# Table of Contents

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 God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God,” (Psalms 62:7).

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 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 a firm refuge, 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. After the reign of King Solomon, the once great nation of Israel had split into two kingdoms, neither of which was ever as powerful as 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 the entire 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 meet 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 participate. 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. If 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 some of 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 these be 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 class, along with friends and neighbors who get invited. You never know what 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 reduce your nervousness. Be flexible and have fun!

Most importantly, prepare for 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

Sample Lesson
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 references 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 marked Lesson Five—Tropical Memory Verse Poster for Lesson Five
   - Bible
   - masking tape (Block Five)
   - slips of paper (Block Five)
   - two large, plastic buckets per team (Block Five)
   - one small, plastic bucket per team (Block Five)
   - cups (Block Five)
   - index cards and markers
   - or
   - copies of the I Doubt Cards printable file from Multi-Media CD and scissors (Block Five)
Block One

• Introduce the lesson topic, The Challenge to Believe God.
• Explain that to build a strong faith we must learn to believe that Jesus is alive.
• Discover the importance of believing the Good News and sharing that Good News with others.

A. Begin by welcoming the students to class. Since this is the final VBS session, you may want to inform any visiting students of your regular worship times and upcoming scheduled events. Be sure to invite them back at any time.

B. Ask the students if any of them can quote the VBS theme verse. Psalm 62:7, “In God is my salvation and my glory; The rock of my strength, And my refuge, is in God.” Our faith in God is a rock of strength in the midst of life’s storms. Ask them:
   • What is faith?
   • How does our faith help us overcome the world?
   • What are the faith-building challenges we have learned to conquer thus far in this VBS?

C. Instruct the students to imagine the following scenario:

Ever since you were little, you have wanted to be a doctor. When you were young, you brought home every wounded animal you found. When you were in grade school, you took first aid classes. As soon as you were old enough, you volunteered to work at the hospital. When you hit high school, you started researching what it would take to become a doctor. You learned it would take strong grades in math and science, so you have studied hard. You learned it would take many years and a great deal of money. You began saving up and looking for scholarships that would help you reach your goals. You realized, unless you had a lot of scholarships, you were going to end up owing a lot of student loans. You are discouraged, but determined.

One day your teacher asks you to stay after class. You notice that a few of your friends stay and you see a few of your best teachers filing into the classroom. You wonder if they came to talk to you. She tells you that she had noticed all of your hard work and determination to become a doctor. She submitted your name to an organization that provided scholarships to worthy students. This organization wants to pay for all of your schooling to become a doctor! They have set up a trust that will take care of everything from tuition to books to room and board!

At first you don’t believe her. Is this an April Fool’s joke? If it is, it’s pretty mean. Why would they do this with your emotions like this? Your friends and teachers have written recommendations for you, assure you what she says is true. You still don’t believe. She writes proof. She hands you the letter the organization sent you. You log in to the website on the letter, and there is the trust fund set up in your name, just like they said. You are going to college, and the price has been paid for you!

After you have told the students this scenario, ASK: Would you want to keep this news a secret, or would you want to tell everyone about it? How difficult it would be to keep the good news to yourself? Obviously, it would be very difficult to keep such wonderful news to yourself. If you had news that amazing, you could not wait to share it with others.

We have this type of good news. As Christians, the price has been paid for us. Jesus paid it with His blood that we might receive forgiveness. All we have to do is believe in Him and accept that forgiveness through baptism. The greatest challenge to our faith is belief. Belief that something so amazing, so unbelievable occurred. Belief that God will forgive us everything, if we will only believe and accept His forgiveness through baptism.

And Jesus paid that price for the entire world. With such amazing news, He wants us to share it with the world. How could we keep such wonderful news to ourselves? Because we know the Good News of Jesus Christ, it is our responsibility and privilege to share it with a spiritually dying world.

D. By this point, the Five Tropical Memory Verse posters should have been placed on the wall of the classroom. Direct the students’ attention to the Tropical Memory Verse poster for Lesson Five, and introduce the memory verse. Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” Belief in the Good News of Jesus, in the Gospel of Christ has the power to save us all. When we believe that Jesus came to earth, died, and was resurrected to save us from our sins, when we follow His teachings and are baptized to receive that salvation, our faith grows strong and leads us to share that faith with others.
A. The story we are studying today occurred long after the fall of both Divided Kingdoms. Israel was gradually fractured and scattered, first by the Assyrians, then the Babylonians, then later by the Persians. Under Persian rule, some Jews were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple, but then the Greeks conquered them, and then came the Romans. Through it all, that remnant of people remained faithful to God and managed to keep their faith intact. Have your students discuss how difficult it must have been to live in a nation who rules did not follow God.

When Jesus began to teach and began to prove who He was through the miracles He performed, some of His followers misunderstood. They thought He had come to deliver them from Roman rule, to bring the Jewish nation back to power. They didn’t understand that His presence on earth had a more far-reaching goal. He wasn’t there to deliver the Jewish nation, He was there to unite all nations far into the future. He wasn’t there to unite the Divided Kingdoms and raise them to power. He was there to unite all peoples and raise them to eternal life.

B. Instruct the students to turn to page 17 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 John 20:19-29. (You might want to discuss with your students what immediately preceded this text, depending on how familiar they are with the crucifixion of Jesus, His death, and His resurrection. Here is a summary of these events on the Multi-Media CD, Jesus Resurrection, you might want to read to your students. You might also want to share other details about the resurrection found in the other Gospels. Read Matthew 28, Mark 16, and Luke 24.)

C. Examine the Bible story with the students by discussing the following questions and answers. The answer that follows each question below is often merely an opinion. Allow the students time to discuss the answers before leading them toward a conclusion.

• In all four accounts of Jesus’ resurrection in the Gospels, the angels and Jesus Himself told those who saw them, “Do not be afraid,” or “peace be with you.” Why do you think they might have been afraid or upset? They might have been upset because they thought someone had taken Jesus’ body. They might not have believed that Jesus was alive, and thought Jesus was a spirit. They had seen Him die, horribly, and now He was alive. They didn’t understand what this meant. In the Bible when people see angels, those angels tell them not to be afraid. The appearance of angels must have been inspiring, indeed!

• In all four accounts of the resurrection in the Gospels, we are told that some of them doubted, not just Thomas. What did it take for some of them to believe? Some of them saw the empty tomb. Some of them saw Jesus. Jesus spoke to some of them. Some of them touched Jesus. Jesus explained the Scriptures concerning Him to some of them. Some of them saw Jesus take bread, bless it, and break it. He showed His wounds to some of them. Jesus ate fish and honeycomb before some of them.

• What did Jesus tell Thomas? Why is that important for us today? “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” We have not seen Jesus alive, only heard the eyewitness accounts of those who saw Jesus, spoke with Jesus after He was raised from the dead. In our court system today, judges accept the eyewitness accounts of those who were present as reliable sources of information. Similar to the way our court system works, we can trust the eyewitness accounts of those who were present as reliable proof that Jesus was not only raised from the dead, He is alive today.
• Why do you suppose, of all the disciples who struggled with belief, Thomas was the one singled out? What might have been the significance of Thomas confessing that Jesus was “My Lord and my God!”? The other disciples saw Jesus, heard Jesus, even believed, but Thomas was the first to speak those thoughts aloud. Perhaps this confession is why Thomas was singled out of all of the disbelieving disciples. He believed and then acted on that belief, confessing that Jesus was his Lord and his God. He openly doubted, boldly proclaiming that unless he touched, he would not believe. Just as boldly, when he believed, he professed his belief that Jesus was his Lord and God.

• Why do we have trouble believing today? What are some reasons we should believe? In a world where seeing is believing, Christians are considered foolish for adhering to the belief in a risen savior that we have never seen. But we can see God’s existence in the intricacies of the world around us: the balance of the universe, the inner workings of our organ systems, the precise structure of atoms that build up all matter, the complex way cellular structures work together. We can know God through the Bible, a document whose trustworthiness has been proven, through many manuscripts that have remained consistent through time and through archaeological finds that have backed up the fact that the Bible corresponds with historical proofs. We can trust God when we observe the way He cares for and protects us and those who have come before us. We can obey the guidelines that God has given us to live a good and productive life, living in a way that honors and will for us, leads us to salvation, and works to spread the news of that salvation to those around us.

Block Three Surf Survival

Stress the importance of believing that Jesus is alive and sharing that Good News with those around us.

A. Instruct the students to turn to page 18 in their Student Books to the section titled, Surf Survival. Allow a student or students to read this section aloud. Surf Survival will provide an explanation of the purpose of the lesson and how it applies to our lives. Reading this section, allow any questions or discussion the students wish to offer.

B. Read, and explain the memory verse once more. There are four elements to stress within the verse:

1) For I am not ashamed—Dictionary.com defines Ashamed as “unwilling or restrained because of fear of ridicule, or disapproval.” It can be scary to share our belief in Jesus with others. Some might make fun of us; some might even get angry. But Jesus wants us to share our faith confidently and joyfully. A good place to start might be to invite friends to youth activities. It may only be a start, but everyone has to start somewhere.

2) of the gospel of Christ—What is the Gospel? The word Gospel means Good News. The Good News is that God has provided salvation through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. A step further, when introducing our friends to Jesus, is to make sure they know who He is, why He came to earth, and what He can do for them today.

3.) for it is the power of God to salvation—And this is what He can do for them today. God provided us with a path to salvation. If we will only hear the Good News, confess that belief, repent, or turn away, from our old way of living, and be baptized into a new way of living. When we are baptized, we die to our old life filled with sin and are raised to a new life freed from sin (Romans 6).

4.) for everyone who believes—Have you ever noticed how many times in the New Testament it talks about someone believing and then being baptized? A natural consequence of belief is action. They believed and then they acted. They believed in Jesus and then acted to show their faith by following His commands and being baptized.
Another natural act of belief is to share that belief with others. Every time we act to share our belief in Jesus with others, our faith grows stronger.

C. Read Luke 8:4-8 then Luke 8:11-15. These verses describe the parable of the sower and the four types of soil. This parable describes three different challenges to our belief in Jesus. In the first soil, the devil comes and takes the seed, or the Word of God, away from us. Some examples are causing us doubt, showing us Christians who act hypocritically, sending us troubles that cause us to feel God doesn’t care. In the second soil, the seed grows well for a time, but then withers in times of temptation. These people have no roots. They might not have a strong knowledge of the Bible or deep connections with a church family that can sustain them during the hard times of life. The third soil is choked with weeds and thorns. The concerns of living in this world, both worries and pleasure, obscure our focus on the next world. The fourth soil is productive soil. The Bible doesn’t say much about how the soil became good soil, but anyone who has ever had a garden knows the kind of work it takes to make soil productive and keep it that way. It requires constant weeding, feeding, and watering. It requires a constant guard against parasites and predators.

On page 18 of the Student Book is a place where students can jot down ways their belief in Jesus is challenged and ways it is encouraged. Have them write down their thoughts about the following:

- How does the devil try to take away your belief?
- What temptations wither your belief?
- What are some of the weeds that try to crowd out your belief?
- What causes your belief to thrive?
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 Believe

Materials needed: masking tape
- slips of paper
- two large, plastic buckets per team
- one small, plastic bucket per team
- cups

Write the 23 different words of the memory verse, Romans 1:16, on slips of paper, and wad them up into Memory Verse Word Wads. You will need to create three sets of Memory Verse Word Wads for each team. You might want to make a few extra sets of Memory Verse Word Wads and keep each set in a separate plastic bag. If one of your team goes a little wild with some of their throws and loses some of the Memory Verse Word Wads, they might need an extra set to get all of the words to complete the verse.

Using masking tape, make a circle on the ground that is approximately 6 feet in diameter. Using masking tape, make a small boundary line 15 feet from this circle. On the side of the circle opposite the boundary line, place an empty bucket. Each team will need a circle, a boundary line, an empty bucket, and a bucket full of Memory Verse Word Wads as well as a small plastic bucket and several cups for the team members.

Divide students into teams of 7 to 15 students per team. Teams should not be larger than 24 students per team. (See Director’s Manual for team forming information.) Have each team choose one student to be the Message Receiver. Give this student a small plastic bucket, and instruct him to stand inside his team’s circle. Instruct the rest of the team members to line up single file behind their boundary line. Beside the last team member in line, place a large bucket full of Memory Verse Word Wads.

Give each student in line a cup. Read the memory verse aloud, although by this point the students have already heard it. When I say Go, the last student in line will pick up one paper Memory Verse Word Wad, put it in their cup, and pour it into the cup of the student behind line. The Memory Verse Word Wad will then be passed from cup to cup all the way down the line. When the student at the front of the line receives a Memory Verse Word Wad, she will take it out of her cup and attempt to toss it to the message receiver, who will attempt to catch the Memory Verse Word Wad in his bucket. After the first student in line throws a Memory Verse Word Wad, she will then race to the back of the line, and all of the other team members will move forward one space. The new student at the back of the line will retrieve another Memory Verse Word Wad and pass it forward.

There are three sets of Memory Verse Word Wads in this bucket. Only two words in the verse are used two times, the words the and of. You will need two each of those words; the rest of the words you will only need one. Each time the Message Receiver catches a Memory Verse Word Wad in the bucket, he should take it out and spread it open to see what word it contains. If it is a new word, he should leave the word spread open and lay it on the ground next to his bucket. If he has a duplicate word, he must wad the word back up and toss it into his bucket. When he has a full set of the 23 words, including two the’s and two of’s, all of the team members may join him in the circle to help him put the verse in order. The first team to do so wins.

Additional Fun

There are several versions of water relays available on the Multi-Media CD that you can choose instead. These water play activities could end your VBS with a huge splash!
Materials needed:
index cards and markers
or
copies of the I Doubt Cards printable file from Multi-Media CD and scissors

Deck
Create a set of Memory Verse Cards. Print one word on each index card of the following portion of the memory verse:

For it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes

You will need four sets of Memory Verse Cards to make a complete deck.

Goal
Discard as many words of the verse in a row as you can. Be the first to get rid of all your Memory Verse Cards, and you win.

Players
I Doubt can be played with 3 to 5 players using one deck of Memory Verse Cards. If you have 6 to 11 players, you might want to use two decks of Memory Verse Cards.

Setup
Shuffle all the cards together. Deal all of the cards as evenly as possible to all of the players. (Some players may end up with one card more than other players.)

Tips
You may need to write the words of the section of the memory verse on your board to help your students remember how the words go in order. There is a small Game Board included with the I Doubt Cards printable file on Multi-Media CD with the verse printed out and a Discard pile, as shown to the left.

There are two sets of the I Doubt Cards printable file on Multi-Media CD. One set uses color to match some of the more difficult words on the cards with the verse on the Game Board to help out those of your students who might need a little help. Use the set that you feel best meets the reading level of your class.

When Game Is Concluded, SAY:
Did you have trouble believing your classmates as you played? How is that similar to how we deal with people everyday? When we hear something incredible, is our inclination to doubt or believe? There is one person we can always believe, we can always have faith in, and that is Jesus. We never have to doubt that God is near us, that God will provide for us, because as we grow to know God and we learn that His commands are there to protect us, it becomes easier to believe that He cares for us and sent His Son to us.

Note:
If doubted, the player who discarded must turn over their discards. If they’re not what was claimed, the player must pick up the entire discard pack. But if the cards were the ones announced, the doubter picks up the stack!

Winning
The first player to get rid of all her cards wins. The last play is always made face up because other players will inevitably doubt it.

Doubting
If doubted, the player who discarded must turn over their discards.

Players
I Doubt can be played with 3 to 5 players using one deck of Memory Verse Cards. If you have 6 to 11 players, you might want to use two decks of Memory Verse Cards.

Setup
Shuffle all the cards together. Deal all of the cards as evenly as possible to all of the players. (Some players may end up with one card more than other players.)

Tips
You may need to write the words of the section of the memory verse on your board to help your students remember how the words go in order. There is a small Game Board included with the I Doubt Cards printable file on Multi-Media CD with the verse printed out and a Discard pile, as shown to the left.

There are two sets of the I Doubt Cards printable file on Multi-Media CD. One set uses color to match some of the more difficult words on the cards with the verse on the Game Board to help out those of your students who might need a little help. Use the set that you feel best meets the reading level of your class.

Lesson Five
35
Spreading the Message

Materials needed: a lengthy message written on a piece of paper

The more students you have, the better this activity will work. Instruct the students to stand or sit in a large circle; you should stand in the circle with the students. SAY: **I have a message I want to give you. It is your responsibility to spread the message so that everyone knows what the message is. You will do this by whispering the message in the ear of the student to your left.**

Write a lengthy message on a piece of paper so you will not forget it. Example: An important yellow box that contains an envelope holding the key to a heavy crate filled with fruits, vegetables, and medicine needs to be delivered to the owner of the grocery store.

You have permission to go one mile past the school either to the park or the theater. Bring a jacket; take a jacket, stop at the store to buy some milk, and ensure that you are home by midnight.

Whisper the message in the ear of the student to your left. That student should then whisper the message in the ear of the student to his left and so on. Once a student has turned to the student to his left, he may not go back to the student on his right and ask for the message to be repeated. It is highly probable that, by the time the message returns to you, it will have changed dramatically. If you wish, you can try again with another message. Upon conclusion, SAY: **God's message is plain and simple and easy for us to share with others. However, many people often jumble His message by adding to it or taking away from it, causing great confusion. His message can be found within His Word, and we should not rely on others to deliver it to the world for us.**