



Preschool
**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.

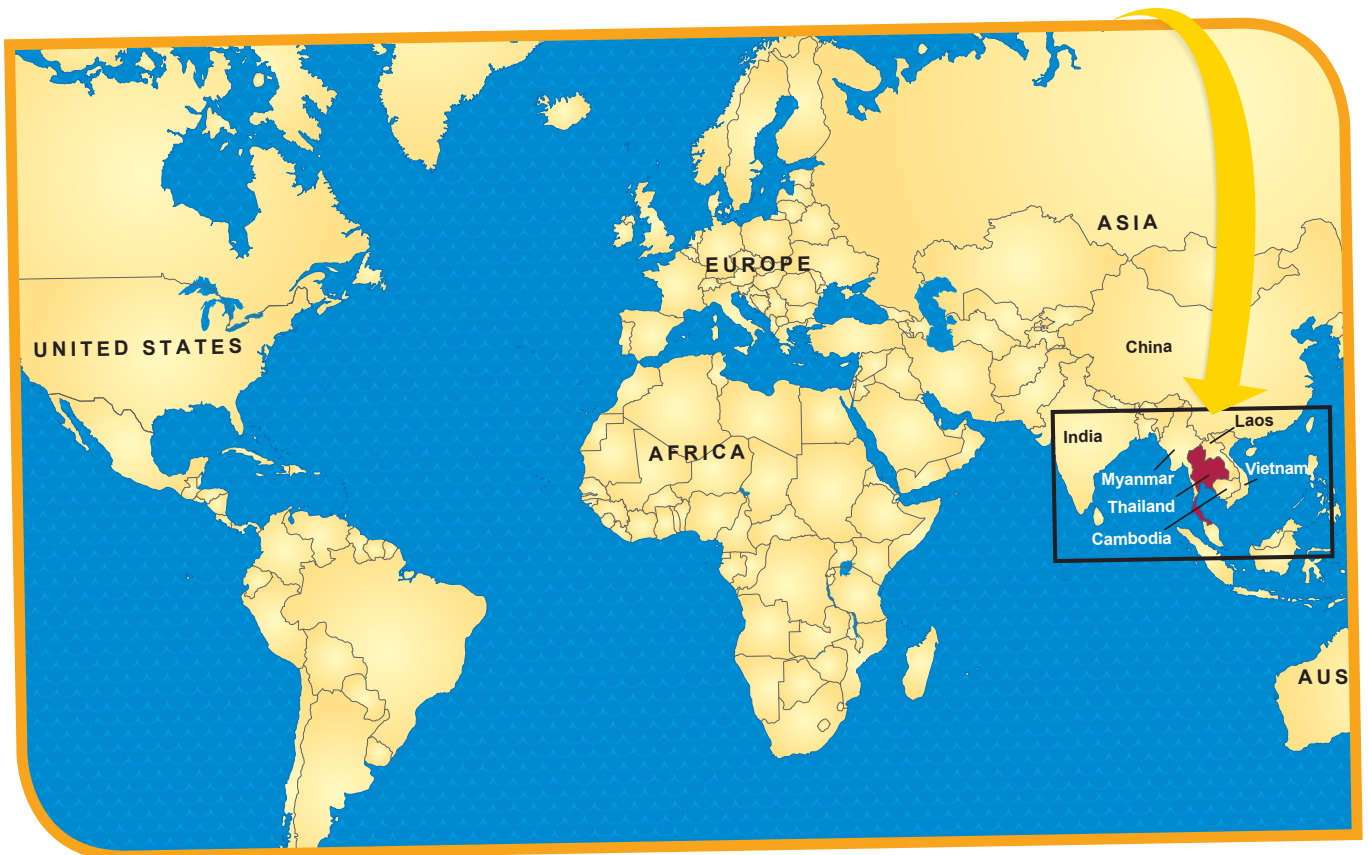


Pack Your Suitcase for Thailand

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! For preschoolers, the specifics of Thai culture are minimal. We've chosen the biggest, best, and most memorable things to share with little ones. You'll focus primarily on the Bible Points, interspersed with some of the unique, multisensory Thai experiences kids love.



How Does Thailand Trek Work?

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

Then preschoolers join their Crews (small groups of up to five kids and one adult or teenage leader) and travel to **Preschool Passport**. Your little travelers ease into their day by choosing from a variety of hands-on **Exploration Stations** that reinforce the Bible Point. Then preschoolers join together for a big, interactive **Bible Adventure**. Next, it's time for scrumptious **Thai Treats**, and a chance to get messy with irresistible **Cross Culture Crafts**. Then preschoolers play **Games** that are guaranteed to wear out their wiggles. Crews come together for a quick **Closing Circle** time before parents arrive to take them home.

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 Thailand Trek, 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
- someone who supports 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 30 minutes early each day.** Report to Preschool Passport for a quick touchbase with the Preschool Director, and then head to the Celebration area. Be ready to greet children who arrive early. Your welcoming presence will bring smiles to anxious faces!
- ◆ **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 activities.
- ◆ **Be available during Exploration Stations.** Stay at one station and guide the kids who come there, helping them make the connection between these “free-play” activities and the daily Bible Point. (Your Preschool Director should have a handout available at every station that makes this connection.)
- ◆ **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!*)
- ◆ **Accompany children to Games, Thai Treats, and Cross Culture Crafts.** If necessary, read the instructions at each station, and help children complete the activities. Distribute supplies as needed.
- ◆ **Repeat the daily Bible Point often.** The more children hear or say the Bible Point, the more likely they are to remember it and apply it to their lives.
- ◆ **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 with their Bible Memory Makers.** Every day, children receive an adorable Bible Memory Maker. You'll help them slide the Memory Makers on their Thailand Trek carabiner. At the end of each day, have preschoolers leave their carabiner and Bible Memory Makers with you. At the end of the week, kids get to take their Bible Memory Makers home.
- ◆ **Keep track of your Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Makers.** Put these in a Crew pack, and keep the pack 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 Passport Pages 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.**

Trekking With Preschool Crews

Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at Thailand Trek 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'll probably need a little help to complete some of the activities, especially those that involve fine motor skills or cutting with scissors.

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 Passport. We enjoy listening to Bible Adventures and answering interesting questions, such as "What would it be like to ride on an elephant?"

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

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.

Starting Off on the Right Foot

- ◆ On this first day at VBS, meet your Crew at Celebration. Be sure you're there early!
- ◆ 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 for a short time.

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."

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

- ◆ Thank a preschooler 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!"
- ◆ As preschoolers help put toys away or throw away their cups and plates from snack, say, "Wow! I see God's helpful hands... right there on you!"

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.**

Showing God's Love

- ◆ 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. Have fun with your Crew members as you look for God in action each day.
- ◆ Smile as you interact with preschoolers. Your words and actions are tangible representations of God's love!
- ◆ After enjoying Thai Treats, you may want to take a quick break with your Crew to allow time for a bathroom stop!

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 things or people that show us God's love. Here are a couple examples:

- ◆ Thank God for the beautiful, colorful sunrise.
- ◆ Thank God for the Station Leaders who are sharing God's love with us here at Thailand Trek VBS!

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.

News to Use

- ◆ 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 kids in Thailand. Ask preschoolers what good things about God they'd like to tell children in Thailand.
- ◆ As the week progresses, preschoolers may get tired—or even more energetic! Remember to demonstrate God's love, kindness, gentleness, and forgiveness with these little ones. They're learning so much about God...from you!

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).

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.*

Wrapping Up the Journey

- ◆ 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 Thailand Trek 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 and other fun goodies from Thailand Trek.
- ◆ Thanks for *all* you’ve done to help preschoolers learn about God’s love for people around the world!

God Sightings®

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

Today help preschoolers look for ways we can be God Sightings to others—showing God’s awesome love to the people around us. Here are a few examples:

- ◆ Hug the Station Leaders, and thank them for teaching about God’s love.
- ◆ Say a bedtime prayer or sing a song with a younger sibling.
- ◆ Help a neighbor sweep sidewalks or carry in the newspaper.

Trek Tips From Your Director

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: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____