

DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

*Welcome to*



# INSPIRE

Six months before I was born my parents left the small town in Illinois where they grew up and began to make their home 1,000 miles away in Texas. They left behind everyone they were related to as they followed God's call. Growing up there meant no sleepovers with my cousins, or bicycle rides to Grandma's house ... and yet our home and my heart could not have been more full.

There were always people to share a meal with on holidays. At every school play and track meet, a small crowd was always there to fully, even embarrassingly, support me. Every birthday I was celebrated and loved by a strong community. Despite not living near my biological family, my parents gave me a gift, which was second only to creating an environment in our home where I was able to meet and fall in love with Jesus. My parents gave me the gift of a faith community, or as I more affectionately call them, my family.

Now that I am married and have a child of my own, I realize more than ever that these kinds of faith communities do not just happen. Engaging the people around me in relationship is a choice. I can choose to do life on my own, keeping my neighbors and even the people I worship with strangers, or I can choose to do life with them.

I want to do life together.

Vacation Bible School can be one more thing on the list of summer activities, or it can be a chance to love, laugh, and do life with the people in the places where we live. It can be a catalyst for community. It can be a chance for God to speak to His children right where they are: "You belong here ..." "You have been redeemed ..." "You are a part of My big story!"



Mallory Rae  
Tru Team

## EQUIP

### THE TALE OF THREE CHURCHES:

#### CHURCH ONE

Five years ago Rock Harbor church in Costa Mesa, California, made the decision to take VBS into the communities of Orange County, instead of making Orange County come to them. VBS was reimagined and designed to take place in backyards, parks, schools, and even senior centers. Families and volunteers were trained to lead the sites in their own neighborhoods and communities. This new structure allowed the church to build relationships with children and families who were mostly unchurched and hearing God's big story for the very first time. In the years that have followed, attendance has grown to more than 1,000 children participating at more than 40 sites in 19 cities throughout Orange County. In 2013, 100 kids made first time decisions to follow Christ!

On the last day of VBS, a young girl approached her Site Leader and announced that she wanted to be baptized. The leader was unsure of how to proceed. So, she paused and prayed, then asked the girl to share her decision with her parents and meet at the community pool the following morning. Word spread, and the next morning, nine children and their parents arrived at the pool to be baptized.

Empowering people to have a missional perspective—to take the Gospel out into various communities and the world—has given life and strength to the church that reaches beyond the week of VBS. As a result of the relationships that have been developed in these communities, Life Groups have formed, as well as the possibility of starting church campuses in these new cities and neighborhoods.

#### Church Two

The Beacon of Orange, California, is no stranger to set up and tear down of a portable church. Each week this faith community meets at a local high school and begins to set up the sound system, chairs, teaching supplies ... everything they need for the weekend worship services. When the leaders at The Beacon heard about another local church that was doing VBS out in the community, they knew it was the perfect opportunity to partner with this church.

Together the two churches hosted a VBS site at a local park. The volunteer team at the site was a combination of people from both churches. Each of the volunteer teams gave of their time, talent, and resources to make it happen. While some donated snacks, others served on their days off, all finding ways to help with the preparations.

Throughout the week, these two faith communities came together as one and were able to share God's love with the people He had placed in their neighborhoods. Humility and sacrifice defined the spirit of this VBS team. Through their offerings, God showed their city a beautiful picture of what it means to be a part of not just a church, but also God's family.

### **Church Three**

For many years the Community Bible Church of San Bernardino had a pretty traditional approach to VBS. Children came to the church campus for five days that were full of great fun and chances to experience God. One year as the leaders were hauling the week's décor and props to the trash they were overwhelmed with the sense that there must be another way. How could they reach their struggling community while utilizing their resources for a greater reach?

According to the 2010 census, San Bernardino is the second poorest big city in the country, following Detroit. The crash of the housing market and the disappearance of several key industries in the area had a big impact on the city. In fact, almost 35% of San Bernardino's residents live below the poverty line. The church knew that it was time to change what they were doing in order to better serve their community.

In 2012, CBC rallied their people and cast a vision for taking VBS out into their city so that they could share their resources, time, and God's love with their community. The first year they were able to host five sites. They chose to host VBS in the evenings and make it a free event so that more children and families could participate. When the time had come to prepare for VBS the following year, the church could not contain their passion and excitement for the many ways God was going to work within their city.

We, too, are excited for the many ways God is going to work within your communities. This year we are pleased to bring you The Big God Story VBS. It is our hope that the resources provided would serve as inspiration as your church reaches beyond its walls and into the heart of your neighborhoods and communities. May God use you and your teams to reach families with the power of His story—The Big God Story!

## Support

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20).

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

We have been empowered by the Lord Jesus to go, to take the Gospel—His good news—to the people in our neighborhoods, communities, and the world. As we go, we can be confident that He has gone before us, preparing the way and will supply for all of our needs. Before you dive into The Big God Story VBS, gather your team and spend some time praying for your neighboring communities. Ask the Lord to open your eyes to the opportunities He has for you and your church.

Once you’ve decided upon various locations within the neighboring communities, set aside some time to do a prayer walk with your team. As you walk, ask your team to be mindful of the things they’re observing. What are the opportunities for outreach? Are there places where community could be created? Where is God already at work? How could you come alongside what He’s already doing?

It’s our prayer that The Big God Story VBS will be a helpful tool you can use to reach the families in the neighborhoods of your town.

—The David C Cook Development Team

IF WE KNOW THAT JESUS IS  
WITH US, EVERY POWER WILL  
BE DEVELOPED AND EVERY  
GRACE WILL BE  
STRENGTHENED. WE WILL  
THROW OURSELVES INTO THE  
LORD'S SERVICE WITH HEART,  
SOUL, AND STRENGTH.  
CHARLES SPURGEON  
(1834-1892)

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*If you're using this material for a traditional VBS at your church site or on a mission trip experience, please see the section entitled "Suggestions on Using The Big God Story VBS in Other Contexts" for ways to adapt this curriculum in those settings.*

## THIS VBS KIT INCLUDES

### DIRECTOR'S GUIDE

In the Director's Guide you will find everything you need to know about creating your own VBS experience. You will find resources for understanding the Site Model, as well as tools for planning, implementation, and follow-up. Creative suggestions have been provided to help you take VBS into other contexts.

### LEADER'S GUIDE

The Leader's Guide is the go-to resource for all volunteers. This guide will provide volunteer leaders with everything they need to know about their roles and responsibilities, volunteer policies, VBS timelines, supply lists, curriculum for the daily activities, ideas for the Family Remember & Celebrate Event, and more!

### THE BIG GOD STORY FLIPBOOK

This easy-to-print booklet can be given to children for use during their small group times. The booklet will serve as a fun and interactive tool to help children remember their VBS experiences.

### REPRODUCIBLE RESOURCES PACK

The following reproducible documents are provided to aid you in creating the best VBS experience possible:

- Child Registration Form
- Site Leader Commitment and Application
- General Volunteer Application
- Supply Lists
- The Big God Story VBS Images for Storytelling
- Incident Report
- Daily Sign-in Sheets
- FAQ's
- Daily Take Home Papers
- Reimbursement Form
- Evaluations
- Follow-up Suggestions for Leaders
- Next Steps for Parents
- Salvation Path for Kids

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS PACK

The following templates are included to create the basics of your promotional campaign:

- Promotional Cards
- Posters
- Site Welcome Banners
- T-Shirts
- A Digital Slide
- The Big God Story VBS Logo
- Thank-you Notes

## SUPPORTING MATERIALS

The Big God Story video

To purchase The Big God Story storybook visit:

<http://www.davidccook.com/catalog/Detail.cfm?sn=106521>



## THE VISION

Who doesn't love VBS? Kids come out of the woodwork with anticipation and excitement. And we have the opportunity to share the most exciting truth with them—God loves us and has sent Jesus to be our Savior! But many of us wanted a VBS that was also in alignment to our growing hunger to provide something that truly upheld the family as primary, which centered on formation and information, made relationship paramount, and honored The Big God Story narrative. We knew that this was going to be a paradigm shift in the way we approached VBS.

This has led us to create a structure in The Big God Story VBS that is simple enough it can be taken out of the church and into a backyard, a park, a living room, or even a soccer field in South Africa. Although this VBS can be adapted to use on a church site, taking it off-site has allowed many families and parents to get involved, with more ownership, than we ever imagined possible.

In this Director's Guide you will find resources on how to run a decentralized, multisite, neighborhood-based VBS experience (referred to as simply the "Site Model" hereafter). Understanding the opportunity in this model, the "why" behind it, and the "how" in doing it are all key elements to catching the vision.

## OUR OPPORTUNITY

- To equip God's people to be ministers of His grace in their own communities (Ephesians 4:11-13).
- To create a safe and loving environment for kids in our communities so they can come to an understanding of who Jesus is.
- To live out the Gospel in word and deed amongst our neighbors.

## WHY WE GO

- To be the church together in our neighborhoods. When we embody love for God in our love for our neighbors, people begin to see a greater picture of who God is.
- To meet both the physical and spiritual needs of people in our communities.
- Because the Lord commissions us to go (Matthew 28:18-20). We desire to be disciples, hearing the Word and following through in action.
- We have been given much and to whom much has been given, much is required (Luke 12:48b).

## HOW WE GO

**Intentionally:** We will be intentional in prayer and in building relationships.

**Humbly:** We go humbly as servants, modeling after Jesus who came to serve not to be served. In humility we also recognize that the Holy Spirit goes before, with, and behind us.

**Prepared:** We will work diligently and in unity to create environments where children and families will feel known, cared for, and loved.

Many parts of The Big God Story VBS, including the content of the daily lessons, flow of group time, as well as our foundational understanding about how we do ministry, will look very familiar to those who use Tru resources in their ministries throughout the year. Yet, there will also be some things described in these pages that might be new, and appear to be risky. We invite you to lean in, knowing that we have worked hard to provide the best resources to help you along the way. As always, this work is tempered with the wisdom and insights of others who have stepped out to take some of these same risks and who, in return, have encountered God in powerful ways.

However, we recognize that you know your church, your community, and your families best, and you know what is going to be the best use of this curriculum in your specific context. We want to give you the freedom to take these tools and create the VBS experience that is the right fit for your community. In that spirit, we will also offer some suggestions for how to implement the experience for a large group in a centralized location using a rotational model, and also instruction for how The Big God Story VBS can be used on a mission trip.

# THE BIG GOD STORY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## SCOPE & SEQUENCE

DAY	PONDER POINT	BIBLE LESSON	REMEMBER VERSE	CREATE
1	“The Big Plan”: <i>God Is Redeemer</i>	Adam and Eve— relationship broken & redemption promised (Genesis 2—3)	Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6	Backpacks
2	“The Big Family”: <i>God Is a Covenant Keeper</i>	Abraham and God’s people—redemption comes through the family line (Genesis 12, 15)	The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9	Preschool: Family Portrait  Elementary: Family Tree
3	“The Big Purpose”: <i>God Is in Control</i>	Joshua and the Promised Land— God’s redemptive purpose (Joshua 1—4)	Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. Joshua 1:9	Bracelets
4	“The Big Promise”: <i>Jesus Is the Promise</i>	Jesus the Redeemer—His birth, life, death, and resurrection (Luke 2; Matthew 21, 26—28)	For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16	Christmas Ornaments
5	“The Big News”: <i>Jesus Is the Good News</i>	Peter and the early Church—the good news of redemption spreads (Acts 2, 4, 8)	But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8	Picture Frames