

Preschool Crew Leader Guide



What's a Crew Leader for preschoolers?

If you've been asked to be a Crew Leader for preschoolers, you've met two important qualifications: You love the Lord, and you love children.

During True North, you'll visit different activities with a group of three to five children. You'll help lead Sticky Scripture/ & Closing Circle. *your role is to love, encourage, and enjoy the children in your Crew.* The following guidelines will help you be the most awesome Crew Leader.



A Crew Leader for preschoolers is...

- ▶ a friend and helper,
- ▶ someone who helps children complete activities,
- ▶ someone who gets down on the floor to interact with children,
- ▶ someone who encourages kids, and
- ▶ someone who supports the Preschool staff.

Use these helpful tips:

- ▶ Learn the names of the children in your Crew, and call children by name often.
- ▶ Help children work at their own pace. You'll have 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in your Crew. You'll probably notice big differences in motor skills (such as cutting and coloring) between older and younger children. Encourage 5-year-olds to help younger children when possible.
- ▶ Look into preschoolers' eyes when you speak to them. You may need to kneel or sit on the floor to do this.
- ▶ Empower children by offering them choices. Ask "Would you like to make a craft or play with blocks?" Don't ask "What do you want to do?" or children may decide they want to do activities that are unavailable or inappropriate.



Here's what you'll do

Arrive at least 30 minutes early each day.

Report to the Preschool area on Day 1 and the Sing & Play Peak area on Days 2 through 5, and be ready to greet children who arrive early. Your welcoming presence will bring smiles to anxious faces! (Besides, the Preschool Director may have some special instructions for you.)

Greet each child by name and with a warm smile. Help children put on their name badges each day.

Sit with the children in your Crew during group activities. Keep your Crew members together, and help them participate in the activities at Sing & Play Peak and Tundra Treats.

Accompany children to preschool stations. If necessary, read the instructions at each station, and help children complete the activities. Distribute supplies as needed.

Always make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room! Be sure children hold hands or a rope as you rotate between stations. Remember to use kind, gentle, positive words. If a child lags behind, remind him or her to stay with the Crew. You might want to walk behind your Crew so you can keep all the children in view and avoid traveling too fast.

Help children think about how we can see what God is doing all around us. Talk about how fun it is to see the amazing things God has made or the way God shows his love to us. (Those are called God Sightings!)

Help children with their Bible Memory Buddies. Every day, children receive an adorable Bible Memory Buddy. You'll help them put the Buddies in their Buddy Packs to hold during VBS, and then they'll get to take their entire collection home **at the end of the week.**

Repeat the daily Bible Point often. Every activity at True North focuses on one simple, memorable Bible truth called the Bible Point. The more children hear or say the Bible Point, the more likely they are to remember it and apply it to their lives. Kids will be listening for the Bible Point so they can respond by pretending to pull a rope with both hands and saying, "Trust Jesus!"

Keep track of your Crew members' name badges and Buddies. Put these in a Crew bag, and keep the bag in a convenient place in your classroom or church at the end of the day. Send them home with the children at the end of the week.

Help children collect their Bible Activity Sheets and crafts after Closing Circle. Children will take these home at the end of each day.

Report any potential discipline problems to the Preschool Director. He or she will help you handle the problems appropriately.

Release children only to a designated parent or caregiver. If an unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, refer the adult to the Preschool Director.

Assist the Preschool Director with cleanup and preparation for your next meeting.



What do I do at each station?

Sing & Play Peak is where kids worship by singing upbeat action songs. At Sing & Play Peak you'll

- greet your Crew members in your designated seating area.
- follow the motions and sing out loud.
- help kids tune in to the Sing & Play Peak Leader between songs.

Exploration Stations ~~allow preschoolers to ease into~~

This station will be led by Station Volunteers: Participate with kids as they explore different hands-on activities.

Bible Adventures & Missions is where kids experience the Bible story and learn about Operation Kid-to-Kid. Your job at Bible Adventures is to

- listen carefully to hear how Crew Leaders should help out that day.
- participate and encourage Crew members to participate, too.
- share your own discoveries during discussion times and your excitement during each awesome Bible adventure.

Sticky Scripture™ is where kids watch a daily video and learn actions to remember God's Word. Here, you'll

- encourage kids to tune in and watch the video.
- lead your Crew in the activities before and after the video.
- lead kids in discussion when it's called for.
- jump up and join the actions right along with the video.
- hand children their Bible Memory Buddies in the special way the leader demonstrates.

Many stations offer times for kids to share about real life challenges, worries, or situations.

If a child brings up a serious issue, such as indicators of neglect, abuse, or violence they've experienced, say "Thank you for telling me about that. It's very important, and we need to talk about it with our VBS Director [or Children's Minister if he or she isn't the VBS Director] to give you a chance to say everything you need to say—and help you with your feelings."

Involve the appropriate person at your church who can follow through with necessary steps after the conversation, as there is not only a moral but a legal obligation to report circumstances where a child might be in danger.

Tundra Treats is where Crews come for a tasty snack. At Tundra Treats you will

- gather your Crew in a designated area. **(classroom)**
- help your Crew listen as the Tundra Treats Leader explains how snack time will work through the week. ***Snacks will be brought to you!**
- help kids clean hands before eating.
- help kids clean up your area before leaving.

Games/Rec:

Supervise kids on playground and with other play items in playground yard. ALL kids should remain in yard until station time is done.

Craft & Play is a fun time full of sensory activities where kids can be creative, get a little messy, and lock in what they're learning each day at True North. At Craft & Play please ***Craft volunteers come to you!**

- help keep messes to a minimum.
- listen carefully to the instructions and remind your Crew of what to do as needed.
- ask preschoolers why they decided to create projects the way they did, and affirm their creativity.
- mark your Crew members' projects with their names and set them in a designated area.

Closing Circle is where kids experience an exciting review of the day's lesson. Your role at Closing Circle is to

- sit with your Crew and participate in reviewing each day's activities.
- make sure each child leaves with his or her craft, Bible Activity Pages, and Juneau sticker.
- collect Crew members' name badges and Bible Memory Buddies and store them in your Crew bag.
- make sure children are picked up by a person designated to do so.

***STICKY SCRIPTURE AND CLOSING CIRCLE WILL BE LED BY ADULT CREW LEADERS IN YOUR DESIGNATED CLASSROOM**

***This is the only part you are responsible for leading each day!**

Crews are cool!

Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at True North each day. Each Crew consists of up to five children and one Crew Leader. Because you are shepherding a small group, you can give each preschooler lots of attention, and discipline issues will decrease. Use the developmental information below to guide you as you work with preschoolers at VBS.



- ▶ **We're 3 years old.** We've just learned how to play together, and we're still learning how to share and take turns. It may be a little hard for us to change from one activity to the next, so give us plenty of warning ahead of time. We're generally happy and sometimes even silly, but we may be a little shy about trying new things. We enjoy playing games that involve moving and jumping around, but we may tire more quickly than our older playmates.



- ▶ **We're 4 years old.** We're full of imagination and excitement. We love to use our imaginations in make-believe play and art activities. We like to use loud voices and big movements. You may need to remind us to play quietly at Preschool. We enjoy listening to Bible adventures and answering interesting questions such as "Tell about a storm you've been in."



- ▶ **We're 5 years old.** We love to help our Crew Leaders and our other leaders. If you notice us helping, please tell us thank you. We're proud of the things we can do, but we're also sensitive. Other children may hurt our feelings by blurting out reactions to things we do. We're improving in our coordination. We can cut with scissors and color between the lines. We're also pretty good at throwing and catching balls.

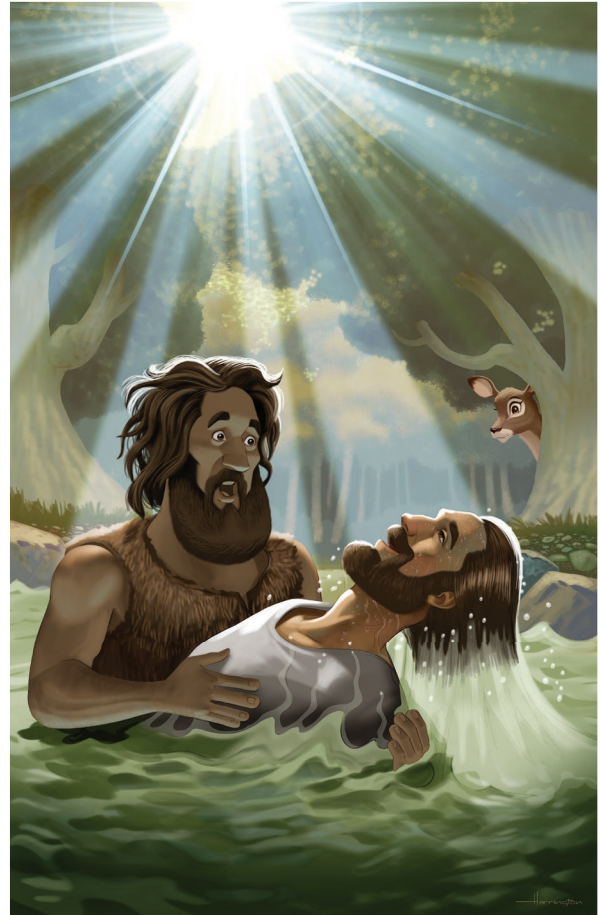
When we wonder, we can trust Jesus.

Bible Verse: “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise.” (Matthew 7:24)

Bible Story: John prepares the way and baptizes Jesus. (Matthew 3; 11:1-6)

Jesus’ cousin John came with unconventional clothes, a pauper’s diet, and a bold message: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” Meaning? Jesus—the Messiah and fulfillment of God’s kingdom on earth—is *here*! John proclaimed Jesus’ power and authority. He resisted the very idea of baptizing Jesus, the one who would baptize with fire and the Holy Spirit! While John adamantly proclaimed Christ, even he had questions about Jesus. From prison, John sent a message to Jesus, asking, “Are you the Messiah we’ve been expecting, or should we keep looking for someone else?” John’s circumstances may have caused him to wonder if (and when) Jesus might take political action. Scholars ponder if John may have assumed the Messiah would be the one to rescue God’s people from Roman rule—as many Jews of the time anticipated. However, Jesus had a greater mission than anyone could comprehend. He came to save *the world* from sin. Such love and compassion go beyond anything we can understand or imagine!

Kids’ curiosity can be intimidating—and a bit wearying. They have so many questions, many of which we simply can’t answer. And when it comes to questions about Jesus, God, or the Bible, adults can *really* feel overwhelmed and underprepared. But we don’t have to have all the answers! Sometimes our wonderings can lead to true *wonder*, as we discover the mystery and marvel of God. Today, celebrate curiosity and questions. Point kids to Jesus, a trustworthy and true friend who will guide us as we seek to know and understand him better.



Pointing to Jesus

People (even John the Baptist) wondered about Jesus. This passage can encourage kids that it’s okay to ask questions about Jesus—he will always help us find the truth.

When we feel alone, we can trust Jesus.

Bible Verse: “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

Bible Story: Jesus teaches about God’s love for us. (Matthew 6:25-33; 18:12-14)

Jesus’ ministry had just begun when he stopped on a mountainside near Capernaum and began to speak...and speak...and speak! What we call the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus’ call to live a life pleasing to God. He covered practical topics such as prayer, divorce, enemies, and giving. No wonder a crowd of more than 5,000 soon gathered! Jesus challenged the multitude, but he also comforted them. He reassured people of God’s gentle care for each person. This mattered because in Jesus’ time, most people led a hand-to-mouth existence. The average citizen awakened each day unsure of how to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. Imagine the peace found in Jesus’ words: “So don’t worry about these things...your heavenly Father already knows all your needs” (Matthew 6:31-32). Ahhhh! Jesus encouraged listeners to rest in God’s loving care, trusting in his unfailing presence. With God by our side, we never face challenges alone.

Some kids will come to your VBS with physical needs. Maybe food isn’t readily available at home or new shoes haven’t been in the family budget for a while. Others have emotional needs—they’re in a friendship famine, or anxiety has starved them of peace. Both types of needs can isolate kids, causing them to feel alone in their struggles. And kids who try to handle stress by themselves end up feeling exhausted and anxious. Jesus’ words provide a feast of encouragement! He offers his broad shoulders and strong arms to carry whatever heavy burdens kids feel they carry alone. Use today’s lesson to bring comfort to hurting kids, reminding them that they can rest in Jesus’ loving care. Kids can trust Jesus, who truly values and sees them.



Pointing to Jesus

Jesus affirms just how valuable we are to God. So when kids feel lonely, left out, or cast aside, they don’t need to worry. They can trust in God’s rock-solid love.

When we feel powerless, we can trust Jesus.

Bible Verse: “ ‘Don’t be afraid,’ he said, ‘Take courage. I am here!’ ” (Matthew 14:27)

Bible Story: A Roman officer trusts Jesus.
(Matthew 8:5-13)

Capernaum, situated on the Sea of Galilee, boasted a Roman customs station and proximity to busy trade routes. Considering Rome’s occupation of the city, Roman soldiers likely patrolled the streets. Their presence offended plenty of devout Jews, who recoiled at the idea of worshipping many gods, among other Roman practices. So onlookers got a big surprise when a Roman centurion—a powerful leader of up to about 100 men—approached Jesus with humility and respect. This leader, who clearly understood what it meant to have authority, identified Jesus as someone with power. The centurion wholeheartedly believed that Jesus could heal his servant with just a word. What confidence from one who likely *didn’t* follow God! Jesus praised the centurion’s faith to the gathering crowd. And, just as the centurion trusted, Jesus’ power provided miraculous, authoritative healing for the servant.

If anyone understands what it’s like to be powerless, it’s a kid. Hungry? You need a grown-up to buy food. Don’t like broccoli? Too bad—that’s what’s on your plate! Want to visit a friend who lives far away? You’ll need to find someone who can drive you there. Oftentimes kids don’t have the power to make daily choices. But on a bigger scale, kids hear overwhelming and frightening news about the world and feel incapable of making a difference. Broken families can bring about anxiety and a sense of helplessness. Yet Jesus promises his powerful presence when life feels out of control. Today, point kids to the mighty power of Jesus—a faithful friend with the authority to conquer every fear.



Pointing to Jesus

Even a mighty Roman officer knew he didn’t have power like Jesus. When circumstances make kids feel helpless, they can always trust in Jesus’ strength.

When we need hope, we can trust Jesus.

Bible Verse: “And his name will be the hope of all the world.” (Matthew 12:21)

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (Matthew 26:47–28:8)

Everything about Jesus offended the religious leaders of the time. He forgave sins. He spent time with tax collectors and people of poor reputation. He seemed to disregard religious tradition. And he claimed to be the Messiah—the awaited Savior and King of God’s people. Their outrage culminated in Jesus’ arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Jesus’ followers must have felt like hope was crucified that day, too. They’d seen Jesus heal lepers and make blind people see. They’d trusted his promises. They’d hoped that he was God’s Son. And now their friend and teacher lay lifeless behind a wall of rock. How could this be? Had they been wrong? What was next? The mystery continued when, three days later, they found an empty tomb and angelic messenger who told them, “He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen.” Jesus lives! Hope is resurrected, giving *all* who believe the promise of eternal life!

Maybe you like working with kids because they bring you hope. Spending time with kids reminds you of days when everything seemed possible. “I’m gonna play pro football,” “I can’t wait to be an actor!” or “Someday I’ll fly a plane!” The future is full of promise. Yet every child experiences a moment when dreams fail, reality crashes in, hope dies. Parents lose jobs, grandparents get sick, families move, friends leave. And frightening news stories may lead to despair about what our future holds. Today, take the opportunity to boldly declare the hope we *all* can have...in Jesus! God’s Son offers a truly hopeful future—one that lasts into eternity and is full of joy and promise. Point kids to the truth and hope Jesus brings through his loving sacrifice.



Pointing to Jesus

Like Jesus’ followers, kids may face times that seem hopeless or dark. Today’s passage encourages kids that Jesus is our hope—both here on earth and for eternity!

When we need help, we can trust Jesus.

Bible Verse: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

Bible Story: Jesus gives the Great Commission, and the Holy Spirit comes. (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 2:1-12)

For about three years, the disciples talked with Jesus, watched him perform miracles, absorbed his interactions with religious leaders, and listened to his teaching. Returning to heaven, Jesus handed the baton to his followers, giving *them* the monumental task of growing God’s kingdom throughout the *world*! Help! But Jesus didn’t leave them alone. He promised to be with them and gave them the divine helper, the Holy Spirit. Soon after Jesus returned to heaven, the followers saw the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, giving them the ability to speak in many languages. Plus, the Holy Spirit empowered Peter to share the news of Jesus in such a way that 3,000 people believed! With God’s help, impossible things happened—in big ways!

How do the kids at your VBS need help? Maybe reading is hard for them, and they need a little assistance. Or they’re shy and need some guidance finding friends. There may be kids who need physical or emotional support. Kids may need help forgiving someone or getting along with family members. Wherever we come up short, the Holy Spirit can step in! Yet kids may wonder how to access the power of the Holy Spirit. *How does Jesus help us?* Today, show kids what it means to live a life of faith, relying on Jesus to help us through every challenge. Point kids to practical ways to pray, read Scripture, talk with other friends of God, and receive the help Jesus freely gives!



Pointing to Jesus

Jesus gave his followers a *huge* job to do! When kids feel overwhelmed, today’s passage can remind them that Jesus promises to be a faithful friend who helps us *no matter what*.