Lesson One
The Challenge to See—Elijah in the Presence of God (1 Kings 19:1-18)

Lesson Two
The Challenge to Know—King Josiah and the Lost Scroll (2 Chronicles 34:1-33)

Lesson Three
The Challenge to Trust—King Jehoshaphat Trusts in God (2 Chronicles 20:1-24)

Lesson Four
The Challenge to Obey—Jonah Runs from God (Jonah 1:1—3:5)

Lesson Five
The Challenge to Believe—Thomas Doubts Jesus’ Resurrection (John 20:19-29)
In many ways, our lives here on earth can be compared spiritually to being marooned on a deserted island. Buffeted by storms, our entire being focused on the day-to-day struggles to survive, but we have a refuge from the storms, a provider ever-present and ready to save us. Sometimes we forget that God is our rock of strength in this shifting sands of the world’s strife. It can be difficult to keep our faith strong in the face of the many challenges we face. But God is always there, a steadfast firm, just waiting for us to call on His name. “In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God,” (Psalms 62:7).

A strong and devoted faith in God is a powerful thing. At one time, the nation of Israel understood. In fact, there was a time when Israel was the most powerful community of people on earth. Led by their faith in an omnipotent God, Israel had risen from the bondage of slavery to a prosperous and influential nation. But it didn’t last. Following the reign of King Solomon, the once great nation of Israel had split into two kingdoms, neither of which was a shadow of the nation that had preceded them. The glory days were over. The emergence of the divided kingdom was the beginning of the end for Israel because, during this time, the only thing that was more divided than the once powerful nation was their once powerful faith. Yet, faith survived. In the midst of turmoil, wickedness and apathy, there was always a remnant of people who remained faithful to God. Because of their circumstances and environment, these people undoubtedly had to work hard to keep their faith as strong as it should be. There were challenges they had to face and conquer in order to build their faith and keep it strong.

Today, we also have many obstacles that battle against our faith, and we must also work hard to ensure that our faith remains strong. In a world that seems chaotic, apathetic, and sometimes wicked, we too must conquer many challenges if our faith is ever to survive. Through studying Bible stories from the days of the divided kingdom, Marooned: Steady Faith in Shifting Sands focuses on five challenges that are vital to building your faith so that we will be equipped, not only to survive, but to thrive in the world in which we live.

Upon closer examination, you will notice that this manual is presented in outline form. This is to enable a teacher of any skill level to present an informative and interesting lesson with minimal preparation time. The outline provides you with all the basic points, Scripture, and illustrations without stifling your creativity.

Each lesson is divided into learning “blocks,” each of which provides a separate learning experience in a short time period. The purpose of the block system is to break up the one, long session into shorter segments, giving you more flexibility and allowing you to move freely and easily through the lesson as you see best. Each block is designed to convey the lesson to the student either by instruction, reinforcement, or application, and some blocks contain activities that allow the student to learn, firsthand, the principles being taught. Depending on your teaching style, there is enough material in each lesson to last easily an hour or more. Determine in advance the amount of time you will have your students in class, and choose the blocks or activities within the blocks that best suit your needs.

In addition to the many learning experiences provided in this manual, this VBS provides many activities to be completed outside the classroom, such as crafts, skits, and Faith Survival Challenges in which the entire student body can come together to compete. Each activity outside the classroom is there for the purpose of reinforcing what is learned inside the classroom. Check with your VBS Director to learn the proper time schedule for such activities and for what your responsibilities are when your students are engaged in them.

Before class begins, be sure you have assembled all the items called for in the lesson and have properly studied each block of instruction. With proper preparation and motivation, we hope this series can provide a positive experience for all.
In Preparation for Class

Before VBS begins, read this book in its entirety. Gather all the materials for each lesson in advance. Last-minute preparation only adds to the stress level. Each lesson has its own materials list for your convenience.

Visual Aid packets are available to help you decorate your classroom and present your lessons. You may also choose to decorate your room with the overall theme for this series. During this VBS your students are castaways on a beautiful tropical island. Go bananas with tropical decorations! Bring in all of your house plants, faux and real. The Tropical Stand-Ups can be scattered around your classrooms and auditorium. You can order several of the Jointed Palm Trees to decorate your walls, and the Bamboo Beach Backdrop will make a wonderful addition to your island theme. Our Island Leis can be used as decoration of your rooms as well as decoration of your students. You could print out several of the tropical flowers found in the clip art section of our Multi-Media CD. There you can also find directions to make a Sandy Tarp. Bring in all the seashells you and others of your congregation have collected on vacations over the years, and don’t forget pieces of luggage that have washed up on the shore. Bring in pieces of driftwood, or learn how to make your own on our Pinterest page. And don’t forget the Jumbo Cutouts of our castaway, Archibald “Archie” J. Worthington, III, and his friends: Cameron the Chameleon, Floyd the Flamingo, Marvin the Monkey, Stella the Starfish, and Topher the Tortoise. Let our ideas be a starting point for your own creativity. Tap into those creative minds of your congregation early, and give them a chance to create a memorable setting for these lessons.

Strive to go into this teaching opportunity with a positive attitude. You will likely have many of your congregation’s students in class, along with friends and neighbors who get invited. You never know who God might bring to your class or the lasting impact you might have on students and their families. Early preparation will help your confidence and increase your effectiveness. Be flexible and have fun!

Most importantly, prepare yourself a good attitude. Teaching can be a stressful experience, especially during Vacation Bible School, when attendance is up and your class is overflowing with students with whom you may not be familiar. Remember that preparation reduces anxiety, and the happier you are, the happier your students will be and the more they will learn. Good luck! Have fun!

Be sure to check out our Pinterest page for some great decorating and snack ideas!

pinterest.com/promiseVBS
Preparatory Considerations:
1. This class is divided into seven “blocks” of instruction. To ensure that all the material is covered, you will want to consider carefully each block of instruction in preparation for class.
2. Read all the Scripture referenced in the lesson.
3. Make sure that all materials are prepared for the students’ use. The following materials will be required for this class:
   • Student Books
   • Visual Aids—Memory Verse Seashells; Cameron the Chameleon; Story Time Bible Book
   • Visual Aids marked Lesson One—God is All Around Me
   • Bible
   • Construction paper (Block Five)
   • tape or reusable adhesive (Block Five)
   • blindfold, optional (Block Five)
   • index cards (Block Five)
   • tape (Block Five)

Memory Verse:
Romans 4:20
“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.”

Bible Story:
Elijah in the presence of God
(1 Kings 19:1-18)

Song Suggestions:
Have You Seen Jesus, My Lord?
Begin by welcoming the students to class: **Hello, everyone! Welcome to Vacation Bible School!** I am so excited to see each of you here at VBS. Are you excited to be here? (Response)

Introduce yourself and any co-teachers as Shipwrecked Cruise Directors. Then continue by explaining the importance of VBS: **I am excited to be here for many reasons. For one thing, we are going to have so much fun together at VBS. Do you like to have fun? (Response)** I know you do. Everyone likes to have fun. We are also going to do something very important. We are going to learn about God. We will be hearing Bible stories from God's Word, and we will be learning about some of the things that God wants us to do. Doesn't that sound exciting? (Response) It should be very exciting for each one of us because it makes God happy when we learn about Him.

Explain the theme of the VBS: **Boys and girls, during this VBS we will be pretending that we are castaways!** We will be pretending that we were on a large ship and that ship wrecked on a very special island called Castaway Key! Do any of you know what a key is? A key is a type of island. It is very small, sandy, and surrounded by water. Some keys like the one we will be visiting, are found way out in the ocean, far away from where most people live. There are lots of fun things to do at Castaway Key. Castaway Key has lots of tall palm trees and sandy beaches. It also has some beautiful birds, sea turtles, and all kinds of amazing animals. Each time we meet here at Castaway Key, we will be meeting a new animal and learning another lesson about God. Are you ready to get started on our first lesson? (Response) Wonderful! Before we begin, we are going to sing a song so we can hear everyone's name.
Lesson One

Block Two

- Introduce the lesson topic, The Challenge to See God.
- Explain that to build a strong faith we must learn to see God.
- Discover that God is all around us and working in our lives.

Before class, remove Cameron the Chameleon from the Visual Aid Package, and glue a craft stick to the back of the puppet. (Or you could use the Cameron the Chameleon finger puppet.) Hold Cameron in your hand as you speak to the students.

TEACHER: Boys and girls, we have a very special guest with us. Say hello to Cameron the Chameleon.
(Response) Actually, Cameron is not our guest. We are Cameron’s guest because Cameron lives here at Castaway Key. Cameron, I don’t mean to be rude, but what is a chameleon, anyway?

CAMERON: (quietly) I’m a lizard.

TEACHER: Sorry, Cameron. I can’t hear you. Can you speak louder?

CAMERON: (a little louder) I’m a lizard. Most chameleons try to blend in with our surroundings. That’s how we stay safe. Some of us can change color, though, to stand out or to regulate our temperature.

TEACHER: That’s interesting! What else is different about chameleons?

CAMERON: (more excitedly) Well, my eyes can move separately from each other. That means I can see 360 degrees, all around me! I have very good eyesight.

TEACHER: That’s terrific news, Cameron! Maybe you can help us then. Today we are going to overcome the challenge to see God. If you can see so well, maybe you can see God, then show us how we can see God too!

CAMERON: Oh, I can see God all around me. Did you notice how hot it was today?

TEACHER: (confused) Well...yes.

CAMERON: God made the sun that made the world so warm and bright. And the trees that spread their branches so wide to give us shade from the sun.

TEACHER: (still confused) Yes, I’ve seen those, too.

CAMERON: God made those, as well. And the big, blue ocean where we can swim and play. And the rain that falls so we have water to drink and that makes the trees grow. And the yummy fruit that grows on those trees.

TEACHER: (getting frustrated) Yes, Cameron, I’ve seen all of those. But we are looking for God.

CAMERON: Did you see God? You are seeing Him in all of the wonderful things He has created. Have you ever seen a sunset? (Have teacher encourage kids to raise their hands if they have seen a sunset.) Did you know God causes the sun to rise and to set every day? Have you ever felt the wind on your face? (Have students raise their hands.) God causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall and the plants to grow. God made me, and God made you in His image! If you ever wonder if God is with you, all you have to do is look in the mirror. God made you to look just like Him.

TEACHER: (understanding dawning) I think I understand what you are saying! Even though we can’t see God, we know He is here because the wonderful things He created are all around us. And I can see God in you (points to student) and you (points to another student) and you (points to another student)!

CAMERON: And that is faith, knowing that God is with us, even though we cannot see Him.

TEACHER: (excited) This is wonderful! Thank you, Cameron, for helping us to overcome the challenge to see God. I feel my faith getting stronger already, don’t you? (Response.) That reminds me of a verse in the Bible. We are going to learn our Bible verse now. Thank you for talking to us, Cameron. Everyone say good-bye to Cameron! Good-bye, Cameron!
Before class begins, remove the Memory Verse Seashells from the Visual Aid Package, and prepare the visual as instructed. Cut out the Memory Verse Seashell for Lesson One. You may want to prepare a bulletin board with tan and blue paper to resemble a beach scene.

Our Bible verse is written on a special seashell that is somewhere in the water. In order to learn our Bible verse, everyone must jump into the water and swim around until we find the seashell. Allow students to stand up and pretend as if they are jumping into the water. Allow them to swim around the room for a moment (For the first lesson, you may have to prompt them by showing them how to swim around the room.) While they are swimming, place the seashell for Lesson One on the floor (or have a co-teacher do so). Castaways, I have found the seashell over here. Everyone swim to the shell. The students should stand in a circle around the shell as you discuss the verse. Our message for today is found in Romans 4:20, “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.” This verse tells us that we shouldn’t doubt that God will keep His promises. We should have faith that He will keep His promises to us, and that, in turn, will strengthen our faith. Let’s swim around the shell and say our Bible verse together. Repeat after me... Swim around the shell in a circle while saying the memory verse slowly, allow the students to repeat. Place the shell on the bulletin board or help a student to do so. If you have time, you may want to give your students a coloring page of Cameron the Chameleon to color and place on the bulletin board as well. You can find a coloring page of Cameron on the Multi-Media CD.

While the students are up and standing in an open area, perform the Castaway Key Action Rhyme with them. Okay, castaways! We are now going to say and do the Castaway Key Action Rhyme. We will do this action rhyme each time we are together so we will always remember why Castaway Key is so wonderful! Instruct the students to watch you and perform the various actions as you say the words. Say the words to the action rhyme slowly so the students will have time to complete the actions. Perform each action as you say each line. This activity will be performed during each VBS session. The students will become more familiar with the actions as the VBS progresses.

In a moment, we will play some games, sing songs, and do our Student Book pages, all of which will help us learn to see God. But first we will hear a Bible story that will teach us about a man named Elijah who was having a hard time seeing God. Before we begin, let’s sing our Story Time Song.

(See page 48.)
The man in this picture is named Elijah. Can you say Elijah? (Response) Good job! Elijah was a good man who always tried to do what God wanted him to do. He spent much of his life telling other people that they should also do what God wanted them to do. But not everyone listened to Elijah. Some people got very mad when Elijah told them about God. There was a wicked queen named Jezebel who wanted to kill Elijah because of the things that Elijah told her. Elijah was afraid, and he felt all alone. So Elijah ran. But Elijah was never alone. Do you know who was always with Elijah? (Response) Yes, God was always with Elijah. But Elijah sometimes forget that God was there, especially when it was hard to see Him. So he ran far away until he found a cave. He spent the night in the cave, and he felt very sorry for himself. God spoke to Elijah. God said, “Elijah, why are you doing here?” Elijah told God all about how alone he felt and how afraid he was.

God knew just what Elijah needed. Elijah needed to see God. God told Elijah to go out of the cave and stand on the side of the mountain. Elijah did what God told him to do. While he was standing outside the cave, a great wind began to blow. The wind blew so hard that pieces of rock began to break away from the mountain. Elijah knew how powerful God was. He probably thought that God was going to show Himself inside the wind, but God did not show Himself in the wind. Then Elijah began to feel the ground shake beneath him. It was an earthquake! “Here comes God!” Elijah might have said. But God did not show Himself to Elijah in the earthquake. After the earthquake, came a fire. “Surely, God is going to show Himself to me now,” Elijah may have thought. But once again, God did not show Himself in the fire.

After the fire, the strangest thing of all happened. It got very quiet and very still. Then Elijah heard the strangest sound of all. It may have sounded like a gentle wind or a quiet whisper, but it was a very special sound. It was God. Elijah knew he had made a mistake. He had been looking for God in all the wrong places. Most of us have heard Bible stories about times when people saw great miracles that God performed. But there are other ways to see God. We can go outside our homes each day and see the sunrise and set, we can look up at the stars, and we can feel the gentle wind on our faces and know God is right there with us.
The following activities are all designed with the same purpose in mind—to reinforce the lesson. They are not listed in any certain order; there are a number of ways you can choose to coordinate them. Depending on the number of students, the number of teachers available, the size of your classroom, and the time allotment, you may decide to perform these activities one at a time with the entire class or separate your class into small groups and rotate through stations. Obviously, you may even opt to pick which activities work best for you and only perform those activities. However, it is important for this age group that each group of students has adult supervision.

God "Sticks" With Me

Materials needed: index cards
tape

You will need one index card for each student in your class. On each index card, write “GOD.” Show the index cards to the students. SAY: Do you know what this word is? This word is God. Hebrews 13:5 says, “For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” God has promised that He will always be there, even when we cannot see Him. Today, this card is going to represent God.

Tape an index card to the center of each student’s back. Instruct the students to stand in an open area of the classroom. ASK: Can any of you see the card on your own back? Do you still believe the card is there? Instruct the students to run and jump around the open area until you tell them to freeze. When you say freeze, they should stop as if they are frozen. Each time you do this, ask them if God is still with them, even if they cannot see Him. Then allow them to run and jump some more. After you have done this several times, SAY: God goes with us wherever we go. Even though we may not be able to see Him, He is always right there with us.
Lesson One

**I Can See God Action Rhyme**

Standing in the center of the room, say the words to the action rhyme as you perform the actions. Students should perform the actions as you say the words and perform the actions. (You can also recite this rhyme for your students as they color page 4 of the Ages 2-3 Student Book.)

I can see God in the sun so high  
I can see God in the birds that fly  
I can see God in a tall, tall tree  
I can see Him through the eyes that God gave me  
I can see God when the snowflakes fall  
I can see God in a seed so small  
I can see God in a buzzing bumblebee  
I can see Him through the eyes that God gave me  
I can see God when the wind begins to blow  
I can see God when the flowers grow  
I can see God in the fish out in the sea  
I can see Him through the eyes that God gave me  
I can see God in the stars so far away  
I can see God when the bunnies play  
I can see Him through the eyes that God gave me

Raise arms above head to form a circle  
Flap arms as if flying  
Spread arms as if branches and stand on tiptoes  
Point to eyes  
Twinkle fingers as you lower your arm  
Squint eyes and looked at your pinched fingers  
Buzz around like a bee  
Point to eyes  
Wave arms to indicate a blowing wind  
Squat down and stand up as you spread arms  
Swim around like a fish  
Point to eyes  
Raise hands and twinkle fingers  
Hop around like a bunny  
Count on fingers  
Point to eyes

**God Is All Around Me**

Materials needed: Visual Aid marked Lesson One—God Is All Around Me  
construction paper  
tape or removable adhesive  
blindfold (optional)

Before class begins, cut a piece of colored construction paper into strips that measure approximately ½” wide by 2” long. Place tape or Removable Wall Adhesive to the back of each strip. Place the poster titled, “God is All Around Me” on the wall at the students’ level.

This activity is similar to “Pin the Tail on the Donkey.” Give one strip of construction paper to each student. One at a time, blindfold a student (or he may close his eyes), and instruct the student to approach the poster and attach his paper strip to the surface of the poster. Any placement of the paper strip within the poster is good. Allow the student to remove the blindfold, and look at where he placed his strip of paper. ASK: Can God be found in this place? (Discuss with the class.) God is everywhere! What evidence of God can be seen near this place? Continue until all students have had a turn.
Materials: Cameron the Chameleon
Gather the students at a table or other seated area, and remove Cameron the Chameleon from the Visual Aid Package. Have Cameron review the lesson with the students.

Can anyone tell me something about our Bible story today? Allow students to share comments about the Bible story. Very good! Our Bible story was about Elijah overcoming the challenge to see God.

Elijah felt all alone, but none of us are ever truly alone, are we? Response We are never alone because God is always right there with us. Elijah must have been looking very hard to find God in the wind, in the earthquake, and in the fire. But we don’t have to have those things to see God, do we? What are some things that we see every day that help us know that God is there? Allow students to name some of God’s creations. When we learn to see God all around us, our faith will begin to grow stronger and stronger.

Pick up a Bible. The story of Elijah and God is found right here in the Bible. The Bible has many wonderful stories that teach us some great lessons that will help us to have faith, or to believe in God. Do you feel your faith growing stronger? Good! Let’s sing some songs that will help us to remember the importance of having faith and believing in God with all our hearts.

Materials: Cameron the Chameleon (Have Cameron help review the memory verse.)

Does anyone remember the memory verse? Let’s say it again together. Repeat after me.

Romans 4:20
“He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God.”
**PRAYER**

Remember, castaways, it is important to remember that we can always see God. We just have to open our eyes and see the wonderful world He has made. Let’s say a prayer to God thanking Him for all the things He has made and asking Him to help us believe that He is always there. Before we pray, let’s sing our Prayer Song.

**I BELIEVE action rhyme**

Okay, castaways! We are going to do one more action rhyme. This one is called the I Believe Action Rhyme. We will do this action rhyme each time we are together to help us have a strong faith in God. The students should stand in an open area as you perform the following action rhyme with them. Instruct them to watch you and perform the various actions as you say the words. Say the words to the action rhyme slowly so the students will have time to complete the actions. Perform each action as you say each line. This activity will be a warm-up during each VBS session. The students will become more familiar with the actions as the VBS progresses.

**Block Seven Survival Handbook**

Allow the students to complete the Application Activity from Lesson One in their Student Books.