

THAILAND TREK



Elementary Crew Leader Guide



Welcome to Thailand Trek

God Loves the World

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Heard that passage before?

We thought so.

But take a close look at John 3:16. A fresh look. A deep look.

God loved *the world*. God didn't just love you, your neighborhood, your community, your city, or your country.

God loved the *entire world*. God sent his Son as a gift of love for people—people who speak English, Mandarin, Spanish, Quechuan, Thai, Malayalam, Hindi, and Farsi.

God didn't want to be separated from people—people who wear jeans, saris, kimonos, ponchos, and kilts.

God wants a relationship with people—people who eat sushi, coconuts, tacos, naan, curry, and croissants.

With Cross Culture VBS, you'll get to share the sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of one unique culture with the kids in your community, while helping them discover God's eternal love for the world. As a result, you'll create confident, faith-filled kids who understand the power of Jesus' love in a diverse world.

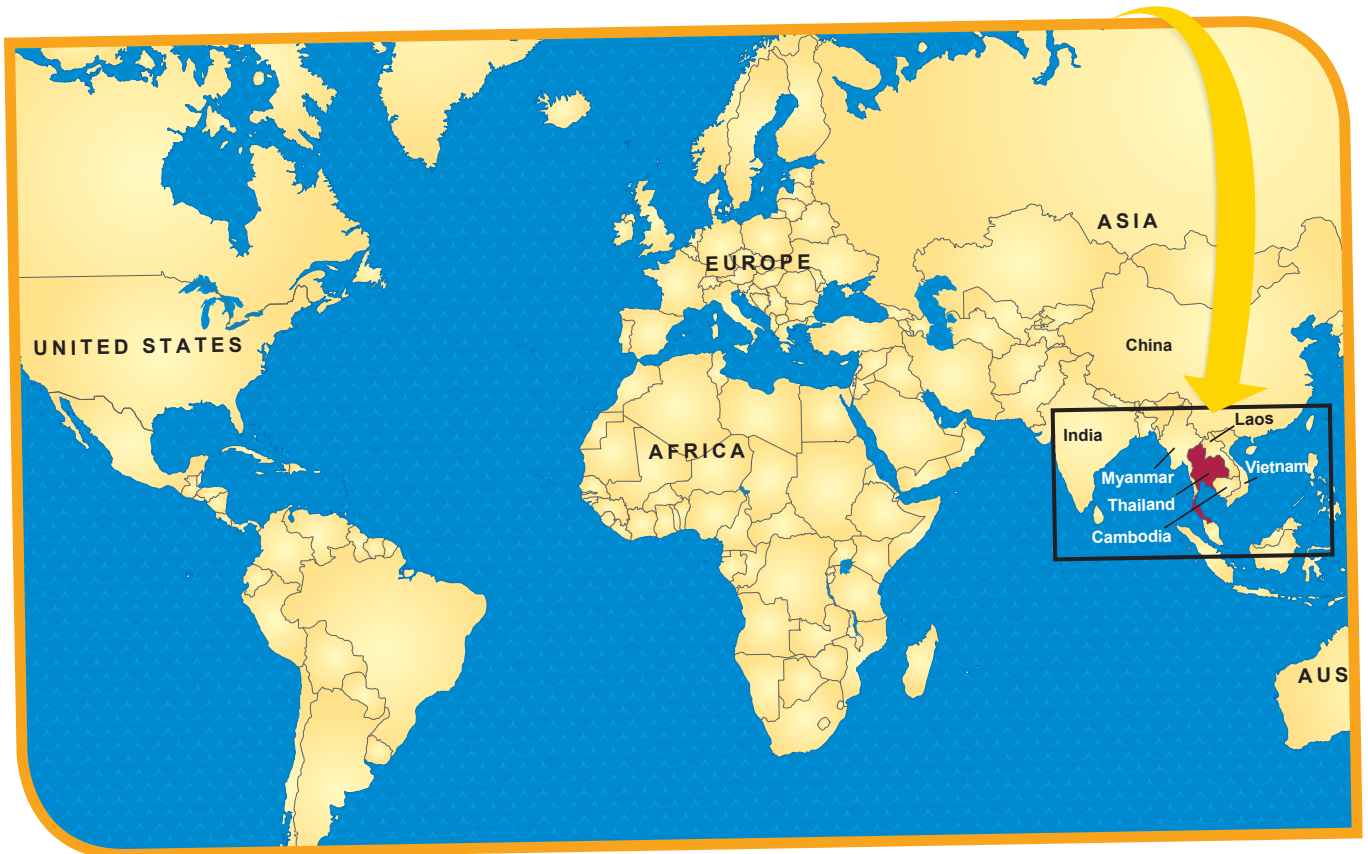


Pack Your Suitcase for Thailand

Nestled between the Southeast Asian countries of Myanmar, Laos, and Cambodia, Thailand fits like a little puzzle piece. What will the kids at your church love about this remarkable culture?

- ◆ **Color:** The streets of Thai cities blaze with colorful lanterns, lights, and signs. Gold, glitter, flowers, and fabric catch your eye wherever you go.
- ◆ **Sound:** Your ears delight to lapping waves along the coastline, beeping tuk-tuks in the cities, and trumpeting elephants in the countryside.
- ◆ **Taste:** Although many of us only think of spicy Thai food, kids in Thailand enjoy a huge array of sweet and tangy fruits like mango, banana, coconut, papaya, and oranges.
- ◆ **Smell:** In this Buddhist country, the scent of incense is on every street corner. Unique flowers and spices make noses happy!
- ◆ **Touch:** Feel the soft sand between your toes, touch the rough skin of an elephant, run your fingers along a piece of smooth silk, or brush some sticky rice off of your lips!

Not an expert on Thai culture? *Don't worry!* No one expects you to be! In fact, it's a good idea to let kids know that you're learning right along with them!



How Does Thailand Trek Work?

Kids begin each day's adventures together at **Opening Celebration** where they sing and do fun motions to exciting Bible songs that introduce the concepts they'll be learning that day.

Then Crews (small groups of up to five kids and one adult or teenage leader) follow a daily schedule to visit one of four stations. One-fourth of the Crews visit **Bible Adventures**, where kids experience the daily Bible story with all five senses. Another group of Crews will play **Thai Games**, while another group creates (and eats) scrumptious **Thai Treats**. The final group of Crews will visit **Experience Thailand** to dig into authentic and surprising things that kids in Thailand might do every day! After 20 minutes, Crews rotate to a different station. After four rotations, all elementary Crews come together for music and more at a **Closing Celebration**. Check out page 10 for a more detailed look at what happens during each day's stations.

Travel Tip

Don't have a smartphone or device? That's okay! The Experience Thailand Station Leader may have tablets available for each rotation. Ask your VBS Director how he or she is planning to accommodate this part of each session.

What's a Crew Leader?

If you've been asked to be a Crew Leader, you've met two important qualifications: You love the Lord, and you love children. During Thailand Trek VBS, you'll visit different activities with a group of three to five children. *You're not in charge of preparing or teaching activities; you just get to be there and help kids enjoy the activities as you shepherd the members of your Crew.* Because your Crew is small, you'll get to know and affirm each member by asking questions, really listening, and being encouraging.

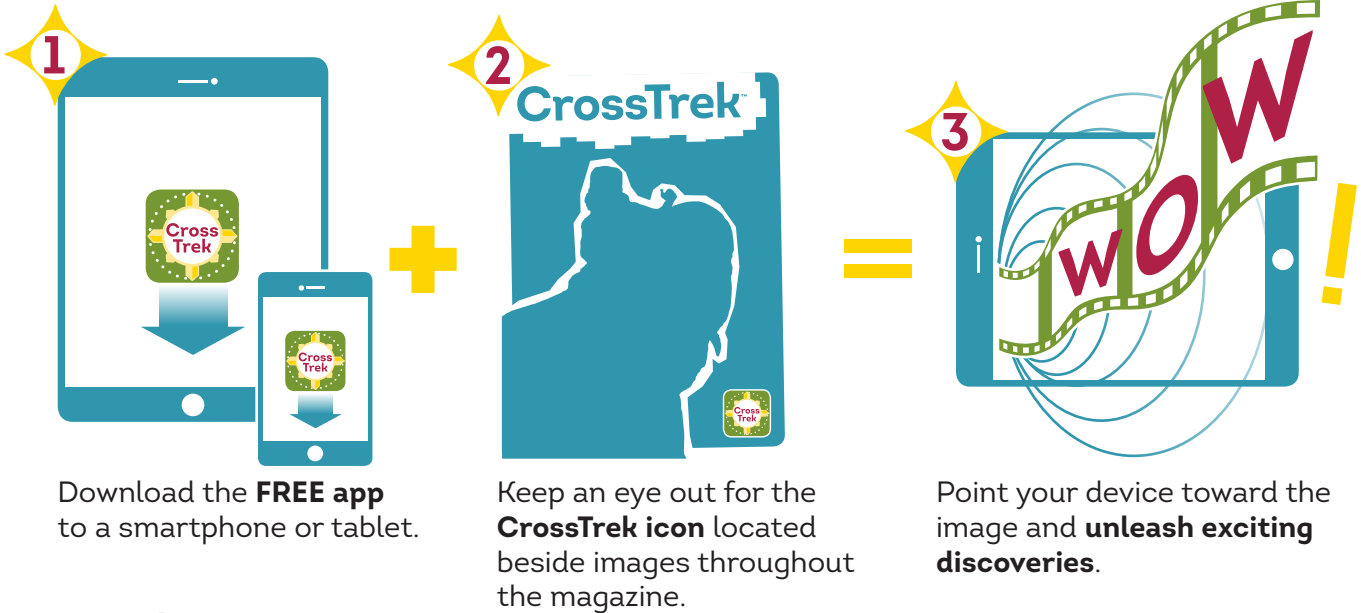
Since most of us haven't been to Thailand, this VBS brings Thailand to you! Each day you'll have the chance to use the CrossTrek student magazine, along with the free CrossTrek Thailand app. When these two tools come together, Thailand comes to life for the kids in your Crew! You'll get to show kids real footage of a Chiang Mai market, a busy Bangkok street, kids taking part in a sports festival, and much more! In field tests, these clips were a highlight of each day's program!



To download the CrossTrek app, just scan the icon shown in the margin with your smartphone, iPod, or tablet, or go to Google Play or the Apple App Store. To see how it works, with the app open, lay a CrossTrek student magazine in front of you. Point your device at any picture that has the CrossTrek icon next to it...and watch what happens!



At the end of the week, kids will take home their CrossTrek student magazine. Parents can download the free app so families can explore even more of the book together!



Search: CrossTrek Thailand
 Available on the **App Store** **ANDROID APP ON Google play**

Who's Who in the Crew

During the first Opening Celebration, kids will choose Crew jobs. Each child will have one of the jobs listed in the chart below. If children can't agree on who should perform each job, tell them that everyone will get a chance to do all the jobs. Assign jobs to kids for Day 1; then rotate jobs each day. The name badges also list these Crew roles on the back. If your Crew has fewer than five kids, some kids may have more than one job. Kids are excited about having special jobs. Encourage kids to fulfill their roles, and provide lots of opportunities for them to do so.

Jobs	Duties
Travel Coordinator	chooses action ideas for traveling through Thailand Trek (such as slithering, hopping, or "swimming")
Luggage Handler	distributes and collects supplies and helps carry the Crew's pack
Prayer Person	leads or opens prayer times
Schedule Supervisor	helps monitor the daily schedule to let the Crew know what's coming next
Thank You-er	leads the Crew in thanking Station Leaders each day

The Crew Family

Every member of your mixed-age Crew adds something to every activity

I'm going into fourth grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to be challenged. I can help younger members of my Crew with challenging projects.

I'm going into sixth grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to make choices. I can help younger Crew members with tasks and help the Crew Leader guide everyone in showing Jesus' love.

I'm going into fifth grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to ask questions. I can help my Crew ask questions to make sure we understand what we're learning.

I'm going into first grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I have a great imagination. I can help my Crew dive into each Bible adventure!

I'm going into second grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I like to be the best. I can help encourage my Crew to be the best it can be.

I'm going into third grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I want everything to be fair. I can help make sure we all take turns and treat one another fairly.



Top 4 Crew Leader Tips

Use Positive Words Like These:

- Let's keep moving so we can do as many fun activities as possible.
- Listen carefully so you'll know what to do next.
- Stay with the Crew; we need your help in this activity!
- That's a unique way of doing things! How did you think of that? Let's try it this way.
- It's important that we all follow the instructions and work together as a team.
- Please move over here so you can see better.
- Let's all sit in a circle so we can see and hear one another better.
- Those Bible Memory Makers sure are cool! Let's keep them put away so we can hear about this next activity.

Participate!

- Sing the songs and do the motions.
- Play the games.
- Be curious in Experience Thailand, and share your own insights.
- Use your imagination in Bible Adventures.
- Share your own God Sightings.

Support the Station Leaders.

- Quickly form knee-to-knee circles.
- Listen to each Station Leader, and encourage kids to listen too.
- Follow any instructions the Station Leaders give.
- Put the Crew pack out of the way during activities.
- Be enthusiastic.

Lavish your attention on the kids.

- Turn off your cellphone; contact your friends after VBS.
- Use kids' names in kind and loving ways.
- Use eye-to-eye contact.
- Be an active, tuned-in listener during discussions.
- Give hugs or high fives throughout the day.
- Be there for the kids as they arrive. Get there early. Check with your VBS Director to see when he or she would like you to arrive each day.

Be positive.

- Model the behavior that you want kids to have.
- Positively acknowledge kids' answers to questions. Rather than saying "No, that's the wrong answer," say "Thanks for sharing. Anyone else have thoughts?"
- Admit it if you don't have an answer. Learning about a new culture is likely to bring up questions you just can't answer. That's okay! Seek out the answers alongside kids. (Start by asking Station Leaders or your VBS Director.)
- Smile!
- Have fun!

What to Do If...

Most of the time, things will go smoothly for your Crew, but every once in a while you may run into a dilemma. Here's some advice on how to handle different challenges.



If my Crew won't stay together...

Encourage your Travel Coordinator to come up with creative ways to travel. Or work with your Thank You-er to come up with cheers to say as you travel.



If older kids are unhappy being grouped with mixed ages...

Highlight their helping role. Encourage them to help younger kids with snack preparation and other activities. Acknowledge them by telling younger kids, "[Name of older child] is really good at that. Why don't you ask him [or her] to help?"

If I have a clique in my Crew...

Cliques can make the Crew experience unhappy for the outsiders. Encourage friendships among all Crew members by pairing kids with partners they don't know very well during games and other activities.

If a Crew member won't participate...

Help shy children feel welcome by calling them by name and asking them questions directly. Respond to their questions with a smile and a statement such as "That's really interesting!" Also try giving children special jobs. For example, assign them the task of finding a place for your Crew to sit at each station.

If someone doesn't want to participate in Thai Games, that's okay. VBS can be tiring! Let children rest until they're ready to participate.

If people in my Crew don't get along...

Quietly take the children aside. Tell them you've noticed that they're not getting along. Let them know that although they don't have to be best friends, they do have to be together all week, so things will be a lot more fun if they can at least be kind to one another. (Use the daily Bible Points for these teachable moments!)



If I have an overly active child...

Pair this child with yourself during partner activities, and suggest that he or she sit with you during quiet times. Try to make sitting still a game by saying, "Let's see how long you can sit still without interrupting. I'm timing you. Ready? Go!"

If those suggestions don't work well enough, ask your Director if you can have an Assistant Crew Leader to help the child focus and participate.

If my Crew gets too big...

Thailand Trek is a blast, so it's likely that kids will want to bring friends. However, the activities at Thailand Trek are designed to work with a mixed-age Crew of *no more than* five kids. If you have a small Crew, you'll welcome a few additional friends into your Crew family. But if your Crew grows past five children, talk with your VBS Director as soon as possible. He or she will need to form a new Crew so kids can have the best experience possible.



What Do I Do at Each Station?

Opening Celebration is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. Kids also watch the KidVid video about a real child in Thailand and learn about God Sightings. Your job at Opening Celebration is to:

- greet your Crew members in your designated seating area.
- follow the motions and sing out loud.
- talk about the KidVid videos and the children from Thailand you meet on the video.

Experience Thailand is where kids discover what daily life is like for kids in Thailand. Your job at Experience Thailand is to:

- listen carefully to the Station Leader.
- share your own comparisons between daily life where you live and for kids in Thailand.
- show kids the clips from the CrossTrek Thailand app when asked.
- help kids complete their activities (*when* they need help).

Thai Treats is where Crews come for a tasty snack. Your job at Thai Treats is to:

- gather your Crew in a designated area.
- help your Crew focus on the Thai Treats Leader as he or she explains the snack.
- guide kids in making delicious (and sometimes surprising) snacks.
- help kids clean up your area before leaving.

Thai Games is where kids play authentic Thai games. Your job at Thai 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.

Bible Adventures is where kids experience the Bible story for that day. Your job at Bible Adventures is to:

- line up with your Crew outside the door.
- listen carefully to hear how Crew Leaders should help out that day.
- encourage Crew members to participate.

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

- lead kids to your assigned seating area.
- participate in singing and other activities.
- remind your Crew to participate without being rowdy or disruptive.
- collect Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Makers and store them in your Crew pack.



On Day 4, kids get to create cool pancake art. Your Crew will gather around its own griddle for this experience. Watch kids closely, and help them be mindful of where they put their hands so no one gets burned. You may need to help younger kids if they have trouble squeezing the special batter from the squeeze bottles.



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!



Bible Point: God is real.

God Sightings®

Every day at Thailand Trek, 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."

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.

Today share about something or someone God has made that makes you smile. Here are a couple examples:

- ◆ Thank a child for being kind to someone else. Say, "God gave you a sweet, friendly smile!"
- ◆ During games say, "God gave you the gift of laughter! When I hear your laughter, I just want to laugh with you!"



Sit in knee-to-knee circles for discussions. Call on kids by their Crew role. For example, say, "I'd like our Travel Coordinator and our Prayer Person to answer the next question."

Trek Tips From Your Director



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!



Bible Point: God is love.

Talking About Buddhism

Today in Experience Thailand, kids will talk a *little* about Buddhism, since it's such a prevalent part of Thailand's culture. (Thailand is 95% Buddhist and only 1% Christian.) *Don't worry! This isn't a time to dig into or try to teach the specifics of Buddhism.* However, some older kids may have questions that you're unprepared to answer. If so, go with the child to your church's pastor or VBS Director. The following chart will help with some simple questions and may give you a basic understanding of some key differences between Buddhism and Christianity.

	Buddhism	Christianity
God	There is no god (or if there is, it is unknowable). However, there is a universal force that runs through all things.	God is the ruler of all and exists as one God in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is the eternal creator of the universe in which we live. God reveals himself to human beings through the Bible and through creation.
Jesus	Jesus was a man who had good teachings. He may have been an enlightened teacher. He was not god.	Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. He is God's Son and part of the Trinity. Jesus died on a cross and came to life for the forgiveness of sins.
The World	Zen Buddhists don't give an explanation for the world's existence. They believe people cannot definitively understand where the universe came from.	The world was created by God.
Sin	There really is no such thing as sin. However, people can create bad karma through their thoughts and actions.	All human beings are sinful, and that sin separates them from God.
The Afterlife	Nirvana (bliss) may be reached after complete enlightenment. Many Buddhists believe that one's consciousness will cease existing after death and the person becomes a part of the energy that makes up the universe	Human beings who have a faith relationship with Jesus will go to heaven when they die and spend eternity with God. Those who do not place their faith in Jesus will be separated from God in hell.
Religious Texts	The Tipitaka are the collected writings of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha). Buddhists also refer to a variety of writings from enlightened teachers throughout the ages.	The Bible

Trek Tips From Your Director



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!



Bible Point: God is forgiving.

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.

You may want to lead the child in a simple prayer inviting Jesus to be part of his or her life. You may also want to share one or more of the following Scripture passages with the child. Encourage the child to read the Scripture passages with you from his or her own Bible.

- John 3:16
- Romans 5:8-11
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 2:4-8

If you feel uncomfortable about talking to the child, refer him or her to your church's pastor or another leader who will help the child understand what it means to believe in Jesus.

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

Trek Tips From Your Director



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!



Bible Point: *God is forever.*

Take It Home

We want kids' curiosity about and compassion for the country of Thailand to continue! Talk about how kids can keep learning about Thailand, its people, and the Christians there. With your Crew, plan to pray for kids like James, Ami and Nami, Peng, and B and C. Think of how your CrossTrek student magazine and CrossTrek Thailand app can spark conversations about faith at home and with friends. Encourage kids to carry their Bible Memory Makers as reminders of God's Word and his amazing love for the world.

Trek Tips From Your Director

After the Trek

- ◆ 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 VBS is over. 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 Makers, CrossTrek student magazine, and other fun goodies from Thailand Trek.
- ◆ Thanks for *all* you’ve done to help children learn about God’s love for the world!



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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