

Message Received: Hearing God's Call

# DIRECTOR GUIDE



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To order or request information, please call 1-844-727-8672 or visit [GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com](http://GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com).

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SAMPLE - DO NOT REPRODUCE

# WELCOME TO OUR VBS!

Thank you for selecting this Growing Up Catholic Vacation Bible School resource and for your willingness to lead this special ministry in your parish community!

We're appreciative to the many people who helped us create *Message Received* theme, from writers and artists to musicians. As you sing and praise God during VBS, may you and the children feel God's presence.

We hope this VBS will also be a tool that helps you better connect with families who are members of your parish or who may be in the future. May God's grace be with you so that you can be a blessing to all you meet during VBS.

**Paul Canavese**

Director, Growing Up Catholic and The Pastoral Center

## INTRODUCTION

### God has a message for you! Can you hear it?

Samuel heard it during the middle of the night. Mary heard it through an angel. The disciples were hard at work when they heard it. They all heard God's special message just for them! *Message Received: Hearing God's Call* lets children know that God continues to call all kinds of people—including them! People are called to love God and follow Jesus every day. Those who hear God's message and respond are forever changed.

### Who is this curriculum for?

*Message Received* is a Bible and activity-based learning experience in two parts. One is designed for grades K–5. Children will see Bible stories come to life in the dramas during worship time, and will reflect on them during three response times: Bible Response, Active Response, and Creative Response.

The second part of *Message Received* is designed for early childhood ages 4–5. You may choose to have the young children participate in worship with the older children or have their own worship time in their VBS room. They will hear the Bible story and process it with crafts, games, and other activities designed for their age and developmental levels.

# OVERVIEW

Session	Theme	Bible Text and Story Summary	Faith Focus	Bible Memory
<b>1</b>	Samuel	<b>1 Samuel 3:1-21</b> Samuel, a young person, is called by God and gives a message to Eli. Samuel listens to God and Eli accepts the message.	God calls us to listen and respond.	<b>Luke 11:28b</b> Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!
<b>2</b>	Esther	<b>Esther 4:13-17</b> Esther is called to go before the king to deliver a message that might save her people. In turn, Esther asks the community to fast and pray as she prepares for this responsibility.	God calls us to work together for what is right.	<b>1 Thessalonians 5:11</b> Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.
<b>3</b>	Mary	<b>Luke 1:26-56</b> The angel Gabriel visits Mary to tell her that she is favored of God and will have a baby, Jesus. Mary responds to this call with joy and trust in God's plan.	We are called to trust God's plan.	<b>Romans 8:28</b> We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.
<b>4</b>	Disciples	<b>Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11</b> Jesus calls some fishermen to follow him. Jesus says that he will teach them how to fish for people.	Jesus calls us to follow him.	<b>Mark 1:17b</b> Follow me and I will make you fish for people.
<b>5</b>	Lydia	<b>Acts 16:11-15, 40</b> Lydia already knows God but hears from Paul a call to open her heart and be baptized. She extends hospitality to others who follow Jesus.	God calls us to open our hearts to Jesus.	<b>2 Corinthians 5:17a</b> So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation.

Texts are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible translation. Feel free to use a translation of your choice.

Encourage children to bring their Bibles to VBS to use during the Bible Response sessions. This is a good time for children to learn how to use the Bible.

**Early childhood memory verse:** Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it! —Luke 11:28b

# USING THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum was written as a one-week vacation Bible school program. There are other ways that this curriculum can be used:

- **Midweek club or program** over 10 weeks (see p. 32 for format)
- **Weekend retreat** (see p. 33 for format)
- **Day camp**—once a week for five weeks

See page 6 for the daily session schedule chart. Suggestions are given for various time frames, which can be modified as necessary.

## FORMAT

*Message Received* is designed for children to be divided into three groups. Some Bible school programs may place children in age groups, while others may prefer to form multiage groups.

Each day includes several sessions: Gather, Worship, Respond, and Send. See page 6 for the daily session schedule.

### Gather

Children gather in their groups to begin the day. Take attendance, answer questions, and make sure everyone is ready to go to the session.

### Worship

Groups gather together for worship, which includes a call to worship, Scripture texts, music, and a drama to present the day's Bible story.

### Respond

Groups rotate between the three Response sessions:

- **Active Response** (games and activities)
- **Bible Response** (Bible story discussion, student book activities)
- **Creative Response** (craft and snack time)

### Send

Children gather in their groups or as one large group for a blessing and dismissal.

If your Bible school has more than 50 children you may want to divide into more than three groups. Instead of one Active, one Bible, and one Creative Response session, you may want to have two of each running simultaneously so that all of the groups can rotate through the three sessions.

# DAILY SCHEDULE

Schedule is for a 2-hour-and-15-minute Bible school session. For other session times, see below.

<p><b>Gather (10 minutes)</b> Small groups meet to begin the session.</p>	<p><b>Worship (25 minutes)</b> Small groups converge for worship. A drama presents the Bible story.</p>	<p><b>Bible/Creative/ Active Response (30 minutes each)</b> Small groups rotate to participate in three stations each day. Activities focus on Bible story themes. Creative Response time includes a snack.</p>	<p><b>Send (10 minutes)</b> Blessing and dismissal in small groups or in total group assembly.</p>
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## Modified schedule

### If you have 2 hours:

**Gather**—5 or 10 minutes

**Worship**—20 minutes

**Respond**—75 minutes

**Active**—25 minutes

**Bible**—25 minutes

**Creative**—25 minutes

**Send**—5 or 10 minutes

### If you have 90 minutes:

**Gather**—5 minutes

**Worship**—20 minutes

**Respond**—60 minutes

**Active**—20 minutes

**Bible**—20 minutes

**Creative**—20 minutes

**Send**—5 minutes

### If you have 1 hour:

**Worship**—15 minutes

**Respond**—45 minutes

**Active**—15 minutes

**Bible**—15 minutes

**Creative**—15 minutes

**NOTE:** We have designed this resource to be as flexible as possible, with many options. There is also plenty of content if you wish to extend beyond the times listed above.

# STAFF NEEDS AND ORIENTATION

## Program Coordinating Team

This team is familiar with the entire curriculum and organizational structure. They are responsible for making decisions about leaders, content, facilities, publicity, promotion, leadership training, registration, and supplies.

## Leaders

### Gather

Group leaders are needed to convene the groups as children arrive. They will travel with their groups to the Worship and Response sessions.

### Worship

The following leaders are needed for the Worship session:

- **Worship leader**—to welcome children to the Worship session and facilitate worship components.
- **Music leader**—to choose songs and lead singing.
- **Drama leader**—to cast characters and coordinate the drama, including props.
- **Bible memory leader**—to introduce Bible memory verses and guide children in learning them.

### Respond

The following leaders are needed for the three Response sessions:

- **Active Response leader**—to choose and lead games and other active responses.
- **Bible Response leader**—to lead discussion of the Bible story and student book activities.
- **Creative Response leader**—to choose and lead crafts and snack.

### Send

Group leaders will help to dismiss the children at the end of the day.

Copy and fill in the volunteer assignment sheets (pp. 15–16) and hand them out to appropriate volunteers.

## How can people volunteer?

Invite members of the congregation to help with a wide variety of needs:

- Serve as VBS staff: Program Coordinating Team member, group leader, worship leader, a Response session leader.
- Serve as prayer partners for the program.
- Help with registration on the first day of VBS.
- Serve as assistants to session leaders.
- Help with snack preparations and clean-up.

## Staff orientation

The following agenda should be covered at a staff orientation:

- **Introduce staff** and clarify roles.
- **Review overall schedule.**
- **Give an overview** of *Message Received* themes (p. 4).
- **Make room or space assignments** for each of the activities: Gather; Worship; Active, Bible, and Creative Responses; and Send.
- **Distribute and explain the schedule**, a map locating all areas and activities, group lists, and record-keeping supplies.
- **Give the following supplies to respective leaders:** *Worship and Drama Guide*, *Active Response Guide*, *Bible Response Guide*, and *Creative Response Guide*.
- **Give copies of *Message Decoder***, one per child, to the Bible Response leader.
- **Give an *Early Childhood Leader Guide*** to each leader and helper for children ages 4–5.
- **Give copies of *My Book of Stories***, one per child, to the Early Childhood leader.
- **Talk about your church's practice** of inviting children to faith decisions at VBS (pp. 28–29).
- **Share a first aid policy** that tells leaders what to do with both minor cuts and greater emergencies.
- **Explain VBS procedures and times** you will be available for questions.
- **Give additional supplies** to group leaders.
- **Outline plans for a VBS commissioning** at Mass, if one is planned.
- **Describe closing celebration plans** (p. 13), if one is planned.



## MUSIC

The *Message Received* music collection provides songs for use at the VBS that fit closely with the theme. Children may sing along with some of the songs. Other songs are offered as listening pieces or as music to play during the Active, Bible, or Creative Response sessions. Music leaders will want to consider songs from the collection, but also choose songs that are familiar to the group and easy for the group to learn and sing together.

When leading music, consider these suggestions:

- **Sing songs from the CD.**
- **Sing other songs** familiar to the group.
- **Listen quietly** to the CD.
- **Incorporate movement** along with the music.
- **Have children use rhythm** or other instruments.
- **Sing songs regularly used at Mass.**
- **Chant song lyrics** rather than singing them.



# ORDERING MATERIALS

*Message Received* materials can be purchased on GrowingUpCatholicVBS.com. Use the following as a checklist for Bible school needs:

- **Message Decoder** is an activity book that will be used each day during the Bible Response session. It is a must for each child and leader. Have extra copies available for visiting children and for volunteers.
- **My Book of Stories** is for children ages 4–5. It contains illustrated Bible stories, activities, songs, and the memory verse. You will need one for each child and leader. Have extra copies available for visiting children.
- **Extra leader guides**, if you are planning for two of each Response session or if individual leaders want their own copy.
- **The Bible memory poster** contains the five daily memory verses. Order one for each group and one for the worship space.
- **Message Received CD** adds music to VBS. Order one for each Response session, plus extras for worship leaders and the Early Childhood class. Some VBS programs order a CD for each child to take home as a reminder of VBS, so we make them very affordable to purchase in bulk.
- **Message Received Songbook** contains songs from the CD. Order at least one per group and extras for the Worship and Response sessions.
- **Promotional materials:** Two invitation posters and one invitation postcard are included in the VBS box. Order extra postcards and posters as needed.



# OFFERING PROJECT

We have teamed up with Catholic Relief Services, the international humanitarian agency of the Catholic community in the United States, to include an offering project suggestion. You may alternately or in addition choose to promote a project serving your local community, through your parish or local Catholic Charities.

To collect a monetary offering, place a large metal bowl on a table at the door of the worship space. Encourage children to put their offering in the bowl as they enter the space, listening carefully to the sound the money makes as it is dropped in the bowl. Have an adult monitor this area.

## A Message from Catholic Relief Services

As conflict worsens in the Middle East, millions of displaced families need our support. Together with our Caritas partners, Catholic Relief Services is supporting hundreds of thousands of families who have been displaced or forced to flee their homes because of conflicts, civil strife, and economic conditions in the Middle East and other regions.

The war in Syria has entered its sixth year. In Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt, more than 4 million Syrian refugees—mostly women and children—are struggling to get by. At the same time, the economies, social services, and basic infrastructure in these countries are strained to the breaking point. In addition to providing basic services, CRS focuses on education, care, and trauma counseling for Syrian children, many of whom have been out of school for most of their childhoods.

Please pray for the families and children affected by the violence in Syria and Iraq. And please give generously to strengthen our response to the refugee crisis and conflicts in the Middle East.

## What Can Our Vacation Bible School Do?

**1. Pray.** Pray for protection for refugees—particularly those fleeing Northern Africa for Europe—as well as for personal transformation as we face the needs of refugees everywhere. You may choose to use the Prayer for Refugees found here: [CRS.org/resource-center/moment-grace-prayer-refugees](https://www.crs.org/resource-center/moment-grace-prayer-refugees).

**2. Provide the Teachers AND Parents with information about the Syrian refugee crisis.** The more you learn about this crisis, the more you'll understand its underlying causes and can spread the word. Continued warfare in Syria, and violence in places like Iraq and Afghanistan, has contributed to the surge of refugees from those countries. Meanwhile, deteriorating economic conditions in places like Sub-Saharan Africa has led people to Europe in search of a better life. (Find links to more information in the sidebar.)

**3. Donate.** One of the best ways to help is through donating to accredited nonprofit organizations that are responding to the crisis. More than 90 percent

**Good Resources on the Syrian Refugee Crisis:**  
Read and Act

**What We Are Doing:** CRS' Support of Syrian Refugees  
• [CRS.org/media-center/current-issues/syrian-refugee-crisis](https://www.crs.org/media-center/current-issues/syrian-refugee-crisis)

**Syrian Refugees:** Meet the People Everyone's Talking About • [CRS.org/media-center/syrian-refugees-meet-the-people-everyones-talking-about](https://www.crs.org/media-center/syrian-refugees-meet-the-people-everyones-talking-about)

**What Would You Do?**  
**Syrian Refugees:** Starting Up and Starting Over • [CRS.org/stories/syrian-refugees-starting-up-starting-over](https://www.crs.org/stories/syrian-refugees-starting-up-starting-over)

**Helping Syrian Refugees:**  
By the Numbers • [CRS.org/stories/helping-syrian-refugees-numbers](https://www.crs.org/stories/helping-syrian-refugees-numbers)

of money donated to CRS goes directly to people in need. Consider having a “Change for Children” change drive. The change collection will support CRS’ work worldwide to end hunger and poverty. (See donation information in the sidebar.)

**4. Advocate.** For years, countries in the Middle East have been sheltering the largest number of Syrians and Iraqis. CRS is calling on the United States to continue and expand humanitarian assistance to Syrian refugees in these countries, as well as those burdened by this new migration. Most importantly, the United States should lead concerted diplomatic efforts to end the fighting in Syria. But you have a part, too. Read more about how our nation’s leaders can respond to the crisis, and write a letter urging them to take up the cause (see sidebar for details). **SPEAK OUT TO CONGRESS: SUPPORT SYRIAN REFUGEES!**

**5. Use Social Media.** Follow and retweet @CatholicRelief and @CRSNews on Twitter for the latest updates on the #RefugeeCrisis that’s reached Europe.

### Offering visuals

Plan a visual way to recognize the amount of money contributed for the project. Review the amount each day so children are aware of how much they’re giving.

- **Attach letters of the word CALL to the wall**, each letter representing a specific amount of money. See how many times CALL can be spelled around the room.
- **Invite children to trace their hands** onto various colors of paper, and then cut out their handprint. Attach each hand to a poster board to represent a specific amount of money.
- **Invite children to write the name of a friend or relative** they love that they are grateful is safe on a large piece of paper as they donate.
- **Create a paper chain** with each link representing a certain amount of money.
- **Fill a glass jar** with the offering money.
- **Complete a chart or graph** as money is contributed.

## VBS COMMISSIONING

Plan a special prayer to commission volunteer staff and children as part of Mass the week before Bible school begins.

List staff in a bulletin insert. Introduce the theme of the week and briefly name the Bible stories about God’s call. There are many stories in the Bible about people called to follow God, and through them we can learn to follow God and love Jesus, too.

Pray that VBS leaders and children will grow their faith through this experience. Invite the parish to hold this program in their prayers.

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Send donations for the Catholic Relief Services project to:  
Catholic Relief Services  
P.O. Box 17090,  
Baltimore, MD 21297-0303.

Once collected, mail your check or money order with this code in the Memo section: YFYIYFLOWR.

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### Advocacy References for Syrian Refugee Crisis

**How Can U.S. Leaders Help**  
• [ConfrontGlobalPoverty.org/issues/syrian-migrant-refugees/](http://ConfrontGlobalPoverty.org/issues/syrian-migrant-refugees/)

**Write a Letter** • [Click here](#) or find link on VBS download page

# PLANNING CHART

<p><b>5 months before:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Become familiar with <i>Message Received</i> curriculum. Look over all of the materials.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select date and time for VBS.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2 months before:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize appointments to all VBS responsibilities. Set date and time for staff orientation.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Place invitation posters in public places.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Give copies of the <i>Worship and Drama Guide</i> and <i>Message Received</i> CD and songbook to worship/drama leaders.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Photocopy registration form (p. 17) and letter to parents (p. 19).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Distribute leader guides to staff.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order <i>My Book of Stories</i> for ages 4–5.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum requires <i>Message Decoder</i> student book. Order copies now.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4 months before:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Estimate the number of leaders needed for your Bible school (p. 7).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose an offering project (p. 10).</li> </ul>	<p><b>1 month before:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan VBS commissioning with pastor or liturgy committee (p. 11).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan closing celebration (p. 13).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold preregistration.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Send letters to parents (p. 19).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Divide students into groups based on registration.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make student lists.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Hold staff orientation (p. 8).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schedule custodian to move furniture before and after VBS.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Share attendance expectations with Creative Response leader so snacks can be planned.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Locate a few extra Bibles for each age group.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3 months before:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Choose group leaders and call volunteers (p. 7).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post VBS dates in local newspaper.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Announce VBS dates, times, and themes in church bulletin.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Plan meeting spaces and map locations.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Read through leader guides.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Order extra <i>Message Received</i> CDs for leaders, Early Childhood leader, and children.</li> </ul>	<p><b>During VBS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Count offering.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Record attendance.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Meet briefly with staff after Day 1.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post daily announcements in a prominent place.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for staff recognition.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare student participation certificates.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for closing event.</li> </ul>

# RECORD KEEPING

Copy an attendance record for each group (p. 18). During Bible school, record daily attendance, average attendance, daily offering, and total offering. Prepare student participation certificates and have them available for group leaders to sign on Day 4.

# WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY

Be sure to have the permission of parents and guardians to allow children to participate in your VBS program. As children register, make sure to have waiver forms available for parents and guardians to sign. Such forms are typically available from a church's insurance provider.

# TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY

- **Post group lists for children** at the entrance to the church. Print the lists with large letters to be easily read by young children. Provide names of the group leaders and the locations.
- **Prepare for late registrants.** Have several helpers at a table to quickly place children in groups. Write the child's name and name of the group leader on a sticky note. Children can use this to find their group and leader. The leader will add the names to the attendance record. Give new class lists to group leaders later in the session.
- **Have parents or guardians of late registrants** complete the registration form. If the children arrive without an adult, be sure to send the registration form home to be completed and returned the next day.
- **Ask Early Childhood leaders to meet their children** at the church entrance. Gather the entire group before going to the meeting space.

# CLOSING CELEBRATION

- **Plan a closing program.** Use songs from the *Message Received* CD and songbook, and other favorites. Introduce the drama space and characters. Acknowledge the work of volunteers, planners, and helpers. Give student participation certificates.
- **Invite parents and friends** to visit the Response spaces.
- **Invite parents and friends** to contribute to the offering project.
- **Use the following Sunday morning** to bring VBS to the entire parish. Use songs and worship materials from the *Worship and Drama Guide* and *Message Received* CD. Offer a snack to celebrate Bible school, perhaps one used during a Creative Response session.

# LEADER APPRECIATION

Thank volunteers by providing a meal within a week after VBS has ended. Use the time to talk about Bible school experiences and complete evaluation forms copied from page 34. Present certificates of appreciation available below.

**MESSAGE  
RECEIVED**

**HEARING GOD'S CALL**

## CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Awarded to \_\_\_\_\_

In recognition of helping with the

\_\_\_\_\_ Bible School

as \_\_\_\_\_

Presented by \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT SHEETS

## Group leader

### Responsibilities

- Function as a guide and spiritual mentor for a group of children.
- Be aware of individual needs of group members as well as group dynamics.
- Greet children as they arrive at Bible school and take attendance.
- Accompany your group to the Worship and Active, Bible, and Creative Response sessions.
- Dismiss children at the end of the Bible school session.
- Attend staff orientation on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

### Gathering

- Welcome each child to Bible school and to your group. Learn names.
- Briefly explain the daily schedule. Share about the offering project for the week and how it will be collected.
- Introduce the *Message Received: Hearing God's Call* theme and prepare for worship and the Bible drama.

### Worship and Response

- Accompany your group to each of the activities and guide the children to stay on task. Assist other leaders as needed.

### Sending

- Remind the children of the offering project and hand out any Bible school information that needs to go home. Encourage them to invite their friends and neighbors to Bible school.
- Offer a sending blessing each day. You may use the following each day, or create your own: "May we have open ears and hearts as we listen for the voice of God today."

## Worship leader

### Responsibilities

- Lead five Worship sessions and coordinate others involved in worship. Use plans provided in the *Worship and Drama Guide* and songs from the *Message Received* CD and songbook.
- Read the dramas in the *Worship and Drama Guide* to see how they coordinate with worship plans.
- Work with the drama coordinator and musicians to plan worship.
- Attend staff orientation on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

## Drama coordinator

### Responsibilities

- Coordinate rehearsals and direct the five dramas. Scripts are provided.
- Read the *Worship and Drama Guide* to see how the dramas fit into the worship services.
- Work closely with the worship leader to plan the worship time.
- Find drama participants; copy and distribute scripts.
- Locate costumes and props for the dramas.
- Attend staff orientation on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time).

## Response leader (Active, Bible, Creative)

### Responsibilities

- Prepare and supervise Response sessions. Use the plans found in the *Active, Bible, or Creative Response Guides*. Choose the activities that work best for your groups.
- Coordinate volunteer helpers to assist in the activities.
- Gather supplies needed for the activities.
- Save copies of receipts and give them to \_\_\_\_\_ for reimbursement.
- Attend staff orientation on \_\_\_\_\_ (day) at \_\_\_\_\_ (time).



# REGISTRATION FORM

## Message Received registration form

Please complete this form and return it by \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Last school grade completed \_\_\_\_\_

Medical concerns/allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/primary caregiver \_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home /  Work /  Cell

Home /  Work /  Cell

Emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home /  Work /  Cell

Church affiliation (*optional*) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Message Received registration form

Please complete this form and return it by \_\_\_\_\_

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Last school grade completed \_\_\_\_\_

Medical concerns/allergies \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/primary caregiver \_\_\_\_\_

Primary phone \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home /  Work /  Cell

Home /  Work /  Cell

Emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home /  Work /  Cell

Church affiliation (*optional*) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# ATTENDANCE RECORD

**Message Received attendance record**

Group \_\_\_\_\_ Leader \_\_\_\_\_

	Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						

**Message Received attendance record**

Group \_\_\_\_\_ Leader \_\_\_\_\_

	Name	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
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# LETTER TO PARENTS



**It's time for vacation Bible school!**

**Place:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

God has a message for you! Can you hear it?

Samuel heard it during the middle of the night. Mary heard it through an angel. The disciples were hard at work when they heard it. They all heard God's special message just for them! *Message Received: Hearing God's Call* lets children know that God continues to call all kinds of people—including them! People are called to love God and follow Jesus every day. Those who hear God's message and respond are forever changed.

Children are invited to vacation Bible school. Young children, ages four and five, will meet in their own classroom but may participate with older children during the worship time. Older children will rotate among activities to help them learn the Bible stories.

We welcome your child to the five vacation Bible school sessions.

—*The Vacation Bible School staff*

# BIBLE BACKGROUNDS

## Day 1—Samuel

### Bible text

1 Samuel 3:1-21

### Faith focus

God calls us to listen and respond.

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**Pope Francis** called Samuel's simple words in this bible passage ("Speak Lord, I am listening") as a beautiful way to pray. He said they are especially good words to use when we have doubts, are confused, or have some resistance to the Holy Spirit. He said we shouldn't be afraid when the Holy Spirit surprises us or changes our plans: joy is part of the package! (4/14/2016)

### Biblical background

Samuel is a familiar and popular figure in the Old Testament. As a child he serves God in the temple with his mentor, Eli the priest. As an adult, he serves as a prophet of God to the people of Israel.

Samuel begins his ministry at a young age after experiencing something highly unusual—he actually hears God's voice calling him. Not surprisingly, Samuel thinks it is Eli who is calling, and goes to see what he wants. Eli, however, realizes that it is God who is calling Samuel's name.

According to 1 Samuel 3:1, the beginning of this story, "the word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread." Yet God calls and Samuel responds, "Speak, for your servant is listening." He is willing to take on whatever God has for him, even though it means that he has to tell Eli some difficult news.

God has warned Samuel about the coming downfall of the house of Eli. Samuel is afraid to share the message, but Eli invites him to do so anyway. Eli hears the news with resignation, saying that the Lord should "do what seems good to him."

Listening and responding to God's call transforms Samuel's life. He grows from a young boy who does not fully know God, to a man who becomes known as a trustworthy prophet of the Lord at Shiloh.

Children will be fascinated that someone their own age was given such an important task from God. This can encourage them to think about God's call in their own lives and to listen for the voice of God as they make decisions.

### Catechism of the Catholic Church

This reading is a central one in learning how to pray, which requires listening as well as speaking (see #2578).