



Juneau's Puppy Playhouse Ages 3 through Pre-K!

Craft & Play

Preschool Station Leader Manual

Group resources really work!

This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's:



Relational

Person-to-person interaction enhances spiritual growth and builds Christian friendships.

Experiential

What we experience through action and discussion sticks with us up to 9 times longer than what we simply hear or read.

Applicable

The aim of ministry is to equip people to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Lifelong

Experiences transform the heart, moving faith beyond the walls of church and into everyday life for years to come.

Craft & Play Leader Manual

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Thanks to our talented team that points the way to Jesus! Laura Baldwin-Stout, Jody Brolsma, Stephen Caine, Lyndsay Gerwing, Charity Kauffman, Micaiah Lee, Laycie McClain, Mike Porter, Joani Schultz, Elisa Snell, Rodney Stewart, and Ali Thompson

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Thanks for joining the team!

True north is a fixed point on Earth's globe. Unlike magnetic north, *true north* is unmoving, unchanging, reliable, resolute.

If you're reading this manual, chances are that *Jesus* is your true north. You've trusted him to be a faithful friend when life's journey got lonely.

You've relied on his unchanging love through life's ups and downs. You've turned to Jesus' comforting words of hope when the world felt cold and dark.

And you want to share *all* of that with kids in your community!

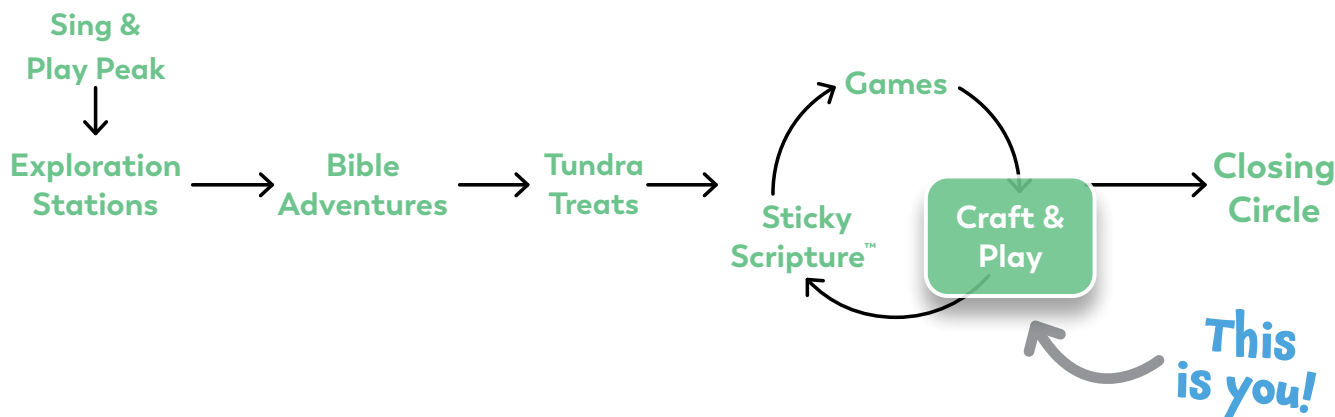
Like you, we love Jesus, and we love kids. We know that kids today may find their world untamed and wild. We understand that kids' source of truth may shift, depending on the latest news headline, trend, or social media influencer. We long for kids to boldly step out in faith, knowing that Jesus always points them in the right direction. He is *their* true north. Now...and for eternity!

That's why we're so glad you've joined this adventure! Think of our team as trail guides, going ahead to make sure the terrain is smooth and the trail is well-marked. We've tested these activities with kids, so you can make the most of every minute you have. And we're praying that God's vast love amazes and astounds you as you lead kids into the wonder of a friendship with Jesus.

It's hard to find your way in a world gone wild.

But we have Jesus—our true north!

Together, let's give kids a rock-solid foundation and point them to Jesus, their unmovable, unshakable friend forever.



Before True North



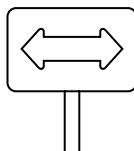
Pray for everyone who will attend True North.

Ask God to prepare your heart and the hearts of the kids and leaders who will be part of VBS.



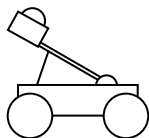
Work with the VBS Director to collect necessary supplies.

Almost all the supplies are easy to find around the church, from church members, or from Group.



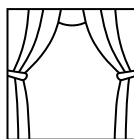
Work with the Preschool Director to select a room.

Choose a room that has access to a sink for easy cleanup.



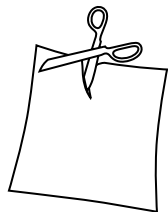
Test the projects ahead of time.

You'll not only come up with extra teaching tips but also have finished samples to show kids.



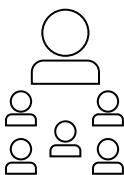
Decorate your craft area.

Remove toys, books, or other items that might distract children. Visit pinterest.com/groupvbs or view our online catalog at group.com/TrueNorth for decorating ideas.



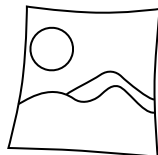
Recruit teens, retirees, or other volunteers to help with prep.

There are many crafts that require cutting or folding ahead of time, and this is a great job for people who may not be able to help during the week of VBS.



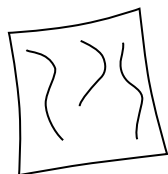
Determine the number of Crews you'll have.

Crews consist of five preschool-age children (kids who've not yet finished kindergarten) and one adult or teenage leader. Plan on having one-third of the total number of preschool Crews in each of your rotations. For example, if your VBS has nine preschool Crews, you'll be working with three Crews (approximately 15 children and three teenage or adult helpers) during each session.



Hang the Northern Wilderness Fabric Wall Hanging.

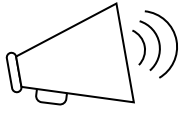
Many of the crafts are things that are shown in the wall hanging, such as northern lights, mountains, pine trees, an eagle, and a moose. Pointing out these creations in the backdrop helps preschoolers have a visual of what they'll be creating!



Cover the floor with an inexpensive paint tarp.

We recommend a paper tarp with plastic backing since it's not slippery. You can paint mountains and pine trees on it for extra color and fun. Or make moose and bear tracks!

During True North



Use an attention-getting signal.

Attention-getting signals let kids know when it's time to stop what they're doing and look at you. Use the Wilderness Whistle (available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier) or another signal of your choice.



Repeat the daily Bible Point often.

Every activity focuses on one memorable Bible truth called the Bible Point. Repeating the Bible Point helps kids remember it and apply it to their lives after VBS. Kids help you finish the Bible Point with a rousing "trust Jesus!" as they pretend to pull on a rope with both hands.



Get Crew Leaders involved!

When you need little ones to listen, follow instructions, or pay attention, call on Crew Leaders to help.



Play the Sing & Play Peak Music while kids create.

Music creates a fun atmosphere and, more important, reinforces faith!

Preschool Sample Schedule

(9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.)

If your Preschool Director decides to have preschoolers rotate through age-appropriate stations, you'll use a schedule similar to this one. (Note: Unless specifically indicated, these are not the same stations that elementary kids will visit.)

TIME	GROUP A Crews: <u>1-3</u>	GROUP B Crews: <u>4-6</u>	GROUP C Crews: <u>7-9</u>
9:00–9:25	Sing & Play Peak (with elementary kids) <i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
9:30–9:45	Exploration Stations <i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
9:50–10:15	Bible Adventures & Missions <i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
10:20–10:40	Tundra Treats (with elementary kids) <i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
10:45–11:00	Sticky Scripture	Games	Craft & Play
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
11:05–11:20	Craft & Play	Sticky Scripture	Games
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
11:25–11:40	Games	Craft & Play	Sticky Scripture
	<i>Allow 5 minutes to travel to your next station.</i>		
11:45–12:00	Closing Circle		



Choose how you'll set up the Craft & Play area. The crafts in this manual are options, so determine which ones best fit your space, your time, and the number of kids and helpers you'll have. Once you've chosen the crafts or activities, gather the supplies for those options. Then you have two choices:

- Run more than one activity simultaneously. Set up multiple Craft & Play options in a large area. Meet with Crew Leaders (or a co-leader) ahead of time to go over the appropriate instructions and how each activity connects to the Bible Point or story. You may want to place one staff member at each station and let the children move from station to station individually.
- Lead activities one at a time. Lead Crews through each activity yourself, allowing Crew Leaders to participate and assist you. In our field tests, we generally have time for one or two of the three activities in each rotation.



FIELD TEST FINDING

While preschoolers love to stand and work on their crafts, you may want chairs so Crew Leaders can easily sit at kids' eye level to help with crafts.

COMPASS CLUE

Tape down tablecloths for each day. The tape will prevent preschoolers from accidentally sliding the tablecloth off, and cleanup is a breeze when you can simply ball up the tablecloth with any scraps and garbage inside!

COMPASS CLUE

If you're making more than one craft per day, pre-label a brown paper bag for each child with the child's name and Crew number. You can use different colors of markers to color-code the Crews! Then put all the crafts in the bag so you can easily send it home.

DAY 1

When we wonder, we can trust Jesus.



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

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

Just for Day 1, preschoolers skip Sing & Play Peak and go straight to Juneau's Puppy Playhouse to meet their Crews and Crew Leaders.



Exploration Stations

- Bible Activity Page
- Wonder Wall
- Wild Life: Explore the Campsite
- River Crossing



Sticky Scripture™

Play "Wilderness Wise" as they explore Matthew 7:24 and discover what it means to have wisdom.



Tundra Treats



A (Northern) Light Snack



Blizzard in a Cup

Craft & Play

- Northern Lights Painting
- Snowflake Sun Catcher
- Floating Otter

Bible Adventures & Missions

Share the exciting news that Jesus is coming, just as John did!



Closing Circle

Review the day, learn about God Sightings, receive a Watch for God Wristband and Juneau sticker, and wrap up with prayer and music.



Games



Wonder Where



Pond Pickup



Wonder Who-la Hoop

At **True North**, the daily Bible Point is carefully integrated into each station's activities for unforgettable Bible learning. See how your station reinforces today's Bible Point.



We can Trust Jesus!

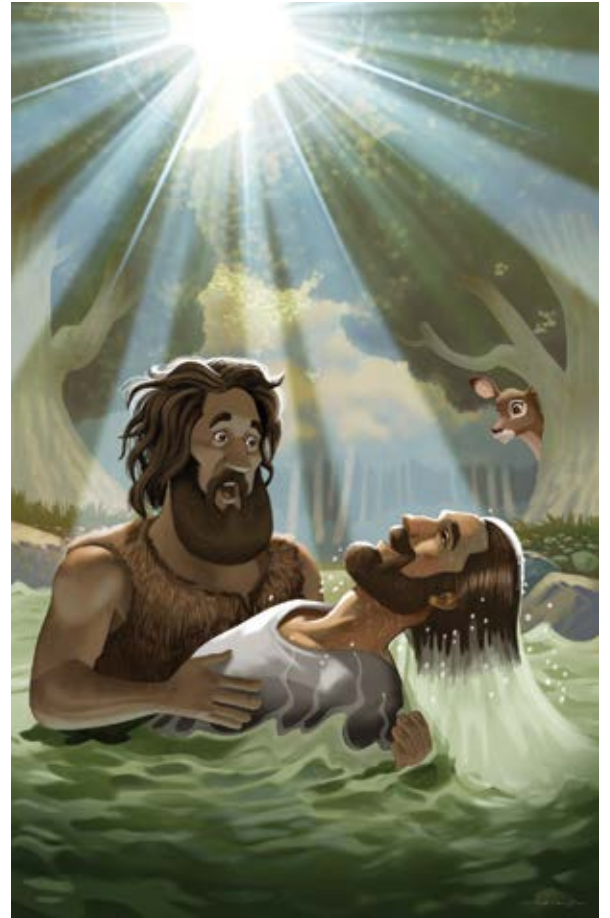
When we wonder, we can trust Jesus.

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.

OPTION 1: Northern Lights Painting

Supplies:



disposable casserole pans or similar-size box lids (1 per preschooler, plus 1 extra to collect the balls)

• card stock (1 sheet per preschooler)



squeezable bottles of washable paints in shades of blue, purple, and green (include sparkle colors!)



32-millimeter rubber bouncy balls (1 per preschooler)

• black construction paper (optional)



glue sticks (optional)



scissors (for Leaders only)

• markers (for Leaders only)

• wet wipes



FIELD TEST FINDING

We preset the tables with the main supplies needed for the first couple of steps of each craft. That way, kids had more time to make their creations.

COMPASS CLUE

You'll reuse the paint-covered rubber balls in a preschool game on Day 4, so hold on to them!

FIELD TEST FINDING

We found that it helped to have a picture—or the Northern Wilderness Fabric Wall Hanging—to show preschoolers what the northern lights look like.

Before kids arrive, cut triangles from black construction paper, 5-6 per preschooler. We found that if you cut strips that are 12 inches by 2 to 4 inches, you can then cut diagonal lines back and forth to quickly cut a lot of triangles. They don't need to be uniform; it's best if they're not! (You'll need this prep completed only if you're having kids finish the craft on Day 2.)

Create a sample Northern Lights Painting.

SAY

We're imagining what it's like to be in a beautiful place called Alaska! One thing that's cool about living in Alaska is that there are sometimes really cool, colorful lights in the night sky. They're called the northern lights, and you can't see them from most places in the world! Let's make a sky full of the colorful northern lights!

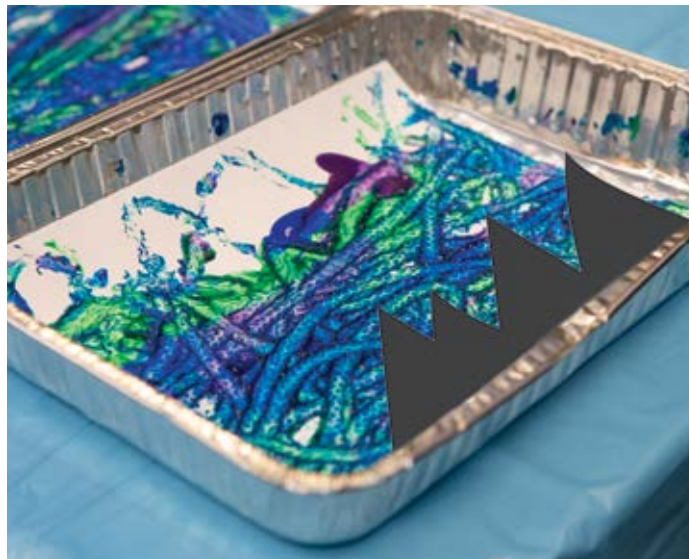
1. Give each preschooler a tray and a piece of card stock. Let Crew Leaders write kids' names on the card stock.
2. Preschoolers will lay their card stock in the trays with their names on the back side of the card stock. Crew Leaders will squeeze dime-size drops of each paint color onto the front of the card stock.

3. Each child will put a bouncy ball in his or her tray and gently roll the ball back and forth.
4. When kids have finished, have them leave the balls in their trays. Remove the artwork from the trays, and set it aside to dry.
5. Provide wet wipes for cleanup as needed.
6. Once kids have left, you can collect the balls in one spare tray and clean them between rotations.
7. If you'd like to add mountain silhouettes, return to this craft on Day 2. Let preschoolers glue triangles to the bottom of their pages to create a mountain range silhouette.

While kids work, talk about this question:

ASK What questions would you ask if you saw unusual colored lights in the sky?

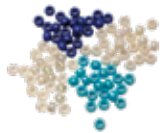
SAY The northern lights are beautiful, but it's hard for us to understand exactly how those amazing lights happen. We might wonder a lot about them! And we might wonder a lot about Jesus, too. When we wonder, we can... *(trust Jesus!)*



OPTION 2: Snowflake Sun Catcher

Supplies:

- white chenille wires (1½ per preschooler)



— clear, white, light blue, and dark blue pony beads

- string



— masking tape

— scissors (for Leaders only)



- markers (for Leaders only)



Before preschoolers arrive, cut chenille wires in half. You'll need 3 half-length pieces per preschooler.

For each preschooler, put 3 wire pieces together and twist them in the middle, then pull the ends out into a snowflake shape.

Assemble and decorate a sample Snowflake Sun Catcher.

COMPASS CLUE

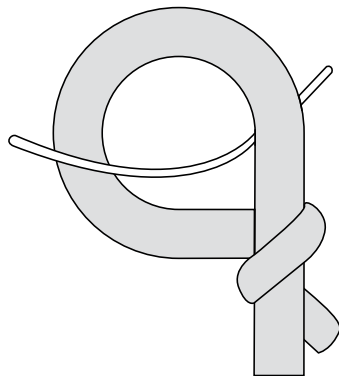


Have a lot of preschoolers and no time to prep the snowflake shapes? No problem! Preschoolers can make icicles using a single full-length chenille wire per child.

SAY

When we wonder, we can... (trust Jesus!) He doesn't mind when we ask questions about him. Maybe we wonder so many things that it's like a snowstorm of questions! Let's make snowflakes to remember that we can trust Jesus with each thing we don't understand.

1. Give each preschooler a prepared snowflake shape. Set out the beads.
2. Let preschoolers add beads to each "arm" of their snowflakes, in any pattern they'd like.
3. As preschoolers finish, Crew Leaders can help them bend the ends of the arms down to secure the beads, then tie a string loop to one arm. This works best if they bend the wire over the string.
4. To label the snowflakes, Crew Leaders can wrap masking tape around the string loop as a tag. Then they'll write the child's name on the tape.
5. Let preschoolers hold their snowflakes up to the light and watch them sparkle!



FIELD TEST FINDING



One of our genius leaders discovered this timesaving tip: Rip strips of tape ahead of time and attach them to a windowsill or shelf so they're easy for Crew Leaders to grab as kids need them.

ASK

What do you like about snowflakes?

SAY

We don't usually see just one snowflake—lots of them come at once. Maybe we have lots of questions. That's okay! When we wonder, we can... (trust Jesus!)

OPTION 3: Floating Otter



Supplies:

- Floating Otter Kits* (1 per preschooler)
- Glue Dots*
- permanent markers (for Leaders only)

*available from group.com or your Group VBS supplier



Before preschoolers arrive, make a sample Floating Otter.

SAY

Today we met Ponder. Ponder is an otter! Otters are curious critters who love to play and explore. They splash and swim and even float on their backs! I wonder how they do that! Let's each make our own little Ponder that can float in the tub with you!

1. Give each preschooler a Floating Otter Kit.
2. Have preschoolers assemble the pieces by securing them with Glue Dots. As needed, guide kids to show them where each part goes.
3. When preschoolers have finished, Crew Leaders can write kids' names on the back using permanent markers.

The next time you take a bath, take Ponder with you to float on the water! Curious otters remind us that when we wonder, we can... (trust Jesus!)

Day 1



- Northern Lights Painting
- Snowflake Sun Catcher
- Floating Otter

Day 2



- Starry Night Light
- Sparkling Snow Globe
- Crawly Crab

Day 3



- Mountain Range Ring Toss
- Sledding Spinner
- Kody Bears

Day 4



- Northern Lights Kaleidoscope
- Pine Tree Puzzler
- Eagle Flyer

Day 5



- Snow Place Like Home
- Alaskan Wilderness Scene
- Moose Antlers



Questions:

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VBS Programming



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