



Main Lessons



An evangelistic VBS

**"Sheriff's Hacienda"
Vacation Bible School**

Pamphlet for the main speaker

Main Lessons

This year's main lessons should be loads of fun as the children get their hands goopy with play dough! Don't worry about making a mess because keeping things clean isn't the goal. The goal is to change lives. If we just preach a sermon to children, they will not be able to remember the lesson or to apply it at home. But seeing the drama and making shapes with play dough during the Bible story will help them remember the lesson for each day. So get excited about changing some lives and make up a whole bunch of play dough! We recommend that, once you make several batches of play dough, you divide them up into small balls, one for each child. Then put each ball into a plastic bag. This way you will be ready to pass them out quickly and collect them again at the end of each Bible story. Have some napkins and maybe even buckets of water ready where your students can wash their hands if needed. Included here are some of our favorite play dough recipes. We hope you can have some fun as you change lives for eternity!

Easy Play Dough:

2 Cups flour
1/2 Cup salt
1 Tbs oil
250 ml cold water
7-10 drops food-coloring or Koolaid (flavored drink mix)

Mix together half of the flour, with the salt. In a separate bowl, mix together the water, oil and coloring, then add to the flour mixture. Add the rest of the flour as needed. Turn onto a floured surface and knead till smooth. This is an easy play dough and requires no cooking!



Fruity Play Dough:

2 ¼ Cups flour
1 Cup salt
2 Tbs of flavored drink mix
4 Tbs oil
1 Cup water

Using powdered drink mix is great for play dough because it not only colors the dough, but gives it a wonderful smell too! Mix the flour, salt and drink mix on the stove, then add the water and oil. Continue mixing until it stiffens into a dough. Take it out of the pan and knead it a few minutes!



Kristina's Favorite:

3 Cups water
3 Cups flour
1 ½ cups salt
6 Tbs oil
3 Tbs Cream of Tartar powder
7-10 drops food-coloring or Koolaid

In a pan on the stove, mix all the ingredients together. Stir over medium heat until the play dough becomes thick. Take off stove, and let cool. Knead the dough for a few minutes until it is smooth and elastic. This dough lasts in the refrigerator for up to 6 months!

1- Wanted

Matthew is Called



You are wanted. Your name is on the poster, and people are out looking for you. But why? Because you were caught red handed. You have been caught in sin. "What?" you may ask. YES. God can see everything. He knows when you lie to your parents or steal a candy or hide from your teacher at school. God sees everything. Raise your hand if you believe in the Bible. Wow, that's good! Now raise your hand if you believe in Jesus. Wow, great!

1 Did you know that the Bible says that ALL have sinned?

Matthew 9:9-13

That's right. Both you and I have sinned. Also, Jesus said that we all have sinned! So if you are going to believe the Bible, you have to believe today's key verse, too: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23 God is perfect. He never does anything wrong. But the Bible says that we fall short all the time. We have all messed up.

We have all sinned.

But that isn't the end of the story. God knows that we are all sinners, but He still wants to talk to us, use us for His glory, and have a friendship with us.

Today's Bible story is about a sinner who Jesus knew had messed up. Jesus knew he had sinned. But Jesus stopped and talked to him anyway. Jesus called him anyway.

How many of you would you like God to stop and talk to you, even though you have messed up? Great! Me, too!

Let's get out some play dough for today's Bible story!

The Bible says that Jesus was walking along and He saw a tax collector named Matthew.

Divide your play dough into three balls. With two play dough balls, let's make a table and chair for Matthew to work at.

(Give the students time to make the table and chair while sharing about tax collectors.)

Back in the day, the tax collectors were known for taking a cut of people's money. Since they were taking people's money for the government, many took a little extra. They were basically stealing from the people all the time. It was so bad that people understood the words "tax collector" to automatically mean "sinner"! Can you imagine your job being identical to "sinner" because so many in your work lied or cheated or stole?

Okay, now let's make Matthew out of play dough and set him down on the chair. (Give them a little time to finish Matthew.)

Okay. You can smash those, and now let's make a coin box and some coins. I bet you can imagine a job where people automatically assume you lie or steal because there is probably a profession in your country that is similar. Do you have people in your country who take bribes? Do people pay to have someone lie for them? This was the life of Matthew. He was a known sinner. Tax collectors took people's money and put it in a box to turn into the government. Only, they usually didn't turn over all the money.

You can smash the money, and now let's make Jesus with all your play dough. He was walking by and saw Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. Jesus said to Matthew, "Follow me."

Immediately Matthew got up, left his post, and followed Jesus!

Now let's make a table and chair again with our play dough,



only this time, let's leave them empty! Matthew was no longer at his post but left everything to follow Jesus!

Now let's make a plate, fork, knife, and spoon. Later, Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, and the Bible says that there were many other tax collectors and sinners there to have dinner with them. The religious leaders asked the disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus responded, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

Did you know you were sick? I bet you feel just fine!

When Jesus said, "The sick are the ones who need a doctor," He was saying that sinners are the ones who need a Savior. If you think you are perfect and don't need any help, then you are on your own. Jesus came to help those who recognize that they are not perfect and do need the help.

(Collect the play dough from the students.)



You and I are on the wanted poster. We are caught in sin. The Bible says that ALL of us have sinned. But that is not the end of the story! Jesus is still looking for you! He knows that you are a sinner, but wants a relationship with you anyway. In fact, He came to earth for sinners! How many of you would like to have Jesus as your friend? That's wonderful! Let's pray together.

"Thank you Jesus for coming to earth for us sinners. I admit to you right now that I am a sinner. I have made mistakes. Thank you for being willing to talk to me and for being my friend. I believe in you. Amen."

Just like today's drama/skit, you and I are also on the wanted poster. But that is not the end of the story. Tomorrow we will see more of the drama and learn more about God.

2- Jailed

Woman is Caught in Adultery



You were wanted.

Your name was on the poster, and people were out looking for you.

But now you are in JAIL! That's right, you are actually locked up! But you don't feel like you are in jail, do you? You can stretch around, and it seems that you are still free.

You or your friends might not see your jail cell, but God can. In fact, your friends might be in their own jail cell!

Our key verse from the Bible today is, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23

Do you remember the lesson from yesterday? We all have sinned, every single one of us!

Well, there is an actual punishment for that sin, just like in today's drama/skit, where Eaglebert and Coyote Bill were caught for their prank and put into jail.

Do your parents have punishments at your home? For example, if you don't finish your homework, you don't get to play with your friends.

That would be a normal punishment.

Well, God has a punishment, too.

It's a punishment for all who have sinned.

But God is also very merciful and doesn't always give us what we deserve.

Let's get out the play dough for today's Bible story!

Jesus was teaching in the courtyard of the church with a lot of people around him. Let's make a whole crowd of people with our play dough.

While all those people were around them, some religious leaders brought in a woman who had been caught in adultery, a bad sin. They made her stand in front of the whole crowd.

Now let's make the woman.

How do you think she felt about having her sin broadcasted out-loud to a big crowd? That would have been very embarrassing, wouldn't it? Now bend your woman down, as though she was very embarrassed and ashamed. Now give her a sad face.

They asked Jesus what to do. They told everyone of

John 8:1-11

her sin and that the law said they should kill her. That's right; the common punishment for her sin was death! They had all picked up rocks and planned on throwing those rocks at her until she died!

(Now let's make some stones like the ones they were going to throw at her.)

The Bible says:

"But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground."

Now let's make Jesus with our play dough.

"At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'

'No one, sir,' she said.

'Then neither do I condemn you,' Jesus

declared. 'Go now and leave your life of sin.'"

(Collect the play dough from the students.)

Jesus had mercy on this woman and did not punish her with what her sin deserved. We too can receive mercy from Jesus, and not receive the punishment for our sins, though it is a punishment that we deserve.

Would you like that?

Let's pray.

"Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner and that I deserve your punishment. But I ask for your mercy, just like the woman to whom you showed mercy. Please forgive me for my wrong doings, and have mercy on me. Thank you."

Just like in today's drama/skit, you and I have also been caught and thrown into jail. But that is not the end of the story. Tomorrow we will see more of the drama and learn more about God.

3- Bailed

Jesus Dies on the Cross

You were wanted. You were put into jail.

People were out looking for you. You were caught and thrown in jail.

But now you have been BAILED out! That's right; someone has offered to pay to set you free! But, you don't feel like you have been freed yet, do you? You can still remember your sins, lies, and mistakes.

You and your friends might still be in trouble for something you have done recently. In fact, you might be punished when you get home!

Our key verse from the Bible today is, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 5:8

Do you remember the first lesson? We all have sinned, every single one of us!

Do you remember yesterday? We are all caught and put in jail.

Well, there is an actual payment that has been made for that sin. It is just like in today's drama/skit, where they were bailed out of jail and received an offer.

Have you ever had to restore a friendship by paying for something you broke or stole? That would be a normal payment to restore the relationship with people whose things we have damaged. Well, God needs us to make a payment, too. All those who have sinned need to restore their relationship with God. But God is very loving and has made a way for us to restore our relationship with Him.

Let's get out the play dough for today's Bible story!

Jesus got together with all his disciples, who were his closest friends, for a final dinner. With your play dough, make a loaf of bread and a plate. At that dinner were two men who would betray Jesus. After dinner, Judas betrayed Jesus by turning him over to the people who would kill Him on the cross. While they were judging Jesus in court, someone asked Peter if he was with Jesus. Peter said, "No," not once but three times! After Peter denied Jesus the third time, a rooster crowed, just as Jesus had predicted. (Make a rooster with your play dough.) Both of these two sinned by

Matthew 26-27

John 21:1-8,19

betraying Jesus. Those two sins required death, just like each of our sins.

After Jesus was betrayed by these two men, a huge crowd gathered at his trial. They called for his execution. When Jesus died on the cross, He died so that we do not have to die for our own sins. (Now make a cross with your play dough.) His death was sufficient to forgive everyone their sins because he was perfect. Jesus changed how we have a relationship with God. Now, instead of trying to be perfect,

we have to choose whether we want to accept his death for our sins. His death covers our imperfection!

Judas and Peter had both sinned. Judas chose not to accept the sacrifice of Jesus, but Peter chose to accept it. After Jesus died and rose from the dead, He appeared to the disciples. On the third time Peter saw Jesus, he was out fishing. (Now make a boat with your play dough) Jesus appeared on the shore, and the disciples knew right away that it was Him. Peter jumped out of the boat and swam to Jesus. Jesus forgave Peter for his sin and told him, "Follow me."

Who will you choose to copy? Will you be like Judas who chose to carry his own sin? Or will you choose to be like

Peter who, after sinning, chose to return to Jesus and follow Him?

(Collect the play dough from the students.)

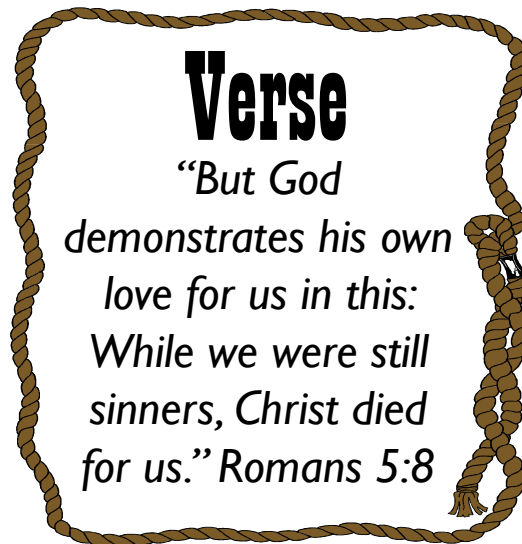
Jesus died for sins we have committed and has made a way for us to be restored to a relationship with God. We, too, can follow Jesus, and not receive the punishment for our sins that we deserve.

Would you like that?

Let's pray.

"Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross so I don't have to die for my own sins. Please forgive my sins. I will follow you. Thank you."

Just like today's drama/skit, you and I also have been bailed out of jail, and we have received an offer to be restored. But that is not the end of the story. Tomorrow we will see more of the drama and learn more about God.



4- Branded

Zacchaeus Climbs a Tree



You were wanted. You were caught and thrown into jail. But then you were BAILED out! And today we are learning about cows getting branded! Ranchers mark their livestock with a brand so that if the cows wander off and somebody finds them, it will be easy to tell who owns each cow. You can't ask a cow to tell you where they live when they get lost, like a policeman or sheriff can ask a lost child where he lives. The Bible says that you were bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). That's just like the cattle on a ranch. How much did you cost? Remember in the lesson yesterday, that Jesus paid the price for our sins when He died on the cross. Then that is what you and I cost! Jesus' death was very painful. It wasn't a cheap price that He paid to redeem you. What valuable thing has your family paid for? Perhaps a bicycle or car? Is it marked so that it can be examined and found to belong to your family? Yes. Every car has a special number marked on it that is registered to the owner. Sometimes people mark their bike with their name or a number. That way, if it is stolen, they can notify the authorities to them catch the thief. These are examples of branding!

Let's get out the play dough for today's Bible story.

First make a cow with your play dough and mark it with your fingernail on its rump (just like a brand). With that brand, it is plain the cow belongs to you! Do you remember in the Bible story on Tuesday? There was a crowd of people following Jesus and listening to everything He said. Yesterday we heard that there was also a huge crowd of people watching to see what would happen to Jesus when He was accused. Do you know what? There was always a crowd of people around Jesus. Now, make a little man with your play dough. His name is Zacchaeus, but we'll call him Zack. He lived in Jericho. Yes, that's the same city you heard about that Joshua marched around and whose walls God made fall down. Jesus came into the city of Jericho and was going to pass through it when Zack heard about Him. Boy, did he want to see and hear Jesus! Wouldn't

Luke 19:1-10

you?

Now form a big tree with your play dough but leave a little bit of play dough separate.

Like you, Zack wasn't very tall so he had a problem. How could he see what Jesus looked like? How could he hear what Jesus said? There was a huge crowd of people surrounding Jesus all of the time. It was like going to see a big parade and getting there late. Wouldn't it be great if

you could watch out of a second-story window above the street? Behind rows and rows of people, you can't see much of anything! Zack ran ahead along the road that Jesus would be coming down and spotted a tree and climbed up to get a much better view.

(Make a ball with the bit of play dough and form it into a head that you can put into your tree. Let Zack peek out from the branches and watch Jesus.)

When Jesus got to the tree, He stopped and looked up and said to the little man, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Now put a big smile on Zack and take him out of that tree. Zack was very happy to welcome Jesus to his home.

In fact, he repented of his sins right there! He said to Jesus, "Look Lord!

Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Use your play dough and make one of your most treasured possessions. Imagine giving somebody four of them! That had to hurt! Zack was wealthy, so when he said he'd give away half of everything he owned to poor people, he wasn't talking about a small amount.

The people were outside of his house whispering and gossiping about Jesus visiting him. He was a sinner, a bad man, a cheater and a tax collector. Zack was a completely-changed man because of his visit with Jesus.

Make Zack with your play dough and put a happy face on him. Why did Jesus pick him, even when he was a little hidden by the branches of a tree?

Jesus told him, "The son of man came to seek and save the

Verse

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

Romans 10:9

lost.” Jesus explained that He wants to save everybody who knows they are lost and need saving. Zack accepted Jesus that day. His sudden generosity was proof that he had completely changed. It was like a brand on a cow; it showed that now he belonged to God. He hadn’t been physically branded, but people could really see the difference. It was just like in the drama/skit, when Eaglebert and Coyote Bill could really see something different in others.

When you accept Jesus to pay for you and your sins, you become His. He will give you the Holy Spirit as proof that you belong to Him. The Holy Spirit will convict you of sin and help you to say you are sorry and to admit it when you do bad things. He will help you to live close to God and to grow as a Christian.

Now, make yourself with your play dough. We are going to pray, and if you choose to become a follower of Jesus like Zack did in the story today, you can put a cross “brand” on your play dough self to show that you belong to God. (Collect the play dough from the students.)

How many of you would like to pray today to accept Jesus into your heart? Would you like to accept His death on the cross to pay for your wrong-doings? Raise your hand if you would like others to see that you are different and changed.

Let’s pray.

“Lord God, I am not perfect and I need help. I want Jesus to come and seek me out like He did Zack. Jesus, will You come into my heart today? Jesus, I want to belong to YOU and to get help to follow You for the rest of my life. I choose to follow You.”

5- Deputized

The Disciples Become Fishers of Men

You were wanted. You were put into jail. You were bailed out. You were branded.

Today we are talking about being deputized! That’s right; Jesus has a job for you! “But, I’m not ready for this,” you say? Well, Jesus has chosen to use you. There are many people who need to hear that Jesus is asking them to follow Him, too. You probably have friends who believe that they have to be good enough for God. But that is not true. Do you remember the lesson? Jesus died for the sick, not the healthy. So as long as we think we are healthy and are trying to be good enough in our own strength, we are missing the whole point!

God doesn’t want us to be good enough. He wants us to accept that we are sinners and to allow Jesus to pay the price for our sins.

Our key verse from the Bible today is, *“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”* Romans 10:14b

So the question for you is this: how can your friends hear about Jesus unless you tell them? It is just like in today’s drama/skit, where they were deputized to bring a message to the pack of dogs.

Have you ever had some good news you wanted to share with someone?

Luke 5:1-11

You couldn’t wait to let them know what had happened. Well, God has given us some great news. We do not have to pay for our own sins; Jesus has offered to do that. So, how will your friends hear if you don’t tell them?

Let’s get out the play dough for today’s Bible story!

One day, Jesus was standing by the Sea of Galilee, and a crowd was forming around Him to listen to the Word of God. (Let’s make a crowd of people with our play dough.) As the crowd grew, Jesus wanted to make sure everyone could hear. He climbed into Peter’s boat and pushed it out a little. Then he sat down and taught them from the boat. (Make a boat with your play dough and maybe some waves.)

When Jesus was done sharing with the people, He asked Peter to climb in and go fishing with Him. Peter had worked all night but climbed in the boat to fish, anyway. When the fishermen (including Peter) let down their nets, they were filled to the maximum and the nets

Verse

“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”

Romans 10:14b

started to break! Peter, James and John were amazed at their catch. (Now make some fish with your play dough.) Peter dropped to his knees and said, "Go away from me Lord, I am a sinful man!" Instead of leaving them there, Jesus said, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." (Now make some people with your play dough.)

(Collect the play dough from the students.)

Jesus has asked us to share the good news that He died for sins and has made a way for us to be restored to a relationship with God. When we follow Jesus, we will become people who share the good news with our friends, family, and neighbors. Would you like that?

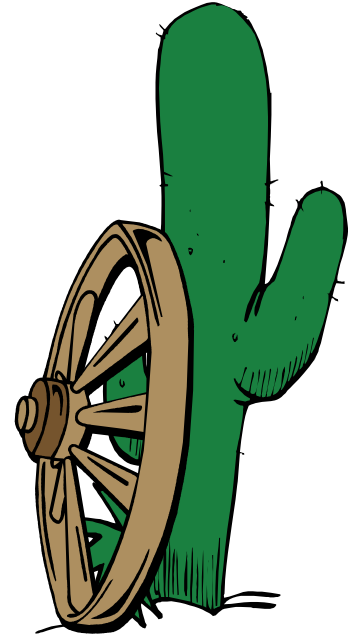
Let's pray.

"Jesus, thank you for giving me good news that I will share with my friends and family. I will obey you. I choose to share with others about you. Thank you for helping me."

Just like in today's drama/skit, you and I have also been deputized! But that is not the end of the story. Jesus has asked us to be fishers of men. We have the good news to share with others.

Let's say all five of our verses together.

1. Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*
2. Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*
3. Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*
4. Romans 10:9 *"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*
5. Romans 10:14b *"...And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"*



Go to

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