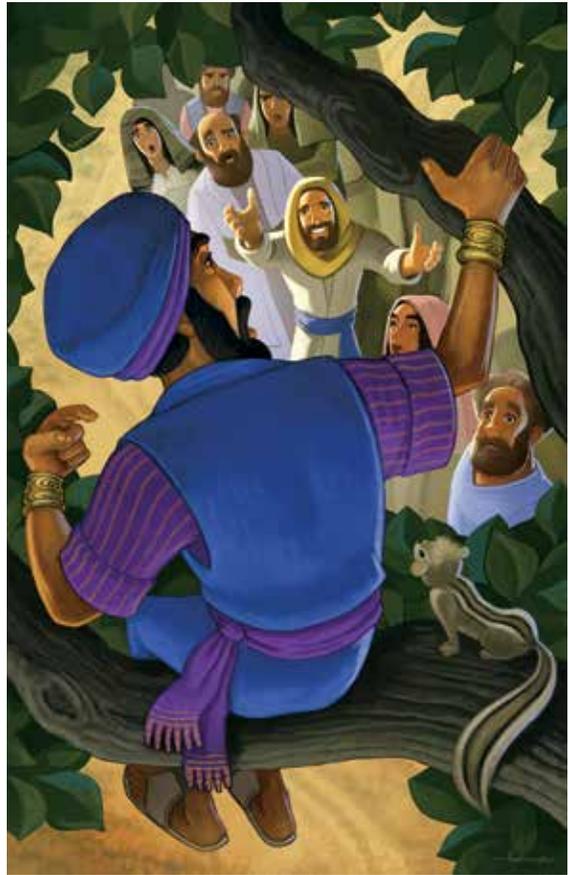
The Light of Jesus Changes Hearts!

Bible Story: Jesus accepts Zacchaeus. (Luke 19:1-9)

Bible Verse: “The Son of Man came to look for the lost and save them. (Luke 19:10)

Leader Insights

- Zacchaeus’ role reminded God’s people of the dark oppression they faced. Jesus—an astounding teacher and leader—provided a ray of hope!
- The Roman government employed Jews like Zacchaeus to collect its overwhelming, heavy taxes. People paid taxes on everything from land to property, as well as customs on imports and exports. That’s why many Jews viewed tax collectors as Jewish traitors who served the hated Romans.
- Tax collectors gathered a higher tax than required, pocketing the difference for themselves. Since Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector—a high position with many officials under him—he became rich from the over taxation of his people.
- Many wealthy priests called the fertile city of Jericho home. In addition, its situation on a border would yield rich customs duties for local tax collectors.
- Welcoming a popular rabbi into his home for a meal would’ve been a huge honor for Zacchaeus. However, Jesus said he needed to stay at Zacchaeus’ home! Scholars suggest that Jesus still had 17 miles on his trek to Jerusalem. He’d need an overnight stay in Jericho before departing.
- The name *Zacchaeus* means “pure one.” Interesting, in light of the salvation he received through Jesus (Luke 19:9).



Why It Matters Today

Zacchaeus was a man who made bad choices, but when he met Jesus, everything changed! Jesus didn’t ignore or reject him—He showed love and kindness, and that changed Zacchaeus’ heart. Just like Zacchaeus, we all need Jesus to help us make right choices and love others well. When we follow Jesus, His light shines in us and helps us grow to be more like Him. No matter who we are or what we’ve done, Jesus’ love can change our hearts!

Day 1 Supplies:

- Day 1 Small Group Posters
- Day 1 Sycamore Tree Posters
- Day 1 Main Point Labels (1/kid)
- Greenery and decorative plants (optional)
- NlrV Bible
- 12x12 heavy duty cardstock in various colors
- cellophane in various colors
- rubber bands (1/kid)
- Stickers, star cutouts, or sequins
- Markers or crayons
- Glue sticks or tape
- hole punch
- Scissors
- Aluminum foil (for a shiny rim effect, optional)
- Yarn or ribbon (optional, to wear around neck)

Before You Blast Off

- Hang sycamore tree posters around your room. Decorate the room with fake trees, plants, greenery so it feels like you're in a tree. (optional)
- For many activities, you will be turning off the lights. Cover any windows with black plastic.
- Hang or display Day 1 Small Group Posters so they are visible to kids. Each day, you will add the next day until all 4 days are displayed.
- Prepare telescope tubes by rolling heavy duty cardstock in various colors and securing with tape/staples.
- Using a hole punch, create two holes on each end for kids to tie their string.
- Precut cellophane into circles to cover one end of telescope.
- Precut yarn into lengths long enough for kids to wear telescope around their necks. (suggested for prek ~ 22-24 ")

SPACESHIP TIP

For preschoolers, consider adding the Main Point Label to telescopes ahead of time



VBS @ ROCK BRIDGE SMALL GROUP PLAYLIST

SPACESHIP TIP

As you welcome Crews each day, keep an eye out for kids or leaders with any physical challenges. Be prepared to modify activities so everyone can feel included in the fun! For example, if an activity has everyone crawling, you might say, "Crawl, scoot, or pretend to crawl."

Welcome Crews

SUPPLIES: Day 1 Small Group Posters, Day 1 Sycamore Tree Posters, Greenery and decorative plants (optional), NlrV Bible

Gather children with their Crews. Introduce yourself

SAY

Hello, friends! Welcome to our first day of VBS! Each day, I get to share with you a totally true adventure from the Bible. In today's story, Jesus is making some friends, but you might be surprised by the kind of friend that Jesus chose to make. We'll find out about one of the friends he made.

Today we're learning that **The Light of Jesus Changes Hearts!** Every day we will start by singing a special Welcome Song! Get ready to shine and sing this with me!

Stand and sing this song together to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."

Before you begin, show kids how to fling out fingers like blinking lights.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, *(Fling out fingers four times, like blinking lights)*

Jesus loves you as you are. *(Hug yourself)*

You are special, yes, it's true. *(Point forward, then nod head "yes")*

I'm so glad that God made you. *(Put hand on chest, then point up with both hands)*

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, *(Fling out fingers four times, like blinking lights)*

Jesus loves you as you are. *(Hug yourself)*

SAY

Today we are learning about friends, and I'm so happy to be learning about this story with friends! Can you turn to your Crew Leader and say "Hi friend!"

Kids will each give their Crew Leader a high-five and say, "Hi, friend!"

Awesome! Now can you turn to a friend beside you and say "Hi friend!"

Let Crews talk about this question. Crew Leaders will share first.

ASK

Who is your friend? What do you like about that person?

Crew Leaders give thumbs-up when everyone has shared.

SAY

Sounds like you all have good friends. I wish you could play with those good friends all the time!

You see, my friend [Crew Leader's name] may want to play a game with [another Crew Leader's name] instead of with me. Sigh sadly. I could get mad at [second Crew Leader's name]. Cross your arms angrily. We wouldn't be getting along.

Meet Zacchaeus

Point out the sycamore pictures greenery, and invite kids to imagine you're in a treetop. Point to the Main Point Poster.

Today, our Main Point is **The Light of Jesus Changes Hearts!**

SAY

We're in a tree because this is where a friendship with Jesus began! But I need to back up a little bit, so let's climb down.

Lead kids in standing and pretending they're climbing down a tree. They'll remain standing. Point to the Bible Story picture. The guy in our Bible story was named Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a short guy...but that wasn't the problem. Jesus loves people of every size! The problem was Zacchaeus' heart. See, he was kind of small on the *inside*.

Here's what I mean. Sometimes people say you're a "big person" when you do the right thing. That doesn't mean you're tall—it means your heart is big!

Shake your head. Well, Zacchaeus wasn't known for doing the right thing. Let's find out more about Zacchaeus. Do what I do!

Tell this story in a way that's similar to "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Have everyone pat their laps once and then clap their hands once (and so on) to create a beat as they repeat each line after you.

Zacchaeus wasn't nice. (*Zacchaeus wasn't nice.*)

He acted really mean. (*He acted really mean.*)

"Give me more money." (*"Give me more money."*)

"And I'll keep some for me!" (*"And I'll keep some for me!"*)

Look sneaky, then pretend to count money and put it in your pocket.

Zacchaeus made wrong choices. He stole money from people! It's no wonder people didn't get along with him. But Jesus looked at Zacchaeus' heart, and that's what matters most. Let's find out what happened next. Do what I do!

Pat your legs, then clap your hands as you say this rhyme.

Jesus was coming! (*Jesus was coming!*)

Zacchaeus had to see! (*Zacchaeus had to see!*)

He ran on up ahead (*He ran on up ahead*)

And climbed up in a tree. (*And climbed up in a tree.*)



WHAT WE FOUND

We discovered that it was helpful to cue Crew Leaders to jump in with the echo. Once little ones heard their Crew Leaders, they eagerly joined in.

See Jesus

SAY Jesus was on his way. Zacchaeus couldn't see because of the crowd, so he climbed a tree. Let's see what Jesus did when he saw Zacchaeus. Do what I do!

Pat your legs, then clap your hands as you say this rhyme.

Jesus walked by *(Jesus walked by)*

And looked up in that tree. *(And looked up in that tree.)*

"Zacchaeus, come down!" *(Zacchaeus, come down!)"*

"Spend some time with me!" *(Spend some time with me!)"*

Pretend to be Zacchaeus and climb down out of the tree. Then sit down again.

Show the Bible Story Picture again.

ASK Look at the people's faces in this picture. How do you think they feel about Zacchaeus? Invite responses from the whole group.

SAY The people didn't want Jesus to be Zacchaeus' friend. Listen to what they said. They thought he did too many wrong things. But Jesus was showing them how his love and light changes people! **The Light of Jesus Changes Hearts!**

Let's see what happened when Jesus went to Zacchaeus' house.

Pat your legs, then clap your hands as you say this rhyme.

They went to the house. *(They went to the house.)*

Zacchaeus was so pleased. *(Zacchaeus was so pleased.)*

"I'll give to the poor!" *(I'll give to the poor!)"*

"And I'll be mean no more!" *(And I'll be mean no more!)"*

Reach into your pocket and pretend to pull out money and give it to people.

Jesus' friendship changed Zacchaeus. And Jesus' friendship can change people today, too. When Jesus is our friend, we can shine his light.

Thank Jesus

Let's pray and ask Jesus to help us shine his light to our friends. Have everyone fold their hands together and bow their heads to pray.

PRAY Dear Jesus,
 Thank you, thank you, Jesus, for friends and family.
 Thank you, thank you, Jesus, when people play with me. Thank you, thank you, Jesus, that you help us get along. Thank you, thank you, Jesus, for loving everyone!
 We love you, too. Amen.



Make Galaxy Gazers (telescope craft)

SUPPLIES: paper towel tubes, Stickers, star cutouts, or sequins, Markers or crayons, Glue sticks or tape, Scissors, Aluminum foil (for a shiny rim effect, optional), Single hole punch (optional), Yarn or ribbon (optional, to wear around neck), [Day 1 Main Point Labels \(1/kid\)](#)

SAY Now let's see how things in space can get along and work together! Let's make telescopes!

Just like Zacchaeus had to look for Jesus, we can use our "telescopes" to remind us to keep our eyes on Him! When we focus on Jesus, His light changes our hearts and helps us live for Him.

Ahead of time, fold the cardstock paper into a cylinder and secure it with glue or tape. Use a variety of colors so kids can pick their own.

Kids can decorate the outside using stickers, drawings, or star cutouts to make it unique. For a shiny effect, glue a small ring of aluminum foil around one end to resemble a real telescope. Attach a cellophane circle to one end.

If desired, punch two holes near one end and tie yarn or ribbon through them to create a strap for wearing around the neck.

Once finished, encourage kids to look through their telescope and imagine seeing Jesus' light shining all around them, just like Zacchaeus saw Jesus and his heart was changed!

ASK What do you think Zacchaeus saw when he looked at Jesus, and how did it change him?

How can we "look" for Jesus in our everyday lives and let His light shine in us?

SAY It's time for you all to blast off to your next station! I can't wait to see you tomorrow!

SPACESHIP TIP

Make sure kids' names are on their telescopes before they leave!

SPACESHIP TIP

For preschoolers, consider adding the Main Point Label to telescopes ahead of time

