Online VBS Guide

Adapting Rocky Railway into a VBS-at-home experience

ROCKY RAILWAY

Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through

Group
Real Bold Love
Leading Sing & Play Express 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 praising God and celebrating with your kids. You’ll introduce them to life-changing Bible truths, 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. You’re not just providing entertainment—you’re sharing 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. You also won’t have the extra time required to quiet kids after songs or take “in person” responses. Additionally, God Sightings can go much more quickly than they would with a large group.
- Your VBS Director will be sending home a Rocky Railway VBS student pack for kids to use throughout VBS at home. You may want to include sticky notes or another fun item for families to write their God Sightings on. Connect with your VBS Director to see about adding something simple to celebrate the ways families are seeing evidence of God (especially during such a challenging time!).
- 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!
- Mount the Bible Point Posters on foam core so you can have them on your “set” every day. Kids will love seeing these giant Buddies!
- Use the materials in your Sing & Play Express 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 just perfectly for this innovative setting!
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.

Connect with your VBS Director to see what ideas he or she has for celebrating and displaying God Sightings. You’ll model this in your presentation.

If you’d like, drop in the daily skit videos. This content is available for purchase as a DVD, or as a download. Just contact Group or your Group VBS supplier.

Due to copyright restrictions, replace the songs “Everywhere I Go,” “Lions,” and “The Same Power” with other Rocky Railway songs. (We’ve given suggestions in the following modifications.)

Day 1

- Begin on page 12 of your Sing & Play Express Leader Manual. Continue through the “Talk About Trains” section.
- During the “Explore Jesus’ Power” section, omit having kids call out superpowers. However, if you’re on Facebook Live or Zoom, where kids can interact, you can keep this short activity.
- After kids watch the Buddy video during “Meet Bible Buddy Ramsey,” omit singing “Everywhere I Go.”
- Omit the “Choose Crew Jobs” section. You can wrap up with prayer, or direct kids to which VBS “station” they’ll experience next.

Day 2

- Rather than hang the God Sightings Poster, as noted on page 29, prepare the innovative way you and your VBS Director have planned to display God Sightings.
- Prepare your balloons, as noted on page 29.
- During the “Getting Everyone Aboard” section, omit the Crew huddle activity.
- For the “Share God Sightings” section, instead of motioning to the poster, show kids how you’re marking your God Sightings. After sharing your own, direct kids to take any necessary items from their student packs. Have parents or older siblings help write the God Sightings on the item while you play “We Can Trust Him.”
- Continue through the rest of the activities, then close in prayer or by telling kids which “station” they’ll experience next.
Day 3

- In the “Welcome Everyone Aboard” section, have kids and families come up with their own train whistle pattern. (You may have them videotape their train whistle patterns later and send them to you!)
- During the “Share God Sightings” section, play the song “We Can Trust Him.” Continue adding to your God Sightings display you began yesterday.
- After kids “Meet Bible Memory Buddy Sierra,” omit the song “Lions.” You can either move directly into your next station or replace it with another Rocky Railway favorite!

Day 4

- Follow the directions in the “Before Crews Steam Your Way...” section. Make the Never-Ending Bottle, and be sure to practice with it. Make sure your camera is close enough so kids can see the glass of water filling up.
- In the “Welcome Everyone Aboard” section, omit the song “The Same Power.” Instead, share today’s Bible verse with kids. The passage connects to the teakettle object lesson and mirrors the lyrics of the song.
- Continue adding to your God Sightings display, and guide kids to do the same. Replace “Everywhere I Go” with the song “We Can Trust Him.”
- After kids “Meet Bible Memory Buddy Finn,” have them give the “fishy five” to one person in the room with them.

Day 5

- For the “Make an Intercontinental Railway” section, simply have kids hold one arm in front of them to represent one side of the U.S. (elbow out, fingers touching their chest). Then guide them in holding their other arm out in the same way, representing the other side of the U.S. Let kids link their index fingers together to be “The Golden Spike.”
- After kids “Make an Intercontinental Railway,” lead them in singing “This Train Is Bound for Glory” rather than “We Can Trust Him.”
- While kids share and note their God Sightings, play the song “We Can Trust Him.”
- Hold up the Bible Point Posters to “Do a Quick Review.”
- Omit the “Celebrate Crew Leaders” section.