Introduction ................................................................. 5

Lesson 1
Joshua Conquers Fear ................................................. 9

Lesson 2
David Conquers Threats ............................................. 15

Lesson 3
Hezekiah Conquers Worry ................................. 19

Lesson 4
Shadrach Conquers Peer Pressure ...... 23

Lesson 5
Gideon Conquers Discouragement .... 27
Lena grew up in a Missionary Baptist pastor's home. After salvation and baptism, she sensed God's calling in her life and actively served Him in His church. She began writing for publication during high school and discovered a niche that fit. To prepare professionally, she completed three correspondence courses (Christian Writing Techniques, Writing for Children and Institute for Children's Literature), and attended four week-long Christian writing seminars.

Lena married Havis after two years in college, and together they served God in youth work. Lena has worked with all ages of children from cradle roll to junior high. She has taught Sunday School, Baptist Training Course, Girl's Auxiliary, VBS, mid-week programs and youth camp classes. Her writing has involved all those ministries and age-groups. “To God be the glory, honor and praise for using one who yielded to His direction and will early in life.”

Her passion is to encourage children's workers to involve students in Bible study with active learning so that boys and girls experience God's Word with personal application. Her fifty+ years of children's Christian education experiences has been the basis for her sharing successful teaching techniques with other children's workers through seminars and workshops in several states.

Lena and Havis had three daughters, nine grandchildren, two great-grands and cared for twenty-seven foster children in their home. They worship, fellowship and serve the Lord in Olive Branch Missionary Baptist Church in Pine Bluff, AR, where he is a deacon.

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Introduction

Becoming a conqueror is the goal for every teacher (pilot) and student (airman) who participates in this Vacation Bible School course. “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us,” Romans 8:37. It is God in you, the Holy Spirit, who accomplishes spiritual success in conquering the enemy constantly tries to defeat Christians while they attempt to serve the Lord. We must have God’s power to overcome him.

The teacher’s book is full of ideas and activities designed to teach the aim of each lesson. The Bible account is central with other suggestions to emphasize the purpose of the session. Teaching pictures, posters and patterns for the course are in the visuals. A teacher can deal a whole lot easier with ideas for decorating the learning environment and understanding the theme and setting. Become familiar with the excellent materials published for this course and determine to be a conqueror in making VBS the most exciting week possible.

Start with the VBS catalog to see what is offered. Attend workshops and seminars where you will discover ideas that stimulate your own creativity. Study this Preschool/Kindergarten Teacher with a highlighter in hand to accent parts to come back to a little later. Make notes of ideas as God prompts thoughts related to the theme. Make a list of students whom you expect to attend VBS—Sunday School children, midweek children’s programs, relatives of church members and last year’s attendees. Make those names a prayer list to intercede to God on their behalves.

Prayer is the greatest resource at your disposal as you prepare. It may also be the most neglected aspect of our service to the Lord. The Bible characters in these lessons recognized the value of claiming God’s power to conquer fear, threats, worry, peer pressure and discouragement. God’s Word has answers. Become a conqueror “through him that loved us.”

What I Need To Know About Preschoolers/Kindergarteners

As the teacher, you will have awesome responsibilities which will produce equally tremendous dividends. Understand that you will be blessed according to what you invest. Some will choose to begin promptly on preparations for VBS while others will wait until the last minute. The Lord will bless accordingly. Those who will be truly affected by your preparations (and you will learn) even though the children in your class are quite young, never take for granted the amount of information that they can absorb even when it appears they are not listening. At this age, two- to five-year-olds are acquiring language skills and are experiencing the birth of information. Their personal experiences are impressed into powerful memories in their memories. They are also attuned to rituals, gestures and words that adults use. Young children love to learn, and there is a greater opportunity at this age to form a stronger spiritual foundation than any other age. Spiritually healthy habits such as prayer and a love for the Bible can take root in these young lives which can grow and blossom into fertile lives receptive to the Holy Spirit’s call and direction.

No two children are alike. Many different elements go into the mix that make up the personalities of each child in your classroom. Some may be affectionate and outgoing while others are shy and introverted. Several may be well behaved while others resist instructions. You will probably have some who are growing up in churched families while others are only present in a church from one VBS to another if ever at all. Keep in mind that VBS is not about you or your church but about the children who attend. Our divine goal is to reach them for the cause of Christ, nothing else. VBS is an outreach ministry. Knowing that, put away any preconceived ideas about how children ought to look, behave or dress. Remember Christ loves them all, He died for them all and now He has led them to you. Will you be prepared? Have your heart, mind and arms open, ready to share the love of Jesus with them. Remember the younger
the children, the more helping hands you are going to need. If you are short staffed, your effectiveness as a teacher will be hindered. Young children need a lot of help with activities in and out of the classroom as well as getting them from place to place.

**Keep Things Interesting**

Learning takes many forms because each of us is born with the ability to learn in different ways. By using varied techniques in teaching, we encourage learning. The Bible account is the central message and is reinforced by the rest of the lesson. The activities involved will address the diverse learning styles of students.

- Tell the Bible account in age-appropriate words the children can easily understand. Hearing is a primary way we learn.
- Combining the Bible account with visuals to illustrate the account encompasses another learning style—seeing—and reinforces the lesson.
- Experiencing the Bible account through role playing the characters and their actions further solidifies learning.
- The use of sounds, rhythms and songs helps supplement learning still more. Each of the five lesson plans should utilize activities that maximize learning in young minds.

**Room Decorations and Visuals**

When decorating your room, keep the age and size of your students in mind. Place visuals at their eye level, not yours. Get on your knees to see your room from their perspective. If available, use tables and chairs that fit their small bodies. If space allows, divide your room into sections that can be used at different times during your class time together. For instance, try sitting on the floor for the lesson and use the table for the activity pages. Attach an activity cover page for each child to the wall in another area of the room. Allow each child to apply a sticker from the sticker pages that come with the activity pages to the appropriate place each day he attends. The *Director’s Plan Book* has illustrations and directions for room decor for each lesson and a *Room Decorations Transparency Book* is also available. These are superb tools for transforming your room into a lesson experience. Ideally, your students’ memories will not only be of an exciting week of VBS fun but also of powerful biblical truths learned while with you.

**Theme Poster**

Stimulate excitement for your VBS by displaying this poster in a prominent place in the church building. Four to six weeks before VBS is about the right time to begin publicizing this favorite summertime event. VBS is too important not to give it the emphasis it deserves.

**Preschool Sign and Kindergarten Sign**

Identify each of these age-groups with the use of the appropriate sign. Use them as a banner to lead children to different activities by attaching the two signs to a dowel rod between them. Place them on each group’s seating area to show where the children sit for assembly. Put one on the classroom door—at students’ eye level—to help children recognize their learning center.

**Preschool/Kindergarten Resources**

This *Preschool/Kindergarten Teacher* book with the accompanying activity pages and corresponding *Preschool/Kindergarten Visuals* are all designed to help in preparing the VBS lessons. In addition, there are other resources available from Bogard Press that will supplement the materials for this age-group.

The teacher’s book is full of ideas and activities designed to teach the aim of each lesson. The Bible account is central with other suggestions to emphasize the purpose of the session. Teaching pictures, posters and patterns for the course are in the visuals.

Time is a precious commodity which can be easily wasted. Preparation is your best defense...and a good watch! For this young group, prepare as many materials as possible ahead of time and keep activities simple. Even the easiest activities, like cutting and gluing, can become extremely complicated with a class of not so coordinated little ones. To test your time, do a complete lesson run through before VBS to see how much time you will actually use. Keep in mind though, once you add the children, time disappears rapidly.
Do not be afraid to be creative or to look for additional ideas. There is a wealth of good supplemental materials available through Bogard Press. The Web site, www.vbs.bogardpress.org, is an excellent source for VBS materials and ideas. Just click on the VBS link.

**The Following Elements Are Found in Each Lesson**

**Bible Background:** This is a personal Bible study to provide commentary on the text for the Bible account. Intended as a guide for learning details of the account, it offers help in understanding how God worked to make a conqueror of the individual on whom the lesson focuses.

**Lesson Setting:** The Room Decorations Transparency Book for this VBS course has easy-to-trace sketches for making awesome room decor for each session. The Director’s Plan Book also has ideas for putting different elements together to make learning happen.

**Daily Meet and Greet:** VBS begins when the first student arrives. Make name tags so that you can call students by name—a big plus for any age-group. Give each student a sticker to add to the inside cover page of the student activity page. He will also add a memory verse sticker.

**Attention Getter:** Introduce the lesson theme and aim with a fun and exciting way that involves all the children.

**Bible Account:** Presenting the Bible account with props and visuals is the focal point of VBS sessions. Prayerfully read the lesson text from the Bible. Then study the Bible Background section. Tell the account in your own words using voice inflections for emphasis. This will take prayer and individual Bible study time of your own to be accomplished effectively. Children are very perceptive and can quickly detect if you are not prepared. The visuals have colorful teaching materials to help your students visualize the Bible account you are sharing with them.

**Life Application:** The best Bible lesson will only be stored away in the memory as interesting fact unless the spiritual truth embedded within it can be applied to our daily lives. The life application should be so identifiable in all phases of the lesson that the children can easily relate to it. There is an opportunity, however, following each of the Bible accounts for the teacher to apply the lesson learned to the children’s daily lives.

**Memory Verse Activity:** The psalmist wrote, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). These activities are designed to help your students do the same while having fun.

**Activity Pages:** Designed especially for preschoolers (two- and three-year-olds) and kindergarteners (four- and five-year-olds), the lesson activity pages are the written work each child will complete each day. The front cover includes a shortened Bible lesson while other pages contain the application and memory verse activities. Stickers are included in with the activity pages.

**Conclusion**

VBS is an exciting, fun-filled week. There will be many places to go, people to see, things to learn and things to experience. But, of all the possibilities that come with VBS, salvation is the greatest. Even at this tender young age, children are inquisitive and need to begin to understand that they are sinners in need of a Savior. Every lesson you teach should be pointing students to the sinless and perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ who came to be their substitute, to take their places. Will you be prepared to share with them the only One who can save their souls? Yes, the thought of this awesome responsibility can be frightening, but it does not have to be. Start praying now that the Lord will lead and guide you in the words to say and the correct answers to those difficult questions. There are many excellent materials, including age appropriate tracts, available through Bogard Press to help guide you. Remember the best example of salvation is your own personal experience. Revisit that experience and be ready as you guide the children.
Bulletin Board Instructions

A silent teacher—that is what a bulletin board display is. The message should be clear to the viewer and further stress the theme for VBS.

Make a visual display that little ones can understand at a glance. Jesus is our Conqueror who enables us to succeed in our fight against the enemy—Satan. Our part is to abide in Him through Bible reading and prayer. That is the message of this display.

Cut out the bulletin board figures and captions found in the Preschool/Kindergarten Visuals. Cover the board with bright paper or fabric. Arrange the display with the Jesus figure in the middle and the boy and girl on either side. Conquerors is a new and big word for preschool/kindergarten children, but they will come to understand its meaning as you progress through the week of studies about people who conquered fears, threats, worries, temptations and discouragement. The idea is to win moral and spiritual victories through Christ who died to redeem us from sin’s grasp.
Climb aboard the old airship with Dr. Vanguard for a fantastic ride as a conqueror. This expedition is more important than any other voyage ever could be. You are teaching boys and girls how to conquer fear through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible account does not tell us Joshua was fearful as he assumed his role as leader of the massive Israelite nation, but he did receive several admonitions to be brave and very courageous. Here is how the account unfolds.

After wandering in the wilderness for forty years, the people of Israel camped on the east bank of the Jordan River; they prepared to cross over and possess the Promised Land. But, a change in command had taken place. Because of his own disobedience, Moses, whom God selected to lead His people through the Red Sea, was not allowed to lead the Israelites over the Jordan River. Instead, God chose Joshua for this great responsibility. Moses’ valiant general and faithful assistant had an opportunity to lead. Born a slave, Joshua was forty years old when he departed Egypt and now at the age of eighty took the great task of leading the Israelites in Moses’ place.

As Moses stood before all the people, he issued a challenge to Joshua. “Be strong and of a good courage: for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them” (Deuteronomy 31:7). Moses reminded Joshua that it was the Lord who would go with him and that He would neither fail nor forsake him. With this guarantee, Joshua had nothing to fear.

With the Law of God now in written form, Moses delivered it to the priest and to “all the elders of Israel” (verse 9) and commanded them to “gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates” (verse 12) every seven years and read the Law aloud before them. The purpose—that the people would hear God’s Word, learn it and live by it daily. This would be especially important because this generation had not personally experienced many of the events that had brought them to this place. These were not the same people who had left Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, been given the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai and been so lacking in faith when the Israelites first found themselves camped on the edge of the Promised Land.

The Lord summoned Moses and Joshua to the Tabernacle where He appeared to them in the form of a pillar of a cloud over the door. The Lord told Moses that he would soon die.
Then, the Lord gave charge to Joshua to “be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring
the children of Israel into the land” (verse 23). The Lord concluded this commission with the
promise, “I will be with thee” (verse 23).

The account jumps ahead to Deuteronomy 34 where Moses died and was buried by God in the
land of Moab (verses 5, 6) The Israelites mourned for him for thirty days and then “hearkened unto
him [Joshua] and did as the Lord commanded Moses” (verse 9). Following Moses’ death, the
Lord spoke again to Joshua and gave him instructions to “go over this Jordan, thou, and all
this people, unto the land which I do give to them” (Joshua 1:2). At this time, the Lord gave
him a description of the land the people were to possess and again provided reassurance of His
continued presence and unfailling protection “all the days of thy life” (verse 5).

God instructed Joshua on the importance of His Law. He was to make God’s Law his rule
and practice. He should have knowledge of it, always observe to do what it said, never turn
from it, be able to speak it and meditate on it day and night. If Joshua obeyed, God vowed to
“make thy way prosperous and then thou shalt have good success” (verse 8).

Five different times in the Scripture text the command is found to be strong and courageous.
The word “strong” in the Hebrew is translated to fasten upon, bind or restrain (like with the
hands). The word translated “courageous” implies to be alert physically (on foot) or mentally,
steadfastly minded. Courage is the most important characteristic in the life of a child of God.
In fact, courage is really just another name for faith. Joshua possessed the faith needed to lead
Israel into the scary unknown of what lay on the other side of the Jordan River. It was necessary
in Joshua’s life to fearlessly do what God told him to do.

Why did God appoint Joshua to succeed a great leader like Moses? Because, similar to Moses,
Joshua relied on God to provide him with the strength and courage he needed for the job at
hand. He had access to unlimited and unbreakable resources. Joshua knew what the psalmist
also knew, “My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2).

Through his life, Joshua surely had known fear but he also knew that God always kept His
promises. Joshua had long seen how God had provided for and protected the Israelites when
they were faithful to follow His instructions. He had personally witnessed the Lord bless Moses
through what seemed insurmountable obstacles when he abided with God. The years in the
wilderness had been the perfect training ground for teaching Joshua how to abide (wait, dwell,
continue) in God. What made Joshua God’s choice for this awesome responsibility was his
eagerness and willingness to obey Him. Because he knew the importance of following God’s
direction strictly, Joshua would lead Israel without fear to possess a land full of giants. Joshua
knew God would never lead him anywhere that His protection and provision would not first
precede him.

God’s people have that same ability today. He never asks anyone to go and do great things.
His great request of us is to be a willing vessel and follow His directions precisely. God can
accomplish great things through the smallest and most insecure child of God who will obey
and is eager to be used. Like Joshua, every believer can have access to the resources of God’s
presence and His Word. His Holy Spirit is ever present and His Word “is quick, and powerful,
and sharper than any twoedged sword” (Hebrews 4:12). In fact, the two accompany each
other. The Bible is like a map. You want to know which way to go, which route to take, how
to best avoid dangerous obstacles on the way? Read and follow God’s map, exactly. It is God’s
desire to equip everyone with these tools, but, first, he must have a right relationship with
Him, remember to follow God’s directions correctly, one must know and abide in the maker of
the map. Despite the young ages of those you will be teaching, this basic foundation can and
should be laid. It is never too early to teach the fundamentals of salvation. This same God who
wants to provide and protect them is the same One who sent His Son to die for them so that
they can live eternally without fear.
LESSON SETTING

Even very young children respond positively to an exciting learning environment. Display decorative materials offered by Bogard Press in this VBS course to enhance your surroundings. Remember to put all posters and other displays at the children’s eye level so that they will be more effective.

A blue paper river with a cellophane topper will give the setting of the Jordan River where Joshua and the people of Israel waited to cross into the Promised Land. Place some rocks on the paper and cover with clear or blue cellophane. Set a pretend palm tree or two around it. Make a tree from a cardboard carpet roll with a wooden stand inserted in the bottom. Cover with paper lunch sacks scrunched over it for bark. Insert silk or plastic palm leaves into the top.

See The Conquerors Director’s Plan Book for creative ideas to decorate for each lesson. The Room Decorations Transparency Book has easy-to-use sketches to make your room sparkle.

DAILY MEET AND GREET

Children of this age often suffer from separation anxiety. For some of them, this might be the first time they have been to a classroom or separated from their parents. Make sure you appear nonthreatening and your room inviting. Have plenty of helping hands to welcome the children and their parents. Parents will feel more secure if they believe they are leaving their child in a nurturing classroom and not neglected in a dangerous one. Take time to make the child feel special by learning his name. Hand each child a name tag, direct him to the wall where you have displayed the inside cover page at eye level for the children. Write the child’s name on the page and give today’s sticker for him to add as you point to where it goes. Explain that he will get a sticker each day he comes to VBS.

ATTENTION GETTER

Invite children to a table where you have paper and crayons. Tell them you are going to play a game of “The Conquerors.” A conqueror is a winner in some kind of battle. Today we want to learn how to trust God to conquer our own fears. On your paper draw a picture of something that makes you afraid. Younger children may need you to help them. Ask them to tell you something that makes them afraid or fearful. Then guide their little hands to draw stick figures or blobs that represents the fear they mentioned. Older children can draw sketches for themselves. Things which they mention may include but not be limited to big animals, strange dogs, singing on stage before people, the dark, going to new places (like VBS if they have not been previously) or thunderstorms.

Say: Whatever it is that makes you afraid or fear, God is bigger. God loves you. You can trust God as your best friend. God is with you wherever you are. He will hear you when you talk to Him. He will help you conquer your fear.

“My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth,” Psalm 121:2.

Now take the picture of fear that you drew and crumple it into a ball. Because we trust God to help us with our fears, toss your fear picture into the wastebasket. Let the children take turns tossing their fears and saying, “My help cometh from the LORD.”

Ask students to fold their hands, bow their heads and close their eyes for prayer. Pray briefly to thank God for His constant care and love.
**BIBLE ACCOUNT**

Joshua Conquers Fear—Deuteronomy 31:7-13, 23; 34:5-9; Joshua 1:1-9

Lesson Block Pictures 1-1—1-4: cut apart the scenes lengthwise between top pictures (1-1/1-2) and the bottom pictures (1-3/1-4). Join pictures 1-2 and 1-3 along the short edges and tape together on the back side to make one continuous strip. Join picture 1-1 with picture 1-4 and tape the edges together on the back side. Fold and crease on the uncut lines. Fold taped edges to make a block. Set the lesson block on a 7” square of cardboard. Put a line of glue around the bottom edge of pictures and set aside to dry. Turn the lesson block as you progress through the lesson with comments to show how Joshua conquered fear.

Moses led the people of Israel for many years. Then God chose another leader, Joshua. He had been Moses’ helper. Moses told Joshua: (use a deep voice) “Be strong and of a good courage.” For older children read Deuteronomy 31:7, 8. Use an abbreviated account with the very young students. Based on the lesson text, the Bible background and your personal prayer and study time, share the Bible account on the level appropriate for your students. After sharing the teaching pictures, gather the children along the paper riverbank described in the lesson setting.

Joshua listened to God. When God told Him to cross the river with all the people, he did just that. Let us pretend to be the people of Israel. They did not have to walk through the water. (Use scissors to cut across the paper and cellophane river and fold it back toward the river’s beginning.) God made the river stop flowing. Everyone walked across on dry land. (Lead the children to walk across to the other side of the river.)

After everyone was safely across, the water in the river began flowing again. (Unfold the paper to reconnect the river again.) God was taking care of His people. God will take care of you, too. He loves you like He loved the people of Israel.

**LIFE APPLICATION**

Never Fear, God Is Here

Read aloud the warning signs on the poster, Never Fear, God Is Here. Emphasize to the children that despite all the dangers that surround them, they need not fear because God is with them. Jesus, God’s Son and our Savior, has shown us how to live in this scary world without fear. Jesus depended on His Heavenly Father for strength, and so should we.

**MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY**

Message in a Bottle

Prior to class time, loosely roll up the printed memory verse message making sure the message is still both visible and readable when rolled up. Remove the label from the soda bottle and slip the memory verse inside. Once inside, the paper will unroll itself to fully reveal the memory verse. Have the children sit in a circle. Lead the children in the following song to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.”

Go, Go, Joshua
God’s Word is always true
You need not fear
The Lord is here
This message is for you.
As the children sing, have them pass the message bottle around the circle. Whoever has possession of the bottle at the end of the song will recite the verse. If a child struggles with the verse, lead the group in the correct recitation. Continue play until everyone has had a turn, or there is no interest or time.

**ACTIVITY PAGES**

**Preschool, Page 1: Joshua Conquers Fear** Give each child an activity page and the Abide sticker to add to the first page. Read the front page aloud enthusiastically. Pause to let the children point to picture as you read about God’s people, the Promised Land and the new leader, Joshua.

**Preschool, Page 2: Bible Account Matchup** Guide the students in circling the picture in each row that matches the first picture.

**Preschool, Page 3: How Should Connor Feel?** Guide the students in choosing and circling the face that should best describe Connor’s feelings, knowing God is with him. (Happy face)

**Preschool, Page 4: The Bible Says…** Review the memory verse with the children as they draw what is missing and color the picture. (Smile) Add the memory verse sticker to the inside cover page.

**Kindergarten, Page 1: Joshua Conquers Fear** Give each child an activity page and the Abide sticker to add to the first page. Read the front page aloud enthusiastically. Pause to let the children point to picture as you read about God’s people, Jordan River, Promised Land and the new leader, Joshua.

**Kindergarten, Page 2: Bible Account Matchup** Guide the students in circling the picture in each row that matches the first picture. (Promised Land, Brave, Joshua with God)

**Kindergarten, Page 3: How Would You Feel?** In the situation pictures, guide the children to circle the faces which reflect how they should feel knowing God is with them. (Happy)

**Kindergarten, Page 4: The Bible Says…** Ask the class to recite the memory verse aloud together. Instruct them to trace the word LORD with a crayon or marker. Add the memory verse sticker to the inside cover page.

**CRAFT AND GAME TIME**

Refer to *The Conquerors Craft Book* and *The Conquerors Game Book* for additional craft and activities ideas.