

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

WELCOME!

The United Thank Offering (UTO) Board and Staff are pleased to present you with this free program focused on geology, the Eucharist, and gratitude, the second edition of our VBS program! *(Be sure to check out Waves of Gratitude if you're looking for other options.)* Our materials this year came from noticing how children are drawn to rocks. Toddlers will stop what they are doing to bend down and pick one up, children often fill their pockets with them, and preteens love to paint them or find painted ones. There's something about rocks that is appealing to us, maybe it's because often we pick one up only to notice a sparkle of quartz crystals hiding among the sandstone, or there's a pretty line in it, or a fun shape. On the surface, learning about rocks might not seem like a lot of fun, but when we take time to look at them, they often are more than they seem. People are like this too. On the surface, we might think we know and understand a lot about a person, but just under the surface are the ways they struggle, the ways they are talented, and the ways they shine. Decades ago, I heard a priest share that she always invited the children of her church up to the altar when she celebrated the Eucharist and when she got to the end, she stood behind them and included them as she said: "These are the gifts of God for the people of God." This always stayed with me as such an important reminder, we are all the gifts of God for the people of God, not just the bread and wine, but a lived and embodied Eucharistic theology. As a parish priest, I invited the children up to the altar so they could see what was happening and ask questions. The Eucharist is a reminder that even though we look ordinary, extraordinary things are happening in our lives and through us each day, and these things are reason to give thanks. These thoughts are what created the program you are holding in your hands. It ties together gratitude, geology, the Eucharist, and community into a fun and engaging program for kids and leaders alike. It also helps connect faith concepts with books and STEAM projects they might experience outside of church, which makes this program unique in that it is visitor friendly. We wanted to make sure that we also connected each day back to parents, so we created a field notebook for our budding geologists and follow-up letters. We also know that camp can be costly, so we tried to keep supplies to a minimum (or easily donated, up cycled, or reused) and as low cost as possible while still being a ton of fun. We hope your congregations loves this program, and we're grateful you're using it!

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

Each day campers will participate in a fun activity to get them moving and engaged with the theme.

We also have snacks that connect to the theme and allow campers to create and engage.

CRAFTS & STEAM

There is a craft each day and a STEAM project - so art and science fun for everyone! We've also got extensions for older kids, alternative ideas, and ways to expand the project if needed. These are all found in the handbook for the craft and STEAM leader.

GEOLOGY

We know that kids love rocks, so this year to help build on the theme we've added a station dedicated to rocks! Here they'll do crafts, experiments, or engage with rocks in a way that connects to the theme for the day.

HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Each day we'll hear a Bible story, either one that uses "Celebrate Wonder: Bible Storybook" or a Godly Play story that connects to the theme.

CONNECT TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Each Bible story and daily theme will get connected with a popular children's story to help build connections between faith and everyday life.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Participants will learn a gratitude practice each day and be invited to share their gratitude as a part of the closing gathering each day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Program Overview for Leaders	2-7
Big Group Gathering Information for Leaders There are 4 pages for each day of camp: 1. Overview for the leader of the big group gathering 2. Morning Big Gathering Page 3. Afternoon Big Gathering Page 4. Daily Rundown Sheet - send home to parents each day and give to leaders in the morning so they can see the big picture of the day ahead	8-9
Day One: The Rock Cycle <i>We are Always Growing and Changing and God is Making All Things New</i>	10-13
Day Two: Metamorphic Rock <i>Conflict, Pressure, and Growth</i>	14-17
Day Three: Igneous Rock AKA Volcano Day! <i>Things are not always what they seem</i>	18-22
Day Four: Sedimentary Rock <i>How Communities Are Formed</i>	23-26
Day Five: Minerals & Gemstones AKA Geode Day! <i>Hidden Glory In Each of Us...We are the Gifts of God for the People of God</i>	27-31
Special Event/Closing Celebration/Instructed Eucharist	32-34
Supply Lists for All of Camp	35-43
Resources Section (Forms, certificates, etcetera)	44-51

PRO TIPS!

**FIND THIS STICKER
THROUGHOUT THE RESOURCES
FOR A TIP FROM SOMEONE WHO LED
GRATITUDE ROCKS FIRST!**



GO OUTSIDE!

**FIND THIS STICKER
THROUGHOUT THE RESOURCES
FOR ACTIVITIES BEST DONE OUTDOORS.**



SAMPLE FULL DAY SCHEDULE**9a Gather and Full Group Activities**

- Welcome and name tags
- Hear the Story
- Wonder About the Theme
- Announcements for the Day
- Gather into small groups

9:30a Small Group Gathering Time

(Hear the story from the book, check in, get ready for the day)

10 a Stations - 3 before lunch and 3 after lunch:

(30 Minutes Per Station)

- Station 1: Crafts
- Station 2: Movement
- Station 3: STEAM
- Station 4: Gratitude
- Station 5: Geology
- Station 6: Snack-tivity

2:30p Small Group Gathering Time

(field guides, notes for home, prepare for closing)

3p Closing Full Group Activities

- Remember the Stories
- Share what we learned
- Practice Gratitude

3:30p Pick Up**SAMPLE HALF DAY SCHEDULE**

Note: this program was designed for a full day of Camp, it can be adapted to a half day (and then used for two years) by splitting the program in half as follows. If using for two years, you'll want to pay attention to the scaffold and expansion options for crafts.

You will want to do the dig for rocks from Geology Day One both years as well as volcanoes two years in a row.

9a Gather and Full Group Activities

- Gather into small groups
- Welcome and name tags
- Hear the Story
- Wonder About the Theme
- Announcements for the Day

9:30a Stations:

(20 Minutes Per Station)

- Station 1: Crafts **or** Snack-tivity
- Station 2: Movement
- Station 3: STEAM **or** Geology
- Station 4: Liturgy & Music **or** Gratitude

11:30a Closing Full Group Activities

- Remember the Stories
- Share What We Learned
- Practice Gratitude

Noon Pick Up**KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND YOUR CLIMATE**

The materials in this program were tested by kiddos and congregations. All non-religious materials were tested in a public elementary school by kindergarteners, third graders, and fifth graders in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The entire program was then piloted by the good folks at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church in Signal Mountain, Tennessee and by St. Luke's Episcopal Church in East Greenwich, Rhode Island. Updates were made after each pilot program and things were tested again. This means that this program is really ready to go as written, but we do recommend adapting to your local context. For example, salt dough dries quickly in New Mexico but slowly in Tennessee. Think through your ages and what can be done as a demonstration versus hands on activity. You've got this, but if you need help, email Heather at hmelton@episcopalchurch.org and she can answer your questions.

ABOUT THE BOOKS

Below are a list of books we suggest for each day of Gratitude Rocks. You might know of a local favorite that would also work, so feel free to change it out to best suit your program. We also recommend making a comfy reading area where someone who might need a lower sensory area can go and read books, breathe, and relax. In this spot you can include books from previous days or other books on geology, gratitude, or faith.

Book List:

Day One Book: *The Street Beneath My Feet* by Charlotte Guillain and Yuval Zommer

Day Two Book: *Don't Blow Your Top!* by Ame Dyckman

Day Three Book: *Old Rock (Is Not Boring)* by Deb Pilutti

Day Four Book: *Ricky the Rock Who Couldn't Roll* by Mr. Jay

Day Five Book: *Scribble Stones* by Diane Alber



We also love the *Geology Activity Book* (pictured here) for activities to have on hand for fast finishers and *Animated Science's: Rocks and Minerals* for a colorful dive into geology.

FIELD NOTEBOOKS

or how we're sharing what we did each day with families...

Most parents find the answer to: "What did you do today?" a bit lacking. To help our parents feel engaged with what our participants are doing, each one is given a field notebook (based on what geologists use) that shares the themes of the day, and a place to get a stamp or sticker. It has room for them to write some thoughts to help capture their experience. The field guide serves as a great keepsake and conversation starter. While it is an optional item to use, we strongly recommend it!

It is set up to print on pre-scored postcards, for ease of printing and creating!

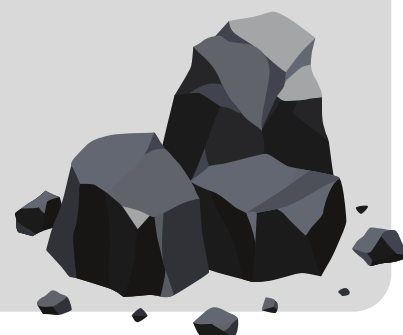
You can download the field guide from the website and we also have a daily rundown handout here in the Director's Guide to use each day at camp.

LETTERS FOR HOME AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Included in this guide are: a sample registration form, waiver, and a welcome letter for after registration. We offer these to help get your thoughts going on communicating to families and gathering information you need, but please be in touch with your diocese regarding what information they recommend (or forms they recommend) that you use.

Just a reminder to ensure that all of your volunteers are following Safe Church practices as a part of your camp. Be in touch with your diocese to ensure the safety of all volunteers and participants. We've created a sample sign-in and sign-out form as well, so IDs can be checked easily.

Finally, don't forget to follow up with families after the event is over to invite them to the next family friendly event. We've included a sample letter on our website to get you started.



ALL ABOUT THE BIG GATHERING AND SENSORY AREAS

The Big Gathering Area can easily be your worship space. It is simply an area to gather everyone together, sing songs, hear the story, share about the theme for the day and then head off with their rock formation on their adventures for the day. The Big Gathering is important because it is where you set the stage for the day and help your camp community understand how everything is connected. This space/time lets campers share their ideas and gratitude. As a part of setting up for camp, you'll be instructed to set up a gratitude wall for the things the kids share to be added onto. This serves a couple of purposes, it lets the campers know that their ideas and experiences are valuable, and it can and should be left up for church on Sunday so the whole congregation can see and give thanks for the experience of the campers even if they didn't participate in camp. This helps the whole congregation feel invested in your program. Since the theme this year is on the Eucharist, being in the worship space also helps kids feel welcome and comfortable in that space so that when they come back to church, they'll feel welcome and comfortable there too.

Sensory friendly spaces are really important for our kiddos with learning differences or different ways of processing information. There's a lot of good information online about why these spaces help kids feel safe and welcome so we won't go into that here, but we recommend taking time to set up one in your worship space that can be a permanent addition. You might also want to set up a sensory area where the stations are so they are accessible throughout the day. If you have families of kiddos who might need this option, they would be a great resource for what might make this a successful offering.

SUPPLIES FOR THE WEEK: BIG GATHERING

Below are a basic list of items that will be needed for each station (or things that will set the station up for success). For daily supplies, see the daily digest or the guide for the station.

Quiet/Sensory Area

1. Make sure the area is visible but separate and has soft items
2. Sensory tools to help create calm
3. If you have kiddos with sensory issues, you can also ask the parents what might work best or what they can bring for the week to share/stock the area.

Big Gathering Area

1. Gratitude Station
2. Check In/Check Out Station
3. Sensory Area

SETTING UP FOR THE WEEK: BIG GATHERING

Each day you'll begin and end together as a big group. The space that likely makes the most sense is your worship area. This will allow you to set up a check in/out table. You can also assign rows for the Rock Formations to sit together. You'll want signs that direct people to the bathroom. In the big gathering space, you'll want to create a way for participants and leaders to share gratitude at the closing. You can make banners using butcher paper or poster board. Make sure to have the theme for the day at the top and writing tools handy. Then kids can write the things they are grateful for from the day as they assemble for closing. The other option is to make paper chains, so each class can write on the strips of paper during the day (or as they get to the closing) and assemble them at the closing. Each class can have their own color and then all can be mixed together when joined. You can also take time to ask people to share a word or phrase of gratitude that you add during the closing. Make sure to call out themes that you see and share something you are also grateful for. Hang the paper (or chains) so everyone can see it - either will make a great backdrop for photos at the end of the week and will help to connect camp with your congregation.

PRO TIP:



The Celebrate Wonder Illustrations are lovely but can be hard to see. Consider enlarging them or having a copy for each small group to look at the images later and discuss in their group.

ALL ABOUT ROCK FORMATIONS: SMALL GROUPS

Since we're spending our week thinking about geology, all of our participants and staff will be organized into rock formations! This is a great chance to talk about famous rock formations in your state or area, and a quick Google search will bring them up or you can use the QR code below.

Remember to have a formation/group for participants by grade level with their group leader. (Just be clear on your registration form if you mean entering that grade in the fall or having just completed it.)

- Use Rock Formations to create name tags - just make sure to laminate them (or turn them into buttons) so they survive the STEAM activities.
- Each Rock Formation will also need their own pennant, which will help them move about and find their leaders. Cut a poster board into a long triangle and write (or use bulletin board letters) the rock formation for the group. Attach it to a dowel, umbrella or broom. On Day One, each school will decorate their pennant with drawings and colors that are meaningful to them. Depending on the size of your groups, you should make a front and back that can be taped or glued together so kids can be working on both sides at the same time without competing for space to work. Each day, the rock formation will decide on a word or phrase of gratitude regarding the theme and write it on a ribbon to add to their pennant as another way to connect the theme to the activities of the day.

Please see the guide for Rock Formation Leaders for more information about the small groups.

SUPPLIES FOR THE WEEK: ROCK FORMATIONS

Below are a basic list of items that will be needed for each station (or things that will set the station up for success). For daily supplies, see the daily digest or the station guide.

Rock Formation Group Areas
(can be as simple as a tote that they can take to their gathering spot)

1. Art Supplies
2. Wide Ribbon to add to the pennant each day (should be a different color each day)
3. First Aid Kit
4. Emergency Contact List
5. Extra snack
6. Paper towels
7. Tissues
8. Hand Sanitizer
9. Cubbies/Bins/Boxes for storing items like lunches or artwork

PRO TIP:

If your church loves small group time (or if you want longer stations), add the snack-tivity to your group time.



SETTING UP FOR THE WEEK: ROCK FORMATIONS

Once you've determined how many Rock Formations you'll have, you need to dedicate a space for them to gather, make a snack, hear a story, and talk. This should be a quiet place away from other groups to enable listening and relaxing. (This is especially important for kids with sensory issues so they can count on a quiet moment in the day.) This can be as simple as a table with chairs in a classroom, a spot outside at a picnic table, or gathering in an office that is unused for the week. Depending on your space, this can also be a place to keep their artwork until the end of the day and other personal items.

If you are organizing the Rock Formations, you also need to create their pennants as described above and decide if you're going to name the groups or let the groups decide their own.

Here are some suggested Rock Formation Names:

1. Arches
2. Needles
3. Pinnacles

Use the QR Code to the right to find more ideas from the National Park Service.



PRO TIP:

If you love our little rock mascots as much as we do, you can use them to name your small groups instead of rock formations - Iggy & the Igneous Rockers, Gemmie & the Gemstones and so forth. Then you can welcome them as Rockers/Rock Starts each morning!



ABOUT THE STATIONS

Each day, the Rock Formations will rotate through stations. Depending on how many groups you have (or the constraints of your space), you might need to include Rock Formation time and/or snacks as stations instead of happening at the same time. You will need adequate space for the group to engage with the activities presented at the station. The other option is to have the stations come to the campers and keep the kids in one room for the week (with the exception of some outdoor activities marked with a sun).

The stations are set up to run independently of one another. Each station will have their own guide (be sure to print it out for the adults leading the station) which we recommend putting in sheet protectors in a binder or folder to protect them from getting wet or messy. Each day includes the recommended activity, accommodations for younger campers, expansion activities for those groups that race through the activity, and the supplies needed for that day. (The supplies needed for the days are included on the supply list on page 35 so no need to cross-reference for your wish list or purchases.)

SUPPLIES UP FOR THE WEEK: STATIONS

Below are a basic list of items that will be needed for each station (or things that will set the station up for success).

Craft Station

1. Art Supplies
2. Coloring Sheets for fast finishers
3. Floor covering, if needed

STEAM & Geology Stations

1. Table coverings or small plastic trays where they can do their experiment without worrying about a mess.
2. This area should have access to hand washing areas nearby.

Movement Station

1. Soft floor for games
2. Sensory-friendly alternatives

Gratitude Station

1. Art Supplies
2. Printouts from the station guide

NOTES ABOUT SPACE NEEDS

Station One: Crafts

This station can be lead by anyone not afraid of getting messy and creative. It's a great station for high schoolers to lead with a little support. Chairs and tables work best here...and a floor that can be cleaned up easily.

Station Two & Three: STEAM and Geology

These stations need to be led by adults, they don't need to be a scientist, just willing to get messy. Demonstrations for these areas are definitely meant for an adult or teen who has been taught to do it unless specified. We found that when this station was run by teenagers they often didn't let the campers run the experiments themselves. All experiments included in this program were tested with kids and campers can (and should) do it themselves. Chairs and tables work best here...and a floor that can be cleaned up easily.

Station Three: Movement

You will want a large open area for games, and this station is great for teenagers to run. If you have a room with a soft floor, that would be best, if not, borrow yoga mats to cover the floor. Some games are easier outside.

Station Four: Gratitude Practices

Campers will have an activity to do, but it can be done on the floor. This is also a great place to keep other books and quiet things for kids to use. Godly Play Rooms make a great spot for this station.



PRO TIP:

Leaders shared that they used the expansion activities as a way to promote camp at coffee hour! You could also use them at community events.

PLAN AHEAD EVENTS

There are three big events that will require you to plan ahead:

- 1. Geology Station:** Presentation by a Local Expert: invite your local natural history museum or someone who works in geology (local college, engineers may have contacts) to come give a presentation on geology. (Our museum has a mobile unit that will visit events any where in the state, so it is worth calling even if you aren't close by.) One of our pilot programs found a local rock group who have a mission to teach kids about rocks!
- 2. Gratitude Station:** This station includes creating an event where campers can give back to their community. You will want to plan this ahead to set everyone up for success, but don't worry, there's information on it in the Station Guide to give you some ideas.
- 3. Closing Event:** If you aren't ordained, you'll need to find a clergy person comfortable with kids, as we'll end camp with an Instructed Eucharist. Originally, we had this slated for day three but after workshoping it at our church, the parents asked if we could do this twice so they could also learn more about the Eucharist. So, we've moved it to the end so everyone can participate. If you're not inviting parents to a closing ceremony, feel free to move it back to day three.



PLANNING AHEAD: COSTLY SUPPLIES

Mining For Rocks:

This is such a fun activity but it is a bit expensive. To keep the cost low we recommend using two kiddie pools, one filled with sand and fancy rocks and the other filled with water. Kids can try panning for rocks by scooping sand and rocks into a sieve and then cleaning it in the water. To help with the cost, these rocks will/can be used in numerous crafts during the week.

Breaking Geodes:

This activity has two options - the first is to break geodes with safety glasses and supervision and should only be done with older kids. For our youngest campers, they'll get to participate in the confetti egg fight with the whole camp.

Elephant Toothpaste:

This is always a crowd pleaser and should be done by adults (or teens who have been trained in the safety protocols) as a demonstration. You will need special hydrogen peroxide so be sure to obtain that early.

OPTIONAL LITURGY & MUSIC STATION

Our first pilot congregation used these materials for a half day camp and they make the most of every minute. The camp also had a lot of preschoolers and non-church people. We realized after a few days that we could move some things around to better use the format of the liturgy to guide this group. We've created a Music & Liturgy Station for those that would like to add it or use it in tandem with the Gratitude Station. For full day camps, it takes the place of the Eucharist teachings that pop up during the Big Gathering time. (If you are using it with the Gratitude Station, we give directions on what to change to make it all work.)

The Liturgy and Music Station focuses on:

Day One: The Rock Cycle - We Are All Growing and Changing

The Liturgy of the Word - we tell and hear stories of how people are always growing and changing to learn with them about God.

Day Two: Metamorphic Rock - Pressure and Conflict

Sacristy Tour, Confession, and the Passing of the Peace

Day Three: Igneous Rock - Things Aren't Always What they Seem

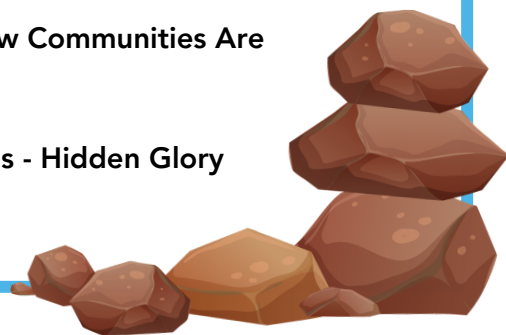
The Liturgy of the Table - sometimes Bread isn't just bread.

Day Four: Sedimentary Rock - How Communities Are Formed

The Prayers of the People

Day Five: Minerals and Gemstones - Hidden Glory

Instructed Eucharist



MORNING BIG GROUP GATHERING: SAMPLE

HOW DO I USE THIS PAGE???



RUNDOWN

Make notes here about the schedule so you don't forget what comes next!

STORY

We'll list the Bible Story here for you each day so it is easy to find!

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

What do you need to tell the campers to ensure their successful participation today?
Jot it down here so you don't forget it!

DIRECTIONS FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Transitions are key! Use this space to remind yourself to let everyone know what to do next and what that is!

AFTERNOON BIG GROUP GATHERING: SAMPLE

HOW DO I USE THIS PAGE???



RUNDOWN

Make notes here about the schedule so you don't forget what comes next!

JOKE

We're going to put a joke here each day - you can use it in one of two ways:

1. Just share the joke
2. Ask in the morning and then have a jar where they can leave answers. At afternoon session, give a shout out or sticker to the ones that guessed correctly!

We know that as the leader for the big gathering there's a lot to keep track of, which is why this sheet has a lot of blank spaces for your notes. We've made headings to help you keep track of the most important parts.

In this block, we're going to give you a script that you can read that will help remind everyone of what they did and pull the day together. You can also cover this up with a big post-it and add your own, whatever is most helpful!

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

What do they need to remember for tomorrow?

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Have a poster board ready for the day with the theme at the top so you (or someone you appoint) can write all of the things shared by the groups.

Have slips of paper ready for kids to write down things they want to share gratitude for to create paper chains - the goal is to decorate the worship space for the closing event at the end of the week with all of these notes of gratitude.

This section will be blank - use it to write down what you are grateful for each day at camp so you can add it after the small groups share.

DAY ONE: THE ROCK CYCLE WE ARE ALWAYS GROWING & CHANGING

Today we're going to give thanks for all of the ways God is making all things new by diving into the rock cycle.

Today as we welcome participants to our Vacation Bible Camp, we want to notice and give thanks for all of the ways God is making things new. During this camp, we're going to explore how the world around us is always changing, in obvious ways like trees gaining leaves only to lose them, and in less obvious ways like how rocks are turning into dirt as we speak. We're being made new this week as we grow and learn together. We'll use the rock cycle today to help campers have a tangible way to see how things are always growing and changing to connect with a verse from Revelations that can be tough for adults but focuses on the promise that God is always making things new, including us.

Today we will help kids connect with one another, leaders/ volunteers, and the space they're spending time in this week. Here are some things to make sure you connect for kids in the big gathering:

1. Where are the bathrooms and what are the rules around going to the bathroom?
2. Where are their leaders and where can they go for help if they get separated from their rock formation?
3. What are rock formations and which one is theirs?
4. Important safety rules to remember?
5. Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

What connections are you most grateful for today as you begin Vacation Bible Camp? Add all of these names to your big gratitude project so that you start the week off remember those who helped get this camp going.

HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option:

Celebrate Wonder Bible Story
Book: Alpha & Omega p. 312

CONNECT THE BIBLE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

The Street Beneath our Feet by Charlotte Guillain and Yuval Zommer is an awesome book that unfolds into a giant poster from the street to the center of the Earth. Kids will love to look at it stretched out!

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

All About Me! Gratitude Edition
One of the best ways to notice how we are growing and changing is to take a moment and give thanks for all of the ways we are special.

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

For today's snack we'll make rock layers using pudding in a take on dirt and worms we're calling "dirt and dinos."

Campers will also play a special bean bag toss game where they can sort "rocks" into metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary spots.

CRAFTS & STEAM

In our craft station, we'll make our own fossils using salt dough and talk about how we can leave an imprint on others through first impressions.

For STEAM, we're going to create our own rock cycle using Starbursts or chocolate.

GEOLOGY

In our Geology Activity, we're going to head outside and pan for rocks! All of the rocks will be used by other stations for crafts so do not send them home!

We'll pick out our favorite rock and show it off to our group!

MORNING DAY ONE: THE ROCK CYCLE

WE ARE ALWAYS GROWING & CHANGING



Good morning and welcome to Gratitude Rocks! I am so excited you are here and can't wait to see all of the cool things you're going to create this week. (Introduce yourself and the big gathering - what do we do in this space?)

I want to share a story with you this morning. This one you might not know, but you may have heard it a few months ago around Easter. This is called Alpha and Omega, which are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, so for us it would be like saying A and Z. (Read the Story.)

- This story might be a little confusing because it was a dream that John had, but in this dream, God tells John that God has always been with us and that God is always changing and growing the world around us and wants the very best for all of us. This might be hard to picture, which is why we're kicking the week off by talking about the rock cycle. Did you know that rocks are always changing and growing? Yes! Rocks break down and become dirt, and then dirt combines to become a rock again! You're going to learn more about that in your STEAM and Geology stations today.
- I wonder if you have noticed how you are changing and growing. Are any of you taller today than you were this time last year?
- Are there other things you've noticed in the world around you that are always growing and changing other than rocks and kids?

One of the things I love about this story, even though it is a little bit strange compared to the other stories we'll hear this week, is that it is a reminder to stay curious about the world around us - do you think you can do that this week, be curious? I hope you'll explore the world around you today at camp and come back this afternoon with all sorts of observations and stories to share with the group.

RUNDOWN

STORY

Alpha and Omega:
Revelation 22:1-13
page 312

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIRECTIONS FOR
WHAT'S NEXT

AFTERNOON DAY ONE: THE ROCK CYCLE

WE ARE ALWAYS GROWING & CHANGING



Welcome back to our big gathering! Today we spent so much time learning about the rock cycle and how things are always changing in the world around us, I don't know about you, but my brain has definitely changed after learning all these new things, can you help me remember and give thanks for what we've done today?

Sharing: Can one person from each Rock Formation come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned or did? If you aren't the speaker for your group today, remember you can use the slips of paper found in your pew to write or draw what you're grateful for to add to our paper chains.

Big Gratitude Activity: It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of amazing things. I want to introduce to you a way that we're going to try to remember all of the things we've done each day to share with our families. This is our gratitude wall. Each day we've got this poster board to fill, so while you were sharing, I wrote down all of the things you're grateful for that we did. For those of you who did not get to come up and share, there are strips of paper you can use to write down things you are grateful for. We're going to put all of these together to form paper chains. Let's see if we can make the world longest paper chain before the end of the week!

Pull It all Together: Today we did so many cool things - who loved dirt and dinos at snack, raise your hand? Who found a blue rock in the geology station? Today we did a lot of things, but the goal was to show you that everything in nature, people included, are growing and changing. God is always making all things new. That means when we make a mistake, we get another chance, or if we did something we loved a lot like our game today, we get to do it again.

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

RUNDOWN

JOKE

How do rocks wash their clothes?

*They use the Rock Cycle
on their washing machines!*

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DAY ONE RUNDOWN: THE ROCK CYCLE

BIG GROUP THEMES

Today at Camp we're thinking about how God is making all things new, from rocks to people! We're going to do activities that help us see that we are always growing and changing and read Revelations 22:1-13.

GRATITUDE

Today, we are going to introduce ourselves to our groups and give thanks for all of the ways we are special. We'll share a bit about our gifts and reflect on how we are a gift from God.

CRAFTS

- During our Craft Station, campers will make two imprint fossils: one will be their own natural creation and the second will be about themselves. They'll make an imprint that shows what gifts they are sharing with the world and what is special about them today.

GAMES

Today we are playing a rousing game of rock cycle bean bag toss!

SMALL GROUP

Today we are reading "The Street Beneath our Feet" which is a beautiful book about the world around us.

GEOLOGY & STEAM

In Geology our campers panned for rocks! All of the rocks they found today will be used in crafts and activities throughout the week, but we first picked our favorite and did a write up on how magical and great this rock is.

In STEAM we learned about the rock cycle and used candy to demonstrate how rocks are always changing.

Psst: Ask your camper what they made/ate for snack!

DAY TWO: METAMORPHIC ROCKS CONFLICT & PRESSURE

Today we're going to learn and explore conflict and pressure.

Today as we welcome participants, we want to notice and give thanks for the ways we grow and change (build resilience) when our engagements with others are challenging. This is why we'll visit our old friend, Zacchaeus.

Be sure to consider adding expansion items, or having them ready, especially for the older kids. Remember to use big group time to reinforce songs from previous days and let kids know they can always keep adding to previous days' gratitude projects if they think of something later - even at morning gathering!

Here are some things to make sure you connect for kids in the big gathering:

1. Everyone experiences conflict and pressure, so learning to respond to it in positive ways is important. Pressure and conflict also affect nature in really interesting ways, I wonder what we can learn from nature about conflict/
2. What is one thing participants can do to better deal with conflict in their own lives?
3. Important safety rules to remember?
4. Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

Consider a time in your life that you experienced conflict or pressure. What good things came out of that experience? Add all of these to your big gratitude project so that you can model for kids that practicing gratitude is for everyone.

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

Snack - pressure can change all sorts of things, so we're going to use pressure to create Rice Krispy Strata and butter.

Movement - we're going to keep thinking about pressure with a fun game of Pressure Ball!

CRAFTS & STEAM

In our craft station, we'll make bath bomb rocks by adding pressure to mostly dry ingredients.

For steam, we're going to try different ways of inflating a balloon with pressure.

GEOLOGY

Today we're thinking about pressure, which is one of the forces that changes rocks. We'll see how pressure changes some rocks in unexpected ways and make confetti poppers to add our own pressure to create a fun toy.



HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option:
Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10
pg. 236

CONNECT THE BIBLE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Ricky, the Rock who Couldn't Roll
by Mr. Jay

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

We'll learn about the Peace Path, try it out, and make lanyards to help us remember the steps. We'll also use small rocks from yesterday to decorate a frame.

MORNING DAY TWO: METAMORPHIC ROCK PRESSURE & CONFLICT



Good morning and welcome back to Gratitude Rocks! I am so excited for today, we're going to spend the entire day learning about pressure and conflict because our focus is on metamorphic rocks.

But you know, there's a bit more to the story, let me fill you in on the details. (Read the story.) People didn't really like Zaccheaus, and they grumbled about the special treatment that he was getting from Jesus. Sounds like there might be more to the story then what we read, and there is. You see, Zaccheaus worked collecting taxes. During Bible times, not everyone who did this job was honest. Sometimes they stole money or charged people too much. Most people didn't like tax collectors and didn't think they made for a great follower of Jesus. But Jesus knew better, he knew that Zaccheaus needed a friend and a community to support him in making better choices.

Conflict is really hard, it's hard for adults and kids. We can feel pressure to do our best and sometimes fall short. It is important to remember that God loves us no matter what and that God sees that there is a gift inside of each of us just waiting to be shared with the world. Today, we're going to talk about pressure and play with pressure so that we understand it better. I think you're going to love playing pressure ball later today! We're also going to learn a new way to try to deal with conflict. Because if we are always growing and changing, so are our friends, which means sometimes we're going to disagree and need to find a way forward. My hope is that the end of the day, you'll all be experts at pressure and have some new tools to help with conflicts. With that, it's time to get ready for our day! Here are some announcements for getting you going!

RUNDOWN

STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option:
Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10
pg. 236

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIRECTIONS FOR
WHAT'S NEXT

AFTERNOON DAY TWO: METAMORPHIC ROCK PRESSURE & CONFLICT



Welcome back to our big gathering! Today we spent so much time learning about pressure and conflict, I don't know about you, but the pressure really got to me!

Sharing: Can one person from each Rock Formation come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned or did? If you aren't the speaker for your group today, remember you can use the slips of paper to write or draw what you're grateful for to add to our paper chains.

Big Gratitude Activity: It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of amazing things, let's check in our gratitude wall and paper chains! Do you think we'll have more links today than yesterday? Here's our gratitude wall for today - what do you think, did I get it all? No? That's okay - you know what to do, add your favorite things, people, or things you learned on the slips of paper for the paper chain.

Pull It all Together: Today we did so many cool things - who found making butter really hard? We can all make a slip of paper in gratitude for being able to buy butter I guess! Who used too much pressure and destroyed their bath bomb? That's okay, that's how we learn. I'm wondering if we have anyone who wants to come up and share about the peace path? Can you tell me why this would be helpful in your community at school? Was it easy or hard to do? Thanks!

Here's the thing, managing pressure and conflict is hard for everyone. But if we believe that we are all gifts from God, that we are always growing and changing, one way we do that, is through conflict. We can learn a lot about ourselves and others when we work together to make things right.

RUNDOWN

JOKE

What did the metamorphic rock say to their teacher while taking a test?

This is too much pressure!

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DAY TWO RUNDOWN: METAMORPHIC ROCKS

BIG GROUP THEMES

Today at Camp we're thinking about conflict and pressure. One of the ways we grow and change is through community, but that doesn't mean we always get along. We take a look at Zaccheaus (Luke 19:1-10) and find that not everyone is who they seem to be.

GRATITUDE

Today we learned about the peace path as a way to deal with conflict. We also gave thanks for our small group by making a frame with some of our rocks for a photo of our group.

CRAFTS

Sometimes pressure looks like frustration and today in the craft station we made bath bombs that fizz and fuss that could also be a little frustrating to make. We used pressure to form them, but too much made them break. (Younger campers made bath salts.)

GAMES

Today we played an awesome game called Pressure Ball! We'll play again with adults at the end of camp so be ready!

SMALL GROUP

Today we are reading "Don't Blow Your Top" which is about volcanoes that need to keep their cool under pressure.

GEOLOGY & STEAM

In STEAM we looked at air pressure (since we can't turn coal into diamonds at camp this week!) and how we could change the air to make enough pressure to blow up a balloon.

In Geology, we looked at how pressure changes rocks and made a confetti popper so we could see how some pressure is good, and in this case, super fun!

Psst: Ask your camper what they made/ate for snack!

DAY THREE: IGNEOUS ROCKS THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM



Today we're going to give thanks for the Church...& volcanos!

As we welcome participants back to camp, we want to notice and give thanks for the Church. Because the Eucharist is a big topic, we're going to use today and day 5 to talk about similar things. Based on your schedule you can swap things around on the church activities. (Or see the optional Eucharist Station for more ideas.) Today, we're going to use volcanos to help kids understand that sometimes things are not what they seem. You might be wondering how the Eucharist and volcanoes are related? Perhaps the biggest way is that most volcanoes just look like mountains. When we see them, we likely do not see all that is happening under the surface. For many of us, what we see when we take communion is bread and wine, but the prayers we say together have changed the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. This is a big idea for kids, and one that many of them haven't had explained to them. Today we're trying to connect to our kids that the church isn't just a building, and the symbols and items inside of it help us see that there is something bigger happening inside of each and everyone of us because of our faith. Sometimes a mountain isn't a mountain, and sometimes bread isn't just bread.

Here are some things to make sure you connect for kids in the big gathering:

1. Explain what is happening today - and give some reference to church, Eucharist, etc.
2. Things are not always what they seem, so we have to get curious to learn more about them. What are some good questions we could ask when we're curious about something that we don't understand?
3. Important safety rules to remember?
4. Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

Consider the Eucharistic Prayers, re-read them before you start the day. What parts are most important to you?

HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option: David and Goliath
I Samuel 1:15a
pg. 90-91

CONNECT THE BIBLE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Old Rock Isn't Boring by Deb Pilutti

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

The Eucharistic Prayers are called the Great Thanksgiving. Today we're going to work as a group to write Prayers of the people to give thanks for all of the wonderful things God is doing in the world.

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

Snack - since we're learning all about the Eucharist today, we're going to make English muffins to learn about bread.

Movement - We'd be terrible people if we didn't play the most amazing game of the Floor is Lava today, so that's what we're up to!

CRAFTS

In our craft station, we'll make friendship bracelets using beads made from volcanic rock - one to keep and one to share with a friend.

STEAM & GEOLOGY

Today STEAM and Geology work together to build and erupt volcanoes! We've also got a cool eruption demonstration with elephant's toothpaste that the campers will love! Note: this activity will branch two stations but not need all of the time. Use the extra time for the tour of the church - see following page for details.

DAY THREE: IGNEOUS ROCKS THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM



TOUR OF THE SACRISTY

Today we have some extra time because erupting a volcano doesn't take long. We recommend that if you are doing the elephant toothpaste demonstration to do it during the afternoon big group gathering. Take the extra time this has created to focus on helping campers engage with the church space by taking them on a tour of the church. Because every group will take different amounts of time, you'll want to be flexible. We recommend having some highlights that are must see items from the sacristy. Here are some we suggest:

1. Paschal Candle
2. All of the items used in the Eucharist
3. The weirdest thing you can find in your sacristy or worship space (it might be a window!)

We picked these things because they are items the kids see every time they come to church but might not have gotten to touch, see up close, or even hear the real name of these objects. Kids are fascinated by the names we give things and are usually in awe of getting to touch things when often times they are told to keep their hands to themselves. This is a great tour to invite the clergy to help with or to let them run (as long as they won't get nervous about kids touching things because this is really important). Let kids ask questions, touch vestments (and learn all of those names), and see that things are not always what they appear to be at church. We use a lot of things at church in our every day life, but at church these become symbols of God, reminders of the divine or of our faith. This is important to talk with the children about because as Christians, we too are symbols or reminders of the love of God out in the world each day. The tour of the worship area in small groups is a way to let kids feel welcome in a space that might be a place they come often but don't get to engage with up close. Events like this help our kids understand that this is their church, and they are apart of the work we are doing every Sunday morning and out in the world each day.

If you don't want to do the tour during the stations, then do it as a part of the big group gathering at the end of the day, this will make it less intimate, but you can accomplish some of the same goals of connecting campers to the idea that things are not always what they seem and that we too are sometimes not what we seem...but we are a gift from God for the people of God, a blessing for the whole world.

MORNING DAY THREE: IGNEOUS ROCK THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM



RUNDOWN

Good morning and welcome back to Gratitude Rocks! I am so excited for today, I could almost explode! But you know what, I want you to guess what the theme is for today. Can anyone tell me what we call a mountain that isn't just a mountain? That's right, today is all about volcanoes! Volcanoes are mountains, but a very special kind. From the outside, they make look like any other hill or mountain, but on the inside there is a lot happening. Turns out, this is also true of people, let me share a story with you. (Read the story.)

I love this story so much because part of why David is so successful is that Goliath doesn't see David for who he is, David was chosen by God to carry out this task. Here's the thing you might not know but if you were baptized, the priest took a bit of oil and put it on your head and marked you as Christ's own forever. That's a fancy way of saying that each of you are very special and have something special to share with the world. It might be as simple as being kind to someone, sharing, being resourceful like David, or willing to change like Zaccheaus. Each of us has something we can give to the world, and the church is where we come to remember that and be supported by others. Today we are going to look at all sorts of things that are not what they seem to be. Just like the volcano that looks like a mountain is filled with potential so are we. We are going to release some of that potential today, as we learn a bit more about church, volcanoes and ourselves. Before we move into the announcements, I realized on a day when we talk about things that aren't what they seem, the church itself is filled with things that are not what they seem. So today, we're going to have a special tour where you get to go behind the scenes and touch and experience all sorts of cool church objects. But before we do that, I wanted to show one item to everyone and see if you can guess what it is called...(hold up a lavabo bowl) What is this? You're mostly correct, it is a bowl, but it is called a Lavabo bowl which is used to wash hands, but you don't wash them very well!

STORY

Bible Option: David and Goliath
I Samuel 1:15a
pg. 90-91

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIRECTIONS FOR
WHAT'S NEXT

AFTERNOON DAY THREE: IGNEOUS ROCK THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM



Welcome back to our big gathering! Today was really explosive, huh? I don't know about you, but today has been a blast!

Sharing: Can one person from each Rock Formation come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned or did? If you aren't the speaker for your group today, remember you can use the slips of paper found in your pew to write or draw what you're grateful for to add to our paper chains.

Big Gratitude Activity: It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of amazing things, let's check in our gratitude wall and paper chains! Here's our gratitude wall for today - what do you think, did I get it all? No? That's okay - you know what to do, add your favorite things, people, or things you learned on the slips of paper for the paper chain.

Pull It all Together: Today we learned that things, like people are complex. Beads for bracelets are really lava, muffins are really bread, mountains can be volcanoes, and words that share our hope for the world become prayers. We also learn that the weird thing in the sacristy is called a thurible.

If you only remember one thing from today it is that our church, our community, and our world needs all of us to see that things aren't always what they seem to be. Sometimes on Old Rock has lived a really exciting life and can teach us about the world, and sometimes the best thing we can do is come together and pray when we don't know what else to do. Thank you for showing up today and for showing us that you are an incredible gift. I am grateful for each and every one of you - that's why I'm adding these links (hold up links with one campers name per slip) to our paper chain today. I'm grateful for all of you.

RUNDOWN

JOKE

What do you call a volcano that has had too much screen time?

Inactive.

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DAY THREE RUNDOWN: IGNEOUS ROCKS

BIG GROUP THEMES

Today at Camp we talked about how things aren't always what they seem and read I Samuel 1:15. Things can be symbols to remind us of something holy, like how communion bread reminds us of Jesus, and how mountains are sometimes volcanoes.

GRATITUDE

Today we learned about prayers. Prayers are a way we can show our gratitude to God and the community around us while also voicing our concerns for others.

CRAFTS

Today we made bracelets using real rocks. We talked about how friends and community help form us and that all of us are complex people and not always what we seem like on the surface. We made two bracelets, one for ourselves and one to give to someone else.

GAMES

Volcano Day means an epic round of the Floor is Lava! Be sure to ask how your camper did!

SMALL GROUP

Today we read "Old Rock (is not Boring)" a great book about a rock who looks like their life is pretty boring but in fact, they've seen a lot!

GEOLOGY & STEAM

Today we combined STEAM and Geology to make and erupt volcanoes! We used the extra time to explore the mysteries of the sacristy and learn about all of the tools and symbols we use at church each Sunday. We also learned some cool facts about the church, from the history of the building to what the strangest object in the church is called.

Psst: Ask your camper what they made/ate for snack!

DAY FOUR: SEDIMENTARY ROCKS HOW COMMUNITIES ARE FORMED

Today we're going to give thanks for how communities are formed.

Today as we welcome participants back to camp, we're taking time to help them see that each day brings so many things to be thankful for because we are a part of a community. For most kids, their community may not be something they've thought much about because the choices about community have been made for them. They live in this town because of a choice made for them, likewise, their parents have probably chosen their school or even this camp. The Eucharist is about connecting us to community of faith located in our church and around the world. So how are communities formed? Who formed yours? We'll start by helping them see how they have built a community together this week during camp and how the ways they've made friends here are also the ways we can welcome the stranger out in the world.

Here are some things to make sure you connect for campers in the big gathering:

1. What are some ways we can create community even if we don't all get along or like the same things?
2. What are you thankful for about your communities? (school, church, town)
3. Important safety rules to remember?
4. Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

Consider your own communities, how would your life be different without them? Make sure to give thanks for all of them through the big group gratitude project.

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

These rocks are all about mixed up things, so we're going to have a mixed up fruit salad or burrito bar!

Today we're going to try our best at yard bowling as a way to think about how erosion works.

CRAFTS & STEAM

In our craft station, we'll paint rocks and make our own tic tac toe set!

For STEAM, we're going to see how weathering changes rocks using Skittles, and how sometimes being in community means our individual gifts combine with others to make something beautiful.

GEOLOGY

Today we're inviting someone to come and talk to us about geology!



HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option:
Love In Action
Romans 12:9-18
pg. 298

CONNECT THE BIBLE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Ricky, The Rock Who Couldn't Roll by Mr. Jay

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Today we're going to do a community outreach project to help kids connect that we can show gratitude to a place by making it better than we found it.

MORNING DAY FOUR: SEDIMENTARY ROCKS HOW COMMUNITIES ARE FORMED

Good morning and welcome back to Gratitude Rocks! We're over halfway through our week, which means that we could use some change - are you all ready for something different today? Today we are learning about sedimentary rocks. The cool thing about sedimentary rock is that sometimes you can see all of the bits of rock and sand that came together and hardened to form the rock. That's kind of like our communities. We're all different and bring different gifts, but together we can do all kind of things we can't do alone. Being a part of a community doesn't mean that everyone has to be the same, it means that each of us brings our own unique vibe together and then all of us together can do some really important things. Today I want to read a very old letter to you from a guy named Paul who was trying to help people figure out how to be a community. (Read the story.)

Do you think Paul is right? Is this how we take care of each other? I think so. If your friend gets hurt, do you take care of them or laugh at them? If you had a bad day at school, do you want someone to listen to you talk about it? That's the thing about communities, we put our gifts together and make something better, like chocolate and peanut butter. Today we are going use our gifts to help others and we've got a special guest coming who is going to use their gift to help all of us learn something new. So before we head out to stations, can anyone tell me one gift you have that you can use today to help others? (follow directions, help younger campers, listen, curiosity, kindness, run fast during the game, etc.) There are so many gifts in this room. I want to take a moment and give thanks for them.

Yesterday, I put all of your names in the paper chain, today, I'm adding adjectives or describing words, of gifts I've noticed some of you sharing this week at camp. If I say a word that describes you this week, raise your hand! helpers, kind, funny, sharing, fast, excellent volcano creator, curious, sensitive, adventurous with food. I could keep going because you all are amazing gifts, but I bet you want to get out there and get creating, but first, some announcements!

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIRECTIONS FOR
WHAT'S NEXT



RUNDOWN

STORY

Bible Option:
Love In Action
Romans 12:9-18
pg. 298

AFTERNOON DAY FOUR: SEDIMENTARY ROCKS HOW COMMUNITIES ARE FORMED



RUNDOWN

Welcome back to our big gathering! Today was awesome, I don’t have a rock pun for how great today was, but I was blown away by your community project. I wanted to share with you the results of the project (so how many backpacks did you stuff, or pounds of canned goods, etc.). Thank you for sharing your gifts with the community around you. Never underestimate what you can do when you care about others.

Sharing: Can one person from each Rock Formation come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned or did? If you aren’t the speaker for your group today, remember you can use the slips of paper found in your pew to write or draw what you’re grateful for to add to our paper chains.

Big Gratitude Activity: It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of amazing things, let’s check in our gratitude wall and paper chains! Here’s our gratitude wall for today - what do you think, did I get it all? No? That’s okay - you know what to do, add your favorite things, people, or things you learned on the slips of paper for the paper chain.

Pull It all Together: Today we learned that being a part of a community will change us and we will change others, just like the jar with rocks and sugar cubes, and Ricky who finally got to roll down the hill. We learned about fossils, how they might look like bones but are really rocks. Being a part of a community can be hard at times, but I think today proved that being together is always better.

Tomorrow is our last day, so be sure to fill out your paper chain slips so we can make it the whole distance of the church. We’ve got a big celebration tomorrow so go home and get some rest!

JOKE

What did Sherlock Holmes say when Watson asked what type of rock he was holding?

“Sedimentary, my dear Watson”.

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DAY FOUR RUNDOWN: SEDIMENTARY ROCKS

BIG GROUP THEMES

Today at Camp we learned that sedimentary rocks are formed by lots of things - wind, water, getting stuck together with mud... This is also how our communities are formed, all different people come together to do great things together, we read Romans 12:9-18.

GRATITUDE

Today we did a project where we gave thanks for our community and gave back to support it. It was a good reminder that even though we are kids, we are an important part of our community.

CRAFTS

Today we used weathered rocks to create a game - one for ourselves and one for a friend not at camp. This game is a reminder that our friends (and our community) change us, just like the rock was made soft by water.

GAMES

Today we played a special game of yard bowling that showed us how erosion works.

SMALL GROUP

Today we read: "Ricky, the Rock who Couldn't Roll" which reminded us that we can all help others.

GEOLOGY & STEAM

In STEAM we played with Skittles and Sugar Cubes to learn how erosion works. We talked about how we can see that in nature too (ex. Rocky Mtns. vs. Smoky Mtns.)

In Geology we learned about Fossils, since most fossils are found in sedimentary rocks.

Psst: Ask your camper what they made/ate for snack!

DAY FIVE: MINERALS & GEMSTONES HIDDEN GLORY

Today we're going to give thanks for hidden glory found inside of us, others, our community, and in the Eucharist.

Today as we welcome participants back to camp for the last day, we're taking time to help them see that even though they might feel small, or like people don't listen or notice them, God has a big dream for them and that the world needs them to show up as signs of God's love, kindness, and curiosity. This week we've talked and learned a lot about rocks that aren't very exciting to look at but today, we're going to learn about rocks that might look ordinary on the outside but are very exciting on the inside.

Here are some things to make sure you connect for kids in the big gathering:

1. What is something you wish people knew about you when they met you that they might not notice right away? (you're kind, funny, empathic)
2. What is a hidden talent or interest you have? What's your gift you hope to share with others? (This is a bigger question than what do you want to be when you grow up, it's more the why behind that question...so if I want to be a teacher when I grow up is it because I love learning and like to help people?)
3. Important safety rules to remember?
4. Where can you go if you need a quiet break?

Consider your own hidden gifts and talents, how would your life be different without them? Make sure to give thanks for all of them through the big group gratitude project.

TODAY YOU'LL ENGAGE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

SNACK & MOVEMENT

Today we're saving our movement time for the celebration with families!

And to end the week on a high note, we're going to find the hidden potential of salt to make ice cream!

CRAFTS & STEAM

In our craft station, we'll paint with salt to make an incredible piece of art out of common household supplies.

For STEAM, we're going to make egg geodes!

GEOLOGY

Today we are going to explore geodes! For our older campers, they will get to smash open a geode. Our younger campers will take on a mineral dig kit.



HEAR A BIBLE STORY

Godly Play Option:

Bible Option:
Isaiah is Called
Isaiah 6:1-8
pg. 122

CONNECT THE BIBLE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Scribble Stones by Diane Alber

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Today we're inviting the caregivers to join us for a special closing celebration where adults will share what they are most thankful for about their kiddo, and kids will share their gratitude for their parents. The station will help kids get ready!

MORNING DAY FIVE: MINERALS & GEMSTONES HIDDEN GLORY



Good morning and welcome back to Gratitude Rocks! Today is our final morning together, can you believe that? I know, it has been so much fun this week and I'll miss seeing all of you, but we have a fantastic day ahead and we're going to have a special celebration later so you all get to stick around longer at camp. This week we've spent a lot of time talking about how each of us is a gift, right? Well today, we're going to learn about how sometimes, it's hard to know what that gift is that is growing inside of us. We might think, I'm just a normal, boring person, what gift do I have, but deep inside of us is an astronaut, or a teacher just waiting to get out. Today I want to share a story with you about a man named Isaiah. (Read the story.)

I have always loved this story about Isaiah. Isaiah was just a young person who loved God and tried to do his best. He lived in a time where things were hard, when adults were fighting, and people were afraid. God called Isaiah to be a prophet, or one who speaks for God, not because Isaiah was perfect, but because he loved God so much. No one is perfect, but everyone is blessed. Today we are going to look at how inside of each of us is something remarkable that people probably can't tell just by looking at us. There's an old saying, "you can't judge a book by its cover" meaning the story inside could be really great but the outside is super boring, or worse, the outside is super exciting but the book is super boring. We just never know what is hidden inside of people or ourselves until something happens and the ordinary becomes extraordinary. Sometimes it's pressure, like our metamorphic rocks, sometimes it's heat, like our igneous rocks, and sometimes it's a force of nature like a sedimentary rock but something special lies inside. Today we are going to spend sometime learning about the Eucharist. What I love about the Eucharist is that ordinary things like bread, become a symbol of how much God and Jesus love us and need us to share that love with the world. Things are not always what they seem, and today you're going to see that first hand. So let's get to it!

RUNDOWN

STORY

Bible Option:
Isaiah is Called
Isaiah 6:1-8
pg. 122

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DIRECTIONS FOR
WHAT'S NEXT

DAY FIVE: MINERALS & GEMSTONES HIDDEN GLORY EXPLAINING THE EUCHARIST



About the Special Event:

Today you are going to swap out the movement station with a special session on the Eucharist. This allows your movement leaders to get to work on the afternoon celebration. Please note, this is not the time for an instructed Eucharist but time to talk to your campers about what the Eucharist is and is not. There are a lot of resources out there on the Eucharist for kids, so if your church does Godly Play, we would recommend using their resources to stay cohesive with your other programming. If your church does a communion education class for kids, use those materials. There's an older resource called "This Bread and This Cup", which has three sessions: understanding the story, tour of the sacristy, and an instructed Eucharist. I've used these resources for many years (and made them my own) and found the three sessions to be really helpful to not overwhelm kids with information and to let them experience things more fully. You can probably tell I've used this structure in planning how to teach the Eucharist here. We've done the first step, letting them touch and see all of the things, and letting them ask all of the questions. Now we will help them understand the story. Later today, we'll have an instructed Eucharist which will help bring all of the pieces together. Just a reminder, the Eucharist is a mystical event, debated since it was created, you will not be able to explain all of it today, and if you try it probably won't make a lot of sense to you or to the kids. Keep it simple, keep it clear, and lean heavily on the fact that everything else they are doing today is about how things are not always what they seem.

Children's Talk on the Eucharist

Hello campers! I know that usually you'd be headed outside for movement but today you get to be inside with me to learn about the Eucharist. We've talked about this a bit earlier this week when we took a tour of the church and touched all of the things, but today I want to talk about what we believe is happening during the Eucharist and why that is important. Later today we're going to have a special kind of Eucharist called an Instructed Eucharist where I stop and explain things along the way so you can understand why I am doing what I'm doing, but I wanted to make sure you understood what the Eucharist is first. The Eucharist, or Holy Communion, is really a story about a meal that happened a long time ago. I want to share a story with you about a time when Jesus fed 5,000 people with just a small amount of bread and fish. (Read Matthew 14:13-21)

Did you notice in this story that there were children? This is really important, whenever the Bible talks about children it is telling us something about how we are to treat people. In this story, everyone is fed until they are full, adults, children, those who make good choices and those who make bad choices. Jesus feeds everyone. One more story. This one might feel more familiar to what we do up here at the altar.

(Read Luke 22:7-20) So these words are probably familiar, if we look at a Book of Common Prayer, which we use to pray together on Sunday mornings, we can see the same words are here. (pg. 362-363) When we celebrate the Eucharist, we are remembering all of the good and amazing things that Jesus did, from feeding the 5,000, to being kind to Zaccheaus, to teaching us to love people as best as we can, and in remembering, we get to know Jesus a little better. So the bread that we use at the Eucharist is called the Body of Christ, it's still bread, but it is also blessed and prayed over so it has the love and joy and hope of Jesus in it to. It might look like bread, but it is also a reminder of how much God loves you.

Now you might be wondering about the wine. The wine is just like the bread, it reminds us of all of the wonderful things Jesus did when he was alive like turning water into wine at a wedding when they ran out of drinks. It also is a reminder that all things are possible with God, and that you are a part of that possibility. With that said, you can eat the bread and drink the wine or just do one. But we treat both with a lot of respect. Because it is important to learn and explore, I've brought some bread for you to touch and taste. This is the bread we use at church but it hasn't been blessed so it's just bread. (Give everyone a piece or a wafer) You can look at it, you can eat it, you can smell it, whatever you need to do to explore it, because once it is blessed, we want to eat it quickly and prayerfully. What questions do you have about the Eucharist? I'll try my best to answer them.

AFTERNOON DAY FIVE: MINERALS & GEMSTONES HIDDEN GLORY



Welcome back to our big gathering! Today was awesome, and the good news is, we're not done yet! We are going to wrap up our day with all of the things we usually do and then I'm going to share with you the schedule for the afternoon.

Sharing: Can one person from each Rock Formation come up to share with everyone your favorite part of the day or something cool that you learned or did? If you aren't the speaker for your group today, remember you can use the slips of paper found in your pew to write or draw what you're grateful for to add to our paper chains.

Big Gratitude Activity: It sounds like everyone had a great day and did all sorts of amazing things, let's check in our gratitude wall and paper chains! Here's our gratitude wall for today - what do you think, did I get it all? No? That's okay - you know what to do, add your favorite things, people, or things you learned on the slips of paper for the paper chain.

Pull It all Together: Today we learned that sometimes things are not what they seem to be, sometimes a boring rock is filled with quartz, or a piece of bread is filled with the love and hope of God. My hope is that today, and all of camp, has taught you that being curious about the world around is a very good thing. There is so much to learn and explore so ask all the questions, investigate, share who you are and grow from being friends with others. I know that this week I have learned so much from all of you and from our teachers and guests. What are some of the most important things you learned this week?

We've got just a bit of time before our adults show up, so I want to send you back to your Rock Formations to get ready, while I get us ready for our celebration which begins with the Eucharist!

RUNDOWN

JOKE

What did the rock want to be when it grew up?

A rock star.

FINISH UP WITH:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DAY FIVE RUNDOWN: GEMSTONES AND MINERALS

BIG GROUP THEMES

Today we learned about the hidden glory and gifts found in the world around us - from people, to rocks, to the Eucharist. We read Isaiah 6:1-8. Things are not always what they appear to be so we vowed to stay curious and open to the world around us.

GRATITUDE

Today we worked on a special way to say thank you to our loved ones as a part of the closing celebration.

CRAFTS

Today we used something very ordinary - salt - to make extraordinary artwork!

GAMES

Instead of playing games today, we learned about the Eucharist.

SMALL GROUP

Today we read: "Scribble Stones" which reminded us that we can all share our sparkle and that we all have a purpose.

GEOLOGY & STEAM

In STEAM we created our own geodes using borax crystals and egg shells - they should be ready to take out of the solution at the end of the celebration today!

In Geology, we cracked open geodes to find the hidden glory inside of them.

Psst: Ask your camper what they made/ate for snack!

SPECIAL EVENT: INSTRUCTED EUCHARIST & GRATITUDE EVENT

This week, we've been weaving the Eucharist or Eucharistic ideas throughout camp, today, we're going to bring it all together. While we are not providing a script for the Instructed Eucharist, we do want to give an order of the service to help connect the parts of the week to the parts of the Eucharist in a way that makes it clear to families who may or may not have gotten a ton of information from their campers. This is helpful information to put into a bulletin. You'll also see that we've scaled the worship back as much as we can so that it is as camper friendly as possible. With that said, make this your own, this is only a suggestion.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Opening Song (use one of the songs from camp)
- Opening Statement (pg. 355)
- Song of Praise - can be a camp song
- Collect of the Day
- Readings - we recommend using the lessons from this week: Isaiah, Romans, Luke
- Sermon - quick sermon to give families an overview of camp - how we are all the gifts of God for the people of God.
- The Prayers of the People: **Connecting with: Using the Prayers of the People that the Campers Created to Connect with Day Three: Igneous Rocks...We Gave Thanks for the Ways We Are All Different and How We, the Church, Can Support Others**
- (Skip confession)
- **Litany of Gratitude - see next page**
- The Peace: **Connecting with Day Two: Conflict and Pressure/Metamorphic Rocks...sometimes we make mistakes, and we need to say we are sorry and make it right, sometimes we need to forgive others who hurt us, this is what we are doing during the passing of the peace, not just a greeting but making our community strong.**
- Offering - instead of taking up a collection, you can invite families to join in the paper chain process and collect the extra strips to add to what the campers have made during the week. Or, you can use this to pass out or collect UTO Blue Boxes.
- Holy Communion - pick the prayer your church uses the most so the kids can connect the most. This is when you do the instructed Eucharist - invite the children to come up so they can see and help. Let them help hold things, etc. **Connecting with Day Three & Five: Things are not always what they seem. The three principle acts of the Eucharist are: blessed, broken/shared, sent. Just like the bread and wine, we are blessed during the Eucharist in spite of the ways we are less than perfect, and then we are sent out into the world to share our gifts with others. We are the gifts of God for the people of God.**
- **Blessing - see next page**
- Closing Song - again, use a camp favorite
- Give instructions on what is next - head out to eat, play games, and spend time together, etc.

LITANY OF GRATITUDE FOR VACATION BIBLE CAMP

OVERVIEW

This week, we've helped campers prepare to share their gratitude for one another. We get busy at home and sometimes forget to tell one another how special they are to us, today we are going to help everyone take a moment and give thanks for one another. You can add to this, change it and make it your own. The goal is to just create space and structure to help everyone share gratitude. We recommend breaking into their Rock Formations to do this - you can have folks sit together when they arrive by Rock Formation so it is easier to get to one another. If you have a small camp, you can do it all together. If space is an issue, you can do this outside at the end of the worship.

LITANY

Leader: Campers, this week, you have learned about how you are a gift from God, and so is everyone else. You have learned about gratitude, geology, and how we are all full of gifts and surprises. Are you ready to end camp and go back into the world more curious, joyful, and grateful?

Campers: We are!

Rock Formation Leaders (each takes a brief turn): As your small group leader, I want to begin by sharing a few words of gratitude. (Share a word of thanks for each student, a brief thought on something they contributed or the gifts they brought to camp (funny, curious, fast, etc.)

Leader: Today our campers took some time to think about you, their parents/adults, and the gift you are to them. I want to invite each of our campers to share their work from the gratitude station today. Campers, this week, the parents/adults have been thinking about you and the gifts you bring to your home, your neighborhood, and our whole community. Today they have brought you a special rock to remember a word that describes what a gift you are to those around you.

Note: Campers share - give their gift, adults share, they give their gift. If you would prefer, here are words you can give to parents to help them:

Camper: Thank you for loving me and being a gift to me.

Parent: Camper Name: Thank you for being a gift to our family. I chose this rock because... thank you for blessing us and loving us.

Rock Formation Leader: Thank you for sharing your love and gratitude, parents/adults, thank you for sharing your camper with us this week. We'll close this portion by sharing hugs, high fives, and other signs of gratitude with one another.

FINAL BLESSING

OVERVIEW

If we are all gifts from God, then we can all bless one another. We're going to demonstrate this today by doing a final blessing. You can do this after the litany above or as a part of the final blessing at the Eucharist.

BLESSING

Camp Leader: One of the signs of blessing that we use in the church is to lay our hands on one another. We can also make the sign of the cross on their foreheads or in the air in front of them like the priest does on Sunday mornings. Campers, please lay your hands on your parents and I'll help you by reading the blessing, but you have to add the final sentence at the end. I'll let you know when it is time by saying: "And the campers said:"

O God, bless our parents/adults. Rejoice and give thanks with them today for all of the gifts we share as a family. Support them when we have conflict, remind them that we are all growing and changing but have gifts to share with each other. Remind them that we love them, even when we are sad, hurt, or frustrated. Uphold them with your love, as they continue to love and support us as we grow. And the campers said: **We love you, we give thanks for you, and may God bless you!**

Camp Leader: Parents/adults, I now want to invite you to bless your children. You'll place your hands on their heads or shoulders, you can make the sign of the cross on their foreheads at the end or in the air in front of them.

Parents/adults: **May God bless you and keep you safe. May God's light shine on and through you, and grace your life. May God turn toward you and settle peace on you and your life journey. May you always know that I am grateful for the gift that you are to me, our family, and to the world. We love you, we give thanks for you, and may God bless you!**

Camp Leader: And now for one final blessing for the whole community that made up our camp this week, leaders, volunteers, parents, staff, and of course, our campers.

Almighty God, giver of gifts, life, love, and curiosity, grant all of us wisdom, devotion, and joy so that we may be a community of care to one another, to those in need, and for the care of creation. Uphold us with your Spirit as we go through our days, help us to never forget the hidden glory inside of each of us, so that we may let our light shine out into the world. Carry all of our families safely through this journey, so that we may share our gifts with the world, and join in the work of making all things new. And may the Blessing of God Almighty, the Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, be with us all this day, and always. Amen.

SUPPLY LISTS FOR ALL STATIONS

We know that as the director you're trying to sort out all of the supplies for camp, so to try and make that easier, we've put all of the supply lists in one place. We've added quantities (and if it is per camper or a demonstration which could be for everyone or by group depending on how your program works) and notes as to where you can use things again. There are several items that are hard to find, in those cases, we've included a QR code to help or photos in the station guide books.

One last note about setting yourself up for success with this camp. While designing the activities, I was very aware of the cost of rocks for the first day in the geology station, and the number of rocks sitting in my own house from when my children panned for rocks at different events. I decided to build the crafts (in the craft station and the gratitude station) around using up these rocks. Campers will pick a special rock to keep and the rest will get used up later in the week. Likewise, many crafts will go to the gratitude station to be used as "gifts" so it is helpful to have a box labeled with each small group so that the materials can get moved easily from station to station if used again. In the craft and gratitude stations, you'll want to have space to store things on tables so they can dry. If you have the space, set up a spot for each small group so their items do not get lost before the end of camp. Most things are created to go home on the last day (unless indicated) so you'll want to have a storage plan in place at the beginning of the week.



While we strongly recommend buying locally, upcycling items, or finding what works best for you, we have created an Amazon wish list so if something we describe isn't clear, you can see what we used (or similar). With that said, we do not update this list so be sure to look for better deals or new items that might work better for your context. Use the QR code to the left to access the list.



Slips of paper to make paper chains
something to write with
poster board for each day with the theme at the top
Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook

See the set up pages for more information on the supplies needed to set up the Big Gathering Space for the week.



Books:

- *The Street Beneath My Feet* by Charlotte Guillain and Yuval Zommer
- *Don't Blow Your Top!* by Ame Dyckman
- *Old Rock (Is Not Boring)* by Deb Pilutti
- *Ricky the Rock Who Couldn't Roll* by Mr. Jay
- *Scribble Stones* by Diane Alber

Other Supplies:

Stickers, ribbons, etc. to decorate the pennant
first aid kit
access to water
access to extra snacks



PRO TIP:

All of the pages in this program that might need to be customized for your context are available via the QR code to the left as a template in Canva. Please make a copy of the file before you start making items your own!





SUPPLIES - RESIN CRAFT

Note: the amount of supplies you need will be based on what size mold you choose. The pictures show coaster-sized ornaments, but keychain-sized also works well.

- resin
- gloves
- silicone molds
- craft sticks
- rocks from day one
- cardstock or pieces of cereal boxes (or similar)
- ribbon
- glue
- small bag to "wrap" the ornament in

Note: you will need one mold per camper that is doing the activity for the day as these need to dry overnight.

GRATITUDE DAY ONE

You will need:

- one handout per camper
- pens, markers, etc.
- camera/phone
- dice

GRATITUDE DAY TWO

You will need:

- a peace path for the floor
- name tag holders (if the kids are already wearing name tags, this can just get added to the back of it)
- peace path cards for each camper
- craft frame for each camper (we recommend something substantial because we're adding rocks)
- mod podge
- sponge brush
- small rocks from day one

GRATITUDE DAY THREE

You will need:

- wrapping paper or tissue paper
- ribbon
- tape (if using wrapping paper)
- gift tags

For the Prayers of the People:

- prayer worksheet
- Flipchart paper for writing the *Prayers of the People*
- Copies of the *Book of Common Prayer* (looking at pages 383 for *Prayers of the People*)
- cup with each of the sections for the prayers of the people on slips of paper to pick from

For fast finishers or scaffold:

- UTO Coloring Sheets (<https://unitedthankoffering.com/color/>) We really love using one of the sheets that you can print as a poster - give each camper a tile to work on during the week and then display the poster at the end of camp
- coloring tools

DAY FOUR IS THE OUTREACH PROJECT

GRATITUDE DAY FIVE

You will need:

- worksheets
- letter to parents/adults (send home earlier in the week and adapt as needed)
- plain gift bags and materials to decorate them
- river rocks
- paint pens
- a list of the adults who are attending the final celebration from the camp leader (not all kids will have their parents there so it is good to know who will be there so they can be specific about thanking that person)
- gifts created during the week



CRAFTS DAY ONE

You will need (for each camper, 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt):

- 2 parts flour*
- 1 part salt
- water
- variety of leaves, bones, twigs, shells, etc.
- bowls for mixing and measuring cups
- parchment paper (for holding the salt dough)
- glue (expansion only)
- paper clips (or small letter stamps for clay) and straws
- spoons for mixing

**if you have children with Celiac's Disease, ask their parents first before having them touch flour. You can substitute with air dry clay.*

CRAFTS DAY THREE

Each camper is making two bracelets.

You will need:

- paper plate or tray for holding beads
- volcanic beads

Optional: lava rocks and magnifying glasses

Supplies for Scaffold:

- silicone bracelets for younger campers
- volcanic beads with bigger holes
- Note: about 12 big beads fit this bracelet

Supplies for Expansion:

- bead string and bead glue
- beads representing the other parts of the rock cycle
 - suggested choices:
 - quartz (mineral)
 - white howlite (imitates marble - metamorphic)
 - lava (igneous)
 - jasper (sedimentary)

We recommend having extra beads on hand for those that want to make their projects unique!

CRAFTS DAY TWO

You will need for each camper:

- gloves
- baking soda (4 oz)
- cornstarch (2 oz)
- citric acid (2 oz)
- epsom salt (2 oz)
- water (1-1.5 teaspoons)
- oil (either coconut or olive) (1.25 teaspoons)
- essential oil (2 drops) optional
- food coloring (1-2 drops)
- bags

For the groups to use

- silicone molds (we recommend using rock shaped ones!) you'll want to have enough for two groups so the first set can dry before you try to take them out.
- spray bottles with water
- optional: if you want to have some small, water proof toys/gems these can get added to the bath bombs, to represent how fossils get trapped inside of rocks to build off of what you did yesterday.

For Scaffold (make sugar scrub):

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 tablespoons coconut oil
- 5 drops food coloring
- 10 drops essential oils (optional)
- container for each person

CRAFTS DAY FOUR

You will need:

- two bags with tic tac toe grids on them per camper
- 20 small, smooth rocks per camper
- acrylic paint pens

CRAFTS DAY FIVE

You will need one per camper:

- cardstock or small poster boards (looks great on white or black paper)
- paint brushes or droppers/pipettes

One for every two campers:

- white glue
- liquid water colors or water mixed with food coloring

For a small group:

- salt - in big bowls
- scoop for the salt

See the guide for other options.

**PRO TIP:**

If you are moving campers from station to station and want to add some rock themed activities along the way, check out Day Five of the Movement Station for ideas on how to do just that!

MOVEMENT DAY ONE

Today you have four options for games, each asks for a modification of something you likely already have at your house or church. Here are the main options:

1. Corn hole with modifications
2. Ring toss with modifications
3. Bean Bag Toss with modifications
4. Red Light/Green Light using Rocks

We've also provided instructions to DIY a bean bag toss or ring toss game.

You can set up one game with multiples for everyone to play or set up all four and rotate pairs through each ending with the full group playing Red Light/Green Light together.

We've also provided game cards to make it more challenging for older campers.

DAY TWO SUPPLIES

You will need:

- something to mark off the field - if playing outside you can use tape or washable spray paint
- 4 soft balls

DAY THREE SUPPLIES

The Floor is Lava is made infinitely more fun by taking time to create obstacles for teams to get through together before making it to the finish line. Save up a bunch of cardboard boxes to build structures they have to either get around, over, or under. Hot day? Have adults ready to throw water balloons if campers enter an area of the field. Get creative!

MOVEMENT DAY FOUR**DIY Yard Bowling**

You will need:

- ten 2 liter bottles for each set of two kids (meaning if there are 8 kids in a small group, you'll need 4 lanes set up with a total of 40 pins)
- one ball for each lane - make sure it has some weight to it, so a soccer ball or basket ball.
- pea gravel to fill the bottles about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way (heavy enough the wind doesn't knock the bottles down but light enough that the ball (or other pins) will)
- something to mark the starting area

To make your pins:

- clean each bottle
- paint (or use a Cricut to make decals) each bottle a solid color then write one of the following on each:
 - soil
 - leaves
 - small rocks
 - shells
 - poop
 - sand
 - pebbles
 - trash
 - chemicals
 - bugs

**DAY FIVE IS THE
FINAL CELEBRATION -
SEE THE MOVEMENT
GUIDE FOR MORE
iNFORMATION**



STEAM DAY ONE

You will need (per camper):

- one handout
- wipes for cleaning hands
- toothpicks for stirring igneous rock
- baggies

Option One: Starbursts (get a variety of colors)

- mini starbursts (6-10 per camper)
- regular starbursts (3 per camper)
- microwave
- parchment paper

Option Two: Chocolate

- chocolate bar, white chocolate bar, dark chocolate bar (1 of each for every 3 campers)
- Foil
- Boiling water/electric water kettle
- small bowls for each group reach hot water
- ice (optional)
- Turn $\frac{2}{3}$ of the chocolate into shavings, but keep separate

Which should I choose?

Each process has pros and cons so here are some things to consider. Chocolate is messy when melted, so consider your space. Starbursts are less messy but are harder to manipulate. For younger campers, we recommend focusing on one type of rock and demonstrating the others.

Expansion:

If doing the expansion, you'll need a handout for each camper (or laminate a few copies to reuse) and a rock sorting kit. We recommend one kit for every 3-4 campers. Make sure to get a kit that features rocks and not just minerals and gemstones so they can see metamorphic, igneous, and sedimentary rocks. This kit is also just fun to have for camp and can be shared between rock formations.

STEAM DAY TWO

For the Demonstration:

- disposable pie tin
- candle
- glass vase that fits over the candle but leaves a little room around
- water
- food coloring
- matches

For Expansion:

- peeled, hard boiled eggs (one per camper)
- one glass bottle per camper (mouth needs to be small enough to put an egg on top without falling in)
- matches
- small piece of paper (per camper)
- fire extinguisher

For Activity:

- One small water bottle per camper and one as a control
- 2 Alka-seltzer tablets for half of the campers
- 6 oz vinegar for half of the campers
- 1-2 tbsp baking soda for half of the campers
- one balloon for each bottle of water
- funnels will make it easier to put the powder into the balloons, or you can use straws that have a spoon cut



PRO TIP:

fill the balloons ahead of time to save on mess and struggle. Use one color of balloons for baking soda and one color for the tablets.



PRO TIP:

Save the water bottles from day two to use on day three to build the volcanos!

STEAM DAY THREE

To Build the Volcano You will need:

- one container per camper (you can use the water bottles from yesterday)
- to build the volcano, you will need either salt dough or air dry clay depending on your climate
- paint for decorating the volcano (if clay wasn't colorful)
- paint brushes, etc.

To Erupt the Volcano (per camper):

- baking soda 2-3 tablespoons
- vinegar - 1 Cup
- clear dish soap (a few drops)
- red food coloring (a few drops)
- tray to catch the liquid explosion

For Elephant Toothpaste (per demonstration):

- 300 ml hydrogen peroxide
 - 50% food grade hydrogen peroxide (use QR code below for one option) or
 - best "fun" results - 40 volume hydrogen peroxide - this can be found at beauty supply stores (just get the clear not the creme) and can be done by older campers
- 4 teaspoons potassium iodide crystals
- 1500 Erlenmeyer Flask, or similar
- 3 tablespoons clear dish soap
- food coloring
- 100 ml water



PRO TIP DAY 3:

Use the QR code to the right to order the 50% hydrogen peroxide!



PRO TIP DAY 5:

Prepare the Shells in Advance:

I kept an egg container to collect the eggs halves leading up to testing, and it is okay if they are all different shapes and sizes. To clean them, gently pull the membrane from the shell, then give it a good rinse and let it dry. Once it is dry, use the paint brush to cover the inside and the edge of the shell with white glue, then cover it with borax powder (think of it like glitter, pour a bunch in, make sure it is covered, then dump out the extra). See the photo in the STEAM guide for more information.

STEAM DAY FOUR

You will need for the first experiment:

- one white plate (needs to be water-resistant but can be disposable) per student
- skittles of various colors (about 50 per camper)
- warm water (the warmer the water, the faster the color goes and may not move uniformly, so room temperature is perfect)

You will need for the second experiment:

- jar (this is a great chance to upcycle jars! This just needs to be a clean jar with a lid - one per camper and then use the jar for the egg geodes tomorrow)
- a handful of small pieces of gravel
- 5 sugar cubes per students

Note: the jar and gravel can be used over and over again, you'll only need new sugar cubes each time.

Other Options?

Depending on where you live, this is a great chance to talk about what erosion looks like where you live. So if you live at the ocean you can talk about waves, if you live in a farming community, you can talk about soil erosion, for example. There are great experiments online to help you demonstrate what erosion looks like where you are and when and why we want to avoid causing it.

STEAM DAY FIVE

You will need:

- one handout per camper
- wipes for cleaning hands
- jars with lids (we used quarter pint jars) that can go home with each camper (can be the same jars as day 4, this keeps the egg safe going home, especially if the crystals are still growing)
- 100% pure borax - 3 Tablespoons per camper
- boiling water/electric water kettle (about 1 cup per camper)
- food coloring
- one half of an eggshell for each camper - cleaned and prepared (see pro tip to the left)
- white glue (one bottle)
- paint brush (one)
- one spoon per camper for mixing



GEOLOGY DAY ONE

You will need for each camper:

- sand sifter/sieve
- rocks and sand (variety of sizes, small are great for one of the crafts, approximately 1-1.5 pounds of rocks per camper, we recommend giving each camper a bag of sand and rocks to try to keep the amount of rocks they find about the same)
- ziplock bags with campers names
- handout
- small boxes/bags for the special rock

For the Station:

- large buckets/tubs (for each student) or kiddie pools
- sand
- water
- crayons/colored pencils/markers
- big box to put the bags for each small group

Note: this is one of the most expensive activities at camp this week. There are a couple of ways to do this project:

1. You can buy mixed bags of rocks and then a bag of sand and make your own mix.
2. You can buy pre-mixed bags of sand and rocks online or at a local rock shop.
3. You can buy strainers or you can use disposable pie tins that you have punched holes into.

The goal is to collect all the rocks, so even scrap rocks are great for this activity. You do not need polished or special rocks, just fun colors, shapes, and sizes.

NOTE:

**DAY THREE IS SHARED
WITH STEAM AND LISTED THERE.
DAY FOUR IS A PRESENTATION.**

SUPPLIES: DAY TWO

For the Demonstration, you will need:

- a sample of quartzite (can be borrowed or donated by a local countertop manufacturer)
- a sample of sandstone (from a local landscape company)

You will need one per camper for the activity:

- thick toilet paper tube
- scissors
- balloon
- vinyl sheets (helps make the tube stronger, you can also cover in duct tape)
- stickers to decorate the tube (optional)
- confetti (you'll want a lot of this!)

Expansion (per camper):

- paper towel tubes
- confetti
- balloon
- vinyl sheets



PRO TIP:

If you want to be a hero to campers, you can have a small bag of confetti for each camper to take home with their popper so they can show their parents. If not, be prepared for them to smuggle confetti from the station because they all really love this activity.

SUPPLIES: DAY FIVE

You will need for each camper:

- one geode

For the Station:

- safety goggles for each person
- hammers and chisels for opening geodes
- heavy sock or bag

For the scaffold:

- mineral (or similar) dig kit per camper
- tray/pie pan for working
- water with pipettes (to soften the dig kit as needed)
- paint brushes

Note: sometimes you'll get a geode that has completely filled in with quartz. These are really hard to break so you may want to have some extras in case a camper needs to swap out their geode for one that is easier to break open.



SNACK-TIVITY DAY ONE

You will need enough for each camper:

- pudding in a variety of colors/flavors (ex. vanilla, chocolate, vanilla with red food coloring)
- Oreos smashed into "dirt"
- dried coconut dyed green or green cotton candy for grass
- cookie dinos - these are very popular so make sure to check the serving size and decide how many cookies each camper will get in advance
- clear cups so you can see the strata
- spoons
- chocolate rocks to bury along the way (see note)

Supplies for Making Strata Trail Mix:

- Cheerios
- Goldfish
- M&Ms (or chocolate rocks!)
- Pretzels

Note: there are two types of chocolate rocks - one that is actual chocolate and one that is more like a Tootsie Roll. We do not recommend the Tootsie Roll kind because they are very hard to eat, especially when they get cold on the pudding.

SNACK-TIVITY DAY THREE

You will need:

- 2.5 cups (375g) bread flour
- 1 packet (7g) yeast
- 1 teaspoon (6g) salt
- 1 tablespoon (15g) sugar
- 1 tablespoon (20g) melted butter
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 1 cup (240 ml) whole milk
- semolina or cornmeal for dusting

Per group!

SNACK-TIVITY DAY TWO

You will need:

- Rice Krispy treats
 - preferably homemade with a bit of extra butter to keep them pliable
 - you can add food coloring to make different options for layers (or use cocoa krispies)
 - Spread them out on a cookie sheet to make the layers thinner
- marshmallow fluff
- sprinkles
- chocolate chips
- graham crackers

Note: if you do not have nut allergies, peanut butter (or similar) makes for a great strata layer in the Rice Krispies.

Making Butter:

- 2 Tablespoons heavy cream per camper (needs a high fat content and needs to be as cold as possible)
- salt
- small plastic containers for each camper (or several pint containers two campers can take turns with)

SNACK-TIVITY DAY FOUR

Today there are some options to best fit your camp. The idea is to make a conglomerate rock of food, so a fruit salad, burrito bowl, or similar.

SNACK-TIVITY DAY FIVE

You will need for each camper:

- 1 sandwich-sized ziploc bag
- 1 gallon-sized ziploc bag
- ½ cup half-and-half or heavy cream
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3-4 cups of ice
- ⅓ cup rock salt
- spoons/bowls/toppings for ice cream

PRO TIP DAY TWO:



Want something with less sugar? Swap out the Krispy Treats with bread (or crackers, but they don't smush well) and spreads like sun butter, jelly, and fresh fruit slices. See the extras page in the guide for other snack ideas!



LITURGY & MUSIC DAY ONE

You will need for the leader:

- dice
- handout with questions

LITURGY & MUSIC DAY FOUR

You will need for each camper:

- Book of Common Prayer
- Prayer Writing Worksheets
- pencils

LITURGY & MUSIC DAY TWO

You will need for each camper:

- paper clip (metal not coated in plastic)
- cardboard
- handout (it makes 2 per sheet so half as many copies as campers)
- scissors
- masking tape

For leaders:

- pushpins (3-5)
- needlenose pliers (2 pairs)

LITURGY & MUSIC DAY FIVE

You will need for each camper:

- bulletin

LITURGY & MUSIC DAY THREE

Per Camper:

- wafer

Sacristy Tour Day!

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DATE

Dear NAME,

Thank you for entrusting your child/children to our care for the week of DATE. We are grateful for the chance to spend time with them where we get to learn, play, and make art together.

The theme for our Vacation Bible Camp for this year is Gratitude Rocks. This program focuses on gratitude, the Eucharist, and geology. We'll spend time thinking about the gifts found in the world and people around us. We'll look at stories from the Bible and books from children's literature. Each day has a unique theme to help us look at ways we can practice gratitude and our faith in the world. In addition to talking about the stories chosen for the day, your child(ren) will make at least one craft, participate in a STEAM and a geology activity, make an geology-themed snack, play a game, and try out a gratitude practice. It will be a busy and fun week.

Here's some important information that will help you prepare for camp. Please fill out the enclosed waiver and return it by date. Each day pick up and drop off will happen...describe what parents can expect. Please pack a lunch for them each day. (Tell parents if there is refrigeration available or not.) Please send them with a reusable water bottle each day. Ensure their name is on everything they bring to camp. Please keep the following phone number handy: XXX-XXX-XXXX this is the emergency contact line for camp. Please call it if you are going to be late or early for pick up, if you need to add someone to the pick-up list, or name other reasons someone would use this number.

If there is going to be a party on the last day, describe it here and invite the family.

Thank you again for being a part of our Vacation Bible Camp. We are so excited to get to spend time with your family as we grow in gratitude for the week.

Sincerely,

Name
Camp Director

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

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SAMPLE Gratitude Rocks! Participant Waiver

I, _____, (parent/guardian name) do hereby affirm to name of church that I have the legal authority to provide my consent and authorization for matters relating to the participation of _____ (child's name) in Gratitude Rocks! Vacation Bible Camp, DATES.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Relationship to child: _____

WAIVER AND RELEASE

I, _____, Parent/Guardian, on behalf of

_____ ("Participant Minor Child") do hereby release, waive, discharge, covenant not to sue and agree to hold members of name of church its officers, directors, employees, representatives, agents and affiliates, and the staff of name of church from any and all claims, demands and actions of any and every kind directly or indirectly arising out of or relating in any respect to the participation of the Participant Minor Child in Gratitude Rocks! Vacation Bible Camp, DATES. My waiver and release of all claims, demands, actions and liability shall include without limitation, any injury, illness, death, property damage or loss to the Participant Minor Child which may be caused by any act, or failure to act by the staff of name of church or sustained before, during or after Gratitude Rocks! Vacation Bible Camp unless such injury, illness, death, property damage or loss is a direct result of the willful misconduct of the staff of name of church.

I understand that, without limitation of the foregoing, neither the name of church shall be liable and each is hereby released each from all claims that may arise from loss or damage to the Participant Minor Child's personal property or the interruption of Gratitude Rocks! Vacation Bible Camp for whatever reason. name of church shall NOT be responsible for any lost or stolen property of the Participant Minor Child or any persons attending activities thereof.

Date: _____

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

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SAMPLE MEDIA AND PHOTO RELEASE

The undersigned participant (mark one)

does agree

does not agree

to grant to **name of church** permission to record on film, video tape, or audio tape, their participation in any Vacation Bible Camp sponsored activity. They further agree that any or all of the material recorded may be used, in any form, as part of any future production(s) made by or for name of church, and further, that such use shall be without payment of fees, royalties, special credit, or other compensation. This form shall be valid until such time that it is revoked by the undersigned.

_____ Participant's Name

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature

Necessary for all participants under the age of 18

_____ Date

SAMPLE MEDICAL CONSENT FORM

We (I), the undersigned, do hereby give permission for our (my) child _____ to attend and participate in Vacation Bible Camp at **Church Name, Dates**.

We (I) authorize an adult, in whose care the above named minor has been entrusted by us or by a staff member of name of church, to consent to any reasonably necessary medical examination, anesthetic, medical, surgical or dental diagnosis or treatment, and/or hospital care, to be rendered to the above named minor under the general or special supervision and on the advice of any physician or dentist licensed under the provisions of **Texas** law and an active member of the medical staff of a licensed hospital, whether such diagnosis or treatment is rendered at the office of any such physician or any such hospital, clinic or urgent care facility.

We (I), the undersigned shall be liable and agree to pay all costs and expenses incurred in connection with such medical and dental services rendered to the aforementioned child pursuant to this authorization.

We (I) understand that should it be necessary for our (my) child to return to my care due to medical reasons or otherwise, that I shall assume all transportation costs.

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

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SAMPLE: PLEASE FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

Do you have hospital insurance? * Yes * No (please circle one)

Insurance Company:_____ Policy Number:_____

Please list any allergies, medical problems, current medications, etc.

What else do we need to know about your child to care for them?

We would like to be able to care for your child's sensory issues, learning style, and unique gifts. How best can we serve and work with your child?

Please list the name and phone numbers of anyone who is approved to pick up your participant from camp.

Name

Cell Phone Number

Please note: adults will be required to show photo identification at pick up and their name must be on the list. In the case of an emergency, where someone on this list is unavailable for pick up please call emergency camp phone number so that we can verify with you and add them to the list.

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____ Date:_____

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

DATE

Dear NAME,

We sang songs, we made volcanoes, we practiced gratitude, and we had an amazing party to wrap up our week at Gratitude Rocks!. Thank you so much for being a part of our Vacation Bible Camp. We hope that your child(ren) had fun, learned something about their faith and gratitude, and made some new friends.

My favorite part of camp was hearing the participants share one thing they were grateful for from the day as it was ending. This simple practice of asking them what they were most thankful to do, learn, or experience is one that you can continue at home. Practicing gratitude, even for children, has important spiritual and health benefits, from better sleep to lower anxiety. If you would like to learn more about how your family can continue to practice gratitude visit: www.unitedthankoffering.com/formation UTO offers materials for families to use at home in November, during Lent, or for anytime you want to help build up gratitude in your home.

We wanted to send one last note home to invite you to our next event for families. Tell them all about the event, including when it is and why they should come.

We hope you'll join us for our next event; in the meantime, know we are grateful for you and your family and we hope to see you soon.

Sincerely,

Name
Camp Director

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

[illegible]

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

A Vacation Bible Camp Curriculum Focused on Gratitude, Geology, & Fun

Dear Parent,

Thank you for enrolling your child in our Vacation Bible Camp: Gratitude Rocks! As a part of the program, we have a special ending celebration on **DATE** at time, we hope you can make it. This week our campers are learning about geology, the Eucharist, and gratitude. As a part of our closing ceremony, our campers are going to share their gratitude for you in their small groups. They will be filling out a worksheet just like the one included with this note. We hope you will also take a moment and fill this worksheet out about your camper. This activity is a part of our programming on gems and minerals. Specifically, campers are going to learn about geodes and how on the outside they look pretty boring but when you crack them open they are really beautiful and amazing. All of us can seem pretty boring on the outside, but inside each of us is something spectacular. We know that this is true because our faith promises that we are all gifts from God. Each of us has a special gift or ability to share with the world around us, and we want to celebrate and give thanks for the gift that you are and that your camper is.

When you arrive on **DATE**, you'll be invited to **AREA WHERE THEY CAN GATHER**. When you enter, you'll find a table that has a variety of rocks - some with words, some without. Please pick a rock that has an intention that you wish to pass on to your camper. You can then use a paint pen to add a note, or sign the rock. If you don't find a rock you like, we've got blank rocks where you can add your own intention. You'll be invited to share this rock with your camper as a part of the closing ceremony with their small group, called a rock formation. You will be invited to share with your child the gifts that they bring to your family/home, neighborhood or community. If you would like, you can bring a thank you note to read to your child, or you can just share from your heart.

We'll wrap up the whole event with a celebration for families. **We'll be providing the main dish, drinks, and dessert, please bring a side dish to share.** There will be a bounce house and other fun things for kids so parents can get to know one another and enjoy the nice weather!

We'll see you on **DATE**, and thank you for joining our Vacation Bible Camp this summer!

With Gratitude,

Name
Camp Director



Camp Dates

Name, Camp Director

we are so grateful for you and everything you contributed this week.

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

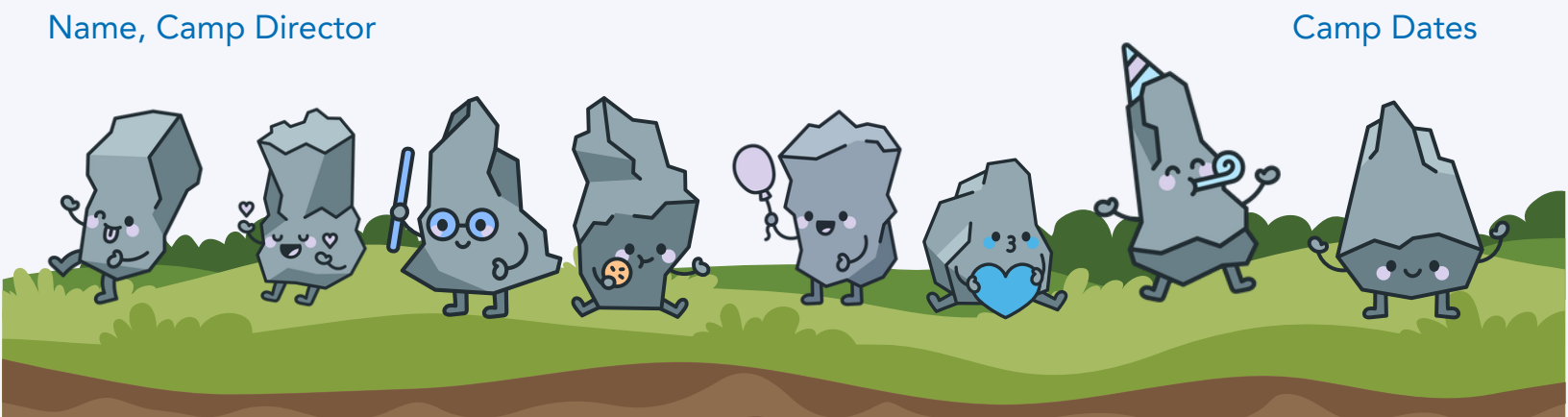
PARTICIPANT NAME
for participating in:



PARTICIPANT NAME
for participating in:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

at CHURCH NAME,
we are so grateful for you and everything you contributed this week.



Name, Camp Director

Camp Dates