



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 Cave Quest VBS, 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 Tad's Preschool Pool 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 Tad's Preschool Pool on Day 1 and the Sing & Play Rock 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 Rock and Cavern Café.
- ➔ **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 (called a Spelunker 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 tag. You'll help them slide the Buddies onto their Cave Quest Carabiner to wear during VBS. The Buddy tags also trigger a special app that lets the Buddy "come to life."
- ➔ **Repeat the daily Bible Point often.** Every activity at Cave Quest 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 holding their pointer finger up like a light and saying "follow him!"
- ➔ **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, Sciency-Fun Gizmos, 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 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.**



You can download the free Bible Memory Buddies app to your smartphone or tablet so you can show it to the preschoolers sitting close to you so everyone can see it during Closing Circle, or let children explore the app during snack time. Go to vbsbuddies.com for more info and a link for downloading, or go to the Apple app store or Google Play and search for Cave Quest Bible Buddies.

What Do I Do at Each Station?



Sing & Play Rock is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. Your job at Sing & Play Rock is to

- greet your Crew members in your designated seating area.
- follow the motions, and sing out loud.



Exploration Stations allows preschoolers to ease into their day by choosing from a variety of hands-on activities. Your job during Exploration Stations is to

- 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. Kids also learn about Operation Kid-to-Kid in this station. Your job at Bible Adventures is to

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



KidVid™ Cinema is where kids watch a daily video of *real* kids who rely on God's power. Your job at KidVid Cinema is to

- encourage kids to tune in and watch the video.
- lead your Crew in participating in the activities before and after the video.
- lead kids in discussion when it's called for. (Expect surprising insights and answers from kids.)

In KidVid Cinema, kids will discuss real-life topics like getting lost, being frightened during a storm, and getting along with family members. Don't worry! Each of these is handled in a kid-appropriate way. The kids in your Crew may share very real experiences with you. Don't feel like you have to have all the answers! Use the Bible Points to reassure kids that Jesus is a light for us during hard times.



Cavern Café is where Crews come for a tasty snack. Your job at Cavern Café is to

- gather your Crew in a designated area.
- help your Crew listen as the Cavern Café Leader explains the snack.
- help kids clean hands before eating.
- lead kids in discussing how the snack connects to the day's Bible verse by following a helpful handout.
- 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 Cave Quest VBS. Your job at Craft & Play is to

- help keep messes to a minimum while still allowing kids to have fun with the art supplies.
- 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 until the end of the day.



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

- sit with your Cave Crew and participate in reviewing each day's Bible Point, Bible story, and Bible verse actions.
- Give each child a Watch For God Wristband on Day 1.
- make sure each child leaves with his or her craft, Bible Activity Pages, and Tad the Frog 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.

Cave Crews Are Cool!

Cave Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at Cave Quest VBS 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 Tad's Preschool Pool. We enjoy listening to Bible adventures and answering interesting questions such as "What would be the scariest thing about going into a deep, dark cave?"
- ➔ **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.



DAY 1 Jesus gives us hope.

Prophets foretell the light of the world.
(John 1:1-34; Isaiah 9:2)

As You Read, Keep in Mind...

- ➔ Throughout the Bible, God sent prophets to foretell future events, especially in proclaiming the coming Messiah. These claims would be nothing unless they had actually come true. Imagine someone today trying to make a prediction that would come true over 700 years from now. How amazing that more than 700 years in advance, prophets like Isaiah foretold about Jesus as the light of the world! Jesus fulfilled all of these prophecies *exactly*. Only God can fulfill promises like that!
- ➔ Think of John the Baptist's role like a preview before the movie, announcing that Jesus was coming soon. John the Baptist knew that he himself was not the "feature film," but rather "he was simply a witness to tell about the light" (John 1:8). Jesus is the true light of the world—the main event!
- ➔ Hope is confident patience that God will carry out what he has promised. Although they struggled to have "confident patience," God's people definitely *hoped* that the promise of a Messiah would come true, and it did! We can have hope that God will fulfill his promises made in the Bible to us, just like he fulfilled his promises then.



Why It Matters...

Kids today can feel hopeless in the troubles they face and those they see around them in the news and other social media. They may not understand why a good friend has to move away, why pets get sick, or why loved ones die. Wars, pollution, and even natural disasters can make kids feel hopeless. No matter how dark life seems, Jesus is the source of light and hope for *our* world today! Jesus gives us hope that God loves us enough to give his greatest gift—and is still in control when the world seems to be in chaos. Shine God's light to the kids at your VBS today with a bright smile and encouraging words of hope!

➔ **Key Verse:** "O Lord, you alone are my hope." (Psalm 71:5)

Day 1

Bible Point: **Jesus gives us hope.**

God Sightings®

Every day at Cave Quest VBS, 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 preschoolers share about something God has provided that gives them hope. Here are a few examples:

- ➔ Talk about a beautiful rainbow after a storm.
- ➔ Suggest Bible verses and songs that tell about Jesus' love for us.
- ➔ Point out a finger, toe, elbow, or ankle where you've had an "owie," and show that it healed. Thank God for making our bodies able to heal from our hurts.



Bright Ideas From Your Director



**BRIGHT
IDEA**

- On this first day at Cave Quest VBS, meet your Cave Crew at Tad's Preschool Pool.
- 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.



**BRIGHT
IDEA**

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.

DAY 2 Jesus gives us courage.

Jesus and Peter walk on water.

(Matthew 14:22-36)

As You Read, Keep in Mind...

- ➔ Jesus and Peter walked on the Sea of Galilee, which is actually a lake. Peter would have been familiar with this area...it was the same location where Jesus first called Peter and his brother Andrew to be his disciples (Matthew 4:18-20). The Sea of Galilee is also where Jesus forgave Peter after his denial (John 21:1-19). How significant that one lake could set the scene for Peter's journey of faith and discipleship!
- ➔ Peter often took the lead among the disciples, venturing out as their bold, ready-for-action spokesperson (Matthew 16:15-18, 17:4, John 6:67-69). His name means "rock," and even though he sank like a stone when he stopped looking at Jesus, he was the only disciple courageous enough to ask Jesus for the chance to walk on water.
- ➔ Because the Sea of Galilee is surrounded by steep hills, strong winds and storms commonly (and suddenly) emerge there. When fierce winds rush down from the nearby valleys to the center of the lake, a violent storm abruptly arises, like it did that night for Jesus and Peter. The only two men to ever walk on water in all of history weren't walking on calm waters. Instead, Jesus gave Peter the courage to follow him out into the storm!



Why It Matters...

Peter courageously stepped out of the boat to walk with Jesus but quickly sank when he stopped looking to his friend and focused on the storm instead. Kids, too, are familiar with the fear that accompanies life's "storms," whether they're the kind with thunder and lightning or more traumatic events such as divorce, death, and bullying. The children at your VBS need to know that in the midst of those hard times, Jesus is always right by their side to give them courage. And when children bravely step out in faith, Jesus will be there with open arms, ready to catch them. Today's activities will encourage children to rely on Jesus for his strength and courage whenever they're afraid.

➔ **Key Verse:** "Take courage. I am here!" (Matthew 14:27)

Day 2

Bible Point: **Jesus gives us courage.**

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 preschoolers identify something God has provided that brings us courage. Here are a few examples:

- ➔ Be thankful for our families and friends who encourage us when we are sad or frightened.
- ➔ Thank God for favorite stuffed animals that make us feel better when we're scared.
- ➔ Thank God that we can talk to him at any time and that he is with us always.



Bright Ideas From Your Director



- When you arrive on Days 2 through 5, go to the Sing & Play Rock area, and sit near the Crew sign that matches your assigned number or name. Wait to welcome your Crew members with a warm smile, calling 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 Cavern Café a few minutes early with your Crew each day to allow time for a bathroom break.

DAY 3 Jesus gives us direction.

Jesus sheds light on how to live.
(Matthew 5-7)

As You Read, Keep in Mind...

- ➔ The Sermon on the Mount is one of Jesus' most well-known teachings. After seeing Jesus heal and hearing him teach, many people eagerly gathered to listen to Jesus! They were intrigued by the way Jesus "taught with real authority" (Matthew 7:29). He didn't need to cite references or other scholars. Jesus spoke with certainty and confidence, covering practical issues that many people faced.
- ➔ The Bible notes that Jesus sat down as he explained the meaning of the law. Sitting was actually the customary practice of preachers and teachers at the time. How cool would it be to sit down and learn at Jesus' feet?
- ➔ Jesus begins his sermon with a series of blessings we now call the Beatitudes. The promises he gave here may have seemed scandalous at the time. Jesus blessed the kind of people that society would have never expected—those who mourn, the poor, and the persecuted. Jesus' words would have gone against the popular beliefs of the time and may still seem counterintuitive to our idea of happiness today.



Why It Matters...

Children may receive mixed ideas about what is right or wrong. Friends, parents, teachers, and even social media sources don't always agree, and the resulting message can be confusing. Kids want to know which way to go in this dark, confusing world. In a post-modern culture that decides its own truth, Jesus provides us with the real truth and the most fulfilling way to live. He gives us direction so we can know what's right. In the Sermon on the Mount (and throughout the Bible), Jesus sheds light on which direction we can take to follow him. In preparing for today's activities, reflect on times that God has helped you make the right decision. Then remind the kids at your VBS of the many practical ways Jesus gives us direction—through reading the Bible, prayer, and talking with Christian adults they trust. You could be that person for a child today!

➔ **Key Verse:** "He will show you which path to take." (Proverbs 3:6)

Bible Point: **Jesus gives us direction.**

God Sightings®

Keep looking for evidence of God all around us. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today, help preschoolers look for evidence of God's directions for our lives. Here are a few examples:

- ➔ Thank God for the Bible, which tells us how to be kind and loving toward others.
- ➔ Thank God for family members and teachers who can give us good advice.
- ➔ Point out songs from Sing & Play Rock that remind us to follow Jesus and light up the world.



- 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 other kids have safe homes!
- As the week progresses, preschoolers may get tired—or even more energetic! Remember to demonstrate God's powerful love, kindness, gentleness, and patience with these little ones. They're learning so much about God...from you!

DAY 4 Jesus gives us love.

Jesus dies and comes back to life.
(Luke 23:1-24:12)

As You Read, Keep in Mind...

- ➔ In his final moments on the cross, Jesus cried out, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!" (Luke 23:46), which is from Psalm 31:5. During Jesus' time, Jews used this verse as an evening prayer before they went to sleep. What beautiful words for Jesus as he voluntarily gave up his life, and what a beautiful prayer for us today to surrender each day to him!
- ➔ Jesus was buried in a "new tomb carved out of rock" (Luke 23:53). This could have very likely been a cave! Extra measures were taken by the religious leaders to ensure that Jesus' tomb was completely sealed shut. This darkest cave of death had no way out at all! They wanted to make sure nothing could get in...or out.
- ➔ You might say that Jesus' specialty is providing the way out when there is none! Besides Jesus, there are at least eight other individuals whose resurrections are recorded in the Bible—not including the many after Jesus' death (Matthew 27:52-53). God's power, not their own power, raised all eight of these people from the dead. These individuals were just temporarily restored to their earthly lives, and later they all died again. Jesus' resurrection is unique! His resurrection came from his own power as God, and he is the only one who never died again!



Why It Matters...

In a world so broken from sin and its consequences, children may sometimes think that love is tied to their behaviors. When kids do wrong things, they may even feel like they are loved less. Or they may feel like they have to earn more love by following the rules and being good. But Jesus' love is completely unconditional. He died and came back to life again to prove the full extent of his forgiving, healing love for us. We have his love simply because we exist, not because we deserve it. As you prepare for VBS today, say 1 John 3:16 with your name in place of "us." Consider Jesus' personal love for you and for the kids who come to your VBS. Look for ways to affirm God's unconditional, unchanging love to the kids you encounter.

➔ **Key Verse:** "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us." (1 John 3:16)

Day 4

Bible Point: **Jesus gives us love.**

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. If 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. If 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®

God Sightings can help preschoolers discover that God is doing amazing things all around us every day.

Today, help preschoolers think of God Sightings that show God's love for us. Here are a few examples:

- ➔ Be thankful for the world—God gave us a big, beautiful home full of *amazing* creation!
- ➔ Praise God for sunshiny summer days full of fun and activity with our friends.
- ➔ It's the ultimate God Sighting—Jesus! God sent his only Son to take the punishment for *our* sins.

Bright Ideas From Your Director



DAY 5 Jesus gives us his power.

Jesus ascends and empowers his followers.
(Acts 1:1-11)

As You Read, Keep in Mind...

- ➔ There are two important reasons for Jesus' ascension. First, the event marked the end of Jesus' earthly ministry; second, it marked the beginning of the Holy Spirit's ministry through each one of us. In a sense, Jesus allows us—his followers—to continue what he started!
- ➔ As Jesus went up into heaven, "he was taken up into a cloud" (Acts 1:9). This cloud is meant to symbolize the shekinah, which is the Hebrew word for "the dwelling of God." Throughout the Bible, God revealed his invisible presence in a visible way—like the pillar of cloud that led the Israelites by day and the cloud around the mountain at Jesus' transfiguration. The cloud at Jesus' ascension is a reminder that God is always with us!
- ➔ After Jesus' ascension, one of the first tasks his disciples carried out was finding a replacement for Judas. The man chosen had to be an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry from the time of his baptism by John to his ascension. Matthias, whose name means "gift of God," was selected to serve alongside the other eleven. God provided this gift of another disciple to share his power in spreading his love!



Why It Matters...

Power is a big thing for kids—they emulate super heroes who have amazing power, read about fictional kids who receive supernatural powers, and even play games based on characters with special powers. While they may not have those superhero abilities, they do have God's power, and his is the strongest of all! As he promised in his last words before ascending to heaven, Jesus has given all of his followers—even kids—the awesome power to share his love! We have the same power that brought Jesus back to life right inside of us! At VBS today, draw on God's power to make sure every child knows about the life-changing love of Jesus!

➔ **Key Verse:** "Our great power is from God, not from ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Day 5

Bible Point: **Jesus gives us his power.**

God Sightings®

Today, help preschoolers think of ways we can use Jesus' power to *be* God Sightings to others and shine Jesus' light. Here are a few examples:

- ➔ We can encourage our family and friends to treat each other with thoughtfulness.
- ➔ We can invite friends to church or Sunday school.
- ➔ We can help out with chores around the house before being asked.

Thank You to You!

Thanks for all you've done to help preschoolers learn about God's *powerful* love!



Bright Ideas From Your Director



- 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 Cave Quest VBS 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, birthday cards, and greet kids who attend your church.
- Give each child his or her Bible Memory Buddies and other fun goodies from Cave Quest VBS.
- Thank your Tad's Preschool Pool and VBS Directors for all they've done to demonstrate God's awesome, loving power 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: _____

Address: _____

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Family members: _____

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Name: _____

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Family members: _____

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