



Leader Devotional

Abraham & Sarah Follow God

Genesis 12:1-9

Welcome to Road Trip! VBS. Thank you for serving as we lead our Travelers to discover God's presence with them wherever they go. Throughout this VBS, we'll recount how God was with people in the Old and New Testaments in a variety of locations and situations, even in places where we wouldn't always expect God to be.

In this session, we will learn that God is with us even when we journey into the unknown. Our Bible story for this session brings us to the beginning of Abraham and Sarah's journey with God, a journey that requires great trust in God. God tells Abraham to move his family to a new place that God would show them, but they did not know anything about this place. God knows about the place, though, and God promises to be with Abraham and his family on the journey. When they arrive at the place God promised, Abraham explores the land that will belong to his descendants, and builds altars and worships God in those places.

Venturing into unknown territory can be scary, whether that is physically traveling to a new place, trying a new hobby, or starting a new job. But, because God fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and Sarah to be with them on their journey, we know that God is with us on our journeys, too.

Let's pause to reflect on journeys in our own lives. When have you stepped into an uncertain situation? How did you know God journeyed with you during that time? Keep that memory in mind as you go throughout this session, and let that memory be a comfort to you on your future journeys.

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we thank you for your presence beside us on life's journeys. Remind us of your ever-present love in both the certain and uncertain times of our lives.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

Abraham & Sarah Follow God

(Genesis 12:1-9)

Green Light Verse

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

(Joshua 1:9)

Mile Marker

God is with us on the journey.



Bible Story

The Israelites Take the Scenic Route
(Exodus 13:17-22)

Green Light Verse

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:9)

Mile Marker

God is with us when we go off course.

Leader Devotional

The Israelites Take the Scenic Route

Exodus 13:17-22

Welcome back to Road Trip! VBS. Thank you for being On the Go with God! as we lead our Travelers to recognize God's presence wherever they go. In this session, we'll hear a story about a very special way God's presence was made known to the Israelites as they left Egypt and made their way to the land that was promised.

In this session, our story picks up in the book of Exodus. The Israelites we will hear about today are descendants of Abraham's grandson, Jacob. They had been enslaved in Egypt, but they trusted God to lead them out of Egypt and return them to the land God had led Abraham to, the land we heard about in Session 1.

The journey from Egypt to the promised land was dangerous, so God guided the Israelites safely out of Egypt by presenting as a "column of cloud" or a "column of lightning" depending on the time of day. This presence of God in the column took the Israelites on an indirect path out of Egypt, but one that led them to safety, and ultimately to a safe place where they could build a home for God's presence.

The journey out of Egypt was full of twists and turns. This was not easy for the Israelites, and they did not always trust God to lead the way for them. Even when they turned from God, however, God stayed with them and guided them on their journey.

Sometimes, God's presence leads us to places we don't expect, and into situations we don't always see coming. Our journey with God can be tiring, as we can't always see the goal of God's plan for us. Have you ever felt that the path that you were on with God was not the right one for you? Reflecting on that journey, how can you recall God's presence with you? When we face paths that are long and winding, we can trust that God goes before us and is with us, even when we take the scenic route.

God who leads us into new life, thank you for your guidance on our journeys, even when we can't see the end of the path. Remind us that even when we are frustrated and want to go our own way, we can trust your presence to be with us and steady us as we venture into the unknown.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Leader Devotional

Mary & Elizabeth's Family Reunion

Luke 1:39-56

Welcome back to Road Trip VBS! Thank you for all you've done as we work together to serve and lead our Travelers to discover God's goodness and presence. In this session, we'll see that God is with us in our joy by hearing a story about Mary visiting her cousin, Elizabeth, after she heard the good news that she would give birth to Jesus.

In the story of Mary's visit to Elizabeth, Mary had just been visited by the angel Gabriel, who told Mary that she would be the mother of God's Son. Her first action is to hurry to tell her cousin Elizabeth, who was also pregnant with the person we would come to know as John the Baptizer. As soon as Elizabeth hears Mary's voice, the story tells us that the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy, and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit leads her to say to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry."

When Mary hears this message, she is also filled with joy! She responds by praising God specifically for choosing her, someone of low status, demonstrating God's favor to the lowly. Mary's joy is rooted not only in her own good fortune, but also in the justice, mercy, and love God showed by choosing her.

By the end of this story, Mary is filled with joy! But we know from our own experience that she probably had other emotions, as well. God was with her in all of these emotions: happy, nervous, excited, and more. It is important for us to remember that God is with us in all our emotions, not only when we don't feel our best. Our joy is a response to God's love and work in our lives; God is with us in our joy, too!

Just as Mary was filled with joy because of the joy Elizabeth shared with her, allow yourself to be filled with joy by the joy our Travelers experience on our Road Trip VBS! As we go throughout this session, be mindful of God's presence here with us in the joy we share, and remind our Travelers of that presence, too.

God of justice, mercy, and love, help us to recognize your presence among us, not only in our serious moments, but in times of lightness and joy, as well. May your ever-present love fill us with great joy!

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

Mary & Elizabeth's Family Reunion
(Luke 1:39-56)

Green Light Verse

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:9)

Mile Marker

God is with us when we're joyful!



Bible Story

Jesus Visits Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

Green Light Verse

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:9)

Mile Marker

God is with us when we're lonely.

Leader Devotional

Jesus Visits Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Welcome back! Thank you again for serving and leading our Travelers to discover God's goodness and presence everywhere. In this session, we'll hear a story about Jesus' travels through Jericho and a man he met along the way.

In this session, we'll learn about a tax collector named Zacchaeus. One day, on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem, he walked through the city of Jericho. When he got to Jericho, the streets were full of people who had heard about Jesus and wanted to meet him. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, too, but he wasn't tall enough to see over the crowd. So, Zacchaeus climbed a tree and sat there alone, waiting for a glimpse of Jesus. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and invited himself to his house as a guest. This shocked the crowd because, as a tax collector, Zacchaeus was an outcast. The people of Jericho would never expect a man of such high esteem as Jesus to associate himself with a tax collector, a group known for their exploitation of the poor.

Jesus doesn't see Zacchaeus the way other people do, though. And Zacchaeus, so moved by someone seeing him as something other than his profession, does something remarkable: he gives half his possessions to the poor, and repays fourfold what he has acquired from unfairly taxing the poor. Jesus shows his approval to Zacchaeus by saying, "Today, salvation has come to this household."

When Zacchaeus humbles himself and accepts Jesus' call, he makes a risky move. He journeys out of a comfortable community with the tax collectors into a lonely tree, and he risks his own discomfort by giving up his material goods and joining the community of God's Kingdom.

Think of a time when you were lonely, either because you hurt someone or because you made a decision to step away from a comfortable position you knew was harmful to you. What might help you to remember that God is with you in that loneliness? How might you recall your beloved community as a child of God in those situations? As we go today's session, remind yourself and our Travelers that you are never truly alone when you're lonely; God's love and grace are always with you.

God of grace, thank you for showing through Zacchaeus that we are never so alone that your grace is not with us. Help us to recognize that grace and love in our own lives, especially when we feel the most alone.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Leader Devotional

On the Road with Paul

Acts 18:1-11

Here we are again at Road Trip VBS! Thank you for working together to serve and lead our Travelers to discover God's goodness and presence everywhere. In this session, we'll hear one way the story of Jesus spread after his death and resurrection.

In this session, we'll learn about Paul, one of the key figures the Bible tells us helped to build the early church. Paul traveled all over, spreading the good news of Jesus to those who had not yet heard and encouraging Christ-followers. In Acts 18, we read the story of Paul's visit to a city called Corinth, where he meets a husband and wife named Aquila and Priscilla. These three worked together to create leather goods while Paul talked to fellow Jewish people in the synagogue about Jesus. When some people in the synagogue began to slander Paul, he decided to go to the home of a Gentile instead. Paul established a group of Jesus-followers in this Gentile house, including the leader of the synagogue and his household. After his time in Corinth, Paul continued on his journey, preaching the gospel all over the Roman world.

The Christ-following community at Corinth is the community to whom Paul wrote the two letters we know as 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians. From these letters, we know that Paul encouraged the church at Corinth to provide each other with encouragement and comfort, work for the good of the community, and to overcome personal divisions through love. We can see from this story in Acts that Paul lived out these messages, sharing the good news of God's love and grace wherever he went.

We don't have to be in Paul's position to share God's love and grace wherever we go, too. By heeding Paul's guidance to build each other up, work for the good of all, and love one another, we can demonstrate God's love in all we say and do. As we prepare to end our Road Trip, remember that God's presence has no boundaries. Truly, "The LORD your God is with you wherever you go!"

God of the journey, thank you for traveling alongside us, wherever we go. Remind us of your presence at all times, and help us to share the good news of your love always.

In Jesus' name.
Amen.



Bible Story

On the Road with Paul
(Acts 18:1-11)

Green Light Verse

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:9)

Mile Marker

God is with us near and far.