

Children's Ministry Curriculum Planning Guide

WELCOME!

The Tree of Life children's curriculum contains lessons for ten key Bible accounts. All together, they tell the story of God's creation and plan for each of us, with Christ as our Savior.

There are several ways you can teach this curriculum. Will you use this curriculum for a week-long Bible camp? Maybe you'll use this in step with the adult and youth Bible studies as your church goes through The Tree of Life sermon series. You could do a little of both—and even use some material for a churchwide kickoff event. The goal of this curriculum is to provide plenty of options so that you can pick the right activities for your children and your format.

CURRICULUM FORMATS

For a week-long VBS program, you will feature five of the children's curriculum lessons. This plan assumes 2–3 hours for your VBS program, but if you have more time, you could easily repeat the schedule with the remaining lessons for a full-day VBS experience. Otherwise, those lessons make a great series of Sunday School classes over the course of ten weeks!

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FIVE-DAY VBS

LESSONS AT A GLANCE

For your traditional five-day VBS program, we suggest you use the following lessons from the children's curriculum to capture the overall message of The Tree of Life: God acts on His plan and saves us through His Son. Each day, you will use one of the lessons in the children's curriculum along with the included station activities.

On the following pages, you'll find a more detailed overview of each lesson with materials, memory verses, and readings included for your preparation and reference.

DAY	BIBLE LESSON	BIBLE VERSE
DAY 1 Children's Curriculum Lesson 1	THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY Genesis 3:1-15	PSALM 139:14 I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
DAY 2 Children's Curriculum Lesson 3	THE PASSOVER LAMB Exodus 12:1-13, 29-42	EXODUS 19:5 You shall be My treasured possession.
DAY 3 Children's Curriculum Lesson 6	JESUS IS BAPTIZED INTO GOD'S PLAN Matthew 3:13-17	1 CORINTHIANS 6:11 But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.
DAY 4 Children's Curriculum Lesson 8	GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION COMPLETED Luke 23:26, 32-46	1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
DAY 5 Children's Curriculum Lesson 10	THE END OF OUR STORY Revelation 21:1-8; 22:1-14	MATTHEW 19:21 You will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.

FIVE-DAY VBS

SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

This schedule assumes a 3-hour program, with 10-minute Opening and Closing and 25- to 30-minute rotations. Following this method, we suggest using music for singing during transitions or clean-up times, but a music station could also easily be swapped with another rotation to provide a dedicated time for memorizing songs together!

For early childhood students, certain activities might take more or less time, so we suggest staying flexible and using available time for engaging memory verse practice or more music.

Below is a rotation schedule for up to five student groups or ages, but use as many or as few as you need based on your group size.

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	GROUP E
	Opening				
ROTATION 1	Storytelling	Science	Craft	Snack	Games
ROTATION 2	Science	Craft	Snack	Games	Storytelling
ROTATION 3	Craft	Snack	Games	Storytelling	Science
ROTATION 4	Snack	Games	Storytelling	Science	Craft
ROTATION 5	Games	Storytelling	Science	Craft	Snack
	Closing				

DAY 1 PREVIEW

THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY

Genesis 3:1–15

The triune God was there at creation, making everything perfect and according to His good will. He created the tree of life, which would sustain humans forever! But Adam and Eve sinned, and the whole world fell into brokenness. God did not let all of humanity suffer the death it deserves. God the Father promised a Savior, Jesus, who would redeem creation on a different tree of life, the cross.



KEY POINTS

BIBLE TRUTH

God made us and promised to rescue us from our sin.

BIBLE VERSE

“I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Psalm 139:14

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God made me, loves me, and saves me.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “The Tree of Life” (Starke, Becker)
- “This Is the Day” (Garrett)
- “Deep in the Word of God” (Browning, Clark)
- “Lord, I Need You” (Maher)

SUPPLY LIST

BIBLE LESSON

- Pictures or video of creation (optional)

CRAFT

- Three brown pipe cleaners
- A small mound of fast-drying clay
- A handful of pony beads
- A small cross bead or a permanent marker

SNACK

- A plain sugar cookie or graham cracker
- A dollop of vanilla yogurt or whipped cream
- Assorted fruits (berries, oranges, apple slices)

GAME

- Five different kinds of fruit

SCIENCE

- Large, clear container
- Vegetable oil (enough to fill the large container)
- 2 clear plastic cups: 1 whole, 1 broken or cut
- Plastic glove (optional)

MEMORY VERSE

- 1 or 2 blindfolds (optional)

SKIT

- Craft from today, one that can be broken or mangled

DAY 2 PREVIEW

THE PASSOVER LAMB

Exodus 12:1-13, 29-42

God's people were oppressed and forced into slavery. All their baby boys were ordered to be killed. The people of Israel cried out to God for help. God gave Pharaoh ten chances to let His people go. This lesson begins as Pharaoh is warned of a terrible tenth plague, which he can avoid by letting God's people go.



KEY POINTS

BIBLE TRUTH

God rescues us from death through the blood of the Lamb.

BIBLE VERSE

“You shall be My treasured possession.”
Exodus 19:5

LEARNER GOAL

I know that God is faithful to rescue me.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “Lamb of God” (Paris)
- “When Israel Was in Egypt’s Land” (African American spiritual)
- “Our God Delivers” (Countryman)
- “Chain Breaker” (Zach Williams)

SUPPLY LIST

BIBLE LESSON

- Red construction paper or poster board

CRAFT

- 9-inch-wide fleece or fabric circles, 2 per kid
- Cotton balls or batting
- Fabric markers, buttons, googly eyes, felt triangles
- Tacky glue

SNACK

- Pita pieces (cut a circle into quarters)
- Hummus spread
- Diced red pepper

GAME

- Duffel bag, 1 per team
- Boxes, 1 per kid

SCIENCE

- Two small white plates
- Clear water
- Pepper
- Dish soap
- Water with food coloring
- Rubbing alcohol in an eyedropper

MEMORY VERSE

- Treasure box, fake gem, or another special item

SKIT

- Raincoat

DAY 3 PREVIEW

JESUS IS BAPTIZED INTO GOD'S PLAN

Matthew 3:13–17

Jesus began His ministry by telling John the Baptist to baptize Him in the Jordan River. God the Father claimed Jesus as His Son in a voice from heaven. God the Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove. Not only did this serve as an anointing for His mission but it also gave power to our Baptism. We are connected to Christ in a very real way. Jesus died and rose. We, too, will die and rise.

KEY POINTS

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus is baptized and gives power to our Baptism. We are connected to Christ in His death and resurrection, so we have new life in Baptism.

BIBLE VERSE

“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Corinthians 6:11

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that I have new life in Jesus through Baptism.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “God’s Own Child, I Gladly Say It” (Neumeister, Voelker, Bachofen)
- “May the Peace of God” (Getty, Townend)
- “Father, Spirit, Son” (Countryman)
- “Who Am I” (Casting Crowns)

SUPPLY LIST

BIBLE LESSON

- Bowl of water
- Large scallop shell (if available)

CRAFT

- Shell beads, cross beads, and pony beads
- Fishing line or plastic cording
- Key chain rings or jewelry fasteners

SNACK

- Dove stencil (online) or cookie cutter
- White cheese slice, 1 per kid
- White bread or pita bread, 2 slices per kid

GAME

- An open area
- Dance music

SCIENCE

- A damp paper towel
- A plate
- A match
- A glass or wide-mouth jar

MEMORY VERSE

- Picture of water, a halo, and a judge’s gavel

SKIT

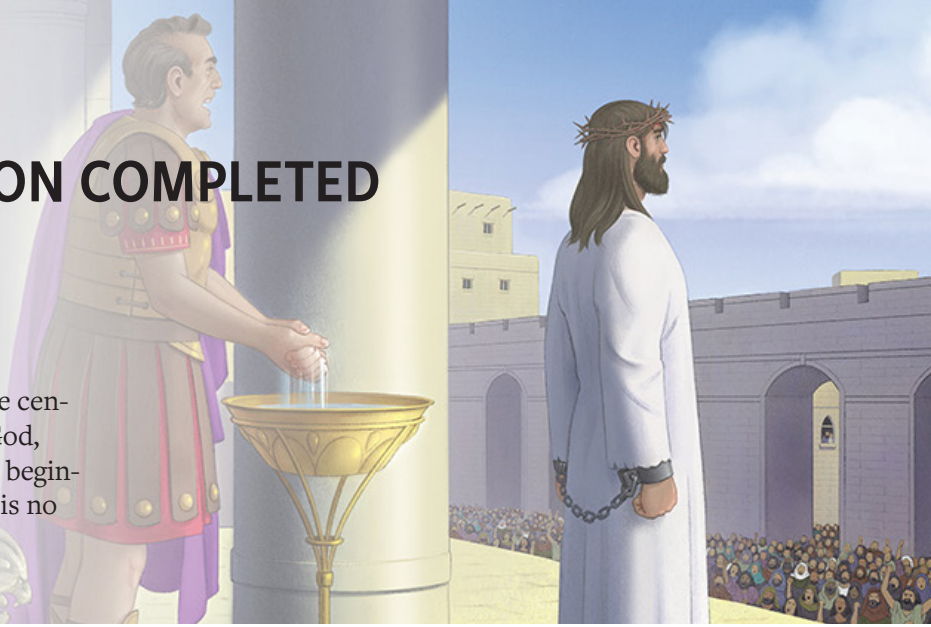
- Variety of seashells

DAY 4 PREVIEW

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION COMPLETED

Luke 23:26, 32-46

Jesus meant what He said: “It is finished.” The Bible centers in on the crux of the cross: the sinless Son of God, true man, died in the place of all humanity. It is the beginning of the end. All things will be made new. There is no way to stop the victory that Jesus has won.



KEY POINTS

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died in our place. Because He is sinless, our sins are canceled out in His death.

BIBLE VERSE

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

1 John 1:9

LEARNER GOAL

I point to the cross as the way Jesus saved me from death.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “When I Behold Jesus Christ” (Belhu, Schoenherr, Keefer, Keefer, Herl)
- “How Deep the Father’s Love for Us” (Townend)
- “Yes in Him” (Countryman)
- “Ain’t No Grave” (Molly Skaggs)

SUPPLY LIST

BIBLE LESSON

- Dark cloths
- Cross

CRAFT

- Puzzle pieces
- Wood or cardboard crosses
- Glue
- Fast-drying clay or adhesive magnet
- Optional: paint, brushes, etc.

SNACK

- Graham cracker segments
- Chocolate icing
- Sprinkles, candies, or granola

GAME

- Concrete or asphalt areas, sectioned off
- Mops or large sponges, 1 per team
- Buckets with water

SCIENCE

- An inflated latex balloon (not helium)
- An orange

MEMORY VERSE

- Hand wipes, 1 per kid

DAY 5 PREVIEW

THE END OF OUR STORY

Revelation 21:1–8; 22:1–14

When Jesus comes back, all who point to the tree of life, the cross, will see a new tree of life in all beauty and glory. God will come to live with His people. Heaven and earth will be made new. Nothing will be broken or sad anymore. Things will be perfect once again—and better than before.

KEY POINTS

BIBLE TRUTH

The kingdom of heaven (the presence and will of God) began to come in an epic way when Jesus, God and man, came to earth. The kingdom of heaven will come and stay when Jesus returns.

BIBLE VERSE

“You will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”
Matthew 19:21

LEARNER GOAL

I know that Jesus will return and make everything perfect.

SONG SUGGESTIONS

- “Christ Is Surely Coming” (Idle, Williams)
- “There Is a Higher Throne” (Getty, Getty)
- “Today’s a Great Day” (Browning, Clark)
- “Is He Worthy?” (Andrew Peterson)

SUPPLY LIST

BIBLE LESSON

- Picture of heaven from a children’s Bible story book, such as *The Story Bible* (CPH, 2011)

CRAFT

- Small canvas, 1 per kid
- Brown marker
- Washable finger paints on a small plate, 1 per kid
- Wet hand wipes

SNACK

- An assortment of fruit, perhaps a selection of twelve different types (apples, mangoes, oranges, bananas, pears, peaches, apricots, coconuts, cherries, nectarines, limes, star fruit)
- Dry instant pudding mix

GAME

- A large playing space

SCIENCE

- Highlighters, various colors
- Jars of water
- Black light

MEMORY VERSE

- Treats to hand out that look like jeweled rings

SKIT

- Apple or other fruit

TEN-WEEK SUNDAY SCHOOL

LESSONS AT A GLANCE

If you want to align with your congregation's ten-week sermon series, you have the time and flexibility to cover all ten lessons of the children's curriculum. Using this format, you could easily cover the lessons during your usual Sunday School times, using the lesson extenders for easy engagement and drawing from some of the larger activities included with each lesson for more involved projects, as time permits.

BIBLE LESSON	BIBLE VERSE	LEARNER GOAL
THE BEGINNING OF OUR STORY Genesis 3:1–15	PSALM 139:14 I am fearfully and wonderfully made.	I understand that God made me, loves me, and saves me.
GOD'S PLAN FOR ABRAHAM Genesis 12:1–8; 22:1–14	PSALM 36:7 How precious is Your steadfast love, O God.	I understand that God always keeps His promises.
THE PASSOVER LAMB Exodus 12:1–13, 29–42	EXODUS 19:5 You shall be My treasured possession.	I know that God is faithful to rescue me.
SLAYING THE GIANT 1 Samuel 17:4–18, 38–51	NEHEMIAH 4:14 Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome.	I understand that Jesus saves me from my worst enemies—sin, death, and Satan.
DELIVERED FROM THE LIONS Daniel 6:1–23	PSALM 77:14 You are the God who works wonders.	I understand that Jesus faced the lionlike devil and came out of the tomb to rescue me.
JESUS IS BAPTIZED INTO GOD'S PLAN Matthew 3:13–17	1 CORINTHIANS 6:11 But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.	I understand that I have new life in Jesus through Baptism.
JESUS PREACHES THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN Matthew 4:3–11; Luke 4:31–44	PSALM 89:5 Let the heavens praise Your wonders, O LORD.	I know that Jesus has come to make all things right.
GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION COMPLETED Luke 23:26, 32–46	1 JOHN 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.	I point to the cross as the way Jesus saved me from death.
JESUS CONQUERS DEATH John 20:11–18	JOHN 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.	I can celebrate that Jesus is more powerful than death.
THE END OF OUR STORY Revelation 21:1–8; 22:1–14	MATTHEW 19:21 You will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.	I know that Jesus will return and make everything perfect.

TEN-WEEK SUNDAY SCHOOL

LESSON EXTENDER PREVIEW

These extenders are great for the Sunday School setting with quick ideas for reinforcing each lesson, highlighting possible games, crafts, and discussion questions that tend to take much less prep than the activities featured in the main lesson. These are the perfect projects to work on during extended time at the end of a lesson or even to use as a bonus lesson (especially if you want to use this curriculum in both VBS and Sunday School settings). The extenders shown below are from Lesson 1: The Beginning of Our Story. To download a complete Lesson 1 sample, visit cph.org/treeoflife.

SILHOUETTES

Hang up a light-colored bed sheet from the ceiling or over a door frame. Shine a bright light from behind the sheet. If necessary, dim the overhead lights. Ask two or three volunteers to get behind the sheet while everyone else closes their eyes. Then, ask kids to guess which silhouette belongs to which kid. Ask the volunteers to move and dance! Say, **God made every single one of us, and we are unique! God loves that we are different. He made us that way!**

TEND THE GARDEN

Ask church leadership if there is a patch of land that could become a wildflower garden, or donate a large pot for an entryway. Work as a group to dig, spread wildflower seeds, and cover with potting soil and water. Say, **God told Adam and Eve to take care of the garden. We can still take care of God's creation! Let's come back each week to see how our flowers are doing.**

GOD MADE ME

Give each kid a paper plate, craft stick, crayons, stickers, and decorating supplies (e.g., yarn, googly eyes, pipe cleaners). Let them decorate a plate to look like themselves. They can match the color of their eyes, add yarn for hair, and so on. Help kids write their names on the craft sticks and attach them to their plates. Say, **God made the first people, and God made you too. You are special, unique, and loved!**

BIG QUESTIONS, BIG PROMISES

Some of your older kids may be wondering about some big questions. For example: Why do bad things happen? We have a loving God who made all things good. But we sinned, and the world is broken. It doesn't always work right. Things go wrong, and it doesn't make any sense. But Jesus gives us big promises: He loves us. He is always with us. He died for our sins. He is coming back someday to make everything new. Even though our world is broken, it will be remade one day!

CREATION SNACK

Give kids animal and fish crackers. Say, **God made the world. He made people in a special way. He loved them and put them in charge of His creation. It was Adam's job to care for the animals and name them. God wants us to take care of His creation too.** Talk about ways to do this.

I-SPY HIKE

If possible, take a walk outside! Whoever the leader is can start the I-Spy game, pausing if needed to keep the object in view. Whoever guesses correctly gets to be the next leader and think of an object. "I spy something . . . blue!" And everyone can continue guessing. Especially when objects are of creation, talk about how God made them. Our God made a wonderful world!

I LIKE YOU

Fold construction paper into cards, and write the name of one kid on the front of each card. Let everyone take turns drawing pictures, writing "I like you," "Jesus loves you," "You are kind," and similar comments on each card. Let each kid go home with their affirming card! Review before handing out, adding stickers or decorations as needed.

ONE-DAY OUTREACH EVENT

WHY ONE DAY?

An outreach day works as a sample day to introduce families to The Tree of Life. In a single day, each of the lesson topics can be introduced just enough to build excitement for the rest of the program, continued through the sermon series, adult studies, and use of the children's curriculum in either of the formats outlined above.

The schedule below is a suggestion of how to structure a one-day event. For each station, choose from the lesson summary, craft, game, or other activity included in the lesson. Work through Lessons 1 through 10 in order, and you will have given a snapshot of the entire Bible in a day!

OUTREACH EVENT SCHEDULE:

8:00 a.m.	Big welcome
8:15 a.m.	Stations (Pick from the lesson, craft, game, or other activities to introduce the account assigned to your station.)
8:30 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
8:35 a.m.	Stations
8:50 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
8:55 a.m.	Stations
9:10 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
9:15 a.m.	Stations
9:30 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
9:35 a.m.	Stations
9:50 a.m.	Snack break! During snack, offer a challenge with volunteers, skit, or another kind of entertainment.
10:10 a.m.	Stations
10:25 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
10:30 a.m.	Stations
10:35 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
10:40 a.m.	Stations
10:55 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
11:00 a.m.	Stations
11:15 a.m.	Transition; play a song.
11:20 a.m.	Stations
11:35 a.m.	Lunchtime prayer
11:40 a.m.	Lunch break! During lunch, offer a challenge with volunteers, skit, or another kind of entertainment.
12:00 p.m.	Series launch: This is The Tree of Life! Our church will be walking together in learning ten key accounts of the Bible.
12:30 p.m.	Hand out kits to all families. Send out extras for families to give away!

THE TREE OF LIFE FAMILY ACTIVITY KIT

Don't forget about The Tree of Life Family Activity Kit! Each kit includes three books (adult, youth, and children's) as well as family-centered activities, a craft, and a game.

The family kit helps families incorporate the lessons of The Tree of Life into their homes and offers an opportunity to grow in the faith as a family.



ORDERING AND NEXT STEPS

We hope you've enjoyed this preview of how The Tree of Life children's curriculum can serve your church as a VBS program, Sunday School, or outreach event! If you want to use this content, be sure to order the congregational package to gain access to the complete children's curriculum, adult study, sermons, and more! Visit cph.org/treeoflife to download a complete lesson sample and to order materials. Materials will be available for preorder in late January 2022 and will ship in April 2022.



CHURCH RESOURCE KIT

\$69.99 **155257**

Includes the following:

- Complete Children's Ministry Curriculum
- Sermons
- Youth Study
- Lesson Overview Videos
- Sample of Adult, Youth, and Children's Books

Send the message home with these supporting resources:



FAMILY ACTIVITY KIT

\$19.99 **124645**

Includes the following:

- Ten Family Activity Pages
- Family Card Game
- Family Craft
- Copy of Adult, Youth, and Children's Books

BOOKS FOR THE FAMILY

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:

- Adult Book (124623) \$6.99 each
- Youth Book (124624) \$6.99 each
- Children's Book (562573) \$3.49 each