Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure
Vacation Bible School Curriculum
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*Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure*
The Goals of the Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure VBS are:

For children and youth to learn that Jesus calls us:

- to learn and study,
- to reach out to others,
- to bring wholeness (healing) to life,
- to serve others, and
- to care for others, even if they are different from ourselves.

For children and youth to learn that:

- Africa University is a university for higher education in Zimbabwe, Africa,
- Africa University accepts students from all across Africa,
- Africa University assists in bringing wholeness to Africa,
- Africa University trains and recruits Christian leaders, and
- Africa University calls for us to care for each other in peace.

Suggested Supplies:

- The Faith We Sing songbook
- The United Methodist Hymnal
- The First Grader (DVD)
- Thy Wonders Displayed
- Woven basket for offering
- Empty tubes of various sizes found at carpet stores
- Black marker and/or dark paint
- Brown paper plastic grocery bags
- Newspaper, brown packing paper
- Material, felt, fleece, camouflage, burlap weed grasses, ferns, palm leaves
- World map and/or globe
- Cardboard
- Yarn
- Paint: hand and water
- Corn husks
- Gold glitter
- Stool
- Lion puppet
- Small flashlight
- Aluminum foil
- Inner seal of peanut butter jar
- Empty, dry water bottles
- Noise “makers” (dry beans, rice, hard seeds, dried peas)
- Stickers
- Rubber bands
- Card tables
- Crepe paper: brown, green, blue, silver
- Cutout insects, African animals, birds, plant pictures
- Stuffed animals
- Recordings of water and animal sounds
- Twine: green, beige
- Tape

Information about hygiene kits and the materials needed should be sent out with registration or distributed on the first day. They are needed for Crafts on Day 3. A list of materials for hygiene kits is listed on page 49.
Basic Plan

The chart below shows the basic plan for Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure.

Each part is designed to work with the other. We hope this Vacation Bible School (VBS) plan will be an enriching and moving experience for all who participate. Plans for other models can be found online with the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jesus learns at the Temple</td>
<td>Jesus reaches out to the</td>
<td>Jesus brings wholeness to</td>
<td>Jesus calls and sends out</td>
<td>Jesus calls us to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 2:41-51</td>
<td>Samaritan woman at the</td>
<td>Jarius’ daughter and the</td>
<td>disciples to spread God’s</td>
<td>peace, the Parable of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>well</td>
<td>woman Luke 8:40-56</td>
<td>word</td>
<td>Good Samaritan Luke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
<td><strong>Mission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is Africa University?</td>
<td>Africa University welcomes</td>
<td>AU seeks to bring</td>
<td>AU recruits and trains</td>
<td>AU helps train people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students to attend from</td>
<td>wholeness i.e.</td>
<td>church leaders</td>
<td>i.e. The Institute of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>everywhere on the</td>
<td>The School of Public</td>
<td></td>
<td>Peace, Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continent of Africa</td>
<td>Health and Sciences</td>
<td></td>
<td>and Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggested</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggested</strong></td>
<td><strong>Suggested</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theme song for the week:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jesus, Jesu</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wa-Wa-Wa</strong></td>
<td><strong>Servant Song</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus, We are Here --</td>
<td>UMH #432</td>
<td>Emimimo</td>
<td>TFWS #2222</td>
<td>Siyahamba TFWS #2235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesu, Tawa Pano</td>
<td></td>
<td>TFWS #2124</td>
<td>Tino Tenda, Jesu</td>
<td>Shine, Jesus, Shine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFWS #2273</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kum-By-Yah</td>
<td>TFWS # 2081</td>
<td>TFWS #2173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UMH # 494</td>
<td></td>
<td>Let There Be Peace on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Earth UMH #431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*UMH = The United Methodist Hymnal  TFWS = The Faith We Sing song book*

This VBS uses a rotational approach. Through this approach, children have different leaders in leadership roles, with adult group guides leading the children to each station. Though this curriculum is written for children from the age of 4 through 6th grade, we encourage the 7th through 12th graders to be Junior Adventure Guides. They would apprentice under the guidance of the adult guides and help the younger children with any activities or projects. Of course, Safe Sanctuary policies should be followed for the good of everyone involved in VBS.
**Rotation Schedule**

Following are two suggested rotation schedules -- depending on the number of children you have attending and the number of adult adventure guides you have. Your VBS team should use a rotation plan that best works for your church. You may need to consider time to change classes and bathroom breaks, if needed.

The first example is for 3 groups and takes a total of 2 hours and 40 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Rotation Off</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 minutes</td>
<td>Refreshments and Opening Assembly</td>
<td>Refreshments and Opening Assembly</td>
<td>Refreshments and Opening Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Victoria Falls/Music</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>Crafts, Games (both set up)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Games, Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Music, Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Victoria Falls/Music</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Victoria Falls/Music</td>
<td>Story, crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second example is 4 groups and takes 1 hour and 35 minutes. The music may be incorporated into the Safari Adventure/Game time or the AU Information Center/Mission time. Depending upon the focus of the day, you could alternate which time to use the music. Particularly with younger participants, adding music to the AU Information time allows the children to engage more.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>Group 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Opening Assembly</td>
<td>Opening Assembly</td>
<td>Opening Assembly</td>
<td>Opening Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes</td>
<td>Griot's Tree Hut/Bible Story</td>
<td>Safari Adventure/Games</td>
<td>AU's Info Center/Mission</td>
<td>Rainforest Creations/Crafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
<td>Closing Assembly</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Setting the Stage

An African theme would be appropriate. One possibility is to use an acacia tree silhouette, which can be found online by searching for acacia tree silhouette. It could be enlarged to fit a wall.

**Trees** may be made using empty round tubes of various sizes. Tubes may be found free at carpet stores and then cut to size. Wrapping the tubes in brown packing paper (found for free at many local retail stores because they have their stock packed in it from vendors), adds to the reality. Draw black magic marker lines on the paper, turn it over and give it a liberal dose of glue, then wrap the paper around the tube. This gives the appearance of bark. Use rubber bands to hold the paper in place while it dries. Either remove the rubber bands, or keep them in place, and add real weeds or ferns to them to give them a jungle look. Use real weed grasses or palm branch/leaves at the top for a palm tree effect.

To make these trees stand upright, turn card tables upside down and place the trees onto the legs, or invite a congregation member who loves woodworking to make individual stands by crisscrossing two small 1x4 boards and attaching a 3-4 ft. post to it. Use brown burlap or camouflage material to cover up the bottom of the table or 1x4 boards and wrap around the bases of the trees. More trees really create a jungle atmosphere.

**Vines** are made by twisting or crunching brown and/or green pieces of rolled crepe paper which may then be hung from the trees or ceilings. Add cutouts of insects for added fun. From experience these vines should be above the height – with arms extended up - of the tallest child attending.

To make hallways look like **paths** use tall fern and grass weeds to form the sides of the road. Use many different types if you wish, to create the look of authenticity. These may be cut and made to stand upright along the walls by crisscrossing and taping in place either green or beige garden twine and then weaving in the grasses. As the grass has a tendency to dry and shrink during the week, use as many as you can. **Walls** may also be decorated in this style. Let the droppings stay on the floor to make it look more real.

Search the internet for **African animal, insect, bird, and plant pictures** and then cut out to add to the theme. These may be hidden behind some of the weeds or hanging from the ceiling or vines. Blow-up vinyl animals and fake flowers may be bought inexpensively from Oriental Trading or the dollar stores and used throughout. Stuffed animals are also good if children want to share and may be added to the base of the trees.

**Recordings** of water and animal sounds are a fun addition and may be played on a boom box. A sleep sound machine could also be used. Place discreetly behind some rocks in the entry area, hallways or wherever fits with your VBS program.

A **waterfall** may be made by hanging blue and silver streamers in a doorway or on a wall. Crepe paper streamers will work as well but the thinner the better. Creating a waterfall as the entry way to the Bible storytelling time is a fun way for the children to be introduced to this station. The storyteller could meet them outside the waterfall and then invite the children to enter through the waterfall.

**Rocks** may be made by stuffing brown paper bags with newspaper, folding over the ends and taping the bag shut. Gray rocks may be made by stuffing plastic grocery bags and spray painting them gray. Also rocks may be made by taking a variety of boxes, denting them, and then covering them with papier-mâché. After they have dried they may be spray painted with a combination of browns, grays, and black shades of spray paint. There are some combo sprays already available at hardware stores. These rocks may be used to make the base of a waterfall, placed around the base of the trees, or mark the entry way into any of the different rotation areas.
Some possible names for the activity areas:

- Music: Victoria Falls Music Room
- Bible story time: Griot’s Tree Hut (The home of the wise storyteller)
- Crafts: Rain Forest Creations
- Games: Safari Adventure
- Mission: AU’s Info Center
- Food: Maize Corner

Refreshments may also be given fun names such as:

- Pizza: Monkey Pie
- Applesauce: Green Slime (algae from river)
- Cherry Tomatoes: Turtle Eggs
- Chocolate Chip Cookies: Fried Ant Cookies
- Grapes: Crocodile Eyes
- Cucumber Slices: Lily Pads
- Celery w/Cream Cheese and Raisins: Ants on a Log
- Brownies: lion patties

The Opening and Closing

The opening and closing to the VBS are essential to gather everyone and to bring focus for the activities, check attendance, receive the AU offering, and then at closing to sum up the activities for the session and report to the group as to the offering.

A puppet may be used with a youth or adult as the voice for the puppet. A formal puppet theatre isn’t necessary; if you are having opening and closing in the sanctuary, gathering space or fellowship hall, just a table with a skirt will suffice. This area could be decorated with camouflage material surrounded by trees and/or rocks.

A possible puppet to be purchased is the Lion Puppet by Folkmanis Puppets, available through Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.

We recognize that all Vacation Bible Schools may not be able to afford this puppet. Other options include making a puppet, borrowing one from another community, or having a person pretend to be the lion.

We have used a lion as the character of the school because of its connection and identity to Africa. The character is named Tinashe – pronounced T-na-shay – which translates as “We have God” or “God is with us.” The character may be portrayed by either female or male.

The daily opening and closing is meant to orient the participants to the Biblical story of the day and its connection to AU.

Alternative Openings and Closings may be found online in the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign resources on the East Ohio Conference Website.
Day 1 Opening

EMCEE
Hi, everyone! Welcome to Vacation Bible School! Throughout this week, we are going to be sharing about how Jesus calls us to grow and how a very special place in Zimbabwe, Africa called Africa University helps others grow in their minds and in their faith.

Tinashe (the Lion) (pronounced t-na-shay)
RRRROOOOOOOAAAAARRRRR! RRRROOOOOOOAAAAARRRRR!

EMCEE
Is everybody okay? Wow, I was startled for a moment. I haven’t heard anything that loud for a while. Who are you?

Tinashe
I’m sorry, did I scare you? I was just trying to do what the lion does at the beginning of the movie.

EMCEE
What lion at the beginning of the movie? You mean like the lion that roars? Boys and girls, do you know anything about that? (Listen for responses) Oh, by the way, my name is _______ and these are the girls and boys who will join us on the adventure of this year’s Vacation Bible School!

Tinashe
Mangwananee!! My name is Tinashe! My name means “We have God” or to put it another way, “God is with us!” I’m here to help with Vacation Bible School, and I know a few things about Africa University! Each day will be an adventure, to learn something that Jesus wants us to learn and to share something about Africa University!

EMCEE
That’s great! So what is our theme for today’s adventure?

Tinashe
Well today, we are going to learn about how Jesus amazed his teachers when he was 12 years old.

EMCEE
He amazed his teachers? How did Jesus do that?

Tinashe
Well, Jesus walked with his family to Jerusalem to visit the temple there. When it was time to leave, the family thought Jesus was with them. He actually stayed behind and the teachers in the Temple were astonished by what he said.

EMCEE
Yeah, so what did he say?

Tinashe
Well, we need to wait until story time, just a little later in our adventure, to find out. What do we need to do right now?
EMCEE
Right now, we need to receive our offering for Africa University. Each day, we will take an offering to support the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign. The goal of the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign is to raise $1.5 million through charitable donations to build a new residence hall that will safely house 90 female students. Your generous donation will help to make this dream a reality and it will change the lives of generations of future Africa University students. We will learn more about Africa University and the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign each day at VBS.

Tinashe
That's great!

EMCEE
(EMCEE selects children to take the offering, receives offering and offers a prayer of thanksgiving for each child present learning and growing.) So it’s time to start our adventure! Are you ready, girls and boys? (Children shout back) Are you ready Tinashe?

Tinashe
RRRROOOOOAAAARRRR! Let’s go!

EMCEE
That's right, we are out of here!

Day 1 Closing

EMCEE
Hi Everyone! Welcome back from your adventures! Did you have fun today? (solicit responses to children's experiences)

Tinashe
RRRRRROOOOOOOAAAAAAAAARRR! I know I had a good time today.

EMCEE
What did you learn, Tinashe?

Tinashe
I learned that Jesus grew in wisdom and in strength. He went to school like we do! I also learned that Africa University is located in the country of Zimbabwe in Africa, and that students from all over Africa may go there to learn and to grow. I learned that we may help female students have a place to live on campus.

EMCEE
Let’s not forget that we had great refreshments, we had a lot of fun playing together and made a craft!

Tinashe
Wow, a lot of great stuff happens at Vacation Bible School. I can’t wait until tomorrow. But, I wonder how we did?

EMCEE
Well, looks like everyone got back okay. What do you mean, how we did?
Tinashe
Well, if our offering each day goes to the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign to build a dorm for female students at Africa University, I wonder how we did?

EMCEE
Let’s take a look. (Reveals chart showing the amount of the offering. EMCEE explains how much was raised.) That’s what our offering was today. Can we do more? Let’s sing our theme song, “Jesus, We Are Here.”

Tinashe
So, we will continue tomorrow?

EMCEE
Yes, we will. I hope everyone had a great time. We will get together tomorrow at the same time and learn more about Jesus and about Africa University.

Tinashe
RRRRRRROOOOOOOAAAAAAAAARRRRRR!!! We will have a roaring good time! See everyone tomorrow!
Day 2 Opening

EMCEE
Hi boys and girls! Welcome to VBS! How is everyone today? (Response) I am glad to hear it. Tinashe, how are you today?

Tinashe
RRRRRROOOOOOOOOOOOOAAAAAARRRRR! I am doing great! I am so excited to be at Vacation Bible School this year, and especially today.

EMCEE
What’s so special about today?

Tinashe
Well, being a lion, I don't typically have a chance to spend much time with people. I really like learning about Jesus and who he is. And today, we are going to hear about how Jesus calls us to reach out!

EMCEE
How did Jesus do that?

Tinashe
On a hot day, Jesus stopped by a well and met a woman who believed differently than him.

EMCEE
So what did Jesus do?

Tinashe
He spoke with her, just like we are speaking to each other now and that conversation changed her life.

EMCEE
Wow! That sounds like a great story to hear today.

Tinashe
Yeah, it is a great story, from the gospel of John. There’s just one thing that bothers me.

EMCEE
What is it?

Tinashe
Remember I said it was a really hot day? Jesus began the conversation by asking the woman for a drink of water from the well.

EMCEE
(hesitantly) Yeah ...

Tinashe
Why didn’t he just turn the faucet on?

EMCEE
People didn’t have faucets like we do now. They had to carry their water from the well back to their homes.
Tinashe
Wow … just like the watering hole.

EMCEE
You might say that … now how about singing our theme song together? (Everyone sings “Jesus, We are Here”)

Tinashe
That was great. Can we take our offering for Africa University now?

EMCEE
Sure. (EMCEE selects the children to take the offering, receives the offering, and offers a prayer for the work of this VBS and AU) We'll let everyone know at our closing how we did today.

Tinashe
So are we off on our adventure?

EMCEE
Yes, we are. All the activities today will help us learn about how Africa University reaches out by training persons in ministry, healing arts, and agriculture to improve the whole world. It's time to go, so we are out of here!

Day 2 Closing

EMCEE
Hi everyone! How was your adventure today? (solicit responses) Did you like the story? (solicit responses) What did you learn about Africa University? (solicit responses) I wonder how Tinashe did? Tinashe!

Tinashe
RRRRRRRRROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOARRRRRRR!!! Did I learn a lot today! The story about the woman at the well was so wonderful! That Jesus would want to reach out to everyone, not just the people who were like him … that Jesus would be able to share like that with me, that is so great!

EMCEE
Yes it is. What did you learn about Africa University today?

Tinashe
Well, on the continent of Africa, Africa University reaches out to everyone to give them a place to learn, and then reaches out by sending those students back to their home countries to help there. They send them back as pastors, as nurses and doctors, as farmers and peace workers!

EMCEE
Wow! You learned a lot. And there are some other people who are reaching out in the name of Jesus to help AU.

Tinashe
Yeah? Who might that be?

EMCEE
All of these friends here! They are helping to educate students at AU! They are reaching out to those students in Jesus' name!
Tinashe
That is wonderful! So, how did we do today?

EMCEE
Let's see: (Reveal board with progress on it) We sure are making progress, but I think we can do better. Can we do better, boys and girls?

Tinashe
I know we can.

EMCEE
Let's sing our theme song! (Everyone sings, "Jesus, We Are Here")

Tinashe
So what's up for tomorrow?

EMCEE
Tomorrow, we will hear a story about Jesus' bringing wholeness to others.

Tinashe
A whole what? Like a donut?

EMCEE
No, wholeness. Jesus helps people find wholeness as they are healed. And we'll hear about how Africa University helps to heal the people of Africa!

Tinashe
A whole lot of healing going on! I can't wait! RRRRRROOOOOOOAAAAARRRR!!!

EMCEE
That's great! I look forward to seeing all of you tomorrow too. For today, we are out of here!
Day 3 Opening

EMCEE
Hi boys and girls! How is everyone today? Are you ready for another great time at VBS? We hope you all are having a great week! Hey, has anyone seen Tinashe today? (Response) Let’s call! TINASHE!!!!!

Tinashe
(weakly, feebly) rrooaarr! Owwwwww! Owwwwww!

EMCEE
Tinashe, what’s wrong?

Tinashe
Oh, I have a thorn in my paw and I can’t remove it! Oh, it hurts, it hurts! Owwwwwwwwwwww!

EMCEE
Well, let’s see here. Oh, that will come out. Let me pull it!!!!

Tinashe
Will it hurt? Oh, don’t do it if it’s going to hurt!! Owwwwwwww!

EMCEE
Just a second … (pulls thorn) There!

Tinashe
Oh, that feels much better. Oh, thank you. You helped to heal me!

EMCEE
Yes, I helped your paw feel whole, just like Jesus helping the little girl and woman feel better.

Tinashe
That’s our story for today, isn’t it?

EMCEE
Yes, it is. Let’s sing our theme song as we move toward beginning our adventure soon! (Sing “Jesus We are Here”)

EMCEE
Today we are going to learn how students at Africa University are learning about how to bring wholeness to people’s lives by helping them to live healthy lives.

Tinashe
I liked how you helped me, but I would have loved to have one of the students help me.

EMCEE
We better get that cleaned up and bandaged soon. But first, let’s take our offering for Africa University. (EMCEE selects children to take offering, receives offering and prays) We’ll see how we did later on.
May I go on the adventure today?

I think so. We need to get your paw cleaned and bandaged. Boys and girls, why don’t you get started? Lots to do today! And it’s time, so we are out of here! (Be sure to bandage the paw before the closing.)

Day 3 Closing

(When the children have arrived, Sing “Jesus, We Are Here”)

Tinashe, are you feeling better?

Yes, and I understand how Jesus helps us find wholeness … can you imagine … just touching Jesus’ robe and being healed! And after 12 years of being sick! … And what about that young girl … she became alive again after Jesus took her hand and told her to get up. How amazing is that!! What a story!

Imagine how Africa University helps students to grow in their understanding of how they can bring wholeness. Isn’t it great? And, we are helping them to become whole students.

What’s our offering going for again?

We are raising money to help build a dorm for female students who are attending Africa University. The money that we are collecting this week will be put together with other money from United Methodist churches all over East Ohio so that we can build a dorm that will hold 90 students. Because of the lack of on-campus housing for girls, many have to walk very far every day to attend Africa University. This can be unsafe for them, so our Bishop has charged those of us in East Ohio with raising enough money to build a new residence hall to allow students to live on campus and receive an education in a safe environment.

I’m excited … how did we do today?

Let’s see. (Reveal) Remember, we have two more days to go!

I’m so excited. Where are we going next? What do we see happen next?
EMCEE
Tomorrow, we are going to celebrate music and crafts again. We will share in games and hear a mission story about how Africa University is recruiting and training church leaders. And we’ll hear the story, from the gospel of Matthew, of how Jesus called the disciples saying that there is a need for workers and then instructs them as he sends them out. We will also hear about how Jesus called all who followed him to become like children to see the Kingdom of God.

Tinashe
You mean adults are to become children like us?

EMCEE
It’s something like that. And remember, we’ll hear about how at Africa University, students - whom God has called to ministry are learning how to serve God in the Church!

Tinashe
It sounds like another great session!

EMCEE
Yes, it will be, but for today, we are out of here!
Day 4 Opening

EMCEE
Hi everyone! Welcome to our Vacation Bible School today. I hope you’re ready for a great time. Hi Tinashe! I hope your paw is better.

Tinashe
Hi, EMCEE! It’s much better, thanks!

EMCEE
That’s great! Today, we will have our Bible story and learn about those whom God has called and more importantly, how they are called!

Tinashe
I wonder if God is calling me?

EMCEE
Do you think God could call a lion to ministry? What do you think, boys and girls? (Solicit responses)

Tinashe
I sure hope God could call me, but I still have some growing and learning to do before I can know.

EMCEE
The students at Africa University are learning about how God is calling them too, though they are a little further along than you are Tinashe. They are seeking to follow God and serve the people through the church.

Tinashe
And I think that it’s time to help them.

EMCEE
It is. Let’s sing our theme song first. (EMCEE selects children to take offering, leads the singing of “Jesus We Are Here,” receives offering and prays) We will see later how we did in total for the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign.

Tinashe
So, is it time to go?

EMCEE
Yes, it is. It has been a great week and we share one more time today. So, we are out of here!
Day 4 Closing

(After all have arrived)

Tinashe
Have any of you seen (EMCEE)? Where is s/he?

EMCEE
(enters) Hi everyone! Did you miss me?

Tinashe
Yes, we did. Where were you?

EMCEE
I was helping some friends who were having some problems about getting along. So, I was helping them to work on their concerns.

Tinashe
You were acting like the Good Samaritan?

EMCEE
Yes, and students at Africa University are being trained to help people around the world and in Africa to help people make peace. That’s one thing that the parable of the Good Samaritan is all about. But, that is tomorrow’s Bible story and AU’s Info Center time!

Tinashe
So, I’m soooo wondering ... how did we do today?

EMCEE
Well, let’s take a look. (Reveal) What a marvelous total. And, we still have one more day to go! Yeah!!

Tinashe
That sounds wonderful!

EMCEE
As we close today, let us join together in our theme song, “Jesus we are here.” (All sing) Everyone have a good night and we’ll see you all tomorrow for our final day of Vacation Bible School. Until then, we are out of here!
Day 5 Opening

EMCEE
Hi everyone! Are you ready for our last Vacation Bible School adventure today? (responses) Tinashe, are you ready?

Tinashe
RRRRRRROOOOOOOOOOOOOOOARRRRRR!!! Hi boys and girls! Hope you’re all doing well today!

EMCEE
Hope you are too!

Tinashe
So, what will we hear about today on our adventure?

EMCEE
Today we are going to hear the story of the Good Samaritan.

Tinashe
I’ve been thinking about this since our closing yesterday. Good Samaritan. That’s funny. Were there any bad Samaritans?

EMCEE
It was not so much that the Samaritans were bad, but the people who lived in Jesus’ country did not like or mix with Samaritans. In fact, we have heard about Samaritans before.

Tinashe
We have? When was that?

EMCEE
Earlier this week we heard the story of the woman at the well. Remember, that woman was a Samaritan, too. Part of what Jesus is trying to teach us is that even though people may be different from us, we can still love and live with them.

Tinashe
That sounds like practicing peace, to live and love your neighbor.

EMCEE
Exactly right! And we will hear about how Africa University has an Institute of Peace, Leadership, and Governance and we will see how the students at Africa University are trying to live out that parable of the Good Samaritan.

Tinashe
That sounds great. I really like Africa University. It is a wonderful place.

EMCEE
Yes, it is. And it’s time to receive our offering for today. (EMCEE selects children to take the offering, receives offering and prays.)
Tinashe
I am excited to see how we are doing to help the female students at Africa University.

EMCEE
I am excited, too. But for now, we need to be about our adventure. Are you ready, boys and girls? Are you ready, Tinashe? We are out of here.

Day 5 Closing
There are many different approaches to closing Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure Africa University Vacation Bible School. The important piece is to include Tinashe.

• One approach would be to gather in a circle outside or in the opening and closing meeting space and share thank-yous and sing some of the songs of the week.
• Another possibility would be to have a full-blown VBS celebration where the children may share with the community what they have experienced each day.
• Still another possibility would be to show slides from the week to the assembly with music.
• Do any or a combination of these during the last day of VBS or have the celebration at another time, such as Sunday Worship.

No matter how you close, appropriate thanks should be given to all who have helped and led VBS. And most importantly, please share the success of the offering with all and celebrate and pray for Africa University in your closing.
Alternative Openings & Closings

Day 1 Opening

Leader:
HI EVERYONE! WELCOME to AFRICA! Has anyone ever BEEN to Africa before? (going under the assumption that nobody has, continue ... IF an adult or child has been to Africa, invite them up with you to add to the discussion or to just be up there!)

Can anyone find Africa on a map? (Project a giant World Map on the Wall, or have a Giant Map in the room – if an older kid volunteers, let them come up and point to it, if nobody does, continue on yourself!)

Here is where Africa is on the map ... it’s pretty big, isn’t it? This entire week we will be “traveling” to Africa to not only find out what Africa is like and learn about it ... BUT we will be learning all about some other exciting things ... A college that is in Zimbabwe, a country in Africa. It’s called Africa University! And it has students from ALL OVER Africa that attend there! We will get to learn all about what kinds of things the students learn, and what kinds of fun things that they do in their free time. AND most importantly, we will be learning about how Jesus calls us to grow, and how the students at the University help others to grow in their minds and their faith. That is A LOT of things to do in college!

DO you guys think that we can pack ALL of that stuff into ONE VBS night? Or even ALL of them! I think we can do it!

EVERYONE UP ON THEIR FEET! Let’s start us out! We are going to learn a greeting game from the Zimbabwe area! People greet each other with Sorida. Let’s say that! Repeat after me! SOAR (Soar) EEDA (eeda) AGAIN - SOAR (Soar) EEDA (eeda). OK all together! SORIDA!

OK- let’s do the clapping that comes with it! Turn to the person on your right! This is your partner! TEACHERS! Jump in and grab someone who needs a partner! We’re going to learn the clapping to this greeting and there is a little song that goes with it! Many times children will play this clapping game and use it as a greeting or a well-wish. OK! Here are the words. (you can have the words projected on the wall or you can pass them out on half-sheets of paper).

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

*Practice this for 5 minutes – only the first day, they will be more familiar with it as the days go by.

Good job everyone!!!! OK everyone sit down again for a minute. Today/Tonight we’re going to learn how Jesus amazed his teachers when he was just 12 years old! Can you imagine! I wonder how he did that! Have a wonderful time at University today/tonight, and I will see you all back here at our closing!
Day 1 Closing

Leader:

Welcome back, students! How did you guys do today on your very first day at Africa U, in Africa? Did you learn a lot? Are you still sorting it out? Let’s have one round of “Sorida” to get us situated – on your FEET! Grab a partner!

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

WONDERFUL! You guys are getting the hang of it! The language we are using in our clap greeting is called “Shona” and it’s primarily used in Zimbabwe. Where did we hear the word Zimbabwe before? (it’s the name of the African country that Africa U is in!) How did you guys do today in your art class?

* Let a few kids answer quickly

Alright, what class would like to stand up and tell us something they learned about Jesus in our story today? (choose a class – make sure teachers are aware that this will happen every day, so they can tell their class to pay special attention so that they can take a turn one day/night at the closing talking)

Tell the children: Jesus grew up in wisdom and strength. He went to school like all of you do! Would anyone like to add anything else about our story about Jesus today?

* Let them answer a few things if there is time, or just one

In Shona the word for “good-bye” is: Sara Mushe. It’s interesting that this is the phrase because “Mushe” means Lord when translated alone. Let’s say that together a couple times so that we will be ready for when we go home. Sara (Sara) Mushe (Mushe). Sara mushe! GOOD JOB everyone! Right now, we have some of our youth volunteers (or the pastor if you like!) are going to come up and tell us something about our mission for the week!

* Discussing first part of mission and introducing what they will work on tomorrow while they’re there, and also tell them they can bring in any coins they’d like to donate in the basket for our mission.

Thank you (youth)! EVERYONE UP on your feet! It’s time to say … WHAT?? What do we say to each other at the end of our first day as students at Africa U? SARA MUSHE! Good job everyone! Congratulations on your first day at Africa U!

* Give any announcements for the next day here!

Let’s quiet our hearts, and join hands with those around you, and get ready for our closing prayer …

Lord, we thank you for the opportunity to take this journey together, to another continent and into another country … We are walking with you to places we are imagining and learning about, and we are trying to do the work you want us to do. Help us to keep compassion and understanding in our hearts as we take this wonderful journey with you! In your name we pray these things, AMEN.
Day 2 Opening

Leader:

HOW are you guys doing today! Are you tired from your school adventures last night? Or READY TO GO!!!! Let’s GET UP and grab a partner and do a round of our Sorida! READY?!

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

That was GREAT you guys! Ok – that’s our clapping sing that is used as a greeting in Zimbabwe, but Africa is A HUGE continent, right? (if you used a projection of Africa on Day One, you can put it up now) There are SO many countries in Africa. Zimbabwe is only ONE of 54. And while we can’t go over ALL of them this week, we will be talking about a few of them. (If you have decorated with signs of the names of the countries Africa U students have come from, point to Zimbabwe, and then our next country)

Today let’s learn how to say hello if you are in The Democratic Republic of the Congo! They speak FRENCH there as their official language! And you would say, “Bonjour!” to them when saying hello. Bon means good, and Jour means day ... so if you translated it directly, you’d be saying “Good Day!” to them. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a multilingual country where an estimated total of 242 languages are spoken! Kituba, Swahili, Tshiluba, and Lingala are the country’s four national languages. That is A LOT of languages to be recognized in ONE country. Kind of cool.

In Kituba hello is: Mbóté! (m-BOH-the)     In Tshiluba hello is: Betwabu (Bèètù abu)
In Swahili hello is: Habari (haBAree)    In Lingala hello is: Mbóté (m-BOH-the)

(have the children say the greetings too)

Saying hello to people is not just a greeting – it can also be a way to reach out to people. Today at Africa U we are going to do SO many things! One of them will be to learn how Jesus calls us to reach out. One conversation with someone can change a life. Can you imagine? With God ALL things are possible, so we know anything can happen!

Have a good day at Africa U! I can’t wait to hear all about what you learned later!
Day 2 Closing

Leader:

Hey! Keep on your feet! SORIDA!!!! Grab a partner!

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

OK! Have a seat everyone! What have you guys learned about Africa U?

*Let the kids answer

So we learned that AMAZING things can happen if we all work together to do God’s work! When we all practice teamwork, we can accomplish all kinds of things. Students at the University learn all about things like agriculture and medicine. They learn to be pastors, peace workers and teachers. These students work hard and get a wonderful education. Then they are able to go back to any country in Africa and help people. What can people do with a medical education? (doctors, nurses, emergency responders) What can people do by learning about agriculture? (farming and planting food and teaching others how to maintain food to grow for families all over villages) One more! What can people who learn to be pastors do? (teaching people about God, bringing God to all, teaching the Bible … praying with people – leading them) It sounds like the students at Africa University are learning more than just taking classes to graduate. They’re becoming educated, and they will be able to use that education to take back to the people of Africa. This sounds like it’s pretty important. Can you imagine teaching people about GOD who may not really know anything about Him?

What was your project today everyone? (UMCOR kits) God’s mission for us: Helping people. Bringing His word to people. Reaching people! It sounds like you guys had a BIG day today! Which class wants to tell us about our Bible story today? What was our story? (Jesus and the woman at the well) It’s important to reach out to ALL people – not just people like us. Jesus was really good at that. He talked to all different people, not just people that were like him. Even when other people criticized him for doing it. He stood his ground and he taught everyone that God loves ALL people, and we should always reach out to them to make them comfortable, feel cared for, and most of all, teach them about God and HIS love.

Let’s call our youth volunteers up again to talk to us about our challenge. *Youth (or Pastor/Adult volunteers) talk about saving for the African U mission – (in class teachers will have discussed safe places to live first or second day) talk about collecting money from this week through the end of August. How we can collect at church or at home. Chores, allowance money, maybe asking family or neighbors. Giving a postcard with the logo of Africa U on it and a thank you for supporting the mission written from the child to hand out to people contributing – each child will receive 10 postcards to take home to use. (if all are used, they can come back for more)

*Instructions for Day 3

It’s time for us to GO BACK to our dorms now! Or, HOME!

*Closing prayer
Day 3 Opening

Leader:

Everyone UP ON YOUR FEET! Grab a partner and Lets do a round of Sorida!

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

That was AWESOME! Let’s sing it one more time! Good job! Now we can start out right! Who here has ever had a cold or the flu? Has anyone had strep throat? There are lots of times when maybe we’re sick and unhealthy. Students at Africa University learn many ways to bring wholeness to people’s lives, and to help people live healthy lives, too! We are going to learn a lot today at University. I can’t wait to hear all about your Bible story at closing! Our donation baskets are up by the story tree! Remember to leave your coins in there at story time under the tree! Have a great day at University!

Day 3 Closing

Leader:

Welcome everyone! How was your day/night at University?!? (have them point to the sign in the room for each country you mention) Who can find the sign for Ethiopia in the room? Who can find the sign for Cameroon? Who can find the sign for Zambia? These are three more countries in Africa where students at the University are from! Some of the countries that students are from are very far away from the school. For example, if you drove from Ethiopia to Zimbabwe, it would take you three days. If it takes three days to drive from your home to school, you MIGHT be late for class, right???

Does anyone remember what they’ve learned this week about students and where they’re from? Some students come from so far away, that they cannot go home at night. They need to live at school, like a lot of the college kids here in the States. However … we are learning this week that there aren’t enough rooms for everyone who goes to the school. It would be very hard to get your schoolwork done if you don’t have somewhere to sleep at night, wouldn’t it?

Did everyone remember to leave your coins in the baskets at the story tree? Who remembers what our coins are being collected for? (to make money to build a women’s dorm so that all of the women at the University will have a safe place to sleep and they will be able to concentrate on their studies and being able to go out into the world and do God’s work.)

Ok Students! It’s time for us to call it a day/night for Day Three! In Ethiopia the official language is Amharic, although English, Oromo, Arabic, Italian, and French are also common. We say “good-bye” in Amharic like this: Behina (Behina) Huni (Huni) Let’s do that again! Behina Huni!

Let’s settle down and grab hands for our closing prayer …

*Closing Prayer
Day 4 Opening

Leader:

Sorida everyone! Sorida! How is Everyone today? UP ON YOUR FEET! Grab a partner and Lets do our round of Sorida!

Sorida - Hand Clapping Song

(Verse 1)
Sorida, sorida
Ri-da ri-da

(Verse 2)
Da da da, da da da
Ri-da ri-da

Today we’re going to learn a new greeting from the country of Mozambique! The official language of Mozambique is actually Portuguese. To say “hello” in Portuguese you would say, “Olá”. People in Mozambique greet each other in a few different ways. They kiss on the cheek, or a simple clap on the shoulder, or hugging. Let’s take a minute and find people around the room and greet them with an “Olá” and either a clap on the shoulder or a hug and move on to another person. Try to greet several people around the room until I call TIME!

*Give them one to two minutes to greet one another, then call time

When you greet people and hug or clap each other on the shoulder, there is something joy-filled in this, and makes us feel good! It’s really starting us out right for Day Four! Can you BELIEVE that it’s Day Four! Today we will learn how God calls all of us. Does he call us on the phone?!?!?! (Noo! Haha!) I wonder what that MEANS and how the kids at University will hear God's call. I will be excited to hear all about it at our closing! Have a great day/night at Africa U!

Day 4 Closing

Leader:

Hi everybody! How was your day today at Africa University? Did you learn a lot in your music studies today? Music is extremely important in Africa. It is a form of communication, and an important purpose in African society. Music is in the center of events like marriage and birth, hunting, politics, and death, and more. A person called a griot is a poet or praise singer who has a knowledge of oral tradition that is passed down from one generation to the next generation. They HAVE to know the traditional songs and they also have to be able to ad-lib on the spot about current events and random occurrences. Did you learn any interesting songs today?

*Let a few kids answer

Which class would like to tell us about our Bible story today? (Jesus calls and sends out disciples to spread God’s Word) Today we’re going to find Nigeria in the room – can anyone find our Nigeria sign? Nigeria’s official language is English! And we know how to say “good-bye” in English already, don’t we? Nigeria has several other languages that people speak, so we will pick one to learn how to say “good-bye”. The language is called Hausa. We say “good-bye” in Hausa like this: Ban Kwana. Let’s try that … Ban (Ban) Kwana (Kwana) Good job! Alright, let’s say it all together! BAN KWANA!

*Make any announcements for tomorrow

*Closing Prayer
Storytellers Process

Thanks for taking on the responsibility of teaching our children about Jesus and his encounters through story time.

You will find the storytelling process for all five days here. It is important that you know what was shared as each day relates to those before it. These process notes are for your edification as you develop 3 or 4 stories, one for each age group:

- Age 4 - going into Kindergarten
- Going into Grades One and Two
- Going into Grades Three and Four
- Going into Grades Five and Six

Each VBS will determine the size and scope of each age group. Some may choose inter-age groups. As you develop your story, please keep the group with whom you are sharing in mind. If there is a youth component, you will want to develop a story for them as well.

Any way you want to adapt and share the Bible story is great: play, skit, acting it out, with objects to hold, by asking questions. Make the story participatory, not a monologue, so the children feel as if they are part of the story.

These are process notes. They are not your story. Your story will develop as you make the story belong to you. If you need help, don’t hesitate to ask your pastor or your VBS committee/team.

HAVE FUN! It’s going to be a great week!

One goal of this week is to introduce our children to Africa University. Africa University is a United Methodist-related institution in Zimbabwe, Africa. In the Bible storytelling time, we will be relating specific stories in the Gospels that show Jesus learning and teaching, healing, calling, and reaching out to others. Here are the storytelling themes for each day:

- Day 1
  Jesus Calls Us to Learn
- Day 2
  Jesus Calls Us to Reach Out to Others
  Samaritan Woman at the Well, John 4:4-15; 19-26
- Day 3
  Jesus Calls Us to Help Bring Wholeness
  Healing of Jarius’ Daughter and the Woman, Luke 8:40-56
- Day 4
  Jesus Calls Us to Spread God’s Word
  Jesus Shares the Need for Workers and Disciples and then Sends Them Out,
  Matthew 9:35 –10:14
- Day 5
  Jesus Calls Us to Care for Others
  Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37
By the end of this Vacation Bible School, children should be able to understand:

- Jesus calls us to learn and study, to reach out to others, to bring wholeness (healing) to life, to share God’s Word with others, and to care for others, even if they are different from us,
- Africa University is a university for higher education in Zimbabwe, Africa,
- Africa University accepts students from all across Africa, AU assists in bringing wholeness to Africa, AU trains and recruits Christian leaders, and AU calls for us to care in peace for each other.

In storytelling, you will be responsible for sharing the message from the Bible selection of the day.

One way to approach storytelling and to keep the Africa theme alive is for each storyteller to become a griot, an African wise storyteller. We recommend the griot wear:

- Bright and colorful clothing.
- Females may wear a long skirt, shawl, and turban style scarf for the head.
- Males may wear loose baggy pants with a colorful shirt.
- Sandals are very appropriate for the feet.

As the children come into the room, greet them and have them sit on the floor in front of you.

The room could be set up as an outdoor area with a grove of trees or put together a small room making the room like a hut. Laying down a large piece of brown material to look like ground may complete the area. It would be here that the storyteller may sit on a stool and share the Bible story. Read the scripture before the children arrive, so you are very familiar with the story. Telling the story is best, rather than reading it. Children believe they are really listening to a griot.

Another fun way to have the children participate in the story is to let them wear tunics. These may be made very easily out of 18” – 20” wide material about 4’ in length. Cut a hole in the middle for the head. Tie a piece of thin rope around the waist. If you choose to have the children play act the story after it has been initially shared by the griot, longer tunics may be made for the adult characters in the different stories.
Day 1 Storytelling

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Learn
Luke 2:41-51 Jesus Teaches in the Temple

Please read the selected scripture and then tell the story in your own words.

They Found Him in the Temple Eugene Petersen’s The Message

Every year Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up as they always did for the Feast. When it was over and they left for home, the child Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents didn’t know it. Thinking he was somewhere in the company of pilgrims, they journeyed for a whole day and then began looking for him among relatives and neighbors. When they didn’t find him, they went back to Jerusalem looking for him.

The next day they found him in the Temple seated among the teachers, listening to them and asking questions. The teachers were all quite taken with him, impressed with the sharpness of his answers. But his parents were not impressed; they were upset and hurt.

His mother said, "Young man, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been half out of our minds looking for you."

He said, "Why were you looking for me? Didn’t you know that I had to be here, dealing with the things of my Father?" But they had no idea what he was talking about.

So he went back to Nazareth with them, and lived obediently with them. His mother held these things dearly, deep within herself. And Jesus matured, growing up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people.
Telling the Story

Going to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover feast was a common experience for most people of Jewish faith living in Judea at the time. The families traveled as an extended group, with many parents and children traveling together for safety.

The story surprises us on two counts:

1. Jesus learns from the teachers (rabbi, a word that means teacher) in the temple. He also teaches them. Children do teach us!

2. Mary’s response is often presented from a Biblical perspective, meaning that Mary didn’t get angry, she was just very concerned. That’s why Eugene Petersen’s *The Message* presentation of this passage is used, though any translation would be acceptable: “Young man, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been half out of our minds looking for you.” Imagine if you had lost your son or daughter as you were setting out on a long journey home. Perhaps Mary and Joseph’s reaction are exactly right, with the panic of emotion presented.

- Jesus responds with respect. Notice in the last paragraph of the scripture, he lived obediently with his parents. He was dealing with the things of God, the things of Jesus’ Father. Even though Mary and Joseph do not understand this, there is that aspect of parenting when we are unsure about our children, yet all we can do is parent them, graciously and responsibly.

- The Temple was the one place for Jesus to worship and learn. In Nazareth, there is a synagogue, a word that means assembly. It, too, was a place to worship, but also to study and learn and practice for worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.

- Jesus studies, he learns, he teaches throughout his whole life, and he obediently lives with his parents and he grows and matures in body and spirit.

- Jesus calls us to do the same.
Day 2 Storytelling

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Reach Out to Others
John 4:4-15; 19-26  Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well

Please read and familiarize yourself with the entire story (John 4:1-42). Then share the story, using the selected verses, in your own words.

In choosing the selected verses, John 4:4-15; 19-26, we have emphasized the woman at the well being accepted by Jesus and have chosen not to focus on the other issues implied in the verses not included, which reference her adultery.

The point of the story is that no matter how different we are, Jesus accepts us and loves us. Later in the week, we will tell the story of the Good Samaritan. Too often when we hear the word, Samaritan, we think of the good person who helped the person in need and think this is what defines a Samaritan. But, Jesus is attempting to make a different point: The Samaritans of his time are seen as outcasts by the people of Judea and are NOT accepted because they worship in the wrong way and they are not like the Jewish people. Jesus would have us understand that God loves and accepts them. Jesus is sharing that we should love and accept others who are not like us, accept them as brothers and sisters.

The reality is that the hatred between the Samaritans and the Judeans was worse than the discord between Rome and the Judeans, for in the Judeans’ eyes, the Samaritans are an abomination for not worshipping correctly. The Samaritans see the Judeans through the same eyes. But Jesus accepts this woman, who is an outcast. She is an outcast because she is a Samaritan. She is also an outcast, because she is at the well at noon.

Water was carried in large jars and the well was a place to meet up with friends and talk. You would probably want to go before the heat of the day in the afternoon. In fact, the busy time at the well was in the coolness of the morning. In our story, the woman comes at noon, so not only is she not accepted by Judeans, but she is not accepted by her community.

And Jesus asks her for a drink of water. This was really out of bounds on Jesus’ part, because they represent different communities. Yet, Jesus uses this moment to strike up a conversation and accept and affirm this woman.

Her response is a desire to share the message of Jesus’ acceptance. This is our calling, too. To tell the world what Jesus has done for us, and to love the world the way Jesus did, in accepting others.
Day 3 Storytelling

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Bring Wholeness
Luke 8:40-56 Jesus Heals in Response to Faith

Scripture: Luke 8:40-56 – Jairus' daughter is ill and so is the woman who touches Jesus' robe. This is a story of faith and healing. Please read the selected scripture ahead of time and then in your own words, tell the story to the children.

If time allows have the children reenact the story. If you have costumes available, let the children put these on and choose to be the characters of the story. This will reinforce the story and play acting can be fun, as well as using up some energy of active children.

Questions that you might ask:

- Do you think the woman was brave in what she did? Why or why not? Women were generally very submissive in their manner and would almost never approach a Jewish man on their own, especially a rabbi.

- How do you think the woman felt after she was healed? Happy, praising God? Wanting to just slip away again.

- How do you think she felt after she heard Jesus was looking for the person who had touched him? Was she scared that she might be in trouble; that she had done something wrong, that she had been caught? How do you [student] feel when questioned about something you have done? Do you try to deny it or blame someone else?

- How do you think Jairus felt when Jesus stopped to find out who had touched him and did not go right to Jairus' house? Angry, worried about his daughter, concerned about the woman or wondering why Jesus would even stop for a sick woman.
Day 4 Storytelling

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Spread God's Word
Matthew 9:35-10:14 The Need for Workers and Jesus Sends Out the 12 Disciples

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-10:14 – This is the story that sets the stage for Jesus sending out his disciples and then Jesus’ instructions when he does send them out. Please read the selected scripture ahead of time and then in your own words, tell the story to the children.

This story is really two stories. Matthew 9:35-38 shares that Jesus traveled all over teaching the Good News and healing people. Verse 37 is important to emphasize because it calls for the need of more workers. Chapter 10:1-4 gives the names of Jesus’ disciples. When telling the story you may want to add the children’s names to that list. If time allows have the children take turns acting like the disciples. Have them tell the other children that God loves them. Some of those children can pretend to not believe the “disciples” so the “disciples” should “shake off the dust on their feet” and move to another child to share the Good News that God loves them.

Questions that you might ask:

- How do you believe a disciple of Jesus would act? Kind, helpful to others – and what does that mean? How can you be helpful? Cleaning your room, helping with chores without being asked, helping a friend with homework, etc.
- Do you believe it would be hard work? Why or why not?
- How can someone your age help Jesus now? Solicit responses, but be prepared to offer suggestions like making cookies or a picture/card for someone who is homebound. Be a friend to someone new at school. Help out at the local food pantry with an adult.
Day 5 Storytelling

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Care for Others
Luke 10:25-37  The Good Samaritan

Please read and familiarize yourself with the story. Then share in your own words.

Sometimes we assume everyone knows this story, or that we know it well ourselves. Like comfort food, we hear its familiar words again. Try reading some different translations and paraphrases to get a fresh perspective on the story.

We need to remember that the Parable of the Good Samaritan begins with a question, “A religious leader asks, ‘What must I do to inherit eternal life?’” This person wants the big question answered. It almost sounds like he is looking for an insurance policy to guarantee eternal life.

Jesus’ response is first to answer the question with a question, “What do the scriptures say?” And the religious leader answers appropriately. But he doesn’t understand the scripture from Leviticus 19:18, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” He asks Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

To answer this query, Jesus tells the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Please see the discussion of the Samaritan vs. Judean people from Day 2 on page 30. The victim is cared for by someone that the victim would probably ignore, at best, or despise, at worst, if he had not been mugged.

The story is about the actions of someone who would not be seen as a neighbor, but who acts like a neighbor in spite of the hatred between Judeans and Samaritans.

Thereby Jesus calls us to stretch ourselves beyond the typical understanding of neighbor to echo the question from Cain and Abel in Genesis, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The answer to the neighbor question is very similar. YES!

The Samaritan even goes the unbelievable distance of agreeing to pay for the care of the person harmed, while the priest, the judge/religious lawyer/Temple official, each pass by the victim and don’t even attempt to help.

Of course, this is the punch line of the story, since the person asking the original question about “who is my neighbor?” is a Levite! He is one of the passersby! At the end of the story, when Jesus asks the religious questioner who he thinks was being the victim’s neighbor, the religious person can’t even bring himself to say “SAMARITAN,” he simply says, “The one who had mercy on him.”

To create peace in our world, we need to recognize that peace can only happen when we see all people in the world as our neighbors. Jesus calls us to see everyone as our neighbors. Maybe the first way to create peace in our world is to know who our neighbors are and to love them.
Day 1 Mission

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Learn
What is Africa University?

Our mission section for the week will focus on different parts of Africa University. Our goal is to help children and youth understand different aspects of the university. Our goal is also to encourage giving through the daily offering to the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign to construct a dorm on campus for female students.

Having maps and/or globes available on the first day will help participants understand the geography:

- Where we are located
- Where the continent of Africa is located (note the differences in size between the USA, Mississippi, and Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mutare)
- Identify some (or all) of the African nations
- What the environment in Africa is like:
  - Extremes of desert, jungle, rainforest
  - Temperature extremes, very hot and very cold
  - Latitudinal differences
  - Plants and animals

(A fun way of doing this is to use a small flashlight that you point at the spots on the map. Then allow the children to point them out using the flashlight. This reinforces what they are learning.)

- Talk about where Zimbabwe is
- Focus on Old Mutare
- Share about Old Mutare being an original Methodist Mission site from the 1800s
- Across from this mission site is the location of Africa University
- Students from all the countries of Africa may attend Africa University

Throughout this week, the mission section will be speaking about different parts of the University.

University and college is for students who have graduated from high school and adults seeking to increase their knowledge through going back to school. (You may want to ask the participants how many want to go to college.)

At AU, students choose a specific course of study. They take courses on writing, math, social studies and courses that will train them for what they want to do. (Ask students what they want to do when they are ready to go to work.)

Students at AU may not have a place to stay on campus, particularly the female students. That means they may have to travel a very far distance to attend classes or stay in places where they are not safe. That’s where we come in.

Through our offerings this week, we will be supporting the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign to raise funds to build a dorm for the female students attending Africa University. Just think, because of what we do together this week, students will be able to attend classes and learn and grow and help their communities, their nation, the continent of Africa, and the world.
Day 2 Mission

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Reach Out to Others
Africa University Students and Faculty, our Brothers and Sisters

1. Review material from Day 1; where AU is, the setting in Africa, the setting in Zimbabwe, the setting in Old Mutare. *(Again use the flashlight and have the children point out the different spots)*

2. Review the University setting, why a person attends university and what they study.

3. Remind them of what they shared the previous day or ask what they would like to do and be when they reach adulthood.

4. Emphasize that just like them, students in Africa want to study and grow, and this is the reason for AU.

5. In the same way we go to school:
   - Children and youth in Africa go to school.
   - They learn and have spelling, math, reading, social studies, physical education, art, and music.
   - And like us, as they get older, they want to go to college. That is why Africa University exists.

   - Identify similarities
   - Identify differences
   - Affirm the beauty of the music and let the children express their opinions about not only the music, but of the movement.

7. Tell the story of an AU student as posted on https://www.eocumc.com/teachreachbless/_video/AUTestimonyCalltoWorship.mp4. Share that even though these friends live in different countries, on a different continent, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and we are called to support and accept each other as Jesus accepts us.

8. As we are connected in Christ, we seek to support each other. Our offering this week goes to support the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign to build a dorm for female students so they can attend Africa University.
Day 3 Mission

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Bring Wholeness

AU Faculty of Health Sciences

Review where Africa University is on the globe or map. Have the children point out Zimbabwe, Mutare, USA and Mississippi. As you share stories from different students, point out where they live on the map as well. Have the children help you look for the different countries.

The faculty of Health Sciences offers a two-year post-basic Bachelor of Science in Nursing Degree and an 18-month postgraduate diploma in Public Health. The faculty recently launched the undergraduate certificate program in Medical Laboratory Technology which is a one-year program.

The mission of the faculty of Health Sciences is to train a leadership group of community and public health practitioners who will be able to function adequately in sub-Saharan African countries as managers of community health projects, district health managers, coordinators of district level HIV/AIDS and disease prevention and control programs.

The training focuses on service in the rural areas, which are usually underserved by the health authorities in most of the least-developed countries on the African continent.

An example of AU’s work in the health sciences is the development of “insect shield blankets.” These blankets are used to protect people from the mosquitoes that carry malaria. The blankets passed the rigid testing by the Zimbabwe National Institute of Health Research Laboratories. They have been tested by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to ensure certification by the World Health Organization and have been marketed and distributed in both Africa and the Caribbean.
Day 4 Mission

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Spread God’s Word
Africa University Recruits and Trains Christian Leaders

Remind the children:

- The theme for the day: Jesus calls us to spread God’s Word.
- Where AU is located compared to the East Ohio Annual Conference?
- Where is Africa, Zimbabwe and Old Mutare? (Have the children point out these spots on the map. Notice how really good they are getting at it!)

Africa University Recruits and Trains Christian Leaders

- Share that AU has a special school for those who want to work on behalf of the Church.
  - Our Church is The United Methodist Church.
  - We are a worldwide Church, and Africa is one of the areas where the Church is growing the fastest.
  - Great leaders are needed to lead the Church -- both here and in Africa.
  - At Africa University, there is the School of Theology. Theology is a word which means “God-words.”
  - At this school, people, who Jesus calls into ministry, are trained to lead the Church.
- Who leads our local church? (pastor’s name)
- How do they lead? (leading in worship, helping others, leading bible studies, etc. You might want to invite the pastor in to share what (s)he does.)
- Two of the things that pastors in Africa do not always have are:
  - Cars. Many ride bicycles, and many walk.
  - Formal church buildings. Some churches are just meeting places in a field, where the people gather for worship, instruction, and fellowship.
- What would it be like to worship in such a way? (seek responses)
- AU sends out pastors to serve
  - In Zimbabwe
  - In Africa
  - Even to the U.S.
- Our goal this week is to learn about AU and to help raise funds to build a dorm for female students who need housing. This is why we have an offering each day for AU.
Day 5 Mission

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Care for Others
Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance

Remind the children:

- Today’s story theme, the Good Samaritan, and how he cared for the victim without thinking about who that person was.
- We are looking at Africa University in Africa, Zimbabwe, Old Mutare. Again, have them find the different spots on the map.

Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance

- Ask the children what “peace” means.
  - Is it the absence of war?
  - Why do we want peace?
- At Africa University, there is a special center for learning.
  - The Institute for Peace, Leadership and Governance: Break this down for them.
  - Peace: Jesus calls us to make peace with our neighbors. Again note that AU has students from all over Africa where many are from tribes (communities) that normally do not get along with each other.
  - Leadership: Training leaders to lead the nations in Africa to live in peace and with justice together in the world community.
  - Governance: Training leaders of nations to create laws that help people live together, as people caring for each other.
- Share some more about the Institute. Information at http://iplg.africau.edu/
- On this, our last day, we remember Africa University and the good it does for our world and for the students who attend and the faculty who teach there.
- Remind them of how well everyone has done to support the offering.
- Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for each participant in the VBS and for AU.
**About The Institute:** (Background information for VBS leaders)

The Institute of Peace, Leadership and Governance (IPLG) was approved by the Board of Directors to provide training, research and consultancy in peace, leadership and governance. The Institute, among other things, offers post-graduate degrees, diplomas and certificates. The Institute enrolled its first students in March 2003.

The purpose of IPLG is to train participants to develop ways to prevent and resolve conflict and to sustain global peace. IPLG has risen to the challenge. A new kind of training is required to prepare the future leaders of Africa to deal with social, political and economic challenges of the new millennium.

**About the University in general regarding leadership:**

The mission of the University is to provide higher education of the highest quality to students and trainees from all over Africa and equip them for leadership roles they are expected to play in the new millennium. University currently enrolls 1,600 students, from across 28 African nations and to-date has over 4,000 alumni in 38 countries on the continent.

A diverse intellectual orientation of African professionals, the AU staff and faculty represent 22 nations. AU faculty and staff are natives of Asia, Europe and North America. Particular efforts are being made to attract more female staff. When fully operational, the University aims to have international students representing at least 60 percent of its total enrollment. Currently, female students account for approximately 50 percent of the total enrollment.

Members of the Board of Directors of Africa University come from various parts of Africa, U.S. and Europe.

Africa University is poised to play a major role in forging social and economic transformation in Africa through its innovative and need-based curricula that address pressing and contemporary issues on the continent.

*Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure*
Day 1 Crafts

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Learn

Make Pause and Reflect Necklaces

Explain that *reflect* means *to think*, but it also means *to display light* like aluminum foil (*illustrate*).

Each student is given a cardboard circle or the inner seal of a peanut butter jar with a hole in the center through which yarn is passed to create a nametag/necklace. (*Be sure the peanut butter circles are well washed to remove all traces of the peanut butter.*) The cardboard circles are made reflective by covering with aluminum.

Explain that *pause* means *to stop for a moment*, and that the word sounds like *paws, the feet of an animal*.

To illustrate, create paws by having each child dip their middle three fingers in paint and press them on a stamp pad, keeping the fingers close to one another, and imprinting them on the circle.

Each student has a necklace that reminds them to pause and reflect. These may be used as name tags for the rest of the week. (*Suggestion: Make a few extras for children who attend later in the week.*)

Maracas

Use empty and dry water bottles. Fill the bottles ½ - ¾ full with assorted “noise makers” such as dry beans, rice, dried peas, hard seeds, etc. Glue the tops in place and then decorate the bottles using water paints, glitter, or stickers, etc. After they are dry these may be used during music time.

Day 2 Crafts

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Reach Out to Others

Helping Hands Wreath

Make a Helping Hands wreath by having the students trace around their own hands or each other’s hands, coloring them, cutting them out, and gluing them to a large cardboard donut.

Helping Hands Banner

Use the same idea as above, except have the children trace and cut the handprints from felt material – using several different colors. Then place them in a “cross” form to make a banner, or in any other manner that you wish. The cutout handprints can be place on top of painted or felt cutout stems to makes them flowers. Make sure that you put each child’s name on their hand cut-out.

These banners may then be displayed in the church sanctuary or on a wall in the Sunday school area. Consider making one of these each year and watch how the hands grow and change each year. This is a great way for families to stay connected with the church.
Day 3 Crafts

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Help Bring Wholeness

Hygiene Kits: For a list of materials for health kits and additional information, including assembling video, you may go to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) website: https://umcmission.org/umcor-hygiene-kit/.

Information about these kits and the materials need to be sent out with registration or distributed on the first day so that items will be available to put these kits together on Day Three. If items are laid out in individual piles, then the children may pick what is needed and each make a complete kit. Adult supervision is vital. Each kit must be completed according to the instructions. This is very important for clearing Customs in the various countries that receive these hygiene kits.

Finished kits may be shipped to an UMCOR drop off center. Shipping labels can be printed from the UMCOR website.

Fleece quilts: Take two large (3’x3’ or 4’x4’) squares of fleece. To prevent separating, put them back to back and pin together. Cut slits all around the edges about 3” to 4” apart, cutting both pieces together. At corner cut away square by making slits meet on the inside. When finished, tie the cut pieces together into a knot, joining the two pieces of material together. Continue doing this until all cut pieces have been tied.

If working with younger children, you may want to precut the pieces and have the children tie them together.

When finished, these blankets may be given to a local hospital or to homebound adults in the community.

Suggestion: As a follow-up to making either of these items, at the closing of the day, it would be very appropriate to have a blessing or prayer over the items which will be sent out.
Day 4 Crafts

Theme: Jesus Calls Us to Spread God’s Word

Corn Husk Ornaments: Corn or maize is the agricultural staple of Zimbabwe. Corn husk ornaments or dolls may be an item that the children of Africa would make.

Play Dough Ornaments/Figurines/Pottery Pieces/Beads: Because gold is mined on the property of AU, bringing a small amount of income to poor families, making one of the above and painting it gold or covering it in gold glitter would remind the children of AU and the people who live near AU. More information about the gold mining may be found in the book, Thy Wonders Displayed – Africa University, written by C. L. Abercrombie, G.R. Davis, Terry Ferguson, and Chris Hope, 2009. ISBN 0978634315. Copies are available for $20 from The Africa University Development Office, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37212, (615) 340-7439 (phone) or (615) 340-7290 (fax).

Glittered Gold Nuggets: Use washed round stones. Spray with glue spray and then put in small baggie that has gold glitter in it. Shake the bag and rock until the nugget is covered in gold. Remove from bag and place on wax paper. Allow nugget to dry.

Day 5 Crafts

Use Craft time to finish any crafts needed to be completed; prepare for distribution.
Game Suggestions

The first two games, **25** and **Praise Shouts**, were suggested by two African young adults. They played these often at their school in Zimbabwe when they were children. The DVD video, *The First Grader*, (based on a true story) shows African children playing **Praise Shouts**.

First, make a ball out of tightly squashed together newspapers and paper bags. This idea was shared by two African adults who grew up in Zimbabwe. They did not have money to buy commercially made balls so they made their own and used them extensively for many different games.

**25:** There are two teams. The playing field has four bases, spread out in a large square.

One team starts on the first base and tries to move to each of the other bases going around the square, without getting hit by the ball. Bases are safe spots.

The second team has two players who may try and hit the opposing team with the ball as they move from base to base. If a member of team 1 is hit, that person is out of the game. Once they are hit with the ball by the opposing team, they cannot reenter the game.

The other members of the second team may retrieve the thrown balls and toss them back to their teammates, but cannot try and hit the team 1 players. Members of the second team may take turns trying to get a team 1 player out.

The object of the game is to get out all of the members of the first team, as they try to touch each base for a total of 25. Each base counts as 1 and the individuals of team 1 yell out the number they are on as they touch a base. Team 1 members do not have to stay as a group when going around the bases. They may move separately when they feel it is safe to do so. Game is over when either all of team 1 members have been hit and are out or if at least one of the team 1 members gets to 25 points.

**Praise Shouts:** The group forms a large circle. One person (carrying the ball) moves to the middle and yells ATTENTION in a loud voice. Everyone else yells “What?” This is repeated three times. Then the person in the middle says whatever they want to say. For example, “My name is ____ and I’m from _____ and I like ____” or “God is Good” or “VBS rocks.” The crowd responds by yelling “Ay, Ay, Ay.” The speaker throws the ball to someone else, who then goes into the middle and begins the process again with yelling ATTENTION.

**Follow the Leader:** If time allows, have each child be the leader.

**Vegetable Basket:** Set up chairs in a circle to match the number of children playing the game, minus one chair. Have the children sit down and count off by three or four depending on how many children you have. Name each of the 1s corn, the 2s tomatoes, the 3s carrots, and the 4s beans (or whatever variation you want). The one child left without a chair is in the middle and calls out one of the vegetables. The children with that name must change seats. The one in the middle tries to take an empty seat. Of course, there will be a child left over so he/she is now in the middle and calls out a vegetable. If he/she calls **Vegetable Basket**, everyone must move to a new seat and the one in the middle tries to get an empty seat.

**Searching for the Gold:** Fill a small swimming pool with sand. Put in toy gold coins and/or pennies (using lots of pennies makes this really fun!) and mix well. As the children find the pennies, they may then put them into a container and add them to the AU collection at the end of the day. This game is best done outside or on a tarp covered floor.

Additional games may be added. We affirm games in which there is no chance to get hurt and everyone participates fully.
Music Suggestions

While music is suggested each day for the opening, feel free to choose from this list and/or other music. Familiar songs of faith may be added as needed.

The theme song, *Jesus We are Here*, was written by Patrick Matsikenyiri, professor of music and first director of the AU Choir.

*Let There be Peace on Earth*, The United Methodist Hymnal #431

*Jesu, Jesu*, The United Methodist Hymnal #432

*Kum-By-Ya*, The United Methodist Hymnal #494

*What a Mighty God We Serve*, The Faith We Sing #2021

*Tino Tenda, Jesus*, The Faith We Sing #2081

*Wa-Wa-Wa-Emimimo*, The Faith We Sing #2124

*Servant Song*, The Faith We Sing #2222

*Siyahamba*, The Faith We Sing #2235

*Jesu, Tawa Panu*, The Faith We Sing #2273

*There Were 12 Disciples*, Music: George A. Manor, 1880, Lyrics: Unknown

There were 12 disciples, Jesus called to help Him
Simon Peter, Andrew, James, his brother John, Philip,
Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus,
Simon, Judas, and Bartholomew.
Under the Acacia Tree VBS in One Hour Sessions

With this format you could hold sessions over 10-13 weeks—use one lesson for two or more sessions. Choose two or three activity areas for each day.

The typical schedule has activity areas lasting about 20 minutes. This makes adapting to one hour easy!

- Opening: 25 minutes
- Storytelling: 20 minutes
- Mission: 20 minutes
- Crafts: 20 minutes
- Snack: 20 minutes
- Games: 20 minutes
- Music: 20 minutes
- Closing: 25 minutes

One Hour for 10 Weeks:

- Schedule your session in three 20-minute segments.
- Alternate Storytelling one week, Mission the next:
  - Week A: Opening, Storytelling, Snacks and Closing at the end of Snacks
  - Week B: Music, Mission, Crafts

Options for additional weeks:

- Games week: Begin with Music and then play Games
- Closing Program for parents and kids with refreshments and displays

This can work with both an early childhood and elementary rotation.
Under the Acacia Tree VBS in a One Day Session

VBS materials are prepared to be presented for two- to three-hours over five days. However, this material can be used in other formats like this “all-in-one-day” schedule.

- Saturday is the day of choice for a one-day VBS.
- Choose to focus on the middle elementary age-level.
- Decide if you are going to provide for nursery and preschool level children. This daylong event can be fun and exciting, but the schedule can be difficult for young children.
- Schedule all five Storytelling and Mission sessions if possible.
- Creatively schedule Craft, Snacks, and Games. Make sure you make connections to the daily themes with each activity to reinforce the message of God’s Word.
- Time for five crafts may not be available, but the extended time provides the opportunity for a craft that takes multiple sessions to complete. (Great opportunities to have paint/glue dry!)
- Modify the schedule below as needed.
- A one-day VBS has potential to be a Family event.

VBS: One Day Possible Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration (could include a continental breakfast)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Worship Time with Music: Focus on teaching the theme songs and other songs. Practice all the Daily themes. Introduce Mission Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 1 Storytelling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Indoor/Outdoor Activity: Make the craft Fear Not Flyer (Lesson 2) and then play with them outside or play Launch It Game (Lesson 1) and Fortress Ball (Lesson 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 2 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch: Serve foods from the suggested snack list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-1:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 3 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:15-1:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Game Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45-2:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 4 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Movie Time: Serve a snack from the suggested snack list. Watch videos and discuss in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15-4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 5 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15-5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Music Time: Sing VBS songs and assign and practice any participation in the Family Night Celebration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15-6:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner: When children finish dinner, they can create another craft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Family Night Celebration: Use Closing Program Resource for a large group time. For Family Fun Time, provide VBS Snacks, play VBS Games, and do another VBS Craft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under the Acacia Tree VBS in a Weekend Retreat

VBS materials are prepared to be presented for two- to three-hours over five days. However, this material can be used in other settings like a weekend retreat.

- Choose to focus on the middle elementary age-level.
- Schedule all five Storytelling and Mission sessions if possible. These two elements can be done back-to-back in your schedule and take about 45 minutes.
- Creatively schedule Craft, Snack, and Games activities. Make sure you make connections to the daily theme with each Craft, Snack, and Game to reinforce the message of God’s Word.
- Time for five crafts may not be available, but the extended time provides the opportunity for a craft that takes multiple sessions to complete. (Great opportunities to have paint/glue dry!)
- Modify the schedule below as needed. You can extend the schedule with free time and other recreation activities that might be available at a retreat/camp setting.

VBS: Weekend Retreat Possible Schedule

**Friday Evening**

6:00 p.m.  Arrival  
7:00 p.m.  Worship Time with Music (Use Opening materials)  
7:15 p.m.  Lesson 1 Storytelling & Mission  
8:00 p.m.  Worship Time with Music (Use Closing materials)  
8:30 p.m.  VBS Snack

**Saturday**

8:00 a.m.  Breakfast (include a VBS snack?)  
9:00 a.m.  Worship Time with Music (Use Opening materials)  
9:30 a.m.  Lesson 2 Story Telling & Mission  
10:00 a.m.  VBS Snack & VBS Games  
10:45 a.m.  Lesson 3 Story Telling & Mission  
11:30 a.m.  Worship Time with Music (Use Closing materials)  
12:00 p.m.  Lunch  
1:00 p.m.  VBS Craft  
1:30 p.m.  VBS Games  
2:00 p.m.  VBS Mission Project Activity  
3:00 p.m.  VBS Snack  
3:30 p.m.  Free Time (could include a craft opportunity)
### Saturday Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Worship Time with Music (Use Opening materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 4 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Worship Time with Music (Use Closing materials)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>VBS Snack</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sunday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Breakfast Time / Pack up &amp; Clean Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Lesson 5 Story Telling &amp; Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 a.m.</td>
<td>VBS Craft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Worship Time with Music (Use VBS Closing Service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Depart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hygiene Kit

Hygiene kits provide basic necessities to people who have been forced to leave their homes because of human conflict or natural disaster. Hygiene kits are also used as learning tools in personal hygiene, literacy, nutrition, and cooking classes.

Hygiene Kit Materials:

- 1 hand towel
  - 15 x 25 inches to 17 x 27 inches;
  - No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels.
- 1 washcloth
  - No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels
- 1 comb
  - Must be sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth;
  - No pocket combs or picks;
  - Rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable with a minimum of 6 inches of teeth.
- 1 toenail or fingernail clipper
  - No emery boards or metal nail files.
- 1 bath-size soap
  - 3 oz. and larger sizes only;
  - No Ivory or Jergen’s soap;
  - Do not remove from original packaging.
- 1 adult toothbrush
  - Do not remove from original packaging;
  - Personal advertising not acceptable.
- 10 adhesive bandages
  - ¾ inch by 3 inches;
  - Common household bandages acceptable.
- 1 plastic bag
  - One-gallon size sealable bag only.
Registration Form

Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure
Vacation Bible School: Celebrating the Gospel and Africa University

Church: __________________________________________________________

Name(s) and grade(s) entering in Fall: ______________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Street Address: ______________________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip: __________

Home Phone: ________________ Cell phone: __________________________

Email Address: ______________________________________________________

Parent(s) or Guardian(s): _____________________________________________

In case of emergency, contact (name and phone number): __________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Allergies (food or otherwise) or other medical conditions: __________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Home Church (if any): ________________________________________________

People allowed to pick up children: _____________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

As part of our VBS program we would like to take pictures of what the children are doing. The pictures may be used by the church to promote other events within the church or shared in East Ohio Conference print and digital media. NO names will be listed with the pictures. By signing below you give the church permission to take and use possible pictures of your child(ren).

Parent/Guardian Signature: ____________________________________________
Under the Acacia Tree: An African Adventure
Vacation Bible School Curriculum

A Vacation Bible School (VBS) created by members of the Upper New York Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church and adapted by members of the East Ohio Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church to teach children about the work of Africa University, a United Methodist-related institution in Old Mutare, Zimbabwe, Africa.

The purpose of this VBS is to provide a resource that may be used in a church of any size to learn about Africa University (AU) and to take an offering every day/evening to support the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign of the East Ohio Conference. The goal of the Teach • Reach • Bless Campaign is to raise $1.5 million through charitable donations to build a new residence hall that will safely house 90 female students.