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

ROCKY RAILWAY
Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through
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 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 preschoolers 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 preschoolers 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 preschoolers to use throughout VBS at home. The student packs should include daily Bible Memory Buddies. Kids will have “met” these fun characters during each day’s Sing & Play opening. Connect with your VBS Director to get a list of everything included in the student packs, such as carabiners for holding Bible Memory Buddies or Watch for God Wristbands.
› 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! It’s a great idea to have the Bible Memory Buddy Posters on your set, too.
› 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 Preschool 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!

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 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 Kids” section. Pause while they tell a family member what makes them special.
- Before preschoolers “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD,” omit the question about sports and games. Simply share a few sports and games that preschoolers like to play.
- Omit the question about what hard things Dominic did. Direct parents to pause the video while they talk about the next question.
- Continue through the “Lead Bible Verse Actions,” and into “Lead Ram-bunctious Preschoolers.”
- In the “Receive a Bible Memory Buddy” section, it’s a great idea to have a helper demonstrate how you want parents to give their preschoolers the Bible Memory Buddy. Direct parents to find the Ramsey Bible Memory Buddy in the student packs, and give their child the buddy in the way you demonstrate.
- Wrap up with the “Close in Prayer” section.

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!
- Omit the “Tell about that” part of the first question.
- As preschoolers talk with their parents after the video, be sure to put the two questions onscreen for parents.
- During the “Play Hawk-Eye Spy” activity, “spy” something on your set instead of something a child is wearing. Then allow a minute for families to play “I Spy” together.
Direct parents to take the Ava Bible Memory Buddy from the student packs.
Have a helper demonstrate how parents will give the Bible Memory Buddy to their child.
For the “Close With a Cheer” section, have family members cheer together.

Day 3

- Begin with the first two sections as written, pausing for a few seconds for preschoolers to call out “ups” and “downs.”
- **Omit the first question in the “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD” section.** Allow time for families to talk about the second set of questions.
- “Lead Bible Verse Actions,” and then continue into “Lead Jumping Cats.”
- **Omit the question about cats.** Instead, lead kids in simply acting like cats for a minute. Omit the question about Sierra acting like a cat.
- Direct parents to get the Sierra Bible Memory Buddy from the student packs. Have a helper demonstrate how parents will give the Sierra Buddy to their “leaping” preschoolers.
- Have parents play the role of Crew Leader in the “Close With a Cheer” section.

Day 4

- Lead the first two sections as written, pausing so families can discuss the question about heaven. (Remember, if you’re pre-recorded, direct parents to pause your video so they can talk.)
- Continue through “Lead the Bible Verse Actions” and “Introduce Finn.”
- Direct parents to take the Finn Bible Memory Buddy from the student packs.
- Demonstrate how parents will give Finn to their preschoolers, as directed in the “Introduce Finn” section.
- Lead preschoolers in making fishy “hands” and praying, as directed on page 25.

Day 5

- Modify the question in “Talk About VBS Friends” to be “Who are some friends you like to play with?” Pause while kids and parents say the name of their friends.
- **Continue through “Watch the KidVid Stories DVD,” but omit the question about Renee and Alina.** You may list some of the ways you saw the girls being good friends.
- In “Lead Bible Verse Actions,” have preschoolers hug any family members who are nearby, rather than a Crew. Continue through “Introduce Lawrence Elk.”
Omit the question about people who are in their “herd.”

- Direct parents to take the Lawrence Elk Bible Memory Buddy from the student packs. Demonstrate with a helper how parents will take the role of Crew Leaders, giving their child the Buddy in a special way.
- Have families “Close With a Herd Hug” while you pray.