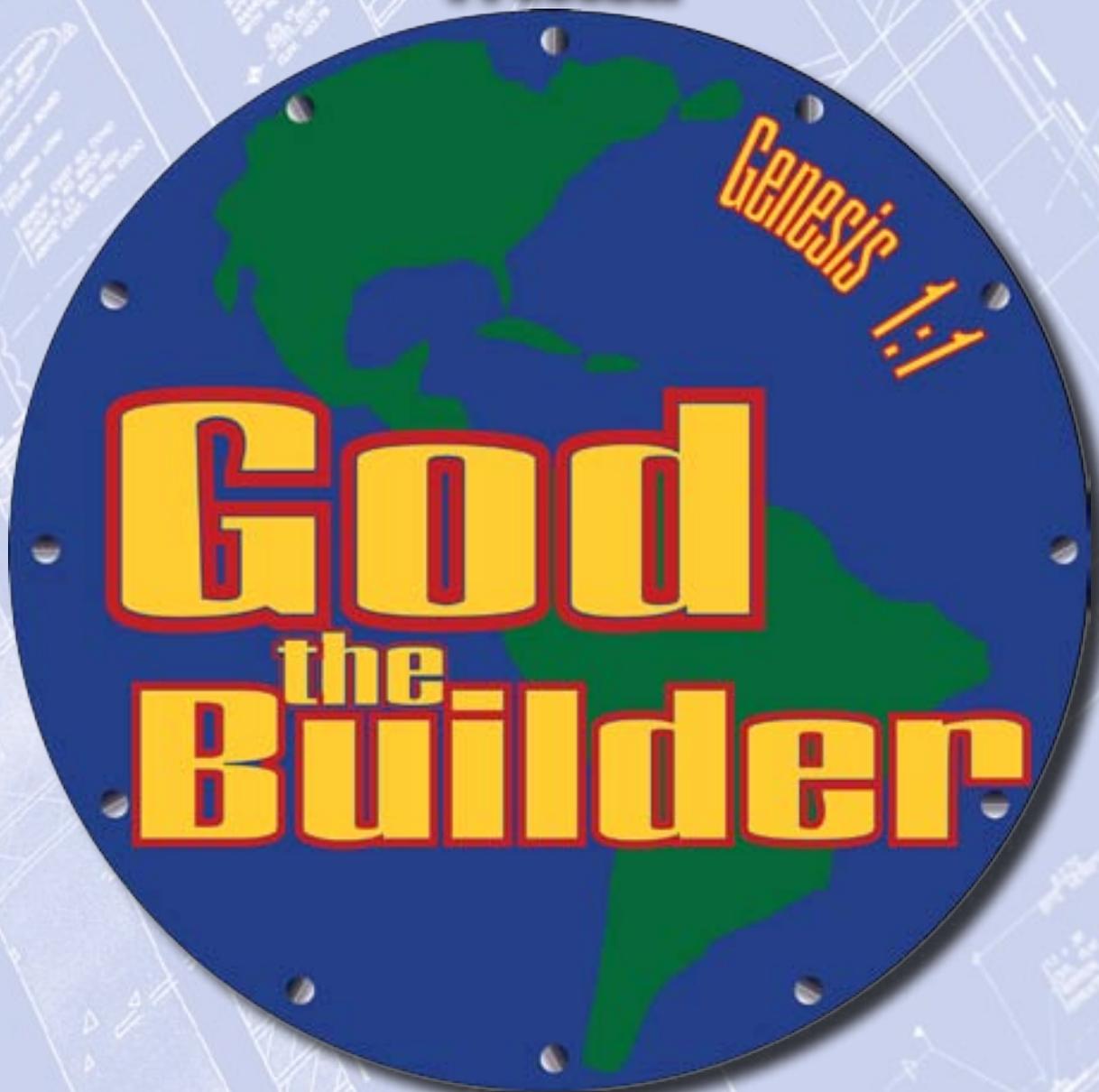


**Whitewater Valley Presbytery
Presbiterio Norte de Quintana Roo
Present:**



**Vacation Bible School
Class: Youth**

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 Youth

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Psalm 8• Attendance list• Lesson theme pins to mark attendance• Bulletin / Cork / flannel board• Creation illustrations• Blank sheets of paper• Newsprint• Crayons and/or markers• Pictures of pristine landscapes and of polluted areas

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 on the second day (*If you have creation pictures/illustrations you may use them to narrate the story*).

On the third day God created the seas, the land and the trees (*Stick on the board each work of creation as you mention them*).

On the fourth day, God created the sun, moon and stars (*Again, stick on the board each work of creation as you mention them*).

On the fifth day, God created the animals that live in the water and all the birds (*If you prefer, ask a student to help you stick the pictures of some animals on the board*).

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: all the beautiful scenery of the earth, and all the planets.

Not only did God give creation to human beings to live in and enjoy it, but also for us to take care and preserve it. 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 make 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 things 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 better 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 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 of 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 maintain 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. Also show pictures of beautiful landscapes or seascapes for contrast.*

Optional Activity 1: Ask students to make posters that share today's lesson with the congregation. It can be a way to encourage the congregation to take care of the environment and/or praise God for creation.

Optional Activity 2: 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 in 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 on 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 Youth

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

- Students will learn that God shapes our lives according to God's purpose

Preparation

- Read Jeremiah 18: 1-6 and get familiar with the scripture.
- Take time for prayer. Pray that God will use/lead you to make an impact on the youth you are about to teach; pray that He may give you passion to reach the youth of this generation and that with love, understanding, wisdom and joy you may be able to lead the class.
- BEFORE CLASS: Set up a table with about 8-10 different vases. Make sure that the vases differ in size, shape, color, etc. Have the table set in front in order for the students to see it as soon as they walk in the room.

Material

- A table
- 8-10 different vases
- Papers
- Pencils

Introduction

- Greet the group. Express to the group how happy you are to see them. Reaffirm them that they are at the right place at the right time. Create a welcoming atmosphere.
- Introduce yourself and any other staff that might be assisting you during this time.
- Open with a brief prayer (or invite one of the students to open with prayer) If you choose to have one of the students do the opening prayer, try to reach out to him/her before class. Sometimes young people do not like to be put "on the spot."
- Divide the group into two groups. Give each group 1 piece of paper and pencil and card with the name of an object, this card we will call "the challenge." The objective of this activity is for each group to invent or re-invent a specific object and draw it in a piece of paper. You will come up with the "challenge" (for example: "invent or reinvent a toothbrush or a

toilet seat). Each group will have only 3-5 minutes to draw their creation. Ask the group to be as creative as possible.

- Once they are done, have 1 person from each group show their new invention to the opposite team. Do not give the name or the purpose of the product.
- After a few guesses, if the other team has not guessed the name of the product or its use, have the group explain their new invention and its use.

Studying and Reflecting on the Bible passage

You see how it was not as easy to figure out what each product was going to be used for. We had to ask the "inventor(s)" about the meaning and purpose of the object in order to fully understand their purpose. Just like the objects that surround our life were created with a purpose to fulfill, we too, were created with a purpose.

Let us read Jeremiah 18: 1-6 (*ask for volunteers to read. You may have print outs of the scripture ready in case someone does not have a Bible*).

The scripture we read talks about the prophet Jeremiah's experience in the potter's house. He saw the potter working at the wheel and how he was shaping the clay the way he seemed best. Then the Lord spoke to Jeremiah and said that just like the clay in the potter's hand so are we in His hand.

Applying the Bible passage to our life

1. God is our creator. (*emphasize that we were created by God*)
2. He is working in our lives. (just like the potter is working on the clay, He is working in our lives, so we ARE NOT alone)
3. He has made us in the way that He saw best. God made you the way you are (a girl/boy, tall/small, etc.) with a purpose.
4. Just like in the activity we did at the beginning, in which we needed to ask the inventor/creator of the object for its meaning/purpose, we have to ask our Creator to know that He has shaped our life to fulfill His purpose.
5. The many vases on the table are used for different things. The process in shaping each and one was different, and the hope of the creator of each of the vases is for them to fulfill the purpose for which they were created.

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

Let's close in prayer: God, thank you for creating us with a purpose. Give us the strength to fulfill the purpose for which You have created us. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. *(This prayer could be different if you see that the group is more sensitive to the Word you have taught. Please note, that young people deal a lot with low self-esteem and with a sense of belonging. Therefore, this truth might be an emotional moment for some. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and how He is moving in the room.)*

God the Builder

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

Day Three

Youth

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, comprehension, 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 our 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 do 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 witnessed 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 can inject you with new life, just like he did with those dry bones.

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.

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 no circumstance that God cannot be changed by God. God will give you new hope, new dreams. Although you may feel that there is no hope, all the solutions to negative things is in God's hands.

Conclude with prayer.

God the Builder Dios el Constructor

The wise build on the Rock Day Four Youth

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

Preparation

Material

- Students will learn how parables teach us lessons about following God.
- Read Matthew 7: 24-29 and Psalm 118: 22-23 in order to get familiar with the scriptures.
- Take time for prayer. Pray that God will use/lead you to reach and make an impact on the youth you are about to teach; pray that He may give you a passion to reach the youth of this generation and that with love, understanding, wisdom and joy you may be able to lead the class.
- Set up a table and place the buckets, one on each end of the table.
- A bucket with sand
- A bucket with stones

Introduction

- *Greet the group. Express to the group how happy you are to see them. Reaffirm to them that they made the right choice in attending the VBS and that it will be an evening full of learning and fun! Create a welcoming atmosphere.*
- *Introduce yourself and any other staff that might be assisting you during this time.*
- *Open with a brief prayer (or invite one of the students to open with prayer) If you choose to have one of the students do the opening prayer, try to reach out to him/her before class. Sometimes students do not like to be put "on the spot."*

Studying and Reflecting on the Bible passage

- *Read Matthew 7:24-29 (ask for volunteers to read. You may have print outs of the scripture ready in case someone does not have a Bible).*

- *After the reading, ask the group to come up to the table and stand around the buckets.*
- *Have the students touch and feel the texture of the elements. (specially how the sand quickly runs through their fingers instead of the rocks that stay firm in their hands)*
- *Ask for volunteers to tell you when something "quickly slipped through our fingers" (Sometimes it is better that you as the leader start first with a story of your own, if you see that they group is not as open to share)*
- *In the scripture for today, we find Jesus teaching about the wise man who built his house on the Rock and the foolish man who built his house on the sand.*
- *It is easier to build on sand: compare on easy things to do (for example, give in to peer pressure, choosing not to go to church, choosing not to obey, etc.)*
- *It is harder to build on a rock: compare challenges (following Jesus, when my friends/peers think is the "un-cool" thing to do, etc.)*
- *Building a home is more than just placing 4 walls up; it's all about the foundation!*
- *Explain to the young people the process of building a foundation (digging, finding bedrock, lay cement foundation to build upon, etc.)*

Applying the Bible passage to our life

1. *God is creating faithful followers that build their home on the Rock.*
2. *Jesus IS the ROCK; therefore our lives should be built on Jesus.*
3. *In this fallen world, we have adversities that hit our lives, but if we stand on the Rock, Jesus, he will help us stand firm.*
4. *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

Close with prayer. Heavenly Father; Creator, we come to you to lay our lives before You, our Rock. Give us the strength to follow you faithfully, in the name of Jesus, 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.

Dios el Constructor God the Builder

We are the Body of Christ Day Five Youth

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

Objective	That the students may:
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance List• Class theme pins to mark attendance• Tortoise and hare masks• Copies of the script below

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.

(See script at the end of the lesson)

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.

This lesson teaches us that we should not be selfish. We should pay attention to the needs of others as well. 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 even if we are young?

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

Optional Activity: *Break students up in small groups (you can have only one group if it is a small class). Ask them to do a skit on the topic of unity. The skit can take place in a school, church, household, etc. The purpose of the skit should be to emphasize today's lesson from the Bible passage and the story of the tortoise and the hare. The group(s) should present the skit for the rest of the class. If there is only one group, the class may present the skit in front of other classes in the church (with permission from the teacher of the other class).*

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, school, 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.

It's not easy to do, but it's the best way to go. This way we can construct healthy relationships wherever we are.

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!!