Whitewater Valley Presbytery
Presbiterio Norte de Quintana Roo
Present:

Vacation Bible School
Class: Adults

For more information, see http://www.whitewatervalley.org/hm_vbs2011.htm
God the Builder
God the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth
Day One Adults

THEME: God creates everything, and continues to create
BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 1:1-2:4
MEMORY VERSE: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”
Genesis 1:1

Objective
• That the student may recognize that God is the creator of the sky, the earth, and all that is in it, and that they may feel responsible for taking care of the creation that God has put in their hands.

Preparation
• Pray that God may give you the wisdom to use the proper words so that the student can understand the word of God.
• Use the appropriate time to be able to read and become familiar with the Bible story and its content.
• Prepare and organize the materials needed for your class.
• Memorize the memory verse in order to set the example to your students.
• Above all, act with love and dedication by showing an attitude of service, understanding, and interest towards the students.
• Read Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Psalm 8
• Attendance list
• Lesson theme pins to mark attendance
• Bulletin / Cork / flannel board
• Newsprint
• Glue
• Markers, crayons, color pencils
• Pictures of beautiful natural scenery throughout the world, and pictures of polluted land and/or bodies of water, animals, etc.

Material

Introduction
Greet students as they arrive. Let them know you are glad to see them. Hand out name tags.

Encourage them to continue coming to VBS. Let them know they can invite friends.

Introduce the overall theme of VBS, today’s theme and the passage for the day.

Studying the Bible Passage
Ask students to close their eyes (or use a blindfold to cover them) and have them describe what they see. Most of them will agree that they cannot see anything; that everything is dark. Let them know that this is how it was at the beginning of time before creation. The only one that existed was God; he has no beginning or end.

God designed and created everything that exists with his great power. He simply ordered things to be done, and they were made out of nothing. No one can make something out of nothing. Only God can do such a wonder, and now we can enjoy all of God's creation.

Ask the students to take turns reading a Bible verse from today's passage.

God is the great creator, because he created everything around us without anyone asking him to do so. He formed matter, designed time, and everything else according to his will and wisdom. When God created time, he made the day and the night of the first day. He created the sky, or the heavens, on the second day.

On the third day God created the seas, the land and the trees.

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon and stars.

On the fifth day, God created the animals that live in the water and all the birds.

On the sixth day, God created all the animals of the land. He created those that we have as domestic animals today and wild animals. On this day, God also created the first human beings, which were Adam and Eve. He first created man, and later used a rib from the man to create the woman.

When God completed his creation, he saw all that he created and said that it was very good. Then, on the seventh day, God rested because he was done creating everything that we can see and enjoy today.

Not only did God give creation to human beings to live in and enjoy it, but also for us to take care of and preserve. However, this command is not being fulfilled today, because many people do not care for the environment. For example, there is a lot of trash produced, many trees are cut without any consideration for the environment, and bodies of water are polluted. We currently have problems with the ozone layer. Some of the consequences caused by this problem are the melting of ice glaciers, which can cause flooding in some places, and some skin diseases because of the lack of protection from the sun.

How do you feel when you think about us being a small part of all that God has created? (Let students answer). I feel like God makes human being so special, because we are able to take care of creation. Ask the students to take turns reading Psalm 8.

Reflecting on the Bible Passage
Do you remember what God created? Allow your students to respond. Write their responses on the board.

It is very important for us to remember that no one ordered God to create this great work. It was God's own decision to create the entire universe and made us human beings to live in and take care of it.

Do you believe that we are fulfilling our task of taking care of God's creation? When God created the heavens and the earth, they were not polluted.

Ask the class to mention some of the practices that human beings commonly do that have a negative impact on the environment. Some responses may include:

- Not recycling trash
- Polluting water
- Wasting water
- Cutting down trees without any concern for the environment

Add to the list any ideas the students may have. Ask them what measures can be taken to take care of the environment. Make a list of these measures.

We should give thanks to God because he created us, and created for us a beautiful world. We can do this by praising him, singing songs of praise. However, we should always have in mind that it is our responsibility to take care of creation. When we act responsibly with God's creation, we demonstrate that we are grateful to God, and that we are fulfilling our responsibility.

Applying the Bible Passage to Our Lives

How can we help take care of God's creation? Encourage them to express their thoughts. Expand on them if possible. Encourage responses from everyone. You may want to list some on the board or on newsprint.

Some ideas to share:

- Explain the importance of using plastic bags as little as possible. Every time we put trash where it should go, and every time we recycle we are doing our part to take care of our environment. Make sure you explain and give examples of recycling if you see or think that the students may not know what it means.
- If we go to the beach or to the park, we should always make sure we pick up our trash. By doing this, we keep the waters and the land from being polluted. This is what it means to act responsibly, to take care and appreciate all that God has made for our own benefit.
- When we take care of the plants and animals of the land we help in maintaining the balance of life. We all benefit from this, especially with the global warming concerns that we have. Instead of cutting down trees in a way that is out of control, we should take care of the ones that we have, and if possible, plant new ones.
We please God when we act responsibly and take care of the world in which we live. However, there are many people who do not act responsibly. That is why we should set the example and take care of our surroundings. At this point you may want to show pictures of polluted water and/or land to show how the planet is affected when humans do not act responsibly.

**Optional Activity:** Students can organize a meeting with the session of the church or the pastor and talk about what can be done at the church to do a better job in taking care of the environment. (maybe start by recycling unused bulletins, etc.)

**Conclusion**

God is the great builder. God created a beautiful world so that we may live in it. We have the task to take care of creation and everything that is in it. Even though there may be a lot of pollution on the earth, we can still do our part to make our planet a better place.

Encourage students to take care of the bodies of water that are around us, animals, and everything that is in planet earth.

Emphasize that if we do not take care of creation, we will suffer the consequences. For example, we may not have clean water to drink. Ask them if they would be able to live without water, or food. Encourage them to be committed to taking care of creation so that we may have a better quality of life for many years to come.

Close in prayer.
God the Builder
Dios el Constructor

The Potter Shapes the Clay
Day Two

Adults

THEME:
God shapes our lives according to God’s purpose.

BIBLE PASSAGE:
Jeremiah 18:1-6

MEMORY VERSE:
“The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me.” Psalm 138:8

Objective

• To learn from this passage that they are “wet clay” in God’s hands and that God is shaping their lives.

Preparation

• Prepare for this lesson by first asking God to open the eyes of your understanding of His Word (Ps. 119:18) and to prepare you to teach His message.

• Read Jeremiah chapters 1-18 to put the story in context.

• Bible, paper and pencil for each student, and a blackboard or marking board to write on.

• Teacher may want to put together a time line of the time prior, during and after the exile.

Material

• Clay or play dough

Biblical Background:

In 627 BCE, the vassal nations in the Assyrian Empire revolted, including Judah, ruled by King Josiah, whose ambition was to reestablish the empire of David and Solomon. Five years later, Josiah launched a reform that reaffirmed the covenant of Moses and centralized the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Judah was initially successful, but its dreams of independence ended with the death of Josiah at the hands of the Egyptians at Megiddo (609 BCE). Within a year or two after the battle of Carchemish (605 BCE), Judah became a part of the Babylonian Empire, ruled by King Nebuchadnezzar. A later king of Judah, Jehoiakim (609-598 BCE), died during an unsuccessful revolt against Babylon, and the first exiles were taken to Babylon (597 BCE). A second rebellion, led by the last king of Judah, Zedekiah (597-587 BCE), resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and the second, more comprehensive exile in 587 BCE. After zealots assassinated the Judean governor, Gedaliah, Jeremiah was forced to accompany a group of Jews seeking exile in Egypt. The Babylonian captivity lasted until 539 BCE, when the Persian king, Cyrus, conquered Babylon and allowed the exiles to return home.

Jeremiah’s prophetic career coincided with these critical events in Judah’s history (627 BCE – 539 BCE). The early period of his life is difficult to reconstruct. It is most likely that he opposed the unabashed enthusiasm for the political ambitions of Josiah and spoke of a “foe from the north”,

God the Builder / Dios el Constructor: Potter shapes clay

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who would bring destruction (Jer. 4-10). This foe was not clearly identified as Babylon until the battle of Carchemish. If active at the time, Jeremiah may have initially supported Josiah’s reform, though this reformation ended with the king’s death in 609 BCE. Before coming to Jerusalem after Josiah’s death, the prophet preached repentance by returning to the ancestral faith (Jer. 3) and acquiescence to the Babylonians as the sole means of avoiding national destruction, thus gaining for himself powerful enemies within Judah. (The Harper Collin’s Study Bible (NRSV); Harper Collins Publisher; 1993; p. 1111)

During the time leading up to the exile, the people of God did not obey God’s commandments and turned away from God. So God, through the use of the kings and their armies, sent the people into exile to Babylon. During the exile, the people were separated from their homes, land, families and culture. They were very unhappy and felt that God had forsaken them. The study passage finds Jeremiah either during or after the exile. The Lord sends the prophet to the potter’s house. Jeremiah finds that the clay formed vessel, which the potter is molding, has a flaw in it. The potter doesn’t throw the vessel away. He simply reworks it and creates a new one. Upon completion of the new vessel the potter pronounces it “good”. Then the Lord asks the question, “Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.” (Jer. 18:5-6) The people of Israel have sinned against God and are damaged. God gives the people hope that they can be restored to new life. They can be shaped and molded into a new vessel after the exile.

Introduction

- Greet the group. Offer an opening prayer asking God’s Spirit be present in your discussion and worship as you study his Word.
- Briefly go over the lesson from yesterday regarding how God creates everything as in the beginning (Genesis) and is still creating.

Studying and Reflecting on the Bible passage

Teacher will need to give an overview of the history of the time leading up to the exile and during it. It is important for the students to know that the exile was due to the people of Judah and Jerusalem turning away from their commitment and reliance upon God. Walter Brueggemann says, “Judah’s destiny in the world depended upon obedience to Yahweh’s commandments. When Israel obeyed Yahweh’s commands, it prospered. When Israel disobeyed, it suffered.” (A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament; Abingdon Press; 1999; p. 328) The passage today speaks to hope that lies in the reshaping found in the forgiveness of God.

Read Jeremiah 18:1-6

Discuss the following questions with the students:
- What part of the story stands out to you and why?
- Why does the Lord send Jeremiah to the Potter’s house?
- What did Jeremiah notice the potter doing?
- Why would the potter not throw away the spoiled clay and start over with new?
- When the potter reshapes the clay, does he have a plan for the shape or does it just happen?
- Why does God claim that the reworked vessel is good?
- What does the scripture mean when the Lord says, "Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel."

Applying the Bible passage to our life

God reworks the clay and produces a good product. This product is something good in the eyes of God and can be used for a purpose. God shapes our lives today according to God's purpose.

If time permits, the teacher may want the class to use some clay or play dough to create some sculptures or work it with their hands.

Have the class talk about the following process that a potter goes through when creating a clay vessel.

1. The potter begins with clay that is brown and ugly

2. The potter picks up a clump of clay and makes sure it is very moist to create an object

3. The potter throws (places) the clay on the moving wheel and begins to evenly form the shape

4. The potter shapes the clay with his wet hands, slowly molding the clay into the desired object

5. If the potter is not pleased with how the object is turning out, so he stops the wheel and pulls off the clay, restarts the wheel and throws the clay again.

6. The potter is pleased with his object and decides on the glaze (a special kind of paint used on pottery) to add color and allow it to hold moisture

7. The object is placed in a kiln (a type of very hot oven) and fired (heated to a certain temperature to permanently hold the shape)

8. Once it is baked, it is removed from the oven and cooled and this is ready to use.

How does God shape your life like the potter molds the clay?
Does God reshape your life like the potter does the clay, when the flaw appears? (How?)

How do you see the shaping and reshaping of your life fitting into God's purpose?

Does God have a memory? Are there a certain number of times that God reshapes us before God gives up?

Does God reshape us with our knowledge of it? Do we need to be open to God's will?

Do we need to do something for the reshaping/remolding to occur (as in repentance of sin)?

Does God use others in your reshaping? Do you take part in God remolding others? How?

Is God's reshaping us more about forgiveness or character building (or both)?

How does the reshaping from God reflect God's love for us?

Is the reshaping of God's hands easy or difficult to experience? Do we always welcome the change of God remolding us?

Our memory verse - Psalm 138:8 - The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me."
How does this verse fit the lesson for today?

Conclusion

Jeremiah is called to the potter's house to witness the potter at work. We have talked about the potter reworking the damaged clay into something that is good in God's eyes. Many of you have shared how God continues to reshape us for God's purpose. May we be open to the remolding of God's hands in our life.

Have someone close in prayer or go around asking everyone to share one way they have experienced God reshaping their lives, lifting this all up in a thanksgiving to God.
God the Builder

The Spirit of God Breathed Life into the Dry Bones of the People of Israel

Day Three

THEME:
God creates hope and new life in the midst of desperation and death.

BIBLE PASSAGE:
Ezekiel 37:1-14

MEMORY VERSE:
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Objective

- That the students recognize that God gives life to what is dead, and that we find hope and new opportunities only in him. If we trust in God, he will give us a new life with a promising future.

Preparation

- Pray that God may give you the wisdom to use the proper words so that the student can understand the word of God.
- Use the appropriate time to be able to read and become familiar with the Bible story and its content.
- Prepare and organize the materials needed for your class.
- Memorize the memory verse in order to set the example to your students.
- Above all, act with love and dedication by showing an attitude of service, understanding, and interest towards the students.

Material

- Attendance list
- Lesson theme pins to mark attendance
- Pictures or illustrations of human skeleton, muscular system and of the human body.
- Chalk Board/Whiteboard

Introduction

* Greet students as they arrive. Let them know you are glad to see them.

* Encourage them to continue coming to VBS and that their attendance is very important. Let them know they can invite friends.

* Introduce the overall theme of VBS, today’s theme and the passage for the day.

Studying the Biblical passage

* Ask students to take turns reading verses of the passage.
The Bible tells us that many years ago a prophet called Ezekiel had a very strange experience. God gives him vision that is a bit unusual. You all know that are bodies are made up of many different parts. (Show them the picture of the human skeleton) Some of the parts of the body are called bones. Do you know what they do? They give structure and support to our body. Another part of our body is our muscular system. (Show them a picture) Our muscles help our body move.

In this picture we can see the circulatory system, which provides nutrition to all the parts of our body and allows them to have the energy to work normally.

These are some of the parts of the human body. When a part of the body is not working right it can cause problems. Just imagine if you broke a bone or strained a muscle. It would hurt a lot and you would not be able to things as easily as you are used to.

During the time of this story, God spoke to his people through prophets. One day God took the prophet Ezekiel to a valley. A valley is an open and very wide place. Let us imagine how that valley was. The prophet was walking through this valley noticing that it was full of dry bones. Do you think that this was a pleasant view? Would you be afraid of walking through a place like this? Ezekiel was not afraid to see a valley like this. God asked him, “Son of Man, can these bones live?” Perhaps God asked him this just to see what the prophet would say. The prophet responded “O Sovereign Lord, you alone know.” God ordered him: “Speak to these bones and say to them, ‘Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! God says that he will give you life, will cover you with flesh and skin and you will live again. Then you will know that God is Lord.” When the prophet began to say these words, there was a loud noise that was heard throughout the land, and immediately, the bones obeyed and began coming together. They then began being covered by muscle tendons and skin. (As you narrate this part you may want to show the pictures of the entire skeleton, muscular system and the human body). Skeletons just like this one were formed and then muscles were formed like we see in this picture. This continued until the human body was formed like this one. The bodies were formed, but they still didn’t have life. God told Ezekiel to prophesy over (speak life into) the bodies. The bodies were filled with life and stood up. There were so many bodies with life that there were enough to have an entire army. God explained this vision to the prophet. God told him that the bones represented the people of Israel, who felt like they had no hope, and were very sad. However, God was determined to give them a new life and new hope. God wanted to give his people a new purpose in their lives. He demonstrated this by giving the prophet the vision of the dry bones and adding a message of hope for his people.

You may feel sad and without hope just like the people of Israel. God wants to give you a new hope so that you may no longer be sad. God is more interested in you than you imagine. What you say, think, and feel is really important for God. God wants you to know that, and that you acknowledge him as the only God and trust in him fully. He is God the builder, and the one who restores lives.

Reflecting on the Biblical Passage

It must have been weird, or even scary, to be in a place like the one Ezekiel was in, and see so many dry bones, right?
Perhaps it may be scary for some of us to have an experience like this and be in a place full of bones. It truly must have been a gloomy experience. However, Ezekiel was very obedient to God. The Bible does not say that the prophet was afraid or that he no longer wanted to see the vision. He spoke to the bones just as God ordered him to, and he was able to see how the bones began coming together, coming to life, and forming many human beings. This must have been an impressive experience for the prophet. He was witnessing the building of life from bones that were completely dry. God took dry bones that were without life and breathed life over them just like he did when he created Adam and Eve. Even though it was a vision, it was something that no one had ever experienced.

God gave a message to his people through that vision. It was a message of life and hope, because the people felt lost and without hope. God gave them a reason to feel animated to continue marching forward. God tells Israel that he is willing to give them a new life. God demonstrated that the breath of life is in his hands.

If you have felt sad because of something that has happened to you, only in God can you find a new happiness. He is willing to give to you a new life.

God is not only the builder, but he also rebuilds our feelings and our very life. He does not want us to be sad. God is willing to breathe new life into us.

Just like the prophet, we can be witnesses of the marvelous work of God in our own lives. All God wants is for us to trust him, and then he will do his perfect will in our life. The plans that God has for us are great ones. They are better than what we can imagine. All we need to do is allow God to work in our lives. God wants to manifest himself just as he is: Magnificent Creator and Restorer of Life.

Just like the prophet, we can be witnesses of the marvelous work of God in our own lives. All God wants is for us to trust him, and then he will do his perfect will in our life.

**Applying the Bible Passage to Our Lives**

God is very interested in knowing how his people feel, what they think and what they say. That is why he had to show the prophet a vision of dry bones. Although the message may be a bit strange for us, it brought a message of hope, new life and new joys to the people.

The people should only trust in God the builder of life because he would renew them, animate them, and give their lives a new purpose.

If you have felt very sad just like the people of Israel, you should put your trust in God and he will give you joy. It does not matter what may have caused you to feel sad, God is capable of rebuilding those things that may be dry or have no life. I could be your job, your finances, your relationship with your family or anything else that is affecting you. There is nothing impossible for God. God can restore what you may have thought was dead because he is the giver of life. Do not doubt. God wants to help you. Just have faith.
The most beautiful thing about this message is that God is willing to give new life, regardless of whether we ask for it or not. He wants to do a marvelous reconstruction in our life to show us that he is God.

God wants to build a new life for everyone that may feel like those dry bones, sad and without hope. You can witness the great divine power that comes from God if you allow him to work and restore.

Conclusion

If you have experienced sad moments remember that the God truly exists. God is the builder of the heavens and the earth and can give new life. God is the one who gives life and new opportunities to enjoy all of his blessings. We simply have to trust and believe.

Who is capable of giving life? Only God. Let us put all of our trust in him. When you feel sad, afraid, or when you feel there is no hope, know that only God can help you. God can give you new hope and new joy.

God wants you to trust in him always. Just like he cares for the people of Israel, he also cares for you. Whatever you think, feel, and say is very important to God. God is always willing to build new lives that recognize him as God.

Do you want to be happy? God wants to help you. Put your life in God’s hands, and you will not be sorry you did. You will enjoy his presence and his love. You will have new strength to confront all of your problems, no matter how difficult they may seem.

Only God is capable of bringing life to where there was none before. There is nothing that can resist God’s voice. God simply speaks, and it is done. There is nothing that can equal God’s power and love.

Conclude with prayer.
God the Builder
Dios el Constructor

The wise build on the Rock
Day Four Adults

THEME: God creates faithful followers.
BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 7:24-29
MEMORY VERSE: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." Psalm 118:22

Objective
• To learn from this parable of the wise and foolish builders and understand how we build our faith on Christ, who is our rock.
• Prepare for this lesson by first asking God to open the eyes of your understanding of His Word (Ps. 119:18) and to prepare you to teach His message.
• Read today's memory verse Psalm 118:22 and reflect on how Jesus fulfilled this prophesy.
• Read the parable of the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-29) and consider ways people can be wise and foolish in their faith walk with God.

Preparation
• Bible
• Paper and pencil for each student
• A blackboard or marking board to write on.

Material

Biblical Background:

This parable that Jesus tells is part of the Sermon on the Mount. This particular parable is labeled by some commentators as a "Parable of Preparedness". It is pretty clear what Jesus is trying to tell his disciples. The wise man builds his house upon the rock. When the storms roll in, the wise man's house stands firm and safe. But the foolish man, who builds his house upon the sand, does not survive the storm. His house falls down because the sand cannot support it. The house cannot stand up against the harsh wind and the floods that overtake it.

The pivotal factor in this parable is acting on Jesus' words. The foolish builder, who built on the sand, is identified as one who hears Jesus' words but doesn't act on them. It isn't enough to find Jesus' words interesting, or even agree with them. We are to follow through on the words we hear and live them out, which means we incorporate them into who we are. To act on Jesus' words means we take them seriously and they become part of our lives. Hearing and understanding lead to action on the part of those who build firm foundations. They will be able to weather the storms. In life we will encounter storms. Those storms will often distinguish those who have only heard Jesus'
words from those who are faithful followers. (Parables: Stories for Life; Richard J. Henderson; Resource Book - The Kerygma Program; 1998)

Introduction

- Greet the group. Offer an opening prayer asking God’s Spirit be present in your discussion and worship as you study his Word.

- Briefly go over the lesson yesterday regarding how God creates hope and new life in the midst of hopelessness and death.

Studying and Reflecting on the Bible passage

Read Matthew 7:24-29

Discuss the following questions with the students:
- What part of the story stands out to you and why?
- How was this parable preparing Jesus’ disciples?
- Is it enough to just hear the words of Jesus?
- What action does Jesus request from his followers?
- Does it surprise you that Jesus is so blunt when it comes to the term “foolish”?
- What was so different about Jesus’ teachings compared to the scribes?

Applying the Bible passage to our life

For many of us the storm image in the parable suggests connotations about the turbulence we face as we live. We easily relate that image to weathering storms in our personal lives. To a lesser degree perhaps we find a related meaning in the building of a house. Many of us were taught to be concerned about constructing a firm foundation for our lives, whether it related to school work, moral values, or other aspects of life. The correlation between building a life and building a house is fairly common today.

Discuss the following questions with the students
- Have you ever been in a really bad storm? What was it like?
- How did you feel during the storm and then after it?
- Have you ever experienced a hardship in your life that felt like you were going through a storm? How did it feel?
- When growing up, did your parents stress to you the importance of a good foundation for your life?
- How did you prepare for this?
- Is it just as important to have a strong background such as education, moral values, economic security as it is to have a strong faith?
- Why is it so important to have a strong foundation of faith?
If you have 20 minutes remaining of class time, it is suggested to walk the class through a Prayer of Examen (see pages following the lesson). If time does not allow for this exercise, the teacher should ask the class to share if God is calling them to strengthen their foundation of faith? If so, why and how should they do this?

Conclusion

Jesus calls us not only to listen to his words but also take action. As alternative to closing with the Prayer of Examen, have the class close in prayer by using the following prayer.

O God of the faithful, we come to you this evening, searching our faith for strength. May you show us the areas where we are weak. Help us to know that you are always there to offer direction, strength and love when our foundations begin to crumble. We give you thanks God for your Son Jesus Christ, who is our rock and our Savior. Amen.
Prayer of Examen

This information is taken from Protestant Spiritual Exercises: Theology, History and Practice; by Joseph D. Driskell; Morehouse Publishing; copyright 1999; p. 99-101.

A Prayer of Examen is used to reflect on the nature of God's activity in human life. A Prayer of Examen involves two major activities: (1) an examination of consciousness to discover how God has been present throughout our day; (2) an examination of conscience to discover those areas in our lives that need further growth and healing. A Prayer of Examen helps us search ourselves for an awareness of God's presence in ordinary events. It helps us see how our thoughts, feelings, and actions can more faithfully serve God's work in our daily lives.

Instructions for Prayer

1 - Quiet yourself. Remember that in prayer you are entering into a relationship with God. Using whatever method you find most helpful, take a few moments to move beyond whatever may distract you or intrude on your quiet. Gently find the still point within your being.

2 - Allow yourself time to appreciate the silence. Invite God to be present with you in this time of prayer.

3 - Now look back over the past twenty-four hours. Beginning with the present moment, let each hour of the past day gently pass by your awareness. (For the purposes of the exercise, I will arbitrarily assume you are doing this at 6:30 p.m. When using the exercise, begin at the point in the day when you are teaching it. Pause between each question.) Notice what you are doing now. What were you doing just before coming here to Vacation Bible School? Where did you have dinner? With whom did you have dinner? What were you doing before dinner? What were you doing during the afternoon hours? What did you do after lunch? What was lunch like during your day? Where did you eat? With whom were you? What did you do before noon? What was breakfast like this morning? Was it rushed or did you skip it? Did you have a restful or interrupted night's sleep? Did you dream? When did you go to bed last night? How did you spend your evening before you went to bed? How was Vacation Bible School last night? What did you learn? If you didn't attend, what did you do?

4 - What are you noticing that you have taken for granted during the past twenty-four hours of your life? What feelings and thoughts are emerging as you look back over the past twenty-four hours? What was the most challenging part of your day? Where did you find great reward? What made you most grateful?

5 - Now look back again over this period of time and reflect on the way in which God has been present in your life. Where do you see God at work in your life in the past twenty-four hours? In joys, fears, suffering, work? In an act of service? In your reading? In an event, person, sound, nature, music, action?

6 - When in the past twenty-four hours did you feel you were cooperating most fully with God's action in your life?
7 - Are there areas of your life where you feel you were resisting God's presence or not listening carefully enough to God's will? Are there actions or thoughts that require God's pardon? The pardon of others?

8 - In what ways do you believe God may be calling you to a new awareness, a change of heart, to different actions?

9 - Do you have a sense of gratitude for one or two particular ways that God was present in your life during the past twenty-four hours? If so, allow yourself to experience deeply this sense of thankfulness. Depending on what is appropriate for your context or situation, express your feelings silently or aloud, using words, movement, or journal keeping.

10 - Conclude this period of prayer with a time of silence.

11 - At the conclusion of your prayer time, reflect for a few moments on what you have observed about how God is working in your daily life. Do any of these insights need to be followed by actions? Make a note of things to which you may want to return and reflect on. The teacher may want to have this exercise printed up on a handout for the students to take with them so they can do it at home.
God the Builder

Dios el Constructor

We are the Body of Christ

Day Five Adults

**THEME:**
God builds the Body of Christ, the Church

**BIBLE PASSAGE:**
I Corinthians 12: 12-27

**MEMORY VERSE:**
"So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Romans 12:5

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**Objective**
That the students may:
- Learn the importance of fellowship, unity and harmony with their classmates.
- Identify attitudes that cause division among people.
- Understand that there can be unity within diversity.
- Pray that God may give you the wisdom to use the proper words so that the student can understand the word of God.
- Use the appropriate time to be able to read and become familiar with the Bible story and its content.
- Prepare and organize the materials needed for your class.
- Memorize the memory verse in order to set the example to your students.
- Above all, act with love and dedication by showing an attitude of service, understanding, and interest towards the students.

**Preparation**
- Pray that God may give you the wisdom to use the proper words so that the student can understand the word of God.
- Use the appropriate time to be able to read and become familiar with the Bible story and its content.
- Prepare and organize the materials needed for your class.
- Memorize the memory verse in order to set the example to your students.
- Above all, act with love and dedication by showing an attitude of service, understanding, and interest towards the students.

**Materials**
- Attendance List
- Class theme pins to mark attendance
- Tortoise and hare masks
- Copies of the script below

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**Introduction**
*Greet students as they arrive. Let them know you are glad to see them.*

*Introduce the overall theme of VBS, today's theme and the passage for the day.*

**Studying the Biblical Passage**

*If you choose to act the story out, make two masks: one of a tortoise, and another of a hare. Make copies of the script and hand them out to the students that will help you out in the skit.*
We can see in this story how important it is to work as a team without allowing rivalries or being jealous. We can apply this to our own lives. Things will be better for us if we seek unity and teamwork in everything that we do.

**Ask the students to take turns reading a verse from today’s Bible passage.**

**Reflecting on the Biblical Passage**

Do you know what it means to work as a team? Allow students to respond and make write down their responses.

I would like for you all to remember the story of the tortoise and the hare. At first they acted in a selfish way. Then they realized that sometimes there are moments that we cannot overcome some things by ourselves and that there may be some consequences for not working as a team. After thinking about it, they raced again as a team and were able to have better results. They were able to work harder toward their goals. They saw how important it was not to be selfish and to have a spirit of cooperation with each other.

If we focus on the human body like the Bible passage does, we can see how there is perfect unity between its members. Division and selfishness among the members of the body does not exist. They all work together for the well-being of the entire body.

The heart will never ask for a rest without the rest of the body being affected. If the kidney or the liver rest, the entire body will suffer the consequences. No member is selfish or works for themselves. This lesson shows us that we should not be selfish, and instead, should consider the needs of others and how we can help them.

Each member of the human body has its own function, which benefits every other member. God created us with all of our parts in complete harmony and unity.

The apostle Paul emphasizes this and reminds us that we are the body of Christ. Since we are members that rely on one another there is no space for selfishness or arrogance. Even though we may have different functions, we should always respect one another so that peace, unity, and harmony may reign. That way we can have healthy and happy lives.

God compares the church to the human body and calls it the Body of Christ.

Do you believe we are doing a good job of taking care of the unity of the church?
Applying the Bible Passage to Our Lives

It is important for us to know that in the church we are all different. We have different roles and jobs. However, we should always work towards the unity and well-being of all people.

Ask the students to mention certain attitudes that cause division or arguments among people in general or in families.

If the students do not respond, encourage them, and give some examples.
- Lies
- Selfishness
- Jealousy
- Arguments

Ask them to mention attitudes that promote unity. For example:
- Speak with truth
- Generosity
- Show interest and love for others
- Practice patience

Do you think we can work for unity in the church?

What do you think you need to work on the most in order to fully practice unity? Allow students to respond and encourage them to be open and honest.

We shouldn’t only work for unity at church, but also in our homes and jobs. Wherever we may be, we should always promote unity. We should always seek to serve others and work as a team.

When someone is sick, you see how their entire body is affected. We they begin to feel better, their entire body gains strength. That is why we should use this as an example of unity and do our part to work on our behavior.

God wants the church to be able to live and work in unity and harmony just like the human body. If we fulfill this divine expectation, it will please God and we will have a better life.

The Bible shows how the arguments and divisions that we experience come from our own untamed passions.

Conclusion

God is the great builder, and created a beautiful world for us to live in. We have the responsibility of taking care of creation and everything that is in it. God also wants more commitment for his children to learn how to live in harmony with each other.
Why is it important for the church to seek unity and harmony among its members? Because, it makes God happy. God sees the church as the body of Christ and always wants it to be in unity.

God wants to see his people living in peace, love and taking care of each other. By doing this, we can show the rest of the world that we are God's children.

We should think about how we act and see how we act. Let's choose to always act in unity and harmony with those that are around us no matter where we are: Church, work, home, etc.

We should defeat the selfishness, and arrogance that causes so much damage to the church and everywhere else. We should learn how to work in unity and harmony as we seek to do what's best for the group, before thinking of ourselves.

The early church was encouraged to live in unity and love. Many expressed this by sharing everything they owned. They looked out for each other. They were witnesses of God's love and had good relationships with each other. People from outside the church saw this. Through the witness of the church, God added all those who were to be saved.

Express to the students your appreciation for them to come this week. Invite and encourage them to continue participating in the ministries of the church.

Finish with prayer.
THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

Narrator: Today I will tell you a story of something that happened in a forest. In this forest there was a tortoise and a hare that were always arguing about who was the fastest.

Hare: Tortoise, I am faster than you are.

Tortoise: That's not true, I'm faster than you.

Hare: Ok, well there are some friends here with us (pointing to the rest of the class). Let them tell us who is faster.

Tortoise: Yes, tell the hare that I'm faster. You know what? Let's race to see who is fastest!

Hare: Ok, tortoise. We'll race, but I already know that I'm going to win.

NARRATOR: They agreed on the route they were going to take for the race. As soon as the race began, the hare shot out quickly. After a while, the hare noticed that she was far ahead and decided to stop and rest. The problem is that the hare fell asleep. Even though the tortoise was walking slowly, it caught up to the hare and past her, and ended up winning the race. This teaches us that those who are steady win the race.

Tortoise: I WON! I WON!

Hare: Hey, what happened? NOOOOO!! I can't be! I fell asleep and the tortoise won the race! It's not fair!

Tortoise: You see, hare? I told you I was faster.

Hare: No, I really lost the race because I was too confident and never believing that you could win.

Tortoise: You thought that you were going to beat me.

Hare: Yes, give me another chance. Let's race again.

Tortoise: Ok, hare.

Hare & Tortoise: On your marks, get set, go!

NARRATOR: The hare ran from the very beginning and didn't stop. The hare won by a landslide. This teaches us that those that are quick and aggressive beat those that are slow and stable. But the story doesn't end here. After the race ended, the tortoise stopped to think about what just happened. The tortoise came to the conclusion that there was no way of beating the hare in speed. The way the race was set up, the hare was always going to win. So, the tortoise decided to race the hare once again.
Tortoise: Hey, hare! Give me another chance and I'll show you that I am fast.

Hare: Ummmm, let me think about it. Well, ok. I'll give you another chance.

Tortoise: But now we will follow a different route. We will go through the river in this new route.

Hare: Ok, no problem. Ready, set, go!

NARRATOR: The hare ran as fast as she could until she reached the river. The river was very wide. Standing by the river, the hare asked:

Hare: Now what do I do?! I can't swim!

NARRATOR: Meanwhile, the tortoise got to the river, swam across and continued her own pace. The tortoise ended up winning the race. This teaches us how we can identify the advantages that we may have in a race. In this case, the tortoise knew how to swim, which is why she chose to include the river in the new route. The tortoise took advantage of this and ended up beating the hare in the race.

The story doesn't end here. As time passed the tortoise and the hare became very good friends. They both realized that they were good competitors. They decided to race again. But this time, they would race as a team. In the first part of the race, the hare carried the tortoise until they got to the river. Then, the tortoise carried the hare on its shell across the river. Once they got across the river, the hare once again carried the tortoise until they got to the finish line. They were able to get to the finish line in a record time. They were happier than they had been when they won the races individually.

Hare: This teaches us that it is good to be very talented and have great individual skills. But, unless we are able to work with others and use the skills of each other...

Tortoise: We will not be as good as we can. There will always be situations for which we will not be prepared, but that others can handle better.

NARRATOR: It's important to see that neither the tortoise nor the hare abandoned the race.

Hare: I saw what I did, recognized my mistakes and decided to work harder after I had failed.

Tortoise: Once I saw that speed was my weakness, I decided to change my strategy and take advantage of my strength as a swimmer.

Tortoise and Hare: These races helped us see that if we work together we will have better results!

NARRATOR: When we go through challenges in our life, there are going to be times that it's better to take it easy and trust ourselves. There are going to be other times when we have to make a stronger effort. There will be other moments that it may be better to change our strategy and try something different. However, the best answer to challenges may be to join forces with someone...
else. The lesson of the story is that we should stop competing against each other, and instead join forces with someone to overcome a problem, so that we get better results.

Tortoise and Hare: We all have races to win ahead of us!

Tortoise: There are many hares!

Hare: There are many tortoises!

Tortoise and Hare: AND MANY GOALS TO REACH!!