

ALL ABOARD!



Joining in God's Journey

OVERVIEW

Description

All Aboard! Joining in God's Journey is a Vacation Bible School curriculum that examines Scripture passages in which God calls individuals to jump on board and join in a lifelong journey of faith. Using the theme of trains and locomotives, children will engage in daily activities, games, crafts, and play-based learning to familiarize themselves with Bible stories and the Christian concept of God's calling on our lives. Traditional learning styles are combined with play in STREAM activities (Science, Technology, wRiting, Engineering, Art, and Math), mission projects, and movement.

This curriculum is divided into two age groups: **Red Line Conductors** (ages Pre-K to 2nd grade) and **Blue Line Conductors** (3rd grade-5th grade). (Note: any color can be designated, and you can design shirts using the colors or even invite children to wear that color clothing for the week.) However, you are encouraged to form groups as you see fit, and can even create mixed age groups of both as long as both groups are provided age-appropriate activities during each lesson.

Theme Details

This Vacation Bible School curriculum is designed to teach children about the Christian concept of answering God's call to become a person of faith and understanding the journey of a disciple as a lifelong adventure. During this program, children are referred to as "conductors-in-training" and will be invited to learn all

about trains and how to solve train-related problems with their leader for the week, Cal the Conductor.

Your main group space will be known as the Faith Express Station. This is where you will start and end each day (and could also function as the snack space). At the end of each day, the children will gather here and be invited to share what they have learned during a brief closing skit, followed by a closing prayer. At the end of the week, consider giving each child a train whistle, conductor's hat, badge, or other train-themed item to signify that they are ready to conduct their own trains and call others to climb aboard God's Faith Express.

On Day 1, I suggest giving each child a name badge that can be laminated and/or attached to a lanyard with their name, along with a fun "conductor name" made up by using the the first letters of their first and last names and assigning them the corresponding words on the Conductor Names Chart below. For example, a child named Alex Green would be Conductor Chugging Boxcar.

Included in this packet is a printable for a customized train ticket. Upon arrival every day, children will "clock in" and stamp or punch their train ticket as a way of checking in. (Note: The ticket printable is at the bottom of this document. There is also an optional ticket printable without the punch/stamp option.)

If your budget allows, I suggest giving each child a conductor's hat for the week that they can label with their name, wear each day, and leave in your main space until the last day. These can be purchased in bulk from various websites.

One way of organizing your conductors into groups is to label each group's table or classroom as a "Boarding Platform" with a number assigned to it. For example, "I invite all Red Line conductors who are boarding at Platform 2 to go sit at their table."

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Joining in God's Journey

Day 1 Opening Skit:

Characters:

- **Conductor Cal**, our week's head conductor and Bible story teller (Note: the script is written using female pronouns for Cal, but all skit characters are intentionally gender neutral). Cal is wearing navy slacks, a white or blue button down shirt, a neck or bow tie (or neckerchief), and either navy suit jacket or navy vest. On top of her head is a conductor's hat. She carries a large pocket watch on a chain at all times. Other props include a map, a schedule, a train whistle, and an oversize ticket with a hole punch.
- **Sidney**, a young passenger who is scared to ride the train for the first time (ideally played by a youth)

Stage Design/Props:

- A stack of vintage suitcases sturdy enough to sit on.
- The stage area can be decorated like the inside of a train car, with chairs set up in rows of two facing the same direction, a backdrop that features train windows, and luggage piled between the seats.
- A Bible.

Conductor Cal walks onstage in a hurry looking at a pocket watch in one hand and a map in the other. She checks the map, nods, and tucks it into her back pocket. Then she pulls a schedule out of her vest/jacket and checks it against her watch. She nods with satisfaction and looks up.

CAL: Well Good morning, *buenos dias*, *buon giorno*, and *bonjour*! My name is Cal the Conductor, and I've been running the rails around these parts for a loooong time. The

director of the Faith Express told me I would be training a group of new conductors this week, and I assume YOU are THEM! Am I right?

[Kids shout, "YES"]

CAL: And some of you are running the Red Line trains this week, yes? Can I see a show of hands for the Red Line Conductors-in-training? How about the Blue Line Conductors-in-training?

Alright, well no matter what line you're working, the first and most important thing to remember about our work as conductors is that we have to stick to the SCHEDULE! We can't be late, we can't be delayed, and we can't be tardy. The clock is our friend and the time is always ticking. Nod your noggins if you know what I mean.

[Kids nod]

CAL: Good, good. Alright. Now we have exactly thirteen and a half minutes until we need to do a last call for passengers, and we do that by yelling this: ALL ABOARD! Go ahead and practice.

[Kids yell, "ALL ABOARD!"]

CAL: Oh that was good, but I think you can do even better to make sure every passenger in the station can hear you. Let's try again: ALL ABOARD!

[Kids yell, "ALL ABOARD!"]

CAL: Excellent, you're off to a great start. Now, another important thing to remember as a conductor is that we are responsible for the safety and well-being of all of our passengers. If you encounter a passenger who is on the wrong train, confused about the schedule, or has gotten separated from their luggage, you'll have to think quickly to solve their problems and get them where they need to go. Nod your noggins if you know what I mean.

[Kids nod]

CAL: Good. Tell me: do you all know anything about trains? You do? Like what?

[Allow kids to shout out answers]

Good, good. Now let me tell you a little bit about the Faith Express. This train has been running on these rails for over 2,000 years. That's right, it's the longest running train in the world. Countless passengers have taken journeys with us and had the time of their lives if I say so myself. We pride ourselves on navigating rough terrain with grace. And while some trains carry cars full of things like lumber, grain, coal, and steel, we here at the Faith Express specialize in carrying beautiful souls like you. That's right, our passengers are our most precious freight.

DAY 1

LIKE JEREMIAH, SAMUEL, AND SARAH, GOD CALLS PEOPLE OF ALL AGES.



Scripture focus:

1 Samuel 3:1-10 and Genesis 18:1-2, 9-15

Skit:

See Day 1 Skit

TRAIN STOP 1: BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION (all ages)

Read the Samuel text out loud together.

Ask the following wondering questions with time in between for the conductors to share:

"I wonder why Samuel didn't know it was God calling him at first?"

"I wonder why Samuel thought it was his teacher Eli calling him instead of God?"

"I wonder why Eli finally realized God must have been calling Samuel?"

"I wonder how Samuel must have felt when he realized God was calling him?"

"I wonder how you might feel if you suddenly heard God speaking to you?"

Say, "Samuel was very young, like the prophet Jeremiah we learned about in our opening skit. Now let's read a story about an older person God called."

Next, read the Genesis text out loud together.

Ask the following wondering questions with time in between for the conductors to share:

"I wonder how Abraham felt when he looked up and saw three strangers standing nearby?"

"I wonder how Sarah felt when she heard the strangers announce she was going to have a baby even though she was very old?"

"I wonder why Sarah laughed?"

"I wonder what the messenger meant when they said, 'Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?'"

"I wonder why God calls people like Samuel and Jeremiah who are young AND people like Sarah who are old?"

Additional Questions for Blue Line Conductors:

"I wonder what is similar about the calls of Jeremiah, Samuel, and Sarah? What is different about them?"



TRAIN STOP 3: STREAM LEARNING

Red Line AND **Blue Line** Project: Painted noodle trains (Lesson: Sometimes new adventures seem intimidating, but with a little faith, anything is possible!)



Supplies Needed:

- Noodles of various shapes and sizes (lasagna, rigatoni, and rotelle are highly recommended)
- Glue and/or super glue, tape
- Acrylic paints
- Copies of the train mazes below

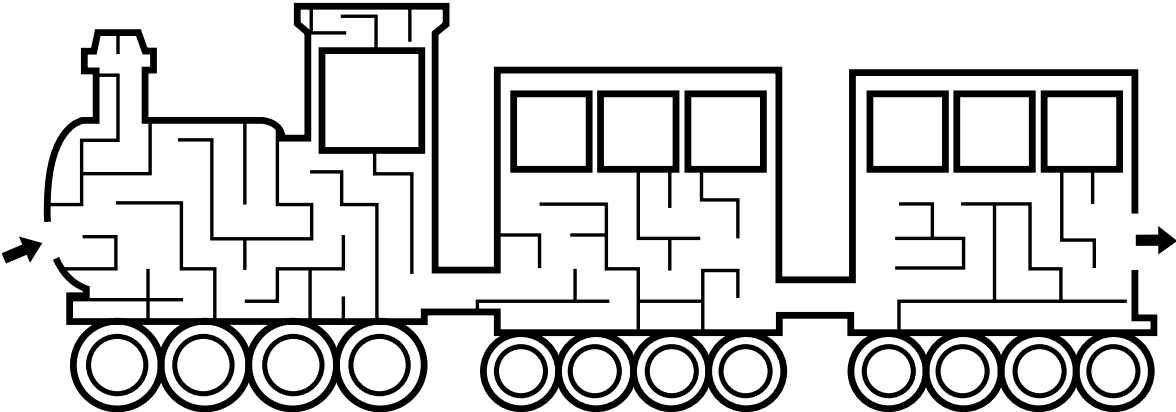
Say, "This week as we ride the Faith Express together, we're learning all about trains. Raise your hand if you've ever built a train before. Most of you haven't, but what have we learned today? It's okay if you've never done something before, because with faith and a little help, anything is possible, right? So today we are going to design and build our own little trains out of noodles.

1. Invite conductors to build their trains. Ask, "Which of these noodles would make good wheels? Why? The cars of the trains might carry people or items like corn, wheat, or lumber. Which would make good cars for carrying people? Which would make good box cars for carrying freight? Why?"

2. Help conductors glue the various noodles together. Hot glue is the easiest and fastest, but will require assistance and supervision.

3. As trains are drying, invite conductors to complete the train mazes below. When trains are dry, invite conductors to paint them.

RED LINE TRAIN MAZE



BLUE LINE TRAIN MAZE

