

The United Thank Offering Presents:  
**Waves of Gratitude**

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude



Dear Vacation Bible Camp Director,

Thank you for choosing to use *Waves of Gratitude* for your Vacation Bible Camp this year. We hope this free resource will help your congregation host an amazing, visitor friendly, camp focused on gratitude. This guide provides an overview of each day and offers some additional information for those who might need or want it.

Our vision of this camp is that you, as the camp director, will be leading the **big gatherings**. There are two each day. The **morning big gathering** is where you will set the stage for the day with reminders, music, announcing the theme of the day, and the Bible story. In the camp booklet, we've given you some basic ideas of things to discuss. In this booklet, we'll graphically show you what is happening each day and add some additional discussion questions for the Bible text. The **afternoon big gathering** is a chance to reflect and wrap up the day. This session is focused on gratitude. The visual overview of the day will again be helpful as you connect the activities of the day to the theme and help kids name the things they are grateful for each day. You will work with them to create gratitude "walls" or paper chains to name all the things they are grateful for from the day. These items are important because they are visualizations of gratitude, and they will help connect camp with parents at pick up and with your congregation the following Sunday. Encourage people to go and read what the campers wrote so they can see all the amazing things you did during the week.

Outside of the big gatherings, groups will move about in **Schools of Fish**. One piece of feedback that we've received regarding children's faith formation is that many adults feel unprepared to talk about faith with children. In this guide, you'll find an overview to help you prepare your School of Fish leaders to tackle "I wonder questions" and be the guide for their small group. We've also given them a picture book to read as it represents a more accessible way to talk about the theme of the day with their group.

Finally, **everything is open to local adaptation**, so read the entire guide and decide if you need to change things. Perhaps your church is located near a waterway so one day you might want to have a field trip or hear from a local parks person about the need to conserve and care for water. Maybe you don't like the picture book for the day. No problem, just change it out. The goal is to have a fun week where participants get to hear Bible Stories, engage with gratitude, and get curious about the world around them through crafts, activities, and STEAM.

We hope you have a great camp, and we're so grateful that you invited us to join you for it.

The Board and Staff of the United Thank Offering

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## Getting Started

*In the big book, there is a section to help you get started. We wanted to also provide a quick glance at the specific tasks a camp director will need to undertake and where you can find resources to get started.*

### Invitation to Support Vacation Bible Camp

The first step in a successful Bible Camp is inviting your congregation to participate. Here are three ways you can invite people to help:

1. **Volunteer** - Make sure to communicate the different levels of support that you need. There is a big difference between being a School of Fish leader and an activity station leader, for example. Give people a quick description of each job that you think you might need. Be sure to follow your local [Safe Church](#) guidelines when recruiting leaders. Here are the roles that we see:
  - a. Nurse (or similar) to handle medications of campers and basic first aid
  - b. School of Fish Leader
  - c. Activity Station Leader
  - d. Snack Support (someone who can get snack materials to the Schools of Fish and who can keep the kitchen managed, stocked, and clean)
  - e. Registration (people who help with sign in and sign out each day)
  - f. Set Up and Clean Up crew
  - g. Musicians (if needed) to lead songs
  - h. Junior Counsellors - this is a great role for middle and high school students who are too old to enjoy camp as participants but still want to come and help. Assign one to each School of Fish and to each activity station. (This is often a huge help to families with children of different ages because they can have childcare in one location for the week for all of their kids.)
2. **Donate** - This camp requires a lot of materials that are readily available online or at your local stores. Make a giving tree where people can take a tag and then bring back the item you need. Make sure you include the quantity needed and break up bigger items into more than one tag. (For example, you're going to need a lot of bubble solution and water balloons!)
3. **Invite** - Use the social media tools on the *Waves of Gratitude* website to encourage members of your congregation to invite people to Vacation Bible Camp.

### Advertising and Registration

As you begin to think about inviting people to your camp, reflect on your space and volunteers to determine capacity. This way you can be honest about when your classes fill up. Make sure to have a registration deadline so you have time to put together the information from the registration forms for your volunteers. Here are some things to consider as you begin inviting families to sign up for camp:

1. **Capacity** - How many participants can each school of fish hold and how many schools of fish can your building accommodate? When answering these questions, it is also good to consider the number of volunteers you expect to have and the budget for the camp.

2. **Registration Forms** - You will need to create a method for registering campers. We recommend an online form that is easily shared and accessible. (Microsoft Forms and Google Forms are easy-to-use tools, for example.) This will also help you manage registration numbers (and not have forms dropped off at the wrong place) and allow you to know when to update the form to say that a class is full. You will also want to ask if the child needs medication administered during the day. If you have children in this situation, work with congregational leaders on the best and safest way to accomplish this given the number of individuals who need it. We have provided a sample waiver that can be used in addition to basic registration information; however, make sure to check the content of all forms with your congregational leaders before using them.
3. **Camp Fees** - We recommend charging a small non-refundable fee. Studies show that even a small fee means that people are more likely to show up and commit to the camp because they paid for it. We recommend keeping this fee low because studies have also shown that summer day camps are inaccessible to a lot of families due to the cost. The goal is to find the sweet spot between enough to make people show up and low enough that it is accessible. Consider offering sibling discounts and scholarships. If the cost is low, you can also encourage registrants and parishioners to donate to the scholarship fund.
4. **Lunches** - If you are doing a full day camp, you will need to address lunch. You will want to have back-up lunches on hand for kids who forget theirs, and you may need to provide lunch to those who need it. This is something to consider when thinking about your community and the likely participants.

Once you've thought through all these things, it is time to advertise your camp. You can make digital flyers to share on social media, add to your community's calendar of events, or connect with local parent groups to get the information out. If your camp is going to be small, we recommend advertising through the families at your church before opening it up to the whole community. We've created some social media tools to help you advertise, but since the specifics of each camp will be different, you can make your own using the logos for the camp provided.

## Processing Registration Forms

In the window between registration opening and camp beginning, you will need to process the registration forms. Here's how we would do it:

1. **Create/adapt class lists for the Schools of Fish.** Include emergency contact information, allergies, medication notes, and learning style notes from the parents. We've started a sample one for you.
2. **Create/adapt the Sign-In and Sign-Out Sheets** for the registration table. We've created a sample one for you in the Additional Resources Section.
3. **Create an email list** - Use this list to send out reminders (like bring your white T-shirt tomorrow) and for the follow-up letter at the end of camp.

## Prepare for Camp

With a group of volunteers, get ready for camp! Here are some things to do before camp starts.

1. **Train your volunteer leaders** - Make sure they know what they are doing, when, and why.
2. **Print Passports** - Passports can be printed at a local print shop, or simply select "booklet" print from the PDF menu. You will need to cut the booklets down if you print at your church, but we've included cut marks to help you do that (or for the printer to use). We recommend putting a staple in the middle and having the outside cover printed on cardstock.
3. **Create nametags** - We recommend printing labels with the names of all children and volunteers for each day, so you don't have to worry about collecting them and handing them back out each morning.

4. **Print handouts** - There are several crafts that require a printed handout. Make sure you have enough for each person plus a few extras.
5. **Create pennants and ribbons** - Each school of fish will need a pennant with their fish name on it (ex. Koi) and 5 wide ribbons that they can easily write on with a permanent marker. You may want to pick five colors and prewrite the theme on each ribbon to help your School of Fish leaders stay organized.
6. **Inventory supplies/Set up Stations** - Make sure you have everything you need for the number of people expected. Store supplies for each station in an easy-to-reach spot and group by day. We recommend putting the supplies for each day in their own container (box, etc.) so that your volunteers don't have to search for things.
7. **Create a sensory-friendly spot** - Camp is a lot of fun, but for some kids it can be overwhelming. Set up a quiet spot (perhaps your parish administrator is happy to have kids sign in/out to sit and read near them in the office, because it is quiet there, or organize your gratitude station to often be quiet so that space can serve this double purpose with an extra junior counsellor) where kids can ask to go if they need a break. Make sure they know they must tell their group leader they are going or create a sign in/out sheet for the sensory space.
8. **Set up the kitchen** - Make sure you have back-up snacks and all the snack supplies ready to go. We recommend having a small basket or bin labeled for each School of Fish so leaders can easily grab their snack materials when they need them.
9. **Make and hang signs** - You may know your church building well, but kids may not. Make sure to make signs with directions and location names. Make signs for each station, School of Fish meeting area (both in the big gathering area and for their group time), and directions to the bathrooms.
10. **Prep the big gratitude activity** - If you are using paper chains, pre-cut strips of paper. If you are using posters or foam core, write the theme of the day at the top of each one so they are ready.
11. **Music** - If you don't have someone who is willing to lead music, be sure to download the song tunes from the internet to use when teaching songs, if that would be helpful to you and your volunteers. Also, be sure to have your dance party music ready and able to be heard in the big gathering space.
12. **Look over the booklet** and make sure the week is ready to go with expansion ideas, invitation to the closing event (if you're having one), and supplies.
13. **Decorate** - Make sure the space is welcoming and inviting to campers. They will add to the decorations over the week, but signage to let people know where to drop off/pick up is always good and a banner or two in the big gathering space that says "Welcome!" and "We're grateful you're here!" are nice additions.

## After Camp

First off, celebrate! Pulling off Vacation Bible Camp is always a lot of work, and we're so grateful you did it. Here are some ways we suggest wrapping up camp.

1. **Sunday Morning** - Ask for time at church to talk about camp and explain the big gratitude project. We suggest leaving it behind so people can read it or see it and engage with what happened during the week.
2. **Practice Gratitude** - Send thank you notes to all your volunteers, donors, and supporters. You can ask the kids to make extra bubble art paper on Day Three that you can use to make the notes out of.
3. **Tell the Story** - Write an article for your church newsletter or local paper about your camp. Be sure to thank volunteers and donors once again.
4. **Follow Up with Families** - Be sure to send a letter thanking families for participating and inviting them to your next event. We've included an adaptable letter to get you started.
5. **Self-Care** - This was a lot of work, and you did it! Make sure to take time to rest, reflect, and rejuvenate. We are grateful for you and your leadership, so take care of yourself.

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## Day Three Expansion: Clergy Involvement

If you are a priest or if your priest would like to find an easy way to participate and support your Vacation Bible Camp, we suggest the following expansion on Day Three: Grateful for Baptism.

As a way of closing out the day on Baptism, we suggest having a Renewal of Baptismal vows from the *Book of Common Prayer* (using whatever Rite is common in your congregation). Make sure this is appropriate for your community (for example, that the children are baptized, and parents are comfortable with it). Instead of blessing water in a font for asperging the gathered people, bless a tub of filled water balloons. A plastic bin with a little water in the bottom helps keep the balloons from popping. At the conclusion of the Renewal of Baptismal Vows, instead of sprinkling water on everyone, the priest gets to hit each person present with a water balloon or can invite pairs to take a water balloon each and hit each other.

## Day One Additional Information

*In case Deep and Wide is unfamiliar to you, here's the hymn tune.*

### Deep and wide

Assurance and Joy of Salvation—General

(Guitar: Capo 3)

Deep and wide, deep and wide, There's a foun - tain flow - ing deep and wide.

Deep and wide, deep and wide, There's a foun - tain flow - ing deep and wide.

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## Helpful Hints for the Big Gathering Talks

If you are finding leading the Big Gathering talks daunting, we've created an outline for the first day to show how we would bring it all together. We hope this will help you do the same for the following four days but from your own authentic voice and experience. Note: Items in blue are from the Big Booklet so you can see how we expanded around them.

### An Example for the Morning Big Gathering

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Good morning and welcome to St. Julia's Vacation Bible Camp! My name is *(only use what you expect them to call you)*, and I will be your camp director for the week. I want to introduce to you a few other people who you can go to for help or will be interacting with throughout the week.

*Introduce your team.*

This week we are going to be learning about gratitude and water, which means we are going to be drinking lots of water to stay hydrated, saying thank you when we notice someone helping us, and we are going to get a little bit wet during games, crafts, and other activities. Who loves playing with water? It is going to be a great week, and I am so glad you are here! Thank you for coming! Each morning we're going to sing a song, and today we are going to start with a really silly one called Take Me out to the Ocean.

**2. Sing a song** *(You might want to create a song booklet for the week using the songs you've picked or project the words on a screen.)*

#### **Take Me Out to the Ocean**

*(To the tune of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game")*

Take me out to the ocean

Take me out to the sea

Show me the foamy waves rolling there

As I breathe in the salty sea air!

Let me look, look, look at the ocean

See the sea and explore

For it's fun to dive from the top

to the ocean floor!

#### 3. Hear a Bible Story and talk about it

Thank you for singing that song so joyfully! Now it is time to think about our theme for the day. Today we are giving thanks for all the ways we are connected. Have you ever noticed how much **we need other people?** **And because we need other people, we have opportunities** to say thank you? **From our friends to our parents, each person is someone who we can be grateful for, and their actions are often things we can give thanks for as well.**

**Let's start with a story you might know from the Bible.** Let me help set the scene a bit. Jesus is out teaching in communities about the love of God and how we should share that love with each other. Let's see what



Jesus says about how best to show love to Jesus. [Read Children of God Storybook pg. 100 or the Bible Passage.](#) (Matthew 25)

This was a really interesting story, and I am curious about what is happening in it and if you can help me understand it better.

- I wonder how the people felt when they were told that if they wanted to take care of Jesus, that they had to take care of people in need.
- Have you ever been asked to do something you didn't want to do, like chores? Have you thought about why it might have been good to do it anyway?
- [Who are some of the people who show you love? Who are people you know who are fun?](#)
- [Have you ever helped someone? I wonder what that felt like for you?](#)
- [What are some ways we can see God in everyone we meet?](#)

One of the things I notice in what Jesus is telling us today is that when we connect with people with kindness, we get to also connect with God and the love of God through them. I hope you'll notice today all the ways you can connect with others and God, because today our theme is connections. You're going to connect with your school of fish, and then come back here to share what you've learned and connect with all of us. You're going to connect with stations and their leaders, where you'll do crafts and experiments. There's so much to connect with this week, and we're excited to get to connect with all of you. Before you head out to make new connections, I want to sing one more song and then share a few announcements.

#### **4. Sing Another Song!**

##### **Deep and Wide**

Deep and wide, deep and wide

There's a fountain flowing deep and wide. (X2)

##### **Hand motions**

deep = hold one hand up and other down

wide = hold hands out to the side

fountain = make a wave with arms

Repeat the text omit the word "deep", then "wide", then "fountain" and use only hand motions. Try speeding it up if the kids are doing well at omitting the words, as it often gets very silly and fun.

#### **5. Announcements:**

- Where are the bathrooms and what are the rules around going to the bathroom?
- Where are their leaders and where can they go for help if they get separated from their school of fish?
- What are schools of fish and which one is theirs?
- Important safety rules to remember?
- Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

# An Example for the Afternoon Big Gathering

## 1. Sing Songs

Some groups might take longer to get back to the big group than others, so start by singing some of the songs from camp until everyone is assembled.

## 2. Welcome Back

**Welcome back** to our big gathering! Today we spent so much time connecting with one another, the leaders and gratitude. I don't know about you, but I am feeling happy about all the friends that I've made today and grateful for the ways we can connect, from things we all like to doing activities together.

## 3. Reflect on the Day and Invite kids to share their favorite part

I want to help us remember all the things we did today because it has been such a full day. This morning we began by hearing a story of when someone asked Jesus how to connect with him. Jesus tells the person that if they want to show love and care to Jesus, then they should show it to others. This is why noticing the good things people are doing in our lives is so important. Gratitude helps us connect to each other and to the love of God. We did make a lot of connections; can you all help me remember some of them?

- What connects acids and bases? (Water or neutral of water.) That's right! Opposites, like acids and bases are still connected, just like we are to people who might be new to us or seem different.
- What kept the water from coming out of the bag when you pierced it with the pencil? (The connection between the bag and the pencil.) That's right, connections make us stronger.
- Did you hear any connections in the story you read with your school of fish? (the snail and the whale, the children and the whale) I love how this book was filled with connections and kindness and gratitude. I bet the snail was so thankful when it got invited on the adventure with the whale, and the whale when the snail got the children to save it.
- Did you make anything to connect with others today? (rocks, cards) That's amazing! These are all ways of noticing that people in our lives and community are important to us and we are grateful for them.

I am so thankful for all these things you did today, I've got this big gratitude board to help us remember all of it...

**Sharing:** Can one fish from each school come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned?

## 4. Big Gratitude Activity

It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of cool things. To help us remember the things we did each day, we've got this giant poster where we can write things down. I've written down things that people shared just now but raise your hand if you want to add something to our poster. (Write down ideas or invite kids to do it themselves. If using paper chains, ask them to work on these in their schools and then we'll connect the chains from each school.)

## 5. Reminders for tomorrow

It is okay if this happens while parents are arriving, it might be good for them to hear these reminders too! Tomorrow we'll start back here in this big space together. Remember to bring your water bottle, lunch, and clothes you can get messy in. We're sending home a reminder with your parents, but if you forgot to bring a white T-shirt today, please bring it tomorrow as we're going to be using them in our water activity

## 6. Dance Party

This is a great way to let kids play while waiting on parents with fun music. Ideas for music are found on the additional resources page for the week.

**Dance it out!** We've had a great day, and now it's time to introduce you to how we wrap up - it's time for a dance party! Let's dance it out!



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## Schools of Fish

Each day, campers will meet in small groups called Schools of Fish. While the camp guide offers some basic guidance, this page will offer a bit more context for first time group leaders.

### Overview

Schools of Fish are where participants will spend the bulk of their time at camp. These groups are how children move through stations and know where they gather to talk together. Their room is their home base for the week, where they can keep things they're working on, extra snacks, and is a place to relax and connect with their peers. You'll notice that we don't provide a lot of planned discussion for use during your gathering time. This is because this is a moment of downtime in a busy day. It's okay to let them just talk and be silly while eating their snack. Totally fine if they want to lay down to listen to the story and rest. Have coloring sheets (see the additional resources section for some Illustrated Ministries posters and sheets you can use) and materials for those who might want them.

### Schedule

While we believe you'll find a rhythm that works for your group, here are the basic elements that will happen during your School of Fish time. If your group meets early in the day, you might want to save snacks for the end of your time together. If you've just come from a high-energy game, you might want to start with a story and making sure everyone has a drink to cool down.

- Check-in/greeting
- Snack-tivity
- Story and discussion
- Closing - adding a ribbon with words of gratitude to your pennant

### Pennants

Each school of fish will have a fish name on a pennant. This is to help your group find you in the morning or when moving from station to station. It also is a sign of belonging, so encouraging your group to add to the pennant or to the daily ribbons is a way that they can show they belong to your group. Each day you'll add a ribbon with the theme of the day, ask participants for their favorite thing they did so far that day, and you can always go back and add to the previous days as well. This helps model that writing things we're grateful for is a way to remember good things to help us get better at looking for them.

### Discussion Questions

Some of our questions use "I wonder" language and we know that this can feel unfamiliar. This word choice is intentional. The idea is that instead of asking a question with a definite answer, we're inviting a conversation. It implies that you are curious and perhaps don't have all the answers either, or that you really are interested in learning from what your group has to say. If you get a question from a camper you don't know the answer to, you can respond, "I wonder about that too, let's be sure to ask that this afternoon at the big gathering." If this feels odd, switch to language that is more authentic to you, but do try to weave it in. We've provided some questions you can ask, but feel free to add others. Switch out books if you have one you like better that is similar. Again, this is time to regroup, rest, and reflect, so work with your Camp Director to make any changes that help you feel empowered to do this with your group.

### Camp Directors:

Be sure to provide the following things:

**Training:** make sure you meet with leaders, practice a School of Fish session, answer questions and walk through the space.

**Schedule** for each day of which station they should go to when.

**Class List** of names, any food allergies (and how they should be managed), information shared by their parents about learning styles or sensory issues.

**Emergency Information** so they know who to call onsite and for what purposes if they need help.

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## Activity Stations

### Camp Directors:

Be sure to provide the following things:

**Training:** make sure you meet with station leaders and practice or talk through the crafts. Make sure they know where supplies are and where to go for more materials.

**Schedule** of which group is coming and when. (Especially important if they need to modify an activity for little ones.)

**Expansion Items** make sure each station has things to do or use if they end early.

**Emergency Information** so they know who to call onsite and for what purposes if they need help.

*Each day, campers will travel with their school of fish through a variety of stations. Each station will need a leader (and a junior counsellor or two) who can help participants engage with the activity.*

### Overview

Waves of Gratitude utilizes a station system to help smaller groups of participants engage with the daily theme (and the overall water theme for camp) via hands on activities. The stations are:

- **Movement** - Get the wiggles out with a game
- **Craft** - Engage with a fun under the sea art project
- **STEAM** - Parents are often looking for STEAM activities for their children to supplement what they are learning in school. We've added a STEAM station, where kids will engage with science to help meet this need and make the program more appealing to your community. All directions are included and accessible for a non-science person to lead.
- **Water** - Because this whole camp is about water, we want to give participants a chance to play with water every day. (It's also summer so this is a great way to keep kids cool.)
- **Gratitude** - Our other big theme for the week of camp is gratitude, so just like the water station, we want to make sure that everyone has the chance to try out a gratitude practice each day. This station will utilize crafts, games, and more.
- **Music** - This can be a separate station but is intended for the big gathering time. We've got a mix of water-themed songs and classic Bible Camp favorites. Again, feel free to add your own local favorites.

### Schedule

While we believe you'll find a rhythm that works for your station, the basic flow of the information we've given you is:

- Welcome and introduction of activity
- Activity
- Discussion

Some crafts require paint to dry. There are two ways to speed this up - a hair dryer or setting it in the sun. If this is the case, paint items right away to give yourself enough time. Be sure to notice when we've suggested having things prepared before the group arrives as this will save you a great deal of time and frustration.

### Discussion Questions

Some of our questions use "I wonder" language and we know that this can feel unfamiliar. This word choice is intentional. The idea is that instead of asking a question with a definite answer, we're inviting a conversation. It implies that you are curious and perhaps don't have all the answers either, or that you really are interested in learning from what your group has to say. If you get a question from a camper you don't know the answer to, you can respond, "I wonder about that too, let's be sure to ask that this afternoon at the big gathering." If this feels odd, switch to language that is more authentic to you, but do try to weave it in. We've provided some questions you can ask, but feel free to add others.



# Waves of Gratitude Day One: Grateful for Connections



## Big Group Gathering

**Bible Story:** Matthew 25

**How it Connects to the Theme:** One way to connect with Jesus is by caring for others, and Jesus is grateful when we do.



## School of Fish

**Book:** *The Snail and the Whale* by Julia Donaldson

**How it Connects to the Theme:** This book is filled with people connecting and giving thanks for those connections.



## Movement Station

**Activity:** Under the Sea Actions

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Let's connect with each other via a silly game of charades.



## Gratitude Station

**Activity:** Thank you notes

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Let's make cards to simply thank someone for their importance in our lives as a way of acknowledging the way they care for us, are connected to us, and our gratitude for them.



## Craft Station

**Activity:** Gratitude Rocks

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Gratitude can connect us to people we don't know through acknowledging them and their kindness. Let's make rocks for people to find that share kindness and gratitude as a way of connecting with them.



## STEAM Station

**Activity:** Acids and Bases

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Acids and bases are opposites, but they are connected by a neutral (water). Sometimes we can't see how we're connected to others, but we are, through water! Humans all need water to live, and so do plants and animals!



## Water Activity

**Activity:** Pencils through a Ziploc Filled with Water

**How it Connects to the Theme:** The water doesn't escape because of the invisible connections between the bag and pencil. Gratitude creates strong connections that sometimes we can't see.



# Waves of Gratitude Day Two: Grateful for Creation



## Big Group Gathering

**Bible Story:** Genesis 1

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we'll hear the creation narrative that helps us think about all the parts of creation and how grateful we are for all of creation.



## School of Fish

**Book:** *Save the Ocean* by Bethany Stahl

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Our story today follows a mermaid who needs our help to take care of the ocean. One of the ways we show gratitude to creation is to take care of it however we can.



## Movement Station

**Activity:** Octopus Tag

**How it Connects to the Theme:** This game simply connects to our water theme, is fun, and collaborative.



## Gratitude Station

**Activity:** Adding to Creation with a Plant

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we'll paint a pot with all our favorite things in creation. Then we'll plant sunflower seeds in them to care for at home. Sunflowers are heliotropic, meaning they follow the sun, which might be how they say thank you to the sun!



## Craft Station

**Activity:** Glow in the Dark Jellyfish

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Some jellyfish are bioluminescent, and shine in the dark. We'll talk about how when we care for creation, we shine too!



## STEAM Station

**Activity:** Invisible Ink

**How it Connects to the Theme:** One of the amazing things in creation is the ability to adapt via camouflage. We'll give thanks for the hidden things in creation by making a hidden message.



## Water Activity

**Activity:** Tie dye a camp shirt

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we'll make our camp shirts using tie dye as a way of talking about how powerful liquids are in nature.



# Waves of Gratitude Day Three: Grateful for Baptism



## Big Group Gathering

**Bible Story:** Matthew 3

**How it Connects to the Theme:** What better way to kick off a day on gratitude for baptism than to hear and think about Jesus' baptism. We're going to focus on a portion of the Baptismal Covenant today: "seek and serve Christ..." We'll talk about letting the light of God's love shine through us as a way of doing this important work.

## School of Fish

**Book:** *Bubbles...Up!* By Jacqueline Davies

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Our story today follows a young girl who loves swimming and imagining. When a smaller child needs help, she helps him and experiences gratitude. We'll talk about how she showed love through her actions.



## Movement Station

**Activity:** Bubble wand relay race

**How it Connects to the Theme:** This collaborative game uses bubbles, part of our theme for the day, to get our group moving.



## Gratitude Station

**Activity:** Creating a gratitude journal

**How it Connects to the Theme:** There are lots of ways we can seek and serve Christ in all persons, and one way is to love our neighbors and ourselves. One of the best ways to show love is by noticing and giving thanks. Today we'll turn a UTO Blue Box into a submarine gratitude journal.



## Craft Station

**Activity:** Painting with Bubbles

**How it Connects to the Theme:** We've talked about how bubbles let the light through (and often make rainbows) in our craft we'll use bubbles to capture color and make art together.



## STEAM Station

**Activity:** Design a Better Bubble Wand

**How it Connects to the Theme:** There are a lot of ways to create bubbles and today we'll see if we can engineer a better wand. This is a reminder that there's always new ways to try and show love to the world.



## Water Activity

**Activity:** Bubble Party

**How it Connects to the Theme:** We've used bubbles all day today so in our water activity we'll make big ones, tiny ones, and try out different bubble solutions to find what makes the best bubble.





# Waves of Gratitude Day Four: Grateful for Everyday



## Big Group Gathering

**Bible Story:** Jonah 1-4

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Jonah's story is one of overcoming fear. Not every day is perfect, but if we notice God in the midst of the struggle, we'll find reasons to be brave and grateful.



## School of Fish

**Book:** *Thank You Book* by Mo Willems

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Our story today focuses on one character who wants to thank everyone and one that is afraid they will forget someone. We'll talk about how important it is to practice gratitude even if we're not perfect at it yet.



## Movement Station

**Activity:** Water Relay Race

**How it Connects to the Theme:** This collaborative game asks kids to fill a bucket using sponges dipped in water. While we might not always know it, saying thank you helps fill the bucket of the person we recognized.



## Gratitude Station

**Activity:** Gratitude Game

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we practice giving thanks every day and for a variety of things using an adapted version of pick up sticks.



## Craft Station

**Activity:** Up-cycled Crafts

**How it Connects to the Theme:** One way we can show our gratitude to creation every day is by reusing things. We'll try this out today by making crafts using egg cartons.



## STEAM Station

**Activity:** Summer-Proof Snow

**How it Connects to the Theme:** It's easy to be thankful for something when we see it or use it, but what about when we can't? Today we'll make snow in the summer and remember how grateful we are for snow when we get to experience it.



## Water Activity

**Activity:** Oobleck

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Oobleck is just cornstarch and water, but the mixture is a non-Newtonian fluid, so it is sort of a liquid and a solid at once. When we practice gratitude it changes all sorts of things, it can make a hard day better, or help us make a new friend.





# Waves of Gratitude Day Five: Grateful for Water



## Big Group Gathering

**Bible Story:** Matthew 25

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we'll hear a story about a time when Jesus calmed a storm over the water when he was out on a boat with his friends and think about how important water is to our faith.



## School of Fish

**Book:** *We are Water Protectors* by Carole Windstorm

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Our story today shares the Ojibwe understanding that women are the protectors of water, but that it is everyone's jobs to help keep our water clean and safe for everyone.



## Movement Station

**Activity:** Water Balloon Spoon Race

**How it Connects to the Theme:** This collaborative game is a silly way to see how much fun water is, which is a reason to be thankful for water!



## Gratitude Station

**Activity:** Water Gratitude Reflection and a Gratitude Tool for the Road

**How it Connects to the Theme:** In our gratitude station, we'll reflect on how important water is to us in ways we love (swimming) and ways we might love less (bathing). We'll make one last gratitude tool for the road that kids can use to help others practice gratitude.



## Craft Station

**Activity:** Photo Frames and Camp Photo Booth

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Today we'll use gratitude and water themes to create a frame for a photo from camp and a photo backdrop for our end of camp celebration.



## STEAM Station

**Activity:** Water Squirters

**How it Connects to the Theme:** Water can do all sorts of amazing things, but one of the fun things it can do is squirt, so we'll make a water toy and see if we can improve upon the design together.



## Water Activity

**Activity:** Water Party

**How it Connects to the Theme:** We'll end camp for the week with a big water party. There will be water balloons, bubbles, and fun for everyone.