



MISSION BRIEFING

Simplified

SHORT & MULTI-AGE

BIBLE LESSONS FOR SOLO TEACHING

ACCESS
GRANTED

TEACHER
GUIDE



AnswersVBS
SPY U



Visit the Teaching folder at:

AnswersVBS.com/spyuresources

- Animal Pal Coloring Pages
- Memory Verse Coloring Pages
- Teaching Slides
- Puppet Scripts (Primary, Pre-Primary, Toddler)
- Teaching Patterns (all age groups)
- Classroom Decorations

Course Overview

Theme Verse: Psalm 86:10

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Title	Uncovering Counterfeits	Finding Fingerprints	Collecting Clues	Cracking Codes	Hot on the Trail
Bible Passages	1 Kings 18:20–39	Various Scriptures	Various Scriptures	Luke 15:11–32	Mark 12:28–34; Revelation 3:15–16
Lesson Focus	God is unique because he is the only true God. Today, we'll uncover counterfeit gods and discover the God of the Bible.	God is unique because he is one God in three persons. Today, we'll be on the lookout for those persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.	God is unique because he himself came to earth to rescue us. Today, we'll be challenged to admit, believe, and forever receive him.	God is unique; he is beyond description! Today, we'll crack codes to track down some of his attributes.	God is unique because he wants to have a personal relationship with us. Today, we'll learn our mission to keep God as our first love.
Apologetics Content	There's only one true God. All others are counterfeits.	The Trinity is a reality but also a mystery.	The biggest difference between Christianity and other religions is who Jesus is.	God's character is like no other.	Unlike other religions, our God is about relationship. He is loving and personal.
Commit This to Memory	1 Kings 18:39	2 Corinthians 13:14	John 17:3	Psalm 145:8–9	Mark 12:30
Daily Cipher	1 True God	3 in 1	God Cares 4 U	God Is . . .	Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength
Animal Pals	Camo the Mimic Octopus	Loop the Sugar Glider	Scout the California Sea Lion	Gracie the Kunekune Pig	Homer the Homing Pigeon
Truth Sleuth Crafts	A-maze-ing God Maze Master of Disguise Mimic	Spy Kit Trinity Keepsake Ornament	Ichthys “Jesus Fish” Verse Decoder	Forgiving Father Agamograph One True God Bible Bookmark	Love God Magnet Secret Spy Bracelet
Truth Sleuth Science	Spot the Fake! Whose Writing Is It?	Unique Fingerprint Patterns Print Patrol	Insect Detectives pHantastic Experiment	Secret Ink Lab The Code of You!	If the Shoe Fits Decoding the Digital World
Top Secret Snacks	Mini Mimic Look-Alike Landmarks	Thumbprint Cookies Trinity Pizza	Classified Clues Bananagrams	Codebreaker Crunch Pig Slop	Mystery Muffins Hot on the Trail Popcorn
Fast Action Games	Disguise Dash Sneak Training 101	Triple Play Three-Legged Maneuvers	Search and Rescue Collect the Clues Kickball	Crack the Code Training Stations Prodigal Son Relay	Mission Possible Operation: IXΘΥΣ (Ichthys)
Cool Contests	Mystery M&M's	Secret Signals	Devise a Disguise	Code Cracking Bible Challenge	Mission Money Mania



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Simplified Teacher Guide

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Your Mission

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to train special agents around the world to detect counterfeit religions and to know, love, and live for the one and only God.

At *Spy U*, the latest from Answers VBS, kids will be in training to become agents for the one true God. In this jam-packed week, the cadets will be trained in the following areas:

- Uncovering counterfeit gods and recognizing the only true God—the God of the Bible
- Finding that God is unique—one God in three persons
- Collecting clues to reveal how to become a child of God
- Cracking codes to discover attributes of God
- Discovering that God is not distant but personal, wanting to be their first love

Excitement and adventure await from the first minute of the day, when everyone gathers for the **All Agents Assembly**, which includes entertaining intros, catchy songs, a Mission Moment, and prayer.

Then the cadets rotate through five fun sites:

Mission Briefing at Spy U HQ, where God's Word is taught in hands-on ways.

Fast Action Games, where training challenges of the utmost fun are mastered.

Top Secret Snacks, where top level treats vanish in a hurry.

Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts, where cadets engage in hands-on science activities and crafts.

Operation: Missions, Music, and Memory Verses, where kids can spend additional time learning songs and memory verses, and hearing about missions.

After training and mission assignments are completed, cadets regroup for the closing assembly, which includes more singing, contest results, and the highly anticipated daily drama. The drama is set in International City, a place that has drifted away from following the one true God. The Truth Mission Force is sent in to expose the truth about God. Agents Jordan Trace, Alex Cipher, and Riley

Gizmo find foes in unlikely places as their assignment takes them through unexpected twists and turns.

All this adds up to one great, high-impact week! Ready, cadets? Do you copy? The world awaits!

Our Goal

We are so thankful for how God has chosen to use the Answers VBS programs over the past years! But why did we decide to embark on such an undertaking in the first place? And why are we still at it by God's grace?

Our primary goal has always been to bring God glory by boldly and unashamedly proclaiming him to a strategic group—young people! From both a biblical and statistical point of view, young people are a big deal. They're not only awesome—we love 'em!—but they're also dearly cherished by our Lord and tend to be softhearted toward spiritual things. Researchers generally agree most people become Christians when they're children, so it's apparent this age group is a huge mission field!

Children are loved by their Creator, and Jesus said to let them come to him (Luke 18:16). We want children to come to Christ and not be hindered in any way from doing so. To that end, we combine a biblically rich VBS with off-the-charts, irresistible fun. In a day and age when content sometimes suffers, we don't want to sacrifice rich teaching. But it's also crucial that the most exciting book in the world not come across as boring or irrelevant. We want to reflect our creative, inspiring, joy-giving God who made laughter and fun.

So why do we do it? We want kids around the world to hear about and personally meet our awesome God and understand how they can receive eternal life through repentance and faith in Christ Jesus. We believe VBS is a great way to introduce them to God, as it is one of the biggest outreaches of the year for most churches.

We pray you will find that every prayer prayed, every minute invested, every dollar spent, and every word spoken will bring God glory as you reach kids for Christ. Just remember—VBS is worth it. May God richly bless your VBS. We're praying for you!

Your Role

Your role as the teacher (Agent) is outlined in the following pages and includes planning and preparing the daily lessons, enthusiastically engaging in teaching the lessons, and praying over all aspects of your job.

Read this guide carefully and prayerfully, using our suggestions combined with the ideas the Holy Spirit brings to your mind.

So get ready! Get set! Get excited! God is about to use you and your church to impact lives.

Frequently Asked Questions

The content of *Spy U* may be new to you. For a list of helpful articles on the topics covered in this VBS program, please visit AnswersVBS.com/spyufaq.

Terms to Know

Throughout the VBS curriculum, various terms will be used. Here is a list of some of the most common terms to know.

Cadets: Groups of children (individual classes) named after countries (Truth Team Canada, Truth Team Japan, etc.). They will “graduate” from Spy U at the end of the week and earn the title of “Junior Agents.”

Truth Team Leaders: Group leaders who guide the cadets from place to place during VBS. No teaching is required of this position.

Mission Briefing: The Bible and apologetics lesson time happening at Spy University HQ.

Agents: Teachers at Spy University HQ.

Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts: Rotation site where crafts are made and science activities are explored.

Top Secret Snacks: Indoor or outdoor location where snacks are served.

Fast Action Games: Indoor or outdoor site (outdoor is preferred) for recreation time.

Operation: Missions, Music, and Memory Verses:

Rotation site where kids can spend additional time learning songs and memory verses and hearing about missions.

Commit This to Memory: Time to learn and practice the daily Bible verse.

Animal Pals: Our friendly animal mascots that remind us of the main themes of each day.

Toddlers: 2–4-year-olds.

Pre-Primaries: 4–6-year-olds or children ages 4 through those who have completed kindergarten.

Primaries: 6–9-year-olds or children who have completed grades 1–3.

Juniors: 9–12-year-olds or children who have completed grades 4–6.

For multi-age K–6 groups, we recommend using the material for the Primaries.

Top 20 Teaching Tips for Teachers

1. Pray and study God's Word. This is your most important preparation. God has entrusted you with the awesome privilege of sharing his Word, so be well prepared. "We will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).
2. Read through all your lesson plans well in advance and become familiar with the resources at AnswersVBS.com/spyuresources. Begin to pray and plan now and continue to pray during and after VBS.
3. In this guide:
 - » Teaching Tips are marked with a .
 - » Materials are listed next to each activity.
 - » The "teacher says" portion is bold.
4. You may want to assign the task of gathering supplies for all the teachers to one person or have the teachers divide up the supply list, with each being responsible for multiples of certain items. It's also helpful to get all the supplies ready in containers ahead of time rather than gathering them day-by-day the week of VBS.
5. See Decorating Decisions for a picture and description of the teaching set. Also, when setting up the room, you may want to clear away tables and chairs, depending on the room size and number of children expected.
6. Attend the Teacher Workshop and the Gospel Workshop. Be prepared to share the good news of salvation!
7. Dress in spy-themed clothes, such as a black T-shirt and pants. You can also wear the T-shirt and hat available from AnswersVBS.com.
8. Take on a persona to bring lessons to life. You may want to make up a fun name, dress in character and talk in first person, adopt a foreign accent, or add something new to your "costume" each day, such as small stuffed animal pals added to pockets of a vest. Teach in a way that makes you feel comfortable.
9. Call the children by name. Name tags help with this.
10. Keep eye contact as you share the lessons, ensuring each child senses your warmth and care.
11. Children will be at various levels of spiritual comprehension. Pray for the Lord to take the message and do with it as he wills: plant seeds, bring to salvation, or strengthen and grow those who are already believers.
12. Have Bible passages from the lessons bookmarked ahead of time and use your Bible throughout as noted. Show the importance of the Scriptures through your facial expressions and your actions.
13. Show love. All children, regardless of age or appearance, need to be loved. Greet them warmly each day and always be ready with smiles, encouraging words, and appropriate hugs.
14. Be aware of your church's safety protocols and appropriate touching policies.
15. Be all there. Try to leave behind whatever is currently going on in your life and focus your attention on the children under your care.
16. When kids are sitting on the floor for drawing or writing activities, give them a firm surface (e.g., clipboards, old magazines, or books) to use underneath the papers. Cut corrugated cardboard or coroplast sheets into 9 x 12-inch pieces and add a binder clip for inexpensive clipboards.
17. Notice the good. Children want attention and will sometimes resort to acting up in an effort to receive even negative attention. Be proactive by noticing and praising the things they do right. Be an encourager.
18. Children like order. Think through potential trouble spots in your day and decide on a firm, loving discipline strategy. Ask for help from experienced individuals.
19. Children generally rise to the level expected of them. Challenge them to work on memory verses and take-home student guides as well as other challenges. Some may even want to try the bonus memory passages.
20. Have fun! Teaching should be a joy for you. "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Tips for Managing a Group of Kids

Kids are fun, and kids have energy! Prepare to confidently lead them using the following strategies.

Attention-Getters

Call and Response—Teach the kids that when a teacher says something, they should reply with something else. Practice the following ideas so kids know your expectations for responding:

Teacher: I spy

Kids: With my little eye

Teacher: Mission

Kids: Possible

Teacher: Crisscross (as they sit and cross legs)

Kids: Spy boss

Teacher: Jesus loves me

Kids: This I know

Teacher: For the Bible

Kids: Tells me so

Teacher: God is good

Kids: All the time

Teacher: And all the time

Kids: God is good

If You're Listening—Say, “If you’re listening, put your hands on your head. If you’re listening, stomp your foot,” and so on. See how fast everyone catches on.

Rhythm Claps—The teacher claps a little rhythm, and the kids clap the exact rhythm back. Vary the clapping patterns.

Countdown—Hold up five fingers and start to count down from five to one. By the count of one, kids should be completely quiet.

Soft Talk—Start talking about something important very softly or in a whisper. Kids will often quiet down to hear what you are saying. Or say, “If you can hear me, clap once.” Continue softly with other commands.

Flash the Lights—This is a good signal to listen up.

Lining Up to Walk Through the Building

If You—Say different categories for lining up in fun ways, such as the following:

- “If you are wearing black like an undercover agent, line up. Now, if you’re wearing red, line up.”
- “If your birthday is during the summer, line up. Now, if your birthday is during the school year, line up.”
- “If you have a dog, line up. Now, if you have a cat, line up. Now, if you have no pets, line up.”
- “If you are quiet, line up.”

Proactive Tips

Be Prepared—One of the best ways to ward off discipline problems is to be prepared. Think through and organize your schedule, leaving no downtime. Keep things moving! This takes more effort on your part, but it’s worth it.

Active Participation—Keeping kids actively engaged in the lesson is perhaps the best thing you can do to keep the class from getting rowdy. The lessons are written to be creative, fun, and full of active participation. Play the games, act out the Bible accounts, and do the other ideas listed. Occupy kids’ minds and attention with good stuff!

Helpers—Involve the kids. Let them be helpers. Some kids just want to feel needed, so giving them a responsibility is a way to show you trust them. Try putting them in charge of a simple task, like helping others learn memory verses, passing out papers, or holding a poster for the teacher. Sometimes a simple task can keep them busy and make them feel important!

Use Humor—Kids of all ages love to laugh! Have fun together. If you see a situation is getting tense or a child is getting upset for some reason, try thinking of a way to lighten the mood with humor.

Calming Rowdiness

Don’t Yell—Kids may respond at first if someone yells, but they eventually dismiss it. Try some of these other ideas instead.

Separate Kids—Separate kids who misbehave around each other but encourage problem-solving when possible. “What are some things we could do to help you and ___ get along?”

Give Choices—Avoid power struggles by giving choices. If a child is resistant to doing something you’ve asked, try your command another way. For example, “You can either sit with the rest of the group and listen or sit with ___ (leader’s name) at the back of the room.”

Praise in Public, Correct in Private—If someone does need correction, be careful not to embarrass him in front of his peers. If you need to talk to a child about a misbehavior, pull him aside while everyone else is busy. Kids will be less defensive if they don’t feel they have to “save face” in front of their peers—and if they feel you really care and aren’t just coming down on them.

Know Church Policies—Know your church’s policy for severe behavior issues. Do you take the child to your VBS director? Do you alert the child’s parents? Do you involve other staff members? Be prepared.

Age-Level Characteristics

Kids are awesome! Each one is unique and is a special creation from the hand of our amazing Creator. With all their uniqueness, however, kids often share some common characteristics. Use the following guidelines as a benchmark when looking at characteristics of children as a whole. Understanding how God has wired different age groups can help us be more effective in teaching and interacting with them.

First, you'll see characteristics of children in general and then specific characteristics of Primaries (ages 6–9 years). See pages 16–18 in the Director Guide for characteristics of other age groups.

Characteristics of Children

Children have some common characteristics.

- They are all sinners (Romans 3:23).
- God has given each a conscience, and they generally want good to win over evil.
- God has shown himself to all children through his creation, making it obvious to all that there is a Creator.
- Children enjoy active learning—moving around, seeing things, touching things, smelling and hearing things, and being involved.
- Children need to be loved, encouraged, and praised.
- Children are rapidly growing and changing.
- Children trust the adults who are responsible for them.
- Children can get discouraged with criticism and failure.
- Children are eager to learn and are curious about the world and about God.

Characteristics of Primaries

Physical Characteristics

Primaries love games and competitions, but it can be hard for them to lose. They are continuing to grow and improve in hand-eye coordination and fine and gross motor skills. They need to have opportunities for movement.

Takeaways for Us

- Use games to teach! Primaries love any kind of games, whether active or learning-type games.
- Help them learn to take turns and to be good winners and good losers! Both winning and losing well are important in God's sight.
- Use boys vs. girls competitions to get kids revved up! As long as you keep it light and fun, they will enjoy these times!

Emotional/Social Characteristics

Primaries are becoming more independent and confident in their ability to do things. Girls play most often with girls and boys with boys, but there is some mixing of girl/boy friends. They like to have a best friend and enjoy pretend play. Primaries enjoy jokes and are gaining a sense of humor. They care about being accepted by the group and want adult/teacher approval.

Takeaways for Us

- Give Primaries plenty of opportunities to work in groups or with partners.
- Use humor with Primaries. The sillier, the better!
- Be careful to walk worthy—act and speak in godly ways.

Spiritual/Mental Characteristics

Primaries like to talk and ask questions. They understand simple concepts and sentences and are concrete in their thinking, rather than being able to understand abstract or symbolic thinking. They're learning to read. They need active learning. They're gaining a growing attention span. They understand the consequences of their actions. They can tell the difference between reality and fantasy. They often have a strict sense of right and wrong.

Takeaways for Us

- Be concrete in what you say. Don't use abstract or symbolic language. For example, regarding salvation, don't ask if they have Jesus in their hearts. They will take that literally. "Becoming a child of God" or "being in God's family" are more concrete ways to express this concept as kids will understand what it means to be part of a family.
- Activities can stretch for a longer time, but it's still good to vary them. Keep Primaries involved in being active as much as possible.
- Some children read better than others. Be careful about asking them to read out loud. Try asking for volunteers.
- Small print can be a challenge, so use larger print when possible.
- Encourage memorization.
- Use visuals.
- Show interest in each child, letting them know you care.
- Be careful to speak accurately and truthfully. Explain Bible words and concepts.
- Remember that you are a role model.
- Show care and respect for your Bible and help them see your love for it and for the Lord.

Special Needs

The *Special Needs Teacher Supplement* (1240530) can help you accommodate and modify these lessons for those who need it, either in your regular classroom or in a self-contained classroom.

Mission Briefing Bible Time

As cadets meet at HQ for their mission briefing, they will be trained on how to detect counterfeits and recognize the one true God.

The lesson time is written as a 20–30-minute period, divided into three sections.

Introduce It! (5 minutes): Each day, kids will meet at headquarters for a lively intro to get the lesson going.

Teach It! (15–20 minutes): The Bible teaching and apologetics content is presented during this time in creative, appealing ways.

Review It! (Remaining class time): This is the memory verse review and practical application time.

Below is a sample schedule of a typical day at VBS. Check with your director for a copy of the schedule with shortened lesson times and room assignments for your VBS.

Sample Schedule

Time	Group One	Group Two	Group Three
9:00–9:15	All Agents Assembly—Opening: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		
9:20–10:00	Mission Briefing Bible Time	Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts	Fast Action Games and Top Secret Snacks
10:05–10:45	Fast Action Games and Top Secret Snacks	Mission Briefing Bible Time	Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts
10:50–11:30	Truth Sleuth Science and Crafts	Fast Action Games and Top Secret Snacks	Mission Briefing Bible Time
11:35–Noon	All Agents Assembly—Closing: Large Meeting Area (Everyone Together)		

Memory Verse Songs

Encourage your kids to learn their memory verses the easy way—by singing them! The contemporary memory verse songs are produced by Seeds Kids Worship (ESV), and the traditional memory verse songs are produced by Majesty Music (KJV). They feature the full verses. Both are available with the Music Leader Download, which comes with the purchase of a Super Starter Kit. If you

choose to use these songs, we suggest using them during the memory verse time in each lesson. The memory verse songs and the theme songs are together on one student CD. Student CDs in packs of 10 are available if you would like each student to have a copy of the songs (Contemporary—1240610; Traditional—1240620). You can also find streaming options at AnswersVBS.com/streaming.

Student Extras

Check with your VBS director and choose one or more of these fun optional materials so your students can take home a review of the daily lesson content.

Also, decide with your director when it works best to give out the various items: at the beginning of the day; during lesson time; during snack time (a good time to review); or at the end of the day (a good time to pass out student guides, bookmarks, and other items that need to make it home safely).

Spy U Map and Stickers: Use these sticker sets as a fun, daily review of each lesson. These are available in packs of 10.

- Map and Stickers sets (1240780)

Student Guides: These daily, age-appropriate take-home papers feature a lesson review activity, the memory verse, and a suggested verse review game. You can either go over these during class time or send them home to be completed. (This is what our test churches do.) If you send the guides home, motivate the kids to do them because they are full of good information! Give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day. Then have them check with the kids the following day to see how they did. Consider asking your VBS director to give contest bonus points to the individuals and teams for their hard work. These are available in packs of 10.

- Junior ESV (1240710); Primary ESV (1240720)
- Junior KJV (1241320); Primary KJV (1241330)

Spy Training Manuals: These fun, interactive booklets feature the daily memory verses to decipher and a place to stamp (1240930) for attendance. Check with your VBS director to find out when he or she would like to give these to the kids. They can receive them at any time during the first day. You can review them with the kids during the Review It! memory verse section of the lesson if you have time, or they can be stamped as the kids arrive at VBS. These are available in packs of 10.

- Junior/Primary ESV (1240910)
- Junior/Primary KJV (1241370)

Bookmarks: These are available in packs of 10 and can be passed out at the end of class or at the end of the suggested day.

- Gospel (1240760)—Day 3
- God Is . . . (1240770)—Day 4

Exploring God's Word: This little booklet encourages your students to continue discovering God's Word for weeks after VBS has finished. It features a daily question and answer found in the Scripture verse. You or the Truth Team Leaders can pass one of these to each student on the last day of class at dismissal. These are available in packs of 10.

- Booklets (1240750)

Decorating Decisions

It's no secret that boys and girls alike love a spy theme! So use your creativity along with the tools and ideas in this section to capture the imagination of the kids with your classroom decorations. A colorful and engaging environment helps children learn better, remember more, and leave with happy memories.



Key Decorating Elements

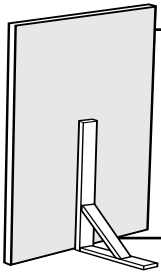
Classroom Set

Each day, the cadets will gather in the mission briefing room at Spy U HQ where God's Word will be taught. To serve as a focal point for the teaching, create a set with a high-tech aesthetic. Use bold colors and geometric designs, a world map, and international wall clocks. You can also add screens and keyboards. See the Digital Resources for clip art images. Construct your backdrop using sheets of corrugated cardboard or rigid foam insulation or use your classroom wall.

Classroom Scene Setter

As a quick and easy alternative to making your own classroom set, a scene setter is available for purchase (1241260) from the Resource Catalog. Simply mount the panels onto a rigid material using double-sided carpet tape, clear packing tape, or staples and prop them up. Or you can attach them directly to a wall with mounting putty, Mavalus tape, or double-sided tape on top of painter's tape.





Prop up your set, and any freestanding decorations, with wooden jacks made from 2 x 4, 2 x 3, or 2 x 2 boards, according to the size of your decorations. If necessary, jacks can be weighed down with bags of sand or road salt.

Resource Posters

Contained in the Teacher Resource Kit are the teaching, memory verse, and animal pal posters. These are important visuals for the kids and should be displayed in an organized fashion on a wall (or walls) adjacent to your set.

Clip Art Images

See Digital Resources for numerous clip art images. Use an overhead projector to enlarge and transfer the images onto roll paper, poster board, corrugated cardboard, or foam insulation sheets. Prop them up with wooden supports (jacks) or mount them to a wall.

How to Enlarge and Transfer Clip Art

COMPUTER AND PROJECTOR

1. Download the clip art onto a computer or USB. Hook up the computer/USB to a projector.
2. Using the projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
3. Place roll paper or a rigid material against a wall.
4. Trace the image outlines onto the paper or rigid material.
5. Paint the image and cut it out.

OVERHEAD PROJECTOR

1. Photocopy the clip art onto transparencies.
2. Using an overhead projector to enlarge the clip art, shine the image onto the paper or rigid material, adjusting it as necessary for the size desired.
3. Follow steps 3–5 above.

Other Tips & Miscellaneous Ideas

- Use a raised platform or place a rug in front of your set to create a stage effect.
- Add some LED light strips to accent parts of your set.
- Place a pretend hand scanner at your entry door. See Digital Resources for a sample design.
- Place “Restricted Area,” “Classified Personnel Only,” “Top Secret,” and “Classified” signs in various places.
- Display the Truth Mission Force logo in a prominent place. See Digital Resources for a clip art image.
- Install some fake security cameras near your stage. They can be made cheaply and easily with small cardboard boxes and paper towel tubes.
- Add a thin (½-inch) black border to your painted props. This helps them stand out better and makes the colors appear more vibrant.
- Because corrugated cardboard tends to curl when only one side is painted, first apply a quick single coat of paint to the back.

Check out [Pinterest.com/AnswersVBS](https://www.pinterest.com/AnswersVBS) for colorful photos of decorations from our test churches!

Visit [YouTube.com/AnswersVBS](https://www.youtube.com/AnswersVBS) for how-to decorating videos!

- A** **“Affirmative”**—yes
Aka—also known as
- B** **Birdwatcher**—name for a spy in British Intelligence
Bug—listening device
- C** **Compromised**—when an operation or agent is uncovered
“Copy that”—I heard and understood the message
- D** **Dead drop**—a secret location where materials can be left and retrieved
“Do you copy?”—Are you there? Do you understand?
- E** **Ears only**—information too confidential (secret) to be written down
Expats—people who live in a country other than where they grew up
Eyes only—documents too confidential (secret) to be talked about
- F** **Flaps and seals**—using tools to open letters, read them, and replace them without tearing the envelope
FYEO—for your eyes only
FYI—for your information
- G** **Gather intelligence**—collect information
- H** **Hijack**—unauthorized seizure of a vehicle, person, or system
HQ—headquarters
- I** **Infiltrate**—to secretly gain access to a secure area
Informant—someone who provides information about another person’s secret actions
- J** **Julius Caesar code**—used by Julius Caesar and commonly called the Caesar cipher, which replaces each letter of the alphabet with another letter that is a fixed number of spaces away
- K** **Keyboard cipher**—a code made by shifting fingers on a keyboard by a fixed number of spaces and typing from that position
- L** **Listening post**—site where audio surveillance from bugs and other devices can be heard
- M** **MI5**—the United Kingdom’s intelligence agency that covers domestic affairs
MI6—the United Kingdom’s intelligence agency that covers foreign affairs
Mole—a double agent
- N** **“Negative”**—no
Neutralize—to make a spy ineffective by foiling their plans
- O** **Op**—operation
“Over and out”—goodbye
0100 hours—one o’clock in the morning
- P** **Pocket litter**—items in a spy’s pocket that verify their assumed identity
- Q** **Q gadgets**—legendary, imaginative spy tools often disguised as everyday objects
- R** **Ring**—a network of spies or criminals
Rolled-up—when an operation goes wrong and/or an agent is taken into custody
- S** **Sanitize**—to delete information in a document
Swim—to travel
- T** **“That’s classified”**—that’s private information
Troll operative—an online spy who creates confusion and conflict in the online platforms of other countries
Turn—to force or convince a spy to work against their country as a double agent
“10-4”—okay
- U** **U-2**—the world’s most famous spy plane
- V** **Virus**—malicious computer code meant to disrupt or extract information from the targeted system
Voice-scanning software—technology that uses your voice as a password and is strong enough to even tell identical twins apart
- W** **Walk-in**—a defector who enters a spy office to give intelligence information in exchange for something
- X** **X-ray vision**—advanced technology that allows you to see through walls or containers
- Y** **Year of the Spy**—1985, the year that an unusually high number of spies were caught working in the United States
- Z** **Zephyr**—a high-altitude surveillance system



Day 1

Uncovering Counterfeits

BIBLE PASSAGE

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
1 Kings 18:20–39

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique because he is the only true God. Today, we'll uncover counterfeit gods and discover the God of the Bible.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

There's only one true God. All others are counterfeits.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." 1 Kings 18:39

ANIMAL PAL

Camo the Mimic Octopus

DAILY CIPHER

1 True God

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Operation One True God
- Teach It!
Part 1: Uncovering Counterfeits
Part 2: Views of God
- Review It!
Part 1: Animal Pal
Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game
Part 3: Commit This to Memory
Part 4: Over and Out

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read 1 Kings 18 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on false religions/gods and the one true God, visit AnswersVBS.com/spyufa.
- Pray.

◆ Theme Memory Verse Poster

- ☐ Bible or children's Bible
- ☐ Agent costume for teacher
- ☐ Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape for posters
- ☐ Briefcase
- ☐ Optional: Walkie-talkie

🌐 Study your lessons each day and know them well but feel free to say things in your own way. Also available are [presentation images](#).



◆ Elijah Poster

- ☐ Fake bill and real US bill

Introduce It!

Operation One True God (5 minutes)

PREP: Bookmark the Scripture passages in your Bible used in today's lesson. Put the Bible in the briefcase.

As the cadets come in, you may want to come out from somewhere, using a walkie-talkie and signing off of an imaginary conversation, "Yes, sir. I copy that. 10-4, over and out."

Welcome, cadets. I'm Agent _____. Good to see that you've arrived safely at Spy U HQ, aka (also known as) Spy University Headquarters. This is our international base where people gather from all over the world for training.

As you may know, I'm a member of the Truth Mission Force, a specially trained squad of Christians, finding fake gods—yes, there are fakes out there—and teaching people about the one true God. He is the greatest treasure of all!

The case you're being assigned to is called Operation: One True God. This case is important for every person. Each day, you'll have a mission briefing here at HQ to learn more.

You are starting out your week as cadets, but by the end of the week, with careful training, you will graduate from Spy U with the rank of Junior Agents.

Your first assignment is to stand and say the theme verse together and commit it to memory. It comes from the one true God's one true collection of books called the Bible. This is the most important book for *all* people *all* over the world. Take the Bible out of the briefcase, open to the premarked spot, and read Psalm 86:10. Refer to the **THEME MEMORY VERSE POSTER** to teach the verse. Emphasize the "You alone are God" part.

Now, today's mission briefing is on learning to uncover fakes, or counterfeits. Let's synchronize our watches and begin. [Pretend to synchronize watches.](#)

Teach It!

Part 1: Uncovering Counterfeits (5–10 minutes)

Who knows what the word *counterfeit* means? [Take answers.](#) Right, it's a fake. Any Truth Mission Force cadet must be on the lookout to detect fakes.

Sometimes people who are up to no good try to make counterfeit (fake) money and pass it off as the real thing. Here's a test. Tell me which of these bills is *counterfeit*. [Hold up a fake bill and a real bill. Have children point to the fake. Hold up the real bill.](#) How do you know this is real? [Allow answers.](#)

Professional agents carefully study what real bills look and feel like so they can tell when a fake one comes along. That's the key to identifying fakes—get to know the real thing as much as you can so you won't be fooled by a fake.

Did you know that just like there's counterfeit money, there are also counterfeit gods? These gods aren't real. The Bible tells us there's only one true God to worship. By getting to know him, we'll be able to tell when a fake god comes along.

People worship, or treasure, fake gods in all kinds of forms, like trees, cows, statues, or even other people, such as sports stars or movie stars. Fake gods aren't anything new. We can read about them in the Bible. In fact, let's hear about a battle between a false god named Baal and the one true God. It's in 1 Kings 18. [Open your Bible to 1 Kings 18 and tell the account with excitement and animation.](#)

About 3,000 years ago, in the land of Israel, there was a man of God (a prophet) named Elijah. The Lord told him to go see Ahab, the king of Israel.

Ahab was a wicked king. He believed in a fake god called Baal. "You have been doing wrong by worshipping the fake god Baal," said Elijah. Then he challenged the king to a contest. "Get all the people in Israel, including the prophets of Baal, and meet me at

Mount Carmel.” This was going to be an exciting contest. All by himself, Elijah was going to stand against 450 prophets of Baal!

When the prophets got to Mount Carmel, Elijah announced the contest rules. “We will each have one bull to put on an altar. But we will not set them on fire. Instead, you must call on your god, Baal, to send fire and burn up your bull. Then I will call on the Lord. The one who answers by fire is the one true God!”

The prophets of Baal went first. They built an altar with stones and put some wood on it with the bull. Then they called on Baal—for hours! But nothing happened. So they shouted louder and danced around their altar all day long. But no one answered and nothing happened.

Finally, it was Elijah’s turn. He built an altar and put some wood and the bull on top. Then Elijah dug a ditch around the altar and poured water over the bull until the ditch was full of water. Now when you want something to catch on fire, do you normally soak it with water first? No! But that’s what Elijah did.

Why do you think he did that? [Take responses](#). He wanted everyone to see that the one true God could burn up the bull even if it was soaking wet! Do you think God did it? Let’s find out!

Elijah prayed, “God, I’ve done what you asked me. Now show these people that you are the one true God.” Guess what happened? [Show the ELIJAH POSTER](#). The Lord God sent fire down! It burned up that soaking wet bull and wood, the wet stones, and the wet ground! It also licked up all the water in the ditch!

The people fell down and cried out, “The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God!” They realized Baal was a fake. He wasn’t a god at all! He didn’t even exist. There is only one true God in the whole wide world—the Lord God of the Bible.

Today, people still believe in many counterfeit gods. Every person on the planet has a view of God, what they believe about him. Of course, it’s critical for all Truth Mission Force cadets to have the correct view of God, because what we think about God decides both how we live our lives now and where we’ll spend eternity (forever). It’s a big deal to get our view of God right.

Part 2: Views of God (15–20 minutes)

PREP: Cut apart the **VIEWS OF GOD HEADINGS** and the **VIEWS OF GOD POSTERS** but don’t hang them up yet. Fold the **DAY 1 CIPHER POSTER** so the answer isn’t showing.

Divide into two teams—boys vs. girls—and decide who goes first. Keep a tally of points scored during the game. Put up the headings when indicated below. Leave enough room to put each **VIEWS OF GOD POSTER** underneath the correct heading. Do the first half, then continue as time allows.

To successfully complete this mission—the Views of God Game—listen carefully as I explain some important information. First, there are two main camps—“The One True God” and “The Deceiver.”

Camp 1: The One True God

In Camp 1 there’s only one view of God. **VIEW 1**—he is the one true God. [Put up this heading](#). Remember how the Bible tells us he alone is God? There’s nobody else. So this view of God is the only one that is true. This is the God of the Bible. He is the Creator of the universe ([Genesis 1:1](#)) and the Creator of you ([Psalm 139](#))!

Camp 2: The Deceiver (Liar)

But then we have the deceiver’s camp. [Put this heading next to the first heading, leaving some space between](#). There are four main views in this camp—and they’re all wrong. All wrong views of God come from the deceiver, who is the father of lies. Does anyone think they know who the deceiver is? [Take responses](#). Yes, it’s Satan, the devil. He’s against everything God does, so he tries to get as many people as he can to believe his false views. They can look very different, but they are still all wrong. We can’t believe them because Satan is a liar and his views don’t line up with what the Bible says. All the deceiver’s views are based on what people think, not on God’s Word.

🌐 Baal was considered the god of rain (among other things) and should have been able to send lightning to kindle the wood. Elijah gave Ahab’s prophets all the advantages in this contest, from letting them go first to calling on their rain god. It didn’t help. Only the one true God has power!



- ♦ Views of God Headings
- ♦ Views of God Posters
- ♦ Day 1 Cipher Poster



VIEW 2—No God. Put this under The Deceiver's heading. Some people believe there is no God (atheism—"a" for "no" and "theism" for "god"). Thinking there's no God is an incorrect view of God.

VIEW 3—One False God. Put this under The Deceiver's heading, to the right of View 2. Some people believe there is one God, which is called monotheism (monotheism—"mono" for "one" and "theism" for "god"). But this god is not the same as the one true God of the Bible. It is one *false* god. Each group in this category makes up their own version of a god, based on people's ideas, rather than what the Bible says. Many of these groups reject the Trinity, which we will talk about tomorrow.

VIEW 4—Many Gods. Put this under The Deceiver's heading, to the right of View 3. Some people believe there are many gods, which is called polytheism (polytheism—"poly" for "many" and "theism" for "gods"). Many ancient cultures, such as the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, believed in many gods. Today, there are still those who believe there are many gods.

VIEW 5—All Is Part of God. Put this under The Deceiver's heading, to the right of View 4. Some people believe that all of nature is a god, so anybody and anything can be part of a god. This is called pantheism (pantheism—"pan" for "all" and "theism" for "gods"). This means the grass, cows, and even people can all be part of a god. This group worships nature and often uses symbols and images in their worship. There is sometimes overlap between views 4 and 5, such as with Hinduism.

Begin the game by holding up the **VIEWS OF GOD POSTERS** one at a time as you read the following descriptions. Each cadet on the team puts up either 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 fingers to indicate which view he/she thinks it is—one true God (1), no god (2), one false god (3), many gods (4), or all is part of god (5). Views 2–5 are numbered on the poster headings. If most of the team gets it right, they get a point. Keep a score tally on the board.

As you go through the views below, emphasize that as the Creator, God cares for every person on this earth, and he wants them to know the truth. We should care and want them to know the truth too.

1. **Darwin Fish**—A man named Charles Darwin taught that God did not make the world, but that it came about all on its own through natural evolutionary processes. His ideas caught on, and now people who believe this view think the world came about on its own without any Creator. **No god (2).**
2. **Greek Gods**—People who believed this view worshipped Greek gods with names such as Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. These made-up gods made lots of mistakes and were selfish. **Many gods (4).**
3. **Christian Science**—This view has a holy book that teaches that evil and matter don't exist; therefore, there is no such thing as sickness or sin. It states that there is a god but doesn't accept the one true God described in the Bible. **One false god (3).**
4. **Jainism**—People who believe this think many things are gods, so they wear masks to avoid swallowing bugs because they think bugs might be gods. They also carry brooms to sweep the path so they won't step on any insect gods. **Many gods (4) or All is part of god (5).**
5. **Cross**—Jesus, who is God, died on a cross and was raised to life on the third day. His resurrection from the dead is celebrated at what we call Easter or Resurrection Sunday. **One true God (1).**
6. **New Age Movement**—This view states that people can become one with the universe because all energy comes from the same source. **All is part of god (5).**
7. **Cows in India**—This view (Hinduism) states that cows are to be worshipped and not killed, so cows just roam around the streets. **Many gods (4) or All is part of god (5).**
8. **"God Is Dead"**—This view states that there is no reason to believe there is a God. **No god (2).**

Add up the score now and continue with the instructions below or show more posters as time allows.



9. Christmas—Christmas is a time of joy for people with this view because it is a time to remember that God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth, as described in the Bible. *One true God* (1).
10. Communism—This view encourages trust in the government to take care of everyone. Communist people who make up the government don't believe in God or God's rules but make up their own rules for people to follow. *No god* (2).
11. Native Americans Worshipping Nature—This view states that gods are in the wind, the sun, and everything created. *All is part of god* (5).
12. Pilgrimage to Mecca—This view states that there's a god named Allah who is to be worshipped. Allah expects his followers to make a journey to a place called Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Allah requires this of them to have a chance to get to heaven. In this view, people have to work hard to try to get to heaven. *One false god* (3).
13. Eat, Drink, and Be Merry—This view proposes that there is no heaven—only the here and now—so people better live it up while they're alive. *No god* (2).
14. A Missionary for Christ—People with this view believe the Bible contains the best news ever. It tells about Jesus, who is God, and about his perfect life, death, and resurrection. He offers eternal life to those who repent of their sin and believe in him. Believers want to share this good news with others around the world. *One true God* (1).
15. Aboriginal Beliefs—This view encourages prayer to a variety of gods, often found in different forms in nature. *All is part of god* (5).
16. Mayan Temple—People who believed this view worshipped many gods with names such as Ah Peku (god of thunder) and Cizin (god of death). They built special temples to their gods. *Many gods* (4).

Determine who won, then point out that the deceiver's camp is much larger than the one true God's camp. This should not come as a surprise because Jesus told us it would be this way. Read Matthew 7:13–14. Explain that all wrong views of God have something in common—people have to do something to make it to “heaven.” The one true God is different because he has done it for you! It is through a gift (grace), not works, that Christians are saved.

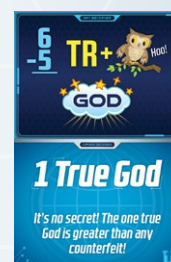
So as we wrap up our game, let me remind you that all these ideas can't all be right. Only one of these views is correct. Which is it? Yes, View 1, there is only One True God.

But you may wonder how we know that One True God is the right view. Well, all good Truth Mission Force cadets look for evidence, right? So if we want to find out about God, let's go to the very best source for evidence—the Bible. *Hold it up.*

The Bible is the only book in the world *written by God*. He guided 40 different men, over 1,500 years, to write down the words he wanted them to write. Even with all those people over all that time, the message of each book in the Bible fits together perfectly like a puzzle! Since the Bible is from God, we know we can trust it. Because God is perfect, he can only tell the truth.

And it's cool that historical and scientific evidence agree with what the Bible says. For example, archaeologists have found places and objects that line up with what it says in the Bible. They've found the remains of Bible time places like Abraham's home city of Ur, the pool of Siloam, and King Hezekiah's tunnel. The Bible is the only book we can trust to be completely true. So that's where to go to learn the truth about God.

Your job from now on, cadets, is to get to know the loving, kind, caring, one true Creator God. Just like people study real money to be able to recognize fake money, we want to study the real God to grow to love him and be able to recognize the fakes. You get to know the real God from the Bible. Listen to it, read it, go to church, study it, love it, obey it. And remember: There aren't other gods—just other views of gods that men have made up! Let's see if we can figure out today's cipher (coded message) to remind us of this important truth. Show them the *DAY 1 CIPHER POSTER* with the answer portion folded up. See if they can decode it, then reveal the answer.



♦ Day 1 Animal Pal Poster

- Timer (smartphone timer)
- Optional: Small prizes



Review It!

Part 1: Animal Pal

Show the DAY 1 ANIMAL PAL POSTER. Let's take a look at our animal pal poster to remember what we talked about today. Our animal pal is what kind of animal? A mimic octopus. What's his name? Camo, short for camouflage. What does it mean to be camouflaged? To blend in to its surroundings. A mimic octopus is like a master of disguise and camouflage. It can look like a lot of other animals. What does that have to do with what we talked about today? Some counterfeit views of God can sound like the one true God, but they are false. There's only one true God who created you. Where do we go to learn about the one true God? The Bible.

Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game

Directions: Put 60 seconds on a timer. On "go," ask a question and have everyone shout out an answer at the same time. As soon as you hear someone say the correct answer, acknowledge it and move to the next question. The goal is to get all 10 questions answered correctly before the 60 seconds are up. Remind kids to be quiet when you read the next question, or you will have to repeat it, which takes longer. You can play just for fun or give everyone a small prize, such as a sticker (available from AnswersVBS.com) or small, individually wrapped candy. To save time, give the prizes to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out later.

1. Can you say today's Bible verse? Have them recite 1 Kings 18:39.
2. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? Mimic octopus.
3. What is his name and why? Camo—he's a master of disguise.
4. What book should we study to get to know the one true God? The Bible.
5. How many right views of God are there? One.
6. Where do all the wrong views of God come from? The deceiver, Satan. He's a liar.
7. Yes or no: God answered Elijah with fire from heaven. Yes.
8. True or false: the prophets of Baal were worshipping a fake god. True.
9. Name one of the wrong views of God. No god, one false god, many gods, all is part of god.
10. From the Bible, what is something you know about the one true God? He alone is God, he is loving, kind, etc. End by saying the most amazing thing about him is he's a personal God who loves you and wants to have a relationship with you.

Part 3: Commit This to Memory

Today's Verse: And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, "The LORD, he is God; the LORD, he is God." 1 Kings 18:39

If you have the Spy Training Manuals, pass them out to each child now and have them read today's verse. Show the DAY 1 MEMORY VERSE POSTER and say the verse together a couple times or sing the memory verse song. After doing so, you may want to say: "The one true God is the real deal. And the most amazing thing is that he loves you! He wants to have a relationship with you."

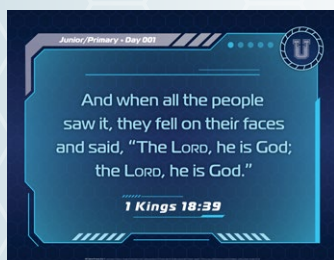
Part 4: Over and Out

- A Spy U Map (available to purchase from AnswersVBS.com) is a fun way to review each day. Today, the kids will add the first day's animal pal sticker. Pass out the maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.

🌐 Gospel Opportunity

♦ Day 1 Memory Verse Poster

- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Spy Training Manuals, 1 per child
- Spy U Maps and Camo Stickers, 1 per child
- Optional: Student Guides



★ Download from AnswersVBS.com/spyresources.

♦ Find in your teacher kit.



Day 2

Finding Fingerprints

BIBLE PASSAGE

Baptism of Jesus
Matthew 3:13–17

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique because he is one God in three persons. Today, we'll be on the lookout for those persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

The Trinity is a reality but also a mystery.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

ANIMAL PAL

Loop the Sugar Glider

DAILY CIPHER

3 in 1

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
One-of-a-Kind Fingerprints
- Teach It!
Part 1: The Trinity
Part 2: Baptism of Jesus
- Review It!
Part 1: Animal Pal
Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game
Part 3: Commit This to Memory
Part 4: Over and Out

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Matthew 3:13–17 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on the Trinity, visit AnswersVBS.com/spyufaq.
- Pray.

♦ Big Fingerprints Poster

- Bible or children's Bible
- Agent costume for teacher
- Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape for posters
- Optional: Small magnifying glasses to share



♦ Trinity Poster

- ★ Trinity Illustration Sheets, 1 per child
- Pens/markers, 1 per child
- Optional: Clipboards, 1 per child

It may be tempting to use an analogy such as an egg (yolk, white, and shell) or water (liquid, steam, ice) to help explain the Trinity, but there are significant problems with each of these illustrations, and we suggest not using them.



Introduce It!

One-of-a-Kind Fingerprints (5 minutes)

PREP: Bookmark all the verses used in today's lesson.

Welcome back for today's briefing at HQ, cadets. Yesterday we learned how to find fakes. Who remembers something about the counterfeit, or fake, views of God? Briefly review and remind them that all the wrong views of God fall into just one camp—the deceiver's. Who remembers something about the one true view of God? Take answers.

In today's briefing, we'll be learning about fingerprints. Each of us has unique fingerprints. This proves to be a very useful way for identifying people. By studying fingerprints, we can figure out who they belong to. That's because no two fingerprints are exactly alike. It's amazing to think that all the way back to the beginning of time, God has made every single person's prints one of a kind. This shows God's brilliance and your uniqueness. The Bible says that each of us are fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God (Psalm 139)!

Optional: Pass out the magnifying glasses for the kids to share. Show the **BIG FINGERPRINTS POSTER**. Fingerprints fall into three main categories: Arch, loop, and whorl. Look at your fingers. Can you tell which kind of fingerprint you think you have? Allow the children to study their prints and determine the kind they have. Within these groupings, though, each one is different. You won't find any two arch fingerprints alike or any two loops or whorls alike.

Teach It!

Part 1: The Trinity (10 minutes)

PREP: Print the **TRINITY ILLUSTRATION SHEETS** for each child. Attach each sheet to a clipboard if necessary.

Just as each of us is a unique person with unique fingerprints, God is also *uniquely* unique because he is one—but he is also three. That's right! The one true God exists in three persons. Does that sound like a mystery, being one in three? We have lots of mysteries here at Spy U, so let's get to the bottom of this.

The one true God is just one God—he is *not* three gods. That would be the counterfeit view of God that says there are many gods, which is wrong. So we know that the one true God is not three gods. He is one.

The one true God exists in three persons. God's Word tells us who the three persons are. We're going to read some Bible verses, and I want you to listen for clue words. Every time you hear the first clue word "Father," give one quick clap. Listen to what Jesus said: Read Matthew 6:26 and the first part of Mark 14:36.

Now listen for the clue words, "Son" or "Jesus." Snap your fingers when you hear them. The high priest said to Jesus: Read Matthew 26:63–64.

This time listen for the clue words, "Holy Spirit" and do one quick drumbeat on the floor when you hear them. Jesus said: Read John 14:26, then the last part of Romans 5:5.

There are hundreds of verses about each of these persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There are also verses that talk about all three of them at the same time, such as 2 Corinthians 13:14, our memory verse.

The three of these together—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—are known as the Trinity. "Tri-" in "Trinity" means "three," as in three persons. So we use the word "Trinity" to refer to God being three in one. This word is not actually in the Bible, but as you can see, the idea is clearly taught throughout God's Word. Let's make a drawing about this.

Go over the triangle illustration on the **TRINITY POSTER** and have them draw it on their **TRINITY ILLUSTRATION SHEETS**.

Part 2: Baptism of Jesus (5 minutes)

We already mentioned there are accounts in the Bible that show all three persons of the Trinity working together. We're going to hear about one right now. Listen carefully to see if you can pick out the three persons of the one true God.

Show the **BAPTISM OF JESUS POSTER**. Read Matthew 3:13–17 with interest from a Bible or children's Bible. When finished, see if the cadets can identify the three persons (the Father spoke from heaven, Jesus was baptized, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove).

You know, we've talked about Jesus' baptism and been on the lookout today for the one God who is in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible tells us this is so. Although it seems like a mystery, it's one mystery that's too big for even the best spies to solve. You see, God is so big and so amazing and so incredible, we can never completely know and understand how everything about him works. But that's where trust comes in. God gave us his Word—the Bible—so we can trust him and know whatever his Word says is true.

I'm so thankful for each person of the Trinity—God our Father, Jesus our rescuer, and the Holy Spirit our helper and comforter. Together, they—the Trinity—make up the one true God.

Let's take a minute to focus on Jesus. He is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. This important fact makes Christianity unique. What we believe about Jesus is super important. No other view of God believes Jesus is God the Son *and* a member of the Trinity. But Jesus identified himself as God by using “I am” statements, like “I am the good shepherd.” He also told people who he is in other verses, such as John 10:30 and John 14:9. [Read these verses.](#)

We've looked at fake veiws of God. But what do they say about Jesus? This is a key piece of evidence! Some say he is *a* god but not *the* God. Some say he is just a man—a good, moral person who always tried to do right or a teller of the future (a prophet)—but not God.

But Jesus said he *is* God. A good, moral person who isn't God wouldn't lie by saying he is God because that would not be right. So Jesus can't be just a good, moral person. Some believe that Jesus is God, but they don't believe that he is the *only* way to eternal life. They think they still have to work hard to get to heaven. But that's not true. Jesus died on a cross and rose from the dead so all those who repent, by turning away from sin, and believe in him can have eternal life.

How do people come up with all these wrong ideas of God? It's because they aren't believing or following the Bible. It's the best place—the source—to go to for the truth!

Let's decode today's cipher together. Use the **DAY 2 CIPHER POSTER** with the answer folded up and see if they can figure out the cipher. Then reveal the answer.

- ♦ Baptism of Jesus Poster
- ♦ Day 2 Cipher Poster



Review It!

Part 1: Animal Pal

Hold up the **DAY 2 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? Sugar glider. What is her name? Loop. What does the word “Loop” remind you of? A type of fingerprint. As we think about how fingerprints are unique, what does it have to do with what we learned today about God? God is unique. There is no one else like him. One way God is unique is that he is one God in how many persons? Three.

- ♦ Day 2 Animal Pal Poster
- ☐ Timer (smartphone timer)
- ☐ Optional: Small prizes



Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game

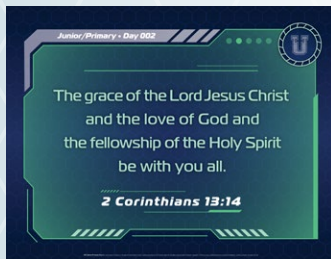
See page 18 for directions.

Review Questions

1. What is today's Bible verse? Can you say it? Have them recite 2 Corinthians 13:14.
2. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? Sugar glider.
3. What is her name, and what does it remind us of? Loop, which reminds us of a kind of fingerprint.
4. Who is the most unique being of all? God.
5. Yes or no: Is God really three gods? No.
6. He is one God but in three persons. Who are those persons? Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
7. This is called the Trinity, and it makes Christianity unique. What does "tri-" mean? Three—God is three in one.
8. Yes or no: Is God's Son named Jesus? Yes.
9. One place we see all three persons of the Trinity at the same time is when Jesus went in the water and was _____. Baptized.
10. Yes or no: Does the Bible give clear evidence that God is one God in three persons? Yes.

♦ Day 2 Memory Verse Poster

- ☐ Optional: Memory verse music and player
- ☐ Optional: Spy Training Manuals, 1 per child
- ☐ Spy U Maps and Loop Stickers, 1 per child
- ☐ Optional: Student Guides



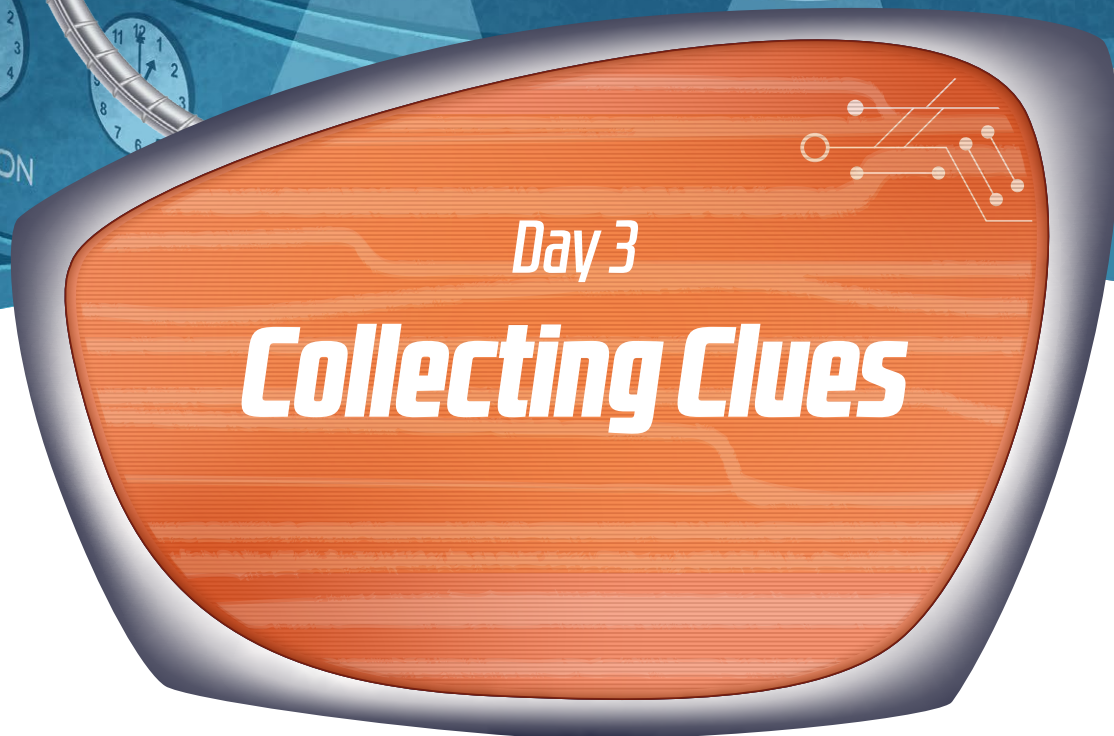
Part 3: Commit This to Memory

Today's Verse: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

If you have the Spy Training Manuals, pass them out to each child now and have them read today's verse. Show the **DAY 2 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** and say the verse together a couple times or sing the memory verse song.

Part 4: Over and Out

- Pass out the Spy U Maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.



BIBLE PASSAGES

Gospel Presentation
Various Scriptures

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique because he himself came to earth to rescue us. Today, we'll be challenged to admit, believe, and forever receive him.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

The biggest difference between Christianity and other religions is who Jesus is.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

ANIMAL PAL

Scout the California Sea Lion

DAILY CIPHER

God Cares 4 U

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
 Birthday Party Crime Scene
- Teach It!
 The Eden Files—Gospel Presentation
- Review It!
 Part 1: Animal Pal
 Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game
 Part 3: Commit This to Memory
 Part 4: Over and Out

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Genesis 1–3, Luke 1–2, and Luke 23–24.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- Read “Leading a Child to Christ,” found on the inside back cover of this guide.
- For more information about who Jesus is, visit AnswersVBS.com/spyufaq.
- Pray.

- ❑ Bible or children's Bible
- ❑ Agent costumes for teachers
- ❑ Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape
- ❑ Birthday party supplies (see Prep)
- ❑ Crime scene tape or yellow crepe paper

Introduce It!

Birthday Party Crime Scene (5 minutes)

PREP: Bookmark the Bible verses you are using today. Prepare a table in the room to look like a ransacked birthday party. There could be cups knocked over, candles blown out, crumpled up cupcake wrappers and napkins, empty pizza boxes, half-eaten food, possibly a piñata that's opened, etc. Have the area taped off with yellow and black crime scene tape or bright yellow crepe paper with "Crime Scene" written on it. What will be missing is any evidence of presents, opened or unopened.

The teacher may want to enter wearing a party hat and blowing a party blower.

Welcome to today's mission briefing, cadets. So far this week, we've uncovered counterfeits and learned about fingerprints. Our focus today will be to collect clues. Every good Truth Mission Force agent must be able to track a trail of clues. For instance, look at the pretend crime scene behind me. Let's try to collect clues to figure out what went on here and figure out what's missing. Have the cadets share various clues they spot. After a minute, come to the conclusion that there was a birthday party, but the birthday presents are missing and must have been stolen.

Teach It!

The Eden Files—Gospel Presentation (15–20 minutes)

PREP: Cut apart the **GOSPEL POSTERS**. Optional: Run the envelopes (without metal clasps) through the copier using the "TOP SECRET" and "CONFIDENTIAL" PATTERNS. Write letters A through F on the envelopes. Put the corresponding **GOSPEL POSTER** in each envelope. See the bulleted list below for further instructions. Print **CLUES A-F** and keep in an organized stack with Clue A on top and Clue F on the bottom. Print the **SOLVE THE CASE PATTERN**, 1 per child, and put them on clipboards. Hide the envelopes around the room at the correct spots listed below.

- File envelope A—Draw a large #1 on the envelope; put the **SCENE OF THE CRIME POSTER** inside; hide the envelope anywhere in the room.
- File envelope B—Put the **SUSPECTS POSTER** inside; hide it under a leader's feet.
- File envelope C—Put the **CRIME POSTER** inside; hide it in a fake tree or by someone's knee.
- File envelope D—Draw a cross on the front; put the **CASE SOLVED POSTER** inside; hide it anywhere in the room.
- File envelope E—Put the **BEST EVIDENCE POSTER** inside; hide it under a rock by a locking door or combination lock.
- File envelope F—Write the letters "ABFR" on the front; put the **ABFR POSTER** inside; hide it anywhere in the room.

That was good work, cadets. Now, if this had really happened, we would have to track down the person who stole the presents and punish him, wouldn't we? But have you ever asked yourself why people do bad things in the first place? I mean, why do people steal and lie and bully and cheat and act mean? When did all that start?

The Bible tells us there was a point in time, thousands of years ago, when the very first crime happened on earth. We're going to hunt down some clues to find out more about this. Let's pass out these **SOLVE THE CASE** papers and pens, and then we'll get started with the first clue. Do so. Begin with Clue A.

CLUE A: This first clue starts the fun. Look around for the file with the number one.

Have one or more cadets look around the room for the File A marked with a #1. After they give it to you, pull out and show **GOSPEL POSTER 1: SCENE OF THE CRIME**.

From the Bible, we learn that God—the one and only God—has lived forever. He never had a beginning. But when he created the world, he began time. That happened about

♦ Gospel Posters

★ Clues A–F

★ Solve the Case Pattern,

1 per child

★ Optional: "Top Secret" and "Confidential" Patterns

- ❑ 6 large (10 x 13) white or manila envelopes without clasps

- ❑ Clipboards, 1 per child

- ❑ Pens/markers, 1 per child

- ❑ Optional: Fake tree

- ❑ Rock or stone

- ❑ Optional: Combination lock

Optional: Rather than getting up to look, have the cadets stay seated and just point when they see file envelope 1. The number needs to be visible from their seated position.



★ Download from AnswersVBS.com/spyuresources.

♦ Find in your teacher kit.

6,000 years ago. God is perfect, so the world he created was perfect. The heavens and the earth were all beautiful and good ([Genesis 1–2](#)). God created a special garden in that perfect world called Eden. There was no crime anywhere. There was no sin, no disobedience to God's commands. But this picture says it's the scene of the crime. Let's find out what happened. Have the children fill in Clue A on their Solve the Case paper—Scene of the Crime: Garden of Eden.

Let's move to the next clue.

CLUE B: The next clue is nearby. It's under the feet of one of these guys.

Have someone retrieve File B. Okay, we know the scene of the crime was the garden of Eden. But we also know Eden started out as a perfect place. So what happened? Pull out and show [GOSPEL POSTER 2: SUSPECTS](#). Well, God had created the first two people named Adam and Eve, and they lived in the garden. They had a special relationship with God and talked with him all the time. They were perfect, and everything was going great ([Genesis 2](#)). But God's enemy, in the form of a serpent, came into the garden and tempted Eve. Have them fill in Clue B—Suspects: Adam and Eve.

Let's read the third clue to find out what happened next.

CLUE C: Next is Clue C. But where could it be? Look around, up or down, or maybe near a tree (or knee).

Have someone retrieve File C, hidden in a fake tree or by someone's knee. Pull out and show [GOSPEL POSTER 3: CRIME](#). The enemy, Satan, the devil, was wicked and wanted to be a god. When that didn't work, he tried to get God's people to follow him. So he tempted Eve to eat fruit from the one tree that God had told them not to eat from ([Genesis 2:15–16](#)). But Eve gave in to the temptation and ate the fruit, and Adam also ate it and disobeyed God. Disobeying God's commands is called sin.

Their disobedience was the first crime on earth. And God had said that the punishment for disobeying his command was death. Now, instead of being able to have a close relationship with God forever, they would go to a terrible place when they died. God is holy, which means he is perfect and never sins, so he can't allow people who sin into his presence in heaven. Have them fill in Clue C—Crime: Sin—Not Obeying God.

Let's read the next clue and see what happens next in this case.

CLUE D: The next object will be something made from a tree. Christians hold this dear, and it's pretty near.

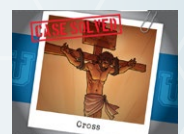
Have someone retrieve File D with a cross drawn on it. God had a way to solve this case. He knew that Adam and Eve and every person who would ever live, including you and me, would commit crimes against God ([Romans 3:23, 5:12](#)). We may not rob a bank or kill someone, but every one of our crimes (or sins) separates us from a holy and perfect God. For example, because God is truth, lying separates us from him, and so does being unkind or disobedient to our parents and many other wrong things we do.

Pull out and show [GOSPEL POSTER 4: CASE SOLVED](#). But God loves us and wants us to be with him forever. So here's how God solved this case. He promised Adam and Eve that he would one day send someone to save them from sin ([Genesis 3:15](#)). And 4,000 years later, or about 2,000 years ago, God sent his Son, Jesus, from heaven to earth. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity whom we talked about yesterday.

Jesus took on the form of a man while still being God. He lived a perfect life, and even though he didn't do anything wrong, he was put to death on a cross ([Philippians 2:5–8](#)). Since Jesus is perfect, he could take the punishment for all the sins we have done so God doesn't need to punish us. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross. Jesus is our rescuer.

He did this because he loves us so much! We can receive God's forgiveness for our sins because Jesus has been punished in our place ([John 3:16–17](#)). This is the one and only way we can have a personal relationship with the one true God! Have them fill in Clue D—Case Solved: Jesus Died on the Cross.

Time for another clue.



**CLUE E: Our clues are close to done. But it's not the end of fun.
Look near a lock for a stone or a rock.**

Have someone retrieve File E, which is under a rock near a door that locks (or near a combination lock). This is the best news ever! God has made a way for us to be part of his family! Think of it this way. When someone commits a bad crime, they're put in jail as their punishment for doing something bad.

Well, we deserve punishment for sinning. Listen to what the Bible tells us in Romans 3:23. [Read the verse](#). Every person has sinned. For example, God says we are to do all things without grumbling or complaining ([Philippians 2:14](#)). Have you ever complained or whined about something—even once? God says to be kind to one another ([Ephesians 4:32](#)). Have you ever thought an unkind thought about someone—even once?

If you answered yes to even one of those, then you're guilty. You've committed a sin, meaning you've disobeyed God's command. And even one sin is too many for us to be part of God's family and live with him in heaven.

But that's what's so fantastic about Jesus coming to earth to make a way for us. Jesus lived a perfect life, never sinned, and was willing to be punished in our place. And that's not all. [Pull out and show GOSPEL POSTER 5: BEST EVIDENCE](#). The most amazing piece of evidence is that Jesus didn't stay dead. Because he's God, he came back to life! He's alive right now in heaven. Only the one true God could come back to life! [Have them fill in Clue E—Best Evidence: Jesus Is Alive!](#)

Let's collect our last clue now to see how this case ends.

**Clue F: Last but not least, let's look for some letter clues.
That could be the most important to you.**

Have someone retrieve File F, which has the letters ABFR written on the outside. [Pull out and show GOSPEL POSTER 6: ABFR](#). You aren't automatically part of God's family because you were born as a sinner. But this coded message will help you know how to be a part of God's family and live with him forever.

A stands for "Admit." God wants us to admit to him we have disobeyed his commands. If you agree that you sin, and if you are sorry for disobeying God, then you should admit it ([1 John 1:8–9](#)). Tell God that you know you sin and you want to turn away from sin (repent).

B stands for "Believe." God sent his Son, Jesus, to earth to take your punishment. Jesus willingly came and died on the cross for the punishment of sins he didn't commit, and he rose to life. If you believe that he did this for you, you need to tell God that you believe in Jesus and trust him to give you eternal life ([Romans 10:9–10](#)).

FR stands for "Forever Receive." You can forever receive the gift of eternal life and become part of God's family. There's nothing you can do to earn this gift. It's something that God freely gives to those who turn away from sin and believe in Jesus ([Ephesians 2:8–9](#)). We can never do enough good things to take our sin away.

All of those other fake views of God make their followers do things to try to get into heaven. They may need to pray a certain number of times a day, wear certain clothes, eat certain foods, give money, or just try to be "good." But the Bible teaches us something different. We cannot do anything on our own to become part of God's family because Jesus has already done everything for us. He is perfect, and he pleased God the Father when we couldn't. We need to admit, believe, and forever receive. [Have them fill in Clue F—ABFR: Admit, Believe, Forever Receive](#). Then ask if they see the hidden object on the sheet. If they look closely, they should see the start of a cross. They can connect the lines and fill in the outline of the cross.

God wants you to follow him and love him. It won't always be easy to be a follower of the one true God. But if you'd like to talk to someone more about this or if you have any questions, then Agents ____ are waiting to talk to you. [Provide salvation counseling in another safe, visible area for anyone with questions.](#)



Review It!

Part 1: Animal Pal

Hold up the **DAY 3 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? California sea lion. What is his name? Scout. Scout goes on rescue missions to bring back lost things from the ocean. How does that remind us of what we talked about today? God sent his Son, Jesus, on a rescue mission to save us from the punishment of sin.

Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game

See page 18 for directions.

Review Questions

1. What is today's Bible verse? Have them recite John 17:3.
2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? California sea lion.
3. What is his name, and what kind of missions does he go on? Scout; rescue missions.
4. Who else was sent by God on a rescue mission? Jesus.
5. Yes or no: Did the world need a rescuer when God first created it? No, it was perfect.
6. Who were the first people to sin? Adam and Eve.
7. What is sin? Not obeying God's commands.
8. Yes or no: Do we all sin? Yes, the Bible says everybody sins and falls short of the glory of God.
9. Yes or no: Do we all need to be rescued so we can belong to God and go to heaven someday? Yes.
10. Hold up the **DAY 3 CIPHER POSTER**. This code helps us know how to be rescued. What do the letters stand for? Admit, Believe, Forever Receive. Review the gospel after the 60-second game time is up, if you have time.

Part 3: Commit This to Memory

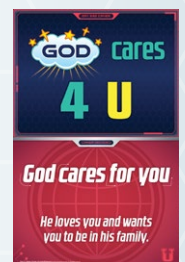
Today's Verse: And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. John 17:3

If you have the Spy Training Manuals, pass them out to each child now and have them read today's verse. Show the **DAY 3 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** and say the verse together a couple times or sing the memory verse song.

Part 4: Over and Out

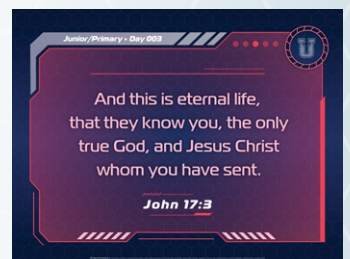
- Pass out the Spy U Maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.
- Pass out the Gospel Bookmarks, which review the "Admit, Believe, Forever Receive" teaching from today or have Truth Team Leaders pass them out at the end of the day.

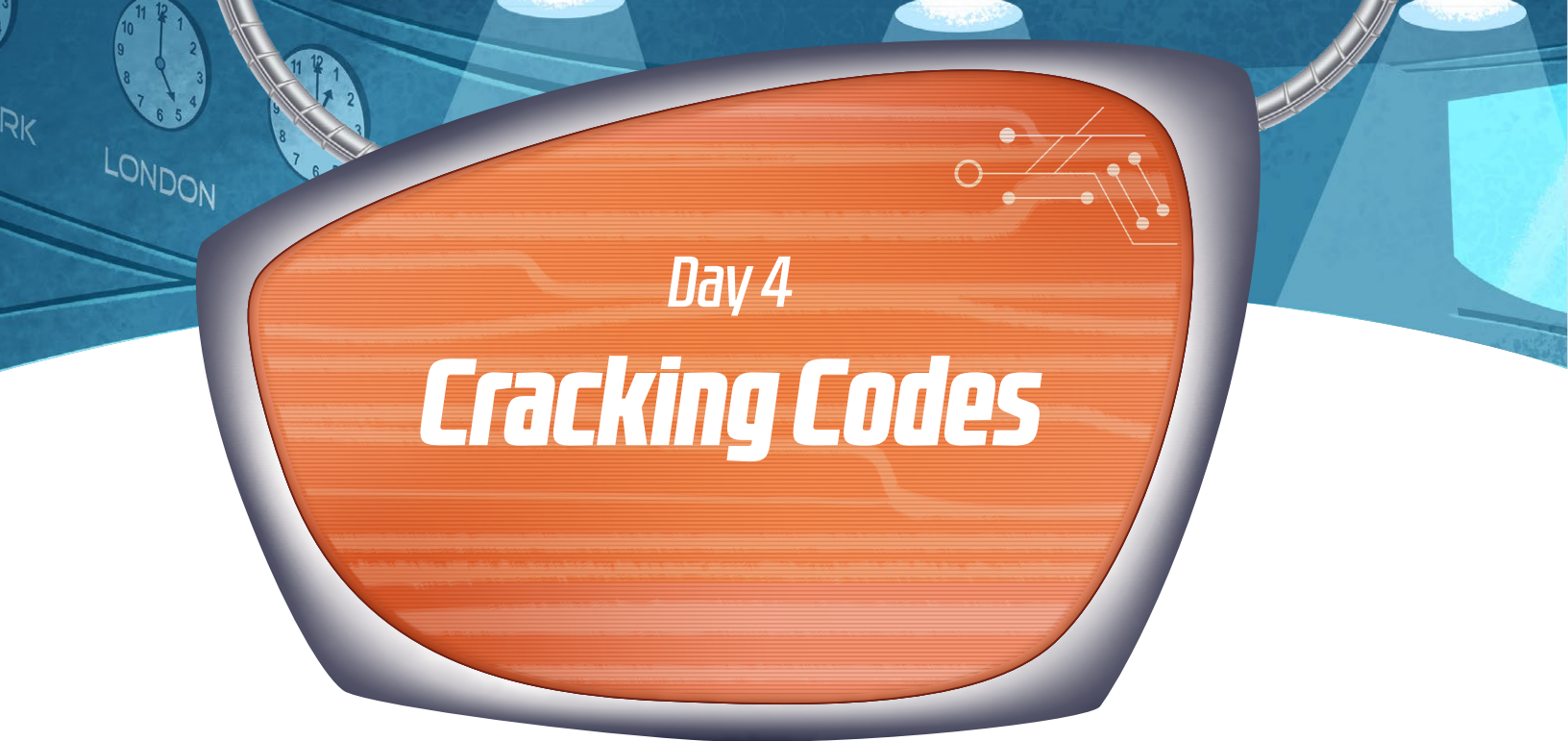
- ♦ Day 3 Animal Pal Poster
- ♦ Day 3 Cipher Poster
- Timer (smartphone timer)
- Optional: Small prizes



🌐 Gospel Opportunity

- ♦ Day 3 Memory Verse Poster
- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Spy Training Manuals, 1 per child
- Spy U Maps and Scout Stickers, 1 per child
- Optional: Student Guides
- Optional: Gospel Bookmarks, 1 per child





BIBLE PASSAGE

The Prodigal Son
Luke 15:11–32

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique; he is beyond description! Today, we'll crack codes to track down some of his attributes.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

God's character is like no other.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. Psalm 145:8–9

ANIMAL PAL

Gracie the Kunekune Pig

DAILY CIPHER

God Is . . .

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Code Cracking
- Teach It!
The Prodigal Son
- Review It!
Part 1: Animal Pal
Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game
Part 3: Commit This to Memory
Part 4: Over and Out

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Luke 15:11–32 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on attributes of God, see AnswersVBS.com/spyufa.
- Pray.

Introduce It!

Code Cracking (5 minutes)

PREP: Bookmark the Bible verses used in today's lesson. Copy the **SAMPLE MINI MISSION SHEET** onto poster board as large as possible using a black marker. If doing multiple rotations, make one per rotation or laminate the poster board to reuse for each rotation with a dry-erase marker. If you don't have access to a laminating machine, clear packing tape or contact paper works.

Hello, cadets! In today's mission briefing, we'll be sharing a skill of top importance for an agent—learning to crack codes. Let's try one now.

Show the poster board with "God is perfect" embedded in between *B's* and *Z's*. Have children raise their hands if they think they know how to crack the code (by crossing out all the *B's* and *Z's*). Begin crossing the letters out and have the kids silently raise their hand as soon as they think they know what the coded message is.

Good job figuring out the coded message—"God is perfect." This week, we're learning that it's your lifelong mission to get to know the God of the Bible better. One important thing to know about him is that he is perfect (Psalm 18:30). As we learned yesterday, we sin and are imperfect, but God will never, ever sin and do anything wrong. This is very important to remember. Sometimes we don't understand why certain things happen, but we can rest in knowing God is perfect and will never make a mistake.

Show the **GOD IS . . . POSTER** and discuss the attributes, particularly "gracious" and "merciful." Explain that these are just some possibilities—a drop in the bucket of what could be said about our infinite God!

- ◆ God Is . . . Poster
- ★ Sample Mini Mission Sheet
- ☐ Bible or children's Bible
- ☐ Agent costumes for teachers
- ☐ Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape
- ☐ Poster board(s)
- ☐ Black marker/dry-erase marker



Teach It!

The Prodigal Son (15–20 minutes)

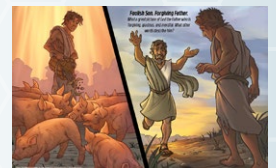
Prep: Fold the **DAY 4 CIPHER POSTER** so the answer isn't showing.

Today, you'll be hearing a parable (a story with a spiritual meaning) that Jesus told. It's about a father and his prodigal son. "Prodigal," in this case, means a son who wastes his money and life on wild, reckless living. The father in this story is a picture of God the Father. Your assignment, cadets, is to listen carefully for the attributes of God we just talked about from our poster (gracious, merciful, slow to anger, loving, and good). Read with interest Luke 15:11–32 from a Bible or children's Bible, showing the **PRODIGAL SON POSTER** at the end and answering the question on the poster.

On a whiteboard or large poster board, draw a blank line for each letter in the following phrase: "God is a good and loving Father." Explain that the cadets will work together (or in two teams) to "decode" the phrase by answering questions about the prodigal son parable. Ask the following questions. For each correct answer, allow cadets to guess one letter at a time. Fill in that letter on each appropriate blank. Write each guessed letter on the board so they are not repeated. Finish all the questions before allowing children to guess the full phrase. You may give them clues from the parable or the **GOD IS . . . POSTER** if they need help.

1. The prodigal son got a lot of money from the property his father gave him. Where did he go with the money? A. to the bank or B. *to a far country*
2. The son squandered his money. What does that mean? A. *he wasted it* or B. he made more money
3. What terrible thing happened in the country where the son was living? A. a battle with the enemy or B. *a famine*
4. The son was so hungry, what did he want to eat? A. *the pigs' food* or B. a great big pizza
5. When he realized he had been foolish, what did he do? A. stay and eat the pigs' food or B. *go back to his father*

- ◆ Prodigal Son Poster
- ◆ Day 4 Cipher Poster



- The father welcomed his son home and gave him good gifts he didn't deserve. What is this called? A. *being gracious* or B. being fair
- The father loved his son so much, he was merciful to him. What does merciful mean? A. he gave his son the punishment he deserved or B. *he didn't punish his son as he deserved*
- The father was slow to anger. He had waited for his son to return and then gave him a second chance. What is another word for this? A. *patient* or B. frustrated
- In this parable, who are we most like? A. *the son* or B. the pigs
- Who is the good and loving father in the story most like? A. *God the Father* or B. you and me

Help the cadets finish figuring out the answer to the game if necessary.

Do you see God as this kind of Father to you? God the good Father shows us steadfast love. This kind of love means it never quits, never lets go, and never runs out! It is loyal, deep, forever, forgiving, constant, and compassionate love. God shows us this love through grace by giving us forgiveness even though we sin and don't deserve it. At the same time, God shows us mercy by making a way for us to be forgiven of our sins, through Jesus, so we won't be punished like we deserve.

God loves us and will forgive us if we ask. He wants each and every one of us to be part of his family. But we do have to *want* to be part of God's family, and we do have to ask God.

We still have one more code to crack. Show the **DAY 4 CIPHER POSTER** and figure out the answer.



- ♦ Day 4 Animal Pal Poster
- ☐ Timer (smartphone timer)
- ☐ Optional: Small prizes

Review It!

Part 1: Animal Pal

Hold up the **DAY 4 ANIMAL PAL POSTER**. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? *Kunekune pig*. What's her name? *Gracie*. What word does Gracie remind you of? *Grace/gracious*. What is grace? *God giving you good things you don't deserve*. How did the father of the prodigal son show grace and mercy to his son? *He gave him a robe and a big celebration. He didn't punish him or make him pay back the money*. How is this a picture of God the Father? *He doesn't give believers what they deserve for their sins but gives us the gift of eternal life*.

Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game

See page 18 for directions.

Review Questions

- What are today's Bible verses? *Have them recite Psalm 145:8-9*.
- Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? *Kunekune pig*.
- What does a pig have to do with the prodigal son parable? *The son wanted to eat the pods the pigs ate; he was that desperate*.
- What is our animal pal's name, and what part of the lesson does she remind us of? *Gracie; God shows us grace*.
- Yes or no: Do we need the grace of God the Father? *Yes. Grace is God giving us good things we don't deserve*.
- The kind father is a picture of who? *God our heavenly Father*.
- What is mercy? *God doesn't give us punishment we do deserve*.
- What is another word for being slow to anger? *Being patient*.
- Psalm 145:8 also says God is abounding, or full of, steadfast ____? *Steadfast love. Steadfast love is loyal love, deep love, forever love, forgiving love, compassionate love*.
- What is another word to describe God? *Answers will vary*.

Part 3: Commit This to Memory

Today's Verse: The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. Psalm 145:8–9

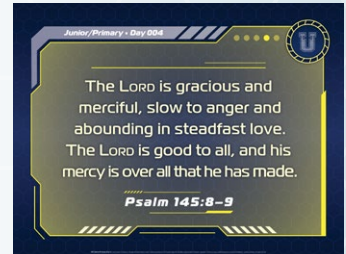
If you have the Spy Training Manuals, pass them out to each child now and have them read today's verse. Show the **DAY 4 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** and say the verse together a couple times or sing the memory verse song.

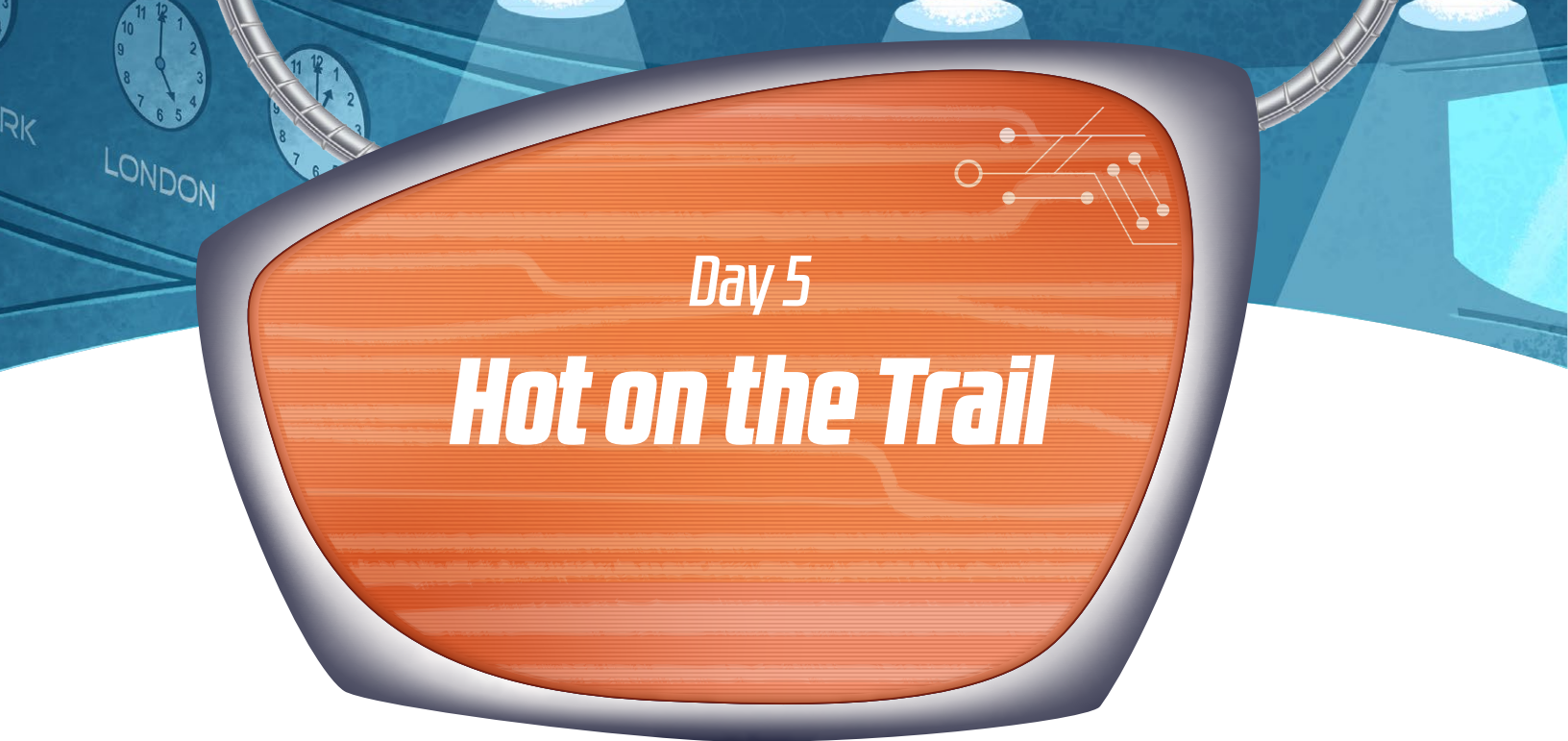
Part 4: Over and Out

- Pass out the Spy U Maps and add today's sticker. Do not put names on the maps until the last day when kids can take them home (it goes faster without names). Collect them after each class time.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.
- Pass out the God Is . . . Bookmarks or have Truth Team Leaders do so at the end of the day.

◆ Day 4 Memory Verse Poster

- Optional: Memory verse music and player
- Optional: Spy Training Manuals, 1 per child
- Optional: Student Guides
- Spy U Maps and Gracie Stickers, 1 per child
- Optional: God Is . . . Bookmarks, 1 per child





BIBLE PASSAGE

The Great Commandment
Mark 12:28–34

LESSON FOCUS

God is unique because he wants to have a personal relationship with us. Today, we'll learn our mission to keep God as our first love.

APOLOGETICS CONTENT

Unlike other religions, our God is about relationship. He is loving and personal.

COMMIT THIS TO MEMORY

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.
Mark 12:30

ANIMAL PAL

Homer the Homing Pigeon

DAILY CIPHER

Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength

Today's Lesson at a Glance

- Introduce It!
Shadowing Tips
- Teach It!
Part 1: Thermometers
Part 2: Most Important Commandment
- Review It!
Part 1: Animal Pal
Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game
Part 3: Commit This to Memory
Part 4: Over and Out

Preparing for the Lesson

- Read Mark 12:28–34 and Revelation 3:15–16 several times.
- Read this lesson several times and prepare the materials.
- For more information on having a personal relationship with God, see AnswersVBS.com/spyufaq.
- Pray.

Introduce It!

Shadowing Tips (5 minutes)

PREP: Bookmark all the Bible verses used in today's lesson. Hide an object at the back of the room that looks out of place, like a large stuffed animal, a rubber chicken, or a large toy. You may want to arrange with someone ahead of time to hide it after the kids are in and settled so they don't see it until the right time.

Welcome, cadets, to our last day here at Spy U, where we've been learning about the one true God who is the treasure of the world. In our mission briefing today, we will be learning how to shadow a suspect, or stay hot on his trail. Shadowing someone—following them without them knowing you are following them—is an important skill.

When an agent is hot on the trail of a suspect, he'll look for clues to tell where the suspect has gone. Here are a couple tips for finding clues. First, look down. *Have them do so.* What do you see? *Take brief answers.* Check the bottoms of your shoes and compare them with your neighbor's. *Have them do so.* Suspects often leave footprints or shoe prints at the scene of a crime, and these prints are a key clue. If suspects forget to cover their footprints, agents can trace them by finding matching prints, sort of like fingerprints. If the prints aren't visible, agents can use a high-powered, special flashlight that can find prints that they normally wouldn't be able to see.

Now, look up. *Do so.* What do you see? *Take brief answers.* When trailing someone, you want to look up in case the suspect hit a branch, knocked something over, or is hiding.

Now, look around. *Do so.* Does anyone see anything out of the ordinary? *Take brief answers and point out the hidden object if they didn't find it.* Agents look for even small differences in a room, such as hairs or pieces of clothing stuck on something or stains or marks somewhere.

These clues can help an agent stay hot on the trail. But if the suspect is very careful, he may leave no trace, and then the agent ends up with the trail going cold.

- ☐ Bible or children's Bible
- ☐ Agent costumes for teachers
- ☐ Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape
- ☐ Object to hide (see Prep)

Teach It!

Part 1: Thermometers (5–10 minutes)

Prep: Laminate the **THERMOMETER POSTER** if you have more than one class rotation.

We've been briefing you on how to stay hot on the trail. I have a picture of a tool here that measures how hot something is. *Show the THERMOMETER POSTER.* *Anyone know what this is called?* It's a thermometer, which measures the temperature. Sometimes an agent is assigned to a hot place. Sometimes to a cold place. Thermometers help to measure that.

But today we're going to measure something else. Everyone stand. You will all be human thermometers. I'm going to ask you some questions, and you're going to show how you feel about each question. We'll use "hot" for something you're excited about, and you'll stand on tiptoe and raise your hands high. If you don't like something and feel "cold" about it, you'll squat down low. But if you are "lukewarm" and don't really care about it either way, you'll stand like normal.

Let's try an example. If I ask, "How much do you like (insert name of closest well-known amusement park)" how would you show that as a human thermometer? *Have cadets respond as directed above.*

Get the idea? Okay, let's begin. How much do you like these things:

- | | | | |
|------------|--------------------|--------|------------|
| • broccoli | • pizza | • dogs | • cleaning |
| • soccer | • brussels sprouts | • cats | • swimming |

◆ Thermometer Poster

- ☐ Red marker or dry-erase marker and eraser for teacher use



🌐 You can customize this list if you'd like to include local sports teams, restaurants, etc.

★ Download from AnswersVBS.
com/spyuresources.

◆ Find in your teacher kit.

- ◆ Most Important Commandment Poster
- ◆ Day 5 Cipher Poster
- Mystery bag and props (see Prep)



Now I've got a couple serious questions about you and God. If we had to measure God's love for us, how would you show that as a human thermometer? [Have them respond, then sit down.](#)

Let's look up what 1 John 4:8 says. [Read it.](#) "God is love." That means all love comes from God. None of us would *ever* receive *any* love from *anybody* if God was not love. And the Bible tells us God loved the world so much he sent his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. That is love with a capital L!

Refer to the **THERMOMETER POSTER**. So where do you think God's love would be on this thermometer? [Read Psalm 57:10.](#) Color in the poster with a red marker up to the top. It would be off the charts, right? As high as the heavens!

Here's something to think about, God's love for his children is much greater than our love for him. He can love perfectly and to infinity and beyond. No other religion of the world has a God like ours—a personal God who is so loving that he gave his own Son for us!

Many of the other religions of the world say their god (who isn't really a god at all) is not personal and loving but far away and uncaring. Who wants that kind of a god? No, there's only one true God, and he is love. And remember, this God wants a personal relationship with you, as we've talked about this week.

Now I've got one more question. If you had to rate *your* love for God, where would it fall on the thermometer? Would you be hot on God's trail, really living for him, or would you be cold and not really interested in God? Or maybe you'd fall somewhere in the middle, not very excited about God? Listen to Revelation 3:15–16 to help us understand what kind of love God expects from his children. [Read the verses.](#) You see, we can't just "sorta" love God. That's like being lukewarm—not hot or cold. It's like a cold drink that sat in the sun and turned warm. Yuck! Makes you want to spit it out. Loving God is important, so let's check out what Jesus said about how much we should love him.

Part 2: Most Important Commandment (5–10 minutes)

Prep: Decide on a mystery bag. This can be a drawstring backpack, a gift bag, or other bag that is not see-through. Put the following props in it: a #1 (make one or use a magnetic or fun foam #1); a heart (make one or use a heart-shaped item like a cookie cutter or fun foam heart); a simple black silhouette picture of a body; a plastic person; and a small barbell (make one from a pipe cleaner twisted to look like a barbell or use a real, low-weight barbell). Fold the **DAY 5 CIPHER POSTER** so the answer isn't showing.

[Show the MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT POSTER.](#) A number of people had been asking Jesus questions. Of course, he always answered perfectly. Then a scribe came to Jesus and asked him, "What is the most important commandment of all?" What commandment, or rule, do you think Jesus said?

[Take out the #1 from the mystery bag.](#) Before Jesus told him the most important rule, he said this: "The Lord our God, the Lord is [\(have them verbally fill in the blank as you hold up the #1\)](#) . . . one." Jesus wanted to first remind him that there is only one God.

Then Jesus told him what the most important rule (commandment) was: to love the Lord God. Do you love the Lord? [Take out the heart from the mystery bag.](#) Jesus said to love the Lord with all your [\(have them fill in the blank as you hold up the heart\)](#) . . . heart.

What does it mean to love him with all your heart? [Take responses.](#) This means to treasure God by giving him your time and attention. Trust him and pray to him. Believe every word in the Bible and praise him with singing. Those are just a few ways you can love him with all your heart.

Jesus said to love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul. [Take out the black silhouette picture from the mystery bag.](#) Your soul is the part of you that decides things. The choices you make and your decisions come from your soul. It's not something you can see, like an elbow or a toe, but it's very important.

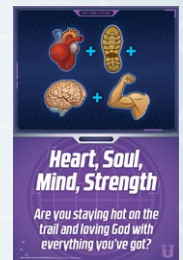
Choosing to obey God and the rules he tells us to follow in the Bible is a way to love God with all your soul. Of course, you can't follow every rule perfectly. But God wants you to *want* to!

Take out the plastic person from the mystery bag. Jesus said to love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. Tap the plastic person's head. Your mind has to do with the things you're thinking about in your head. What are you focused on? Do you like to learn about God? Do you like to listen to his Word? Do you want to keep getting to know more and more about God? That's all part of loving God with your mind.

Take out the small barbell from the mystery bag. Jesus said to love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your (have them fill in the blank as you do an arm curl with the small barbell) . . . strength. Now, this is more than just exercising your muscles. Even a person who isn't able to exercise can love God with all his strength. This includes the actions you do. You may know lots about God, but are you obeying him and using your body to serve him?

There are so many ways you can serve God, like helping a sick person, writing an older person a card, helping your teacher with a task, holding a door open for someone, or doing your chores to obey your parents.

This week we've have a great time learning about God. God is the greatest, and he is worth following forever! To follow God every day and please him, we must stay hot on his trail. We can do that by loving him with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength. Let's decode our last cipher now. Show the DAY 5 CIPHER POSTER, then uncover the answer.



- ◆ Day 5 Animal Pal Poster
- ☐ Timer (smartphone timer)
- ☐ Optional: Small prizes

Review It!

Part 1: Animal Pal

Hold up the DAY 5 ANIMAL PAL POSTER. What kind of animal is today's animal pal? Homing pigeon. What's his name? Homer. Why do you think he's called Homer? Homer carries important spy messages to the spy zone and then returns home. What does that have to do with our mission while we are here on earth? We should be loving God and sharing the important message of Jesus until we go home to heaven someday.

Part 2: Beat the Clock Review Game

See page 18 for directions.

Review Questions

1. What is today's Bible verse? Have them recite Mark 12:30.
2. Today's animal pal is what kind of animal? Homing pigeon.
3. What is his name and why? Homer; he returns home after delivering his message.
4. What message should we be sharing while we are here on earth? Jesus died and rose from the dead to take the punishment for your sins so you can be part of God's family when you turn from your sins (repent) and believe in him.
5. Yes or no: Is treasuring God and believing his Word a way to love God with your heart? Yes.
6. Yes or no: Is obeying your parents a way to love God? Yes. Making wise choices to obey God's Word is a way to love God with all your soul.
7. Yes or no: Is never opening the Bible a way to love God with your mind? No. God wants us to learn the Bible! We can listen to it as people teach about it or read it to us, or we can read it ourselves. Learning the Bible is definitely a way we can love God with our minds.
8. Yes or no: Is doing kind things for others a way to serve and love God with your strength? Yes.
9. Yes or no: Will I perfectly love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength? No, but God wants us to want to love him.



♦ **Day 5 Memory Verse Poster**

- ❑ Optional: Memory verse music and player
- ❑ Optional: Spy Training Manuals, 1 per child
- ❑ Spy U Maps and Homer Stickers, 1 per child
- ❑ Optional: Student Guides
- ❑ Optional: *Exploring God's Word* Booklets, 1 per child



10. What is one way we can stay hot on the trail of God? Read his Word, pray, go to church, sing praises to God, etc.

Part 3: Commit This to Memory

Today's Verse: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12:30

If you have the Spy Training Manuals, pass them out to each child now and have them read today's verse. Show the **DAY 5 MEMORY VERSE POSTER** and say the verse together a couple times or sing the memory verse song.

Part 4: Over and Out

- Pass out the Spy U Map and have everyone add today's sticker. Send them home today.
- Pass out the take-home student guides or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.
- Pass out the *Exploring God's Word* Booklet or give them to the Truth Team Leaders to pass out at the end of the day.



Leading a Child to Christ

Answers VBS presents many opportunities to share the gospel, and every teacher should be ready to explain how to be saved, whether it's one-on-one or with a small group. Use the following steps as a guide to explain salvation, ask questions, read scripture, and pray with and for students.

Pray. Salvation is God's work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone, but we can ask God to prepare a child's heart to receive the truth.

Explain. Prepare a clear presentation of the gospel. Avoid abstract phrases like "asking Jesus into your heart" and instead use clear biblical language, such as "becoming a child of God." You may want to use the following three key words to share how to receive eternal life:

- » **Admit** you have sinned (disobeyed God's commands). Ask God to forgive you of your sins. The penalty for sin is death (Romans 6:23).
- » **Believe** Jesus, God's Son, died in your place and rose again, paying the penalty for your sins (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10).
- » **Receive** the gift of eternal life by telling God you want to be his child (John 1:12).

Ask. To encourage discussion and to gauge understanding, ask open-ended questions, such as the following:

- » What is sin?
- » Can you think of specific sins you have done?
- » Are you bothered by your sin?
- » Who is Jesus?
- » Why did Jesus have to die?
- » Why did Jesus rise from the dead?
- » When you receive the gift of eternal life, is there anything else you have to do? Emphasize that salvation is not based on what we do but is a gift from God through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Respond. When children demonstrate a basic understanding of salvation, encourage them to talk with their parents about what it means to become a child of God (if parents are believers). If they come from a non-Christian home, encourage them to express belief in Jesus through prayer, confessing sin and asking Jesus to save them.

Some children may not be ready to make a decision. For children who have previously made a decision, they may need reassurance or want to confess sin.

- » Read Romans 10:9-10 and John 10:28-29 with those who need assurance, encouraging them to trust in God's promises.
- » For those wanting to confess sin, read 1 John 1:9 and remind them that God forgives when they repent (turn from sin).

Celebrate. Rejoice together! Read Luke 15:10.

Grow. Explain that children of God receive the Holy Spirit, who helps them understand and obey the Bible. Share practical ways for them to grow in faith and follow Jesus:

- » Read the Bible and obey what it says. (Provide a Bible.)
- » Attend a church that teaches that the Bible is God's true Word.
- » Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
- » Tell others about Jesus.

As you faithfully teach and guide children in the gospel, trust God to work in their hearts. Continue to pray for them and encourage them as they grow in their understanding of what it means to follow Christ.

SUPPLY LIST

EVERY DAY

- ☐ Theme Memory Verse Poster
- ☐ Cipher Posters
- ☐ Animal Pal Posters
- ☐ Memory Verse Posters
- ☐ Bible or children's Bible
- ☐ Agent costumes for teacher
- ☐ Mounting putty, sticky tack, or tape for hanging posters
- ☐ Spy U Maps and Stickers
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ Optional: Small prizes
- ☐ Optional: Memory verse music and player

DAY 1

- ☐ Elijah Poster
- ☐ Views of God Headings
- ☐ Views of God Posters
- ☐ Briefcase
- ☐ Optional: Walkie-talkie
- ☐ Fake and real US bill

DAY 2

- ☐ Big Fingerprints Poster
- ☐ Trinity Poster
- ☐ Baptism of Jesus Poster
- ☐ Trinity Illustration Sheets, 1 per child
- ☐ Clipboards or hard surfaces to write on, 1 per child
- ☐ Pens/markers, 1 per child
- ☐ Small magnifying glasses to share

DAY 3

- ☐ Gospel Posters
- ☐ Clues A-F
- ☐ Solve the Case Pattern, 1 per child
- ☐ Optional: "Top Secret" and "Confidential" Patterns
- ☐ Clipboards or hard surfaces to write on, 1 per child
- ☐ Pens/markers, 1 per child
- ☐ Birthday party supplies (see text)
- ☐ Crime scene tape or yellow crepe paper
- ☐ 6 large (10 x 13) white or manila envelopes without clasps
- ☐ Rock or stone
- ☐ Optional: Fake tree
- ☐ Optional: Combination lock

DAY 4

- ☐ God Is . . . Poster
- ☐ Prodigal Son Poster
- ☐ Sample Mini Mission Sheet
- ☐ Poster board(s) and black marker/dry-erase marker and eraser for teacher use

DAY 5

- ☐ Thermometer Poster, laminated if possible
- ☐ Most Important Commandment Poster
- ☐ Object to hide (see text)
- ☐ Red marker or dry-erase marker and eraser for teacher use
- ☐ Mystery bag and props (see text)

STUDENT EXTRAS (1 PER CHILD)

- ☐ Student Guides
- ☐ Spy Training Manuals
- ☐ Gospel Bookmarks and God Is . . . Bookmarks
- ☐ Exploring God's Word Booklets

*Posters can be purchased at AnswersVBS.com

*Download from AnswersVBS.com/spyuresources

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