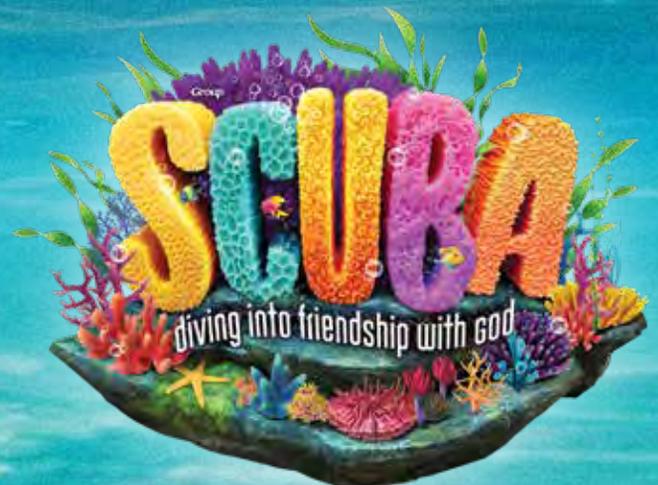




deep Bible adventures

Station Leader Manual



Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:



Relational

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Lifelong

Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.

Deep Bible Adventures Leader Manual

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Visit our websites:

group.com

group.com/Scuba

Thanks to our talented team for diving in! Laura Baldwin-Stout, Jody Brolsma, Stephen Caine, Lyndsay Gerwing, Charity Kauffman, Micaiah Lee, Michael Paustian, Mike Porter, Joani Schultz, Elisa Snell, Rodney Stewart, and Ali Thompson

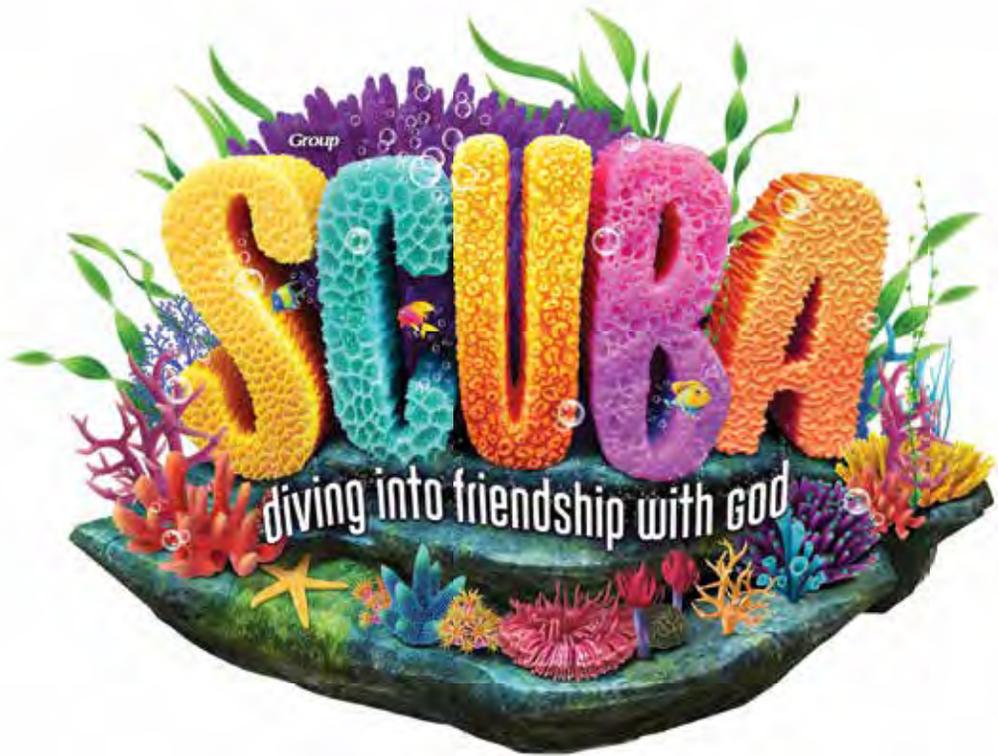
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ISBN 978-1-4707-7430-1

Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

26 25 24



thanks for joining the team!

Scuba divers all follow one unwavering rule: Dive with a buddy. That means never jumping into the water alone. It means discovering the deep blue alongside a friend.

Together, we're going to explore unfathomable faith!

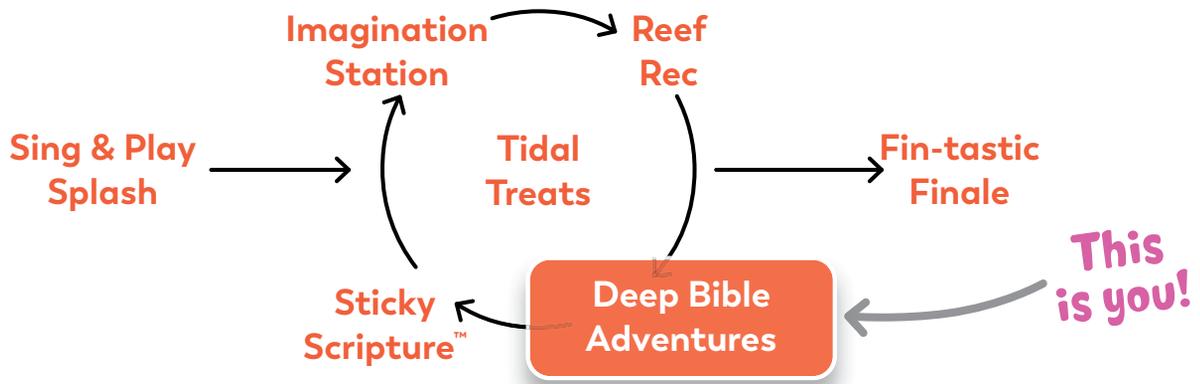
Scuba VBS is going to be full of Bible adventures, games, music, snacks, hugs, high-fives, and sciency-fun "wows." But we're doing more than simply entertaining kids. We have a powerful purpose at the heart of every single activity:

Helping kids dive deeper into a friendship with God.

That's why we're here—dive buddies on a life-changing mission. You're the hands and heart of God, showing kids what a warm friendship with God looks like. And we're right beside you all the way.

What a team!

Thanks for diving in, getting your feet wet, and making a splash that'll have eternal impact with kids.



before scuba



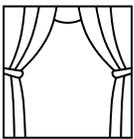
Pray for everyone who will attend Scuba.

Ask God to prepare your heart and the hearts of the kids and leaders who will be part of VBS.



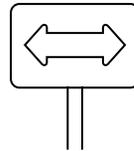
Work with the VBS Director to collect necessary supplies.

Almost all the supplies are easy to find around the church, from church members, or from Group.



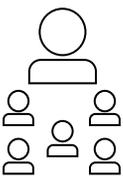
Create a unique setting each day.

Kids become part of the Bible story with their hearts, minds, and emotions. Part of that experience comes when you create a unique setting each day. You'll use decorations again and again to easily create different settings. (Note: You'll have an easier week ahead if you can use two different rooms for Deep Bible Adventures. See notes on page 6.)



Choose a room for Deep Bible Adventures.

Ideally, your room should be large and off by itself a little. Kids aren't just sitting still or staying put during these Bible Adventures!



Determine the number of Crews you'll have in each rotation.

Kids join mixed-age Crews—groups of up to five elementary-age kids and one adult or teenage leader. Plan on one-fourth of the total number of Crews in each rotation. If your VBS has 20 Crews, you'll work with five Crews (approximately 25 kids and five leaders) during each session.

during scuba



Get Crew Leaders involved!

Guide Crew Leaders to participate right along with kids. When Crew Leaders listen, get involved, and have fun, kids do, too!



Call on kids' Crew roles.

Every day, kids choose one of five jobs: Guide, Kit Carrier, Prayer Person, Schedule Supervisor, or Thank You-er! Kids love when those jobs get called on!

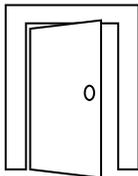


Use an attention-getting signal.

Attention-getting signals let kids know when it's time to stop what they're doing and look at you. Use the Dive Whistle (available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier) or another signal of your choice.



Dive Whistle



Gather outside the room first.

Gathering kids outside the room allows you to set the scene before they even enter the room and gives you the opportunity to create a big “wow” all at once.



Repeat the daily Bible Point often.

Every activity focuses on one memorable Bible truth called the Bible Point. Repeating the Bible Point helps kids remember it and apply it to their lives after VBS. Each time kids hear the day's Bible Point, they clasp their hands and say, “Thanks, God!”



Thanks, God!

DAY 1:

God is a friend who's real.

Bible Verse: "We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:69)

Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18-19)



Sing & Play Splash

- Learn the Day 1 Bible Point and verse, and meet Bible Memory Buddy Tad.
- Sing Scuba songs.
- Meet Sydney Shores, an aspiring treasure hunter.



Deep Bible Adventures

Experience the highs and lows of Elijah's encounters with the real God.



Tidal Treats



Crunchy Coral



Fish Sticks

Sticky Scripture

Play "Believe It or Not" as they dive into John 6:69 and discover what it means to believe.



Imagination Station

Explore unseen things in the ocean to discover that God is a friend who's real!



Fin-tastic Finale

Explore things that are real and imitation, connecting those discoveries to how we experience that God is real.



Reef Rec



TP Tell-All



Off the Hook



Flinchy Fish

At **Scuba VBS**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station's activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today's Bible Point.

god is a friend who's real.

Bible Story: God shows himself to Elijah through ups and downs. (1 Kings 18–19)

Bible Verse: “We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:69)

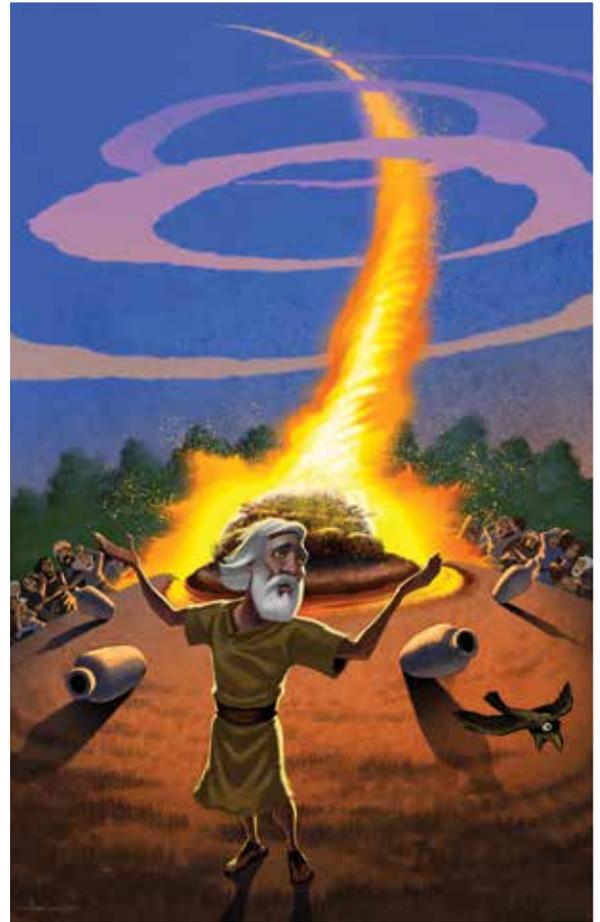
Diving Into the Bible

A harsh drought plagued Israel for years due to the wicked deeds of idol-worshipping King Ahab. Finally, to show God’s existence, God’s prophet Elijah summoned 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah to Mount Carmel. The prophets built an altar, then prayed to their false god, Baal, for fire. For hours the hundreds of prophets prayed, shouted, and even cut themselves. But no one answered. Then Elijah built a simple stone altar and dug a trench around it. Servants poured water on his altar again and again. Elijah prayed, “O Lord, answer me...so these people will know that you, O Lord, are God.” Instantly fire came from heaven and burned up Elijah’s sacrifice, the wood, the stones, and the soil! God—the only true God—answered.

Yet Elijah’s triumph soon turned to terror as Queen Jezebel swore she’d have Elijah killed. The prophet fled into the wilderness, where hunger and depression wore him down. God appeared, not in a flash of fire but in a gentle whisper. The one true God answered again.

Connecting With Kids

Like Elijah, kids swim in a culture increasingly resistant to any one source of truth. Today’s kids doubt the integrity of the Bible. They’re dubious about the church. And many view the idea of one *true* God as judgmental and exclusive. The kids at your VBS really *can* understand what Elijah faced—living in a world that embraced countless false gods and warred against God’s truth! Fundamentally, when we believe God is *real*, the existence of God gives us hope. Belief in one *true* God grounds us, providing stability and firm footing through life’s ups and downs. Today, root kids in the truth that the one amazing, powerful God really and truly desires a friendship with them!



Why It Matters

Elijah experienced the reality of God through fire, and later in a whisper. This passage can help kids who are questioning the truth of a God they can't see or hear.

Before You Dive In

Fill one basket per Crew with craft sticks and a stuffed animal.



Items for Every Day:



Bible



Dive Whistle*

- small blankets or throw rugs for Crews to sit on (1 per Crew in a rotation)
- baskets (1 per Crew in a rotation)
- helper (more than 1 would be great!)



Sing & Play Splash Music CD or download*

- media player

Day 1 Supplies:



Desert Sand Plastic Backdrops*



Stone Wall Plastic Backdrops*

- cardboard boxes
- sturdy tape, such as gaffer's tape
- craft sticks (several per Crew in a rotation)



stuffed animals (1 per Crew in a rotation)

- empty pitchers (1 per Crew in a rotation)



red, orange, and yellow crepe paper streamers

*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Because the inflatable fish/tomb gets used on Days 2 and 4, we recommend you have two different rooms for Bible Adventures. One would be used on Days 1, 3, and 5; the other on Days 2 and 4. That way you don't have to take down the "big fish" and reset it again on Day 4 as the tomb.

A Drought in Israel

Tape Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop to the walls.

Cover cardboard boxes with Stone Wall Plastic Backdrop to be stones. Set the stones around the room, about three per Crew.

Set out blankets for small-group Crews to sit on and circle up knee-to-knee for discussion. If possible, set the Crew blankets away from the stone boxes.



Welcome Crews

Enthusiastically greet Crews outside your Deep Bible Adventures room, holding your Bible.

SAY Welcome to Deep Bible Adventures. When you go scuba diving, you dive right in! My name is [your name], and every day we'll dive into Bible adventures that are fun, exciting...and true!

Hold up your Bible.

You may think the Bible is just an old book that's kind of hard to read. But here you'll discover that it's full of true stories of real people who were friends of God! Let's jump back into Bible times right now!

Motion to the door.

Today we're going to a place called Israel—but there's a drought going on! That means there's no water. In fact, it hasn't rained in three whole years! Open your mouth wide and take some deep breaths in so your mouth dries out. Pause.

Now you understand how thirsty people must have been during the drought! Let's head in!

FIELD TEST FINDING 🔍

We discovered an easy way to switch out the daily decor! Check out the easy setup videos at group.com/vbsTools to see our simple setup hacks in action!

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Recruit a dedicated helper for Deep Bible Adventures. Because so much goes on behind the scenes to make each day's Bible story leap to life, you'll need someone at the ready. Bible teaching is a team sport!

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

The goal of this experience is to show the contrast between the exciting “high” of the fiery showdown and the quiet of a whisper. Begin the experience by talking faster and with enthusiasm and generally keeping a more frenetic pace.



Build Altars

Usher Crews into the room, and ask them to sit on their Crew blankets.

SAY

During the drought in Israel, there was a prophet named Elijah. The king of Israel, King Ahab, hated Elijah. Ahab worshipped a fake god named Baal (pronounced “BAY-el”). Say “Boo, Baal!” Pause. But Elijah worshipped the one true God. Elijah knew that God is a friend who’s real. (Thanks, God!)

Elijah had been off in the wilderness, but now it was time for him to go visit with King Ahab. When Elijah met with King Ahab, King Ahab called Elijah a “troublemaker of Israel”—even though Elijah was a good guy!

Raise your hand if you’ve ever gotten in trouble when you didn’t do anything wrong. Pause.

Well, Elijah knew he wasn’t a troublemaker! He said that King Ahab was the troublemaker for worshipping Baal! So he challenged Ahab to a contest. They would build altars and put bulls on them to sacrifice to their gods. Then they would ask their gods to light the bulls on fire!

Now, making an altar may seem strange to us today, but back in Bible times, even God’s people made altars to offer sacrifices to God. Those were ways they showed they loved and wanted to obey God.

The prophets of Baal had the first turn. Let’s build altars. Have each Crew build an altar in the center of the Crew’s blanket by stacking some “stone blocks” from around the room and putting craft sticks on top. As Crews seem to be wrapping up their building, sound the Dive Whistle.

Next, they needed an animal. Have each Crew place a stuffed animal on the Crew’s altar.



FIELD TEST FINDING

Kids loved building the altars! It was fun to see their creativity in how they stacked their stone blocks and craft sticks. Each altar looked a little different! And any stuffed animal worked!

Dance and Jump

SAY With everything ready to go, let's see how the prophets of the fake god Baal tried to get him to light their altar on fire.

Read 1 Kings 18:26.

They must have looked so silly jumping around and dancing to a fake god and shouting out to no one! Jump around and shout to show how silly they looked! Pause. Sound the Dive Whistle to regain kids' attention.

Elijah even told them to shout louder! He knew a pretend god couldn't hear. But the people shouted louder. Let's hear what that sounded like. Have kids shout.

Well, of course, Baal wasn't real. **God is a friend who's real.** (*Thanks, God!*) But Baal isn't! So he never answered them.

After a whole day of dancing and shouting, they gave up. It was Elijah's turn!



An Altar for God

SAY Elijah built his own new altar. Then Elijah did something that must have seemed very strange. He dug a trench around the altar and filled it with water! And he even poured water on top of the wood and the animal!

ASK What do you know about trying to light wet things on fire? Invite responses from everyone.

SAY Well, you should never play with fire or try this without a grown-up's help, but wet things don't normally light on fire very well. And remember, we're in the middle of a drought anyway! This seems like a waste of water! Give Crews empty pitchers, and have them pretend to pour water all over their altars.

But Elijah knew **God is a friend who's real.** (*Thanks, God!*) Elijah knew God would show up even if Elijah made it seem extra impossible!

With the altar ready to go, Elijah didn't jump up and down. He didn't shout. He simply prayed. Kneel down as I read his simple prayer.

Read 1 Kings 18:36-37. Then, with assistance from your helper, begin throwing red, orange, and yellow streamers all around the room.

As soon as Elijah was done praying, God sent fire to burn up the animal, the wood, and even the water and stones! **God is a friend who's real.** (*Thanks, God!*) He showed up when the fake god Baal didn't. Let's celebrate!



★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Have Crews sit in knee-to-knee circles to ensure that kids can all see and hear each other for Crew discussions.

FIELD TEST FINDING

We weren't sure if kids would have stories to share about how God has worked in big ways, especially kids who didn't come from a church background. Boy, were we wrong! Kids shared about God keeping them safe in car accidents, curing cancer, and more!

FIELD TEST FINDING

We tried to include too many details of the story, giving kids a nap and a snack like Elijah had, and acting out every type of weather Elijah faced on the mountain. It made Bible Adventures really long, and we lost sight of the big picture. You can benefit from what we learned!

Have kids grab streamers from the floor, cheer, and wave them in the air. Then sound the Dive Whistle, collect the streamers, and have kids sit back down. (It's important to collect the streamer "flames," so they're not a distraction.)

SAY God showed up in a big way for Elijah. And God can show up for us in big ways, too!

For example... Tell a *brief* personal story or one from a friend or family member about a time God did something that proved to you he is real. That might include a miraculous healing, a hero showing up at just the right time to save you, or another big, life-changing event where you saw God at work. Keep your story to about 30 seconds.

ASK What about you? Tell your Crew about how God has shown you he's real in a big way. Allow a minute or two for Crew discussions, giving a 30-second warning to wrap up discussion.

Hear a Whisper

This is the point where the lesson shifts to a calm, relaxing environment. Set the tone by talking more quietly and slowly.

SAY You might think that after something so big and exciting, Elijah would be celebrating forever. But when King Ahab went back home and told the queen what happened, she threatened to kill Elijah! He was scared and ran for his life.

Then he got really, really upset. Elijah thought he was the only prophet left who worshipped God. He felt scared, tired, and alone. I'll give you a moment to quietly think about a time you felt that way. Pause in silence for about 15 seconds.

We can all feel scared, tired, and alone like Elijah at times. But remember, God is a friend who's real. (Thanks, God!) So God sent Elijah to a cave to show him something surprising.



SAY Elijah stood just outside the cave. Hold your hands in front of your face and peek through your fingers like you're peeking out of a cave. Pause.

While Elijah stood there, there was a big windstorm, (pause) an earthquake, (pause) and a raging fire! But God wasn't in any of those things. God doesn't always come in loud, big, powerful ways. Sometimes he comes like this.

Read 1 Kings 19:11-13 in a hushed tone.

Then God told Elijah that he wasn't alone. He told him where to meet a friend who would be another faithful prophet for God. And he said there would be 7,000 other people who were faithful to God and didn't worship Baal.

God told Elijah just what he needed to hear. Let's try something. I'd like us to listen for God's whisper. It can be hard to sit still and listen because that's not something we do often.

But sometimes God shows he's real in a quiet whisper we might miss if we're not paying attention!

So have a seat and close your eyes. Make sure you're not touching anyone. Do what you need to do so you're not distracted. Pause.

Now I'll ask God to speak to us. Then you'll listen. You might hear a whisper like Elijah. Or maybe God will speak even more quietly in your heart. Maybe God will bring a picture or a person to your mind. Let's listen quietly to what God has to say to us. I'll pray, and then you'll take time to listen.

PRAY God, we want to hear from you. We want to hear your words, not our own worries or distracted thoughts. We give those to you, and we're listening. Pause for a minute while softly playing the instrumental version of "Your Friend" from the Sing & Play Splash Music. (Be sure to play the instrumental version so the words aren't distracting as kids are listening.)

Thank you, God, for whispering to us. Amen.

SAY Maybe you heard from God just now, and maybe you didn't. It's okay either way! Listening to God isn't like pushing play on a music app. It's something we can do often so that we're tuned in during the times God does want to speak to us.

ASK If you did hear from God, what did you hear? Have kids share in Crews, then take responses from any willing volunteers to share with the group. Remember that not everyone may have something to share, and they shouldn't be put on the spot or made to feel ashamed. When Crews seem to be wrapping up, sound the Dive Whistle.

FIELD TEST FINDING

You may be wondering if kids can really slow down and sit and listen. They can! Kids at our field test heard and saw wonderful things from God. When we asked kids what they heard from God, they shared, "He loves me and will protect me," "I just saw a butterfly," "I don't need to be afraid; he's with me in the dark, and he's the light," and "I just heard the word 'listen.'" Powerful God whispers!



SAY

God is a friend who's real. (*Thanks, God!*) That means he's real in the big events like Elijah's contest! Let's do our Point and response really loudly!

Shout: **God is a friend who's real.** (*Thanks, God!*)

And God is also real in the quiet whispers when we just need some encouragement. Let's whisper our Point and response.

Whisper: **God is a friend who's real.** (*Thanks, God!*)

God is your friend, so keep listening for God's whisper on your own all week long, and see if he speaks to you!

We've seen how Elijah saw how real God is. But there were a lot of other people in the Bible who enjoyed being friends of God! Come back tomorrow and find out about another person who was a friend of God!



Track 1

Play "Thanks, God" from the Sing & Play Splash Music while kids get ready to move to their next station.

When you hear your Director's signal, dismiss kids to their next destination.

Between rotations, you and your helper will need to quickly reset the room by returning the stone boxes to the perimeter, refilling the baskets with craft sticks and stuffed animals, and cleaning up any "fire" streamers.

DAY 2:

God is a friend who loves.



Bible Verse: **“Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.”** (John 13:34)

Bible Story: **God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh.** (Jonah 1–3)

Sing & Play Splash

- Learn the Day 2 Bible Point and verse, and meet Bible Memory Buddy Finnley.
- Share God Sightings and add fish to the God Sightings Celebration Spot.
- Sing Scuba songs.
- Keep Sydney from scuba diving before being prepared.



Deep Bible Adventures

Journey with Jonah to discover God’s love.



Tidal Treats



Ocean in Motion



Fruity Fins

Sticky Scripture

Find John 13:34, play “Submariner See, Submariner Do,” and investigate what it means to follow Jesus’ example.



Imagination Station

Experiment with different modes of transportation and discover how God’s love empowers us.



Fin-tastic Finale

Participate in a game show about Jonah’s choices, then compare Jesus’ actions with Jonah’s.



Reef Rec



A Clean Getaway



Pass the Pearl



Catch of the Day

At **Scuba VBS**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station’s activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today’s Bible Point.

god is a friend who loves.

Bible Story: God shows compassion to the people of Nineveh. (Jonah 1–3)

Bible Verse: “Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.” (John 13:34)

Diving Into the Bible

When God told Jonah to go preach to the people of Nineveh, Jonah jumped on the first ship...headed in the *opposite* direction! He'd likely heard of the Ninevites' reputation for cruelty. In Jonah's estimation, these people didn't deserve to hear about—or experience—God's love. But God had other plans. He sent a big fish to swallow the reluctant prophet. Deep inside the fish's belly, Jonah finally submitted to God's will. God forgave Jonah, then used him to deliver a warning to the people of Nineveh. As soon as the people heard Jonah's message, they stopped their evil deeds and asked for God's forgiveness. God lovingly forgave an undeserving people, demonstrating his heart of mercy for *all*.

Connecting With Kids

Jonah seems to have viewed the Ninevites as unredeemable—so sinful that they were unworthy of God's salvation. When do you first remember a feeling of shame or unworthiness? For many of us, the sense of being unlovable came as a child when we'd disobeyed, been caught in a lie, or disappointed an adult. Perhaps caring friends or family members demonstrated Christ-like forgiveness, modeling unconditional love! Unfortunately, plenty of kids who come to your VBS won't have experienced genuine love and forgiveness. Today is a great day to immerse kids in God's overwhelming love for *all* people. Joyfully share the truth that a friendship with God means we are loved—and so are those we don't think are lovable.



Why It Matters

Jonah didn't think the people of Nineveh deserved God's mercy. Jonah's attitude can challenge kids to think about who *they* may doubt God could love.

Before You Dive In

Follow the setup steps below to create a big fish and the city of Nineveh.

Day 2 Supplies:



Undersea Plastic Backdrop*



Desert Sand Plastic Backdrop*

large box fan

- clear wide packing tape or duct tape (Choose a brand that sticks well to black plastic.)

- two 10x25-foot rolls of black plastic



2 cans of tuna in an open plastic container

- “Build a Big Fish” video demonstration (found on group.com/vbsTools)



stone blocks from Day 1

spray bottle of water, set to mist



*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier

The City and the Sea

Cover three of the walls with Undersea Plastic Backdrop*. The fourth wall will be covered in the Desert Sand Backdrop*.

Stack the stone blocks from Day 1 to create “skyscrapers” in front of the sand. This will be the city of Nineveh.

Create a large fish on the opposite side of the room from the city (see see instructions on page 16).

Spread out Crew blankets in the middle of the room.



FIELD TEST FINDING

Our box fan was so light that the heavy plastic pulled it over. Oops! We attached a rope to the handle of the fan, then tied the other end to a heavy weight to keep the fan upright.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

When the fish is set up, it takes up about 10 feet by 17 feet of space. Measure your space and plan accordingly, increasing or reducing the size as needed. Ours was enough to easily hold our three Crews, and more could have fit.

How to Create a Big Fish!

It's true. Building a giant inflatable fish may seem like a lot of work—but it's worth it for the wow! When kids walk into the room, you'll hear lots of "oohs" and "ahhs." The joy and excitement when kids get to go inside is even more amazing! (Plus, this same fish becomes Jesus' empty tomb on Day 4, so your setup for that day is nearly done!)

First, watch the "Build a Big Fish" video at group.com/vbsTools. Then follow these instructions:

1. Lay the two sheets of black plastic side by side on the floor, and tape them together.
2. With one person at each end, gather the plastic so the 20-foot width is reduced to about 10 feet.
3. Tape both long edges to the floor, in a shape that's similar to a football.
4. Put a large box fan just under one end of the plastic so the breeze from the fan will blow in. Put the seam that's between the two sheets of plastic on the top center of the fan, and tape it down around the fan.
5. Gather the remaining width of the plastic, and tape it to the floor on both sides of the fan.
6. At the open end, gather (make pleats) and tape the plastic to the floor.
7. At that same end (opposite the fan), cut about a 6-foot opening in the center seam. This will serve as the "door" or "mouth" of the fish.
8. Turn the fan on high or medium to inflate the fish. When it's almost completely inflated, turn the fan to medium or low. (If you leave the fan on high, you'll end up with a flying fish!)
9. Place the container of tuna in the fish to add a fishy smell. (Open the tuna the night before so it has time to get stinky!)



Welcome Crews

Greet Crews outside your room.

Introduce yourself in case there are new kids.

Hold up your Bible.

SAY

It's time for another totally true adventure from the Bible. Today we'll explore that **God is a friend who loves.** (*Thanks, God!*) But the guy in our Bible story today wasn't so loving. Let's head into our room and find out what happened. We'll all gather in the middle of our room.

Lead kids in, and have them all stand in the middle of the room.

Go on a Boat Ride

SAY

The guy in our Bible story was named Jonah. Jonah's job was being a prophet. Like our friend Elijah yesterday, Jonah heard messages from God and told them to other people.

Now that might be a nice job if you had a happy message to deliver. Try delivering this happy message to someone near you: **Jesus loves you!** Pause while kids greet each other with "Jesus loves you."

But a lot of the time, prophets' messages weren't so happy. Instead, they were warnings! Like the one God asked Jonah to deliver.

Read Jonah 1:2.

Notice that this message to the people of Nineveh didn't say, "I love you so much, and I'm giving you a second chance! If you follow me, everything will be great!"

No, this message was "I'm going to destroy your city." Now you might wonder why a loving God would destroy a city. Well, the people in Nineveh were doing a lot of really bad things that hurt God *and* other people. God wanted to stop that! So let's try delivering this message to someone nearby: **I'm going to destroy your city.** Pause while kids deliver the message "I'm going to destroy your city."

ASK

What was the difference between delivering those two messages? Invite responses from everyone.

Tell about a time you had to deliver bad news to someone, or a time someone shared bad news with you. Share your own story first. Then invite kids to turn to someone near them to share. Give a 30-second warning to let kids wrap up their discussions, and then use the Dive Whistle to get kids' attention when you're ready to move on.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

As you welcome Crews each day, keep an eye out for kids or leaders with any physical challenges. Be prepared to modify activities so everyone can feel included in the fun! For example, if an activity has everyone crawling, you might say, "Crawl, scoot, or pretend to crawl."

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

As you tell about a time you delivered bad news, you're modeling a level of sharing. Keep your story simple and brief, but feel free to go a little deep with your example (while still being child-friendly). That helps kids go deeper, too!

SAY It might not be so bad delivering Jonah’s message to someone here, knowing it was pretend. But that’s not a fun message for Jonah to deliver to the actual city! Then again, Jonah probably didn’t like the people of Nineveh, since they were so bad! Think about someone you don’t like very much—maybe someone it’s hard for you to get along with. Pause. Now keep that person in mind and imagine Nineveh is full of people just like that.

So God told Jonah to go there (point to the city side of the room), but Jonah went the other direction. Lead kids toward the fish, or simply have kids turn so their backs are to the city.

Jonah bought a boat ticket to sail away from God. Let’s rock in a boat. Lead kids in rocking back and forth.

But then a storm started! Lead kids in rocking harder while you spray them with a water bottle set to mist.

Jonah realized he hadn’t been able to run away from God. God knew just where he was! And God sent the storm to get his attention. So Jonah had the sailors throw him into the sea... and then the storm stopped.

Have kids jump forward as if they’re being thrown into the sea, then pretend to swim. Stop misting kids once they jump overboard.



Get Swallowed

SAY God is a friend who loves. (Thanks, God!) Even though Jonah had disobeyed, God didn’t want Jonah to drown! So he sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Let’s get swallowed by this big fish!

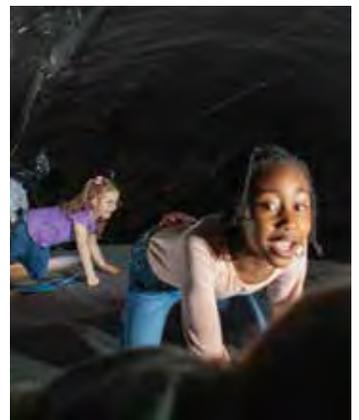
Have kids get into the fish while you stand outside at the mouth. Kids may feign being grossed out! When all kids are in the fish, sit with them just inside the mouth, bringing the spray bottle with you.

ASK What would you do to pass the time if you had to spend three days in a fish? Invite responses from everyone.

SAY Well, Jonah used the time to pray. Let’s pray like Jonah. First, Jonah thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Let’s thank God for things he’s done for us. You can call out your words in this prayer.

PRAY Thank you, God, for... Let kids call out things they’re thankful for.

SAY Then Jonah said he would do what God asked him to do. Let’s promise to do what God has asked us to do. For example, God asks us to be kind to each other.



FIELD TEST FINDING

At our field test, we asked a Crew Leader to get into the fish first. That way the leader could keep kids from touching the tuna or the fan.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

It's okay for kids to go inside the fish—really! Thousands of kids have safely done this! Think of it as a big, fun fort! However, our Station Leader helped kids be gentle as they got in by reminding them that the fish is our friend and we want to be kind!

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

The big fish is so fun that kids may want to talk about it! Let kids enjoy their surprise, but if kids start to get too chatty, try saying something like “Let’s listen to our friends so we can all hear!” or “Let’s put our ears on!”

PRAY Let’s say, “God, we will.” Lead kids in making their promise.

ASK What are some other things God asks us to do? For each answer, repeat it and lead kids in praying, “God, we will.”

What’s it like being in this fish for so long?

SAY Maybe you think it’s fun to be in this fish. But it’s just a pretend fish—not a real smelly, scary, dark fish swimming and flipping around in a sea! Plus, we’ve only been in here a few minutes. Jonah had to stay in his fish for three days! It must have been yucky, scary, and dark in there. And he never knew when he might get hit in the face with some seaweed! Mist kids with water.

After Jonah prayed for three days, God ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach. Let’s get spit out! Have kids get out of the fish. When they emerge, you can mist them with more water.

Go to Nineveh

SAY Jonah wanted to obey God, and he still had a job to do! God reminded him to head to Nineveh and deliver the hard message. Let’s head to Nineveh! Lead kids to the city side of the room.

Read Jonah 3:4.

Let’s announce that message to the city. “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” Lead kids in facing the city and repeating the message a few times.

Well, the people of Nineveh decided to show God they were sorry. They put on scratchy clothes and stopped eating, which was something people used to do to show they were sad. And they stopped all their evil ways, just in case God might change his mind and forgive them.

And God did! Check this out.

Read Jonah 3:10.

God is a friend who loves. (Thanks, God!) He cared about the Ninevites and gave them another chance. God is loving—but Jonah wasn’t. He got angry that God wasn’t going to do what he said! Cross your arms over your chest, show me your grumpy face, stomp angrily back to your Crew blanket, and pout.

Have kids sit with their Crews on Crew blankets.

Jonah didn’t mind when God showed *him* love and saved him, but he was mad that God had changed his mind and saved the people of Nineveh.



SAY And that’s where the story of Jonah ends—with Jonah mad and pouting! We don’t know if Jonah ever decided to show love to the people of Nineveh. But we do know **God is a friend who loves.** (*Thanks, God!*)

Let Go

SAY Jonah had a hard time showing love to the people of Nineveh. Earlier I asked you to imagine someone who’s hard for you to love. Think of that person now, as you close your eyes and squeeze your fists, holding them up for me to see. Demonstrate clenching your fists over your head. Pause for about 30 seconds.

ASK Keeping your fists tightly closed, call out some words that describe how you feel about that person. Allow responses.

SAY God loves you very much. But he *also* loves the people you’re thinking of right now. And God wants us to love and care about them, too. As I ask him to help us with that, keep your fists closed. When I say “amen,” release your fists, lower your arms, and relax your hands.

PRAY God, thank you for your unfailing love. Help us love like you. Help us let go of anger and care for others instead. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Lead kids in releasing their fists.

ASK How did it feel to let go of those tight fists? Invite responses from everyone.

SAY Holding on to anger is like holding our fists tight for a long time. It really only hurts us! When we let go, God helps us become loving friends to others. **God is a friend who loves.** (*Thanks, God!*)

Tomorrow we’ll find out more about being a friend of God! See you then!

 Play “I Have a Friend (Yo Tengo un Amigo)” from the Sing & Play Splash Music while kids get ready to move to their next station.

When you hear the Director’s signal, dismiss kids to their next station.

FIELD TEST FINDING

We originally had green crepe paper umbrellas to make the plant that gave shade to Jonah. But we felt that it took away from the core message of the story, so we cut it.



DAY 3:

God is a friend we can trust.

Bible Verse: "I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart." (John 14:27)

Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)



Sing & Play Splash

- Learn the Day 3 Bible Point and verse, and meet Bible Memory Buddy Fisher.
- Share God Sightings and add fish to the God Sightings Celebration Spot.
- Sing Scuba songs.
- Help Sydney discover that trustworthy friends are a treasure.



Deep Bible Adventures

Trust God in a scary storm—and with their own fears.



Tidal Treats



Seal Snacks



Sweet Sand Dollars

Sticky Scripture

Cheer on their favorite seahorse in the Seahorse 500. It's a race to the finish as kids learn John 14:27 and find out why we need peace from Jesus.



Imagination Station

Discover how ocean currents and pressure create constant movement in the ocean—and learn to trust God as our lives keep moving and changing.



Fin-tastic Finale

Do some surprising science experiments with things that sink, float, and fall!



Reef Rec



Fill 'er Up!



Bubble Trouble



Kelp Catchers

At **Scuba VBS**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station's activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today's Bible Point.

god is a friend we can trust.

Bible Story: Jesus calms a storm. (Mark 4:35-41)

Bible Verse: “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart.” (John 14:27)

Diving Into the Bible

After a long day of teaching along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus gave his followers instructions to cross to the other side of the water. The disciples put their backs into rowing, while Jesus, weary from the long day, quickly fell asleep. Before long, a sudden storm blew in. Gale-force winds stirred up powerful waves that broke over the side of the boat. Jesus’ friends panicked! What if the wind tipped the boat over? What if the boat filled up with water and sank? How could Jesus sleep through all this? In terror, the disciples woke Jesus up. Jesus commanded the wind and waves to be silent and still...and they obeyed! An immediate calm settled over the waters.

Connecting With Kids

What storms are kids at your VBS facing? Divorcing parents? Loneliness? Bullying? Food insecurity? A child may even be trying to navigate relationships with *others* who are facing challenges. At times, kids may feel like Jesus’ disciples, asking where Jesus is when hardships swell into a tidal wave of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. What a comfort to know we have a trustworthy friend nearby! God is a friend we can trust to comfort, guide, listen, and love us. Today, bring peace (just like Jesus did!) as you explore with kids what it means to have a trustworthy friend in God.



Why It Matters

Jesus commanded wild wind *and* waves to be still, showing his power and his ability to bring peace. This passage shows kids they can trust God when life’s troubles crash around them.

Before You Dive In

Prepare a basket of ping-pong balls for each Crew.



Day 3 Supplies:

— Undersea Plastic Backdrop* from Day 2

• blue tablecloths (1 per Crew in a rotation)

• ping-pong balls (1 per child in a rotation)



— spray bottle of water, set to mist

*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier

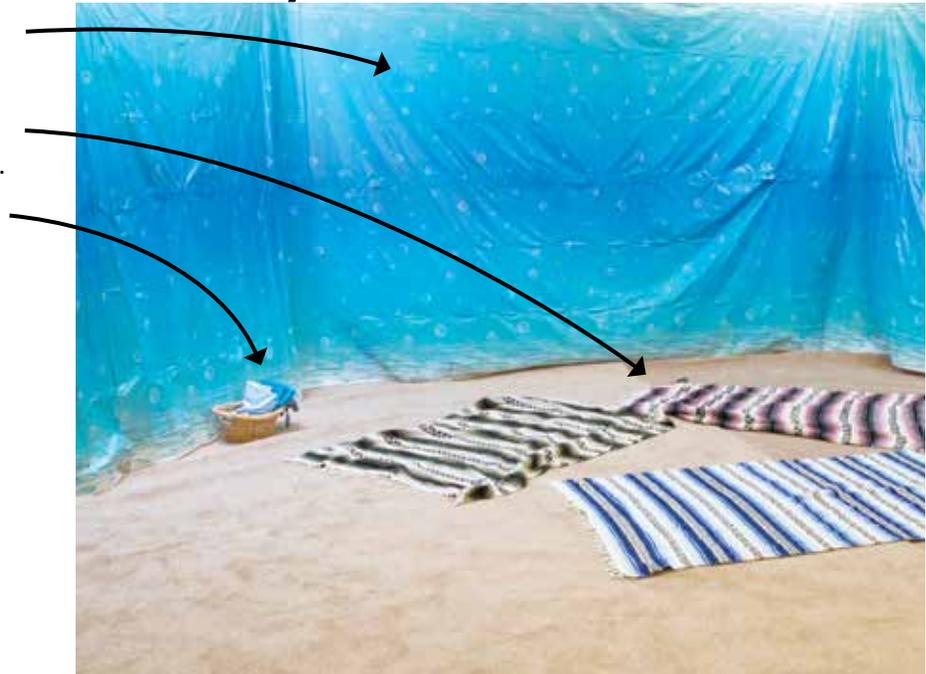


A Stormy Sea

Remove the Desert Sand so all the walls show Undersea Plastic Backdrop*.

Set Crew blankets around the room.

Place tablecloths where you can easily access and hand them out.



Welcome Crews

Meet Crews outside your room.

Hold your Bible.

SAY So far we've learned about prophets—people who brought messages from God. Some prophets told messages that said one day God would send a Savior—Jesus. Their messages were hundreds of years *before* Jesus came! God's people had been praying for someone who would save them from cruel leaders. But God's plan for saving them was way bigger and way better. But we'll get to that later!

Today let's jump forward to when God's Son, Jesus, was on earth, doing miracles and teaching people. Jesus gave God's messages, too!

Jesus is on a boat in today's story, so let's all get in our boats and sail with him!

Lead Crews into the room. Crews can gather around their Crew blankets.

Make a Storm

SAY The first thing we need to do is prepare our boats! Right now these blankets don't look very boat-shaped. Fold and tuck your blanket to look like a boat, and then make sure everyone can get in! Allow time.

Is everyone secure in their boats? Good thing, because we'll need to hold on tight! I think a storm is coming!

ASK Tell your Crew about a time you were in a scary storm. After about a minute, give a 30-second warning. After that time is up, sound the Dive Whistle.

Give each Crew a blue tablecloth.

SAY Well, the storm in the Bible is picking up, too! The water is just a little bit wavy. Have Crews work together to gently wave the tablecloths like parachutes.

The wind is picking up! Crews can pick up speed.

Have Crews wave their tablecloths wildly as you mist kids with water.

This is so scary! The water is getting in the boat! Let's see if we can bail it out!

Have kids pretend to use buckets to bail water out of their boats. As kids "bail water," mist them with water using the spray bottle.

FIELD TEST FINDING

Kids loved sharing about scary storms. Take time for this question! Everyone wanted to share.



FIELD TEST FINDING

At our field test, we handed out cups for kids to use to pretend to bail water. The cups ended up causing a distraction and flying around the room. So we cut the supply and saved you the trouble!

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Look for Crews or kids modeling behavior you desire, and offer collective praise to the group. Say things like “I see Crews are working hard to _____” or “We’ve almost got every Crew _____.” Publicly praising the group as a whole helps everyone work together and celebrate one another’s successes.



SAY It’s not working! But don’t forget—Jesus is in our boat, too! God is a friend we can trust. (Thanks, God!) And Jesus is God! But where is Jesus, anyway?

Read Mark 4:38.

Let’s wake him up! Shout with me, “Jesus, we’re going to drown!” Lead kids in shouting while waving their tablecloths. Encourage them to shout louder so he wakes up.

He’s awake! But the storm is still raging!

Shouting over the noise, read Mark 4:39. When you say, “Silence! Be still!” kids should freeze. If kids didn’t freeze immediately, try a few more times, having them make the storm and freeze when you say, “Silence! Be still!” Then have kids put their tablecloths in the middle of their Crews for now.

Calm Your Own Storms

SAY We had fun making our storm here today. We knew it wasn’t a real storm in our room. But for Jesus’ friends in the boat, that storm was very real! Some of Jesus’ friends were fishermen, so they knew how to handle a boat. But that storm was too big even for experienced sailors! When they woke Jesus up, they asked, “Don’t you care that we’re going to drown?”

They didn’t even ask Jesus to help them. They thought they were beyond help—they were sure they would drown!

Maybe you’ve felt scared like that. I know / have! Briefly share about a time you felt afraid.

ASK **When have you felt really scared?** Let kids share in their Crews. As discussions seem to be wrapping up, give a 30-second warning, and then sound the Dive Whistle to get everyone’s attention.

SAY Sometimes our fears can seem like scary storms—out of our control. Let’s name those storms and ask Jesus to calm them. Try to sum up your fears in one or two words. For example, maybe you shared a story about a time you had to take a test that you didn’t feel ready for. Instead of retelling that whole story, just say, “Tests!” I’ll give you a ping-pong ball that will represent your fear. Distribute a basket of ping-pong balls to each Crew.

Crews will hold their tablecloths still, and Crew Leaders will share a fear or worry, placing a ping-pong ball on the tablecloth. Then kids will take turns calling out fears or worries as they toss their ping-pong balls onto the tablecloths.

After everyone has shared, have kids wave the tablecloths to create a storm. You can call out some fears and worries you heard kids share to add to the chaos. Then call out: **Silence! Be still!** Kids will freeze.

SAY Set your stormy sea on the ground, and find a ping-pong ball that landed near you. Sit down, holding the ping-pong ball. Allow time and make sure each child found a ping-pong ball.

God is a friend we can trust. *(Thanks, God!)* When we feel worried or scared, we can go to Jesus. He's more powerful than the biggest storm, and we can trust him to help us. Jesus can calm the storms in our hearts.

Take a minute to hold your fear—your ping-pong ball—and talk silently with Jesus about it and why it scares you. Allow time for kids to pray.

If you want to commit to trusting Jesus with your fear, pray this prayer and put your ping-pong ball in your Crew Leader's hands. You'll pray, "Jesus, I trust you with my fears." Allow time for Crew Leaders to collect kids' ping-pong balls as they pray. If anyone isn't ready to trust Jesus with their fear, that's okay. Don't force them to pray—but do have Crew Leaders collect the ping-pong balls and place them back in the baskets. Have your helper collect the baskets.

Jesus may not always calm your storms right away, but he's always in the boat with you! When you're scared, you can turn to Jesus and trust him. God is a friend we can trust. *(Thanks, God!)*

We'll find out the ultimate way Jesus helped us in tomorrow's totally true Bible story! Come back and find out what happens!



Track 7

Play "A Friend We Can Trust" from the Sing & Play Splash Music while kids get ready to move to their next station.

When you hear the Director's signal, dismiss kids to their next rotation.

Between rotations, your assistant can help you reset the room for the next rotation by straightening out the Crew blankets and collecting the tablecloths and baskets of ping-pong balls.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

If kids start to share at a time they need to be doing something else, you can affirm them but also redirect. A simple hand on a child's shoulder and saying, "I'd love to hear more later," will help them refocus on the lesson without feeling shut down. Be sure you or a Crew Leader follows up and asks them later! Or if kids need help, ask Crew Leaders to assist them.

DAY 4:

God is a friend forever.

Bible Verse: "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying." (John 11:25)

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18-20)



Sing & Play Splash

- Learn the Day 4 Bible Point and verse, and meet Bible Memory Buddy Waylon.
- Share God Sightings and add fish to the God Sightings Celebration Spot.
- Sing Scuba songs.
- Comfort a discouraged Sydney with the truth that God is a friend forever.



Deep Bible Adventures

Meet one of the witnesses to Jesus' death...and miraculous, life-giving resurrection!



Tidal Treats



Bubble Bites



Treasure Treats

Sticky Scripture

Play "Freeze Dance" and discover how Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Read John 11:25 and hear how Jesus made a way to be God's friend forever!



Imagination Station

Experiment with flotation to see how God is a friend forever.



Fin-tastic Finale

See how Jesus makes a way for a forever friendship with God, and experience how heaven will be a place without sadness or pain.



Reef Rec



Aqueduct



Receding Reefs



Whale of a Tail

At **Scuba VBS**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station's activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today's Bible Point.

God is a friend forever.

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (John 18–20)

Bible Verse: “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.” (John 11:25)

Diving Into the Bible

Betrayed by a friend, accused by religious leaders, and arrested by the Temple guards, Jesus’ future seemed grim. The religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat, a liar, and a blasphemer...and apparently the crowds demanding his crucifixion agreed. His hurried trial ended in a death sentence—one usually reserved for criminals. Jesus died on a cross, under a sign mocking him as King of the Jews. His fearful friends scattered, leaving two men who’d followed Jesus from afar to prepare his body for burial. Jesus’ lifeless body lay in a borrowed tomb, sealed behind a heavy gravestone. It seemed like the end...but was it?

Three days later, Jesus’ friends discovered the stone had been moved and the tomb was empty! Jesus’ body hadn’t been stolen or moved—Jesus appeared repeatedly to his followers! They saw him, felt his breath, and touched the wounds on his hands! Jesus turned the *end* into *eternity*!

Connecting With Kids

Jesus’ followers felt they’d lost their closest friend forever. Kids have felt that, too. Friends come and go. They move away, discover new interests, make new friends, or sometimes just abandon us. The idea of “forever” seems impossible. Yet God had something surprising in store! Jesus’ death wasn’t the end—it was just the beginning of a friendship that will last into eternity! God always has been and always will be—he is forever! And even better, his love for us is forever, too! Things like sadness, loneliness, and worry won’t last forever. Today, share the exciting news that a friendship with God is one that will never ever end!



Why It Matters

Jesus died on a cross, paying the price for the sins of the world once and for all. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, kids can have a forever friendship with God.

Before You Dive In

Follow the setup instructions below to create the empty tomb. As you inflate and deflate the fish/tomb, it may spring a leak! Have duct tape on hand in case you need to reattach the plastic to the fan or the floor.

Day 4 Supplies:



Undersea Plastic Backdrop* from Days 2 and 3



“stone” boxes from Days 1 and 2

- fake plants or other greenery

- large box fan from Day 2



clear wide packing tape or duct tape from Day 2

- two 10x25-foot rolls of black plastic from Day 2

- 1 large piece of white fabric

head-covering or Bible-times costume for Deep Bible Adventures Leader



“Where Is the Body?” script, rolled into a scroll (p. 33)

- pen

- flashlights (1 per Crew in a rotation)

- crayons

- paper

- trash bags

- media player

Sing & Play Splash Music CD or download*



*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier

The Empty Tomb

Make sure all four walls are covered with the Undersea Plastic Backdrop*.

Inflate the “big fish” from Day 2. Today it will be Jesus’ tomb!

Place stone blocks around the sides of the tomb.

Set out fake plants and greenery around the tomb.

Place a folded piece of white cloth inside the tomb.

Lay out blankets for Crews to gather on.

If possible, dim the lights to help create that quiet, solemn environment.



Welcome Crews

Today you'll take on the role of one of Jesus' friends, perhaps Mary Magdalene or John. You've just discovered the empty tomb, and you're not entirely sure what to think. Get into character, wear a costume, and try to memorize as much as possible so you can seem more authentic.

Greet Crews warmly outside your room, acting a bit frazzled.

SAY

Oh boy, am I glad to see you! You know, people say I look kind of like [your name]. But I'm not. I'm actually [Mary Magdalene or John]! And something strange has happened. I mean *really* strange. You know Jesus, right? About yay high (hold your hand somewhere near your head), did a bunch of miracles? Maybe you know about some of them! Invite kids to share some of Jesus' miracles they may have heard about. This can also help kids recall yesterday's Bible story.

Yeah, so you know him! Well, something really weird has happened to him. I don't know what to make of it! Come on in and I'll tell you more. But please, be quiet and respectful as you come in here. We're entering a cemetery! I'm going to take you to Jesus' tomb. A tomb is where we sometimes put bodies, instead of digging graves for them. It's like a small cave. There are a lot of tombs and graves around here, though, (whisper) so let's stay quiet.

Lead kids in tiptoeing into the room, and have them get settled on the Crew blankets.

The Empty Tomb

SAY

So as we just said, Jesus was a pretty amazing guy. But three days ago, the amazingness ended. It was over, I tell you!

I know that for a fact because I was *there*. Jesus died. I saw it with my own eyes! I saw him get beaten and hung on a cross. I saw the blood flow from the nails they put in his hands.

I even saw the soldier make sure he was dead.

And then I saw his lifeless body get taken down off the cross and put into a tomb.

And just in case I had any hope left—which I didn't—a big, heavy stone was rolled in front of his tomb.

When I heard that stone wedge into place, I knew it. Everything was over. All the miracles, all the hope, my friendship with Jesus—gone.

★ SCUBA CLUE ★

As you add your dramatic flair to today's character, remember that you're sad and upset. So don't be overly energetic. Your solemn tone will also help create an atmosphere for kids to be solemn.

FIELD TEST FINDING

We discovered kids needed a bit of extra instruction to be quiet until everyone had been in the tomb. The first person who went into the tomb shouted, "It's empty! There's nothing in here!" (Well, he *did* get the point of the story!)

ASK

Have you ever felt sad or confused like I do? Like all your hope was gone? Gather in a circle and tell your Crew about that.

Allow time for Crew discussion.

SAY

You know, I've hung around with Jesus long enough to know what makes *him* sad. Sin. Sin is when we do wrong things or don't do the right things God wants us to do. The Bible says we've all sinned. Let's draw pictures of those things—something we've done wrong. First, scoot a little away from your Crew so you're not sitting right next to anyone. Pause. No one will see what you draw—no one except Jesus. And you won't have to share this drawing with anyone.

Distribute paper and crayons, and allow time for drawing. Then collect the crayons.

Those sins are things we'd like to get rid of, so let's put them here for now. Bring out a trash bag, and let kids crumple their drawings and put them in the trash bag. Tie up the bag and set it aside. Then have kids rejoin their Crews and sit down.

Well, sin *did* make Jesus sad, but now Jesus is dead, and I'm sad! Like I said, I saw him die and get buried.

But that was three days ago. Now I don't know *what's* going on, because look! Point to the tomb. That big heavy stone is gone! And when I looked inside...well, why don't you see for yourself! Go into the tomb and look around. Don't tell anyone what you see until we're all out and ready to talk about it. It's dark in there, so I'll give you a light to help you see inside. And remember, be quiet! I'm not sure what's going on, so we need to be sneaky so we don't get caught!

Call up one Crew at a time to explore the tomb, and give them a flashlight. As Crews enter, remind them not to say aloud what they see—other Crews can hear them outside the tomb, and this is a quiet graveyard! When everyone has had a turn inside, have Crews return to their blankets.

ASK

Tell about what you saw in there. Invite responses from everyone.

SAY

Yeah, I saw the folded fabric, too. You know what I didn't see? *Jesus!* That fabric was wrapped around his body before he was put in the tomb. And now it's folded up? What's going on?



Examine the Evidence

ASK What do you think could have happened to Jesus' body? Invite responses from everyone.

SAY Well, I had a few ideas.

Pull out the scroll you prepared with the script below, and as you eliminate each idea, act like you're crossing it off the list.



Where Is the Body?

1. First, I thought I went to the wrong tomb! Except...earlier there was an angel outside the tomb, who said, "He isn't here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen." Would an angel have been at the wrong tomb? Let kids respond.

Yeah, that idea doesn't add up. I'm definitely in the right place. But it's hard to believe Jesus could be alive like the angel said. After all, I saw him die!

2. So I also thought maybe some grave robbers had stolen Jesus' body.

But the more I think about that, it doesn't make sense. For one thing, there were a ton of guards stationed outside Jesus' tomb. They wanted to make sure we didn't steal Jesus' body and claim he was alive. Besides, you saw what was in the tomb—the grave clothes! That fabric is worth some money. Would robbers take the risk of sneaking past guards...and then leave something valuable behind? Let kids respond.

3. No, that can't be it either. But now that I'm thinking about the guards, maybe they moved it! So they could trick us and stop us from visiting Jesus' grave! Except...the guards are saying we took the body. Well, I know I didn't take it, and neither did any of Jesus' other friends. Besides, the guards didn't want people to think Jesus had come back to life. If they knew where his body was, would they keep it hidden? Let kids respond.

4. Well, that leaves only one option! The angel must be right! Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!

FIELD TEST FINDING 🔍

While most kids answered this question stating that Jesus came back to life, other kids really got into imagining possible explanations! One child suggested his body might have been stolen, while another suggested Jesus became a zombie. No need to correct silly ideas; you'll be sharing your own wrong ideas before helping kids learn the truth.

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★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Kids may be tempted to “help” the tomb deflate by pushing or even jumping on it. We’ve written a prayer experience to keep them occupied as the tomb deflates. You can also have your station helper stand near the tomb to help keep kids away as they leave.



Death, Where Is Your Sting?

SAY

You know what? Now that I know Jesus is really alive, we have a lot to celebrate! I’ll share some things I’m celebrating, and you can cheer after each one by sitting, then jumping up and clapping.

Since Jesus is alive, death is *not* forever! Lead kids in cheering, and then have them sit back down.

Sin is *not* forever! Lead kids in cheering and then sitting back down.

Pick up the trash bag of crumpled papers. **And that means your sin died with Jesus.** Place the bag inside the tomb.

The Bible has a verse that says, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:55).

So you know what? **Death is over! Death is *not* forever! Because of Jesus, God is a friend forever! (Thanks, God!) Stay in your seat and watch this.** Turn off or unplug the fan so the tomb begins to deflate. When it’s about halfway deflated, continue.

This gives us a lot to celebrate! I remember one time Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying.”

So since Jesus is alive, we can live forever! Lead kids in cheering.

Since Jesus is alive, he’s stronger than death! Lead kids in cheering.

Since Jesus is alive, God is a friend forever! (Thanks, God!)

Since Jesus is alive, Jesus’ love is forever! Lead kids in cheering.

We can have hope! Lead kids in cheering.

Now close your eyes and let’s pray.

PRAY

Silently tell Jesus one thing you’re celebrating because he’s alive. Pause for about 20 seconds.

Silently tell Jesus one thing you love about him. Pause for about 20 seconds.

Silently tell Jesus one reason you’re excited to live with him forever. Pause for about 20 seconds.

SAY

Look at our tomb now! It’s gone! That’s because Jesus didn’t stay in there. Jesus beat death, and our sins are gone!

I’m so glad we have the hope of living forever with our friend Jesus in heaven. And tomorrow we’ll find out about one more friend of Jesus in the Bible. I won’t be here, but I’ll ask [your name] to come back and teach you!



Play “Forever God, Forever Love” from the Sing & Play Splash Music while kids get ready to move to their next station.

Track 5

When you hear your Director’s signal, dismiss kids to their next rotation.

Between rotations, reinflate the tomb and take the papers out.



Helping Children Follow Jesus

During the week, if you sense that a child might like to know more about what it means to believe in Jesus, give this simple explanation:

God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Jesus died and took the punishment for all the wrong things we do. But Jesus is stronger than death, and he came back to life! Jesus wants to be our friend forever. When we ask him to, he’ll take away the wrong things we’ve done and fill our lives with his love. Jesus will always be with us and will help us make the right choices. When we believe in Jesus and ask him to forgive us, someday we’ll live with him forever in heaven.

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



DAY 5:

God is a friend for everyone.

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

Bible Story: **Lydia believes in Jesus.** (Acts 16:11-15)

Sing & Play Splash

- Learn the Day 5 Bible Point and verse, and meet Bible Memory Buddy Octavia.
- Share God Sightings and add fish to the God Sightings Celebration Spot.
- Sing Scuba songs.
- Celebrate with Sydney, who's decided to dive for fun instead of treasure!



Deep Bible Adventures

Meet Lydia and discover how she began a friendship with Jesus.



Tidal Treats



Sticky Sand



Sea Food

Sticky Scripture

Explore John 3:16, play "Spot the Octopus," and find out who is "the world" that God loves.



Imagination Station

Discover just how vast the oceans are...and how big God's love is for everyone.



Fin-tastic Finale

Play a game to act out *all* the people God loves, then celebrate and remember to reach out with God's loving friendship.



Reef Rec



All In!



Feeding Frenzy



Wet Ones



At **Scuba VBS**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station's activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today's Bible Point.

God is a friend for everyone.

Bible Story: Lydia believes in Jesus.
(Acts 16:11-15)

Bible Verse: “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Diving Into the Bible

After Jesus returned to heaven, his followers knew they couldn't keep the amazing news of God's Son to themselves! A man named Paul devoted himself to traveling throughout the Mediterranean and Asia to let everyone know about Jesus. Paul wanted the world to know that Jesus—God's Son—had died, risen, and would give eternal life to all who believed. This good news meant life for Jews, non-Jews, people who believed in false gods—everyone!

During his first missionary journey, Paul met a group of women gathered near a river for prayer. These women believed in the one true God, but they hadn't heard about Jesus. Paul's words had a profound impact on one woman in particular—Lydia. This businesswoman insisted that she and her entire household get baptized! Because of Paul's message, she became the first Christian in Europe, and her home became one of the first churches.

Connecting With Kids

So much seems set out to divide us today. Kids hear adults compartmentalize people by race, political party, church denomination, “pro” or “anti” this-and-that—the list is endless. As a result, kids may view people in groups—groups they are (or aren't) part of. And too often, people view Christians as exclusive, seeking to keep people out. Yet God loves everyone! Jesus died for everyone! A friendship with God is a possibility for everyone! No one is left out or excluded from a friendship with God! How freeing...and unifying! Wrap up your week at Scuba VBS by challenging kids to view people in their world as those God dearly and desperately loves.



Why It Matters

Paul sailed to new lands to be sure everyone—including a businesswoman named Lydia—knew the good news of Jesus! This story can help kids understand that no one should be left out of God's loving friendship.

Before You Dive In

Put enough pre-ripped paper towel sheets and purple markers for a Crew in each basket. For each Crew, make a pile of 12- to 18-inch strips of purple crepe paper.

Day 5 Supplies:



Undersea Plastic Backdrop* from previous days



“stone” boxes from previous days

• Wooden Plastic Table Cover*

• greenery or fake plants



2 folding clothes racks (see diagram below)

• blue fabric

• purple fabric pieces, cut to various sizes

• paper towels (1 half-sheet per child)



• purple markers (1 per child in a rotation)

• paper or card stock

• string

purple crepe paper streamers (1 roll per Crew in a rotation)

• actor to play Lydia

• Bible-times outfit for Lydia to wear (bonus if it's purple!)

*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier

Lydia's House

Keep the Undersea Plastic Backdrop up from previous days.

Arrange the stone blocks into a house shape (for display only, kids won't enter the house). Add a Wooden Plastic Table Cover to make a door.

On a wall near one of the clothes racks, tack up some string, and drape a few pieces of purple crepe paper on it.

Set the plants near the house.

Make two clotheslines, one on each side of Lydia's house, by placing dowels on chairs or setting up foldable clothes racks. Drape purple fabric on one of the racks.

Across from Lydia's house, create a river by bunching blue fabric along the wall.

Set Crew blankets around the room.



Welcome Crews

Greet Crews warmly outside your room.

SAY It's been so fun helping you experience the things that God's friends in the Bible did. Today we're exploring how **God is a friend for everyone.** (*Thanks, God!*) That means you get to have a friendship with God just like his friends in the Bible!

Today we're going to meet a woman in the Bible named Lydia. Lydia loved God, but she didn't know about his Son, Jesus. Lydia met some people who knew Jesus gives us a special way to be a friend of God! Let's find out more about Lydia and what her life was like.

Lead Crews inside the room, and have them sit on their blankets.

A Day in the Life

SAY Yesterday we talked about how Jesus beat death and sin so we can be his friends forever. Jesus came back to life, and a bunch of people got to see him alive! But pretty soon after that, he went back to heaven—and he's still alive today!

So the news about Jesus—how he died to save all people and how he came back to life—was just beginning. When Jesus was alive, most of the people who knew about him lived in the country of Israel. Because God wants everyone to be his friend, he chose people to spread the word about Jesus all over the world. One of the people who never saw Jesus, but heard about him, was a woman named Lydia.

First, let's live out a day in the life of Lydia.

Stand near the house.

We'll imagine this is Lydia's house.

ASK Looking around at what's near her house, what guesses might you make about her life? Kids can call out answers.

SAY Well, the Bible tells us that Lydia sold expensive purple cloth. So her day *might* have included dying the fabric purple. Purple dye was really expensive back then because it was so hard to make. So purple cloth was the most expensive. I just found out that Lydia just got a *huge* order, and she could really use some help! So let's help her out by dying some purple fabric.

FIELD TEST FINDING

Today's environment drew a lot of oohs and aahs from kids—it was so different from the day before. They couldn't wait to find out what was going to happen!



Distribute baskets, and have kids and Crew Leaders color their paper towels purple. Kids should set the paper towel on top of a piece of paper or card stock to catch any bleed-through.

FIELD TEST FINDING

Some kids wanted to keep their paper towels. That's fine! As Crews leave, invite any kids who'd like their paper towels to take them on the way out.



After a minute or so of coloring, point to the fabric that's hanging on the clothesline.

SAY

This fabric is some that Lydia dyed and hung to dry earlier. Now that it's dry, we can take it down to make room for your fabric. We'll need to fold this carefully so it doesn't get wrinkled.

Choose one Crew to fold the purple fabric while others help hang the paper towels on the empty rack. If needed, they can fold the paper towels to tent them over the rack so they don't fall. When the task is done, have kids return to their Crew blankets.

ASK

If someone were acting out a day in your life, what might they do? Let Crew Guides share, and then allow time for kids to share in Crews. When the discussion seems to be wrapping up, sound the Dive Whistle.

SAY

Well, working with fabric was probably part of Lydia's job each day. But now that we're done dyeing and folding fabric for the day, let's go to the riverbank. That's something else Lydia did often, and she met with other women to pray there. Maybe we'll meet her there!

Lead kids in sitting along the wall by the river.

We don't know what Lydia and her friends usually prayed for or about. But God is our friend, and he loves to listen to us! We can talk with God anytime, anyplace. And speaking of Lydia, I think I see her coming!



★ SCUBA CLUE ★

Don't simply recruit a dramatic person for Lydia—make sure it's someone who's great with kids! Lydia will need to interact with kids, call on them, and repeat their answers for all to hear, so it's great to have an experienced children's ministry leader.

Meeting Lydia

As kids are settled in by the river, Lydia will enter. Use the following script to lead kids in interacting with Lydia.

Lydia (enters carrying purple fabric): **Oh, hi! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. I love coming to the riverbank to pray, too! Can you tell me a little bit more about why you pray?**

Call on kids to respond, and repeat answers.

Lydia: **Wow! Those are some of the same reasons I pray! I've been praying to God for a long time. But something really exciting happened yesterday when I was here. I met a man named Paul who told me all about Jesus!**

What do you know about Jesus?

Let kids respond, and repeat their answers.

Lydia: **Well, I'd never heard of Jesus before I met Paul. But Paul told me **God is a friend for everyone.** (Thanks, God!) And the way God shared that friendship with everyone is through Jesus! In fact, Paul sails all around to tell people from all kinds of places about Jesus. He said it's our job to make sure everyone knows about our friend Jesus. Even though I never got to meet Jesus in person, I can be his friend! Maybe you've never seen Jesus in person either. But he wants to be your friend, too!**

Anyway, I ended up inviting Paul to my house, and he's there now! I just came by the river to get a little water, but I'm headed right back home to visit with him and learn more about my new friend Jesus. See you soon!

Leader and kids follow Lydia and then return to Crew blankets.

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Pray for People

SAY Paul wanted to make sure everyone knew about Jesus, so he went out of his way to find Lydia and her friends and tell them. Then Lydia told us!

Let's think about people who've told us about Jesus and thank God for them.

ASK **Who has talked about Jesus with you?** As kids answer, repeat their answers by saying, "God is a friend for [person child named]."

Distribute crepe paper pieces to Crew Leaders, and let each child take a piece of purple crepe paper.

SAY Let's wave our purple streamers to thank God for the people who've told us about Jesus. On the count of three, we'll wave the streamers and shout the names of the people we just shared about. 1, 2, 3! After a few seconds of celebrating, sound the Dive Whistle.

It's so great that people have told us about Jesus. And we can spread that message to people who don't know the truth about Jesus. I think we probably all know people who don't follow Jesus.

We can tell people about Jesus like Paul did. We can also show people Jesus' love so they see what Jesus is like. And we can pray for people to believe in Jesus. Let's do that now.

Since Lydia sold purple fabric, we'll use our purple paper to make a prayer wall as we pray for people to believe in Jesus.

Think of someone you know who doesn't know the truth about Jesus. Maybe it's someone from your school, your neighborhood, or your soccer team. As you tell your Crew about that person, hold a piece of purple crepe paper to remind you of the person.

Allow time for kids to share who their paper represents. Then kids can drape the papers on the string on the wall and return to their seats.



Track 8

As kids share and drape their papers, play "Standing in the Need of Prayer."



FIELD TEST FINDING

We instructed kids to use clothespins to hang their crepe papers, but we discovered that a lot of kids didn't know how to use the clothespins, and it became a distraction. So we changed the instructions simply to "drape the papers."

Sound the Dive Whistle to get everyone's attention.

SAY Remember, Lydia prayed with her friends at the river. Let's pray here together for all our friends represented by this purple paper.

PRAY Jesus, we know you want to be friends with all these people. We pray your love, trust, and friendship become real to these people we love. Help us do a good job showing everyone how much you love them. In your name, amen.

SAY I've had so much fun diving into God's Word with you this week. We've learned all about what a good friend God is. I'm glad God is a friend for everyone. *(Thanks, God!)*

As you leave here, help everyone see the love and awesomeness of God, just like Paul did.



Track 4

Play "One Big Family" from the Sing & Play Splash Music while kids get ready to move to their next station.

Collect the baskets.

When you hear your Director's signal, dismiss kids to their next rotation.

Between rotations, remove the paper towels from the clothes rack, and hang the fabric back up. Make sure the baskets are stocked with the markers and paper towels. You can leave the crepe paper hanging, as long as there is room for more.

Deep Bible Adventures

Day 1



Experience the highs and lows of Elijah's encounters with the real God.

Day 2



Journey with Jonah to discover God's love.

Day 3



Trust God in a scary storm—and with your own fears.

Day 4



Meet one of the witnesses to Jesus' death...and miraculous, life-giving resurrection!

Day 5



Meet Lydia and discover how she began a friendship with Jesus.



questions:

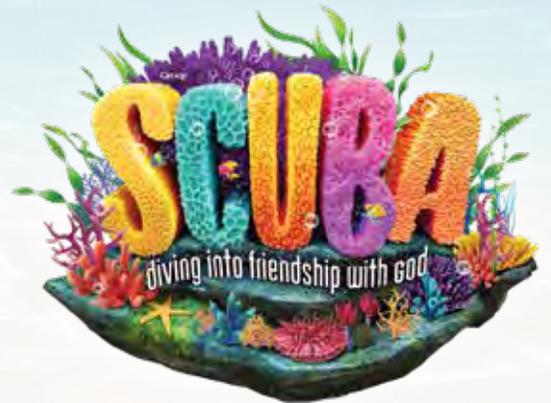
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ISBN 978-1-4707-7430-1



Printed in the U.S.A.

 Group