Online VBS Guide
Adapting Rocky Railway into a VBS-at-home experience

ROCKY RAILWAY
Jesus’ power pulls us through
LEADING KIDVID™ CINEMA ONLINE

During this time of social distancing and less-than-fashionable face masks, the kids you serve need to be reminded: It’s Jesus’ power that pulls them through! So thanks for sharing these true stories of real kids with your kids. You’ll cement Bible truths through video and experiences that are carefully crafted to be engaging, memorable, and centered on the remarkable power of Jesus.

Because you’re reaching out through a screen rather than in person, we’ve provided some quick suggestions about how to crank up the fun meter even though you’re not in the room with kids and, hopefully, their parents.

And that’s important: Involve family members. As you lead these experiences, remember that you’re not just providing entertainment—you’re providing a time of family spiritual growth. Having parents and siblings involved allows for discussion, and that’s where connections and deep discoveries are made.

Ready? Let’s help kids discover that Jesus’ power makes all the difference! Let’s trust Jesus!

General Guidelines

▷ You’re the face of your church to your community, so have fun!

▷ While the activities in the manual were created for a 20-minute station, keep things a bit shorter for an online, at-home version. The following modifications will shorten your program. With a little less moving around—and fewer kids to move around all at once—things should move more quickly.

▷ Your VBS Director will be sending home a Rocky Railway VBS student pack for kids to use throughout VBS at home. Check to see if this includes the Watch for God Wristband, a wearable reminder to look for evidence of God every day and everywhere.

▷ The student pack should also include daily Bible Memory Buddies. Kids will have “met” these fun characters during each day’s Sing & Play opening.

▷ Create a simple “set” for your videos or livestream. You can use the Rocky Railway Fabric Wall Hanging (super simple) or decorations your church had already created for VBS. Another easy option is the Giant Train Poster Pack, which allows you to create a 3D train in a snap!

▷ As you present, it’s a good idea for kids to be able to see all of you, not just your head and shoulders. This will allow you to lead kids with more drama and action.

▷ Use the materials in your KidVid™ Cinema Leader Manual, combined with the following tips and modifications as you livestream or pre-record your session. You’ll find that most of the curriculum you already have will work well for this innovative setting!
KidVid is where kids learn about God Sightings, and receive their Watch for God Wristband (include one in each student pack). Be sure to wear one yourself, too!

When kids would normally talk about a question with their Crew, simply have them talk about it with any family members joining them for VBS. To make discussion time even easier, put the question onscreen so kids remember what to talk about.

If you’re pre-recording your sessions, hold up a fun “Pause” sign and have kids pause the recording while they talk about the questions. Interactions and discussions keep VBS from being just a video that kids watch. Plus, it helps build relationships at home and cement the daily Point.

Day 1

- Welcome kids in the “Welcome Crews” section, then skip down into the middle of the “Watch for God” section. Omit talking about the classroom setting, but pick up as you say, “We’re discovering that we can observe God…”
- **Omit the Crew distribution of wristbands.** Instead, in the “Watch for God” section, have kids find the Watch for God wristband if you’ve included it in the VBS student pack and slip it on.
- Continue through the “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD” segment, remembering to put the follow-up question onscreen and encouraging kids to pause the video if you’re pre-recorded.
- **Omit the lower half of page 8, beginning with the question. You’ll pick back up at the top of page 9.**
- Lead kids in “Explore the Bible Verse.” Give kids a chance to grab a Bible if they have one at home, look up the passage, then you read it aloud (in case kids are non-readers or don’t have a Bible.)
- Ask the question in “Explore the Bible Verse,” then share your story. Rather than the Crew affirmation at the end of page 9, direct kids to think about something hard they’d like to try. As they do, have them take the Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy from their student packs. Have kids hold Ramsey in their hands, as they think about that difficult thing they need Jesus’ help to try. Lead kids in personalizing the verse, saying out loud “[Name], you can do everything through Christ, who strengthens you.” If kids have siblings or parents at home, encourage them to speak the affirmation to each other.

Day 2

- Begin with the first two sections as written, modifying for kids at home and not in Crews. If you play an instrument, you may want to have it on hand to show kids!
- As kids talk about the follow-up questions after the video, be sure to put the two questions onscreen.
During “Explore the Bible Verse,” give kids a chance to grab a Bible and look up Psalm 31:24 with you. Be sure to read it aloud for non-readers or kids who don’t have Bibles at home.

Omit the first question after the verse but put the second one onscreen for kids to talk about at home.

After kids have shared, you’ll see the phrase “We all need Jesus.” After saying this, direct kids to take the Ava Bible Memory Buddy from their student packs.

Omit the paragraph after “We all need Jesus,” and instead remind kids that Ava’s wings take her high, where she has a new perspective. Point out that hope gives us a fresh perspective, too! Then continue with the paragraph that begins “I love that Jesus’ power can give us strength and courage.”

Have kids hold their Ava Bible Memory Buddies in their outstretched “wings” as you do the “Closing Prayer.”

Day 3

“Welcome Crews,” then move into “Create Cheers.” Give kids and families a chance to create a cheer with their family name in it. If your church has a private Facebook group, parents may want to post their family’s cheer there!

Begin the “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD,” but omit the paragraph that begins “I really liked Lauren’s story,” through the question about serving in a community kitchen.

Continue through the “Explore the Bible Verse” section. Allow kids time to get a Bible and look up Isaiah 40:29 with you.

Challenge kids to come up with a bold way they can serve Jesus. Instead of just sharing it in the activity on page 21, have kids pause the video while they write or draw it on a window or mirror in washable marker.

Before the “Closing Prayer,” direct kids to take the Sierra Bible Memory Buddy from their student packs and set it across the room from where they’re sitting. Challenge kids to make bold mountain lion leaps across the room, saying the Bible Point as they do. Once kids have retrieved their Sierra Buddies, they’ll join you for the “Closing Prayer.”

Day 4

During “Explore the Bible Verse,” allow time for kids to get a Bible and look up Romans 8:11 with you.

Continue through the “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD” segment, omitting the last question on page 25.

Before the “Closing Prayer,” have family members give each other a “grand old hug.” Family members can take out the Finn Bible Memory Buddy and hand it to kids (or siblings can hand it to each other), saying the verse that’s written on the back to each other.
Day 5

⚠ Continue through the “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD” section, omitting the first two follow-up questions after the DVD.

- During “Explore the Bible Verse,” give kids time to get a Bible and look up John 15:12 with you.

- Before kids review during “Explore the Bible Verse,” ask them to grab a pencil and five index cards, small pieces of paper, or sticky notes. Ask kids to write or draw the answers to each of the review questions, then put the piece of paper into their Tracking With Jesus Bible Books. Challenge kids to do the things they wrote later in the summer.

⚠ Omit the train activity before the “Closing Prayer.” Instead, have kids take all of their Bible Memory Buddies (including Lawrence Elk) from their student packs. Demonstrate how to connect the notches on each stand to make a loop that will fit over your fingertips, sort of like finger puppets. Have kids hold up their Buddies as you lead the “Closing Prayer.”