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)
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 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 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, 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 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.
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 BeachBackdrop 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 your 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 a 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 one of these a starting point for your own creativity. Tap into those creative minds in 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 your 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!
Lesson Three

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 Message in a Bottle
   • Marked Lesson Three—Survival Kit Matches; Message Strip for Lesson Three
   • Object you can drop (book, shoe, bean bag, etc.) (Block Three)
   • Masking or washi tape (Block Five)
   • Several pieces of paper (or printouts of the Stepping Stone printable file from the Multi-Media CD) (Block Five)
   • A set of different colors of index cards for each team (or printouts of the Memory Verse Word Cards printable file from the Multi-Media CD) (Block Five)
   • Blindfolds (Block Five)
   • Carpet squares, construction paper, or Multi-Media CD printable file—Stepping Stones (Block Five)

Memory Verse:
Romans 8:25
“But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”

Bible Story:
Jehoshaphat Trusts in God
(2 Chronicles 20:1-24)

Song Suggestions:
Trust and Obey
The Battle Belongs to the Lord
I Will Call Upon the Lord
I’m in the Lord’s Army

Reproducible Pages
Available on the Multi-Media CD!
Block One

- Introduce the lesson topic, The Challenge to Trust God.
- Explain that to build a strong faith we must learn to trust God.
- Discover the importance of trusting God to take care of us.

A. Begin by welcoming the students to class.

B. Review the VBS theme verse: “In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God,” (Psalms 62:7). **A strong faith in God is a steady rock in this world’s shifting sands. Faith is understanding that even if you can’t see Him and are just getting to know Him, you can trust in God, know obeying Him will make you happy, and believe that He can save you.** Remind the students that the setting for this VBS is Castaway Key, a tropical island. **Although tropical islands are beautiful, they can also be very dangerous. If a person were marooned on an island, survival would become a challenge. The world in which we live is no different. We love many things about this earth, but it is not our home. We are marooned here for a time, and while there are many things we love about this world in which we live, surviving it spiritually is a daily challenge for us all. In order to survive, we must maintain and build a strong faith in God. During this VBS we are learning to build our faith by conquering several challenges.**

C. Bring out the Survival Kit you have previously assembled as described in Lesson One. Reach in the bag, and pull out the third item, the Visual Aid of the picture of matches. If you are able, you can substitute actual matches for the Visual Aid that has been provided for you. **One of the most important things one would need if marooned on an island would be protection. Ask the students to list some of the things against which they might need protection. Possible answers might include wild animals, weather, sickness, and injury. Fire is protection for so many things. The warmth of the fire would protect you from the cold. The brightness of the fire would protect you from stumbling over something in the dark and hurting yourself. The smell of the smoke from the fire would protect you from dangerous animals. Most wild animals are frightened by fire. If you stay close to a large fire, they will typically not come near you. Fire can also be useful in healing wounds or sterilizing utensils. Obviously, fire can also be used to boil water or cook food. If a person failed to purify drinking water by boiling it or heat food to the proper temperature, he could become very sick or die. Fire is extremely useful for protection so it is wise to remain close to it and make a strong effort to ensure that it is never snuffed out. One of the most important things you would need if marooned on an island would be fire. Fire represents protection if you are stranded in the wild.**

Sample Lesson
Let’s see what the message from our bottle says about trusting God. Help one of your students to pull the message from the bottle, then unfurl it and read the message aloud. Our message for today is found in Romans 8:25, “But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.” One of the ways Dictionary.com defines trust is “confident expectation of something: hope.” When we have trust in God, we have a confident expectation that He will care for us, a hope in Him whom we cannot see.

We learned in Lesson One that we cannot always see God, but that He is at work all around us. One of those ways He is at work is that He is constantly protecting us and providing for us. We may not see Him, but we have hope and trust that He is ever near and working to keep us safe. Like Jehoshaphat who praised God before God even acted on his behalf, we can trust that God will always protect us and eagerly wait to see what wonderful things He will do to provide for us. Place the Message Strip on the bulletin board near the Message in a Bottle or help a student to do so. If a marooned person is wise, they will stay close to the fire that protects them. It is the same with God. Some people trust more in their own reasoning than in God’s Word. All too often, people stray away from God believing that they know a better way. More often than not, this produces tragic results. Those who remain close to God’s side can be assured that God will provide and protect them.

A. Once again, provide a brief review of God’s people who lived during the era of the Divided Kingdom. Many of them had lost their faith in God and had begun to worship false gods. There were, however, still people who lived during this period who tried to remain faithful. In order to survive, they had to face many challenges to keep their faith strong.

B. Before reading the Bible story, explain that, like Josiah, Jehoshaphat was one of the few good kings of Judah, and he provides a wonderful example of what true trust in God should look like. Have the students to turn to page 9 in their Student Books where the lesson text has been written, and allow them to read the text at this time. Text is taken from 2 Chronicles 20:1-6, 10-22.
C. Ask the students the following questions:

- What did Jehoshaphat first do when he heard that a great army was coming to fight against Judah? “He set himself to seek the Lord,” (vs. 3). He proclaimed a fast and prayed to God for help.
- In verse 12, what did Jehoshaphat tell God? He confessed to God that he was powerless and did not know what to do, but his eyes were upon God.
- In verse 15, what message did God send Jehoshaphat through Jahaziel? He told Jehoshaphat not to be afraid because the battle belonged to God.
- Read verses 19-22 again. Which of the following shows the correct order of events? 1. God defeated the enemy’s army and then the people thanked and praised God. OR 2. The people thanked and praised God and then God defeated the enemy’s army.

D. Following are several questions to discuss. After each question follows a possible answer. The answer that is given is often merely an opinion. While leading the students to a probable conclusion, encourage the students to arrive at their own conclusions as well. Discuss the following thought questions with the students:

- What do you think Jehoshaphat meant when he said, “We have no power against (them), nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.” How important was this attitude? Jehoshaphat was telling God that he recognized that he was nothing without God’s help. When he said, “Our eyes are upon You,” he was saying that he acknowledged that God was the great protector and that He would take care of them. His trusting attitude opened the door for God’s power.
- If you were going to fight a great battle, who would you send lead the way? Most army generals would send out their best soldiers.
- Who did Jehoshaphat send out to lead his people into battle, and why? Jehoshaphat’s army was led by men who were singing praises to God. They trusted and marched straight into the presence of the enemy without carrying any physical weapons. Their only true weapon was their trust in God.
- Before the battle had even begun, Jehoshaphat and Judah began praising God, singing songs to Him, and thanking Him for the victory that was to come. What lesson does this teach us about our own faith when facing our daily challenges? It teaches us the importance of trusting God to protect us and that we do not have to worry when He is on our side. Although we do not know what the outcome of every challenge might be, we know that God has our best interests at heart.

Gravity will never let us down. Well, I guess it actually holds us down, but that’s beside the point. On earth, the force of gravity will keep our feet on the ground and will cause whatever we drop to fall.

If we trust someone, we feel certain they will act in our best interests. They will do what is right and good. We might not trust someone because of a past experience with them. People sometimes lie to us. People sometimes ignore us. People sometimes turn on us. People sometimes do not keep secret the things we tell them in confidence. This causes us to lose our trust in people in general. However, there is One whom we can always trust. We can trust in God because He always keeps His promises. This does not mean that God will always do what we want Him to do, but He will always do what He says He will do.
Island Activities

Divide the students into groups of two to four per group. Instruct each group to write a 30-second commercial to try to sell a product in which the world can put its trust. Challenge them to be creative and even silly with their products and commercials. They might choose to advertise a new drug that will take away all your problems. They might choose to invent a new machine that provides you with everything you need. They may choose to advertise a 1-800-Trustline that people can call to get the best advice on any subject. They may even choose to advertise a robotic bodyguard that will protect them from anyone or anything. Whatever they choose is okay. If a group is having difficulty agreeing on a product, you may wish to share some of the above ideas with them. After a few moments, allow each group to present their commercials to the class. Upon conclusion, discuss how silly their products were. SAY: Although there are a few people or things we can typically trust, such as our parents, God is our one true source of provision and protection.

Truth in Advertising?

B. Instruct the students to turn to page 10 in their Student Books to the section titled Surf Survival. There they will find a passage: Matthew 6:25. Instruct the students to locate this passage in their Bibles, and allow one student to read it aloud (read Matthew 6:25-31). (The verse is recorded in the Student Book using the New King James Version. It is best if everyone uses the same version.) Instruct the students to fill in the words of the verse that are missing in their Student Books. Discuss the verse with the students, and arrive at the conclusion that God cares for and protects all of His creation. We can live our lives with a strong faith in Him, trusting that He loves us and will always take care of us.

C. Also on page 10 of the Student Book is the top of a palm tree. Inside the tree's coconuts are Bible verses that contain promises that God has given us. Inside the tree's leaves are listed the actual promises. As a class, locate each Scripture, and instruct the students to draw a line connecting each Scripture to the correct promise. Discuss the promises that God has made. Upon conclusion, explain that these are only a sampling of the many promises that God has given us. We can trust God to fulfill each promise. Challenge the students to strengthen their trust in God.

Block Four

• Reinforce the lesson.
• Create a hands-on learning experience that will solidify the lesson in the students’ minds.
• Have fun!
FAITH SURVIVAL CHALLENGE

During each session, your students will have the opportunity to participate in a Faith Survival Challenge. These challenges are designed to be performed in open spaces with large numbers of students from every age level competing together. More information can be found in the Director’s Manual, including information on forming teams. Check with your VBS Director for scheduling of these events. If your Director chooses not to perform these challenges, they have been included here so you may do so in your class. You may need to adapt the activity to fit the number of students and space available to you.

The Challenge to Trust

Materials needed: masking or washi tape
several pieces of paper (or printouts of the Stepping Stone printable file from the Multi-Media CD)
a set of different colors of index cards for each team (or printouts of the Memory Verse Word Cards printable file from the Multi-Media CD)
blindfolds

Create a set of 17 Memory Verse Word Cards for each team by using a different color of index card for each team. Write one word of the memory verse, Romans 8:25, and draw a piece of fruit on each card. (There is a printable file on the Multi-Media CD. If you choose to print them, use a different color of printer paper for each team.) Clear a large open area in which to play. The area should be 50 to 75 feet long and wide enough to accommodate as many teams as you have. On one end of the playing area, put down a long strip of masking tape for the starting line. Put down another long strip of tape 50 to 75 feet away for the finishing line. Lay down each team’s Memory Verse Word Cards, creating a circuitous path between the start and finish lines. However, do not allow your team’s path of cards to intersect with another team’s path.

Divide students into teams of 10 to 15 students per team, but teams can be as large as you wish. (See Director’s Manual for team formation information.) Read Proverbs 16:9. “A man’s heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.” SAY: In the Faith Survival Challenge to Trust, your team will have to trust that each will play their part so your team will get your team safely across.

The point of this challenge is to make your way from one end of the Mucky Marsh to the other using stepping stones and the Memory Verse Cards, along the way. You will only be given a few stepping stones, one for each member of your team, plus one. Your leader will throw a stone, step forward onto it, and the player behind the leader will step forward onto that stone she has left. When your leader runs out of stepping stones, there should be one empty stepping stone behind the last person in line. The last person in line will pick up that stone and pass it up the line to the leader. The leader will then place that stone, and everyone will take one step forward, leaving another empty stone. Keep passing that empty stone up the line to your leader so that she can place the stepping stone.

There’s one other catch. Your leader will be blindfolded. She won’t be able to tell where she is placing the next stepping stone, so she is going to have to trust someone to tell her where to place the stone so that it leads your team to the next piece of fruit. This person will be the Floyd of your team. That’s right, Floyd the flamingo. Since Floyd can wade through the swamp, your Floyd can walk in front of you. He will tell the leader where to place the stepping stone so that it will lead your team to the next piece of fruit. When you pick up a piece of fruit, hand it to Floyd so that he can carry it until you make your way across the Mucky Marsh.

Allow the teams to pick their Leader and their Floyd. Have the Leader stand behind the Starting line, the other team members lining up behind her. Have Floyd stand in front of her in the Mucky Marsh, close enough to direct, but not so close that he gets in the way. (Remind your Floyds to be careful not to step on the Memory Verse Word Cards or he’ll squash the fruit.) Blindfold the Leader, and hand her the stepping stones, one for each team member behind her, plus one. Floyd will tell the Leader where to place the first stepping stone, and the Leader will place the stone then step onto it. As each player steps forward, the player behind her should also step forward so that each player is standing on one stepping stone. When a team has used all of its stepping stones, the player in the back of the line will pick up the extra stepping stone (which is now behind him) and pass it forward to the Leader who will place it as Floyd directs. This will enable the team to take another step. Players can only step on stepping stones. Floyd should direct the Leader to lay the path of stepping stones to that the path leads to the Memory Verse Word Cards. When the Leader is close, Floyd should direct the Leader to pick up the Card. The Leader will then hand the Card to Floyd to carry until the team crosses the finish line. Once the entire team has crossed the Mucky Marsh, it can begin assembling the Memory Verse Word Cards in the proper order. The first team to do so wins.
Crossing the Mucky Marsh

Materials needed: carpet squares, construction paper, or Multi-Media CD printable file—Stepping Stones
masking or washi tape
blindfolds

Clear a large, open area of the classroom. Use masking or washi tape to outline the edges of the area. This will represent the edges of the Mucky Marsh. Ask for two volunteers, one to be Floyd and one to be a castaway.

Floyd here knows the Mucky Marsh like the back of his wing. He’s offered to help our castaway get safely from one side of the Mucky Marsh to the other using stepping stones. But it’s very dark in the Mucky Marsh, our castaway is going to have to trust Floyd to help her get safely across. Since Floyd can’t speak, he’ll have to direct the castaway by touching her shoulders. A tap in the middle of the back means one step forward. A tap to the left shoulder means one step to the left. A tap to the right shoulder means one step to the right.

Have the castaway put on a blindfold. When the castaway is blindfolded, quickly lay out a path of stepping stones across the Mucky Marsh, or have the other students lay out the path for you. The stones should touch, but can lead left, right, or forward, creating a circuitous path through the Mucky Marsh. Then have Floyd direct the castaway over the path of stepping stones through the Mucky Marsh from one side to the other. When they have completed their journey, remove the blindfold and allow the castaway to see the path of stepping stones they have just been directed through. Allow another pair of students volunteer to be Floyd and the castaway. Once everyone has had a turn, allow the pairs to go again, switching roles, Floyds are now castaways and vice versa.

Upon conclusion, discuss the activity with the students. How did you feel when you could not see what was in front of you? What was it like to be forced to totally trust someone else to keep you safe? As we go through life, there will be times when we cannot see what the future has in store for us. This can be frightening, but we can always trust in God to keep us safe and help us reach our ultimate destination, heaven.

Romans 8:25
“...but if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”