

preschool crew leader guide



what's a crew leader for preschoolers?

If you've been asked to be a Crew Leader for preschoolers, you've met two important qualifications: You love the Lord, and you love children.

During Scuba, you'll visit different activities with a group of three to five children. *You're not in charge of preparing or teaching activities; your role is to love, encourage, and enjoy the children in your Crew.* The following guidelines will help you be the most awesome Crew Leader.



A Crew Leader for preschoolers is...

- ~ a friend and helper,
- ~ someone who helps children complete activities,
- ~ someone who gets down on the floor to interact with children,
- ~ someone who encourages kids, and
- ~ someone who supports the Preschool staff.

Use these helpful tips:

- ~ Learn the names of the children in your Crew, and call children by name often.
- ~ Help children work at their own pace. You'll have 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in your Crew. You'll probably notice big differences in motor skills (such as cutting and coloring) between older and younger children. Encourage 5-year-olds to help younger children when possible.
- ~ Look into preschoolers' eyes when you speak to them. You may need to kneel or sit on the floor to do this.
- ~ Empower children by offering them choices. Ask "Would you like to make a craft or play with blocks?" Don't ask "What do you want to do?" or children may decide they want to do activities that are unavailable or inappropriate.



here's what you'll do

Arrive at least 20 minutes early each day.

Report to the Preschool area on Day 1 and the Sing & Play Splash area on Days 2 through 5, and be ready to greet children who arrive early. Your welcoming presence will bring smiles to anxious faces! (Besides, the Preschool Director may have some special instructions for you.)

Greet each child by name and with a warm smile. Help children put on their name badges each day.

Sit with the children in your Crew during group activities. Keep your Crew members together, and help them participate in the activities at Sing & Play Splash and Tidal Treats.

Accompany children to preschool stations. If necessary, read the instructions at each station, and help children complete the activities. Distribute supplies as needed.

Always make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room! Be sure children hold hands or a rope as you rotate between stations. Never grab, pinch, or pull children as you travel. Remember to use kind, gentle, positive words. If a child lags behind, remind him or her to stay with the Crew. You might want to walk behind your Crew so you can keep all the children in view and avoid traveling too fast.

Help children think about how we can see what God is doing all around us. Talk about how fun it is to see the amazing things God has made or the way God shows his love to us. (Those are called God Sightings!)

Help children with their Bible Memory Buddies. Every day, children receive an adorable Bible Memory Buddy. You'll help them put the Buddies in their Buddy Packs to hold during VBS, and then they'll get to take their entire collection home at the end of the week.

Repeat the daily Bible Point often. Every activity at Scuba focuses on one simple, memorable Bible truth called the Bible Point. The more children hear or say the Bible Point, the more likely they are to remember it and apply it to their lives. Kids will be listening for the Bible Point so they can respond by clasping their hands and saying, "Thanks, God!"

Keep track of your Crew members' name badges and Buddies. Put these in a Crew bag, and keep the bag in a convenient place in your classroom or church at the end of the day. Send them home with the children at the end of the week.

Help children collect their Bible Activity Sheets and crafts after Closing Circle. Children will take these home at the end of each day.

Report any potential discipline problems to the Preschool Director. He or she will help you handle the problems appropriately.

Release children only to a designated parent or caregiver. If an unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, refer the adult to the Preschool Director.

Assist the Preschool Director with cleanup and preparation for your next meeting.



what do i do at each station?

Sing & Play Splash is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. At Sing & Play Splash you'll

- ~ greet your Crew members in your designated seating area.
- ~ follow the motions and sing out loud.
- ~ help kids tune in to the Sing & Play Splash Leader between songs.

Exploration Stations allow preschoolers to ease into their day by choosing from a variety of hands-on activities. During Exploration Stations please

- ~ let children freely move from one center to the next. Some children may spend the entire 15 minutes at one area, while others will move through all of them. That's okay! Each activity helps preschoolers learn through play.
- ~ explain the activity instructions to preschoolers—you'll find instructions at each station.

Bible Adventures & Missions is where kids experience the Bible story and learn about Operation Kid-to-Kid. Your job at Bible Adventures is to

- ~ listen carefully to hear how Crew Leaders should help out that day.
- ~ participate and encourage Crew members to participate, too.
- ~ share your own discoveries during discussion times and your excitement during each awesome Bible adventure.

Sticky Scripture™ is where kids watch a daily video and learn actions to remember God's Word. Here, you'll

- ~ encourage kids to tune in and watch the video.
- ~ lead your Crew in the activities before and after the video.
- ~ lead kids in discussion when it's called for.
- ~ jump up and join the actions right along with the video.
- ~ hand children their Bible Memory Buddies in the special way the leader demonstrates.

Many stations offer times for kids to share about real life challenges, worries, or situations.

If a child brings up a serious issue, such as indicators of neglect, abuse, or violence they've experienced, say "Thank you for telling me about that. It's very important, and we need to talk about it with our VBS Director [or Children's Minister if he or she isn't the VBS Director] to give you a chance to say everything you need to say—and help you with your feelings." Involve

the appropriate person at your church who can follow through with necessary steps after the conversation, as there is not only a moral but a legal obligation to report circumstances where a child might be in danger.

Tidal Treats is where Crews come for a tasty snack. At Tidal Treats you will

- ~ gather your Crew in a designated area.
- ~ help your Crew listen as the Tidal Treats Leader explains how snack time will work through the week.
- ~ help kids clean hands before eating.
- ~ help kids clean up your area before leaving.

Games is where kids play team-building games.

Your job at Games is to

- ~ listen carefully to the instructions so you can help your Crew members follow them.
- ~ participate in each activity, and cheer on your Crew members as they participate.

Craft & Play is a *fun* time full of sensory activities where kids can be creative, get a little messy, and lock in what they're learning each day at Scuba. At Craft & Play please

- ~ help keep messes to a minimum.
- ~ listen carefully to the instructions and remind your Crew of what to do as needed.
- ~ ask preschoolers why they decided to create projects the way they did, and affirm their creativity.
- ~ mark your Crew members' projects with their names and set them in a designated area.

Closing Circle is where kids experience an exciting review of the day's lesson. Your role at Closing Circle is to

- ~ sit with your Crew and participate in reviewing each day's activities.
- ~ make sure each child leaves with his or her craft, Bible Activity Pages, and Winnie sticker.
- ~ collect Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Buddies and store them in your Crew bag.
- ~ make sure children are picked up by a person designated to do so.

crews are cool!

Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at Scuba each day. Each Crew consists of up to five children and one Crew Leader. Because you are shepherding a small group, you can give each preschooler lots of attention, and discipline issues will decrease. Use the developmental information below to guide you as you work with preschoolers at VBS.



► **We're 3 years old.** We've just learned how to play together, and we're still learning how to share and take turns. It may be a little hard for us to change from one activity to the next, so give us plenty of warning ahead of time. We're generally happy and sometimes even silly, but we may be a little shy about trying new things. We enjoy playing games that involve moving and jumping around, but we may tire more quickly than our older playmates.



► **We're 4 years old.** We're full of imagination and excitement. We love to use our imaginations in make-believe play and art activities. We like to use loud voices and big movements. You may need to remind us to play quietly at Preschool. We enjoy listening to Bible adventures and answering interesting questions such as "Tell about a storm you've been in."



► **We're 5 years old.** We love to help our Crew Leaders and our other leaders. If you notice us helping, please tell us thank you. We're proud of the things we can do, but we're also sensitive. Other children may hurt our feelings by blurting out reactions to things we do. We're improving in our coordination. We can cut with scissors and color between the lines. We're also pretty good at throwing and catching balls.

God is a friend who's real.

Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18–19)

Bible Verse: “We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:69)

Diving Into the Bible

A harsh drought plagued Israel for years due to the wicked deeds of idol-worshipping King Ahab. Finally, to show God's existence, God's prophet Elijah summoned 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to Mount Carmel. The prophets built an altar, then prayed to their false god, Baal, for fire. For hours the hundreds of prophets prayed, shouted, and even cut themselves. But no one answered. Then Elijah built a simple stone altar and dug a trench around it. Servants poured water on his altar again and again. Elijah prayed, “O Lord, answer me...so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God.” Instantly fire came from heaven and burned up Elijah's sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil! God—the only true God—answered.

Yet Elijah's triumph soon turned to terror as Queen Jezebel swore she'd have Elijah killed. The prophet fled into the wilderness, where hunger and depression wore him down. God appeared, not in a flash of fire but in a gentle whisper. The one true God answered again.

Connecting With Kids

Like Elijah, kids swim in a culture increasingly resistant to any one source of truth. Today's kids doubt the integrity of the Bible. They're dubious about the church. And many view the idea of one *true* God as judgmental and exclusive. The kids at your VBS really *can* understand what Elijah faced—living in a world that embraced countless false gods and warred against God's truth! Fundamentally, when we believe God is *real*, the existence of God gives us hope. Belief in one *true* God grounds us, providing stability and firm footing through life's ups and downs. Today, root kids in the truth that the one amazing, powerful God really and truly desires a friendship with them!



Why It Matters

Elijah experienced the reality of God through fire, and later in a whisper. This passage can help kids who are questioning the truth of a God they can't see or hear.



day 1

Bible Point:
God is a friend who's real.



God Sightings®

Every day at Scuba, kids and leaders will share evidence they've seen of God. We call these *God Sightings*, and they're an easy, practical, and powerful way to help kids realize that God is still active in our everyday lives. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today help kids talk about things that show you God's loving friendship. Here are a few examples:

- ~ Talk about the friends and family God has given each of us.
- ~ Read or say aloud to them Bible verses that offer examples of God's presence.
- ~ Point out ways you see your Crew members being friends—the way God is a friend to us—demonstrating love and kindness.

Scuba Clues From Your Director

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

- On this first day at Scuba, meet your Crew in the Preschool area.
- Smile and introduce yourself.
- Be sure to learn and use the names of the kids in your Crew. Be sure they know your name, too.
- When Station Leaders ask you to "circle up with your Crew," that means to make a tight knee-to-knee circle for discussions. It's an easy way to help little ones focus in for a short time.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

A God Sighting is not "I see God in that tree." A God Sighting is "I see God's creativity and power because only God can make a tree." God Sightings are seeing things that God has created, allowed, provided, done, or revealed to us.

God is a friend who loves.

Bible Story: God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 1–3)

Bible Verse: “Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” (John 13:34)

Diving Into the Bible

When God told Jonah to go preach to the people of Nineveh, Jonah jumped on the first ship...headed in the *opposite* direction! He'd likely heard of the Ninevites' reputation for cruelty. In Jonah's estimation, these people didn't deserve to hear about—or experience—God's love. But God had other plans. He sent a big fish to swallow the reluctant prophet. Deep inside the fish's belly, Jonah finally submitted to God's will. God forgave Jonah, then used him to deliver a warning to the people of Nineveh. As soon as the people heard Jonah's message, they stopped their evil deeds and asked for God's forgiveness. God lovingly forgave an undeserving people, demonstrating his heart of mercy for *all*.

Connecting With Kids

Jonah seems to have viewed the Ninevites as unredeemable—so sinful that they were unworthy of God's salvation. When do you first remember a feeling of shame or unworthiness? For many of us, the sense of being unlovable came as a child when we'd disobeyed, been caught in a lie, or disappointed an adult. Perhaps caring friends or family members demonstrated Christ-like forgiveness, modeling unconditional love! Unfortunately, plenty of kids who come to your VBS won't have experienced genuine love and forgiveness. Today is a great day to immerse kids in God's overwhelming love for *all* people. Joyfully share the truth that a friendship with God means we are loved—and so are those we don't think are lovable.



Why It Matters

Jonah didn't think the people of Nineveh deserved God's mercy. Jonah's attitude can challenge kids to think about who *they* may doubt God could love.



day 2

Bible Point:
God is a friend who loves.



God Sightings®

God Sightings are a great way to help kids see that God is active all around us. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today help Crew members identify people who show them God's love. Here are a couple of examples:

- ~ Thank God for loving parents and caregivers.
- ~ Keep watch for unique moments during the day, particularly during discussions with your Crew, where you can affirm that God is right with your Crew—at VBS!

Scuba Clues From Your Director

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

- When you arrive on Days 2 through 5, go to the Sing & Play Splash area, and sit near the Crew sign that matches your assigned number or name. Wait to welcome your Crew members with a warm smile, and call children by name.
- It's possible that you'll have new children join your Crew. Be sure to welcome them warmly and introduce them to their Crew members—and to yourself!
- Participate in God Sightings—you're the chief encourager! Have fun with your Crew members as you look for God in action each day.
- You may want to leave Tidal Treats with your Crew a few minutes early each day to allow time for a bathroom break and to avoid losing track of preschoolers in the mix of all the other Crews.

god is a friend we can trust.

Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)

Bible Verse: “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.” (John 14:27)

Diving Into the Bible

After a long day of teaching along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus gave his followers instructions to cross to the other side of the water. The disciples put their backs into rowing, while Jesus, weary from the long day, quickly fell asleep. Before long, a sudden storm blew in. Gale-force winds stirred up powerful waves that broke over the side of the boat. Jesus’ friends panicked! What if the wind tipped the boat over? What if the boat filled up with water and sank? How could Jesus sleep through all this? In terror, the disciples woke Jesus up. Jesus commanded the wind and waves to be silent and still...and they obeyed! An immediate calm settled over the waters.

Connecting With Kids

What storms are kids at your VBS facing? Divorcing parents? Loneliness? Bullying? Food insecurity? A child may even be trying to navigate relationships with *others* who are facing challenges. At times, kids may feel like Jesus’ disciples, asking where Jesus is when hardships swell into a tidal wave of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. What a comfort to know we have a trustworthy friend nearby! God is a friend we can trust to comfort, guide, listen, and love us. Today, bring peace (just like Jesus did!) as you explore with kids what it means to have a trustworthy friend in God.



Why It Matters

Jesus commanded wild wind *and* waves to be still, showing his power and his ability to bring peace. This passage shows kids they can trust God when life’s troubles crash around them.



day 3

Bible Point:
God is a friend we can trust.



God Sightings®

Keep looking for evidence of God all around you. Throughout the day, point out times we can trust God. Encourage kids to...

- ~ practice encouraging a sad friend that God is with them!
- ~ imagine their friend God right beside them, no matter what!
- ~ notice trees, animals, and things in the sky that God made for us to enjoy!

Scuba Clues From Your Director

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

- Remind preschoolers that the stories they're learning are from God's Word—the Bible—and these stories are true!
- As the week goes on, take time to get to know new Crew members and make them feel warmly welcomed into your Crew family.
- Be an example to your preschoolers of God's patient, listening ears.
- If you have time between stations, talk about how exciting it is that you're helping families get clean water through Operation Kid-to-Kid!
- As the week progresses, preschoolers may get tired—or even more energetic! Remember to demonstrate Jesus' love, kindness, gentleness, and patience with these little ones. They're learning so much about Jesus...from you!

god is a friend forever.

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18–20)

Bible Verse: “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.” (John 11:25)

Diving Into the Bible

Betrayed by a friend, accused by religious leaders, and arrested by the Temple guards, Jesus’ future seemed grim. The religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat, a liar, and a blasphemer...and apparently the crowds demanding his crucifixion agreed. His hurried trial ended in a death sentence—one usually reserved for criminals. Jesus died on a cross, under a sign mocking him as King of the Jews. His fearful friends scattered, leaving two men who’d followed Jesus from afar to prepare his body for burial. Jesus’ lifeless body lay in a borrowed tomb, sealed behind a heavy gravestone. It seemed like the end...but was it?

Three days later, Jesus’ friends discovered the stone had been moved and the tomb was empty! Jesus’ body hadn’t been stolen or moved—Jesus appeared repeatedly to his followers! They saw him, felt his breath, and touched the wounds on his hands! Jesus turned the *end* into *eternity*!

Connecting With Kids

Jesus’ followers felt they’d lost their closest friend forever. Kids have felt that, too. Friends come and go. They move away, discover new interests, make new friends, or sometimes just abandon us. The idea of “forever” seems impossible. Yet God had something surprising in store! Jesus’ death wasn’t the end—it was just the beginning of a friendship that will last into eternity! God always has been and always will be—he is forever! And even better, his love for us is forever, too! Things like sadness, loneliness, and worry won’t last forever. Today, share the exciting news that a friendship with God is one that will never ever end!



Why It Matters

Jesus died on a cross, paying the price for the sins of the world once and for all. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, kids can have a forever friendship with God.



day 4

Bible Point:
God is a friend forever.



Helping Children Follow Jesus

During the week, if you sense that a child might like to know more about what it means to believe in Jesus, give this simple explanation:

God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Jesus died and took the punishment for all the wrong things we do. But Jesus is stronger than death, and he came back to life! Jesus wants to be our friend forever. When we ask him to, he'll take away the wrong things we've done and fill our lives with his love. Jesus will always be with us and will help us make the right choices. When we believe in Jesus and ask him to forgive us, someday we'll live with him forever in heaven.

Be sure to share the news of the child's spiritual development with his or her parent(s).



God Sightings®

Today help your Crew members think of God Sightings that are reminders of God's never-ending love.

- ~ Show kids things that come back every year, such as flowers or the leaves on trees.
- ~ Point out that God gave us his special Son, Jesus. Jesus is even stronger than death! You'll have many opportunities to help this truth sink in during Bible Adventures.

Scuba Clues From Your Director

god is a friend for everyone.

Bible Story: Lydia believes in Jesus.
(Acts 16:11-15)

Bible Verse: “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Diving Into the Bible

After Jesus returned to heaven, his followers knew they couldn’t keep the amazing news of God’s Son to themselves! A man named Paul devoted himself to traveling throughout the Mediterranean and Asia to let *everyone* know about Jesus. Paul wanted the world to know that Jesus—God’s Son—had died, risen, and would give eternal life to all who believed. This good news meant life for Jews, non-Jews, people who believed in false gods—*everyone*! During his first missionary journey, Paul met a group of women gathered near a river for prayer. These women believed in the one true God, but they hadn’t heard about Jesus. Paul’s words had a profound impact on one woman in particular—Lydia. This businesswoman insisted that she *and* her entire household get baptized! Because of Paul’s message, she became the first Christian in Europe, and her home became one of the first churches.

Connecting With Kids

So much seems set out to divide us today. Kids hear adults compartmentalize people by race, political party, church denomination, “pro” or “anti” this-and-that—the list is endless. As a result, kids may view people in groups—groups they are (or aren’t) part of. And too often, people view Christians as exclusive, seeking to keep people out. Yet God loves *everyone*! Jesus died for *everyone*! A friendship with God is a possibility for *everyone*! No one is left out or excluded from a friendship with God! How freeing...and unifying! Wrap up your week at Scuba VBS by challenging kids to view people in their world as those God dearly and desperately loves.



Why It Matters

Paul sailed to new lands to be sure *everyone*—including a businesswoman named Lydia—knew the good news of Jesus! This story can help kids understand that no one should be left out of God’s loving friendship.



day 5

Bible Point:

God is a friend for everyone.



God Sightings®

Today help preschoolers reflect on the whole week and what it means to be friends with God every day.

- ~ Offer very personal affirmations of character strengths you've seen in your Crew members as you've learned more about them this week and how they can show God's loving friendship to people around them.

Thank You to You!

Thanks for all you've done to help kids understand what friendship with God looks like.

Scuba Clues From Your Director

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

- Find out if the kids in your Crew have age-appropriate Bibles or Christian music at home. Talk with your VBS Director about providing these basic resources for kids.
- Continue building friendships long after Scuba is over. Work with preschoolers and parents to fill out the "All About My Crew" information on each Crew member. After VBS, you'll be able to send postcards and birthday cards and greet kids who attend your church.
- Give each child his or her Bible Memory Buddies and other fun goodies from Scuba.
- Thank your Tide Pool Preschool and VBS Directors for all they've done to demonstrate God's love to the kids in your community!

all about my crew



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____

Name: _____

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Name: _____

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