

Kids Ministry EVENT OUTLINE Message

Expanding the Impact of Your Gifts of Encouragement



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#UCS4DCE



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Under Construction

This event outline provides ideas and activities for an hour-long children's event for kids ages 7–11. Plan to use this event during Sunday school on the 5th Sunday of a month or as a special event on a Saturday or during your church's Wednesday night meetings. All the activities in this event are based on the *Under Construction* theme verse, "Let your lives be built on him" (Colossians 2:7).

This event outline includes suggestions and instructions for Bible time, snacks, activities, and songs. Choose the ideas that will work best in your local setting and with the size of your group. You will also want to take into account the number of adult volunteers you can count on and any space constraints you face.

God bless you as you share God's love with all who attend!

Ready . . .

If your event will happen during your regular Sunday school hour or during a regularly scheduled midweek class time, your advance planning will need to be much less elaborate than if you invite families from the community and hold it for a special purpose (for example, childcare during a major sporting event).

For a larger, more elaborate event, you will want to put together a team of 3–8 individuals. Work together to decide some of the basics:

- Who will lead each team? You will likely need volunteers to be responsible for publicity and promotion, set up and clean up, decorations, leading station activities, and ordering and coordinating prizes. It never hurts to have a few additional volunteers who can fill in as needed on any of your teams.
- What will the event look like? How many activity stations will you set up? This guide provides game and activity suggestions for five or six stations. If you anticipate a large turnout, consider duplicating stations. Or add additional stations based on local interests and your talent pool.
- When is the best day and time to offer your event? Check with your church office, other ministry leaders, and your pastor as you think about date and time.
- Where will the event take place? Will you offer it indoors or outdoors? Consider your facilities, parking options, potential weather conditions, and other variables.
- Why are you doing this? Do you hope to create an outreach event for the community or is it your intention to encourage young families who regularly attend your church? Knowing your audience will help you craft your invitations and promotion efforts and will also guide you as you evaluate the results afterward.

Prior, proper planning is key! The larger and more elaborate your event, the earlier you will need to start organizing teams and inviting volunteers to join you. Set up the teams suggested below. If your event is small, some volunteers may be able to serve on more than one team. On the other hand, many hands make light work: the more people you involve, the more hearts your event can potentially touch. Encourage teams to select a leader and get together as soon as possible to begin brainstorming ideas based on their focus of responsibility.

Promotions Team

The Promotions Team is responsible for getting word out about your event. How can you effectively let your church (and community) know what you are planning? Can you run an ad in the local newspaper? Will the local elementary schools allow you to send fliers home with students? Can you hang fliers in local shops and community centers? Would other churches announce your event? Consider adding details to your church or municipality website. Don't forget to Facebook your event!

As you plan publicity, find out each outlet's deadline for advertisement submission. Start your promotion blitz two to four weeks ahead of time.

CTA provides free, downloadable invitations and fliers—all with themed art. You can add information about your event before making copies. Check out these resources at www.CTAinc.com/FREE.

Set-Up/Clean-Up Crew

The Set-Up/Clean-Up Crew is responsible for the overall event design and large scale building and tear down. You'll want to decide how to set up each station. You may choose to retrofit existing materials left over from VBS or previous Fall Festivals. Or create new backdrops that can be stored and used again next time. Here are some ideas; you can add your own.

- Arrange chairs to form rough circles for each station
- Use painters tape to mark off the boundaries of each station
- String yellow caution barricade tape around the perimeter of each station

Let everyone on all teams know that you and your crew will be there to help them set up and take down their activity stations on the day of the event.

Decorations Team

The Decorations Team is responsible for small-scale decorating and final touches that will complete the thematic look of the event. Their work will coordinate with that of the Set-Up/Clean-Up Crew, considering the size and scope of the sets that team is developing. The Decorations Team will work to augment the basic set-up. For instance:

- Balloons are a fun and festive addition to any event.
- Wheelbarrows and dry wall compound buckets (filled with sand and sealed) will add to the construction zone feel of the event.
- Heavy bags of quick-set concrete can be piled together to create one or two quick displays.
- Costumes like overalls, painters' pants, and tool belts will set a tone and help identify activity leaders and other helpers who will come into contact with your guests. (Note: Keep dangerous tools on tool belts out of reach!)

Activity Leaders

Activity leaders are responsible for preparing and running their respective activity or game. Make sure each leader is clear on what he or she will do and say—and why. Help leaders assemble the props and materials they will need and make sure each leader has at least one helper during the event. All adults in each activity station should understand the game or activity happening there and the main teaching point they will share with the children.

Stress having at least two people in each activity station at all times to ensure order and maintain safety.

Badges and Prize Team

These volunteers make sure that every participant has a crew name tag and that every booth has enough prizes to distribute.

As each participant enters the event, he or she could be given a paper crew tag (printed from CTA's free resources page, www.CTAinc.com/FREE). As the children and families visit each activity station, the tools illustrated on the tag will be marked or punched with a hole punch. This will help families keep track of how many activity stations they have visited and will keep them moving along from station to station. Explain that as the event ends, each participant who has a completely punched/marked badge will receive an *Under Construction* drawstring backpack (Item #UCS4TB) as a bonus.

Place a few small bags of popcorn, trail mix, envelopes of hot chocolate, or candy in each drawstring bag and hand them out as the final gift for those attending. Consider enclosing an invitation, encouraging each family to join you in worship next weekend. Be sure to include service times and contact information.

Runners

Consider asking teens from your high school youth group to serve during the event. They will serve as messengers and run errands as issues arise. They could also entertain smaller children at each activity station, deliver additional supplies as needed, hand out snacks or other treats, or help direct visitors.

Set . . .

A few weeks before your event, gather your entire team. Pray for your event. Thank God for the volunteers who are willing to donate their time and talents in sharing the Gospel. Pray for the families and especially the children who will attend.

Each team should report on the plans they have developed. Work together to coordinate all the ideas to create a cohesive experience for your guests.

As you wrap up the meeting, make specific assignments, set check-in and deadline dates, and set your plans into motion.

Go!

As families arrive, give each participant a crew name tag (available for free download at www.CTAinc.com/FREE). Remind participants to have their badges marked or punched at each activity station so they can receive their final prize as they leave.

Begin with a brief group time. Thank everyone for coming, and read (or adapt) the free, downloadable Ministry Message for *Under Construction*. It is available on CTA's free resources page.

Share any housekeeping details—directions for moving from one activity station to the next, the location of restrooms, information about refreshments, and where to gather when the event concludes. Keep this opening session brief and focused on only the essentials. Then encourage everyone to enjoy the event and send them off.

Wrap Up

As the families leave, be sure to thank everyone for coming. Hand out the *Under Construction* backpacks filled with goodies and encourage participants to come back again.

Under Construction Activity Stations

I. Bible Time

What You'll Need

Marshmallows

2 or 3 balloons, inflated

A box of Jello

A rock or small bag of quick-set concrete mix

4 paper grocery bags

What You'll Do

Prior to the activity, place the marshmallows, inflated balloons, a box of Jello, and a rock each in separate grocery bags. When the children are seated and quiet, say:

Thanks for coming. I need your help today. I want to build a shed at my house. I have the plans and all the wood, but I need to build a strong foundation first, or my shed will fall over. I brought some building materials with me, and I'm hoping you can help me pick the best foundation.

Open the grocery bags one by one and show the contents to the children. (Be sure to open the bag with the rock or concrete mix last.) As you show each potential foundation material, ask the children if that material would

work well. **Would this make a solid foundation? Why not?** Finally, take the rock or concrete mix out of the bag. **Why will stone (or concrete) work better than these other things?**

When it comes to building a shed, you need to lay down a solid foundation. Then, little by little, the shed can grow and grow.

You are growing, too, and in lots of ways. You are getting taller, you are learning new things, and you are practicing many skills. You are each on your way to becoming a young adult.

As your body and mind grow, it is important that your love for God and your knowledge of him keeps on growing, too. Each of us needs a solid foundation for life, and that foundation is Jesus. He is our Rock. His love, forgiveness, and care are the only things we can absolutely depend on every day of our lives, while we are young and when we grow old. In fact, Jesus once talked about the importance of building on a firm foundation. Listen! (Read Luke 6:47–49.) Paul tells us the same thing. (Read Colossians 2:7.)

Jesus is our Rock. But sometimes we forget this. Sometimes we care lots more about what other people think of us than about what Jesus has done for us. We say or do things that make other people look bad so that we can look good. We disobey our parents or talk back to them. We cheat on our homework or take other people's ideas.

Does Jesus walk away when we do these things? No! We often we fail, but Jesus never leaves us. He is our Rock, and he invites us to confess our sins to him and to ask those we have hurt to forgive us, too. Jesus died on the cross—for you! And you! And you! And you! For each of you! Your sins are forgiven and every day is a new beginning. The Holy Spirit will help you live like God's very own child.

Let's pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to be our Rock. Thank you that we can always trust him to forgive us and help us. Send your Holy Spirit to help me live a strong, holy, and courageous life. In Jesus' name, Amen.

II. Snack Break!

Build-Your-Own House (savory, vegetarian version)

What You'll Need

Cheese cubes (or cut blocks of cheese into bite sized cubes)
Cherry tomatoes
Saltine crackers
Celery and carrot sticks and other veggies
Toothpicks

What You'll Do

Encourage children to stack the cheese or use toothpicks and vegetables to build an edible house, complete with crackers for the roof!

What You'll Say

While children are building their house, remind them:

Houses need a good foundation. Builders work carefully to do a good job. Jesus' love and forgiveness are our foundation. When we learn and trust God's Word, we build our lives on that foundation. Then, when troubles come—and good times, too—we don't need to worry. We are safe and loved and at peace.

Build-Your-Own House (sweet version)

What You'll Need

Graham crackers

Frosting (and piping bags, zip-top bags, or some other means of dispensing frosting in a controlled manner)

Marshmallows

Candy sprinkles for decorating

What You'll Do

Each child can build his or her own house, using crackers for walls and frosting for mortar. Or ask the children to work in groups to create a building that they cooperatively construct and then devour!

What You'll Say

While the children are working and enjoying their snack remind them:

All of your buildings are different, unique. God has made each of you different and unique too. He loves each of you very much. You have one other thing in common: Jesus is your sure foundation.

Building Blocks

What You'll Need

Rice cereal treats cut into serving-sized "building blocks"

Frosting, colored with food coloring

Piping bags or zip-top bags with a small hole cut in one corner for piping

Candy for decoration

What You'll Do

Have children decorate their building block and use frosting or candy to write "Jesus" on their treat.

What You'll Say

As the group works, remind them:

Jesus is our firm foundation. When we build our lives on Jesus, we have a faith that is firm and a life that cannot be shaken. When troubles come, we can be brave and strong because Jesus is our Friend and Savior forever. He loves us and will help us.

III. Construction Zone (Activities)

Rock Relay Race

What You'll Need

30 or so pieces of newspaper crumpled into "rocks"

2 medium-sized boxes, decorated to look like dump trucks (yellow body, black wheels)

What You'll Do

Place the two "dump trucks" a few feet apart. Several yards away mark or indicate two starting lines. Divide the "rocks" into two equal piles. Divide the students into two evenly-numbered groups. Have them form a line. When you say, "Go," the first person in each line grabs a "rock," runs to the dump truck, says, "Let your lives be built on him" (Colossians 2:7), puts the "rock" into the dump truck, and runs back to the end of the line. Repeat until all the "rocks" are in the dump truck. The first group to collect all the rocks wins.

What You'll Say

God sent Jesus to die for us so that our sins could be forgiven. Jesus is our Rock, our firm foundation. When we build our lives on Jesus, we will always be secure. We can be patient, kind, and hopeful, no matter what happens. Jesus loves us and will help us.

Sand Castles

What You'll Need

Several shallow plastic tubs

Sand (enough for each of the tubs)

Water (just enough to wet the sand)

Plastic containers or sand molds

Toothpicks, tape, paper, and pens

Small plastic figures, borrowed from games or purchased at a discount or toy store

What You'll Do

Depending on the number of participants and the size of your tubs, form groups of 2–4 kids, one group per tub. Encourage the teams to work together to build a sand castle or a town of sand buildings, adding details by incorporating toothpicks and plastic figures. They may also want to use the tape, paper, and pens to label features. Encourage them to use their imaginations!

When they are finished, they may use the plastic figures to act out a story, perhaps the Bible story from Luke 6:47–49.

What You'll Say

People use sand for many good purposes. Watermelons grow well in sandy soil. Builders can mix sand with other materials to create concrete. Factories can make glass by melting sand at very hot temperatures. Sea turtles lay their eggs on sandy beaches.

But sand makes a terrible foundation. Why is that? (Let volunteers comment.)

The world urges us to build our lives on things like popularity or possessions, but these things are shaky, uncertain. Like sand, they can wash out from under us. Being popular may not last and possessions break. We can't depend on them.

Jesus invites us to build our lives on him, on his love, his forgiveness, and his promises to always care for us. He is our firm foundation. Jesus is *forever*. His love for us will never fail.

Under Construction Activity Puzzle Cube

What You'll Need

One *Under Construction* Activity Puzzle Cube (Item #UCS4CO) per participant

What You'll Do

Help each child assemble the cube. Show them how to use the stickers to finish each picture. (Use CTA's downloadable, reprintable instructions, available at www.CTAinc.com/FREE.) Then use the cube to play the game.

The children will take turns rolling the cube and answering the question that comes up (1 point) or reciting the Bible verse (2 points). The first player to get 10 points wins!

You may want the whole group to play together or you may divide into groups of two or three students. You will need enough adults so that each team has a grown-up to help answer questions and give the first few words of the Bible verses being recited. Explain the verses as necessary.

As the children leave this activity station, tell them they can take their cubes with them. Encourage them to play the game at home with friends and family members.

Prayer Brick

What You'll Need

One box for each participant (shoe box, empty tissue box, etc.)

Paint (red)

Markers

Construction paper (red)

Assorted craft items for decorations

Copies of the prayers from p. 00, one for each participant

Scissors

What You'll Do

Make a sample "prayer brick" yourself ahead of time.

As children arrive in this activity station, show them your sample and display the materials they can use to make a "prayer brick" of their own. Help them cut a hole in it.

Encourage the students to cut apart the preprinted prayers on the page you give them. Also encourage them to write several prayers of their own in the blank spaces on the page. They are to fold the prayer slips and put these into their prayer brick. Family members may participate also, adding prayers to their child's prayer brick.

The children will take these boxes home today. Then, once each day, the child and his or her family may remove a prayer from the "prayer brick," read it, and use it during their family or personal devotion time.

What You'll Say

Jesus is our firm foundation. We can talk to him about anything. We can ask him to help us and count on him to keep his promises to us. We can thank God for his many blessings including our relationship with him through Jesus.

IV. Songs

You may have a separate station for song time or you may incorporate one of the following songs into your closing:

- "The Wise Man Built His House upon the Rock"
- "Rock of Ages"
- "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

You can find the text and tune for each of these by using your favorite online search engine. Be sure to adhere to the copyright guidelines for the songs you choose to share (note that even songs in the public domain may have arrangements that are protected under copyright).

V. Closing

What You'll Need

Under Construction Activity Book (Item #UCS4AB)

What You'll Do

After everyone has moved through the stations, gather them to form one large group. Sum up the main points accented in today's activity stations. Close in prayer. As everyone leaves, give each child a copy of the *Under Construction* activity book. Invite the kids and their families to join you in worship this coming weekend. Remind them to pick up their *Under Construction* drawstring backpack.

What You'll Say

Today we have seen many reminders that Jesus is our firm foundation. When we build our lives on him, we have a faith that is secure!

As you keep on growing in your faith, we want each of you have a copy of this activity book as a souvenir of today's activities. It can remind you of Jesus' many promises and his love for you. The Holy Spirit will use the Bible verses in this book to help you keep on building your lives on Jesus.

Will you pray with me?

Dear Jesus, thank you for being our firm foundation. You are a great God, an awesome God! Forgive me when I put my trust in anything or anyone else. Forgive me when I try to build my life on earthly things. Thank you that you never stop loving me, even then! Keep on sending your Holy Spirit to help me grow stronger and firmer in faith. Amen.

Prayers and Promises for My Prayer Brick



Jesus lead me day by day,
Keep me kind in every way.
Help me show your love is true
In everything I say and do. Amen.



Bend down, O LORD, and hear my prayer; answer me, for I need your help. Psalm 86:1



[God says,] "I will answer them before they even call to me. While they are still talking about their needs, I will go ahead and answer their prayers!" Isaiah 65:24



Jesus, you are my firm foundation. Help me trust you always, no matter what happens. You love me, Jesus, and I love you, too! Amen.



Father, watch over me tonight and keep me safe 'til morning's light. Amen.



Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. Ephesians 3:17



Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7



Forgive me, Lord, in your strong Son,
The wrong that I today have done.
Teach me to live to honor you
In all I think and say and do. Amen.

