

Early Childhood Bible Teacher—Babies

Birth to Twelve Months



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Vacation Bible School Early Childhood—Baby Unit. "African Safari Adventure—Exploring the Wonders of God's Creation."

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Vacation Bible School

African Safari Adventure— Exploring the Wonders of God's Creation



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VBS Unit Overview

<p>This week in VBS, we will show babies that God created the world for them to enjoy but most importantly, God created them and cares for them.</p>		
Birth to Three Months	Four to Six Months	Seven to Twelve Months
<p>Learning Aim To help babies hear God created everything in the world and he cares for them.</p>	<p>Learning Aim To help babies hear God created everything in the world and he cares for them.</p>	<p>Learning Aim To help babies hear God created everything in the world and he cares for them.</p>
<p>Bible Verses In the beginning, God created the world (Genesis 1:1). God cares for me (1 Peter 5:7).</p>	<p>Bible Verses In the beginning, God created the world (Genesis 1:1). God cares for me (1 Peter 5:7).</p>	<p>Bible Verses In the beginning, God created the world (Genesis 1:1). God cares for me (1 Peter 5:7).</p>
<p><i>Sightings Along the Safari</i> (Bible Learning Activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make a photograph of each child. ▪ Hide the Bible. ▪ Exercise the babies' arms and legs and sing "This is What the Bible Says" (tune—"London Bridge") or "Jesus Loves Me." ▪ Look at pictures in the Bible ▪ Touch furry fabric 	<p><i>Sightings Along the Safari</i> (Bible Learning Activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use activities suggested for birth to three months and add the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Find the Bible. ▪ Read books. ▪ Roll ocean bottles. ▪ Sing "This Is What the Bible Says" (tune—"London Bridge"). 	<p><i>Sightings Along the Safari</i> (Bible Learning Activities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use activities suggested for four to six months and add the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read books in a small tent. ▪ Dump and fill game. ▪ Play a shape matching game. ▪ Play with plastic animals. ▪ Sing "This Is What the Bible Says" (tune—"London Bridge").

How to Use *VBS Early Childhood Bible Teacher—Babies*

Basic Information for the Teaching Team Members:

- **Learning Aim:** The outcome the teacher should teach toward and expect in the life of the child for the unit, stated from the perspective of the teacher. The Learning Aim is the key organizing element for the unit.
- **Bible Verse:** A paraphrase of the Bible verse in language appropriate for the age of the child. Bible verses are included in each activity with suggested conversation to assist teachers in utilizing the Bible with the specific activity.

Preparing and Planning for the Baby:

- **Study the Bible:** This material is written for the team members in an early childhood department. The teacher devotional takes the Bible story for each day and gives team members an opportunity for additional Bible study and life application.
- **Overview the Unit:** This information overviews the unit and reminds the team members of how this Bible story can impact the baby's life and their own personal lives.
- **Plan with the Bible Teaching Team:** The suggestions given are practical ways you as a team member can prepare for VBS and minister to the children God has entrusted to you.
- **Gather These Materials:** This is a list of resources you will need for the VBS unit.
- **Greeting the Child:** First impressions are so important! You will be reminded to greet the babies on their level. This is also the time to gather needed information from the parent or caregiver.
- **Sightings Along the Safari (Bible Learning Activities):** This section includes activities that the teacher will use with the baby (birth to twelve months) during VBS. The activities are divided into three age groups—birth to three months, four to six months and, seven to twelve months. The activities are age-appropriate and written so the teacher will have specific directions in preparing for and guiding the baby. A plan sheet is provided for teachers (Resource Item 6).
- **The Next Step:** This information is written for the teachers as they prepare for dismissal of the babies and evaluating the session.
- **Parent Letter:** The **Parent Letter (Resource Item 3)** is the church's link to the home. The letter can be used as the basis for a letter to each family. There is space at the top of the letter for the church to personalize the letter.

If you teach Babies (Birth to Twelve months):

The curriculum is organized in a unit rather than daily sessions. The activities suggested are grouped into three different age groupings—birth to three months, four to six months, and seven to twelve months. According to the age group you teach, choose at least two activities to do each day. Depending on the teachers available, you may choose more than one activity and then repeat the same activity or add something new each day. Babies learn through repetition and are storing the information learned.

--Debbie Bertrand, Editor

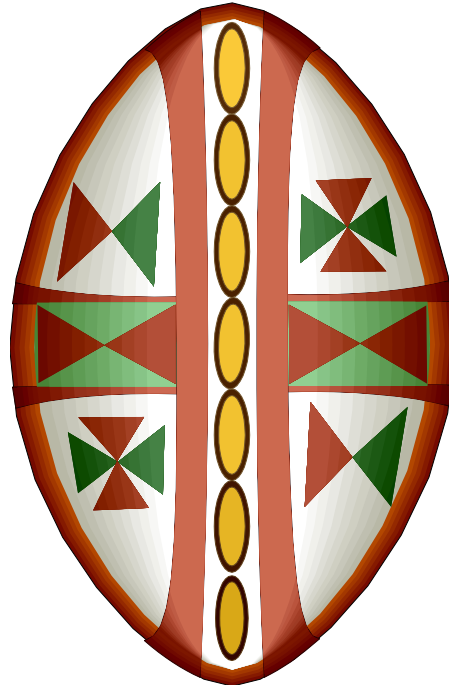
Suggested Schedule for VBS

Thank you for accepting the babies thirty minutes prior to the beginning of VBS! You are teaching teachers' children, and teachers need to be in their classrooms on time. Teaching begins the moment a baby arrives. Don't wait for all the babies to arrive to begin teaching!

The following schedule assumes you will have three-hour sessions each day. Adjust the schedule to fit your particular situation.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 8:30-9:30AM | Greet the baby and begin <i>Sightings Along the Safari</i> (page 9) Bible Learning Activities |
| 9:30-10:00AM | <p>Check and change diapers</p> <p>One teacher could be responsible for changing diapers while the other teachers continue interacting with the babies, or each teacher could have three or four babies to care for each day during VBS. Mark the Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1).</p> |
| 10:00-11:15AM | <p>Continue <i>Sightings Along the Safari</i> activities</p> <p>If some babies are sleeping, one or two teachers could take babies who are awake on a stroller ride or a walk around the church. <u>Have two teachers in the classroom at all times!</u></p> |
| 11:15-11:45AM | <p>Check and change diapers</p> <p>Follow instructions above. Begin placing belongings in their bags.</p> |
| 11:45-12:00PM | <p>Sing songs, read books, or play on the floor to keep the babies' attention from the door. One teacher should be at the door to greet the parent, gather the baby's things, and retrieve the baby. The other teachers should continue interacting with the children.</p> |
| 12:00-12:15PM | <p>Clean and sanitize the room and prepare the room for the next day. See instructions on <i>Prepare for the Child</i> guidelines (Resource Item 2).</p> |

***African Safari Adventure—
Exploring the Wonders of God's Creation***



Learning Aim

To help babies hear God created everything in
the world and he cares for them

Bible Verses

In the beginning, God created the world (Genesis 1:1).
God cares for me (1 Peter 5:7).

Preparing for the Unit

Teacher Devotionals

[The comments in these devotionals provide an overview of the studies for all ages in this Vacation Bible School and will help you know what is being taught in the various age groups. Give special attention, of course, to the emphases for the age group you are teaching.]

Session 1

Creating things and making crafts are so much a part of childhood. From mud pies to paper dolls, very young children begin to act on their environment by using their minds and power to create. As humans, it is easy to see ourselves as creators, but in fact we are not creators. We are only *re*-creators. We take items that already exist and fashion them into something else, but Genesis 1 tells a different story. Genesis 1 tells of God's making everything from nothing and nothingness. Into the deep void, God spoke, and light came, then day, night, and sky. God's work as Creator means God made it all from nothing. God is the source of creation, and our *re*-creation depends on the stuff of his creation, including our hands, minds, and ideas.

God's creation did not stop with the first chapters of Genesis. God did not act like a giant clock-maker, starting the clock, hanging it in the heavens, and walking away to listen and observe the marking of time. Rather, God tended his creation even to the point of realizing it was going astray. God's care for his creation meant that he would redeem his world and his people by sending his one and only Son as a powerless and helpless infant. In the life and sacrifice of Jesus, all creation would have the opportunity to rejoin their Creator—to be made anew. The first light of creation became the light of redemption, available to us all.

As you teach Vacation Bible School, think of the power of God's creation and the power of his love to continue to tend and care for us through the gift of Jesus. Help the children see that God's power to create continues all around us in the light we use to see and the light that brings grace, hope, and love.

Session 2

Pop culture often portrays space as the final frontier, but God's creation is filled with frontiers. Scientists attempt to conquer unseen causes of disease in the medical frontiers, and physicists work on the tiniest bits of reality we know of to understand the nature of the universe. It would be easy for humanity to become so caught up in the complexity of life and miss the fact that God cares for us. Genesis portrays the Creator of creation and also the fact that the Creator cares for us.

Jesus demonstrated his control over nature and its laws in various ways, but it is important to emphasize that Jesus was not doing this to become a first-century hero—or perhaps a superhero—to the people. Rather, Jesus performed the two miracles in Matthew 14:22-32 in order to meet the needs of the people.

Pray for boys and girls today in Vacation Bible School that they may sense God's power to meet our every need. This power is the same power that hung the stars in place as well as the power God showed through Jesus to meet the needs of people.

Session 3

Many children have a pet at some point in time. These pets usually become the responsibility of the parents in most homes.

Think about the domestic dogs, cats, or fish that are neglected. Some grow sick and even die because of captivity and dependence. They cannot seek the natural way of feeding themselves like their wild relatives in the animal kingdom. In the same way, houseplants become dependent on their gardener to sustain life.

The animals and plants in our homes are not that different from our human lives on earth in relation to God, our Creator and Sustainer. We are dependent on God for each breath we take. While we cultivate food and build shelter, God provides the resources for these developments. We are using what God provides for us. We depend on God for our very existence.

In our lifetimes, advancements have been made to help us become healthier and smarter, travel farther and faster, and communicate over long distances, but our needs remain the same. Help boys and girls realize that God is the source of food, life, and love.

Session 4

How could a God love his creation so much that he would provide so many rich, wonderful, and mighty things and then allow human beings the opportunity to destroy the work of his hands through disobedience and sin? When humanity chose to do things their own way instead of God's way, the impact was not only on people but also on all of creation. All of creation groaned when human beings chose to disobey. God made man and woman and gave them everything, including the choice to be faithful to him or not and the consequences of that choice. The choice they made was to follow their way instead of God's way. We still make that choice.

In response, it would have been easy for God to walk away and allow humanity to die with their choices. Instead, God gave humanity and, indeed, creation, an opportunity for redemption.

God made us and offered us choices. Now God is saving us from the consequences of our wrong choices—the punishment of an eternity without him, his peace, and his love. When baby Jesus came to this earth, God emptied himself into the form of a baby destined to live and die for us. The Creator gave and gave and continues to give to us.

As you teach the Christmas story along with the creation story, help boys and girls see that God loved us so much that he both created us and saved us. God did not stop at creation. He did not stop at Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection. He continues to love us and save us today. We can depend on God.

Session 5

People need a *Sabbath*, a day of rest. The idea of a *Sabbath* presents problems for twenty-first century people. The pace of life means that many of us choose to focus on things other than God, and we find it difficult truly to observe a *Sabbath*. Like Adam and Eve, we easily fall into the trap of focusing on ourselves instead of on our Creator and Savior.

Christians should reevaluate their practices and commitments to a day of worship and rest, a day of family and faith. We should ask ourselves, *What is going to last into eternity, and what will fade away?* We should order the day according to the answers.

Another risk for some Christians is that they limit their faith and faith expressions to Sunday. Their faith resides mainly in a day of the week and in a building on a street. Sunday, though, is about refueling for living faith during the rest of the week. Take a few moments and think about how you can revive your life and the life of your family on Sunday so that faith becomes the fabric of each day.

On this day in Vacation Bible School, help children understand that God gave humanity a special day to focus on his love. This Bible study encourages teachers to stress the importance of being connected with church on Sundays but also to remain connected to God throughout the week. Avoid making faith merely a Sunday practice. Focus this session on devotion, good choices, and a lifestyle of worship.

Plan with the Bible Teaching Team

- Use the teacher devotional as part of your quiet time each day. The creation story is so familiar to us. But, this week, you have the privilege of telling the creation to children who have never heard this story! What an awesome responsibility! As they grow, they will hear many stories from the Bible and learn how the Bible will teach them how to live. Pray for each child and family by name.
- Send the **Parent Letter (Resource Item 3)** to all the babies assigned to your class. Personalize the letter by including information about the baby's room, the teachers, what time you will be ready for the baby, and other information you think will be helpful to the parents.
- Make five copies of the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** for each baby assigned to your department. Parents may prefer to take the schedule cards home and have them prepared for VBS before they arrive each day. Remember to use the codes on the card and send home the cards each day. This information will be beneficial to the parents and will eliminate the need to tell them all the details of the morning.
- Read through the suggested activities for the babies. Decide which team member will be responsible for preparing and gathering the needed items for each activity. Decide who will take pictures of the babies. Pictures should be taken on the first and second days of VBS. Directions are given in the Birth-to-Three month section. A **Plan Sheet (Resource Item 6)** is provided for teachers as they meet to plan the activities for the week.

- Prepare nametags for each baby in your class and the baby's belongings. Make five or six masking tape strips for each baby every day. Place the strips on waxed paper for easy removal and place them close to the door.
- Place a copy of *Prepare for the Child Guidelines* (Resource Item 2) in a prominent place in the room.

Gather These Resources:

- ☐ Bible
- ☐ **Resource Item 1: Baby Schedule Card**
- ☐ **Resource Item 2: *Prepare for the Child Guidelines***
- ☐ **Resource Item 3: Parent Letter**
- ☐ **Resource Item 4: Footprint Mat**
- ☐ 8 ½" x 11" white cardstock (one per child)
- ☐ Brown tempera paint
- ☐ Small container (for paint)
- ☐ Sponge brushes
- ☐ Baby wipes
- ☐ 9" x 12" red construction paper
- ☐ **Resource Item 5: African Safari VBS Booklet**
- ☐ Digital camera
- ☐ 8 ½" x 11" white cardstock (one per child)
- ☐ Fabric (12" x 12" squares that feel like animal skin or fur)
- ☐ Mirror (non-breakable)
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ 9" x 12" construction paper
- ☐ Clear contact plastic
- ☐ Cardboard blocks
- ☐ Blanket
- ☐ Age-appropriate board books (animals, nature items, self)
- ☐ 20 oz water bottles (2 or 3)
- ☐ Cooking oil
- ☐ Blue food coloring
- ☐ Sequins or beads
- ☐ Glue gun (for teacher only)
- ☐ Small tent
- ☐ Picture of Jesus (covered in clear contact paper or laminated)
- ☐ Age-appropriate board books (animals, nature items, self)
- ☐ Two-quart wide-mouthed clean bottle
- ☐ Pop beads, toy links, and other toys
- ☐ Cardboard box (sturdy with lid)
- ☐ Different shaped and sized items, such as spray can lids, plastic eggs, pop beads, linking toys, yogurt or other plastic lids (thoroughly cleaned)

- ❑ Animals (vinyl or rubber)
- ❑ Cardboard blocks
- ❑ **Resource Item 6: Bible Learning Activity Plan Sheet**

Guiding the Unit

Greeting Each Baby

The director will greet children and parents at the door. Give each parent a security card and write the number to the right of the child's name on the roll. Older babies may be anxious, particularly the first morning. The director should welcome each child by saying something like, *We are so glad you came to Bible School today. Today we will have fun playing with our friends!*

Guiding Through Activities

As these babies are growing and developing, it is important to remember that you can do much more than care for their immediate physical needs. It is so important that you do all you can to ensure that the babies feel loved and secure, as well as to stimulate them while encouraging their overall development. Find at least two activities you will do with the babies each day. You can repeat this activity and/or you can add something new each day. It is important for babies to experience repetition and familiarity to feel secure and safe. As you play with them, change their diapers, feed, them, and put them to sleep, find opportunities to share parts of the Bible story and to use the suggested Bible conversation and Bible verses each day.

Sightings Along the Safari (Bible Learning Activities)

Activities for Birth to Three Months:

- **Turn on quiet music and check each baby schedule card.**
Play quiet music during the session. Check the **Baby Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** to know what time Emerson needs her bottle. Teachers should have the bottles ready for the baby according to the parent's instructions. It is so important to meet the babies' needs according to their schedules so they will feel secure in your care. Mark the card using the code given on the card.
- **Make footprints of each child.**
Copy the **Footprint Mat (Resource Item 4)** on 8 ½" x 11" white cardstock. On day one or two, paint the child's feet with brown paint. Press their feet, one at a time, on either side of the VBS logo. Glue the white cardstock to a piece of 9" x 12" red construction paper. Write the church's name and the date of VBS at the bottom of the paper. Laminate or cover in clear contact plastic the entire paper. Place a piece of magnetic strip on the back of the paper. Give this to the parent at the end of VBS. What a special keepsake this will be!
- **Make photographs of each child.**

Copy the photo book (**Resource Item 5: African Safari VBS Booklet**) onto white cardstock. Fold it in half. Make one or two vertical photographs of each child involved in an activity. Add a caption if desired under each picture. Write the date of VBS on the back of the book.

- **Exercise the babies' arms and legs and sing "Jesus Loves Me."**
As you rock, change, and feed the babies, and exercise the babies' arms and legs, sing, "Jesus Loves Me."
- **Show the pictures in the Bible.**
As you rock the baby, hold the Bible and turn the pages slowly as you sing, "This Is What the Bible Says" to the tune of "London Bridge." Use the following words: *This is what the Bible says, Bible says, Bible says. This is what the Bible says, God made the sun (insert other things that God made and the baby's name).*
- **Touch fabrics that feel like animals.**
Find fabrics that feel like different types of animal fur or skin. Cut them into 12" x 12" squares. As you rub Cristina's arm with the fabrics, say, *Thank you, God, for making sheep that are so soft.*

Activities for Four to Six Months:

- **Use the suggestions in the birth to three-month section and add the following activities:**
- **Look in the mirror, look at the Bible, and sing, "Thank you, God."**
Place on the floor the mirror and a Bible. When Maddox comes and discovers the Bible, open the Bible to *1 Peter 5:7* and say, *Maddox, the Bible says that God cares for you.* Sing the song "Thank you, God" to the tune "If You're Happy and You Know It." Use the following words: *Thank you, God, for Maddox, thank you God. Thank you, God, for Maddox, thank you God. Thank you God, for her toes, her fingers, and her nose. Thank you, God, for Maddox, thank you, God.* Touch the baby's toes, fingers, and nose as you sing.
- **Find the Bible.**
Write the words "*In the beginning, God created the world*" *Genesis 1:1* and "*God cares for me*" *1 Peter 5:7* on two colorful strips of construction paper. Laminate or cover the strips in clear contact plastic and place the markers in the Bible with only a small portion of the marker showing in the Bible. Hide the Bible under a blanket or under cardboard blocks. While sitting with the child on the floor, say, *I am looking for a Bible somewhere in our room. Will you help me find the Bible?* Lift up a corner of the blanket or move a block to expose the Bible. When the child sees the Bible, open the Bible to the marker. Have a child pull out the Scripture hidden (slipped) in the Bible. Read the Scripture verse to the child. Place the child's hand on the Bible and say, *The Bible tells us that God cares about you.* Say a thank-you prayer for God and the baby.
- **Read books.**
As you hold a baby or sit beside him in a bouncy seat, read books about day and night, animals, or other things that God made. Allow the child to turn the pages with you.

- **Roll ocean bottles.**

Take an empty 20 ounce plastic bottle and fill half of it with water and the rest with oil. Place three drops of blue food coloring and beads or sequins in the bottle. Place a bead of hot glue around the neck of the bottle before screwing the lid down. You may want to place another bead of glue around the bottom edge of the lid, also. Make two or three bottles for each class. Place the bottles on the floor. As Aaron comes to see the bottle, roll the bottle towards him so the water will roll like the ocean. Say, *Aaron, God made the water. Thank you, God for water. Thank you, God for Aaron.*

Activities for Seven to Twelve Months:

- **Use the suggestions in the four- to six-month section and add the following activities:**

- **Read books and look at the Bible in a small tent.**

Set up a tent in a corner of the room. Place a laminated picture of Jesus in the Bible and put the Bible in the tent. Children may play in the small tent each day. Invite the children to crawl in the tent and find the Bible or age-appropriate board books. Open the Bible and show them the picture of Jesus and say, *The Bible tells about Jesus.*

- **Play a dump and fill game.**

Clean a two-quart wide-mouthed plastic bottle and place colorful toys, such as pop beads, toy links, and other items. Check the correct size of toys by placing them in a toilet paper roll. If they fit through the roll, they are too small for the children. As the child dumps and fills the bottle, say, *Connor, you found the red pop bead. Thank you, God, for Connor's eyes.* Say the name of the object and color of the object as the child puts the object in the bottle. Remember, they learn from hearing your words!

- **Play a shape matching game.**

Find a sturdy cardboard box and cut holes in different shapes and sizes depending on the shapes you find to go in the box. Some suggestions are: lids from spray cans, plastic eggs, pop beads, linking toys, yogurt or other plastic lids, etc. The children will enjoy placing the shapes in the holes, opening the lid, retrieving the shapes, and starting over again!

- **Play with large vinyl or rubber or animals.**

Purchase soft vinyl or rubber animals. Place them on the floor in a corner with the cardboard blocks. Build a fence around the animals. When a child crawls or walks to you, begin talking about the animals that God made. Say, *God made the cow. The cow says Moo-oo!* Ask the child to repeat the sound. Don't be discouraged if the child doesn't respond. Remember, they are storing up all the information and one day, he or she will say Moo! Continue naming all the animals and making the sounds that the animal makes.

The Next Step

- **Check each baby's diaper:**
During VBS, schedule a time during each hour to check diapers. Make sure each baby's diaper has been checked at least once during the session. Mark the **Baby's Schedule Card (Resource Item 1)** at the approximate time using the code on the card. This information will be helpful both to teachers during the session and to parents.
- **As babies are leaving:**
Place the schedule card, parent letter, and other belongings in their bag. Remove the nametag when the parent comes. Make sure the person picking up the baby has a security tag before releasing the baby. Make the baby's exit as quiet as possible so as not to upset the other babies in the room.
- **At the end of the session:**
Refer to *Prepare for the Child Guidelines (Resource Item 2)* as you prepare to clean the room and the equipment. Using bleach solution (one tablespoon bleach to one quart of water), spray the toys and any other objects used. Use one-quarter cup bleach to one gallon of water to disinfect beds, swings, high chairs, and changing tables.
- **Ask yourself these questions:**
 1. Did I arrive early enough to prepare the room before the first baby arrived?
 2. Did I wash my hands after changing and before feeding the baby?
 3. Did I spray the changing table with bleach solution (one-quarter cup bleach to one gallon water) after each diaper change?
 4. Did I remove a mouthed toy and disinfect (one tablespoon to one gallon water) it before returning it to the play area?
 5. Did I give the baby as much attention as possible? Did I physically remain on his or her level?
 6. Did I relate the learning aim to each activity through my conversation with the babies?
 7. What specific needs of the babies do I need to address before the next day?