



Totally Catholic
Elementary

Crew Leader Guide

OurSundayVisitor

vbs.osv.com

What's a Crew Leader?

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



Fun Stuff!

Each day during KidVid™ Cinema, you'll give each kid in your Crew a Weird Animals Bible Memory Buddy and help kids slide the Buddies onto a safe break-away chain that they can wear. Each Buddy has the day's Bible verse written on the back, PLUS the Buddies include a free downloadable app. Just scan the code in the margin with your smartphone, iPod, or tablet, or go to vbsbuddies.com to download the app. With the app open, lay a Bible Memory Buddy on a table a few feet away from you. Point your device at the Buddy (as if you're going to take a picture)...and watch what happens!

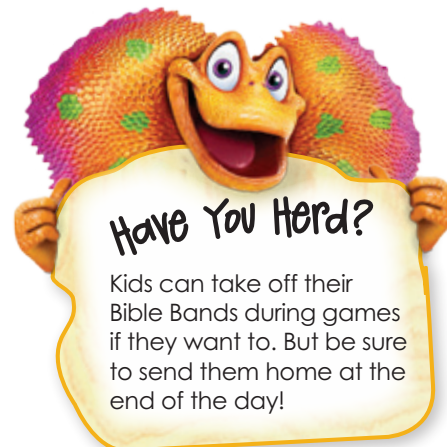
At the end of each day, kids will leave their Safe-Keeper Buddy Chains and Bible Memory Buddies in the Crew bag. *Be sure kids clip the two red pieces back together before putting the chains in the Crew bag.* This way, the breakaway attachments won't slip off. You'll also keep the ends of the chain untangled this way.

You'll also get to hand out Bible Bands to each child during One-of-a-Kind Bible Adventures. Bible Bands are easy to fold into fun-to-wear wristbands that seal with a sticker. These colorful cuffs are an integral part of each Bible adventure! Here's how they work:

- Each unique Bible Band ties into that day's Weird Animals VBS Bible story.
- Every Bible Band guides kids in applying the Scripture they learned at Weird Animals VBS to their everyday lives.

Bible Bands are intentionally woven into Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS as a fun and personal way for kids to connect to Scripture.

vbsbuddies.com



Who's Who on the Crew

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

Jobs	Duties
Guide	chooses action ideas for traveling through Weird Animals VBS (such as slithering, hopping, or "swimming")
Materials Manager	distributes and collects supplies and helps carry the Crew's bag
Prayer Person	leads or opens prayer times
Schedule Supervisor	helps monitor the daily schedule to let the Crew know what's coming next
Thank You-er	leads the Crew in thanking Station Leaders each day

The Crew Family

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

I'm going into fourth grade.

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

I'm going into sixth grade.

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

I'm going into second grade.

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

I'm going into fifth grade.

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

I'm going into first grade.

I'm a unique and important part of my Crew because I have a great imagination. I can help my Crew pretend we're really lepers!

I'm going into third grade.

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



Top 4 Crew Leader Tips

Participate!

- Sing the songs and do the motions.
- Play the games.
- Be curious in Imagination Station.
- Use your imagination in Bible Adventures.
- Share your own God Sightings.
- Give your own insights during KidVid Cinema.

Support the Station Leaders.

- Quickly form knee-to-knee circles.
- Listen to each Station Leader, and encourage kids to listen too.
- Put the Crew bag out of the way during activities.
- Be enthusiastic.

Lavish your attention on the kids.

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

Be positive.

- Model the behavior that you want kids to have.
- Positively acknowledge kids' answers to questions. Rather than saying "No...that's the wrong answer," say "Thanks for sharing. Anyone else have thoughts?"
- Smile!
- Have fun!

Use Positive Words Like These:

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



What to Do If...

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



If my Crew won't stay together...

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



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

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



If I have a clique in my Crew...

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

If a Crew member won't participate...

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

If someone doesn't want to participate in Untamed Games, that's okay. Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS can be firing! Let children rest until they're ready to participate.

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

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



If I have an overly active child...

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

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

If my Crew gets too big...

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



What Do I Do at Each Station?



Sing & Play Stampede is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. Kids also learn about Connecting Kids to Justice in this station. Your job at Sing & Play Stampede is to

- greet your Crew members in your designated seating area.
- follow the motions, and sing out loud.



Imagination Station is where kids can experiment, play, and discover as they use amazing Sciency-Fun Gizmos! Your job at Imagination Station is to

- listen carefully to the instructions because you will most likely need to repeat them for some members of your Crew!
- help kids complete their activities (when they need help).
- distribute each day's Saint Card.
- help clean up your area before leaving.



Critter Café is where Crews come for a tasty snack. Your job at Critter Café is to

- gather your Crew in a designated area.
- help your Crew focus on the Critter Café Leader as he or she explains the snack.
- lead kids in discussing God Sightings, writing them on a God Sightings Tracks sticker, and attaching them to the designated God Sightings Giant Poster.
- help kids clean up your area before leaving.



Untamed Games is where kids play team-building games. (One day of VBS, your Crew will skip games to help make treats for the entire VBS!) Your job at Untamed Games is to

- listen carefully to the instructions so you can help your Crew members follow them.
- participate in each activity, and cheer on your Crew members as they participate.
- participate during one day's game time in a "photo shoot" for the day's Spotlight VBS slide show (a customized slide show featuring the kids and leaders at Weird Animals VBS)!



KidVid™ Cinema is where kids watch videos of five real kids who rely on Jesus' one-of-a-kind love. Your job at KidVid Cinema is to

- encourage kids to tune in and watch the video.
- lead your Crew in participating in the activities before and after the video.
- lead kids in discussion when it's called for.
- give kids the special Bible Memory Buddies each day.

In KidVid Cinema, kids will discuss real-life topics like sickness, autism, bullying, and fear. Don't worry! Each of these is handled in a kid-appropriate way. The kids in your Crew may share very real experiences with you. Don't feel like you have to have all the answers! Use the Bible Point to reassure kids of Jesus' love...and of your love!



One-of-a-Kind Bible Adventures is where kids experience the Bible story. Your job at One-of-a-Kind Bible Adventures is to

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



The Tail End is where kids experience an exciting review of the day's lesson. Your role at The Tail End is to

- lead kids to your assigned seating area.
- participate in singing and other activities.
- remind your Crew to participate without being rowdy or disruptive.
- make sure each child leaves with his or her Sciency-Fun Gizmo and Bible Band.
- collect Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Buddies and store them in your Crew bag.

Our Catholic View

Jesus heals ten lepers. Luke 17:11-19

- There are 55 references to “leprosy” in the Old Testament, and Leviticus 13:1-59 is devoted entirely to God’s instructions for priests to follow in diagnosing and treating leprosy.
- In the ancient world, people believed leprosy was punishment from God for wrongdoing. According to Old Testament law, people infected with leprosy had to live away from their families and friends in leper colonies. Leper colonies still exist today, with more than a thousand of them in India alone.
- After Jesus healed the ten lepers, only the Samaritan came back and thanked him. The Samaritans lived in great tension with the Jews. Jesus tells the Samaritan, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”
- The Gospel of Luke is often referred to as the gospel of compassion because it is filled with stories of Jesus healing the sick and injured. One of the most memorable of these stories is when Jesus heals the ear of the guard who has been sent to arrest him.

Bible Point: Even when you’re left out...*Jesus loves you!*

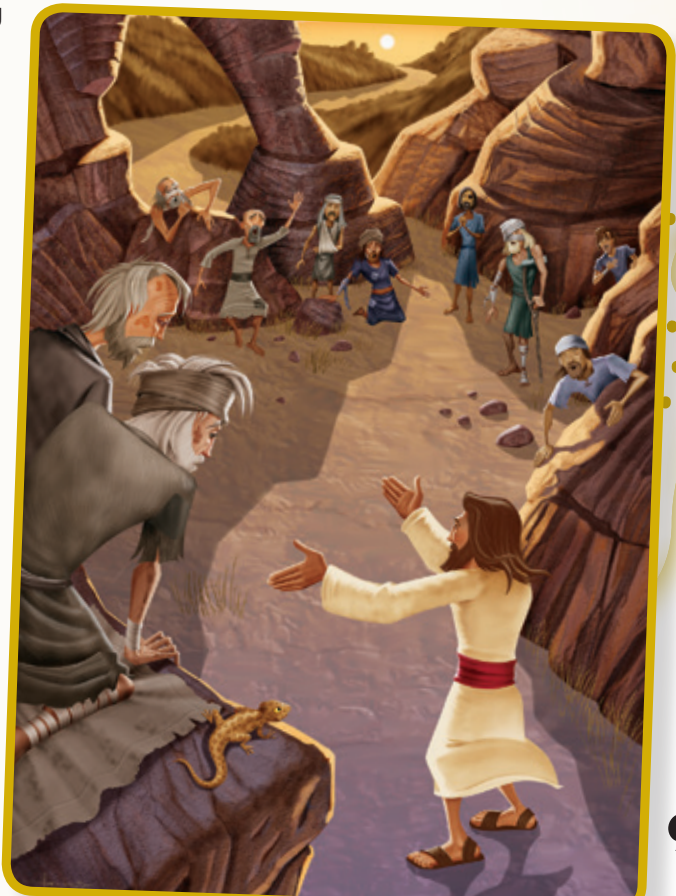
Everyone, big and small, young and old, knows the loneliness of being left out. Everyone has a story to tell, and for kids, it can be particularly difficult. When asked, kids will relate their experiences of being left out of games on the playground, birthday parties, jokes, and friendship circles. When we feel like a “weird animal” who’s been left out of the group, it’s a comfort to remember God’s tender, compassionate, and ever-present love. Today take the time to share that love with each child, as you help kids discover that when we feel excluded, God is always right beside us with a warm and welcoming love.

Catholic ID: The Corporal Works of Mercy

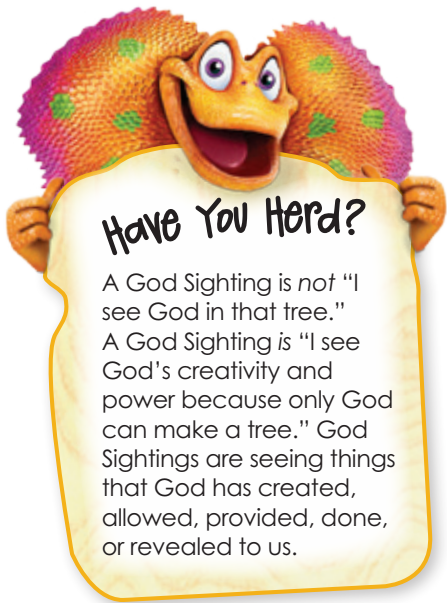
In the Gospels, Jesus teaches us to love and care for our neighbor. Our first understanding of mercy comes from the early life of the Christian community. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that “the works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.” (2447) The Corporal Works of Mercy are those that tend specifically to the bodily needs of people. The seven Corporal Works of Mercy are: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, care for the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. When we perform works of mercy, we receive God’s sanctifying grace.

Key Verse:

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
(Matthew 28:20)



Day 1



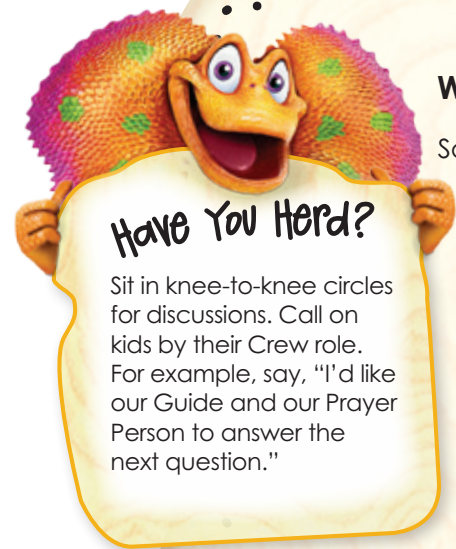
Bible Point: *Even when you're left out...Jesus loves you!*

God Sightings®

Every day at Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS, 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 share about something or someone God has made that makes you smile. Here are a couple examples:

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



Wrap-Up Questions: Shrinking Islands

Say: **In this game, more and more of us were left out of the Shrinking Islands. However, we still could do fun things when we were out—like joining the Untamed Games Leader in high fiving others. In life, it might not be so much fun when we're left out.** Ask:

- ❓ **In one word, tell how you felt when you realized there were no islands for you.** (Sad; mad; disappointed.)
- ❓ **How did this game remind you of feeling left out in real life?** (It's boring; you don't get to do what everyone else is doing; it makes you sad.)
- ❓ **Even though we know it feels bad, why do we leave others out?** (Sometimes we leave people out because we're shy and don't know what to say; sometimes we don't want new people to be friends with our friends.)

Join hands in a circle, and offer a prayer for others who might feel left out in life. Ask God to help everyone welcome and include others and show Jesus' love to them.

Wrap-Up Questions: Zoo Crew Tag

Ask:

- ② **When you were in the middle, how did it feel to have people protecting you?** (Good; I felt safe; fun.)
- ② **When you were part of the circle, how did you protect the person in the middle?** (I put myself between the person and it; I used my arms; I worked with others.)

Say: **Sometimes when we see someone who's left out, they need us to protect them or take care of them.** Ask:

- ② **How can you take care of or protect someone who's left out?** (I can sit with them at lunch; I can call them; I can introduce them to my friends.)



Have You Herd From Your Director?

Our Catholic View

Jesus reaches out to a Samaritan woman. John 4:1-30

- The longstanding tension between Jews and Samaritans involved everything, from the Scriptures they followed to where they believed God should be worshiped. The Jews of Jesus' time considered Samaritans unclean, and they weren't even allowed to touch a cup or bowl that a Samaritan had touched.
- The woman who met Jesus during the heat of the noon hour at the well lived in the Samaritan village of Sychar. She was likely an outcast in her village, because women during that time gathered water in groups early in the morning, to avoid the heat of the day. When she encountered Jesus at the well, she was alone.
- The woman must have been surprised when Jesus spoke to her, because Jewish religious leaders usually didn't speak to women, much less a Samaritan. Jesus looked beyond social prejudices and saw a woman who ached for love and acceptance.
- After her conversation with Jesus, the woman ran to tell others about what she learned. We are like the woman at the well, called to share the Good News.

Bible Point: Even though you're different...Jesus loves you!

Think of a time when you felt really different from everyone around you. The differences may have been physical, social, economic, spiritual, or even emotional. How did it feel to be the "weird animal"? We've all felt like an outsider at one time or another. Sometimes that discomfort makes it tough to stand firm in our uniqueness and be the person God has made us. With today's activities, affirm each child's individuality, and point them to our Catholic teaching that we were all created in the image and likeness of God, with our own gifts and talents. God loves us just the way we are!



Catholic ID: Wisdom

Wisdom is the first and highest of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit—infused in us most often through the sanctifying grace poured forth in the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us that the gifts of the Spirit help to sustain “the moral life of Christians.” (1830) Wisdom is the quest of that which is true, just, and lasting and is found most fully in the knowledge of God as conveyed through the Church. Several books in the Old Testament are grouped together and called the Wisdom Literature. The Book of Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs are among the Wisdom books. This type of writing teaches about God and offers wisdom for living a virtuous and holy life.

Key Verse:

“For we are what he has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good
works, which God prepared
beforehand to be our way of life.”
(Ephesians 2:10)

Day 2

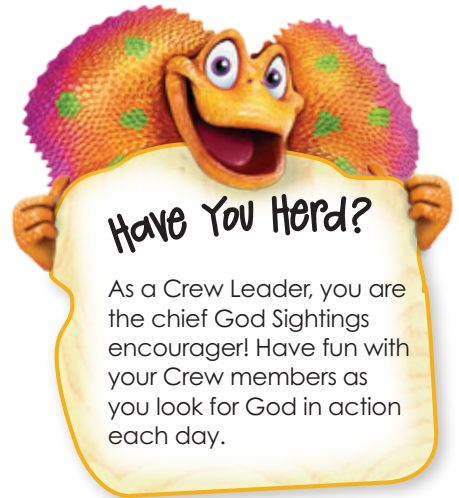
Bible Point: *Even though you're different...Jesus loves you!*

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 Crew members identify something God made that seems unique, weird, or unlike anything else. Those are God Sightings because we see God's awesome creativity in those things. Here are a couple examples:

- Thank God for the one-of-a-kind, beautiful, colorful sunrise.
- Thank God for creating each Crew member unique, special, and unlike anyone else. You feel joy and happiness when you get to know each person.

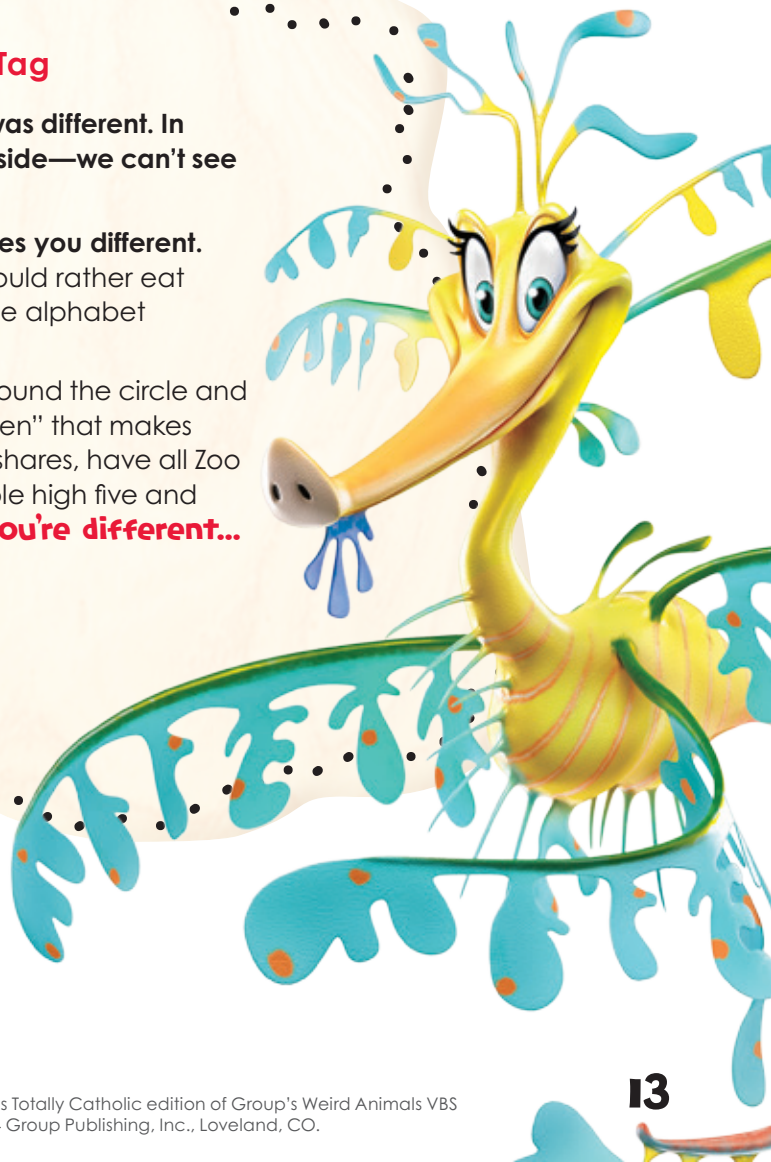


Wrap-Up Questions: Weird Animal Tag

Say: **In this game, you could see everyone was different. In real life, some differences are on the inside—we can't see them.** Ask:

- ① **Think of something unseen that makes you different. Then tell about it.** (I love to read; I would rather eat nachos than ice cream; I can say the alphabet backward.)

Zoo Crew Leader, share first; then go around the circle and let each person share something "unseen" that makes him or her different. After each person shares, have all Zoo Crew members give the person a double high five and shout the Bible Point, **even though you're different... Jesus loves you!**



Wrap-Up Questions: Fill-Up Time

Ask:

❓ **How did you feel when you saw the item you had to collect water with?** (Mad—it wasn't fair; frustrated because it would take forever to collect water with a spoon; happy because I had the big sponge.)

Say: **Sometimes life doesn't seem fair—we don't like how God made us different. Sometimes we feel we got a bad deal or that someone else has it easier than we do. But *even though you're different...Jesus loves you!*** Ask:

❓ **How do you encourage people who feel sad because they feel like things aren't fair?** (I can pray for them; I can tell them about Jesus' love; I can give money to people who don't have as much as me.)

Say: **This week at Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS, you'll learn about Connecting Kids to Justice and how we can help kids around the world get clean water to drink. It may seem unfair that kids in other parts of the world have a hard time even getting water, and we have it so easy. But God is giving us the chance to be his hands and feet and to help them! Let's do our best to show Jesus' love this week through Connecting Kids to Justice.**

Join hands in a circle, and offer a prayer for all the people who will be helped through Connecting Kids to Justice.



Have You Herd From Your Director?

Our Catholic View

Jesus washes the disciples' feet. John 13:1-17

- The roads during ancient times were dirty and dusty, making it customary that people washed their feet before eating a meal together, especially since most ate at low tables with their feet in full view. A host would provide water for guests to wash their feet or provide a servant to do this task. This practice is mentioned several times in the Old Testament.
- The disciples did not understand why Jesus was washing their feet. When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, he was doing the work of the lowliest of servants and setting a powerful example, asking them to serve others as he taught them.
- In many parishes, on Holy Thursday, the priest washes the feet of several parishioners, just as Jesus did at the Last Supper. Holy Thursday is part of the Triduum, one of the three most sacred days of the Catholic Liturgical Calendar.
- The meal Jesus and his disciples were sharing was the Passover, one of the most important observed Jewish traditions. The Jewish people celebrate Passover as a commemoration of their liberation over 3,300 years ago by God from slavery in ancient Egypt and their birth as a nation under the leadership of Moses.

Bible Point: Even when you don't understand...Jesus loves you!

Life is full of mysteries, questions, and things that just don't make sense. As adults, we may not have all the right answers when kids ask "why." Remind kids that they can turn to Scripture and the Church for help when life doesn't make sense. Reassure them that God knew and loved them even before they were born and that God wants to be in relationship with all of his children. Even when things are tough to understand, God's love is a firm foundation that will never end.

Catholic ID: Discipleship

Followers of Jesus are called disciples. The word "disciple" means *student* or *learner* in Greek. At our baptism, we are initiated into new life in Christ and called forth to a life of discipleship. The framework for discipleship is found in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. Here we read that disciples are called to love and serve our neighbor and share the Good News of Christ's salvation through the life of the Church. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "The disciple of Christ consents to 'live in truth,' that is, the simplicity of a life in conformity with the Lord's example." (2470) Jesus' washing the feet of his apostles before the Last Supper is symbolic of our role as disciples in the Body of Christ.

Key Verse:

"Do to others as you would like them to do to you." (Luke 6:31)



Day 3

Bible Point: *Even when you don't understand...Jesus loves you!*

God Sightings®

Keep looking for evidence of God all around us. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today, help your Crew members look for things around us that are so wonderful and amazing and big that we can't understand how God could make them.

Here are a couple examples:

- Wiggle your fingers and flex your arms. Thank God for making our bodies work the way they do.
- Point to the huge mountains or the big blue sky. Thank God for making all of this incredible creation!



Wrap-Up Questions: What Do We Do?

Ask:

- ② **How did you figure out how to solve these problems?** (Our Crew helped each other; it was teamwork.)
- ② **In life, who helps you when life is hard to understand?** (My friends; my parents.)
- ② **How can you be a friend to someone who's going through a hard or confusing time?** (Make a card and give it to them; listen to them; pray for them.)

Close by praying for people who are going through a hard time. Thank Jesus that he loves us all the time.

Have You Herd From Your Director?

Our Catholic View

Jesus dies and rises to new life. Luke 22:47-24:12

- Crucifixion was a sentence given only to the lowest level of criminals and to slaves—rarely Roman citizens. It was a slow, painful, and humiliating death, unfolding in the eye of the public.
- The Gospel of Luke doesn't name the thieves, but later in history the unnamed penitent thief was assigned the name Dismas and traditionally referred to as "St. Dismas." The name "Dismas" was adapted from a Greek word meaning *sunset* or *death*. The Catholic Church remembers the Good Thief on March 25.
- Jesus' teachings are filled with references to identifying with the outcasts, the poor, and the forgotten in the world. For him to accept the most degrading death and be treated like a common criminal was a powerful example to his disciples and to us today.

Bible Point: Even though you do wrong...*Jesus loves you!*

It's likely that you're reading this because you *love* kids. You're giving your time at Totally Catholic VBS so kids know that someone cares and—most importantly—that God loves them. Yet, we *all* sin...even these children we've come to affirm and encourage. We all need God's forgiveness. Kids know when they've used unkind words, been selfish, disobeyed, or when they have *not* done the right thing. Talk about the mercy offered in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and how God forgives each of us when we have a contrite heart. Use the activities in today's lesson to help children understand that God's love and forgiveness is greater than we can imagine.

Catholic ID: Resurrection

The Resurrection of the Body is essential to our Christian faith. Christ's resurrection is part of the infallible teaching of the Paschal Mystery which also includes his passion and death. We profess our belief in Christ's resurrection in both the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that "The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ...." (638) The Scriptures have much to say about resurrection. The Gospels tell us of Christ's miraculous resurrection from the dead, while our belief in bodily resurrection is found most notably in the letters of St. Paul. The empty tomb is an Easter symbol proclaiming that Jesus has overcome the chains of death and that "the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also" (2 Corinthians 4:14).

Key Verse:

"God...loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins."
(1 John 4:10)



Day 4

Bible Point: *Even though you do wrong...Jesus loves you!*

Helping Children Grow in Faith

At Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS, children don't just hear about God's love; they see it, touch it, sing it, taste it, and put it into action through God Sightings. As they travel from station to station, they go deeper into their understanding of God. Most importantly, children learn that because Jesus loves us, he came to teach us of his Father's love.

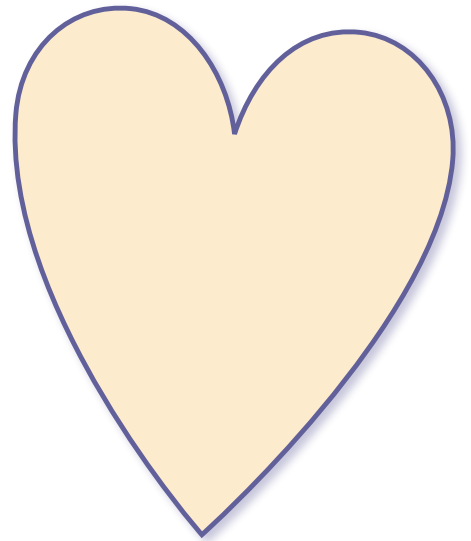
Many wonderful things happen at VBS when a child is immersed in discovering more about Jesus. A child will learn more about his or her faith, more about Scripture and prayer, and more about what it means to live the life of a Catholic.

God Sightings®

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

Today help Crew members look for ways we can be surprising 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 Jesus' one-of-a-kind love.
- Say a bedtime prayer or sing a song with a younger sibling.
- Help a neighbor sweep sidewalks or carry in groceries.



Wrap-Up Questions: Get Rid of It!

Say: **During this game, it was hard work trying to keep our side clean. All the paper wads seemed to keep coming back. Ask:**

❓ **How is that like sin (the bad things we do) in our lives?** (It's hard to not do things I know are wrong; I try to be good, but I end up being not so good.)

Say: **We can't clean our hearts by ourselves. We can't do it on our own. And we can't be perfect all the time. We all do wrong things. But God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus. Jesus died on a cross, and he forgives us, no matter what. And then Jesus rose to new life—he beat death—and we know his love is never-ending!**

Have the Crew members join hands and say a prayer, thanking Jesus for forgiving our sins. Then have Crew members put their hands on top of each other in the center of the circle and give a group cheer: "Jesus' love is one-of-a-kind!"



Have You Herd From Your Director?

Our Catholic View

Ananias bravely helps Saul. Acts 9:1-19

- God often asks his followers to do difficult—and sometimes frightening—things. Noah built an ark. Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. Ananias had the terrifying job of reaching out to Saul, a man known throughout the region as someone who arrested, persecuted, and even executed the “Followers of Jesus.”
- Ananias, the Greek version of the Hebrew name “Hananyah,” meaning *Jehovah* (or *The Lord*) *has been gracious*, was a disciple of Jesus Christ—a Christian. He was present for one of the most significant events in the Bible, the conversion of the Pharisee Saul into the apostle Paul on the road to Damascus.
- In the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles recounts the story of the Early Christian Church, with special emphasis on the apostle Peter and Saul of Tarsus. Acts focuses on the Holy Spirit and the spreading of the Christian message beyond the Jews throughout the Roman Empire.
- Historians believe Damascus is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Excavations from the courtyard of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus have yielded finds dating back to the 3rd millennium BC.

Bible Point: Even when you're afraid...*Jesus loves you!*

The kids at your Totally Catholic VBS understand what it's like to be afraid, whether they're facing a bully like Saul, cowering during a crashing thunderstorm, or enduring sickness. Or maybe they're afraid to share their belief in Christ. Just like Ananias, they may question God's wisdom, presence, or love in these struggles. And just as God reminded Ananias, today you have the chance to remind kids that our loving God is bigger than anything we might fear. Use your activities to encourage kids. Show them how to have faith in God's love and rely on his mighty plans when life gets scary.

Catholic ID: Angels

Both Sacred Tradition and Scripture witness to the existence of angels. The word “angel” means *messenger*, and in many Scripture accounts, the angels serve as God's messengers. The archangels are angels of the highest order. Three archangels are named in Scripture—Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael. Angels also serve to protect and serve the faithful. “From infancy to death human life is surrounded by their watchful care and protection. Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and shepherd leading him to life.” (CCC #336) At Mass we join the angels in the invocation, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts!” Angels are members of the Body of Christ along with the saints and all believers, living and dead.

Key Verse:

“Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”
(Matthew 14:27)



Day 5

Bible Point: Even when you're afraid...Jesus loves you!

God Sightings®

Today, help your Crew members think of God Sightings they can't actually see.

Here are a few examples:

- The wonderful smell of flowers or fresh-cut grass.
- The sound of booming thunder during a storm.
- The feel of cool breeze on a windy day.

Wrap-Up Questions: Swamp Thing

Ask:

- ② **Did the game get easier or harder as you sank? Why?** (Harder because I couldn't move around; easier because I was tired of sitting.)
- ② **How do our fears make life harder?** (We don't try things because we're afraid; we feel bad when we feel afraid; it makes us feel sad.)
- ② **How can you overcome your fears so they don't drag you down?** (Pray about them; face them; learn a Bible verse; remember that God is bigger than my fears.)

Have You Herd From Your Director?



Have You Herd?

- Find out if the kids in your Crew have age-appropriate Bibles or Catholic music at home. Talk with your VBS Director about providing these basic resources for kids.
- Continue building friendships long after VBS is over. Fill out the "All About My Crew" information on each Crew member. After VBS, you'll be able to send postcards and birthday cards and greet kids who attend your parish.
- Give each child his or her Bible Memory Buddies and other fun goodies from Weird Animals Totally Catholic VBS.
- Thanks for *all* you've done to help children learn about Jesus' one-of-a-kind love!





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: _____