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Are you ready to get lost in a tropical island adventure? If so, then travel with us to the island of Castaway Key and get ready to conquer some amazing faith-building challenges!

In many ways, our lives here on earth can be compared spiritually to being marooned on a deserted island battered 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 this 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 rock standing 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 this. 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, 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 in building our 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, or 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 early 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

Sample Lesson
Lesson One

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?

Reproducible Pages
Available on the Multi-media CD!
GREETING

Begin by welcoming the students to class: Hello, everyone! Welcome to Vacation Bible School! Or as we like to say around here, Aloha! Have you ever heard the word Aloha? (Response) Can anyone tell me what Aloha means? (Response) Very good! Saying Aloha is a lot like saying Hello. People say Aloha in places like Hawaii. Hawaii is a beautiful island in the Pacific Ocean.

Introduce yourself and any co-teachers as Shipwrecked Cruise Directors. If time permits, allow each student to introduce himself. Then continue by explaining the theme of this VBS series: 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 shipwrecked on a very special island called Castaway Key! Do any of you know what a key is? A key is a type of island. Have any of you ever visited an island before? (Response) What do you know about an island? (Response) Something that most of us know about an island is that an island has water all around it. Most islands are found in the middle of the ocean, far away from other people. Many islands have sandy beaches and tall palm trees. Some islands also have beautiful birds, sea turtles, and all kinds of amazing animals. Each time we are here at Castaway Key, we will be meeting a new animal and they will be helping to teach us another lesson about God. I am very excited to be here, aren't you! (Response)

One reason why I am so excited to be at Castaway Key is because we are going to learn about God. We are going to learn from God’s Word, the Bible, during this VBS. We are going to learn that it is important to have faith in God. Have any of you ever heard the word faith? (Response) Most of us have heard of faith, but we might not understand what it means. When you have faith in something, you believe in it with all your heart. Faith is understanding that even if you can’t see Him and you just getting to know Him, you can trust in God, obey Him and believe that He can save you. God wants us to have faith in Him. During this VBS, we are going to learn some ways in which we can make our faith in God strong. Are you ready to get started? (Response) Me, too! Before we begin, let’s sing a song that will help us to remember everyone’s name.

Lesson One
Lesson One

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 trying to overcome the challenge to see God. If you can see so well, maybe you can see God, then show us so 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 as the big, blue ocean where we can swim and cool off, 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're looking for God.

CAMERON: Do you see how God is working in your lives? Did you notice how hot it was today? (Have teacher encourage kids to raise hands.) Did you see how the wind makes the trees sway?

TEACHER: (having a breakthrough) 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!
Lesson One

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.

Our Bible verse is written on a special seashell that Cameron has hidden somewhere on the island. But there are so many seashells, how do we know which is the right one? Cameron with her special eyes would be able to see which shell is different, but we are going to have to flip over every shell until we find the right seashell. Allow students to move around the room, flipping over the seashells until they find the Memory Verse Seashell. (There is also a Memory Verse Seashell Decoy printable file on the Multi-Media CD. You could print out several colored seashells instead of cutting them out of construction paper.)

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 should not doubt that God will keep His promises. We should have faith that He will keep His promises to us, and by doing so, will strengthen our faith. Let’s say our Bible verse together. Repeat after me...

Before class begins, remove the Memory Verse Seashells from the Visual Aid Package. You may want to prepare a bulletin board with tan and blue paper to resemble a beach scene where you can staple the Memory Verse Seashells during each class period. Cut out the Memory Verse Seashell for Lesson One. Use the Memory Verse Seashell as a template to cut out several other seashells in different colors of construction paper. Tape one of the construction paper shapes to the back of the Memory Verse Seashell to disguise it, and lay it face down so that the memory verse is hidden, but the construction paper shape is face up. Then scatter several of the construction paper seashells around the room so that your students have to turn them all over to find the Memory Verse Seashell. (There is also a Memory Verse Seashell Decoy printable file on the Multi-Media CD. You could print out several colored seashells instead of cutting them out of construction paper.)

Our Bible verse is written on a special seashell that Cameron has hidden somewhere on the island. But there are so many seashells, how do we know which is the right one? Cameron with her special eyes would be able to see which shell is different, but we are going to have to flip over every shell until we find the right seashell. Allow students to move around the room, flipping over the seashells until they find the Memory Verse Seashell. (There is also a Memory Verse Seashell Decoy printable file on the Multi-Media CD. You could print out several colored seashells instead of cutting them out of construction paper.)
Elijah in the Presence of God

Remove the Story Time Bible Book from the Visual Aid Packet. Turn to the first group of pictures, and show the corresponding pictures as you read the following story. Scriptural reference: 1 Kings 19:1-18

PICTURE ONE

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. God was always with Elijah. But, like all of us, Elijah sometimes forget that God was there, especially when it was hard to see Him. Elijah ran far away until he reached a cave. He spent the night in the cave and felt very sorry for himself. Then God spoke to Elijah. God said, “Elijah, what are you doing here?” Elijah told God all about how alone he felt and how afraid he was.

PICTURE TWO

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 face of 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 must have thought. But once again, God did not show Himself in the fire.

PICTURE THREE

After the fire, the strangest thing of all happened. It got very quiet and very still. Then Elijah heard the smallest sound. It may have sounded like a gentle wind or a quiet whisper, but it was a very special sound. It was God. Elijah couldn’t dare to look. He 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 God performed great miracles. But there are other ways to see God. We can go outside our homes each day and see the sun rise 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.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What was the name of the man in the Bible story? Elijah
2. Why did Elijah run away? He was afraid, and he felt all alone.
3. What were the first three powerful things that Elijah saw outside the cave? wind, earthquake, and fire
4. How did God finally show Himself to Elijah? through a still small voice, a blowing wind, or a gentle whisper (Various Bible versions translate it in different ways.)
5. What can we learn from this story? That we can see God through ordinary, everyday things.
Block Four

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

Survival Handbook

Block Five Activities

- Reinforce the lesson.
- Create a hands-on learning experience that will solidify the lesson in the students' minds.
- Have fun!

I Can See God

Materials needed:
- Several magazines
- Several pairs of safety scissors
- Butcher paper
- Tape or reusable adhesive

Tape a piece of white butcher paper to the wall or lay it on a table at the students' level. Depending on the number of students in your class, the butcher paper should measure anywhere from a 2-foot square to a 5-foot square. At the top of the butcher paper write, “I Can See God.” Bring several old magazines to class. On another table lay out the magazines and safety scissors. SAY: There are many ways that we can see that God is all around us. Look through these magazines, and cut out pictures that show God at work. You may choose to cut out pictures of things that God has created or pictures of people showing God at work in your lives through kindness. You can cut out a picture of the sun, of a tree, of an animal, or of a person smiling or helping someone else. Whatever you choose to cut out is okay. When you cut out an item bring it to me. When they bring a picture to you, put adhesive on the back as you encourage them and announce to the class what they have cut out. Direct the student to place their picture on the butcher paper. You might point to an empty space to make sure they don't cover up someone else's picture. By the end of the activity, you will have created a montage of ways to see God.
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
Seeing God is as easy as 1-2-3
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 tip to
Point to eyes
Twinkle fingers as you lower your
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

Materials needed: Visual Aid marked Lesson One—God Is All Around Me
construction paper
tape or reusable 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 our 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.”
This verse tells us that we shouldn’t doubt that God will keep His promises, just as He kept His promise to always be with Elijah. Even though Elijah couldn’t always see Him, Elijah could know that God was always with Him. Even though we cannot actually see God Himself, we can see Him in other ways, and we can always know that He is there with us. The greatest feeling in the whole world is to know that we can see God anytime we want to just by looking around us and seeing the wonderful things He has made. I think this would be a great time to say a prayer to God thanking Him for all the things He has made and asking Him to help us continue to make our faith in Him stronger. Before we pray, let’s sing our Prayer Song.