



Tribe Leader Pocket Guide

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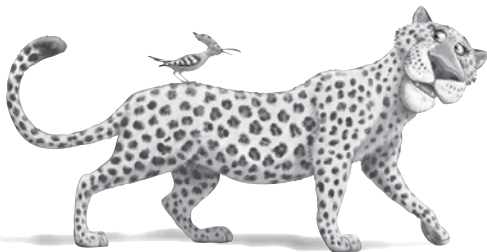
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**WILDERNESS
ESCAPE**
WHERE GOD GUIDES & PROVIDES

WELCOME TO WILDERNESS ESCAPE!



We're glad you're a part of this exciting Holy Land Adventure. During this event, families will explore what it was like to be one of God's people, just after their nail-biting escape from slavery in Egypt. Kids and adults will walk away with the comfort of knowing that God is with us, gives us what we need, gives us strength, saves us, and guides us today.

Tribe Leaders are the heart and soul of Wilderness Escape VBS. As a Tribe Leader, you'll direct a group of up to 10 children and adults (your Tribe) through experiences that have an authentic, traditional Bible-times feel.

The time children and adults spend within the Tribe will be memorable, life-changing, and thought-provoking!

Tribe Leader Tips

Smile! Be a friendly face that Tribe members look forward to seeing. It's likely that you'll have Tribe members who are new to your church, so be sure to welcome everyone with friendliness and warmth.

Call each person by name. This is one of the easiest ways to affirm and encourage the people in your Tribe. Make sure each member feels valued and welcomed.

Circle up! During Tribe Time, guide kids and adults in forming a tight, knee-to-knee circle. Through years of field testing, we've found that this physically focuses everyone inward on the small-group time. Tribe circles really do make a difference!

Get to know your Tribe members. Ask about their families, hobbies, and favorite subjects in school. Where have they been on vacation? What movies have they recently seen? What pets do they have? What would they pack on a trip to the moon? Take a real interest in Tribe members' lives.

Keep children safe. Keep your Tribe together as much as possible so children are never alone. If a child needs to use the restroom, take a few kids with you, and leave the rest with the Assistant Tribe Leader or another staff member. Only release kids to a parent or authorized caregiver. (The exception is when you visit the Israelite Camp. Here, it's okay to let kids explore in smaller groups. Colorful Banduras help you know at a glance where everyone is.)

Encourage adults to join in the fun! Reassure adults that you have plenty of supplies so they can participate, too. The more involved everyone gets, the more meaningful the program will be for all ages.



Use the response phrase "Trust God!"

Each day, activities focus on *one* simple, solid, memorable Bible truth. When participants hear the Bible Point, they respond by saying "Trust God!" and making the accompanying motion (see photo).

You can help kids and adults tune in and remember each day's Bible Point by using the response phrase. This is an easy, effective way to reinforce the life-changing truth that we can trust God.

The Voice of Truth

Remember that you're the voice of truth!

Scripture shows that the Israelites repeatedly struggled to trust God. Even when God provided through jaw-dropping miracles, the Israelites whined, doubted, and took matters into their own hands.

Keep drawing your Tribe members back to a rock-solid faith in God by saying things like "Things may look scary for the Israelites, but God hasn't let them down!" Or "Let's be sure to encourage everyone that they really can trust God."

As you lead your Tribe in conversation, use kid-friendly language to point out the ways that God showed his faithfulness.

As Tribes roam the Israelite Camp and interact with other "Israelites," they'll hear a variety of opinions about God. Encourage Tribe members to invite the Tent Hosts to join them at Celebration.

Costuming and Supplies

Your VBS Director will coordinate collecting costumes and supplies. However, you can join in the fun by creating your own Bible-times costume. A simple robe or tunic, belt or sash, and sandals will suffice. You'll also wear a Bandura (a colorful stretchy tube that can be worn in a number of ways), since each Tribe is designated their own

color for Banduras and for Tribe name posters. Your Director will provide a basket with the Tribe items you need each day, "home base" blankets where your Tribe will gather, and your Tribe name poster.



EVENING SCHEDULE

(6:00–8:00)

BIBLE POINT

God is with us, so...*trust God!*

BIBLE STORY

The Israelites cross the Red Sea.
(Exodus 14:1–15:21)



	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
	Tribe <u>Asher</u> <u>Issachar</u>	Tribe <u>Benjamin</u> <u>Joseph</u>	Tribe <u>Dan</u> <u>Judah</u>	Tribe <u>God</u> <u>Levi</u>
6:00–6:20	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration
6:20–6:30	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time
6:30–6:45	Moses' Tent	Fun & Games	Visit Israelite Camp	
6:45–7:00	Fun & Games	Moses' Tent		
7:00–7:15	Visit Israelite Camp		Moses' Tent	Fun & Games
7:15–7:30			Fun & Games	Moses' Tent
7:30–7:50	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time	Tribe Time
7:50–8:00	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration	Celebration

Today's announcements:



What You'll Do

Before Participants Arrive

- ♦ Plan to arrive *at least* 20 minutes early (especially on the first day of the program), and let the Director know you're there. He or she might have specific instructions or hold a Tribe Leader meeting.
- ♦ Find your Tribe "home base" (blankets where you'll gather for each Tribe Time), and locate your basket of supplies.
- ♦ Make sure your Tribe name poster is taped to the wall next to your home base.
- ♦ Get a list of your Tribe members from the registrar or Director. (This list may change as participants arrive, since some will not have preregistered, so be flexible!)
- ♦ Look over your daily schedule to see what's in store for your Tribe today and find out which lettered group you'll travel with.

When Participants Arrive

- ♦ After participants register or sign in each day, they'll join you at your home base. Introduce yourself, and be sure your Tribe members know each other's names. Introduce any newcomers to the group. Help each Tribe member feel welcome.

- ◆ Help everyone put on their colorful Banduras. Tell them this color represents their Tribe for the week. Participants can choose how they want to wear their Bandura, such as on their head or as an armband.

Opening Celebration (20 minutes)

- ◆ When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with the other Tribes, and participate in singing and worship.
- ◆ When the opening Celebration time is finished, lead your Tribe back to your home base.

Opening Tribe Time (10 minutes)

- ◆ Greet everyone, and welcome anyone who arrived during Celebration.
- ◆ Beginning on Day 2, share God Sightings, and record Tribe members' God Sightings on the God Sightings Footprint stickers.
- ◆ Be sure each person has three pieces of Egyptian Gold in his or her coin pouch.
- ◆ Lead activities like choosing which tents to visit in the Israelite Camp and giving Tribe members a daily "mission" to accomplish, such as inviting others to the Celebrations. (There's a daily mission on the back of each day's Mail From Moses student page.)



Moses' Tent (15 minutes)

- ✦ Sit with your Tribe, and encourage everyone to listen and participate.
- ✦ Visit with Moses, and learn about how he's been leading God's people on this astonishing, faith-building adventure.

Fun & Games (15 minutes)

- ✦ Encourage everyone to listen to the Games Leader's instructions.
- ✦ Join in the fun, and help younger children, if necessary. *Participate in the games wholeheartedly.* Your participation will speak volumes to your Tribe members!

Israelite Camp (30 minutes)

- ✦ Before heading into the Israelite Camp, remind Tribe members that they can visit *two* tents each day plus have a snack in the Baker's Tent. (You may want to encourage kids to have their snacks first so they can finish eating before heading to Moses' Tent or Fun & Games.)



- ▶ Let Tribe members work together to determine which tent they'll visit each day. It's okay to let your Tribe split into two groups for "exploring."
- ▶ Explore new trades as you interact with "residents" of the Israelite Camp. These hosts will share their expertise and guide Tribe members in fresh experiences such as making butter, crafting sandals, or decorating camel caravan bells.
- ▶ Assist young children with any projects they choose to do. *Your Tribe will have 30 minutes, so encourage everyone to take their time and work at a comfortable pace.*
- ▶ Each day, every Tribe member will have three pieces of Egyptian Gold to use as a "thank you" for the Tent Hosts in the Israelite Camp. At our field test, we discovered that this helped kids pace themselves so they didn't try to rush through all the crafts in a couple of days. Plus, kids liked having the grown-up feeling of spending money!

Closing Tribe Time (20 minutes)

- ◆ Gather Tribe members, and listen to the Celebration Leader guide you through Closing Tribe Time activities. These experiences help Tribe members connect what they've learned in Wilderness Escape to real life through simple object lessons, discussions, and experiences. The Celebration Leader will give you the unique supplies for these surprising, memorable activities!
- ◆ Hand each person that day's Mail From Moses. Families will take this home each day as a reinforcement of what they've learned and how to live out the Bible in everyday life.



- ◆ Gather Banduras, coin pouches, and leftover Egyptian Gold that wasn't spent in the Israelite Camp so you can use them the next day.

Closing Celebration (10 minutes)

- ◆ Participate in singing and worship as led by the Celebration Leader.
- ◆ Keep your Tribe together until parents or caregivers come for kids. *Do not* let kids wander off on their own! Remember, you're responsible for their safety.
- ◆ Let Tribe members know you're looking forward to seeing them tomorrow.
- ◆ Be sure participants take home their projects and each day's Mail From Moses page.



What Do I Do If...?

Q: What do I do if my Tribe won't stay together between activities?

A: Work with your Tribe members to develop special routes and fun ways to travel between stations. Pretend to be a trotting donkey caravan, a baa-ing herd of sheep, or a crawling cadre of lizards. Be creative, and challenge kids and adults to think of new (and cooperative) ways to move from place to place.

Q: What do I do if a Tribe member won't participate in discussion?

A: Ask follow-up questions to draw out shy or reluctant Tribe members. Use phrases such as "What do you mean by that?" or "That sounds interesting! Tell me more."

Encourage participation by challenging Tribe members to offer as many different answers as they can think of. If participants offer answers that seem off base or contrary to your church's teaching, take time to follow up with them between activities or after your time at Wilderness Escape. If you're not comfortable discussing their questions or concerns, refer them to your VBS Director or church pastor.

If Tribe members don't respond to your encouragement, don't force them to participate. You may have introspective people in your group who need time to think quietly about the things you're discussing.

Q: What do I do if a Tribe member is too talkative or too active?

A: To ensure that each person has a turn to share, try going around the circle and giving each member 30 seconds to share a response. Or occasionally ask children and adults to respond with one-word answers. You can even call on people by their birthdays, such as "I'd like anyone with a wintertime birthday to answer this one."

Q: What do I do if someone asks me a question I can't answer?

A: Some families who come to your Wilderness Escape VBS may have never been to church before, so you can expect lots of questions as you help kids and adults learn about God. If someone asks you a question you can't answer, don't be afraid to admit you don't know. Say something such as "That's a good

question. Maybe our church's pastor would know the answer. Why don't we ask our pastor later today?"

Q: What do I do if older kids are unhappy being grouped with mixed ages?

A: Highlight older kids' helping roles by telling younger kids, "[Name of older child] is really good at that. Why don't you ask him [or her] to help you?" Older kids will enjoy being respected and looked up to, and younger children won't demand so much of your attention. Plus, older kids learn just as much—or even more—when they help lead younger children during activities. And younger children will thrive on the special friendships they build with older kids!

Q: What do I do if my Tribe finishes an activity early?

- A:** Here are some fun ideas if you need to fill a little time.
- ◆ Make up an affirming Tribe cheer that everyone can shout during Celebration. (This was very popular at our field test!)

- ◆ See who can make the silliest face.



- ◆ Try to name items around you that start with each letter of the alphabet (Tribe of Asher, bread, pictures of camels, desert sand, and so on).
- ◆ Think of fun ways to affirm and thank each Tent Host, such as giving high fives or a round of applause.
- ◆ Identify "Israelites" or other staff members your Tribe can invite to Celebration.

Day 1



1. If Tribe members arrive early...

Gather the Tribe members on your home base blanket, and introduce yourself. Be sure each person receives a Bandura and a name badge with his or her name on it. Have the Tribe members write their names on their coin pouches and Banduras. They'll use them throughout the week. Ask:

? At home, what's your least favorite job to do? Why? What's a job you don't mind doing?

When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with other Tribes for the opening time of singing and worship.

2. After Celebration, gather on the home base blanket.

Make sure each person has a name badge and a colorful Bandura. Let everyone tell their first and last names.



Say: Our last names show we're related to people with that last name. In Bible times, God's people didn't really have last names. They were divided into Tribes, or family groups. So a Tribe name was kind of like a family name. Every small group you see around the room is a Tribe. These Tribes are named after the twelve sons of a man named Jacob.

Point to the Tribe name poster, and tell kids and adults their Tribe name for the week. Read the information on the poster.

So instead of being [child's first and last name], **you'd be** [child's first name] **from the Tribe of** [your Tribe name]. **These fun Banduras match the color of our Tribe name poster. Every time you see a Bandura this color, you'll know that's one of our Tribe members!**

3. Look at the schedule.

Bring out the schedule for Day 1, and tell your Tribe members where you will be going first today. The Tent Hosts, Games Leader, and Moses will repeat their activities several times each day, with a different group of Tribes each time.

4. Check out Mail From Moses.

Use the ideas on the back of today's student page to plan a mission in the Israelite Camp.

5. Hand out Egyptian Gold.

Say: The Israelites didn't have their own kind of money. But the Bible tells us that the Egyptians gave them gold and silver before they left. So I have some gold pieces you can use when you're in the Israelite Camp. Hold up a handful of Egyptian Gold.

Our friends there will be teaching you some of their skills, and we want to give them something to thank them for their time. So we'll give each Tent Host one of these Egyptian Gold pieces when we visit them. Give each Tribe member three gold pieces and a pouch to put them in.

When you hear the attention-getter, lead your Tribe to their first stop in the wilderness.



On the first day, kids were so excited by all of the opportunities in the Israelite Camp, it was a challenge to keep them from jumping from one tent to the next. We found it was important—and easy—to simply explain that kids would work on two projects each day. Once we'd set the expectation, kids realized they could slow down and take their time in each tent.

Day 2



1. If Tribe members arrive early...

Gather the Tribe members on your home base blanket.

Say: The Israelites traveled far, far away from home. Ask:

? Tell about a time when you were far from home. What was that like?

When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with other Tribes for the opening time of singing and worship.

2. After Celebration, gather on the home base blanket.

Make sure everyone is wearing a name badge and a Bandura. Introduce any new Tribe members.

3. Share God Sightings®.

Say: God guided and provided for his people a long, long time ago. But we can see God at work today right here in [name of your community], too. That's because even though we may not see God himself, we can see the things he's created, the blessings he's poured



out on us, or things that remind us of him. Those are called God Sightings.

Share your own God Sighting,

such as a healthy body, clean water to drink, a kind word from a stranger, or something beautiful or unexpected in nature. (While you're sharing, you're modeling examples of God Sightings, as well as giving Tribe members a moment to think about ways they've seen God in their day.)

Then give Tribe members a chance to share what evidence *they*'ve seen of God. As people share, write on the God Sightings Footprints, creating one Footprint sticker for each person.

Say: After escaping from Egypt, God's people begin a journey into the unknown. They don't know where God will take them. They don't know what's ahead. They aren't sure how God will take care of them.

Point to the God Sightings Map on the wall. **Our God Sightings Map reminds us of the way we are on a journey through life. Even though we face things like loneliness, new schools, new jobs, or sickness—God is *still* all around us.**

When we take the time to see what God is doing, it helps us trust God every step of the way!

Hand each person his or her sticker. Lead them to the Day 2 Map, and guide them in putting their stickers along the line on the map. (The Israelites didn't walk in a single file line, so it's fine to let Tribe members put their footprint stickers on either side of the dotted line.)

4. Look at the schedule.

Bring out today's schedule. Tell your Tribe members where they will be going first today. Give each Tribe member three pieces of Egyptian Gold to spend in the Israelite Camp. Discuss which two tents you'd like to visit.



5. Check out Mail From Moses.

Use the ideas on the back of today's page to plan a mission in the Israelite Camp.

Say: **When we're visiting the Israelite Camp, let's see if the hosts need any help. We can show God's love to them by helping out!**

When you hear the attention-getter, lead your Tribe on a fun adventure on your Wilderness Escape.

Day 3



1. If Tribe members arrive early...

Gather the Tribe members on your home base blanket.

Say: **God's people were happy to leave Egypt...but they didn't have a place to call home for quite a while.** Ask your Tribe members:

? What do you like best about your home?

When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with other Tribes for the opening time of singing and worship.

2. Gather on the home base blanket.

Make sure everyone is wearing a name badge and a Bandura. Introduce any new Tribe members.

3. Share God Sightings®.

Ask:

? How did you see God providing for your needs yesterday?

Write on the God Sightings Footprint stickers, using single words or short phrases. Be sure you have one Footprint sticker for each Tribe member.



Then lead your Tribe to the God Sightings wall to add the stickers to the journey line on the Day 3 Map.

4. Look at the schedule.

Bring out today's schedule. Tell your Tribe members where you will be going first today. Give each Tribe member three pieces of Egyptian Gold to spend in the Israelite Camp. Remind your Tribe members that they can visit two tents plus purchase a snack. Talk about which tents you'd like to visit today.



5. Check out Mail From Moses.

Use the ideas on the back of today's student page to plan a mission of God's love in the Israelite Camp.

When you hear the attention-getter, lead your Tribe on another fun adventure.

Day 4



1. If Tribe members arrive early...

Say: The Israelites had to walk a long, long way through a place they'd never been before. But God made sure they never got lost! **Ask:**

- ? Tell about a time you got lost. What was that like? How did you find your way again?**

When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with other Tribes for the opening time of singing and worship.

2. Gather on the home base blanket.

Make sure everyone is wearing a name badge and a Bandura. Introduce any new Tribe members.

3. Share God Sightings®.

Ask:

- ? How have you seen God's power since we met yesterday?**

Write on the God Sightings Footprints, using single words or short phrases.



Be sure there's a Footprint sticker for each Tribe member. Then lead your Tribe to the God Sightings Map for Day 4, and attach the stickers to the dashed lines.

4. Look at the schedule.

Bring out today's schedule. Tell your Tribe members where they will be going first today. Give each Tribe member three pieces of Egyptian Gold to spend in the Israelite Camp. Discuss which two tents you'd like to visit.

5. Check out Mail From Moses.

Use the ideas on the back of today's student page to plan a mission of God's love in the Israelite Camp.

When you hear the attention-getter, head on out to another fun day in the wilderness!



Helping Children and Adults Follow Jesus

At Wilderness Escape, children and adults don't just hear about God's love; they see it, touch it, sing it, taste it, and put it into action. Most importantly, children and adults learn that Jesus came to provide a way for us to live with God forever because God loves us.

If you sense that a person might like to know more about what it means to follow Jesus as a forever friend, give this simple explanation:

God loves us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for us. Jesus died and took the punishment for all the wrong things we do. But Jesus is stronger than death, and he came back to life! Jesus wants to be our

friend forever. If we ask him to, he'll take away the wrong things we've done and fill our lives with his love. Jesus will always be with us and will help us make the right choices. If we believe in Jesus and ask him to forgive us, someday we'll live with him forever in heaven.



You may want to lead the individual in a simple prayer inviting Jesus to be part of his or her life. You may also want to share one or more of the following Scripture passages. Encourage the person to read the Scripture passages with you from his or her own Bible.

- John 3:16
- Romans 5:8-11
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 2:4-8

Be sure to share the news of a child's spiritual development with his or her parent(s).



Day 5

1. If Tribe members arrive early...

Say: When the Israelites left Egypt, they had to leave their homes and most of their stuff behind.

Ask:

- ?** If you had to leave home and could only take three things with you, what would you take? Why?

When the Celebration Leader begins, gather with other Tribes for singing and worship.

2. Gather on the home base blanket.

Make sure everyone is wearing a name badge and a Bandura. Introduce any new Tribe members.

3. Share God Sightings®.

Ask:

- ?** How have you been a God Sighting to someone else?

Write on the God Sightings Footprint stickers, using single words or short phrases. When you have a Footprint sticker for each person, lead your Tribe to the Day 5 God Sightings Map. Attach the Footprints to the dashed lines on the map.



4. Look at the schedule.

Bring out today's schedule. Tell your Tribe members where you will be going first today. Give each Tribe member three pieces of Egyptian Gold to spend when they visit the Israelite Camp. Discuss the two tents you'd like to visit.

5. Check out Mail From Moses.

Cut apart the encouragement cards, and talk about which Tent Hosts might need these words from God.

Have fun on your final visit with the Israelites.

