



**WELCOME TO YOUR
SMALL GROUP!**

THE UNITED THANK OFFERING PRESENTS:

GRATITUDE ROCKS!

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

WELCOME!

Thanks for signing up to lead one of our small groups! This is where community is built and formed during camp this week. You will get to know your campers really well and help them to get to know the other members of their group. You'll read books, discuss what they are learning and always have back up snacks on hand.

Our small groups are often the most flexible part of camp - so you may or may not have a permanent space to gather, you might lead the snack-tivity for your group, and you might have a spot for that where you read the story while they eat. What we do know, is that you are going to really get to know your kiddos and have a great time learning about them, what they are grateful for, and the world around you.

Each day, you'll have time to gather as a group for snack, water, and a story. We've included a few questions that you might ask for discussion after the story. We've also left some blank space in case you think of things you'd like to add.

Here's a quick look at your week ahead:

Day One: The Rock Cycle

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

Day Two: Metamorphic Rocks & Pressure

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

Day Three: Igneous Rocks & Volcanos

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

Day Four: Sedimentary Rocks & Weathering

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

Day Five: Minerals & Gemstones

Book: *Scribble Stones* by Diane Alber

We hope you have a great week with your campers!

THINGS TO HAVE:

Your group is going to be moving around, so we recommend having a wagon to take your supplies on the go! We would also tuck in:

- first aid kit
- picnic blanket (in case you want to meet under a tree)
- tissues
- wet wipes

THINGS TO KNOW:

Before camp, make sure you know about any allergies kids in your group might have. Learn their names and if they have any accommodations for things that you'll need to help them with (for example, if a kiddo has dyslexia, don't ask them to read out loud unless you've checked with them first).



OTHER BOOKS?

If you are planning to have a small library with books for campers to borrow (or for you to read to fill the time) there are a lot of great books out there about geology, fossils, and gratitude. Here are some we love, that we just didn't have room in the schedule for:

- *A Little Thanksgiving Spot* by Diane Alber
- *The Thank You Book* by Mo Willems
- *We Are Grateful Otsaliheliga* by Traci Sorell
- *Giving Thanks* by Chief Jake Swamp
- *Bear Says Thanks* by Karma Wilson
- *Kindness Rocks!* by Sonia Ellis
- *Stones and Bones* by Rob Wilshaw
- *God's Dream* by Desmond Tutu
- *The Little Book of Joy* by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu
- *Old Turtle* by Douglas Wood
- *Scribble Stones Art Guide* by Diane Alber
- *Rocks and Minerals* by Animated Science

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DAY ONE: STREET BENEATH MY FEET

Today we're learning that things are always growing and changing, and that includes us! Sometimes people struggle with change - we want to help our campers to understand that one of the cool things about being alive in the world is that we get to keep growing, learning, and changing. In small group today, you've got two tasks: the first is to get to know each other and the second is to read the coolest book I've ever seen...there is a way to read it like a regular book, which I recommend doing first, and then at the end, unfold the whole book so the kids can see it! We're not offering a ton of questions today because the book will really lend itself to discussion as you travel to the center of the earth and back again.



DAY ONE: THE ROCK CYCLE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the Book: *The Street Beneath Our Feet*

Note: this is a rather long book and there are tons of things to look at so today you might not have time for discussion because they simply may want to investigate what is on the pages, or you can skip some of the text. This is a book where it is best to read it ahead of time and decide how you want to present it in your group.

Here are some things you might want to discuss:

1. What was the most surprising thing we found underground?
2. What was your favorite layer of the earth?

YOUR NOTES FOR THE DAY

TALK ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

1. Welcome your group! Take a moment to have everyone introduce themselves. Come up with a fun question to ask, like do they have a favorite type of rock or if they could invent a new rock what color and shape would it be.
2. Introduce yourself and let them know you'll be with them all week.
3. Make sure to double check allergies!
4. Pass out their field guides, share that they can use these to draw when they are needing something to do, or they can write what they see. There are pages with specific information they'll use during the week. To start, have them fill out the first page with information about themselves.
5. Did your group come with a name or did you get to name it? Either way, be sure to share with your group some information about the rock formation your group was named after. If you have the name ahead of time, you can even print out small photos they can tape into their field guide as they fill out page 2.

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DAY TWO: DON'T BLOW YOUR TOP!

Today has a lot of learning about conflict. When we are in relationships with other people, there will be conflict. Conflict can happen at home, at school, at church, and even at camp! We've got a great story today about how one little volcano learns not to blow their top...even though a pesky bird keeps dropping coconuts on their head! I don't know about you, but conflict can bring on a lot of feelings and if I don't manage my feelings, it is hard to deal with the conflict. Most of our campers can relate to this, especially if they are attending school or day care.

If you have time today, give the peace path another practice run if you've made it to the gratitude station before your small group time as the book makes a great introduction to getting calm within ourselves - an important first step in resolving conflict.



DAY TWO: METAMORPHIC ROCK

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the Book: *Don't Blow Your Top!*

Note: this book is interested in helping young people think about managing their feelings. It's important to share with your campers that we all get to feel our feelings, just sometimes our feelings mean we have to make things right with others, you can do that by talking to them about the story or having a discussion.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think the volcanoes were right in getting upset about having coconuts dropped on their heads? (Note: this is an important thing for kids to understand - their feelings are valid, but what they do with their feelings is also important.)
2. What would be a better way for the volcanoes to have dealt with the bird?
3. Have you tried any of these ways to calm down? Which is your favorite?
4. What other ways can you find calm within yourself?

TALK ABOUT THE PEACE PATH

Today we learned about the Peace Path, a tool that we're using here at camp to deal with conflict. What I love about the Peace Path Card that we got is the first step is to get calm within ourselves. We can't find a way to peace if we aren't peaceful. Our book tells us the story about a volcano that needs to get calm before it can deal with the conflict. Let's review the ideas from the book and see if we can come up with other ways we can get calm in our bodies before dealing with conflict.

YOUR NOTES FOR THE DAY

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DAY THREE: OLD ROCK (IS NOT BORING)

Today there are volcanoes everywhere, except here (although there is one in the story), and the gratitude station. Here we're going to talk about perspective and how we might see things differently than other people. Sometimes we see things differently because of our abilities, sometimes because we've lived longer or shorter lives than the other person. Either way, we all come together to be a community and can give thanks for the different perspectives that make the world a bit different than it would be without the differences found in each of us. Today we're asking you to help us connect with our campers that sometimes things are not what they seem to be.



DAY THREE: IGNEOUS ROCK

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the Book: *Old Rock (is not boring)*

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you think Old Rock is boring? Did you think Old Rock was boring at the beginning?
2. Why do you think the characters thought Old Rock was boring? Would you rather be a rock, a tree, a beetle or a bird? Why?
3. Why do you think it was important for the others to ask so many questions of Old Rock?
4. On the first day you picked your favorite rock, what kinds of things do you imagine your rock has seen or experienced in the world?

YOUR NOTES FOR THE DAY

TALK ABOUT USING OUR IMAGINATION

One way that we can understand people better is to try to imagine how they are seeing the world around them. For example, it might be hard to understand why an astronaut thinks it is worth the risk to go in a rocket to space, but if we think about how they see the world, we can see that what they learn in space and get to see and experience (from floating to doing experiments) is worth more than the potential cost or fear of going in the rocket to space. Parents will sometimes encourage us to think about how someone else feels when dealing with conflict. This is an important thing to learn how to do, but it can be really hard.

How might you imagine or learn about how another person sees the world?

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DAY FOUR: RICKY, THE ROCK THAT COULDN'T ROLL

Today we are learning about and experiencing ways we can help others. Our book tells a story about a rock that needs a little help to roll. (And by chance, it also describes how some sedimentary rocks form!) Ricky watches all of the other rocks roll down the hill, but he's flat on one side so he can't roll. He's a bit sad about it, but resigned to simply watch. His friends try a variety of ways to include him until finally they help him adapt (and get a fancy feather) so he can roll. I've worked with children and youth for almost thirty years now and the number one thing I know to be true is that they love to help. As a parent, I've learned that if I ask my children for help instead of telling them what to do, I get a much more positive response. Psychologists will tell us that humans want to be useful and needed, helping is one way to do that. The way we care for others not only helps them, but gives us meaning. Today we'll read the book and think about ways we can help others, just like Ricky's friends.



DAY FOUR: SEDIMENTARY ROCK

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the Book: *Ricky, the Rock that Couldn't Roll*

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Ricky didn't ask for help from his friends when he realized he couldn't roll?
2. What ways might you have helped Ricky roll?
3. How do you feel when you get to help someone?
4. How does it feel to ask for help?
5. Why do you think it is hard to ask for help but feels so good to help? (This might be a hard question for younger campers to answer.)

TALK ABOUT BEING A HELPER

Fred Rogers told a story once, as a response to a question about how to talk to children about hard things, about his mother telling him that when he felt afraid or uncertain of what to do to look for the helpers. Who is helping and how can you join in or support them? We all love helping. Many of you have helped me this week by carrying things, opening doors, or you've helped each other with games and crafts. It is really good to be a helper and it is especially good, to ask first before helping to make sure the person needs or wants our help. What if Ricky didn't want to roll?

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DAY FIVE: SCRIBBLE STONES

Today we're finishing up and thinking about minerals and gemstones. The idea is to talk about the fact that many of us have and share gifts that folks don't always see. Sometimes we miss those gifts in others, or simply take them for granted. If we want campers to remember anything from this week it is that they are a gift, they have something to give and share to make the world a better place, and that the world is a gift, from their friends and family, to the community and beyond. Today, we're going to read a book that really shows that all the painting on rocks we've done gives them a special purpose in the world just like each and every one of us. You'll help usher the members of your group and their families through a sharing of gratitude later today, so no need to say goodbye just yet!



DAY FIVE:
MINERALS & GEMS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the Book: *Scribble Stones*

Discussion Questions:

1. How many rocks do you think you helped reach their full potential this week like the one in the book?
2. Why do you think the rock didn't want to be a paper weight, what do you think he would rather do or be?
3. If you were to have a unique scribble, what would it be and what would it represent?

YOUR NOTES FOR THE DAY

TALKING ABOUT POTENTIAL

Each of us has something special inside of us. There was a famous Bishop named Desmond Tutu who often talked about how God had whispered in our ear a beautiful dream for each of us. I think this beautiful dream is how we start to share who we are and the hidden gifts inside of us with the world around us. Each of you are gifts. You might not know what you want to be when you grow up but you might know what you love or what you are good at, or maybe you are very kind or are a good friend. These are all the gifts and dreams that God has placed inside of you, each is unique, just like each scribble added to the rock. When we share our gifts, we add that unique mark onto each other - so we get fancier and fancier, just like the rock in the book.