

Day 1

Bible Verse:

"From beginning to end, you are God." (Psalm 90:2)

Bible Story:

Only God could create the world. (Genesis 1)



Did You Know?

- ◆ The word *genesis* comes from the Greek word *geneseos*, meaning "origin, source, generation, or beginning."
- ◆ Genesis spans more time than any other book of the Bible, extending from the creation of the world through hundreds of years of history within the stories of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.
- ◆ Most scholars agree that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. Since Moses wasn't alive when God created the world, God must have given Moses special revelations about how the world was made.
- ◆ In Genesis 1:5, God gives names to the light and darkness—day and night. Ancient kings named a thing or person as a way to claim ownership over it. By naming each part of creation, God declares that he is Master, Lord, and King over all he made.
- ◆ The Holy Spirit is first mentioned in the second verse of the Bible in Genesis 1:2: "And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." This verse celebrates that the Holy Spirit was just as much a part of the creation of the world as the other two persons of the Trinity.
- ◆ The ancient Greeks and Romans worshiped the earth, sun, sea, sky, and other elements of nature as deities. But Genesis 1 clearly illustrates that God is Creator of the whole universe and everything that's in it. Psalm 89:11 says, "The heavens are yours, and the earth is yours; everything in the world is yours—you created it all."



Bible Point: God is real.



Why It Matters...

Life is filled with so much uncertainty. Whether it's moving away and going to a new school or a parents' divorce, kids know what it's like to experience instability in life. Today give the kids who come to your VBS the wonderful assurance of God's existence. Help them understand that God is real and that he loves them! Proof of God's existence is everywhere—we just have to see it! From the overwhelming vastness of our galaxy to the intricacies of each unique snowflake, God leaves an undeniable trace of his magnificence in each piece of his creation—including us!



Day 2

Bible Verse:

"God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him." (1 John 4:9)

Bible Story:

Jesus is born to show God's love. (Luke 2:1-20)



Did You Know?

- ◆ There are dozens of prophecies in the Old Testament surrounding the birth of the Messiah, and Jesus fulfills every one! Among those prophecies:
 - Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfills Micah 5:2: "Bethlehem...a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past."
 - Jesus' virgin birth was foretold in Isaiah 7:14: "The Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel."
- ◆ After Jesus' birth, Mary wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger. This wasn't an accident! Mangers held food for animals, giving them sustenance and life. Jesus called himself the Bread of Life, and he is what gives us strength, nourishment, and everlasting life.
- ◆ The shepherds were the first people to hear the good news of Jesus' birth. Shepherds were among the lowest of the low in their society and considered unclean. Because the angel told these men about Jesus' birth first, God showed that his love and the gift of Jesus are for everyone.

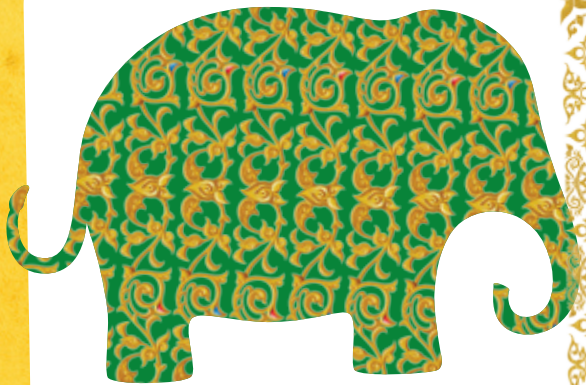


Bible Point: God is love.



Why It Matters...

Kids can never receive too much love! While many of the kids at your VBS come from loving, caring homes, it's likely that some come from homes where there is abuse or neglect or where the word *love* just isn't used that often. No matter how much love kids experience in their day-to-day lives, all kids need to know they have a Father who loves them unconditionally. In today's lesson, help kids to see that God is the source of love and that he loves each of us more than we could ever imagine!



Day 3

Bible Verse:

"This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." (1 John 4:10)

Bible Story:

Jesus dies to forgive our sins. (Luke 23)



Did You Know?

- ◆ The Romans reserved crucifixion—a cruel, painful, and slow way to die—for criminals without Roman citizenship. Usually only slaves, rebels, and the worst political offenders received such a gruesome sentence. This horrible public punishment was meant to deter crime throughout the empire.
- ◆ After being cruelly beaten, Jesus was forced by guards to carry one of the beams of the cross, a common practice in Bible times. Jesus carried this beam about a third of a mile, and the wood beam could have weighed as much as 125 pounds.
- ◆ Luke is the only book of the Gospels that tells about Jesus forgiving the thief. Jesus tells the thief, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The word *paradise* is only used three times in the New Testament. (It's also in 2 Corinthians 12:4 and Revelation 2:7). Some scholars believe the word refers to a place of rest between death and resurrection.
- ◆ When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain in the inner sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two. This inner space, the Holy of Holies, was the earthly dwelling place of God's presence. God ordained that only the high priest could go past this curtain once a year. The torn curtain revealed that now, because of Jesus' sacrifice, anyone who puts their faith in Jesus has access to God.



Bible Point: God is forgiving.



Why It Matters...

Jesus lived a perfect life and was wrongly put to death. Everyone who witnessed Jesus' death knew a great injustice had taken place. Jesus didn't deserve to die, but he still forgave the people who crucified him! Today help kids understand that because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we have been forgiven for our sins too. When we accept Jesus' gift, we are forgiven for the sins we have already committed and for the wrong things we will do in the future. Share with kids the wonderful news that there is nothing they can do to make God love them less and nothing they can do that God won't forgive them for. God is prepared to forgive us an infinite amount of times—he is the ultimate forgiver!



Day 4

Bible Verse:

"For he is the living God, and he will endure forever."
(Daniel 6:26)

Bible Story:

Jesus promises us an eternal home. (John 14:1-3)



Did You Know?

- ◆ John devotes one-third of his book to the 24-hour period before Jesus' death. Chapters 13-17 describe one continuous scene from this last night, and the chapters are filled with realistic detail and a moment-by-moment retelling of the conversation between Jesus and the disciples—nothing like these chapters exist elsewhere in the Bible.
- ◆ Jesus described heaven as a house filled with many rooms, an expression meaning unlimited space. So we know heaven is really big—big enough for everyone who believes in Jesus!
- ◆ Jesus gave his disciples this message of comfort and the assurance of heaven to help prepare them for what was ahead. He knew the disciples would soon face many trials and persecutions, beginning with his own betrayal, trial, and crucifixion.
- ◆ Jesus mentioned heaven many, many times in the Gospels. But he didn't give many details of what heaven is like. This is because Jesus was more concerned with making sure people knew *how* to spend eternity with him—by believing in him! "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).
- ◆ Jesus used parables often during his ministry to explain truths to his followers. But during his last night with the disciples, described in John 13-17, Jesus spoke very plainly. This was Jesus' last chance to make sure the disciples understood who he was, the work he had for them, that he would have a place waiting for them in heaven, and that he would one day return to earth!



Bible Point: God is forever.



Why It Matters...

Sometimes the Bible can seem like a big history book filled with stories from a long, long time ago. But our God is not a character in a story from once upon a time. God always has been and always will be—he is forever! Use today's lesson to help kids discover the hope they have in a heavenly future. Share the excitement Jesus' followers have and the unimaginably wonderful home we have waiting for us in heaven!