Online VBS Guide
Adapting Rocky Railway into a VBS-at-home experience
LEADING PRESCHOOL
BIBLE ADVENTURES ONLINE

During this time of social distancing and less-than-fashionable face masks, the preschoolers you serve need to be reminded: It’s Jesus’ power that pulls them through! So thanks for sharing these Bible stories with your kids. You’ll introduce preschoolers to adventures 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 preschooler and, hopefully, their parents.

And that’s important: *Involve family members.* As you lead these adventures, 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 25-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 preschoolers 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. This includes the Little Kids Preschool Pack, which features an eye-catching poster of each daily Bible story.
- 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 preschoolers 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 Little Kids Preschool Bible Adventures & Missions 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!
Some questions are a “call-out” response, where preschoolers might chime in with short responses. It’s okay to ask these, even if you can’t hear and respond to preschoolers’ answers. Just pause to let them joyfully call out their answers to family members.

When preschoolers 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 parents remember what to talk about.

If you’re pre-recording your sessions, hold up a fun “Pause” sign and have grown-ups pause the video 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

⚠️ Omit setting out blankets.

- Ideally, try to find a willing friend to take part in the drama with you as Saul. You may even have Saul join you on a Zoom call! If not, your biggest modification will be playing the roles of Saul and Ananias. Because of preschoolers’ big imaginations, it’s easy! Wear a Bible-times costume, and when the time comes, add an element that you can take off or cover up as you switch to Saul, such as a fabric belt or a paper mustache.

- Begin with the “Talk About Trains” section, starting by saying “Welcome, travelers, to Little Kids Depot!” No need to point out mountain scenery. Also remember, if you’re pre-recording your station, direct grown-ups to pause the video while they talk about the questions together.

⚠️ In the “Sing the Welcome Song” section, omit the explanation of Crews and just have everyone stand up and sing.

- During the “Meet Billy and Sing a Song” section, zoom in on the poster of Billy to be sure it can be seen on kids’ screens.

⚠️ Omit the reference to going to Sing & Play with the big kids.

⚠️ Omit the “Meet Your Crew” section.

- In the “Learn the Bible Point and Meet Ramsey” section, zoom in on the Bible Point Poster so it’s easy to see on a computer screen. (If you’ll have kids watch the Sing & Play Express session along with older kids today, you can omit the Buddy video, since they will already have seen it then.)

- For “Begin the Bible Adventure,” kids can still shout out answers to your question about mean people they’ve seen on TV. No need to pause for this question. However, do pause the video and have kids share with their families for the other questions in this section.

- Also in “Begin the Bible Adventure,” while walking around the room, have kids stop when you do. Have family members lead preschoolers with their eyes closed where it asks Crew Leaders to do so.

⚠️ Omit the reference to snack time.
Day 2

- Omit the Operation Kid-to-Kid™ aspects of this lesson.
- Omit all setup except for hanging the posters and bookmarking your Bible.
- In “Sing the Welcome Song,” omit Crews greeting one another.
- In the “Climb Aboard” section, omit the question about changing your name.
  - During “Climb Aboard,” when you say, “Let’s climb aboard our ships,” let preschoolers know they’ll need to quickly build a ship and find an ocean. A ship can be a couch cushion or large pillow, and the ocean can be a towel, sheet, or blanket. Give a moment for someone to run and grab the items before you guide families in the experience.
  - As families “Sail Into a Storm,” let them get their fingers wet and flick water drops on preschoolers in place of spray bottles. Preschoolers can also grab nearby objects in the room, such as pillows, to toss out of the boat in place of the boxes.
  - During “Share the Hope,” let a family member run and grab crackers or a handful of cereal for the “sailors.” Have family members discuss all questions directed toward Crews. Remember to pause the video if you’re pre-recording to allow time.
  - Continue through the “Swim to Shore” section. During this activity, all family members can count those present together. As you talk about how frightened the sailors were, you may want to hold up the Day 2 mini-poster from the preschool student page since preschoolers will have this at home. Point out how scared the men were!
- Omit references to Exploration Stations and snack time.

Day 3

- Omit setting out blankets.
- In “Sing the Welcome Song,” omit Crews greeting one another.
- Omit the “Learn About Operation Kid-to-Kid” section.
  - After you “Sing the Welcome Song,” go right into the “Dance and Celebrate!” section.
- Omit the questions in the “Dance and Celebrate!” section.
  - Before you “Gather a Crowd,” hold up the mini-poster from the preschool student book. Point out how joyful and happy the people look when Peter and John helped the man!
  - For “Gather a Crowd,” guide family members (rather than Crews) to rush to one side of the room and back. Small families may want individuals to take several turns. Have families pause the video if you’re pre-recording to allow time.
  - During the “Put Peter and John in Jail” section, preschoolers can wrap their arms entirely around the person in jail. The oldest family member can take the role of Crew Leaders. (Or you can guide families to make a simple “jail” with chairs.)
During “Boldly Tell Others,” families make a circle when Crew members are directed to do so.

Rather than pointing to the Bible Poster, hold up the mini-poster from the preschool student pages, since preschoolers will have this at home.

⚠️ Omit references to snack time.

Day 4

⚠️ Omit setting out blankets.

- Include supplies intended for preschoolers to interact with, but you won’t need one per child or Crew. You will need three dot stickers for yourself.
- Begin with “Sing the Welcome Song.”
- Omit the “Talk About Operation Kid-to-Kid” section.
- Tell families they’ll need to grab a few simple supplies to help you explore today’s story. Families will need tape and something to make a cross. They can use masking tape or painter’s tape on a wall, make a large paper cross from wrapping paper, or even draw a cross with washable markers on a window. Have families pause the video while they get their supplies. You’ll need these supplies, too.
- In the “Talk About Wrong Choices” section, omit reference to the part of the room decorated for a party. Guide families to put pieces of tape on their shirts rather than dot stickers.
- During “Hide When Jesus Is Arrested,” preschoolers can hide somewhere in the room.
- In “Put Jesus in the Tomb,” use a spike and piece of wood to demonstrate. Omit having kids wrap dolls and place them in the box. Instead, demonstrate this, and encourage preschoolers to pretend to do the same.
- In “Celebrate That Jesus Saved Us!” let preschoolers and grown-ups remove their tape pieces and put them on whatever cross they made while you play the song.
- Omit the party in heaven. (However, if you want families to celebrate with a snack, play the Sing & Play Express songs while they have their own party!)

⚠️ Omit references to snack time.
Day 5

⚠️ Omit setting out blankets.

- Begin with “Sing the Welcome Song,” directing preschoolers and grown-ups to interact.
- For the “Add New Friends” section, have one person in each family stand, and have them add individuals instead of Crews. If only two are participating, have them name family or friends and pretend to add them to their group.
- During “Enjoy Being Together,” hold up the mini-poster from the preschool student page, rather than the Bible Story Poster. Let families take on Crew roles. Instead of having Crews pray, lead a prayer for everyone.
- In “Help Our Friends,” families can use blankets or towels to pull the oldest member of their family around the room. If families don’t have enough people to pull, they can put an object on the blanket or towel that would be hard for one person to pull alone. Remember to have families pause the video if you’re pre-recording to allow time.

⚠️ Omit the snack in the “Help Our Friends” section.

⚠️ Omit references to snack time.