



Day 1 Supplies:

Bible

play dough

• paper plates

Unshifting Love

Bible Point: God loves you no matter what. (*Awesome God!*)

Bible Story: Joseph's family feuds. (Genesis 37)

Bible Verse: "Your unfailing love will last forever." (Psalm 89:2)

SAY

Welcome to Monumental VBS! Each day before we take our kids on an adventure, we'll take a few minutes to prepare our hearts and focus on what kids will be exploring. This time will help us get in the right frame of mind to make every minute count as we help kids grow in their friendship with Jesus.

Today we're going to explore how amazing rock monuments form.

Give each person a lump of play dough and a paper plate.

First, make your play dough into flat land on your plate

Pause.

Now, push it in from the edges to make mountains rise.

Pause.

Give everyone a little bit more play dough.

Next, add a little more play dough on top of your mountains.

Pause.

You've just seen how shifting play dough changed the landscape. That's kind of like how the landscape of our earth has changed.

Let's get sciency for a minute! In Monument Valley, sediments were deposited in the area at the same time the Colorado Plateau experienced a geologic uplift. That pressure pushed up the plateau, causing bulges and cracks to form. Then wind and water wore away more land in some of the cracks, leading to the deep valleys and tall rock formations we see today. You can almost imagine God playing with those rocks the way we just played with this dough!

It's amazing to think how things as big and strong as mountains have changed their shape over the years.

ASK ▶ What are other things that might seem unchanging at first glance but do actually change?

SAY ▶ The truth is, even the biggest, strongest things in this world don't last forever. Our world will one day pass away. But here's one thing we can count on: God's love. No matter what happens in our world, no matter what we do, **God loves us no matter what.**

ASK ▶ Let's think about the kids coming to our VBS. What's one thing you can do this week to show love to kids?

Why is it important for you to set an example of God's love?

Read aloud Psalm 89:2.

SAY ▶ **God loves you no matter what!** (Awesome God!) Unlike your play dough—unlike the earth—God's love is unshifting. Some of the kids coming to VBS this week may have already seen that modeled from parents or other adults. Other kids may have never experienced unconditional love. Maybe they've felt that they have to earn love. Your influence in kids' lives this week can help them get a glimpse of God's never-ending, never-shifting love.

Lead staff in praying for kids. Ask God to help your VBS team show his unconditional love to kids—no matter what struggles this week may bring.

Collect the play dough.



Day 2 Supplies:

- Bible
- 2 glass jars with lids
- 2 different colors of sand
- clear plastic cups (1 per person)
- wet wipes (optional)



Together Forever

Bible Point: God is with you everywhere. (Awesome God!)

Bible Story: Joseph is imprisoned. (Genesis 39–40)

Bible Verse: “For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.” (Joshua 1:9)

SAY

Welcome back to another exciting day at Monumental VBS!
Today we’re going to learn that **God is with you everywhere.**
(Awesome God!)

Give each person a cup.

Hold up one color of sand.

Imagine this sand is God. He’s been around forever.

Pour some of that sand into a jar.

Hold up the other color of sand.

Imagine this sand is you. You joined the scene more recently!

Pour the second color of sand into the same jar as the other sand.

Screw on the lid, and shake the jar to mix the sand.

God is intricately involved in your life. You can’t ever be separated from him.

Unscrew the lid, and pour the sand into the second jar.

You can go here...

(pour sand)

Or there...

(pour sand back into the first jar)

Or all over the place...

(pour a little bit of sand mixture into each person’s cups)

But you can’t go anywhere without God. God is with you everywhere.

ASK When are you most glad to know that God is with you?

When might someone want to get away from God?

Now let's think about the kids in our VBS. Why is God's presence important to a kid?

SAY Let's listen to God's reassuring words. As I read this, pour a little of the sand into your palm.

Read aloud Joshua 1:9.

Hold the sand in your palm as we think of the kids we're interacting with.

They're busy—constantly running from place to place.

Some may be popular.

Others may feel like no one likes them...or notices them.

Some may have moved and had to make new friends.

But when life is busy, lonely, or changing, it's helpful to know that **God is always with us.** (Awesome God!) And kids can find comfort in that, too. Let's pray for them.

PRAY God, thank you that you are with every child in our VBS, even now as we pray. Show them they're not alone; show them they can always turn to you for help and comfort. In Jesus' name, amen.

Gather the sand back in the jars. You may want to provide wet wipes for your staff to clean their hands from the sand "dust."

Day 3 Supplies:



Bible



“My Leadership Style” handouts
(1 per person)

• pencils



Sing & Play Celebration
Music CD*

• CD player

*available from group.com
or your Group VBS supplier

God's Type of Leader

Bible Point: God is in charge. (Awesome God!)

Bible Story: Joseph gets new responsibilities. (Genesis 41)

Bible Verse: “How great is our Lord! His power is absolute!”
(Psalm 147:5)

SAY

Today we'll be exploring how **God is in charge**. (Awesome God!) In the Bible story, God was in charge of the coming famine, and he put Joseph in a position to gather food and prevent people from starving.

Sometimes God gives leaders an important role in his plans. And that's exactly what he's doing with you this week! God put you in this position to feed his children with his love and care.

The Bible is full of different leaders. And even though they exhibited many different leadership styles, the one thing all the good leaders had in common was trusting God.

Distribute the “My Leadership Style” assessment and pencils.

You can take this assessment home if you're interested in filling out the whole thing to see what your leadership style is. For now, let's just look at the answers. Circle the one that sounds the most like you.



As people peruse the answers, play “You Are in Charge” from the Sing & Play Celebration Music CD.

Now find someone who circled a different option than you. Talk about this question together:

ASK

What does leadership mean to you?

SAY

We may all have different leadership styles, and some of you may not even typically think of yourselves as leaders. But God has given each of you special gifts to use as you interact with kids here at VBS this week.

SAY No matter what your leadership style is, it's important that you remember **God is in charge**. (Awesome God!) Turn to God for help, just like all the people the assessment talked about. They all relied on God, and *that's* what made them good leaders!

Let's do that now. Talk to your partner about a challenge you've faced this week leading or working with kids. Then pray for one another.

Allow time for discussion and prayer.



Quietly play "How Great Is Our God" from the Sing & Play Celebration Music CD while staff talk and pray. When you can see that everyone is finished, turn off the music.

ASK If you're willing to share, what are some challenges you've faced this week at VBS?

How can God help you with your challenges?

Read Psalm 147:5.

SAY Some of you might have strong-willed kids who are hard to lead. But maybe God is building up leadership skills in *them*, and they just need to hone those skills. For now, you don't have to let it be a battle of your will versus theirs. Remember that God's power is absolute. **God is in charge**. (Awesome God!)

MY LEADERSHIP STYLE

Read each description. Mark the gray box for that line with a number to reflect how well you identify with that description.

3 = all the time

2 = most of the time

1 = some of the time

0 = rarely or never

A	B	C	D	E	F	
						I often notice what skills other people have.
						I am good at accepting feedback.
						I am good at teaching people how to do something.
						I have a lot of big ideas.
						When I have a big project to do, my mind naturally goes to the steps it will take to finish.
						In group projects, I usually take the lead.
						I enjoy helping people use their gifts.
						I love sharing my ideas with other people.
						I like planning timelines and making to-do lists.
						When making decisions, I research possible options and like to talk them out.
						I can help people work together as a team.
						When people aren't sure how to do something, they ask me for help.
						When I have a decision to make, I ask a lot of people for advice.
						I often encourage people when they're not sure they can handle something.
						I explain things well.
						People ask me to help organize things.
						I like helping people become better versions of themselves.
						People tend to naturally follow my lead.
						I enjoy being the "boss."
						If I don't plan out the details of a project, I feel overwhelmed.
						I know I'm not good at <i>everything</i> , so I like to find people who can do the things I don't do well.

						I'd rather show someone how to do something than do it for them.
						I like to hear different perspectives to help me know what to do.
						I see the good in other people.
						I can usually convince people that my way is best.
						I don't like to make decisions without help from others.
						I am very organized.
						People say I have good ideas.
						I can get everyone on the same page.
						I'm good at delegating.
						TOTAL SCORE

ANSWER KEY:

Total up each column. Using the column with the highest score, find that number below to read about your leadership style.

A. COACH. Your style as a leader is to train other people. You enjoy helping people grow and improve so they can take more responsibility. Your focus as a leader is more on helping other people grow than on showing off your own power and skill. Jesus had a similar leadership style, as he raised up 12 disciples to be able to perform miracles and teach in his name. (See Matthew 10; Luke 10:1-20; John 14; and Acts 1:1-11.)

B. VISION CASTER. You're full of great ideas...and you're good at getting everyone on board with your ideas! Your ideas often focus on the big picture, and you might not think about all the details of what it will take to get there. But because you're so passionate about your vision, other people catch on and you can lead them in making your dream a reality. The Apostle Paul is a biblical example of a Vision Caster—he kept his vision of preaching the Gospel going by traveling, teaching, and writing letters. (See Acts 13–28.)

C. COMMANDER. You're great at leading a team in the same direction. Taking on more of a traditional “boss” role comes naturally, and as you give clear direction, you can lead a team to success. In the Bible, Joshua was this kind of leader, and God chose him to lead the people of Israel into battle to take over the land God had promised them. Because of his clear direction, they were able to succeed. (See Joshua 1–12.)

D. PLANNER. It takes a lot to see a plan all the way through—and you have what it takes! You can easily see all the details it will take to make something happen, and you're good at keeping tasks and people organized to help that happen. Joseph showed these kinds of leadership skills when he was able to execute the plan to reserve grain for seven years and distribute it for the following seven years. (See Genesis 41.)

E. INCLUDER. When you're in charge of something, you don't want to go it alone. You want to make sure you're making decisions that will help as many people as possible. So you listen well to the needs of others, take advice, and implement people's ideas. Moses showed this kind of leadership style as he led people through the desert and when he settled disputes and listened to the advice of his father-in-law. (See Exodus 16–18.)

F. ENCOURAGER. Your leadership style is all about encouraging others. You might stay a little more behind the scenes, but you see the natural talents in others and help them find ways to use them. You easily see the potential in people, and through your encouragement, you help them live up to that potential. Deborah was a judge in the Bible who displayed this kind of leadership, giving wise advice and encouraging a man named Barak to go into battle with God's help. (See Judges 4–5.)



Day 4 Supplies:

— Bible

Thumbthing Strong

Bible Point: God is stronger than anything. (Awesome God!)

Bible Story: Jesus dies and comes back to life. (Luke 23–24:12)

Bible Verse: “And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love.” (Romans 8:38)

SAY

Today will be amazing as God displays his monumental strength—even over death! **God is stronger than anything.** (Awesome God!)

It’s like this.

Stack your fists one on top of the other.

Your top fist should be holding your bottom thumb, but make sure volunteers don’t see you put your thumb up. It should look like you are just stacking your fists.

Here’s my challenge: You can use your pointer finger on each hand to try to knock my fists apart. So you’ll use one finger to knock my top fist one way and the other finger to knock my bottom fist the other way.

Let a couple of volunteers try to knock your fists apart. They won’t be able to do it.

Now you try and see if you can be as strong as I am. Stack your two fists.

Demonstrate stacking fists, but do not put your thumb up.

Now see if a partner can knock your fists apart.

Partners should easily be able to knock fists apart.

Want to know why my fists were so much stronger than yours? I’ll show you why! The trick is in the thumb.

Show volunteers how to stack their fists so their top fist is holding their bottom thumb.

Let volunteers try again to knock partners’ fists apart.

At first, your fists weren’t very strong. But your thumb made them strong! Jesus is like our thumbs in this experiment. He holds us close to God and gives us the strength to keep going!



SAY Maybe you've felt strong this week—energized by the excitement of VBS. Or maybe you've felt weak. Maybe by Day 4, you're feeling tired. Either way, it's important to remember that our strength doesn't come from ourselves. It comes from Jesus! And **God is stronger than anything.** (Awesome God!)

ASK What's one area of your life in which you need to remember to rely on God's strength?

SAY If you're feeling like even God's strength isn't enough, listen to this!

Read Romans 8:38.

When we feel weak, God's strength carries us through.

ASK What's something a child has shared with you this week that shows you they need God's strength?

SAY When we're not strong enough, God is. We couldn't take care of our own sin; God could. We can't always stand strong. Sometimes life knocks us over, just like your partner knocked your fists apart.

But God can give you that “thumbs up” of strength and help you stay strong. And for the kids who have shared some tough stuff—well, God is just as strong for them. Let's pray.

PRAY God, thank you for your strength. Where we are weak, make us strong. Where our kids need help, give them strength to keep going. In Jesus' name, amen.

Note: The thumb experience is also used in Elementary KidVid™ Cinema. Make sure your volunteers don't give away the surprise to kids ahead of time!



Day 5 Supplies:

— Bible

- “Startling Sounds” track, available at group.com/vbsTools

Startling Sounds

Bible Point: God is surprising. (Awesome God!)

Bible Story: Joseph reunites with his family. (Genesis 42–45)

Bible Verse: “Come and see what our God has done, what awesome miracles he performs for people!” (Psalm 66:5)

Download the “Startling Sounds” track to your phone or another device you can have handy. Just before your volunteers arrive to the huddle, hit “play.” The track is mostly silence but will periodically surprise everyone with startling desert sounds. Make sure it will play loudly enough to be heard over the sound of discussion.

SAY All week we’ve been discovering God’s greatness. His love is great, his presence is great, and his strength is great. Today we’ll wrap things up by realizing there’s so much more about God than we can discover this week. We’ll learn that **God is surprising!** (Awesome God!)

Let’s talk about surprises. Find a partner and talk about this question.

ASK Tell about a fun surprise you planned for someone else.

SAY Now find a new partner and talk about this question.

ASK Tell about a fun surprise you received.

During the course of this discussion, your volunteers should have been surprised with some strange sounds.

Have everyone return to their seats, if they’ve moved.

SAY You probably noticed some surprising sounds during our conversations!

ASK Describe how you felt when the first surprising sound played.
What happened as more and more sounds played?

SAY Surprises keep us on our toes. The sounds we heard may have surprised you at first. But once you knew they were coming, you probably got more used to them, and the surprise faded. Now let’s think about God’s surprises.

Read Psalm 66:5.

ASK How has God surprised you?

SAY Talk with a partner about this:

ASK Do you feel like God's surprises are fresh, or have you become used to them? Explain.

SAY Sometimes God's surprises are big: an exciting job offer or an unexpected financial blessing. Sometimes God's surprises seem more common: a beautiful sunset or a child's laughter.

We can choose to keep seeing God's surprises by watching for him at work around us. Don't take his works for granted!

God is surprising. (Awesome God!)

ASK What's one surprise God had for you here at VBS this week?

Allow a bit of time for this sharing with the whole group. Consider this a time of inspiration about what God has done through your VBS program!

SAY **God is surprising. (Awesome God!)** VBS may be almost over, but God's work in these kids' lives is just beginning. Let's pray for it to continue long past this week.

PRAY God, we're so grateful for all the ways you've blessed and surprised us this week at VBS. We thank you for the work you've begun in kids' lives this week, and we pray that you'll continue to surprise and delight them as they discover more of your greatness for the rest of their lives. In Jesus' name, amen.