



Rocky Railway  
VBS Service  
July 3, 2022  
Group VBS Publishing



**Introduction to the Day:**

We just completed five enjoyable evenings of our annual Vacation Bible School! We welcomed a very large group of kiddos, over 75 children aged 3 to 12, and spent the week teaching them about God's love and power through music, dance, games, crafts and Bible stories. Today's worship service is a glimpse of the program we used. We hope that you will join in on the songs that are familiar and enjoy worshipping in a VBS kind of way!

**Prayer Requests**

*Congregation participation in **bold print**.*

*Please stand as you are able.*

**GATHERING** – The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**Confession and Forgiveness**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, + and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. Our sins have been forgiven in the name of Jesus Christ, and now may Almighty God strengthen us with the power of the Holy Spirit, and may Christ forever live in our hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

## **GATHERING HYMN**

*“Your Power Will Pull Us Through”*

*VBS Theme Song*

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Mighty God, you showed us your power this week, and you helped us to bring the good news of your love to dozens of children in our community. We learned that your power helps us to do hard things, gives us hope, helps us to be bold, lets us live forever, and helps us to be good friends. We pray that you will continue to give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

**WORD** – God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

## **DAY 1: JESUS’ POWER HELPS US DO HARD THINGS**

***Bible Story: Ananias helps Saul. (Acts 9:1-19)***

***Bible Verse: “For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.” – Philippians 4:13***

The Bible makes it evident that God often asks his followers to do hard things. Noah built an ark. Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son. Mary bore the Son of God. Ananias had the terrifying job of reaching out to Saul. To understand the difficulty of Ananias’ job, it’s important to realize just how much Saul hated the early church. He approved the stoning of Stephen, arrested Christians in Jerusalem, and set his sights on imprisoning Christians living in Damascus. Christians ran *away* from Saul—not toward him!

Ananias' name means "protected by the Lord." In Acts 9:15, God doesn't ease Ananias' misgivings with words of comfort or empowerment. He simply shares his life-changing plan for Saul and urges Ananias to go. Because of his selection and obedience, Ananias got to be the first person to welcome Saul as a Christian. In spite of any misgivings or fear, Ananias warmly greeted Saul with the phrase "Brother Saul."

Jesus still asks his followers to do hard things. The kids at our VBS know it's hard to forgive when someone hurts their feelings. They've experienced the difficulty of splitting time between parents' homes after a divorce. Kids can tell you how tough it is to make new friends, do what's unpopular, learn a new skill in school, and reach out in friendship to someone who's lonely. That's why we encouraged them with the truth that Jesus' power can fortify them through life's challenges. Just as Ananias drew strength from God's reassurance and plan, kids came away with renewed inspiration that *they* can trust in Jesus' power to tackle the hard things they face.

## SONG SELECTION

*"Power Shuffle"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

## DAY 2: JESUS' POWER GIVES US HOPE

***Bible Story: Paul encourages others in a storm and shipwreck. (Acts 27)***

***Bible Verse: "So be strong and courageous, all you who put your hope in the Lord!" – Psalm 31:24***

After Paul became a follower of Jesus, he fervently shared the news of Jesus everywhere he went. In Jerusalem, Paul encountered a group of men who opposed his teachings. These men began a riot, accusing Paul of spreading false doctrine and of defiling the Temple. Guards arrested Paul and threw him in prison. The following years included trials, death threats, secret transfers to other prisons, and finally a trip to Rome where Paul could plead his case before Caesar.

In Acts 27:9, Paul notes the sailing season in connection with Jewish observances. Sailors typically only sailed from Pentecost (May–June) through Tabernacles (after the Day of Atonement in late September or early October). Roman sailors resisted sailing in November, as it typically proved dangerous.

The sailors battled the fierce storm for at least three days, using every trick they knew to secure the ship and survive hurricane-force winds and waves. Finally, the weary seamen lost hope of ever being saved. At this low point, Paul shares the hopeful news given by God.

God's message of hope, conveyed through Paul, rang true for the soldiers, the sailors, *and* the prisoners. God's angel assured Paul that "none of you will lose your lives". However, after the shipwreck, the soldiers planned to kill the prisoners so they wouldn't escape. (Roman law mandated that a soldier who lost a prisoner had to take that prisoner's place!) "But the commanding officer wanted to spare Paul, so he didn't let them carry out their plan". And, just as the angel said, not even a *prisoner* died.

In many ways, Paul was powerless in the stormy sea. He didn't have experience as a sailor. Guards held him prisoner. And, of course, *he* couldn't stop the crashing waves and howling winds. But Paul *did* have Jesus' power on his side! In the same way, the kids at our VBS might feel powerless through life's storms. The world can seem turbulent, dark, and confusing. Bad news crashes over us. Fear blows relentlessly, leaving kids feeling hopeless. Yet God promises to strengthen us with *his* power! And we

can trust that God's promises are true. Like Paul, we have Jesus' power on our side. On Day 2, we celebrated that truth which gave the kids the hope of victory and comfort during life's uncertainties.

## SONG SELECTION

*"In You Alone"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

## DAY 3: JESUS' POWER HELPS US TO BE BOLD

***Bible Story: Peter and John teach about Jesus. (Acts 3:1-4:31)***

***Bible Verse: "He gives power to the weak and strength to the powerless." – Isaiah 40:29***

In the name of Jesus, Peter and John healed a lame man at the Temple gate. The man celebrated the miracle so loudly that a crowd gathered. Peter, making the most of this instant audience, stood up and boldly shared the good news of Jesus.

The priests who heard Peter's message were most likely Sadducees. Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, nor did they believe in the existence of angels or spirits. These leaders also maintained loyalty to the Roman government and sought to maintain the status quo.

At the time, most Jews could read and write, but few – if any – received rabbinical training. Such an education would have made them skilled at lengthy theological discussions. So when Peter and John boldly preached before the Sanhedrin (a crowd of highly trained priests), the judges marveled at their ability and noted that they must have been with Jesus.

After Peter and John's release from prison, the church gathered around them for prayer and praise. It's interesting to note that they *don't* pray for the persecution to stop but that God would give them the boldness to continue sharing the news of Jesus *in spite of* their suffering.

Like Peter and John, most kids that attended our VBS are ordinary and "untrained." Speaking out about their faith can be intimidating, especially in the face of a culture that often feels "anti-Christian." Many children feel shy about praying before a restaurant meal, inviting a friend to church, or even mentioning Jesus in regular conversation. Other kids may feel unsure when it comes to showing Jesus' love, playing with a new friend, or reaching out to someone who's lonely. On Day 3, we gave the kiddos the chance to practice speaking about Jesus with ease and confidence. We provided opportunities for them to daringly step out of their comfort zones. We helped them cultivate a courageous faith, and encouraged them to rely on Jesus' power to help them be bold.

## SONG SELECTION

*"Lions"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

## DAY 4: JESUS' POWER LETS US LIVE FOREVER

***Bible Story: Jesus' death and resurrection. (Matthew 26:17-28:10)***

***Bible Verse: "The spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you." – Romans 8:11***

The Passover meal shared between Jesus and his disciples commemorated God's miraculous provision for his people centuries earlier. In this traditional celebration, Jews remembered the sacrificial lamb, whose blood (marked on their doorposts in Egypt) saved them. How appropriate that Jesus – *our* sacrificial lamb – completes his work on earth with such a symbolic event.

In Jesus' culture – and in some Middle Eastern cultures today – eating together equaled friendship. Scholars equate sharing a meal with trust and intimacy, adding weight to Jesus' comment to Judas: "One of you who has just eaten from this bowl with me will betray me".

The Roman government had deprived the Sanhedrin of the right to carry out most capital punishments. Therefore, even though the chief priests and elders found Jesus guilty, they had to turn him over to Pilate for execution.

At Jesus' death, Matthew 27 records that "the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn in two, from top to bottom." There were actually two curtains in the Temple. One divided the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place; the other separated the Holy Place from the court. Matthew doesn't specify *which* curtain tore, but a rending of either one would symbolize changes between God, ritual law, and humanity.

Even Jesus' followers found his resurrection hard to believe! Matthew 28:17 tells us, "but some of them doubted!" Yet Jesus eased their doubts by appearing to them repeatedly over 40 days.

Death is an uncomfortable – and even scary – topic for children *and* adults. Even though we don't like to talk or think about it, it's likely that most kids will experience the death of a pet, friend, or relative. That's why it's critical that we help children understand the hope we have through Jesus. Even though death may mean the end of *this* life, kids can celebrate the astonishing promise of eternal life with Jesus. We used our Day 4 lesson to help children understand their need for Jesus. We helped to guide them as they discovered that through Jesus' miraculous power, we can live forever in heaven.

## SONG SELECTION

*"The Same Power"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

## DAY 5: JESUS' POWER HELPS US BE GOOD FRIENDS

***Bible Story: The church is united. (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-35)***

***Bible Verse: "Love each other in the same way I have loved you." – John 15:12***

The book of Psalms mentions prayer more than 60 times—more than any other section of Scripture. The book of Acts comes in second, recording the importance and occurrence of prayer about 34 times. Clearly, the early church relied on prayer for hope, communion, healing, provision, and unity. Communication with God became a critical part of their community.

Scholars believe that the early church probably met in Solomon's Colonnade, a porch along the inner side of the Temple wall.

Many of the first Christians came from Jewish backgrounds, meaning they probably already followed God's command to give to the poor. Uniting and caring for others may have been a natural connection with their faith family.

Acts 4:33 records the great power with which the apostles testified about Jesus' resurrection. It's likely this refers to a boldness given by the Holy Spirit but might also indicate that their life of unity and joy became a powerful witness to those around them.

While Acts shines a light on the rapid growth of the early church, in a city of around 200,000 people, they still represented a minority of the population. This small band of believers needed to stick together and support each other!

What would happen if kids today had the same spirit of that first faith family? What would the church of tomorrow look like? As teachers, we had the opportunity to send them off with a passion for sharing Jesus' love in powerful and practical ways! With Jesus' power, we can transform tomorrow's faith community into an environment of belonging, sharing, caring, and community. On Day 5, we helped the children discover how Jesus' power can help them be faithful friends who truly care for each other.

## **SONG SELECTION**

*"This Train Is Bound For Glory"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

*Please stand as you are able.*

## **APOSTLES CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**  
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**  
**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*After each petition, the Worship Assistant will say, "God of grace," The congregation will respond, "hear our prayer".*

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

**Amen.**

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**MEAL** – God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

**OFFERING**

**OFFERING SONG**

*“Old Rugged Cross”*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

*Please stand as you are able.*

**OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

**DIALOGUE**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

**WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

*Please be seated.*

*We believe that Christ is truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine. All those who are baptized and have received formal teaching about The Lord’s Supper are invited forward to commune. If you desire a blessing, come forward and keep hands folded together. Come forward at the direction of the usher. Pick up a clean cup from the right side of the altar. The empty cups can be placed in the tray on the left side of the altar.*

## COMMUNION SONG SELECTIONS

*Rocky Railway VBS*

*Please stand as you are able.*

## POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**SENDING** – God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Tuesday – Christian Growth Meeting at 6:30 p.m.**
- **Thursday – Executive Committee Meeting at 12:00 noon.**
- **Pastor Chris is out of the office until July 5<sup>th</sup>. Contact Deacon Kathy with any needs.**

## BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

## SONG SELECTION

*"Everywhere I Go"*

*Rocky Railway VBS*

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

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***Called by God to Worship, Learn, and Nurture; Sent to Serve and Tell***

Christ Lutheran Church – ELCA

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[www.christlutheranyakima.org](http://www.christlutheranyakima.org) | Worship Sundays at 9:30 a.m.

Pastor Chris' Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays

Deacon Kathy's Office Hours: Tuesdays – Thursdays 11:00 - 2:00 and by appointment