



Preschool CREW LEADER GUIDE



What's a Crew Leader for Preschoolers?

If you've been asked to be a Crew Leader for preschoolers, you've met two important qualifications: You love the Lord and you love children.

During Maker Fun Factory, you'll visit different activities with a group of three to five children. *You're not in charge of preparing or teaching activities; your role is to love, encourage, and enjoy the children in your Crew.* The following guidelines will help you be the most awesome Crew Leader.

A Crew Leader for preschoolers is...

- a friend and helper,
- someone who helps children complete activities,
- someone who gets down on the floor to interact with children,
- someone who encourages kids, and
- someone who supports the Tinker Tots staff.



Use these helpful tips:

- Learn the names of the children in your Crew, and call children by name often.
- Help children work at their own pace. You'll have 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in your Crew. You'll probably notice big differences in motor skills (such as cutting and coloring) between older and younger children. Encourage 5-year-olds to help younger children when possible.
- Look into preschoolers' eyes when you speak to them. You may need to kneel or sit on the floor to do this.
- Empower children by offering them choices. Ask, "Would you like to make a craft or play with blocks?" Don't ask "What do you want to do?" or children may decide they want to do activities that are unavailable or inappropriate.



Here's What You'll Do

- **Arrive at least 20 minutes early each day.** Report to the Tinker Tots area on Day 1 and the Sound Wave Sing & Play area on Days 2 through 5, and be ready to greet children who arrive early. Your welcoming presence will bring smiles to anxious faces! (Besides, the Preschool Director may have some special instructions for you.)
- **Greet each child by name and with a warm smile.** Help children put on their name badges each day.
- **Sit with the children in your Crew during group activities.** Keep your Crew members together, and help them participate in the activities at Sound Wave Sing & Play and Snack Factory.
- **Accompany children to preschool stations.** If necessary, read the instructions at each station, and help children complete the activities. Distribute supplies as needed.
- **Always make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room!** Be sure children hold hands or a rope (called a Crew Cable) as you rotate between stations. Never grab, pinch, or pull children as you travel. Remember to use kind, gentle, positive words. If a child lags behind, remind him or her to stay with the Crew. You might want to walk behind your Crew so you can keep all the children in view and avoid traveling too fast.
- **Help children think about how we can see what God is doing all around us.** Talk about how fun it is to see the amazing things God has made or the way God shows his love to us. (Those are called God Sightings!)
- **Help children with their Bible Memory Buddies.** Every day, children receive an adorable Bible Memory Buddy tag. You'll help them slide the Buddies onto their Maker Fun Factory Carabiner to wear during VBS and then they'll get to take their entire collection home at the end of the week.
- **Repeat the daily Bible Point often.** Every activity at Maker Fun Factory focuses on one simple, memorable Bible truth called the Bible Point. The more children hear or say the Bible Point, the more likely they are to remember it and apply it to their lives. Kids will be listening for the Bible Point so they can respond by holding and flaring all 10 fingers and saying "Wow, God!"
- **Keep track of your Crew members' name badges and Buddies.** Put these in a Crew bag, and keep the bag in a convenient place in your classroom or church at the end of the day. Send them home with the children at the end of the week.
- **Help children collect their Bible Activity Sheets, Sciency-Fun Gizmos, and crafts after Closing Circle.** Children will take these home at the end of each day.
- **Report any potential discipline problems to the Preschool Director.** He or she will help you handle problems appropriately.
- **Release children only to a designated parent or caregiver.** If an unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, refer the adult to the Preschool Director.
- **Assist the Preschool Director with cleanup and preparation for your next meeting.**



What Do I Do at Each Station?



Sound Wave Sing & Play is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. Your job at Sound Wave Sing & Play is to

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



Exploration Stations allow preschoolers to ease into their day by choosing from a variety of hands-on activities. Your job during Exploration Stations is to

- let children freely move from one center to the next. Some children may spend the entire 15 minutes at one area, while others will move through all of them. That's okay! Each activity helps preschoolers learn through play.
- explain the activity instructions to preschoolers—you'll find instructions at each station.



Bible Adventures & Missions is where kids experience the Bible story. Kids also learn about Operation Kid-to-Kid in this station. Your job at Bible Adventures is to

- listen carefully to hear how Crew Leaders should help out that day.
- encourage Crew members to participate.
- share your own discoveries during discussion times and your excitement during each Bible adventure.



KidVid™ Cinema is where kids watch a daily video of *real* kids sharing and exploring the unique ways God made them. 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. (Expect surprising insights and answers from kids.)

In KidVid Cinema, kids will discuss real-life topics like conquering fear, feeling left out or different, and living with a disease. 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 Points to reassure kids that God *purposely* made each of us the way we are and loves us.



Snack Factory is where Crews come for a tasty snack. Your job at Snack Factory is to

- gather your Crew in a designated area.
- help your Crew listen as the Snack Factory Leader explains the snack.
- help kids clean hands before eating.
- lead kids in discussing how the snack connects to the day's Bible verse by following a helpful handout.
- help kids clean up your area before leaving.



Games is where kids play team-building games. Your job at 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.

Craft & Play is a *fun* time full of sensory activities where kids can be creative, get a little messy, and lock in what they're learning each day at Maker Fun Factory. Your job at Craft & Play is to

- help keep messes to a minimum while still allowing kids to have fun with the art supplies.
- listen carefully to the instructions and remind your Crew of what to do, as needed.
- ask preschoolers why they decided to create projects the way they did, and affirm their creativity.
- mark your Crew members' projects with their names and set them in a designated area until the end of the day.



Closing Circle is where kids experience an exciting review of the day's lesson. Your role at Closing Circle is to

- sit with your Crew and participate in reviewing each day's Bible Point, Bible story, and Bible verse actions.
- Give each child a Watch For God Wristband on Day 1.
- make sure each child leaves with his or her craft, Bible Activity Pages, and Chewy sticker.
- collect Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Buddies and store them in your Crew bag.
- make sure children are picked up by a person designated to do so.

Crews Are Cool!

Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at Maker Fun Factory each day. Each Crew consists of up to five children and one Crew Leader. Because you are shepherding a small group, you can give each preschooler lots of attention, and discipline issues will decrease. Use the developmental information below to guide you as you work with preschoolers at VBS.

- ➔ **We're 3 years old.** We've just learned how to play together, and we're still learning how to share and take turns. It may be a little hard for us to change from one activity to the next, so give us plenty of warning ahead of time. We're generally happy and sometimes even silly, but we may be a little shy about trying new things. We enjoy playing games that involve moving and jumping around, but we may tire more quickly than our older playmates.
- ➔ **We're 4 years old.** We're full of imagination and excitement. We love to use our imaginations in make-believe play and art activities. We like to use loud voices and big movements. You may need to remind us to play quietly at Tinker Tots. We enjoy listening to Bible Adventures and answering interesting questions such as "What's your favorite animal that God made in our world?"
- ➔ **We're 5 years old.** We love to help our Crew Leaders and our other leaders. If you notice us helping, please tell us thank you. We're proud of the things we can do, but we're also sensitive. Other children may hurt our feelings by blurting out reactions to things we do. We're improving in our coordination. We can cut with scissors and color between the lines. We're also pretty good at throwing and catching balls.



Bible Point: God made you.

Bible Story: God lovingly creates people. (Psalm 139; Genesis 1:26-2:4)

Consider This...

- In Genesis 1:26, God speaks of himself in the plural form when he says “Let us make human beings in our image.” This is often thought of as a reference to the Trinity as well as an acknowledgment of God’s majesty. However, you may not know that throughout history, kings traditionally used plurals when referring to themselves. This “royal we” is known to have occurred in the Hebrew language and fits with the idea of the Trinity.
- It’s interesting to note that after God created human beings on the sixth day, he looked at all he had made and saw that it was *very* good—not just good.
- The book of Psalms is actually five different books put together. Each of the five books is thought to correspond with a book of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible).
- Psalm 139 is part of the fifth book of Psalms. David wrote these primarily as songs of thanksgiving and praise that would’ve been set to music and used in communal worship.



Why It Matters...

Today’s kids are in the unique position to compare themselves to the entire world. Social media gives us all a mirror to which we compare ourselves, and it can feel like there’s always someone who’s better, prettier, smarter, more athletic, more adventurous, and just all-around *more!* That’s why today’s message matters! You get the chance to share with the kids at your VBS that they were intentionally, lovingly, carefully crafted by God. You’ll have the opportunity to help kids (and even leaders) set aside the mirror and simply rest in the realization that the same God who created the entire planet also formed their fingers, toes, brain, and being with his skillful hands. Help kids discover that they’re one-of-a-kind creations of the most-high God who loves them dearly.

Key Verse: “Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!”
(Psalm 139:14)



DAY 1

Bible Point: **God made you.**

God Sightings®

Every day at Maker Fun Factory, kids and leaders will share evidence they've seen of God. We call these *God Sightings*, and they're an easy, practical, and powerful way to help kids realize that God is still active in our everyday lives. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today help preschoolers share positive things about themselves and the way God made them. Here are a few examples:

- Talk about abilities they have like being able to draw pictures, run really fast, make friends or family laugh, or being a good friend.
- Share Bible verses and songs that tell about how God knows us *very* well.
- Point out positive things you notice about the kids in your Crew throughout the day and say, "God made you that way!"

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Tinker Tips From Your Director



TINKER TIP

- On this first day at Maker Fun Factory, meet your Crew in the Tinker Tots area.
- Smile and introduce yourself.
- Be sure to learn and use the names of the kids in your Crew. Be sure they know your name, too.
- When Station Leaders ask you to "circle up with your Crew," that means to make a tight knee-to-knee circle for discussions. It's an easy way to help little ones focus in for a short time.

TINKER TIP

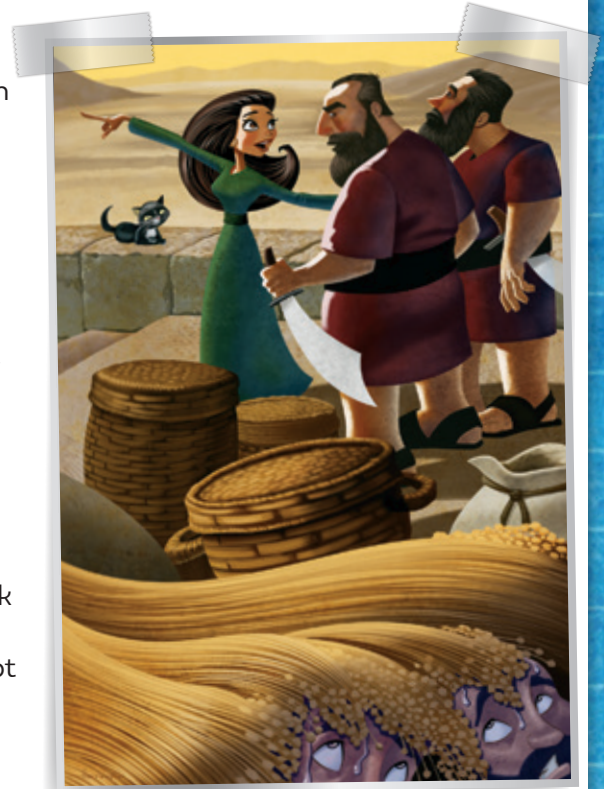
A God Sighting is *not* "I see God in that tree." A God Sighting *is* "I see God's creativity and power because only God can make a tree." God Sightings are seeing things that God has created, allowed, provided, done, or revealed to us.

Bible Point: God is for you.

Bible Story: Rahab believes in God's mighty power. (Joshua 1-2)

Consider This...

- Joshua had already proven himself as a godly leader. When Moses sent spies into the Promised Land, Joshua was the leader who went on behalf of the tribe of Ephraim. Upon their return, only Joshua and Caleb had faith that God would give them the land he had promised.
- Rahab's short, yet crucial, role in this passage contains strong examples of faith, strength, grace, and mercy. Rahab may have impacted history in another way, as many scholars trace Jesus' lineage back to her!
- Joshua received plenty of training for his leadership position, serving as Moses' personal aide for 40 years. (What a great internship!)
- Joshua knew a thing or two about faith. At the time he took over as leader of the Israelite nation, he was one of only two remaining Israelites who had seen the plagues of Egypt and had been present for the entire exodus. He had seen God's mighty power displayed time and time again.



Why It Matters...

Take a look around you and you'll likely see people of all ages showing what they believe in. T-shirts proudly promote superheroes, ball caps shout logos of sports teams, bumper stickers tell what political candidates we like, and bracelets call out our connection to charitable causes. Kids know what it means to rally behind a cause, person, or team. So consider how the kids at your VBS will feel as they discover that God is *for them!* On days when they feel like they don't have a friend in the world or when everything seems to be against them, kids can find comfort in knowing that God is on their side. Use every opportunity today to remind kids that God is championing *their* cause because of his unfailing love.

Key Verse: "If God is for us, who can ever be against us?"
(Romans 8:31)



DAY 2

Bible Point: **God is for 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 preschoolers identify what being "for" someone else looks like and how God is for us. Here are a couple of examples:

- Praise kids so others can hear when you see acts of encouragement, kindness, and helping hands and thank kids for being *for* each other.
- Keep watch for unique moments during the day to lead your Crew in thanks to God for his love and comfort.

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Tinker Tips From Your Director



TINKER TIP

- When you arrive on Days 2 through 5, go to the Sound Wave Sing & Play area, and sit near the Crew sign that matches your assigned number or name. Wait to welcome your Crew members with a warm smile, calling children by name.
- It's possible that you'll have new children join your Crew. Be sure to welcome them warmly, and introduce them to their Crew members—and to yourself!
- Participate in God Sightings—you're the chief encourager! Have fun with your Crew members as you look for God in action each day.
- You may want to leave Snack Factory a few minutes early with your Crew each day to allow time for a bathroom break.

Bible Point: God is always with you.

Bible Story: God is with Gideon.
(Judges 6:11–7:25)

Consider This...

- In Judges 6:11, Gideon is threshing wheat in the bottom of a wine press. People usually did their threshing above ground and often on a hill where the wind would blow away the chaff. However, in such a position, Gideon would have been an easy target for the raiders that plagued the area. Threshing his wheat in the hidden pit of a wine press kept his crops from being stolen.
- Gideon followed God's orders and destroyed the idols and altars to false gods. After this, people wanted to stone Gideon for his actions. Some of these people were Gideon's fellow Israelites! This shows how far the Israelite people had fallen from God's will.
- The Amalekite and Midianite armies were camped in the valley of Jezreel, which was an incredibly fertile agricultural area and still is to this day. Whoever controlled this valley controlled all who lived around it.
- The dream described in Judges 7:13 might seem a little strange without some historical context. At that time, barley was far less valuable than wheat; therefore, barley bread was considered inferior to wheat bread. Similarly, the Amalekite and Midianite armies considered Gideon's army inferior to theirs. God simply used cultural symbols of value to demonstrate the surprising thing he planned to do!



Why It Matters...

Researchers estimate that 1 in every 5 Americans struggles with loneliness. The kids and teens at your VBS are particularly vulnerable to such feelings, especially when you consider rampant bullying. Social media can create a false sense of connectedness that actually leads to physical isolation. (Think of how you feel when you see pictures of everyone else having fun without you.) Now more than ever, kids need to hear that God is with them. The kids at your VBS will be reassured to know that God is truly a constant companion who will never let them down. You have the chance to point out that a friendship with God satisfies our needs better than anything or anyone else.

Key Verse: “The Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”
(Joshua 1:9)



DAY 3

Bible Point: **God is always with you.**

God Sightings®

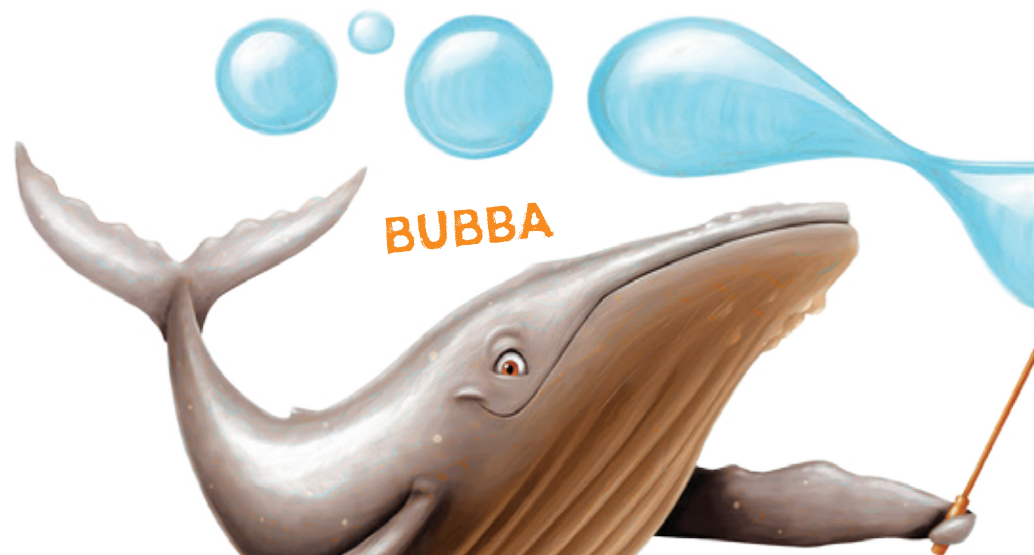
Keep looking for evidence of God—our amazing Maker—all around you. Throughout the day point out the things that remind you of God's consistent presence. Here are a few examples:

- Thank God for the Bible and the love God communicates to us in its pages! It's no ordinary book and it's a true God Sighting.
- Bring up the Operation Kid-to-Kid project and how amazing it is that it doesn't matter where in the world you are, your community or across the world in a village in Peru, God is always with you.
- Point out songs from Sound Wave Sing & Play, such as "He's Got the Whole World In His Hands," that offer reminders that God's presence covers the world.



TINKER TIP

- Remind preschoolers that the stories they're learning are from God's Word—the Bible—and these stories are true!
- As the week goes on, take time to get to know new Crew members, and make them feel warmly welcomed into your Crew family.
- Be an example to your preschoolers of God's patient, listening ears.
- If you have time between stations, talk about how exciting it is that you're helping kids in Peru have clean, safe water!
- As the week progresses, preschoolers may get tired—or even more energetic! Remember to demonstrate God's powerful love, kindness, gentleness, and patience with these little ones. They're learning so much about God...from you!



Tinker Tips From Your Director

Bible Point: God will always love you.

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (Luke 22:66–24:12)

Consider This...

- Pilate and the Jews didn't really get along. Pilate had taken from their funds to build Roman architecture in the area and had brought imperial images into the city. Roman authorities had already warned Pilate about the mounting tensions in the area he ruled.
- Pilate found Jesus innocent—he didn't want to kill Jesus. In fact, Pilate likely thought the Jewish leaders were just jealous men who wanted to get rid of a rival. But when Jewish leaders threatened to report Pilate to Caesar, he compromised his beliefs and gave in to public demand for the sake of his career.
- Interestingly, David foreshadows Jesus' pain and suffering in amazing detail throughout Psalm 22. He writes of being mocked (verse 7), having his hands and feet pierced (verse 16), and people casting lots for his clothing (verse 18).
- Most historians and scholars believe Jesus' tomb was something like a cave, carved from the limestone hills surrounding Jerusalem.
- Bringing spices to a grave was the Bible-times equivalent of bringing flowers to a grave today. It was a sign of love and respect.



Why It Matters...

Of the many incredible things God offers us, his love is undoubtedly the greatest. Unfortunately, true love might be an increasingly difficult concept for the kids at your VBS to grasp. We claim to *love* everything from hamburgers to sports teams, so it's easy to see where this confusion (or trivialization) comes from. But God's powerful love is transforming because it's unending and undeserved. *That* is unlike *anything* kids see around them! The kids and adults at your VBS will be unearthing evidence of God's love as long as they live—it's just that big. Today you'll help kids explore the fact that God's pure love is real, unending, and stronger than our shortcomings. Kids simply don't see examples of that in our culture today! Look for opportunities to set an example for the kids you interact with by demonstrating God's unending love.

Key Verse: "Your unending love will last forever." (Psalm 89:2)



DAY 4

CHEWY

Bible Point: **God will always love you.**



Helping Children Follow Jesus

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

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

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



God Sightings®

Today, help your Crew members think of God Sightings that show God's love for us. Here are a few examples:

- God shows us his love through amazing experiences like a week at VBS where we learn about our amazing Maker!
- God made us to care for each other because he loves us. Highlight times you see kids caring for one another.
- It's the ultimate God Sighting—Jesus! God sent his only Son to take the punishment for *our* sins because God loves us so much.

Tinker Tips From Your Director

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Bible Point: God made you for a reason.

Bible Story: Abigail brings peace. (1 Samuel 25)

Consider This...

- David and his men stayed in this remote area after running from King Saul. At this point in history, David had encountered Saul and the two had made peace. David, however, remained in the area even though he was no longer a fugitive. He knew that Saul's words couldn't always be trusted.
- It might be easy to sympathize with Nabal at first. After all, David asked him to feed 600 men! But cultural customs at the time demanded that travelers be fed. Nabal was incredibly wealthy and would've had no financial problem taking care of David and his men. Not only that, but Nabal owed some of his financial success to David and his men since they had protected Nabal's men and flocks.
- Not only was Abigail incredibly brave, just, and wise, but she also showed a sense of humor. In verse 25, she says Nabal "is a fool, just as his name suggests." This was actually a little joke. *Nabal* sounds like a Hebrew word meaning "fool." (Good one, Abigail!)
- David made a good choice when he took Abigail as a wife. She was wise, kind, and beautiful, and by marrying the widow of a prominent citizen of Judah, David earned a few "political bonus points."



Why It Matters...

There's no doubt about it—the kids at your VBS are going to do amazing things in life. But those amazing things start *now!* Psalm 139 reassures us that God's purpose and plans began before we were born. While kids may not *know* God's plans for them yet, imagine how transforming it would be for *every* child to begin prayerfully seeking God's purpose today! No child is an accident. No child is meaningless. God created each one of us intentionally. Today you have the privilege of encouraging each child with the promise that he or she was created for a specific reason!

Key Verse: "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord."
(Jeremiah 29:11)



DAY 5

Bible Point: **God made you for a reason.**

God Sightings®

Today, help your Crew members celebrate God Sightings that give them glimpses of the reason God made them. Here are a few examples:

- Tell kids about qualities you've noticed about them this week and give ideas about how God might use those qualities in them as they grow up.
- Challenge kids to give each other and their family and friends the encouraging reminder that "God made you for a reason."
- Tell each child why they're a God Sighting for you and how their unique qualities made your week great.

Thank You to You!

Thanks for all you've done to help preschoolers learn that they're here for a reason and their purpose comes from our amazing Maker-God!



Tinker Tips From Your Director



TINKER TIP

- Find out if the kids in your Crew have age-appropriate Bibles or Christian music at home. Talk with your VBS Director about providing these basic resources for kids.
- Continue building friendships long after Maker Fun Factory is over. Work with preschoolers and parents to fill out the "All About My Crew" information on each Crew member. After VBS, you'll be able to send postcards, birthday cards, and greet kids who attend your church.
- Give each child his or her Bible Memory Buddies and other fun goodies from Maker Fun Factory.
- Thank your Tinker Tots Preschool and VBS Directors for all they've done to demonstrate God's awesome, loving power to the kids in your community!



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: _____

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Name: _____

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