



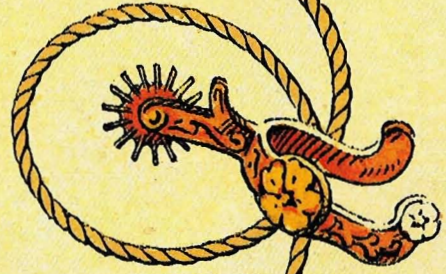
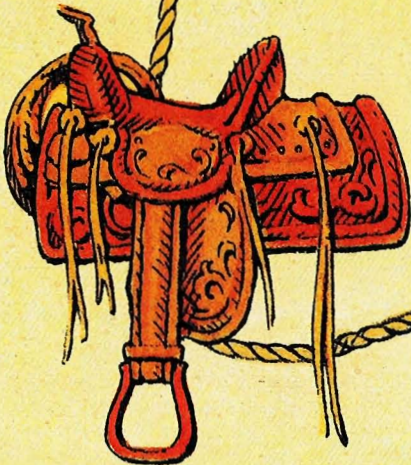
HAPPY TRAILS

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

THE WEST OF THE STORY

Vacation Bible School

by Ellen S. Bunnell



HAPPY TRAILS

...THE WEST OF THE STORY

Praising The Lord The Cowboy Way!



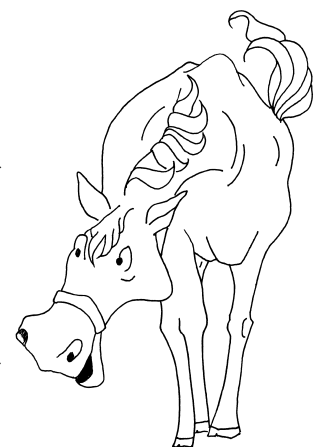
The Wild West means cowboys, guns, cattle, horses and gunfights. It was also homesteading and pioneering. The American west was rugged country with few comforts and much danger. It represented the growth of our nation from scattered people to a united nation.

"HAPPY TRAILS...The West Of The Story" features colorful cowboy traditions taming the wild west and coping with harsh range life. Jesus changes lives when we become His Range Riders.

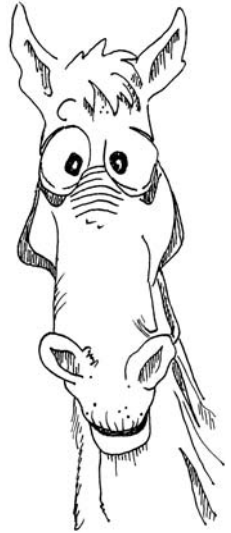
From the first Texas cattle drive up the Chisholm Trail to the invention of barbed wire to Congressional permission for settlers to purchase up to 640 acres of public land at 25 cents an acre, we celebrate our brave ancestors.

With the covered wagons came Christian settlers' steadfast faith in Christ and cherished Bibles. Christian cowboys found each other on the great plains by constructing a rugged wooden cross in the middle of a pasture, encouraging other Christian cowboys to come and worship Christ the Lord.

Become a Cowboy For Christ! Let your church and community know that being a Jesus follower is full of faithful fun!



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Branded For Life!



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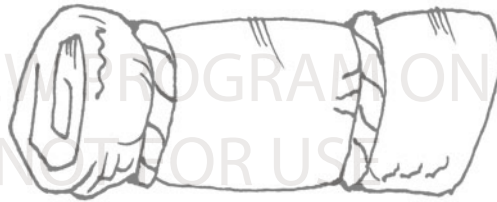
HAPPY TRAILS

...The West Of The Story

"Everybody has a little cowboy in 'em. You've just got to let it loose."

HAPPY TRAILS is a five day Vacation Bible School "live-it" event for Preschool and Elementary children. Create a Christ centered wild west town. Thrill your cowpokes as they discover "The West of the Story".

HAPPY TRAILS students mosey into five Wild West workshops where they are treated to cowboy fun, Bible stories and crafts.



HAPPY TRAILS features a variety of fifteen minute daily activities. Gather in God's Country Opening. Eat at The Chuck Wagon. Play at Giddy Up Games. Hear the story, "Silver Saddles". Sing at Cowboy Serenade. Surprises await at The Frontier Cabin.

HAPPY TRAILS provides preschool curriculum ideas (ages 4-5). Saddle Pals participate in many of the same activities as older students with their special 'posse' of teachers. Staff Nursery: Tyke's Peak!

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HERE COME THE COWBOYS!

"Count it all joy...." James 1:2
"Never pass anyone on the trail without sayin' Howdy."
-Old Cowboy Wisdom

THESE SUGGESTIONS ARE A GUIDELINE.
Build your own exciting Wild West adventure.

HAPPY TRAILS IS FOR PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE SIX. Involve grade 7-12 youth and college students as leaders and assistants.

COLOR CODED GROUPS. Students become Buckeroos and Buckerettes. Individual groups display color coded cowboy hat bands. Workshop teachers change groups each day. Students stay in the same group all week.

BIBLE WORKSHOP TEACHERS DECORATE THEIR AREA. The same Bible lesson is repeated daily to a new group. Adjust teaching activities as needed. A new student group arrives each day. Students must have a leader with them at all times.

ACTIVITY TEACHERS SEE ALL STUDENTS EACH DAY. Groups travel to music, snack and special activities. Activity leaders prepare five separate daily activities.

PURCHASE SUPPLIES. Give invoices to the Director or ask for a check in advance. Look for sales, discounts, catalogs and scrap materials. Use the church tax exemption number. Craft projects from S&S Arts and Crafts catalog and Guildcraft catalog may be purchased separately. Provide a local church tax exemption number when purchasing materials.



TRAIL BOSS



*"...God gave me my talent
and I was afraid of facing Him one day if I didn't use it."
-Jack Sorenson, Cowboy Artist*

HAPPY TRAILS is easily completed by a dedicated teaching team under the direction of The Trail Boss. The church will shine with the excitement of a unique time and place somewhere "way out west"

THE TRAIL BOSS. Wear blue jeans, chaps, cowboy boots, western hat, bandanna, fringed vest, denim shirt and leather belt. Carry a coiled rope. Become the kindly Trail Boss.

Be cheerful! Help leaders prepare specific activity areas. Be available to answer questions, order materials, make copies and secure props and costumes.

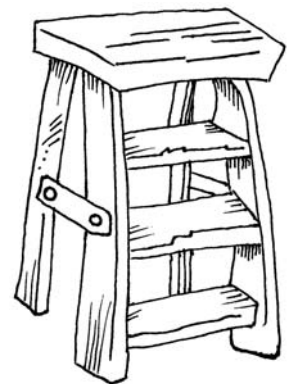
DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITY. Trust the staff to carry out their assigned tasks. Check with them occasionally. Never apologize when asking for help.

PRACTICE A POSITIVE APPROACH. Statements like "We can't do it", "We never did it this way", "There's no money", or "No one will teach" serve no purpose. If the Trail Boss' attitude is right, even the grouchiest saint responds cheerfully.

PRAY! Pray for the staff, students and the entire event. Take each detail before the Lord and then--RELAX!

PLAN! List details you must handle personally. Meet the staff six weeks before Vacation Bible School begins to plan details.

ADAPT! Complete adaptations to accommodate your local church during preliminary planning to avoid staff confusion.



SET UP. Provide adequate set up time. Decorate during the week before Vacation Bible School making sure everything is in place for the first day.

STAFF PRAYER. Plan a five minute session one half hour before the day begins. Those who attend appreciate the "upward boost".

SAY THANK YOU WITH A GIFT. This "God given" team is vital to children's ministry in your church. Find fun ways thank them privately and publically. Pray for them sincerely and thank them often!

There is nothing like appreciation to keep teachers coming back.

CLEAN UP. After Open House, clean up begins. Encourage staff to remove their props immediately. Stay to help!



Preschool Preparation

Give preschool leaders copies of decorating ideas, teacher information and lesson plans designed for older students.

Speak to individual activity leaders to be sure projects are appropriate for preschoolers. Eliminate complicated or frightening activities. Choose age appropriate projects from catalogs or local stores.

OPTION: Preschoolers can become one of the five major groups. They travel to all activities like the older students. Less staff, less planning, less expense and the "grown up" feeling preschoolers love!

Provide a Home Base (safe place) where young students rest and enjoy age appropriate crafts and stories or fun activities. Choose the best way to organize your own group of enthusiastic little ones.



CHOOSING THE STAFF

*Let your light so shine among men,
that they may see your good works
and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

Matthew 5:16

Staff choice will make or break HAPPY TRAILS.
Do NOT be satisfied with "any warm body".
Aim for the best people to fill each teaching spot.

RECRUIT

Approach people personally with a specific task. Explain the job fully.
No sugar coating allowed!!!

BULLETIN

Include a worship folder/bulletin recruitment insert for 2-3 Sundays.
Give people with specific requests their assignment immediately.
Explain the insert during worship announcement time--in costume!
Give this first recruitment effort the personal touch.

PICK AND CHOOSE

Contact people who will do a good job. The Lord honors your attempt to have the best staff possible. Pray about staff choices and if someone says "No", assume another person is waiting to fill that place. Use teens, men, women and senior citizens as staff members.



MEETING THE STAFF

*"For where two or three are gathered together in My name,
there am I in the midst of them."*

Matthew 18:20 KJV

PLAN ONE STAFF EVENING TO EXPLAIN
EXACTLY WHAT WILL BE EXPECTED.

Stress 100% attendance
so no other meeting will be necessary.



SEAT STAFF ACCORDING TO WORK AREAS. Distribute lesson plans to each small team. Build in "chatter" time to create excitement as teachers and helpers plan their week.

PREVIEW THE ENTIRE PROGRAM. Present an overview of all events taking place throughout the church building and yard.

ANSWER QUESTIONS, ASSIGN CLASSROOMS, OFFER INSPIRATION. Be the person in charge--The Trail Boss.

AFTER THE MEETING, THE TRAIL BOSS' ATTENTION TURNS TO DETAILS. Trust the staff to carry out their responsibilities.

THE TELEPHONE IS THE STAFF LIFELINE. Call work area leaders regularly. Ask questions and check on how things are progressing.



HAPPY TRAILS...The West Of The Story

**WANTED! POSSE MEMBERS
REWARD: MORE THAN \$ CAN BUY.**



COOL WATER COWBOYS—GET ‘ER DONE!

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| ...ART CREW | Decoration/Designers |
| ...SCRIBBLERS | Student Registration |
| ...PICTURE TAKER | Photographer |

RANGE RIDERS!

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| ...GIDDY UP GAME STAMPEDE | Recreation | LEAD/HELP |
| ...CHUCK WAGON | Snacks | LEAD/HELP |
| ...RED RIVER WRANGLER | "Silver Saddles" | Story Teller |
| ...FRONTIER CABIN | Salvation Station | LEAD/HELP |
| ...COWBOY SERENADE | Music With Yodelin' Kid | LEAD/HELP |
| ...TYKES PEAK | Staff Nursery | LEAD/HELP |
| ...SADDLE PALS | Preschool Team | LEAD/HELP |

WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOPS!

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| ...THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE | Golden Help | LEAD/HELP |
| ...ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE | Study God's Word | LEAD/HELP |
| ...HOME ON THE RANGE | Share Good News | LEAD/HELP |
| ...TUMBLEWEED BARN | Bad To Beautiful | LEAD/HELP |
| ...THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE | Believe In Jesus | LEAD/HELP |

HONOR OF THE WEST DEPUTIES

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ...I WILL LEND WESTERN PROPS | JUST ASK ME! |
| ...I WILL DONATE CHUCK WAGON SNACKS | TELL ME WHAT YOU NEED! |
| ...I WILL GIVE A FINANCIAL DONATION | IT'S WORTH IT! |
| ...I WILL PRAY FOR THE POSSE | I CAN DO IT! |

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL DATES:

Need More Information? Talk to the Trail Boss!



**How The West Was Fun!
Here Come The Cowboys!**





GROUPING STUDENTS

*“If you’re ridin’ ahead of the herd,
take a look back every now and then to make sure it’s still there with ya.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

HAPPY TRAILS is broadly graded.
The goal is to divide students into five groups of equal size.

TYKE’S PEAK NURSERY (BIRTH-AGE 3)

Two choices: Will we open this for the community?
Will we provide a nursery babysitting service for our teaching staff?

SADDLE PALS PRESCHOOL (AGES 4-5)

Give preschool children free time and optional involvement in daily activities.
Or, include these children as one of the basic five groups.

GROUP COLOR CODE

1. SADDLE PALS (ages 4-5): WHITE
2. TRAIL BLAZERS (kindergarten): YELLOW
3. THE TULSA KIDS (grade 1): BLUE
4. PIONEERS (grade 2): GREEN
5. SOD BUSTERS (grades 3-4): ORANGE
6. THE WILD BUNCH (grades 5-6): RED

Overlap ages in any group. If twenty students are in one group and five students in another, switch some students regardless of grade. Visiting cousins and neighborhood friends appreciate joining familiar faces in an otherwise unfamiliar situation.

OPTION: SMALL CHURCH GROUPING

With twenty or less students and a few faithful teachers, conduct one daily workshop in a common teaching area. Set up crafts in a separate area. Small groups have the luxury of treating students to projects carried over day to day. Students travel to activities together.



REGISTRATION ...SCRIBBLERS

*“Don’t worry about bitin’ off more’n you can chew;
your mouth is probably a whole lot bigger’n you think.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

Make name tags. Lead the Registration Table the first day. This job is too big for one person. If there is a tangle at registration, the first day could be delayed as much as thirty minutes.

*Identify individual tables with group colors,
group names and grades.
Students line up to receive a name tag and hat.*



PRE REGISTRATION

Registration cards simplify the first day by having name tags and hats prepared. Utilize the church newsletter, bulletin, special mailing and take home forms. Visit nearby neighborhoods.

Record name, grade/age, emergency telephone and emergency contact person, environment or food allergy information. If cards are the basis for church growth, add address and parent names.

NAME TAGS

Print name tags on corresponding group colors for quick identification. Tags are pinned to shirts or made into necklaces. Since the tags are collected each day and made available for the next day, consider purchasing clear plastic covers. Slide name into the plastic sleeve.

Collect tags at day's end. Give them to the next day's workshop teacher for that group. Each day students pick up tags at the Opening and meet their new teachers at the same time.



COWBOY HATS

Attach a name tag (in the form of a color coded paper hatband) to a straw cowboy hat. "Oriental Trading Catalog" (www.orientaltrading.com) offers straw cowboy hats for children and adults.

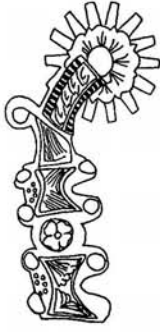
The benefit of using a hat is immediate name recognition without searching for a tag. The hats are great keepsakes. Stickers may be attached to the hatband for memory work, good behavior, attendance, etc.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The sample daily schedule offers one option for arranging a day and week at HAPPY TRAILS. Divide the total group into small groups that rotate. The goal is to move five groups of loosely graded students to all five workshops and a variety of daily activities by the end of the week. Create your own best schedule.



HAPPY TRAILS...The West Of The Story



***** DAILY SCHEDULE *****

STUDENT GROUPS	9:00-9:15	9:15-9:30	9:30-9:45	9:45-10:00	10:00-10:15	10:15-10:30	10:30-10:45	10:45-11:00	11:00-11:15	11:15-11:30
SADDLE PALS Preschool	GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING									
THE TULSA KIDS Kindergarten	GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING	W O R K S H O P	K S H O P	O P	CHUCK WAGON	ROUND UP RODEO	GIDDY UP GAMES	STORY TELLER	FRONTIER CABIN	CLOSING
THE WILD BUNCH Grade 1-2	GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING	FRONTIER CABIN	FRONTIER CABIN	W O R K S H O P	W O R K S H O P	CHUCK WAGON	CHUCK WAGON	GIDDY UP GAMES	STORY TELLER	CLOSING
SOD BUSTERS Grade 3-4	GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING	STORY TELLER	W O R K S H O P	K S H O P	W O R K S H O P	CHUCK WAGON	GIDDY UP GAMES	FRONTIER CABIN	COWBOY SERENADE	CLOSING
TRAIL BLAZERS Grade 5	GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING	GIDDY UP GAMES	STORY TELLER	CHUCK WAGON	FRONTIER CABIN	COWBOY SERENADE	W O R K S H O P	K S H O P	O P	CLOSING

***** GROUP ASSIGNMENTS *****

HAPPY TRAILS WORKSHOPS	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE	TRAIL BLAZERS	THE TULSA KIDS	SADDLE PALS	SOD BUSTERS	THE WILD BUNCH
ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE	THE TULSA KIDS	TRAIL BLAZERS	SOD BUSTERS	THE WILD BUNCH	SADDLE PALS
HOME ON THE RANGE	THE WILD BUNCH	SOD BUSTERS	TRAIL BLAZERS	SADDLE PALS	THE TULSA KIDS
TUMBLEWEED BARN	SADDLE PALS	THE WILD BUNCH	THE TULSA KIDS	TRAIL BLAZERS	SOD BUSTERS
THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE	SOD BUSTERS	SADDLE PALS	THE WILD BUNCH	THE TULSA KIDS	TRAIL BLAZERS



HAPPY TRAILS
..THE WEST OF THE STORY



NAME _____ GRADE/AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

PARENTS _____ TELEPHONE _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE _____

SPECIAL INFORMATION:

ALLERGIES (FOOD/ENVIRONMENT):

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

HAPPY TRAILS
..THE WEST OF THE STORY



NAME _____ GRADE/AGE _____

ADDRESS _____

PARENTS _____ TELEPHONE _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____

CONTACT TELEPHONE _____

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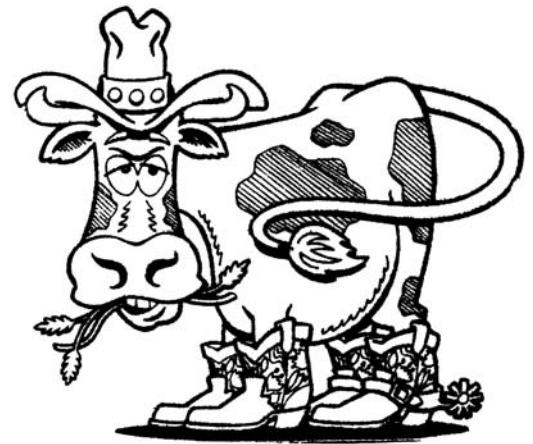


HOW TO DRESS LIKE A COWBOY

"Don't squat with your spurs on."

"Never try on another man's hat."

-Old Cowboy Wisdom



STUDENTS!

Cowboy hat with name tag. Colorful bandana tied around the neck. Ask students to wear their favorite denim jeans or shorts, cowboy styled t-shirts, vests or shirts if they have them.

TEACHERS!

COWBOY: Jeans or denim skirt, denim or plaid shirt, fringed vest, bandana, string tie, cowboy hat and boots.

TENDERFOOT: City dude arriving in the west dressed in suit with string tie and bowler hat. This is a great outfit for the photographer.

PIONEER: Long prairie dress, apron and bonnet with ties. High top shoes or boots may be worn under the dress. Men wear denim overalls with plaid shirt, cowboy hat or straw farmer's hat and bandana.

GOLD MINER: Wear basic cowboy outfit.

FUR TRAPPER: Cowboy outfit with faux fur hat, vest and boots.

HAPPY TRAILS VBS is cowboys only.
Avoid Native American dress.



MEANWHILE...BACK AT THE RANCH

DECORATE WITH FLAIR!

*“The best things you can give children
next to good habits are good memories.”*

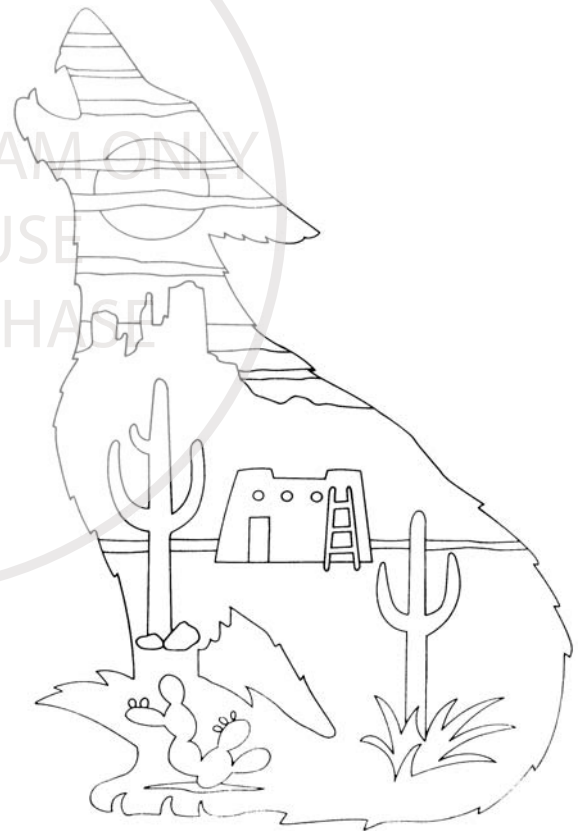
-Sydney J. Harris

When students arrive at HAPPY TRAILS, they shout “Yippee-O-Ki-Ya” before the day begins. Keep decoration simple yet exciting.

Focus decorations in the Opening area. Activity leaders decorate their own rooms. Discuss plans and follow curriculum suggestions. Don't be afraid to create your own western flavor.

Use items available in catalogs, party stores and attics: Cactus, wagon wheels, cardboard animals, desert scenes, wagon trains, horse tack, pioneer gear and wood items.

SIGNS: Place signs outside each area. Include memory verses. Stain plywood strips and print messages. Print on brown paper, cardboard, poster board.



Add tattered cardboard dusty road markers throughout the building:

GOD'S WAY ----->
<-----EVERY OTHER WAY

BOOT HILL—STAY OUT
IF'N YER SMART!

SWEET WATER
TAKE A DRINK—COULD BE YER LAST!

THUNDER RIVER
NO WADING!

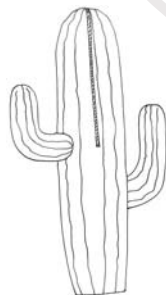
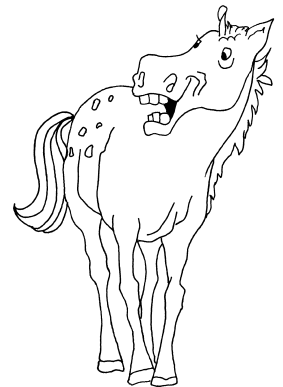
CALIFORNIA ----->
FERGIT IT...GOLD'S ALL GONE!

DON'T STEP ON RATTLERS
(scatter baby rattle on floor near sign)

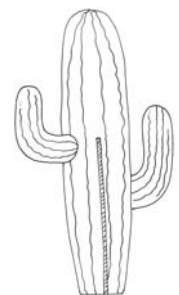
COW PIES FOR SALE—CHEAP!

TIE YER HORSE TO HITCHIN' POST!

KEEP AWAY FROM BLACK BART!
HE AIN'T SLEPT IN THREE DAYS.

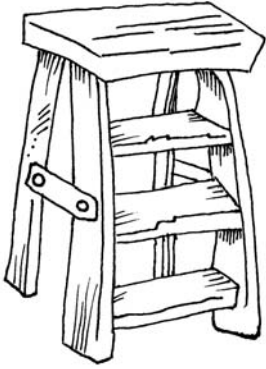


CACTUS: Make life sized reproductions of desert cactus using cardboard and green spray paint. See illustrations: slit from top and bottom to stand alone. Any size from life sized to table decor. A few can be flat on the walls.



CARDBOARD ANIMALS: Make cardboard life sized cows and horses.





ATTIC FINDS: Ask church friends and family to search their attics, garages and basements for old items that fit the western theme.

ACCESSORIES: Wood benches, barrels, baskets, checkered tablecloths, quilts, cowboy boots, hats, saddles, pottery, metal coffee pots, Old West paintings or posters, live plants, logs, old fencing, large rocks, wood wagons, wood tables and chairs, taxidermy animals.

LIVE ANIMALS: If a gentle horse is available, ask the owner to dress in western garb and greet students. Horseback rides are possible if owners remain and oversee the event. Cows and calves may be corralled for viewing. Place sheep, goats and chickens in a pen.

Live animals are **NOT** necessary for a successful program.

If available, they add excitement to the day.

TENTS: Daily events may be held in tents or under canopies. If the tent is small, arrange a campfire circle outside and let groups sit around it.

PICNIC TABLES: Borrow picnic tables for snacks. Cover with red and white checkered tablecloths. Add wild flowers in canning jar centerpieces. Several flower jars in a wicker basket look great!

ROCKS: Add large rocks in strategic locations. Paint some rocks gold or spray them with gold glitter spray.

LIGHTS. Be creative. Place spot lights on the floor shining upward. Use electric candles instead of real candles.

PICTURES: Use coloring book pictures as patterns for wall decor. Enlarge any graphics found within HAPPY TRAILS curriculum.

A GENTLE REMINDER

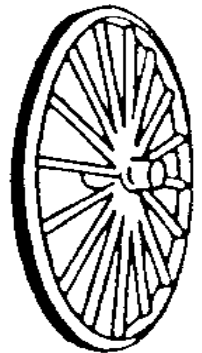
Avoid setting up a saloon.

Leave guns, rifles and holsters at home.

Do not mix Cowboys and Indians.

NO live snakes—No matter how gentle.

(Even fake snakes really scare some people.)





Check out many fun decorating items
in catalogs and on web sites
to add to your Wild West look.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

ShinDigZ...Where The World Comes To Party
Catalog and web site available

NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE

www.ShindigZ.com

800-314-8736

Oriental Trading Company, Inc.
Catalog and web site available

www.orientaltrading.com

800-228-2269





PUBLICITY

...GETTIN' OUT THE WORD!

*"A cowboy doesn't talk much;
he saves his breath for breathin'."*

-Old Cowboy Wisdom

Publicity is vital to Vacation Bible School.
Be clear and concise.

CHURCH BULLETIN: Advertise for leaders. Include reminders in the church bulletin. Include Registration forms when appropriate.

CHURCH NEWSLETTER: Print quick, catchy announcements and include Registration forms in the monthly Church Newsletter.

WORSHIP SERVICE GREETERS: Greet people coming into church. Dress in costume. Place one or more students near the door. Distribute Registration forms and basic information. This is a great reminder that HAPPY TRAILS is "around the bend".

LOCAL NEWSPAPER: Photograph people in costume. Send a news release. Invite a local new reporter and photographer to visit for a feature story.

COLORING CONTEST: Sponsor a Sunday School coloring contest. Choose one picture. Display completed pictures. Award prizes to create excitement.

LETTERS TO KIDS: Send a letter by mail. Pretend the letter is coming from the Pony Express at HAPPY TRAILS.



VISIT THE PULPIT: Visit the pastor in costume during announcement time. Give this your best information effort so the congregation gets excited.

LOCAL TELEVISION: Ask your local television station to film a feature story. This is great publicity and encouragement. Do not assume a crew will not come. Call and ask!

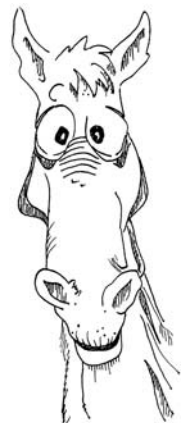
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES: Does your denomination have a communication network? Send pictures and a well written article. You may be pleasantly surprised to find your church featured in the next edition.

SIGNS AND "WANTED" POSTERS: These are the most common forms of publicity. Although considered the least effective, placing signs and posters in stores, offices and well traveled spots brings attention to your program. Attach tear off sheets stating basic information.

TELEPHONE CALLS: Use last year's attendance information. Assign a phone committee to call families. Give basic information in a cheerful and friendly voice.

CHURCH SIGN: Place a large sign outside the church announcing dates and times. Use the western theme to draw attention to the sign. Feature an old wagon, hay bales, baskets and flags to draw the eye.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!
HAPPY TRAILS..THE WEST OF THE STORY
DATE: TIME:
ALL COWPOKES AGE 4-GRADE 6 WELCOME



PHOTOGRAPHY

...LIGHTNING BOX PICTURE TAKIN'!

*"If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence,
try orderin' somebody else's dog around."*

-Old Cowboy Wisdom



Pictures are a unique way to remember the work and the rewards of a bright, visual week. Wear an appropriate western outfit and enter activities with enthusiasm.

Encourage Visitors To Bring Phones/Cameras

Involve parents and church members. Visiting photographers usually stand at one side and should not disrupt events.

Photography Crew

Assign a small crew to take digital pictures. Make copies as desired.

Digital Photography

Put digital pictures on a website like www.smugmug.com. Families can purchase their choices at inexpensive prices. The church can choose pictures to display.

Video

Delegate one person to video events. Some activities can be staged for filming but it is fun to record events as they develop.

Display Pictures

Consider viewing pictures during OPEN HOUSE. Prints may be placed on a wall/bulletin board and video may be shown in the snack area.



THE OPENING GOD'S COUNTRY!

*"Courage is being scared to death-and saddling up anyway."
-John Wayne, Cowboy Actor*



Introduce events, pray, make announcements, collect offering, spark enthusiasm and sing. GOD'S COUNTRY skits establish the theme, provide humor and present the spiritual theme.

DIRECTOR

Become the TRAIL BOSS. Dress in cowboy gear. Prepare the 'posse' for their wild west adventure.

SPIRITUAL THEME

What happened to Bible people AFTER Jesus touched their lives? Every person who accepts Jesus has a "before and after" in their lives. What is the "West Of The Story"?

DECORATE

Design a visual focal point for the western theme. Create your own "God's Country" using supplies available locally. Keep it simple!

Choose from these ideas or use what you have:





RANCH PORCH: Recreate a comfortable, old fashioned porch. Rocking chairs, benches, potted plants, baskets, blankets, large pillows, saddles. Old furniture and worn out tools work well. Light the stage from the floor, placing small lights behind objects.

CORRAL: Fill the stage with fencing, saddles, buckets, horse tack, rope. Create a small representation of a western corral.

TOWN: Make western town building "fronts" along an old Main Street. Use large pieces of cardboard, acrylic paint. Add large cutouts of cowboys and horses. Check images on the internet for ideas.

PAINTED DESERT: Place three tall cacti on stage. Make from cardboard and stand with a base or lean against a wall. Spray paint green/beige. Add rocks, pretend animal horns, shovel.

ANIMALS: Draw large cows and horses. Use heavy cardboard and acrylic paint.

FENCING: Lean strips of wood on one side of the stage to resemble a broken down fence. Or, create a corral fence cut from cardboard.

RANCH: Borrow items from folks who may have great things stored in out of the way places. Saddle, harness, horse blanket, lariat, milk cans, garden tools. Old trunk, wood crates, barrels, burlap feed sacks, hay bales. Scatter the items in small groups on stage.

MILE MARKERS: Print cardboard signs in the shape of simple arrows.

GOD'S COUNTRY--YER HERE!
UTAH--SOMEWHERE OUT WEST
ARIZONA--CLOSE TO UTAH
CALIFORNY--FERGIT IT! GOLD'S GONE.
OREGON TRAIL--450 MILES THAT WAY
POWDER KEG CANYON--OVER YONDER
(WATCH YER STEP!).



OFFERING—IN THE BUCKET

Collect money in cowboy boots, buckets or metal pie pans. Ask two students to hold the containers as guests arrive. If a contest between groups or boys vs girls is desired, communicate clearly.

Decide where the offering will be donated. Let families know. There may be some worthy western ministry or community project that will make the week exciting.

Consider the Heifer International Project: www.Heifer.org

CHAIRS OR NO CHAIRS

If gathering in a gymnasium or fellowship hall, students may sit on the floor. Mark the seating areas with group colors.

WATCH THE TIME!

Begin on time even if students and staff are gathering. Welcome the group, sing a few songs, make announcements, perform one short skit and dismiss. End on time to allow groups to get to their first activity center promptly.



GOD'S COUNTRY SKITS

Dress in costume. Ham it up! Have fun!!! No memorization.



MONDAY IN GOD'S COUNTRY Searching!

TRAIL BOSS: (Shouting...) Yippee! Hey there Saddle Pals. Welcome to God's Country. There ain't nothin' here you haven't seen before but it's all bigger and better out here in the wild west. Take a deep breath! Ahhh, now don't that feel good? That there is God's Country Fresh Air. None better.

I'm the Trail Boss. Fer you tenderfeet that means I'm the Top Dog Executive--Top hand of the herd. You better listen up! I don't take no guff from my cowpokes. It don't take a genius to spot a goat in a flock of sheep!

The Wild West will make a man or a mouse out of 'ya. The weather's hot and the water is sparse in these parts. Then there's them lazy cowpokes that make ya' stir crazy. When in doubt, let yer horse do the thinkin' for ya.

COWPOKE: (Enter from back) Hey! I ain't lazy. I'm the best cowpoke you'll ever see. I get lost on the prairie once in awhile but doesn't every cowpoke?

TRAIL BOSS: Git over here, Cowpoke. Why ain't you ridin' the range?

COWPOKE: I kinda lost it.

TRAIL BOSS: It's hard to lose. What did you do this time?



COWPOKE: If'n I knew what I did, do you think I'd be lost? I been going in circles since yesterday. Where's the herd?

TRAIL BOSS: Those ain't words a Trail Boss wants to hear. You get back out there and find the herd. It's your job and I'm holdin' ya to it!

COWPOKE: Well, okay but I warned ya. I'm not too good on directions.

TRAIL BOSS: I got a map. (Hand a wrinkled road map) If you follow this here map you'll find yer way.

COWPOKE: I'll just warn ya that tellin' a cowpoke to get lost and makin' him do it are two entirely different propositions. So if you got plans to get rid of me, you can fergit it. I ain't goin'.

TRAIL BOSS: Get goin'.

COWPOKE: I ain't goin'.

TRAIL BOSS: If you want work this ranch you'll high tail it outta here. Never miss a good chance to shut up.

COWPOKE: Okay, okay. I was jest testin' ya. I'm goin'! But if I don't come back, it's on yer sorry head. (Leave the area.)

TRAIL BOSS: (To Audience) Don't worry about that cowpoke. He won't get lost. He just has to learn to trust the Trail Boss. That gives us somethin' to think about while we're ridin' the trail today. Git yerself a smile on that puny face! We don't call this here "Happy Trails" fer nothin'! Now git goin' and have some fun! Oh and don't fergit: Never squat with yer spurs on!

EXIT





TUESDAY
IN GOD'S COUNTRY
Reading The Good Book!

TRAIL BOSS: (Shouting...) Yippee! Hey there, Saddle Pals. I see yer back fer more "Happy Trails" livin'. Have you seen that wrong way Cowpoke of mine?

COWPOKE: (Amble to the front while trying to read the wrinkled map.) Howdy Trail Boss. I been lookin' fer ya. I'm lost. I mean the cows are lost. I mean, well, I hate to tell ya I lost the herd but...have you heard...I lost the herd?

TRAIL BOSS: (Angry) You lost the herd? I never heard you lost the herd. How could you lose the herd? Haven't you ever heard of the herd finder?

COWPOKE: A herd finder? I never heard of a herd finder. What's a herd finder?

TRAIL BOSS: You got it in yer hand, Cowpoke! It's real special. I 'X'd' that map myself. (Whispers to audience) The herd is in the hidden pasture at the X.

COWPOKE: Oh-h, I hadn't heard. Thanks! I bet I can find 'em now!

TRAIL BOSS: Wrong map.

COWPOKE: (Frustrated) You give me this map yerself. You said "Follow this here map and you'll find the herd." I got the map. Lookee here, right in my hand.

TRAIL BOSS: You ain't got the right map. You need the map that shows the 'West of the Story'. You need this here map. (Show a Bible)

COWPOKE: How will the Good Book help me find the herd?



TRAIL BOSS: (Sighs...) Who trains these cowpokes? Any good cowboy knows you can't find yer way out of a paper bag without the Good Book.

COWPOKE: Alrighty then, I'll give it a try. Which way do I go?

TRAIL BOSS: What do you know about Jesus?

COWPOKE: Not much. He's that dude that walked around preaching.

TRAIL BOSS: No wonder you spend most of your time driving those doggies in circles. The Good Book says our lead steer is Jesus. God sent His only Son, Jesus, by name, to save our sorry hides.

COWPOKE: (Sadly) I never heard that. If you remember correctly, I been carryin' the wrong map.

TRAIL BOSS: My copy of the Good Book is a mite dirty and tattered from the trail but it still reads real good. Here take it and read it a bit. You can read, can't ya? (Hand the Bible)

COWPOKE: Well, now yer jest hurtin' my feelin's. I can read real good. It's losin' stuff I have a problem with. But, I'll take real careful care of yer Good Book! I'll see ya at the end of the trail. Have ya heard I gotta find the herd?

TRAIL BOSS: That there map's just part of gettin' found. Don't forget, there's 'The West of the Story'.

COWPOKE: (Running out...) Don't have time. Gotta find that herd!

EXIT



WEDNESDAY IN GOD'S COUNTRY Praying!



TRAIL BOSS: (Shouting...) Yippee! Hey there Saddle Pals. Are ya ridin' the range with Jesus? We have some rootin' tootin' buckeroos and buckerettes on this here HAPPY TRAILS ranch!

At the start of every cattle drive, the cows are always jumpy. To keep the herd in order, a wise trail boss--like me!--searches out a huge, bossy animal and makes it the lead steer. After a day or so on the trail, the cattle fall in behind the big, old steer and march as pretty as you please to the end of the trail

The Good Book says our 'lead steer' is Jesus. He died on the cross and rose from the grave to pay up our sin and get us to moo-ve on over to God.

If you Saddle Pals want to get safe to the end of the trail, just hitch up to Jesus...He's our lead steer. He'll get you there. In the meantime, anybody seen that pesky cowpoke around these parts?

COWPOKE: You callin' my name? I don't have time to jaw with ya. I gotta keep readin' the Map. (Read from Good Book....) "God shows His love for us like this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

TRAIL BOSS: Well, yer readin' the right stuff. Did ya find the herd?

COWPOKE: How can I find the herd when I'm doin' all this readin'?

TRAIL BOSS: Did ya do yer talkin'?

COWPOKE: How can I do talkin' when I'm searchin' and readin'? Every time I talk to you I get myself in a heap of trouble.



TRAIL BOSS: I mean talkin' ...you know, Talkin' (point up). Talkin' to God

COWPOKE: (Looking upward...) Up there? Up where? I don't see nothin' but blue sky and sunshine up there. You been eatin' loco weed fer sure.

TRAIL BOSS: Cowpoke, you need to learn to PRAY! Nothin' happens unless you learn how to talk to God! You won't find a lost cow. You won't find a lost herd. You just won't do much of anything if you forget to add God in the mix.

COWPOKE: Well, I sure don't have time to go to church and pray. I'm busy readin' the Good Book and finding a lost herd. I know you heard the herd is lost. How about you go to church and talk to God and come back and tell me what He says about findin' those lost cows.

TRAIL BOSS: Don't work that way. YOU gotta do your own talkin' to God. I can't do it for you. By the way, you don't have to be in church to pray. You can pray standin' where you are right now.

COWPOKE: (Puzzled...) Ya mean I can pray right here, right now? What do I say?

TRAIL BOSS: What do you want to say?

COWPOKE: I want to ask God if He heard I lost the herd. And, could He help me find 'em.

TRAIL BOSS: Do it. Just say it. He's waitin' to hear from you.

COWPOKE: (Takes off hat...) I'll give it a try. 'Howdy God, have ya heard I lost the herd? Did ya know my Trail Boss is kinda mad at me? Did ya know I been readin' yer Good Book? By the way it's real good! How did ya think of all those stories?'

TRAIL BOSS: Cowpoke, get back on the trail.



COW POKE: Oops, sorry. 'I'm just talkin' here and I'm wondering if You'll help me find that herd of ornery cows. I don't know where they got off to and maybe they was rustled by a bunch of bad guy rustlers. Even so, I'm talkin', I'm askin'. Will You help me find 'em? Goodbye. I mean So Long. I mean I'll be talkin' to Ya. I mean, AMEN!"

TRAIL BOSS: Good job, Cowpoke. You're a real good talker when ya need to be.

COWPOKE: Okay, gotta run. Talk to ya later. (Run out of area...)

TRAIL BOSS: (Calling....) Wait a doggone minute! There's more to it that searchin' and readin' and talkin' to God. Come back here! You don't know what you're getting yourself into.

I guess he'll learn the hard way. You know what the old cowboys always say: "There's three kinds of cowboys. The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by watching and the rest of them have to pee on the electric fence." Don't ever do that! You buckeroos have to get back on the Happy Trails trail. I'll try to find that crazy cowpoke and talk some sense into him. See ya tomorrow.

EXIT



THURSDAY IN GOD'S COUNTRY Listening!



TRAIL BOSS: (Shouting...) Yippee! Hey there, Saddle Pals! We're having a great time on our HAPPY TRAILS adventure. Every day you get to come to God's Country where the air is clean and the people are nigh on to friendly.

Back when cows were wild and men were wilder, there was a man named **Sam Maverick** who owned 400 cattle. He was so busy in San Antonio he couldn't watch over them properly and soon those cows were having babies as wild as antelopes. There were so many un-branded cows that ranchers who saw them would say, "That's a **Maverick**."

Some ranchers stole the Mavericks and branded them with their own brand. Sam Maverick rescued as many as he could and sold them. To this day any un-branded adult range cow is known as a maverick.

Did you know God wants to put His brand on you? Not the tattoo brand that cows wear. He wants to brand your heart with Jesus. You gotta **LISTEN** to God's voice (His voice is real quiet in your heart and mind) saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved". If you listen real careful, He'll come into your life in a special way.

COWPOKE: (Shouting from back of room...) Hey, Trail Boss, I gotta bone to pick with you. Don't you move one step til I get there.

TRAIL BOSS: Did you find the herd?

COWPOKE: You know I didn't find the herd. You been leadin' me in the wrong direction. You said if I **search** and **read** and **pray** I'll get God on my side and then I'd find the herd. I been on the trail all day and all night and God didn't help me one little bit.



TRAIL BOSS: Are you sure?

COWPOKE: Am I sure? Do you see cows pawin' down the path? Do you hear 'moo-in' back there in the pasture? Of course I'm sure God didn't help. And I did everything you said. I did my searchin', I read the Good Book. I even learned how to talk to God. I did my part. God didn't keep His part of the bargain!

TRAIL BOSS: You sound kinda' mad, Cowpoke. Like maybe you don't wanna ask God to help you anymore.

COWPOKE: Got that right. He might love other cowboys but He sure don't love me!

TRAIL BOSS: Where did you get that idea?

COWPOKE: Nowhere. I just feel it. God couldn't love a clumsy cowpoke like me who loses important things like a herd of cows.

TRAIL BOSS: If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. I think you better quit digging for trouble! You were in such an all fire hurry that you didn't give me a chance to tell you the West of the Story about talkin' to God.

COWPOKE: There's more? What more could there possibly be? I did it all. I promise you I tried real hard.

TRAIL BOSS: It ain't about trying hard, cowpoke. It's about **LISTENING** to God. You can search and read and pray but if you ain't listening to God's voice, you'll never hear His answer.

COWPOKE: (Scratching head...) Listen. I forgot to listen after I talked to God. Well, if that don't beat all! I'll be back tomorrow. Gotta find the herd! (Run out of room.)

TRAIL BOSS: Well, while your running after the herd, don't forget to listen to God. And you buckeroos better listen to God too while your traveling HAPPY TRAILS. Adios til tomorrow.





FRIDAY IN GOD'S COUNTRY Finding!



TRAIL BOSS: (Shouting...) Hey there Saddle Pals! I am doggone happy! Many of you cowpokes asked Jesus to be your Trail Boss forever. When you sin, ask God to forgive you because you **FOUND** Jesus as your Savior.

Did you ever think about cowboy gear? On the trail we take a pair of bed blankets and a sack for extra clothing. No more load than needed is allowed on the wagon. We got no tents or shelter of any sort. Just our blankets.

Coats get in the way. A **vest** is better. Keeps warm but don't get tangled in the roping knots. We wear **chaps** to protect our legs. Cowboy **boot** high heels keep feet from slipping through the stirrups. **Gloves** keep hands from being burned raw by the lariat. I paid good money for a big **hat** because it's my roof against the weather. It has to be big like an umbrella to keep off the sun, rain and snow.

My **bandanna** should be the official flag of the West. It protects the back of my neck from the sun, it's a dust mask, an ear cover in cold weather, a towel, a blindfold for skittery horses, ties a calf's legs together while branding it, a strainer when drinking muddy water, a dish dryer, a hat tie in windy weather, a sling for broken arms, a bandage and help for hand signaling.

When Jesus is our Trail Boss, we put on new clothes. We wear armor to protect us from the devil's tricks. Wear a **belt** to let God's justice protect you. The **shoes** on your feet show your desire to tell the good news about peace. Let your faith be like a **shield** to stop all the bullets of the evil one.



COWPOKE: (From back of room...) Yippee! I found 'em! I found the herd. Did ya hear me? I found the herd!!! (Run to the front.)

TRAIL BOSS: Don't surprise me one bit. You took time to listen to God and He took over the job.

COWPOKE: How did you know? I stopped in my tracks out there on the range and didn't say or do anything. I waited, real quiet like, and pretty soon I heard something.

TRAIL BOSS: You heard the herd?

COWPOKE: No! I heard God talkin' to me! He said, "I am your God. I will get you out of trouble. Listen to My voice." It wasn't like out loud or anything. It was a still, quiet voice inside my heart. It was hard to stand still but I put my head to one side and there was the answer as plain as day.

TRAIL BOSS: You heard the herd?

COWPOKE: Yep! I heard the herd! You see, the other day I got real tired on the trail so I says to myself, "Self, just put that herd over there in the canyon. That way you can take a nap and they got some good, fresh grass and a bit of water to drink in a safe spot.

TRAIL BOSS: And...

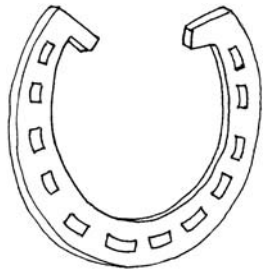
COWPOKE: And when I woke up I forgot I put them in the canyon. I thought they ran away or maybe rustlers snuck up on me and snatched them away while I was napping.

TRAIL BOSS: So it paid off to search, read the Good Book, talk to God, listen to God and Find His way, right?

COWPOKE: I guess that's why yer the Trail Boss and I'm the Cowpoke. How'd you get so smart? Wanna see the herd? I know ya heard I found the herd!

TRAIL BOSS: Let's go, Cowpoke. I heard you found the herd!





THE COWBOY REVUE ...END OF THE TRAIL!

*“A righteous man may have troubles,
But the Lord delivers him from them all.” Psalm 34:19*

Show off workshops, sing songs and display crafts. Families tour HAPPY TRAILS, sample CHUCK WAGON snacks and enjoy an evening in your version of the Wild West.

**Teachers and helpers are responsible
to be in their work area during OPEN HOUSE.**

Choose a time so a high percentage of parents and friends can attend. If the week ends Friday, plan a Friday evening program.

If VBS is in the evening, do not eliminate the last day of programming. Some churches present OPEN HOUSE on Sunday. Eliminate Open House if a good time cannot be found.

END OF THE TRAIL SCHEDULE

- 7:00 P.M. Welcome and Opening Prayer
- 7:02 P.M. Trail Boss introduces theme
- 7:07 P.M. Song
- 7:10 P.M. Recite HAPPY TRAILS scripture verses
- 7:11 P.M. Students sing the songs of HAPPY TRAILS
- 7:20 P.M. Offering
- 7:25 P.M. Teacher Appreciation
- 7:35 P.M. Students sing and close in prayer.
- 7:40 P.M. Dismiss group to tour HAPPY TRAILS
- 8:30 P.M. Staff begins clean up





THE STORY TELLER ...RED RIVER WRANGLER

*“Don’t interfere with something that ain’t botherin’ you none.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

*This OPTIONAL fifteen minute segment
provides rest and a delightful continuing story*

What is Red River Wrangler Story Teller? The Story Teller greets small groups cheerfully and tells a continuing story aloud with enthusiasm. Choose a quiet room far from the noise. Students hide away and hear a five day story in fifteen minute segments.

What Should I Wear? Wild West gear.

How Should I Decorate? Find a quiet outdoor spot and seat students on the ground. Sit on a big, wooden rocking chair. Create a corner where the story teller sits near an old fence. Toss pillows on the floor where students relax. Blow a gentle fan across the room. Keep the space dimly lit and create a quiet, story telling atmosphere.

Who Hears The Story? All student groups visit daily. Preschool students are scheduled to visit but if they cannot pay attention, substitute short story books or another activity. Discuss choices with the preschool team before ‘Happy Trails’ begins.

What Story Should I Tell? Our suggested story is “Silver Saddles”, a five part Conley Twin adventure with complete script and line drawings. Order separately from CLOSE ENCOUNTERS MINISTRIES 1-888-236-5433.

There are Christian DVD’s available that are appropriate. Consider showing segments of Veggie Tales “The Ballad Of Little Joe”. Purchase from any Veggie Tales web site.





MUSIC
...COWBOY SERENADE
WITH THE YODELIN' KID!

*"Never miss a good chance to shut up."
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

*"I will be glad and rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your Name, O Most High."
Psalm 9:2*

COWBOY SERENADE is a fifteen minute daily music session for small groups. Students sing choruses featuring the cowboy theme. Choose upbeat, easy to sing songs from your music library and consider the CD music, 'Heavenly Hoedown'. Plan more songs than you can teach in the time limit in case the songs are learned quickly.

Decoration. If meeting at God's Country Opening, no decoration is needed. If singing in a small room, decorate with a western theme. Scatter colorful blankets, guitars, wooden fences, etc.

Costume. Become "The Yodelin' Kid". Dress as a traditional cowboy.

Instruments. Piano, guitar, fiddle, banjo, mandolin, jew's harp, harmonica. These are possibilities if people are available to play them during song time.

HEAVENLY HOE DOWN

We found a great collection of toe-tapping tunes with a country flavor at the "Let Us Teach Kids" or "The Puppet Factory" web site. You can use several as sing-along songs with kids; others make great performance or puppet specials. Sound track included. **Check their web site for current prices.**



Purchase CD: www.letusteachkids.com

904-287-2869

www.thepuppetfactory.com

785-286-6800

1. Do the Right Thing
2. Jesus, Take Me Away
3. Do What God Wants You To
4. Humbly Grateful or Grumbly Hateful
5. The Dog Song
6. I'll Be Riding With My Partner
7. Big Ol' God
8. I Have Decided To Follow Jesus
9. Born In A Barn
10. God Is Good All The Time

"Let Us Teach Kids" also offers a great "Cowboys For Jesus" CD that works as background music. Authentic cowboy music from the original Christian Cowboys. You're gonna love it! Yippi-yi-kai-ya!

Here is an opportunity to mix a bit of traditional western music fun with the message of Christ. Sing these old favorites a capella and add the Christian lyrics we have provided.

HAPPY TRAILS

by Dale Evans Rogers

Happy trails to you, until we meet again.

Happy trails to you, keep smilin' until then.

Who cares about the clouds when we're together?

Just sing a song and bring the sunny weather.

Happy trails to you, 'til we meet again.

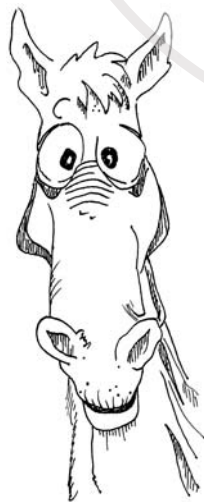
CHRISTIAN LYRICS: Happy trails to you,
it's great to say "hello".

And to share with you the trail we've come to know.

It started on the day that we met Jesus,

He came into our hearts and then He freed us.

For a life that's true, Happy trails to you!



HOME ON THE RANGE

Oh give me a home, where the buffalo roam
And the deer and the antelope play.
Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

CHORUS: Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play.
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

How often at night, when the heavens are bright
With the light of the glimmering stars
I have stood there amazed and asked as I gazed
If God's glory has made them all ours. CHORUS

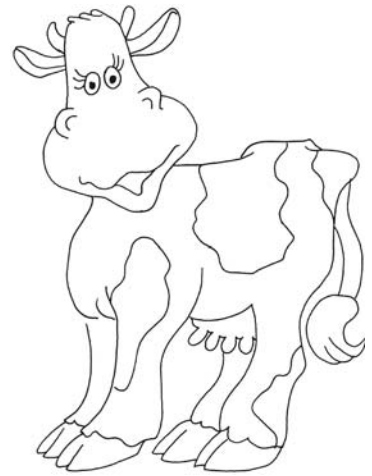
CHRISTIAN LYRICS: When God sent His Son, His be-loved Son
To the earth, to save my poor soul,
He did it with love, coming down from above
So that I would make Jesus my goal. CHORUS

RED RIVER VALLEY

From this valley they say you are going,
I shall miss your sweet face and bright smile.
For they say you are taking the sunshine
that has brightened my pathway awhile. CHORUS

CHORUS: Then come sit by my side if you love me
Do not hasten to bid me adieu,
And remember the Red River Valley
And the Cowboy who loves you so true.

CHRISTIAN LYRICS: Do not leave without Jesus your Savior.
Do not hasten to leave all alone.
Just remember those Happy Trails lessons
And the folks that have loved you so long. CHORUS



OH SHENANDOAH

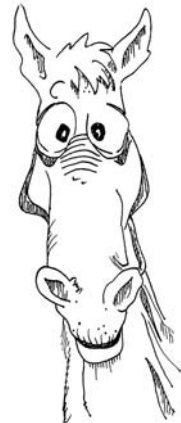
Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you
Look away, you rollin' river.
Oh Shenandoah, I long to hear you
Away, we're bound away
'Cross the wide Missouri.

CHRISTIAN LYRICS: Oh friend of mine, do you know Jesus?
He stays close in all life's journeys.
Oh friend of mind, do you know Jesus?
He's there, He's always there
From the Cross to Glory.

STAY ON THE SUNNY SIDE OF LIFE

Stay on the sunny side, always on the sunny side,
Stay on the sunny side of life.
It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way,
If we'll stay on the sunny side of life.

PLEASE PURCHASE



I'M AN OLD COWHAND

I'm an old cowhand from the Rio Grande
But my legs ain't bowed and my cheeks ain't tan
I'm a cowboy who never saw a cow
Never roped a steer cause I don't know how
Sure ain't fixin' to start in now
Yippie yi yo kay-ah.

I'm an old cowhand from the Rio Grande
And I learned to ride, 'fore I learned to stand
I'm a riding fool who is up to date
I know every inch of the Lone Star State
Cause I ride the range in a Ford V-8
Yippie yi yo kay-ah.



We are old cowhands from the Rio Grande
And we come to town just to hear the band
We know all the songs that the cowboys know
'Bout the big corral where the doggies go
We learned them all on the radio
Yippie yi yo kay-ah.

CHRISTIAN LYRICS: I'm an old cowhand, one of God's great band
Headin' home to Heav'n, cause it's my home land.
I'm a cowboy who loves the Lord so dear
Wanna be the best, keep Him very near
Sure ain't fixin' to leave in fear
Yippie yi yo kay-ah.

**The Little Cowboy Song–For Little Cowboys and Cowgirls
(Tune: “I’m A Little Teapot”)**

I'm a little cowboy, here is my hat
(Point to self, point to hat)
Here are my spurs (point to heels)
And here are my chaps. (Pat legs)
As soon as I get up, (Stretch, pretend to wake up)
I work all day (Pretend to lasso a cow)
Get on my horse (Pretend to get on a horse)
And ride away. (Pretend to gallop on a horse)



**Work Song–For Little Cowboys and Cowgirls
(Tune: “She’ll Be Comin’ Round the Mountain”)**

1. She'll be fryin' eggs for breakfast when he comes....(sizzle, sizzle)
2. She'll be washin' clothes on a washboard when he comes...(rub, rub)
3. She'll be choppin' wood for fire when he comes...(chop, chop)
4. She'll be swimmin' in the fish pond when he comes...(splash, splash)



GIDDY UP GAMES

....Round Up Rodeo!

GIDDY UP GAMES is a 15 minute small group recreation time. Decide which games your team enjoys. Include lively, fast paced activities that encourage running, jumping, laughing and comradeship.



DECORATION

Choose an indoor or outdoor area large enough for rodeo activities. If outdoors, select a grassy spot away from traffic. Fence off the area using brightly colored strings of pennants (Available at www.orientaltrading.com) for extra safety.

COSTUME

Dress comfortably in a western outfit. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes for walking and running.

EQUIPMENT

Organize individual game supplies during the preparation stage.

GIDDY UP GAMES

BARREL ROLL: Cowboys pair into teams. One cowboy is the barrel and the other is the roller. "Barrel" curls into a ball and "Roller" rolls him/her to the finish line. Trade places and go again.

Supplies: Starter whistle, markers for start and finish on course

THREE LEGGED RACE: Cowboys team up and tie legs together. The team must race to the finish line.

Supplies: Fabric strips to tie legs, starter whistle, markers for course



SACK RACE: Cowboys put legs inside a burlap sack, jump to the finish line.

Supplies: burlap sacks, starter whistle, markers for course

BUCKET RELAY: Two teams. Each team must fill a bucket with water. Place a tub of water at the end of the course. Cowboys race to the water, fill cup, race to an empty bucket, dump water, give cup to next person, etc. Winner is the team with the most water in their bucket.

Supplies: 2 buckets, one tub of water, cups, starter whistle, course markers.

Option: *Teams must race with styro foam cups that have holes punched around the bottom. Water will squirt as they run!*

SHOOTING GALLERY: Cowboys knock cans over which are standing at a distance using small balls.

Supplies: Small balls, cans or plastic bottles (may be filled with water)

ROPING: Loop one end of a rope so cowboys can toss and loop a post.

Supplies: one long rope, post

LOOP THE LONGHORN: Make large cardboard (or plywood) head of a steer with horns. Cowboys loop the long horns with plastic hoops.

Steer, plastic hula hoops

CUTTING CALVES: Two teams. Some students become "calves". Teams hold hands, forming a circle. Calves run from teams while the teams try to trap a calf inside their circle. *Many teams of 2 and many calves may run at the same time to create confusion and diversion.*

BOOT TOSS: Students toss bean bags into big boots.

Supplies: bean bags, boots

ROUND UP THE HERD: Set up an obstacle course using boxes, chairs, bushes, etc. Divide into two teams and line up at starting line. Give the first person in each line a broom and 3 balloons. (Team color balloons) They must herd their wild ponies (balloons) through the course. The first team to finish the course, wins! If a balloon pops during a player's turn, take a new balloon to the starting line and begin again.

Supplies: 2 brooms, lots of balloons, obstacles for the course.



HOGTIED: 2 teams. Attach a large spoon to the end of a very long ball of twine or yarn. Teams line up and must pass the spoon in and out of their shirt and on to the next person who repeats with their shirt. When the whole team is "hogtied", they must pass the spoon back through the team to untie themselves. First team finished is the winner.

Supplies: 2 large spoons, lots of strong string or twine.

PENNY IN A HAYSTACK: Hide pennies, small toy horses or other cowboy items in a large pile of hay. The kids pile in and find them.

Supplies: Lots of loose hay on a tarp, small prizes and pennies. If desired, hide one really GOOD prize deep in the stack. (Large candy bar, bag of bubble gum, coupon to McDonald's, etc.)

GOLD RUSH: Hide chocolate money around the area and send the kids on a gold rush to see who can find the most coins.

Supplies: Gold coin money (www.orientaltrading.com)

RATTLESNAKE RUMPUS: Make a rattlesnake out of a long sock stuffed with a container with rattling beans inside at the end and then padded with newspaper. Seat cowboys in a circle, add music. Pass the rattlesnake. When the music stops, the player holding it has been "bitten" and sits in the middle of the circle.

Supplies: Rattlesnake, music

PANNING FOR GOLD NUGGETS: Spray paint tiny pieces of gravel in gold. Bury lots of these tiny nuggets in sand and water in a small wading pool. Give each player a pie tin filled with holes. Let them sieve the sand and water and see who can find the gold nuggets. The nuggets can be exchanged for candy or prizes although most kids want to keep their "gold" ...and that is their choice!

Supplies: aluminum pie pans, gold nuggets, plastic bags for nuggets, small prizes

PINATA: There are lots of great cowboy pinatas available in stores and on the internet. Find a few and have a great time!

Supplies: pinata, stick, small bags for prizes

COW TURD TOSSING: Throw bean bags into a bucket.

HORSESHOES: There are great child friendly horseshoe sets available.



SQUARE DANCING: Teach a simple square dance with music.

THERE'S A SNAKE IN MY BOOT: Cowboys toss rubber snakes into old cowboy boot. (Check out good will stores for a cheap boot.)

PIN THE BADGE ON SHERIFF JONES: Enlarge and laminate a picture of the pastor in cowboy gear. Make sheriff badges for cowboys to tape onto picture.

PRIZE IDEAS

Find a variety of prizes online and in local stores. Choose safe prizes and try to make them age appropriate.

Bandanas

Sheriff Badges

Water pistols

Mini horse animals

Lone Ranger masks

Plastic or rubber snakes

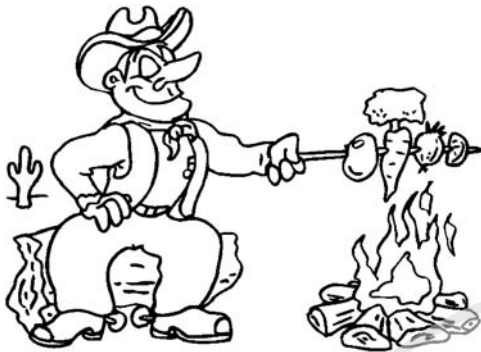
Stuffed cows/plastic cows

NOTES:



SNACKS

...THE CHUCK WAGON With Cookie The Cook!



*“The easiest way to eat crow is while it’s still warm.
The colder it gets, the harder it is to swallow.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

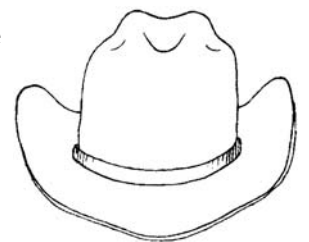
Every great Vacation Bible School needs a memorable snack time and this one is terrific! Set up an old fashioned cowboy chuck wagon kitchen. Serve loads of cowboy styled snacks.

DECORATION AND ENTERTAINMENT: Serve snacks outdoors in front of a large wagon (if available). Seat students at picnic tables covered with red and white checked tablecloths in a shady area. Top the tables with wicker picnic baskets, containers of wild flowers and cowboy items. If appropriate, set up a cozy campfire with seats around a circle.

Ask people to sit in rocking chairs playing guitars, harmonicas, fiddles and tambourines. Country Christian cowboy music may be substituted.

Set up a cozy campfire circle. Add old pots and pans, rocks, wagon wheels, wooden tables, etc. to the scene.

COSTUME: Cowboy gear with large white apron. Be comfortable and cool for cooking duties!



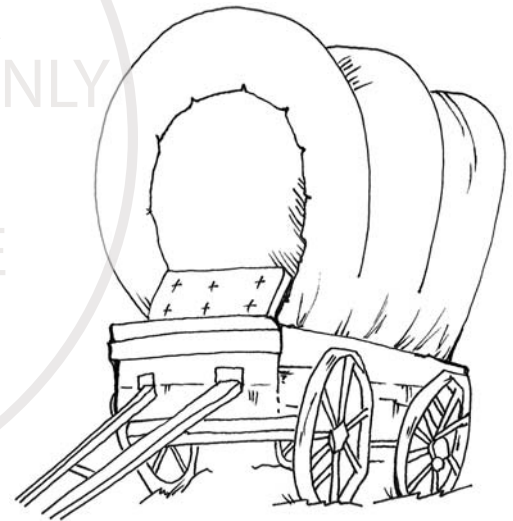
HISTORICAL INFORMATION: The chuck wagon was a work of art, an invention of a master cattleman, Charles Goodnight, of the Goodnight-Loving Trail. The chuck wagon was a cafeteria on wheels, a sturdy wagon covered with canvas and equipped with a box at the rear for storing tin dishes, a Dutch oven, a frying pan, kettle and coffee pot. The standard staples had their exact places: green-berry coffee, salt pork, cornmeal, flour and beans. For fresh meat, of course, there was always plenty of beef handy.

A folding leg was usually attached to the chuck box lid so that it formed a table when lowered for action. The main body of the wagon was packed with bedrolls, slickers, extra clothing. Fastened securely in the front was a water barrel with a convenient spigot running through the side of the wagon.

Beneath the bed was a cowhide sling for transporting dry wood, kindling or buffalo chips. In the box below the driver's seat, the cook usually kept necessary tools such as axes, hammers and spades.

The chuck wagon was a private realm ruled by a cantankerous master cook. He was a permanent member of the outfit and was powerful. His authority lay in the fact that he provided one of the most important parts of the drive, other than sleep. The food better be top notch because top hands wouldn't work for a ranch that served bad food.

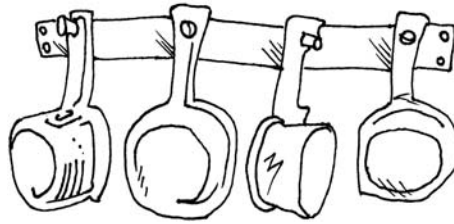
After supper in a cow camp, while the cook was washing the pots and pans, the cowboys who were free of duties liked to assemble around the fire for some singing. If they were lucky, a fiddler would be among them. They sang rollicking songs, sad songs, but usually ended with a sacred hymn. Soon afterward, all except the night herders would be in their bedrolls; the next day's work would begin before sun up.



*“No matter how weary and hungry you are
after a long day in the saddle, always tend to your horse’s needs
before your own, and get your horse some feed before you eat.”*

-Old Cowboy Wisdom





A GENTLE SUGGESTION TO COOKIE

Do not provide alternative "safe" snacks for students who refuse to try cowboy recipes. Serve sample portions with a spirit of cowboy adventure. Most students take a "no thank you" helping. Refill when students want more.

Do not be held hostage to bad attitudes. Complainers become enthusiastic telling everyone they tried something new. Say, "No problem! I'm sure lunch will be served at your house later. Just enjoy chatting with your friends."

No big deal! Hold the line cheerfully yet firmly.

The only exception is for health concerns. Parents must make their desires known when their student arrives.

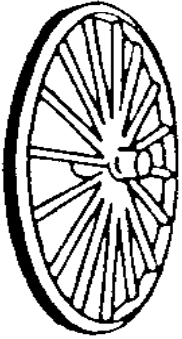
TABLE WARE. Serve snacks in disposable aluminum pie pans. Add pint sized canning jars for beverages. Add red and white checkered paper napkins.

SERVING FUN. Cookie and the Chuck Wagon crew should wear large aprons over their cowboy outfits and serve snacks from large kettles with wooden spoons. Let the cowpokes hold out their pie pan for a helping of whatever the snack of the day is. Refill beverages from an old, bent up coffee pot.

SNACK SUGGESTIONS. Give the Chuck Wagon an authentic touch by naming snacks appropriately. Have fun with food. Use our suggestions or create your own cowboy cuisine. Keep it simple. It is not necessary to serve an entire lunch. Sample portions of each food are enough to provide a light snack.



COWBOY SNACK IDEAS



SOUTHWEST BANANA SPLIT: Chocolate ice cream covered with sliced bananas, cinnamon, chocolate sauce, whipped cream and a cherry.

DIAMOND BACK RATTLESNAKE CHUNKS: Chicken nuggets or strips of chicken served hot. Add pineapple chunks to each plate.

CORNBREAD, BISCUITS, DUMP CAKE: Use your favorite recipes.

MINI TACOS AND MILD SALSA

TATERS WITH SLOP: French fries served with BBQ sauce on the side.

LIZARD PLANKS: Deep fried fresh, lengthwise sliced **zucchini** topped with parmesan cheese and served with salsa.

BUFFALO BILL CHILI: Small cup of your favorite mild chili recipe topped with grated cheese or dollop of sour cream. Serve with generous slices of buttered Italian bread.

CATTLEMAN'S FILET: Tiny hamburgers placed on hot dog rolls cut into three pieces. Serve with pickle chips, mustard, ketchup.

SON OF A GUN STEW: Beef stew made with beef, potatoes and vegetables served with a generous slice of buttered Italian bread.

PRAIRIE DOGS WITH MAC 'N CHEESE: Make your favorite macaroni and cheese. Serve with hot dog 'circles'.

PIONEER PLATTER: Platter filled with fresh fruit cut in bite sized portions.

CAMPFIRE CATCH: Hot dog bites. Each hot dog placed on a bun and cut into three sections for appetizer size portions. Serve with mustard and ketchup.

BUCKBOARD BEAN SOUP: Serve your favorite bean soup recipe in tiny portions in small cups. Top with cheese.



CITY SLICKER CHEESECAKE: Purchase boxes of instant cheesecake. Top cheesecake with cherries, blueberries or strawberries.

PRAIRIE PIE: Apple pie and ice cream.

STAGECOACH CAKE: Bake cakes and serve with icy cold milk.

PRAIRIE PIE: Apple Pie and Ice Cream

SHERIFF BADGE COOKIES: Make large star shaped cookies frosted in yellow. Add silver sugar balls around the edges.

COW PIES: Vanilla ice cream between homemade cookies.

CALF SLOBBERS: Make meringues and serve in a small paper cup.

CHOKER HOLES: Doughnuts or doughnut holes.

FLAP JACK BREAKFAST

Serve pancakes with plenty of butter and syrup. Add sausage links, bacon and scrambled eggs. Adjust portions according to size of cowboy. Serve milk, orange/apple juice.

CHUCK WAGON SANDWICH

Toast English muffins. Add one fried egg, Canadian bacon and cheese. Serve milk, orange/apple juice.

BEVERAGES

ROOT BEER: Ice cold, in small bottles.

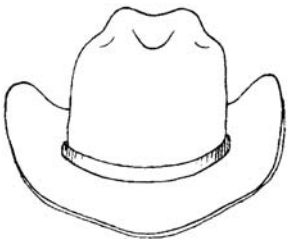
SARSAPARILLA: Cold drink served in canning jars

BUG JUICE: Any cold drink with ginger ale for a bit of sparkle.

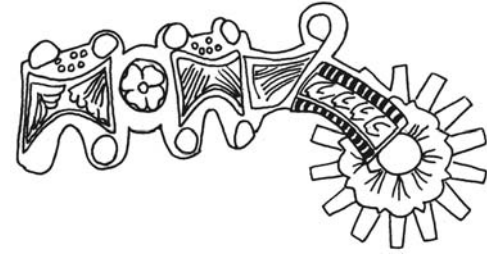
MOO JUICE: Chocolate or White milk

GOD'S FAVE: Iced water served in canning jars with colorful straws.

COWBOY COFFEE: Lots of rich, dark, hot coffee served fresh from a metal coffee pot. Add cream and sugar as desired. Leaders only!



CHUCK WAGON RECIPES



Baked Bean Bread

This works well in Campbell soup cans. After you finish baking the bread in them it looks nice to tie a bandana around the center of the can. Kids really like this even though you might think they won't!

2 C flour 2 C sugar 1 C oil
3 Eggs 1 t. vanilla 1 t. cinnamon
1 can pork and beans (16 oz. Drained)
½ t. baking powder ½ t. soda 1 C. Raisins (optional)

Mix sugar, oil, beans.

Mix flour, dry ingredients, put together with vanilla.

Fill 5 greased (sprayed with Pam) 16 oz cans 2/3 full with batter.

Bake 45-50 minutes at 325 degrees.

Cow Pie Cookies

Makes 4 Dozen

2 C. Sugar 5 T. Unsweetened cocoa ½ C. Milk
½ C. Butter (1 stick) ½ C. Chunky peanut butter 1 t. vanilla
3 C quick-cooking oats

Cover baking sheet with wax paper and set aside. Combine sugar and cocoa in a large sauce pan. Stir in milk, butter and peanut butter. Cook and stir over medium heat until butter melts and mixture is combined (5-10 minutes). Turn off heat. Stir in vanilla and oats. Mix thoroughly. Spoon onto waxed paper. Refrigerate until cool and set.

Caution To Cookie: Be sure to remove the mixture of milk, butter and peanut butter from heat before adding oats. This prevents the mixture from burning and to start cooling before spooning it out.

Trail Mix – GORP

Trail mix is an ideal trail snack . It is lightweight and easy to store. Also called GORP meaning "to eat greedily" or better yet, "Gobs Of Raw Protein". Serve in small brown bags. There are many ingredients to place in the mix. Choose from our ingredient suggestions or make your favorite mix.

Mini pretzels Raisins M&M's Cheerios Chex cereal
little toasted breads Mini Marshmallows Sunflower seeds
Dried fruit (apricots, cranberries, cherries, bananas)



Peanut, Cashews (watch out for peanut allergies!)

Corn Fritters

1 1/4 C. Flour 2 C. Corn 1 t. baking powder
2 t. salt 1/2 C. Sugar 1/4 t. paprika 2 eggs 1/4 C. Milk

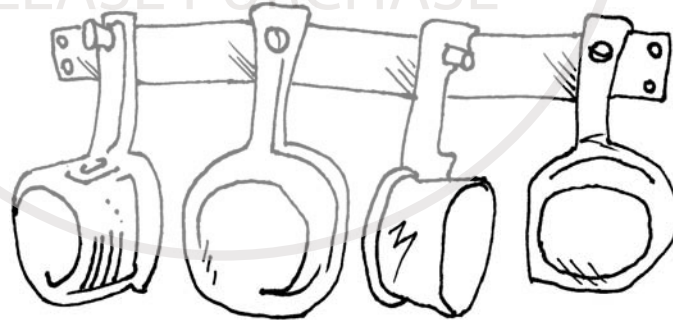
Stir dry ingredients together and add corn. Add egg yolks beaten thick and fold in egg whites beaten stiff. Fry in hot oil. Use a cold bowl to beat egg whites if possible.

OPTION: COWBOY SUPPER

Publicize an evening meal to follow the final day's activities. Invite students, families and the church congregation. After a wonderful Wild West week, this is a perfect way to end the celebration.

MENU: Plan a big, old fashioned outdoor picnic. Ask folks to bring dishes to pass and their own picnic baskets. Seat everyone outdoors.

Hot Dogs/Hamburgers Corn On Cob Potato Salad
Jello Salads Cantaloupe Baked Beans
Relish Tray Desserts Beverages



THE FRONTIER CABIN

“Behind every successful rancher is a wife who works in town.”

-Old Cowboy Wisdom

Teach students about prairie life in this fifteen minute daily activity. Students learn how God keeps those who follow Him safe. A series of small projects remind students of the concepts learned.

COSTUME: Wear typical pioneer dress.

DECORATIONS: Create a simple log cabin in a classroom. Collect items to place on walls and stack in corners:

Wood table, rocking chair, spinning wheel and yarn,
Wooden bowls, utensils, woven and rag throw rugs,
Broom, bedding in a corner, green plants,
Bowl of potatoes, apples, carrots and beans,
Replica of a fireplace, candles, metal washtub, tinware,
Benches, fresh flowers in glass jar,
Wooden cradle, rag dolls, stack of firewood, lantern,
Leather hides, large family Bible.

CHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE SIGNS: Paint wooden/cardboard signs to hang on the cabin wall for each of the five parts of the code.

FRONTIER CABIN ACTIVITIES: Each day students visit the Frontier Cabin for a short lesson about the Christian Pioneer Code and a quick project. Keep the activities within a 15 minute time period.



MONDAY IN THE FRONTIER CABIN

CHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE: GOD COVERS US WITH HIS LOVE



PIONEER WELCOME!

Welcome to my frontier cabin. Life on the frontier is a challenge. Westerners live in sod houses called "soddies" or log cabins cut from local trees.

The first pioneers wanted a new way of life. They traveled in covered wagons that contained every item they owned. The wagon was pulled by a set of oxen. Oxen were slow moving but very strong. In fact, the Indians had little use for oxen because of their slowness.

My family traveled with other families in a wagon train. We got to know each other very well. We stopped the wagons at night and started campfires where we cooked our meals. Sometimes we sang and sometimes we just went to sleep.

GOD COVERS ME WITH HIS LOVE: I remember heading for this place--a new home on the prairie. I was afraid God would forget me way out here. Maybe He only loved the people in the cities. Soon, I found that God covered me with His love no matter where I lived. He loves you too and can see you wherever you are.

Let's make a quilt square to remind us that just like a homemade quilt keeps us warm, God's love covers us and keeps us warm.



QUILT SQUARES

Here are two ideas for making simple quilt squares. Choose an easy option for your groups and have fun.

HOME MADE QUILT SQUARES

Purchase and cut muslin into 8" squares. Students paint a simple symbol in the center of their square. It may be a flower, hand, heart, name, cross, house, animal, etc. Fabric markers in a variety of colors work best and are the simplest solution when working with a time limit.

Options: Separate squares may be displayed in the cabin and then taken home at the end of the week. Cut the muslin squares with pinking shears to form a natural edging.

OR, machine sew the squares together and make a small wall hanging. Back the quilt with a plain piece of muslin or cotton. Hang the homemade quilt in the cabin. Keep each group's quilt on permanent display in the Sunday School area.

S&S ARTS AND CRAFTS offers fabric markers and an interesting quilt that may work for your small groups.

Fabric Markers: Create your own permanent keepsake using these permanent, non-toxic fabric markers! Dries quickly. Conical tip makes it neat to use. Comes in assorted colors.

More at www.swww.com

Search: Fabric Markers

Color Me Quilt: A new twist on a classic craft. 16 each of 6" fabric squares easily button together. Have each student decorate his own square and join together to create a large keepsake. No sewing required. Squares easily button together. Multiple quilts can be joined together. Use fabric markers sold separately.



TUESDAY IN THE FRONTIER CABIN

CHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE: GOD LIGHTS OUR WAY

There were no electric lights when pioneers crossed the prairie. At night the only light came from the moon. If the moon was dark, the land became pitch black. Fire from campfires, fireplaces, lanterns and candles was very important. Pioneers were especially careful when they lit candles. Fires were common and many pioneers were injured or died because their candles tipped over.



Listen to verses about Light from God's Word:

"Everything that was created received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone. The light keeps shining in the dark and the darkness has never put it out."
John 1:4-5

Jesus said, "Everyone who has seen me has seen the one who sent me. I am the Light that has come into the world. No one who has faith in me will stay in the dark."
John 12:46

I feel better when there is a lot of light in my frontier cabin. It cheers me and makes me feel safe. Let's make a candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world.

SAND ART CANDLES

Create one of a kind candle holders by layering one color of sand over another. Poke along the sides with a dowel for special effects. Includes glasses, votive candles, dowels, fine sand colors and instructions.

Check for current prices.

Want to make a homemade version? Collect baby food jars, add colored sand to bottom of jars, insert small tea light candle, trim outside of jar with raffia or ribbon.



WEDNESDAY IN THE FRONTIER CABIN

CHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE: GOD PROTECTS US



Pioneers lived when the land was untouched with factories and smoke. The mountains were glorious and the flowers were perfect. Sometimes life on the prairie was frightening. Wild animals roamed the land without fear of being killed. Wild bear, mountain lions, buffalo, snakes were always a threat.

Weather was terrible! Hot, dry days on the plains. Winter brought deep snows on the mountains.

Wind and snow was so fierce they tied ropes around their waists to keep from getting lost just a few feet from the cabin. In the spring, rain poured down hills and filled rivers to overflowing. Mud! Mud! Mud!

God protected pioneers from these fearful things in our new land. Some people died and some became so fearful they returned to their homes in the east. It took a strong person to trust God's protection in this strange land. Let's make a weather rock to remind us (in a funny way) of God's protection from the weather.

HOMEMADE WEATHER ROCK

Supplies: 1 dowel rod or strong twig/stick approximately 24" long, 1 small rock, twine approximately 2 ½' long.

Draw a line of glue around the center of the rock. Wrap one end of the twine several times around the center of the rock and tie securely. Draw a line of glue around one end of the stick about 2" from the end. Wrap the other end of the twine around the stick several times and tie securely. Give each student a printed set of instructions:



STAND OUTSIDE AND HOLD THE END OF THE STICK
SO THE ROCK DANGLES FROM THE END OF THE STRING.

--If the rock is gently SWAYING...it is BREEZY.

--If the rock is SWINGING...it is WINDY!

--If the rock is WET...it is RAINING!

--If the rock is WARM AND DRY...it is SUNNY!

--If the rock is MOIST...it is HUMID!

--If the rock is DIFFICULT TO SEE...it is FOGGY!

--If the rock is COVERED BY SHADOWS...it is CLOUDY!

--If the rock is WHITE...it is SNOWING!

--If the rock is SPINNING IN CIRCLES...it is a TORNADO!

--If the rock is SHAKING...it is an EARTHQUAKE!

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY

BUTTERFLY, FLOWER AND LADYBUG PINWHEELS: Decorate wooden pinwheels with paint and plant them in your garden. Watch pinwheels whirl in the wind! 19" x 6".
S&S Arts and Crafts

FLOWER THERMOMETER: Cute magnet features a working thermometer!
S&S Arts and Crafts

COLOR ME WINDSOCK: White canvas 3" diameter x 22" L. Beautiful windsock to color and really use!
S&S Arts and Crafts



THURSDAY
IN THE FRONTIER CABINCHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE:
GOD PROVIDES EVERYTHING

Pioneer life was difficult. We made everything we had in our cabins and on our farms. I mean everything! We even had to make the tools to make the wagons, homes, furniture, clothes and food. There were no stores! It isn't that people didn't want to help. There was no way to get items so far away from civilization.



God provided what I needed at the right time. The weather had been dark and stormy. It hadn't rained in weeks and the desert sand was kicking up because of wind. Soon the wind was blowing so hard we knew we were in the middle of a sand storm. I was afraid. I never saw anything so wild. The sand was so thick that my eyes hurt from the grains getting in them. I couldn't see the wagon in front of me.

I began to pray: "Lord, help me see where I am going. I don't have anything to cover my face and my oxen might run into the McCarthy wagon before we can get stopped in a safe place. Help!"

As soon as I said "Amen", a gust of wind blew a piece of material straight into my face. It was a bandana! It must have blown off one of the wagons in front. I was so grateful to tie that scarf around my nose and eyes and pull the oxen off to the side of the road without injuring people or wagons. God provided a simple thing at the perfect time.



BANDANNA

Purchase brightly colored bandanas and cut into 2 triangles. Each bandana serves two students. Purchase plastic crow beads. Students cut narrow strips at the triangle end of the scarf (teachers may pre-cut strips if time is an issue) and string 3 plastic crow beads on each strip. Hot glue bottom bead on each strip. (See sample illustration.)



Decide how many beads each student will receive and cut number of strips accordingly. Example--15 beads=5 strips, 30 beads=10 strips.

Bandanas are tied in the back and worn so beads hang down the front of student's shirt.

ORIENTAL TRADING CATALOG: www.orientaltrading.com

Beads may be purchased through S&S arts and crafts catalog or Oriental Trading.

PREVIEW PROGRAM ONLY
NOT FOR USE
PLEASE PURCHASE



FRIDAY
IN THE FRONTIER CABIN
CHRISTIAN PIONEER CODE:
GOD ENJOYS US



Pioneer children did not choose dolls and games from toy stores. There was no money for such wasteful purchases. Toys and games were made at home. Leftover scraps of wood and material were used to make toys. Each toy was special and children took care of their toys.

I remember the story of Jesus with the children. They wanted to climb all over Him and His disciples said, "Get away! Jesus doesn't have time for this foolishness." But He did! He said, "Let the children come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus knew how wonderful it is to enjoy life with laughter and games. There is going to be a lot of laughter and games in heaven. No sadness, only joy. Let's make a game to remind us that Jesus enjoys us.

HOME MADE 'ROCK-TAC-TOE'

Kit Supplies: 6" x 6" cardboard base, 9 smooth, small rocks (beads, buttons). Make a kit before class and place in separate zip lock sandwich bags.

Paint brushes, acrylic paint (2 colors), water, paper towels, newspaper or protective plastic to cover tables. Black Markers, rulers to make game lines.

Each student receives a kit. Paint 5 rocks, beads or buttons one color, 4 another color. They may make their rock markers look like ladybugs or grasshoppers. If the base is wood, students stain with a small rag and let dry. If time is an issue, prepare base before class.

CHECK S&S ARTS AND CRAFTS www.ssw.com for other craft project games that can work well for your group. Or, design your own homemade game or toy!



WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOPS
TIPS FOR TEACHERS

*“When you lose, don’t lose the lesson.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*

Each HAPPY TRAILS workshop represents a wild west place where cowboys hear the “West of the Story” to learn the rest of the story about people changed by Jesus. Enjoy an activity, memorize a verse, hear a Bible story and complete a craft.



Workshop leaders accompany their group and serve as daily activities assistants. Decorations, costumes and relationships bring this cowboy theme to life. Guide students on a fun wild west adventure.

Watch their lives change!

WEST OF THE STORY

Each Workshop features a Bible person/people who responded to God’s call to Jesus. When they did, the ‘west’ of their story became a lifetime adventure.

WORKSHOP #1: THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE

THEME: Golden Help

Memory Verse: Matthew 7:22

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”

Bible Story: Raising Lazarus

Craft

WORKSHOP #2: ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

THEME: Study–“The Dog Ate My Homework”!

Memory Verse: II Timothy 2:15

“Study to show thyself approved unto God,

A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Bible Story: Timothy The Kid

Craft



WORKSHOP #3: HOME ON THE RANGE

THEME: Sharing Is Good

Memory Verse: *Romans 10:9*

*"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus,
and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Bible Story: Riding The Range With Philip
Craft

WORKSHOP #4: TUMBLEWEED BARN

THEME: Bad To Beautiful

Memory Verse: John 8:32

"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Bible Story: Well Woman of Samaria
Craft

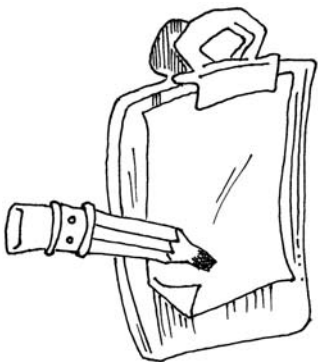
WORKSHOP #5: SHERIFF'S OFFICE

THEME: Believe In Jesus!

Memory Verse: Acts 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Bible Story: Jailer Believes!
Craft



DECORATE: Follow our suggestions or design your own wild west environment. Borrow items from family and friends. Make items from construction paper, posterboard and cardboard. Create dramatic lighting with floor lights and darkness. Find fun, inexpensive accessories at home, garage, attic and in second hand shops.

COSTUME AND CHARACTER: Follow curriculum suggestions. Borrow, rent or create simple cowboy costumes. Become the character suggested.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY: Teach a scripture verse. If you prefer another version of scripture or another activity, use it. Shorten the memory verse to match the age group.



BIBLE STORY: The Bible stories involve people who were changed when they met Jesus. The West (Rest) of the Story is that we are changed too.

Seat students on the floor. Ask questions. Simplify material for younger students. Older students may participate in discussion.

CRAFT: Reserve one workshop corner. Students enjoy taking home a craft keepsake. The project must be simple enough to complete in one session.

Divide craft parts into kits. Place everything needed in front of them. If younger students need help, ask parents or helpers to participate.

There are many appropriate projects suggested. Choose from our list. Our craft suggestions may not fit your needs. Adapt the activity if you find another project. This is your workshop. Have fun with it.

Decide whether keeping crafts until Open House or taking them home daily works for your event. Communicate the decision so all workshop leaders are prepared.

TIME MANAGEMENT: Small groups complete their West Of The Story Workshop activities in one session. If suggested activities cannot be completed within the 45 minutes allotted, choose the most important details and omit the rest.

Notes:



CRAFT SUGGESTIONS

*“Lettin’ the cat outta the bag
is a whole lot easier than puttin’ it back.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*



Give your cowboys the opportunity to make great craft projects that will become keepsakes of their HAPPY TRAILS Adventure. The project must be completed within the time of the workshop.

Choose projects from our suggestion list or design your own homemade versions of keepsakes your students will enjoy.

Simpler projects may be needed for the preschool group. Find a project they can complete successfully with the help of a few leaders.

S&S Arts and Crafts

Website: www.swww.com Call for current catalog: 1-800-243-9232

CROSSES. There are lots of cross craft choices from S&S. Find one that fits your group and budget at their web site.

SUPER FOAM MEMORY BOOK. Assemble and decorate these great notebooks with a large star on the front. No gluing or painting. 6" x 6".

CRAFT STICK BARREL BANK. Contains everything needed to make 25 projects. 4" x 6". Paint sold separately.

WOODEN SHAKE SNAKE. It's hard to be scared of this 20" L wiggly wooden snake when you paint it with bright colors!

RAFFIA BASKET. It's a cinch to make bright, colorful raffia baskets! 4 ½" long ovals.



COWBOY BOOT PHOTO FRAME. Young buckaroos will love these fun paper frames! 6 ½" x 9 ¾". 2" x 2 ¾" photo space.

WOOD COWBOY BOOTS. A craft kids can really dig their spurs into! 4 ½" x 5 ½".

WOODEN YO-YO. Everyone's favorite toy! 2 ½" diameter.

RAINBOW TOP. Decorate with paint. 2 ¾" x 4 ½"

WOODEN TRAIN WHISTLE. All aboard! Whistles make an authentic sound. Popular with all ages. Approx 8 ½" x 1 ½".

COLOR ME CERAMIC BISQUE COW BANKS. Decorate you own unglazed white bisque cow bank. Decorating materials sold separately. Coin slot and rubber stopper at the base.

COVERED WAGON. Easy to assemble kits for a favorite keepsakes. Come unassembled and unfinished. 3" x 8" x 7".



WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOP #1:

THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE

"A cowboy always helps someone in need, even a stranger or an enemy."

-Old Cowboy Wisdom

WEST OF THE STORY THEME:

Help Is Golden!

THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE is a "working" gold mine where students learn that Jesus gives great advice and truly helps His friends.

DECORATION: Gold Mine

Cover the walls of an empty classroom with black plastic. Add sparkle to the mine walls by adding gold glitter spray. Fill each corner with large rocks spray painted with gold glitter. Paint small rocks gold. Make enough small gold rocks so each student can choose a 'gold nugget' to take home with them.

Place shovels, axes, hammers, barrels, burlap bags, rope and an old wagon. Wood planking may be placed on the floor. Paint an old piece of wood--THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE, EST. 1865.

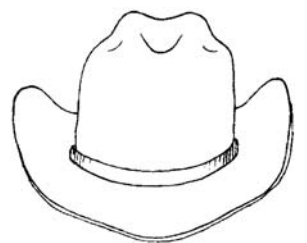
Light the room with lanterns, small lights hidden in rocks and small flashlights. Scatter white twinkle lights behind rocks. It should be as dark as possible so the mine walls sparkle. Enlarge "Clementine" the mule illustration on this page on cardboard. Lean 'her' on one wall.

Print and spray glitter individual rocks: THE GOLDEN RULE--"Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You." Matthew 7:12

Scatter around the mine.

COSTUME AND CHARACTER: Miner

Become a gold miner who has staked a claim for Thunder Gap Gold Mine. Wear jeans, long sleeved work shirt, vest, suspenders, bandanna, cowboy hat and boots. If available, wear a headlight.



68



WELCOME

Are you one of those squirrely bunch of claim jumpers? Turn your tails and 'git! I'm not giving up this gold claim for anyone. The promise of the "mother lode" is written on these old rock walls and it's mine all mine. When I get rich, I'm going to high tail it out of here for the big city. I'm gonna buy the best cowboy outfit I can find and my partner here is going to buy a new hat. And..we're each gonna get a BATH!

As long as you went to the trouble of climbing into this old hole, settle back and relax. We ain't got much but we'll share what we got. I don't think you'll be wantin' to stay fer long. It's so dark we have to bring our own lanterns. The work is hard and the air is bad in here--real bad (Cough). Watch out for every miner's enemy, Fool's Gold. It's rock that looks just like the real stuff but ain't worth a plug nickel.

MEMORY VERSE: The Golden Rule

Do unto others
As you would have them
Do unto you.
Matthew 7:12

Print individual words on small, gold rock shapes made of posterboard. Before class, attach the rock words all over the walls. Students search for the words with flash lights and put the verse together to say aloud. Or, use real rocks painted gold and printed.

The words of the GOLDEN RULE come out of the Good Book. My copy is torn and tattered but the GOLDEN RULE is just as true now as ever.

The Man who spoke it was real special and He was real smart about giving good advice. His name is Jesus. Have you heard about Him?



GOOD BOOK TALE: Raising Lazarus

Serve a small, cold snack while telling the story.
Choose something that can be served from a large metal bowl.
(Frozen grapes, chilled apple slices)

Jesus was always helping people. Why, He healed sick folks, fed hungry people and even raised up dead ones. Speaking of raising up dead people, that 'truer than true' tale is a humdinger!

John 11:1-54: Jesus loved a small town called Bethany because His best friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus lived there. Whenever Jesus was in shouting distance, He'd stop in for a bite to eat and a good talk. He loved these folks like they were His very own kin. They believed Jesus was the Messiah, Savior and loved Him.

Jesus was out of town when a messenger tracked Him down, "Jesus! Your dear friend is feeling poorly! His sisters need you in Bethany as quick as a jackrabbit to make him feel better!"

Strange thing is, Jesus didn't go. He said "Lazarus' is sick for the glory of God." Lazarus got sicker and weaker. Mary and Martha got more scared...and then...Lazarus died! The sisters cried, "Why didn't Jesus come?" A day passed...no Jesus.

Finally the neighbors came and wrapped the poor, old guy and got him ready to be buried in a cave. A huge rock was rolled in front of the cave so no one would get inside. *(I guess that's why I like this story. It's got a 'mine' and a rock in it!)* People cried. Still Jesus didn't show up. What was goin' on with that guy?

Two full days later Jesus says, "Let's go back to Bethany in Judea"... Like it was all His idea. The disciples weren't so happy because the last time they were in Judea the people tried to stone Him. *(There you go with the rocks again!)*

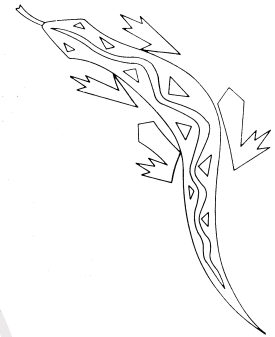
Why Jesus would want to go back to Bethany was more than they could understand. They were kind of scared but Thomas said, "Oh well, come along. We might as well die with Him."



Jesus told them Lazarus was sleeping. When they got back, Lazarus had been dead four days. Too late. The sisters were more than disappointed in their friend. He said He loved them but when they needed him most, He had flown the coop.

THE WEST OF THE STORY: Help Is Golden

The WEST OF THE STORY is amazing! Martha ran to meet Jesus. She was mad and sad all at the same time. She said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died!"



To make her feel better, Jesus told her Lazarus would rise again. "Yes, I know", she cried, "He'll rise on the final day when all God's people meet Him in the sky." She didn't get it at all. Jesus was getting ready to make a miracle to honor God!

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live. And those who live and believe in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Jesus asked her to call Mary. Mary ran to meet her friend. She was crying really hard. When the neighbors saw her crying, they all started crying. Jesus asked where Lazarus was buried.

By now, Jesus was crying too. He asked someone to move the rock and while the people watched, Jesus lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Father I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you always hear me. I say this so the people who are here may believe you have sent me." Then He shouted, "Lazarus, come out!"

And can you believe it, Lazarus popped his wrapped head out of the cave! Wow, everyone was amazed. They unwrapped him and Lazarus went home with his sisters!

Well, that was a turnaround for many people. They saw what Jesus did and believed in Him. He showed he was truly God's Son, Messiah and Savior of the world. AND...THAT'S THE WEST OF THE STORY!



CONCLUSION: TREASURE NUGGETS

I want you to remember Thunder Gap Gold Mine. Look around the floor of the mine and find a gold nugget to take home. It is yours to remember how Jesus talked about doing good to others.

CLOSE IN PRAYER.

THUNDER GAP GOLD MINE CRAFT

Choose a craft project from our list of suggestions or create your own keepsake. The students must be able to complete their project within the time frame of the Workshop. They will not return to this area.

OPTIONS: TAKE HOME GIFTS

Oriental Trading Company:

www.orientaltrading.com

GOLD NUGGET BUBBLE GUM in a small canvas bags
"Jesus Is The Light" Mini Flashlight Key Chains.

NOTES:

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WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOP #2:

ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE

WEST OF THE STORY THEME: The Dog Ate My Homework

Timothy grew up with a mother and grandmother who were Jesus followers. His father was not a believer. He had every excuse not to become a believer. Excuses can make or break a follower of Jesus. Did Timothy make excuses? Do YOU make excuses?



DECORATION: School Room

Set up a black chalkboard, benches for students, school bell, water bucket and dipper, teacher's wooden desk and chair (with ruler, ink well, apple and other teacher items), braided rugs, children's books.

Add a few items like a tall stool in the corner with a paper dunce cap sitting on it. Print the word "Dunce" in large letters on the cone shaped hat. Scatter balled up paper on the floor.

COSTUME AND CHARACTER: School 'Marm'

Become a "school marm". Dress in a long dress with prairie bonnet and full white apron. "Simplicity Patterns" offers prairie costumes.

WELCOME

(Ring a large school bell) Students, come to order! I do not tolerate disobedience in my prairie school. We use our time wisely. When the weather improves, your parents need you on the ranch to help with spring planting, summer chores and fall harvest. I like fun but we must get serious about studying God's Word.

Not one of you brought your completed homework with you. Excuses! Excuses! I want to know why your homework is not done.



This list is a guide for excuses and responses. Give reading students one excuse on a small slip of paper. Answer each student's excuse as written or create your own response. Have fun with this activity. The students may even come up with their own excuses!

1. I didn't know I had homework!

That is no excuse! It is always your responsibility to find out what is required of you. Did you even wonder if there was an assignment? Ask someone!

2. The dog ate my homework!

That's the oldest excuse in the book! I love dogs so you want to soften my heart. I don't believe a mosquito bite gave you an allergy to paper and pen or that you spent the evening rescuing a kitten from a tree.

3. I was afraid and had to go to bed early.

We are all afraid of something. I personally don't like spiders but I still do my work.

4. My parents punished me for not doing the dishes and forbid me from doing my homework.

Oh really? Shall I talk to your mother and suggest she use another form of discipline during the school year?

5. There was a family emergency! My grandmother died and on the way to her house, my father fell off his horse and broke his leg. My mother tried to help him and she slipped in the mud and wrenched her back. My brother started to cry so I had to comfort him all evening.

Well, I'm indeed impressed that you had such a difficult time. I'll give you bonus points for tears and wailing. When is the funeral? I'd like to come and support your family.

6. I was sick.

Faking sickness is an art best left to the masters. Because you're really sick, no recess today and you better not eat your lunch.

7. I spent the evening with my old Aunt Nellie. She needed the company and I felt my time was best used being with her.

That is indeed a noble excuse. However, charity work must be done after your responsibilities.



8. I fell asleep and woke up this morning!

Sadly, your lack of sleep has cost you a good grade and a class reward. Oh, and you can put your head down on your desk during recess today to catch up on your lack of energy.

9. I did my homework in my head. I didn't know I was supposed to write it down. Then I forgot. Next time should I write it down?

I have no words for you. Today you get an F. Next time write it down.

10. I spent the evening reading my Bible and praying. Is there something wrong with that?

No, but homework must be completed too.

Making excuses is telling lies. Lying disappoints people, makes others not trust you even when you tell the truth and God says lying is a sin. It's just plain wrong.

Don't forget homework has to get done or you fail. Study a little at a time and pretty soon you will know more than you ever thought you could.

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MEMORY VERSE: Study To Please God

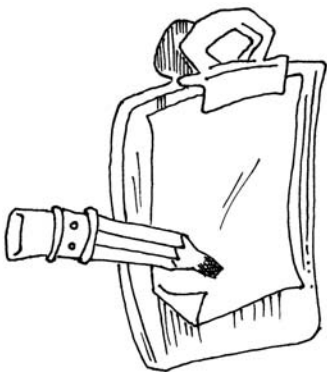
Let's combine fun and learning by using my chalkboard and today's memory verse.

II Timothy 2:15

Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth."

Print the verse on the chalkboard. Say the verse aloud as a group. Ask one student to erase one word or short phrase. Repeat the verse. Continue erasing words until the board is blank and students can say the verse from memory.

Reward: Give a sticker to students who can say the verse.



GOOD BOOK TALE: Timothy The Kid



The Good Book tells us about Timothy. Let's learn about Timothy's life to discover THE WEST OF THE STORY. Timothy was a boy who lived near the towns of Lystra and Derbe.

Timothy's mom and grandma taught him about Jesus. Paul visited Timothy's town and met the boy. Paul gave young Timothy a lot to think about. He may have had the same excuses you have when you are making decisions about serving Jesus.

DO YOU SAY "I CANNOT SERVE JESUS"?

Print each excuse on the chalkboard as you discuss it.

EXCUSE #1: I COME FROM A DIVORCED FAMILY.

Read Acts 16:1: Timothy came from a racially mixed family. His mother and grandmother were Jewish and his father was Greek. Timothy may have felt he had a foot in two different worlds. If he believed what his mom and grandma believed, he would disappoint his father who worshiped many false gods. If he rejected Jesus, he would disappoint the women he loved. What a dilemma!

We hear so much about Timothy in the New Testament. We know he considered Paul's teaching carefully and decided to serve Jesus. He became one of the closest friends of Paul.

EXCUSE #2: I AM TOO YOUNG!

Do you think no one will respect your faith in Christ because you are still a kid? Timothy thought the same thing. He was a young man when he accepted the Lord. He was still living at home. Adults during those days didn't have much time for the "young'ns".

It must have been an issue because Paul wrote to Timothy and said: "Teach these things and tell everyone to do what you say. Don't let anyone make fun of you, just because you are young. Set an example for other followers by what you say and do, as well as by your love, faith and purity."
I Timothy 4:11-12CEV



Paul encouraged Timothy and gave him suggestions to help him gain the respect of the adult believers he would be teaching.

EXCUSE #3: I CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE.

We tend to put off studying until the last moment and then we rush to learn everything we can in a short amount of time. Wrong! We must pace ourselves and learn to make studying fun.

Do a little each day. Do not wait until the last minute to cram! Studying is fun and easy if you do it the right way.

Timothy began studying as soon as he heard Paul talk about Jesus. When Paul returned to Lystra two years later, Timothy had his bags packed, ready to travel the world teaching the good news of Jesus.

EXCUSE #4: I AM VERY SHY.

I am afraid to speak in front of people. My mouth gets dry, my knees shake and I can't think of anything to say. Surely God can use someone who isn't this shy. Timothy must have been courageous and fearless in face of trouble.

Timothy was just like you. He felt the same feelings we all feel when people are going to laugh or, worse yet, punish us for what we believe. He had to overcome shyness just like you. Being a Christian was not popular in Paul and Timothy's time. In fact, the religious leaders in each town would arrange for soldiers to arrest Christian leaders and hope they would be beaten or executed--anything to stop their "Jesus talk".

EXCUSE #5: I NEVER DO ANYTHING RIGHT.

Oh yeah? Do you think that's a bad thing? We all fail. God has not called us to be perfect people. He knows we make mistakes all the time. It is important to try again after a disappointing failure.

Timothy failed too. Once Paul sent him to the church in Corinth. They were having a terrible time. It turns out Timothy couldn't handle it and Paul had to send another--older--man to solve the problem.



Timothy must have felt terrible. He blew it. He failed. Maybe he should have ended this crazy dream. Did he quit? No! The Bible says Timothy was with his friend until Paul died. He was faithful to the end. Was Paul angry with Timothy for failing? No! Paul said, "Let no man despise thy youth...."

(From the "Chicago Tribune") Life is pretty simple: You do some stuff. Most fails. Some works. You do more of what works. If it works big, others quickly copy it. Then you do something else. The trick is in the doing something else.

EXCUSE #6: NO ONE GIVES ME A CHANCE TO SERVE JESUS.

Are you the person that people turn to to pick up, clean up, run for this, go for that, on and on? You would like to be a leader but no one ever gives you the chance. You are just the "go-fer".

Every time we hear about Timothy he is going for this, delivering that, left behind, sent back, on and on. That was the story of Timothy's life and yet he faithfully served Paul wherever he could.

Could it be that the Lord is asking you to **do whatever you can** to serve Him?

EXCUSE #7: NO RUSH--I HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

Do you? Really? How do you know? God is calling you to serve Him TODAY. None of us is guaranteed a long life. Even if we live 90 years, time goes quickly. Timothy served where he could, as soon as he could. No excuses! So should you. Start serving Jesus this very day!

THE WEST OF THE STORY: No Excuses!

God's Word mentions Timothy often. He was one of Paul's closest friends. He traveled around the world with Paul and also went to jail while teaching about Jesus.

The last word about Timothy is found in Hebrews 13:23 where it is reported that Timothy was recently released from prison and the writer of Hebrews intends to bring him along on a visit. There he was, overcoming every excuse in the book, to continue to serve Jesus. Let's learn to be like Timothy.



ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE CRAFT

Choose a craft project from our list of suggestions or create your own keepsake. The students must be able to complete their project within the time frame of the Workshop. They will not return to this area.

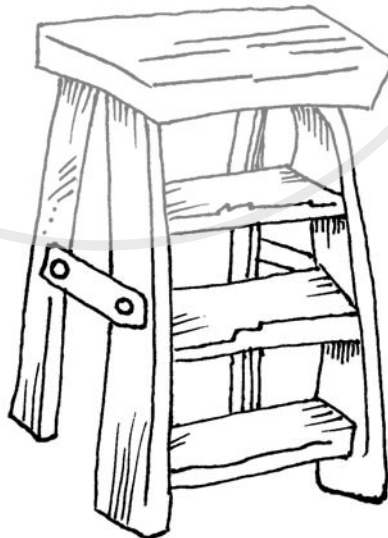
OPTIONS: TAKE HOME GIFT

Oriental Trading Company
www.orientaltrading.com

Cowboy Notepads. 2 dozen per unit. 3 ½" 35 pages. 4 covers: Cowboy on Bucking Horse, Cowboy hat, Cactus, Cowboy boots.

Canvas Color Your Own Western Drawstring Backpacks. These backpacks are also a fun craft option. Approx. 14 ½" Fabric markers not included.

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WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOP #3:

HOME ON THE RANGE

*“After you pass someone on the trail,
don’t look back at him. It implies you don’t trust him.”
-Old Cowboy Wisdom*



WEST OF THE STORY THEME:

Sharing Is Good

When traveling THE WEST OF THE WAY, you never know who you will meet. Be prepared to talk about Jesus wherever you go with everyone you meet.

DECORATION: Camp Site

OUTDOORS: Choose a grassy place with trees, tall grasses or a calm spot where simple camping gear can be placed. A small tent can be pitched on the site. Build a fire ring with camp chairs in a circle.

INDOORS: Green plants, tall grasses, wild flowers, twigs, trees, stuffed/posterboard animals that look like gophers, snakes, cows, buffalo, skunk, butterflies, fox, grasshoppers, dragon flies, eagles, elk, owl, coyote, wolf. Choose outdoor items available and have fun creating a western camping atmosphere.

Set up a campfire so the group can sit in a circle on the floor. Use wood, rocks in a circle. Place wood stumps, old blankets around the circle. Place a lightbulb in the wood to represent the fire.

Add simple camping gear like backpacks, bedrolls, cooking utensils, blankets, pillows, camp chairs. Set up a tent if available.

Fun: Set up one or more untrimmed artificial Christmas tree. They make a huge statement and photo opportunities!



CHARACTER AND COSTUME: Cowboy

Become a cowboy riding the range on a cattle drive. The workshop takes place at a camp site. Wear traditional cowboy gear.

OPTION: Consider having a real horse/pony, cow/calf nearby. Ponyrides may be considered. Owner must be present with any animal at all times!

WELCOME: Trail Snack

SHARE A CAMPFIRE SNACK.

Consider Slim Jims, Jerky, Pepperoni slices, dinner rolls, water

Howdy, cowpokes! How'd you beat me back to the campfire? I been ridin' the range all day, chasin' down ornery cows. I have to get to Tumbleweed Town in the next day or so to get these beasts to market. Anybody seen a cow hidin' in the brush?

I'm hungry as a bear! What did you make me to eat? Nothing? What kind of cowpokes are you? I need my grub. Well, I have something in my bag for all of us to chew on.

MEMORY VERSE: TELLING GOOD NEWS

If you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus
 And **believe** in your heart
 that God has raised Him from the dead,
 You will **be saved**.

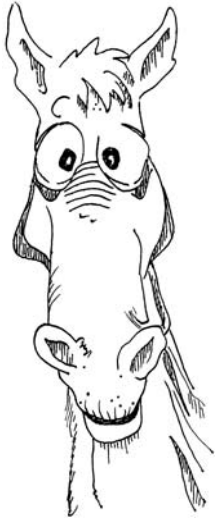
Romans 10:9

Print verse segments on brown cardboard. Be sure to print the theme words large and dark so students see they must CONFESS, BELIEVE and BE SAVED. Let students hold the segments while the group says the verse aloud. One student turns their segment around so no one can see the words while the verse is said. Continue until everyone knows the verse!

1. CONFESS (Tell) About Jesus.
2. BELIEVE in your heart that Jesus is Lord.
3. BE SAVED! If you confess and believe, you ARE saved!



GOOD BOOK TALE: Riding The Range With Philip



Look at us out here ridin' the range and campin' like real cowboys. Now, what Good Book story can possible remind me of this place?

Acts 8:26-40: This Good Book Tale is truer than true. There was this old cowpoke named Philip. He was an all around great guy who loved Jesus and preached about Him. He was one of seven Christian men chosen to care for poor folks in Jerusalem. He did a good job too.

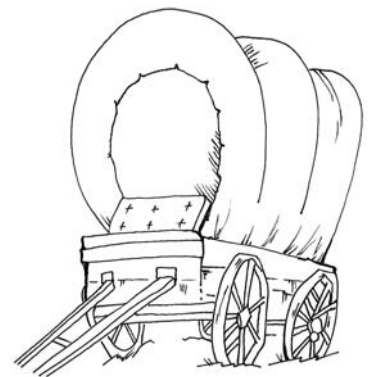
Now, this was when being a Christian was mighty dangerous. It was so scary that most believers moved to faraway places to be safe. Everywhere these Christians traveled, they talked about Jesus. Good news traveled fast and spread far and wide.

Even Philip took to the road and was ridin' the range for Jesus. One day *(and I know this is hard to believe)* an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go...." Philip headed out to the range and came across a traveler.

Out here on my range I see gophers and herds of cows. I never met a royal chariot with the Ethiopian Queen's treasurer *(Ethiopia is a country in Africa)* riding along...but Philip did! The man had been to Jerusalem to worship God. He was riding along in his fancy chariot, reading a Good Book scroll....that's how they had 'em back then...scrolls, not books.

The Ethiopian longed to know God and the scroll was his precious possession. He read and read but he could not understand the words. Philip saw the frown on his face as he caught up to the fancy wagon.

"Hey! What're doin up there?!", shouts Philip. The Ethiopian calls back, "I'm reading the Good Book!" Philip says, "Do you understand it?" The Ethiopian says, "How can I understand when I have no one to teach me?" He invited Philip to ride along and explain the meaning of the words.



They rode and talked and talked and rode. They got to talking about Jesus and Philip was able to tell him the easy steps to becoming a Jesus believer. Remember what our Good Book verse said?

CONFESS–BELIEVE–BE SAVED

The Ethiopian had not heard about Jesus. He listened. He believed. How thankful he was that Philip had come along! At last he was learning the very thing he had longed to understand. They passed a pool of water and the man asked if Philip could baptize him.

Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized." The Ethiopian said, "I do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God". They got out of the chariot and went into the water where Philip baptized him.

THE WEST OF THE STORY: Sharing Is A Good Thing

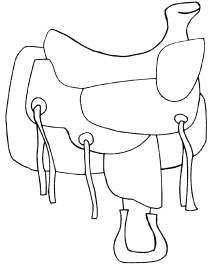
What do you think happened to the very important Ethiopian man?
(Let students respond.) Let's think about it:

1. He was VERY happy!
2. He returned to Ethiopia in Africa.
3. He told the Queen about Jesus.
4. He told everybody he knew about Jesus.
5. Good News about Jesus told all over Africa.
6. Africans are still telling each other about Jesus!

And that is because one man, Philip, was willing to ride the range telling everybody about Jesus! We can do that too!

REVIEW MEMORY VERSE: Tell everybody you meet that they can be Christians: "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."
Romans 10:9





CONCLUSION: RIDE YOUR OWN RANGE

Before you can tell someone how to be a Jesus believer, you must believe in your own heart that Jesus is Lord. If you never asked Jesus to be your Savior, pray this simple prayer and become like Philip the Ethiopian and all the believers since then...a Christian!

Dear Jesus,
I never understood how to be a Christian until today. I am asking You to be my Savior. I confess my sins. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the grave. I know that beginning today, I am saved.

In Jesus' Name,
Amen

RIDING THE RANGE CRAFT

Choose a craft project from our list of suggestions or create your own keepsake. The students must be able to complete their project within the time frame of the Workshop. They will not return to this area.

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WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOP #4:

TUMBLEWEED BARN

WEST OF THE STORY THEME: Bad to Beautiful

After the Samaritan woman met Jesus at the well, she changed. She stopped leading a bad life and became beautiful. That's how Jesus makes a difference. We change from bad to beautiful too!



DECORATION: Barn

Place hay bales in corners. Scatter farm tools. Small, live animals may be kept in hutches (rabbits, kittens, chicks, puppies). Add stuffed animals and cardboard replicas. Place horse tack, buckets, blankets, cowboy hats, old jacket hung on wall, milk cans, wooden planks and lanterns as available.

COSTUME AND CHARACTER: Cowboy/Rancher

Dress in cowboy gear. Become a cowboy of the Old West.

WELCOME: Resting In Tumbleweed Barn

Howdy, Saddle Pals. Come on in and rest awhile. Sounds like a storm's comin' in. (If available, play CD of a thunder storm.) The best place to be is leaning against a warm barn wall. We can spend this time thinking about important things from the Good Book.

MEMORY VERSE: Know The Truth

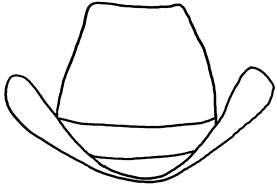
Toss crumpled balls of paper to students. Each ball has one word printed on it. Students open their paper and put the verse in the right order. Give stickers as rewards.

John 8:32 "You shall know the truth
and the truth shall make you free."



GOOD BOOK TALE: Well Woman

Serve Cold Water in simple jars



John 4:1-42: One day Jesus and his disciples took a short cut through Samaria. Not many Jews went this way. They hated Samaritans. Jews and Samaritans both worshiped God but they disagreed about where that should happen. Samaritans worshiped on a mountain in their country and Jews worshiped in Jerusalem. The fight lasted generations. They kept at each other, "I'm right." "No, I'm right."

Jesus was hot and tired. He rested by a well Jacob had dug hundreds of years before. The disciples left him and went to the city to buy food.

A woman came and lowered her water jar into the well. Just as she was ready to start back to the city, Jesus said, "Give me a drink."

The woman was so surprised she almost dropped her jar. "Why would a Jew ask a Samaritan woman for a drink? You know the Jews have nothing to do with Samaritans."

Jesus said, "If you knew who asks you for a drink, you would ask him to give you living water."

She didn't understand. "Sir, you don't even have a jug. You didn't come prepared to drink anything. How could you give me living water? Are you greater than Jacob who gave us this well?"

Jesus told her that anyone who drank water from the well would get thirsty again. He told her He was offering her water that leads to eternal life.

Huh? She still didn't get it but she was very interested. She didn't know that the "living water" was salvation for all people.

She hated coming to this well in the middle of the day. If there was an easy way out, she wanted it. "Sir, give me this water so I won't have to walk out here. None of the women like me so I come alone."



Jesus told her private things about her life that no one else knew. Her eyes must have gotten big as she realized this man was special. She thought He was a prophet--a teller of the future.

It was uncomfortable to hear someone name her sins aloud so she tried to change the subject. A 'high-falutin' religious argument would distract Him. "Oh, so you're a prophet, huh? Well, answer this one: We Samaritans worship here but you Jews say people should go to Jerusalem to worship. Who's right?"

Jesus was wise to her trick and would not allow her to squirm out of it. "God is not found in only one place for God is Spirit. Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth." The woman was very excited to hear this. She knew of the coming Messiah and Jesus told her He was that Messiah.

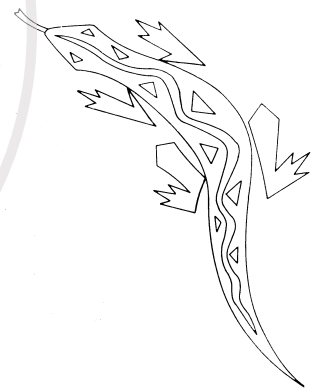
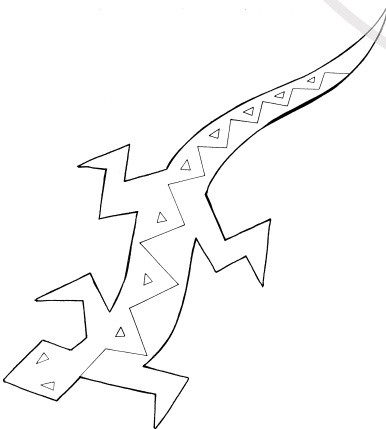
THE WEST OF THE STORY: Bad To Beautiful

Attach 6 theme questions to the mouths of individual posterboard green lizards. Hang lizards on walls of barn before class begins.

The Samaritan woman believed Jesus. She ran back to town and told everyone, "Come see a man who told me all the things I ever did. He is the Messiah!"

The people went to Jacob's well with her. Jesus talked with the Samaritans about the things of God. They invited him to stay and teach them.

For two days Jesus lived in the village and taught the people. Many believed. They said to the woman who first met Jesus at the well, "Now we believe. Not because of what you told us, but because we heard for ourselves, we know this man is the Christ, the Savior of the world."



DO YOU THINK ANYTHING HAPPENS BY CHANCE?

Was it a coincidence that the Samaritan woman went to the well at exactly the same time as Jesus? If she had been a few minutes earlier, she would have missed Him. The woman didn't just happen to meet Jesus. He went through her country (where Jews never went) on His way to Galilee and stayed at the well because He planned it!

Your life is filled with "God-Incidences." God is always reaching out to you. He wants you to believe His word and trust in Jesus.

CAN YOU GET YOURSELF OUT OF YOUR OWN PROBLEMS?

The Samaritan woman lived a sad life. Her problems were big. She wasn't finding answers.

Is God big enough for today's problems? Problems kids face today are huge. You can try to wander by yourself. Each time you work yourself out of one problem, it will come back bigger and meaner and in different ways. Problems are God's specialty. Trust Him and He will give you a better life.

DOES GOD KNOW ALL ABOUT ME?

The woman was embarrassed that Jesus knew all her secret sins. She knew this Stranger was real. He was from God.

God knows all about you. He knows every fault and sin and yet--He loves you. He keeps working in your life. What a wonderful God we serve!

CAN I GET TO GOD IN MY OWN WAY?

Well Woman tried to start an argument with Jesus. She wanted to impress Him or maybe she just wanted to get off the touchy subject of her personal sin. Whatever the case, Jesus brought her back to the real topic; Worshiping God truthfully!

It is simple. When people worship Jesus Christ crucified, risen and coming again as Messiah and Savior, they are worshiping God correctly.



What's a wrong way to worship God? If anyone tells you Jesus isn't the Savior, the Bible isn't true, all people go to heaven no matter what they believe, there is no heaven or hell or just be a good person, that is false. Be careful. Believe what the Bible says. Stay on the right track!

WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO BELIEVE IN JESUS?

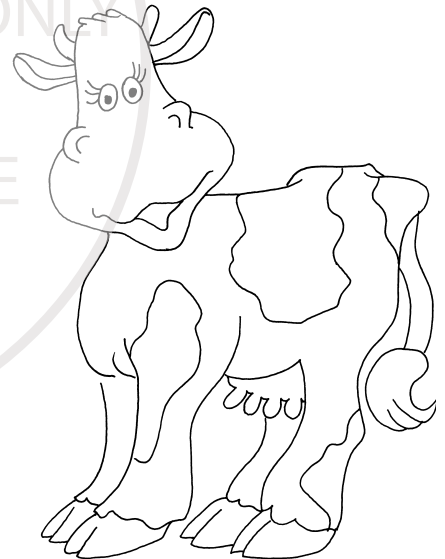
Well Woman tried to put off accepting Christ. "I know someday Christ the Messiah will come. When He does, He'll explain everything." There was plenty of time. She'd wait till then. Jesus said quietly, "I am the Messiah." There He was, up close and personal, and she had to make a decision immediately. Paul said, "Now is the time of salvation!"

How about you? You didn't just 'happen' to be here today at the right place at the right time to hear the right lesson. God planned for us to be together. He is saying to you, "Look at Me. I am God. I am for real. This is your chance for salvation. Do it now!"

WHAT'S NEXT?

Well Woman went back to her village. She stopped everyone, "Get yourself out to that well. The man is offering living water. Don't believe me, see for yourself. Come meet a man who told me everything I ever did! Can this be the Messiah?"

There must have been something truthful in the way she spoke. Her life changed from bad to beautiful and they knew it. They listened to Jesus and begged for more. They kept Him talking for two days and many believed.

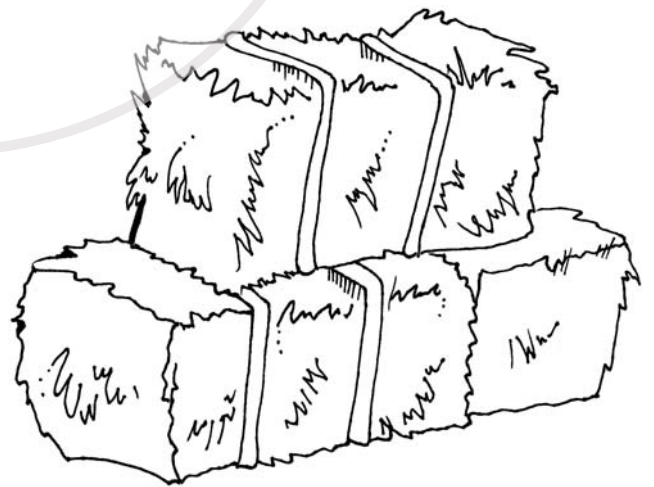


TUMBLEWEED BARN CRAFT

Choose a craft project from our general suggestion list or create your own keepsake. The students must be able to complete their project within the time frame of the Workshop. They will not return to this area

NOTES:

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WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOP #5:

SHERIFF'S OFFICE



WEST OF THE STORY THEME: Believe In Jesus

Hard to be a Christian? No way! Just like the Old West Sheriff, we must be ever vigilant to consider the claims of Jesus.

DECORATION: Jail

Turn an empty Sunday School room into a wild west jail. Part of the area should be a cell with the other part becoming the sheriff's office.

CELL: Place a simple cot, pillow and blanket against one wall. Add sparse items like a rag rug, bucket, straight back chair, small wood table. Bars: Twist black crepe paper streamers and attach at ceiling and floor.

OFFICE: Old wood desk, hat rack, large keys, rug, waste basket, straight back chair, lamp on desk. Hang the keys on the wall.

Signs: Wooden JAIL sign, hand printed "Wanted" posters--take non smiling photographs of people in the congregation (pastor included) and place on poster. Cover the walls with these posters. Information may include physical description, aliases, list of crimes, reward. Make crimes fit the real person. Of course, the funnier, the better!

Example: WANTED--PREACHER JOHN, \$100 Reward, 6'2", 180 lbs., black hair, scar on left cheek, halo over head, big feet. Also known as: The Soul Man, Preacher Creature, Honey Bunch and Dad. Crimes: Ate too much at the last church dinner, parked buckboard too close to the church, preached too long last week, left Bible in church kitchen.



COSTUME AND CHARACTER: Cowboy Sheriff

Dress in cowboy gear. Wear a star reading "Sheriff" or "Deputy Sheriff".

WELCOME: The Arrest!

Serve a light jailhouse snack on a tray.

Prepare tiny sandwiches. Hide little posterboard keys with Memory verse hidden inside each serving.

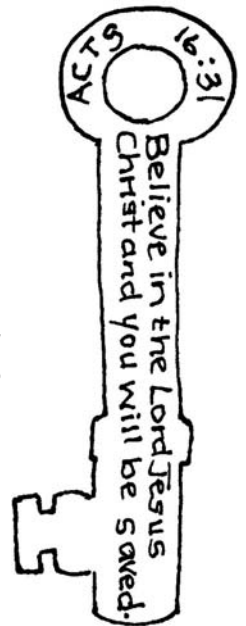
You low down, horse thievin' varmints! Get in here and put yourself behind those bars. We don't cotton to criminals in this town and I been sworn to uphold the law. There's no escape from my jail so settle in for a good, long stay. You're living in the dark now and it remains to be seen if you will ever get back to the light.

MEMORY VERSE: Believe In Jesus!

I know you varmints want to escape justice. Can't ever be done as long as God is God. Listen up good. You might learn something that will aid in your eventual release from my little roach hotel.

Serve half sandwiches for each prisoner. Contents may be anything you desire. Hide a small posterboard key in each sandwich with the memory verse printed on it.

As students eat their sandwich and find their key, tell them to whisper among themselves and learn the verse. Non reading students gets help from the Deputy Sheriff. They say the verse to the Sheriff to get on the early release list.

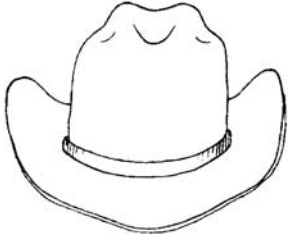


Acts 16:30

Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

And you will be saved.



GOOD BOOK TALE: Jailer Believes!

Acts 16:22-34: There is an adventuresome truer than true Good Book Tale about a jailer (like me) who had some pretty famous prisoners. God's men, Paul and Silas, were traveling around talking about Jesus and the good news of salvation.

Now you would think folks would be happy about that. No! People got mad and made the sheriff arrest the missionaries. The judge said they were disturbing the peace and breaking the law.

After beating them black and blue, they threw Paul and Silas in jail. The jail keeper was under strict orders not to let them escape. He threw them into the maximum security cell and clamped leg irons on them. (And you think I'm a mean sheriff!)

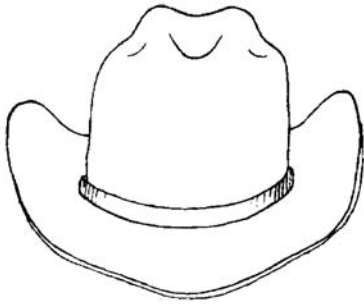
Along about midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing great songs to God. The other prisoners couldn't believe their ears. Then, without warning, a huge earthquake hit! The jailhouse shook. Every door flew open. All the prisoners were loose.

The jailer woke up and saw the doors swinging loose on their hinges. Figuring all the prisoners escaped (including the famous Paul and Silas), he pulled out his sword and was about to do himself in, figuring he was as good as dead anyway. Paul stopped him: "Don't do that! We're all still here! Nobody ran away!"

The jailer got a torch and ran inside. He was so upset, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas. He asked, "What do I have to do to be saved, to really live?" They must have smiled because this is the very question they had the answer to: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, and everybody in your house too!"

They never did get to bed that night. The jailer took them to his home. His whole family got in on it. The jailer couldn't wait until morning—he and everyone in his family were baptized! They celebrated with a festive meal. It was a night to remember! The jailer's entire family put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration!





THE WEST OF THE STORY: Believe In Jesus!

1. Name the two men who were put in jail. (Paul and Silas)
2. What did they do to get put in jail? (Talked about Jesus)
3. What were the men doing at midnight? (Praying and Singing)
4. What amazing thing happened? (Earthquake/Jail opened)
5. Who escaped from the jail? (Nobody)
6. What did the jailer want to do? (Kill himself)
7. What did Paul and Silas say to the jailer that changed his life?
(Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ)
8. What did the jailer do?
(Took them home, dressed wounds, fed them)
9. Who believed in Jesus that night? (Jailer and his whole family)

Yep, that's what happened and you just earned yourselves a 'get out of jail free' card. Come on out of there, you rascally varmints! You have heard the West of the Story and it is: Believe In Jesus!

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CONCLUSION: Time To Believe!

I hear tell folks say it's hard to be a Christian. Some think you have to be real smart. Some think you have to do good deeds. Folks even believe you can never be good enough to go to Heaven.

If I remember Paul's words, all you have to do is...what? Yes! BELIEVE IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST! Doesn't sound hard to me. After all, Jesus proved how much He loves us when He died on the Cross.

Are you a Jesus believer? It's time to change your life and get out of the sad life you're livin'. Easiest way to show God you're serious is to talk to Him and say you have a new plan to turn your life from bad to good. Do it today. Do not end up back here in my jail!



THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRAFT

Choose a craft project from our list of suggestions or create your own keepsake. The students must be able to complete their project within the time from of the Workshop. They will not return to this area.

NOTES:



TYKES PEAK NURSERY



WHO SHOULD COME?

HAPPY TRAILS is not designed for students under four years old. They do not respond well to high activity so loved by older students. A separate nursery offers security. Invite youngsters, birth through age three, children of leaders. Option: Open the nursery to the public.

HOW MANY HELPERS?

Provide one helper per baby in charge of that infant from bottles to changing diapers. If that is not possible, ask one adult and a variety of assistants to watch the children.

SHOULD WE PLAN ACTIVITIES?

Tykes Peak is a babysitting service. Tell a few stories, sing songs, play CD's, give wagon rides and take walks. Decide how much to do by the babies' ages.

SHOULD WE FEED THE CHILDREN?

Ask parents. They may want to provide snacks. Be sure the food is safe and healthful. NO POPCORN, HOT DOGS, LOLLIPOPS OR HARD CANDY WHICH COULD BE CAUGHT IN A TINY THROAT.

HOW SHOULD WE DRESS?

Wear clothing and shoes that are comfortable. The key to being happy is to be comfortable. Theme costuming is not necessary.

WHAT SHOULD WE BRING?

Bring Christian CD's and DVD's. Play music at a low, non-threatening volume. Bring a small fan for humid days. Place the fan away from children--preferably on a shelf or high table.



PRESCHOOL SADDLE PALS

Age 4-pre-kindergarten



Include five year old pre-k students or place them in the kindergarten group.

OPTION: If your preschool students are fun loving, active and mature, include them as one of the major groups and eliminate the preschool grouping.

It has been a pleasure to discover preschool children adapt to normal activities with very little adjustment.

THEME

Saddle Pals study the same spiritual themes as older students. Use the curriculum as a guide. Provide rest time, play and simple crafting. Do not feel pressured to move young students to activities if they are crying or upset. Cancel your appearance in favor of free play time.

TEACHERS

Staff one helper for every 2-3 Saddle Pals. Parental help is welcome. Wear comfortable clothing. Make each day fun and relaxing. Students should be able to chatter and sing without being reprimanded. However, run away children or rudeness must not be tolerated.

HOME BASE

Prepare one room where optional preschool stories, crafts, play and rest take place. Offer this separate space for criers and other young students who need privacy during the day.



CRIERS

Preschool children are unpredictable. If a few children continually cry, keep them busy separately with play and coloring in the Home Base area. Movement around the building may be threatening for some younger students.

If one or two children never calm down, it may be necessary to ask a parent to stay with their child or to take them home and try again next year.

While we want to accommodate as many young students as possible, crying and temper tantrums discourage teachers, helpers and students. It could be the child is just too young and will do better at a later time.

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PLANNING A SADDLE PALS DAY

Two hours + is a long time for preschool students. Plan your day around lots of play time. Bring beach balls, balloons, bubbles and other outdoor toys to play indoors or outdoors.

Purchase story books from your local Christian bookstore. Use these books as fill in teaching times.

Travel with the students to activities as suggested on the daily schedule.



GOD'S COUNTRY OPENING

Saddle Pals participate in the opening if they can sit still, sing and respond. This is an opportunity to organize name tags and gather. If there are "criers," a helper takes them to Home Base. This avoids chaos and distraction for older students.

COWBOY SERENADE MUSIC

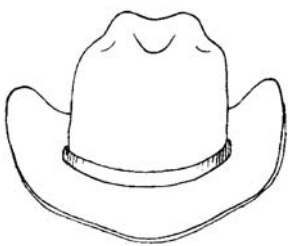
Take students and stay with them.

THE FRONTIER CABIN

Take students and stay with them.

THE CHUCK WAGON

Take students to snack time. Sit with them. Use this time as a bathroom and hand washing break.



THE RED RIVER WRANGLER STORY TELLER

This is a continuing story. If you think students would hear the story and sit quietly, take them. It is NOT written at their age level. The suggested story is "Silver Saddles". Option: Purchase 5 short story books to tell your group separately. You decide!



WEST OF THE STORY WORKSHOPS

The Preschool group can be one of the five rotating groups if desired. If not, it is easy to adapt materials within the preschool team leaders.

Rather than trying to duplicate workshop decorations, take students to one workshop each day for their Bible time. Tell the workshop teacher you will use the room for 15 minutes when their class is not in session. Use the props in each area to tell stories.

Activity suggestions may be attended at the discretion of the staff. Simplify each story.

GIDDY UP GAMES

Plan separate recreation for your small ones and create your own games depending upon ages. Or, take them to Giddy Up Games.

REST TIME

Plan play and rest. Darken the room, play music and encourage quiet activity.

CRAFTS

The perfect craft is one which can be completed by the young student. Coloring pictures, Play Doh, Legos. Large beads on yarn are favorite activities. Keep the process simple and everyone will enjoy the experience.

