

# INTRODUCTION



## Water All Around the World A Full-Church Resource for Children, Youth and Adults

### Living Waters for the World...

...is pleased to offer this resource, exploring the world water crisis - its causes, its consequences for people and the Earth, and how we can help. Through stories, activities and worship, it can be a learning experience for the whole congregation.

You may choose to use this resource as:

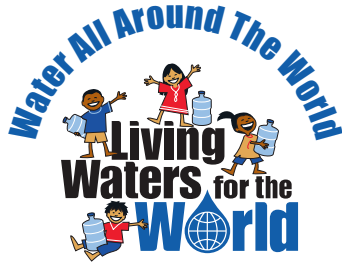
- A traditional VBS for children
- A four-session youth and/or adult study
- A weekend retreat
- A church school class



However you choose to use it, this resource will broaden your understanding of the world's water crisis, and encourage you to take action where you can.

### What you'll find in this full-church curriculum

- For children – a VBS including:
  - Stories from the Bible of the ways in which God has used water with God's people
  - Mission stories describing how children in other lands deal with the water crisis they face
  - Crafts from other countries
  - Suggestions for games and snacks
  - Opportunities for children to reflect upon God's uses of water in our world
  - Traditional music that children have loved through the ages
- For adults and/or youth:
  - Assessment of our knowledge about the present state of the world's water
  - Information from the United Nations and World Health Organization
  - Discussion of things we can do to conserve our own water
  - A four-session study series weaving together scripture, facts and action
  - Two challenges for people privileged to have safe water from the tap!
- For EVERYONE together:
  - Intergenerational art projects
  - An experience with international food
  - Worship resources focused on water
  - Links to additional resources – videos, music, art, and more



# Water All Around the World

## Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is unique about “Water All Around the World?”**

This resource is intended for use as a traditional VBS experience, or as an intergenerational event; its sections can be used as stand-alone resources or as a four-session Church School class, a weekend study, or a weekly fellowship event. Further, it can be used at any time of year – as a Lenten study, a mission fair, etc.

- **Why is it appropriate for the changing practices of congregations?**

The “traditional” model for VBS is rapidly being transformed, and new models are arising: some congregations may choose to do a weekend experience, others benefit from a weekly hour-long session, still others have adopted an evening model, incorporating table fellowship as well as intergenerational learning.

- **Who can use this curriculum?**

“Water All Around the World” is intended for use by faith communities who wish to broaden their Vacation Bible School to include the whole congregation - children, youth and adults.

- **Why is water an important topic for us at this time?**

There is a worldwide water crisis, both of availability and of quality. The consequences of this crisis will affect all of us in all countries of the world. We need to know more about the crisis and our appropriate response as Christians.

- **How does this resource engage us with the Biblical narrative?**

It explores the stories of God’s uses of water in God’s care for people, and suggests ways we can join God’s mission to restore the “goodness” of God’s creation, including its water.

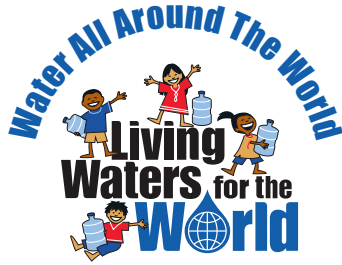
- **Is this a “grab & go” curriculum?**

No. This is an all-inclusive curriculum – it is a variety of options which can be tailored to your church’s context for Christian formation. Educators and others who plan and carry out VBS-like experiences are creative, resourceful people. Given access to ideas, facts and resources that modern technology affords, and using readily available materials, you can offer a meaningful experience for your congregation. Smaller congregations with limited finances can combine many of the suggestions to create a rewarding time for all ages.

- **How is it packaged?**

- Available in print, with digital format included
- All parts easily reproducible
- Links to videos and other online resources embedded
- Designed to be easily accessible and affordable





# Water All Around the World

## Initial Full-Church Gathering

Imagine having your whole congregation – children, youth, adults – engaged together for a period of time in a topic of interest to all ages. These materials are designed to make that possible, extending the VBS experience to the full church family, with age-appropriate resources for study, activities and worship. It draws from and enhances “Water All Around the World” (a 2016 VBS published by Living Waters for the World), and adds resources for youth and adults as well.

Families grow closer together in the sharing of a meal, and the church family is no exception! So a great beginning to this resource is a meal in which foods from other lands are highlighted, followed by an informative video and reflection. Here is a suggestion for an opening event, which you can use as an approximately one-hour gathering for your church to learn more about the world water crisis and how people are working together to change that, one community at a time. It can be used as a standalone program to begin a four-week Bible study for adults and/or youth. It can also work as part of a Sunday luncheon after worship or for a Sunday or Wednesday evening gathering. Make it fit your family’s style!

- Welcome/Prayer
- Meal (see suggested menu and recipes on following pages)
- Video Presentation (20 minutes - Steve Young, Director of LWW, video from Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, and video from a young supporter). This presentation is found [here](#)
- Reflection (moderated by the director of your program)
- Announcing your schedule for the study
- Closing and prayer – you may want to show this music video before the prayer: ([click here](#))

## Some Notes for the Director of This Full-Church Event

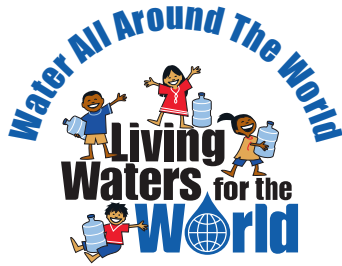
The traditional VBS contained within this curriculum is fully explained in its Introductory section; it can be used with or without tabs 1-5 of this resource.

The Adult/Youth Study will require someone to facilitate as instructed in that section of this manual.

The “Going Deeper” section contains lots of information about the world water crisis, suggestions for water conservation, information about the United Nations’ goal for universal safe water, and more. You may choose to use some or all of these resources.



# ADULT AND YOUTH STUDY



## A Study of Scripture and the World Water Crisis

This is a study of scriptural references to water – both physical and symbolic – as they relate to the critical need for clean water in our world. The study contains four sessions, each focusing upon one or more scriptures, with relevant facts, a related story, questions for reflection, and suggestions for action.

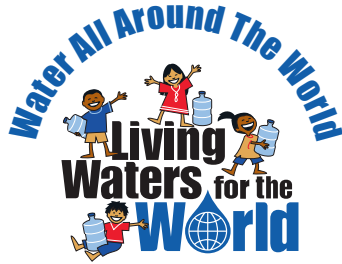
It is the hope and prayer of Living Waters for the World that this study guide will engender lively discussion about God’s plan for our world and our responsibility for its fulfillment, and that participants will feel called to action. Living Waters for the World trains and equips teams of volunteers who desire to respond by providing a means of purifying existing contaminated water sources in developing areas of the world, and an educational curriculum about the appropriate use of purified water. Some information about this mission ministry is included within these pages. More information is available at [livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://livingwatersfortheworld.org).

Some of the material in this study has been borrowed from *A Cup of Cold Water* by David Douglas, published by Presbyterian Publishing House. Living Waters for the World is grateful to Mr. Douglas for his permission to use some of his stories and insights. The statistics cited in this study are drawn from many sources, including World Health Organization, National Geographic Society, United Nations, World Water Council and others.

In an age and a society accustomed to convenience, many Christians view thirst as an obsolete problem. But millions of people still lack access to safe water, many of them in countries and communities where Christians are actively engaged in mission. This study is designed to sharpen awareness of the current world water crisis, and to provide a way to respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world.

Congregations are not civic organizations. When engaging in service projects, Christians are motivated not only by an ethical standard, but even more by the command of the Lord to love one another. For this reason, responding to the physical needs of people includes, for Christians, witnessing to God’s love and grace, and listening for the witness of those they serve.

These pages are intended to highlight those words of scripture through which God speaks to us about the physical and spiritual needs of people, to provide information, to encourage reflection and response, and to stimulate prayer and action.



## To the Discussion Leader:

This study guide is designed to be used in four one-hour sessions. Each session includes six sections:

- **Learning about the World Water Crisis:** information about current conditions in the world. Read these statistics one at a time, allowing time for assimilation and asking for comment from group members. *Suggested time: 5 minutes*
- **Turning to Scripture:** a text relating to water, either physical or spiritual. Using a commentary or other resource, provide the group with some context for the selected scripture. Ask someone to read the scripture aloud, then allow time for absorption of the text. *Suggested time: 5 minutes*
- **Finding the Word in the World:** a story or illustration relating to the text; some excerpted from *A Cup of Cold Water* by David Douglas (by permission), others from mission teams who have been engaged with LWW in a developing area of the world. Ask someone to read the selection, or have several people each read a paragraph or two, pausing occasionally for discussion. *Suggested time: 10 minutes*
- **Reflecting upon the Situation:** Offer each of the reflection questions to the group, asking them to react and then share thoughts with the group if they feel comfortable doing so. Remember that there are no right or wrong reactions – open dialogue and mutual respect are crucial to group dynamics. *Suggested time: 10 minutes*
- **Listening for the Call to Action:** based upon the text, the story, and the shared reflections, what action can we take as individuals or as a group? Where is God in this action, and how does this action affect us, others, and the kingdom of God? *Suggested time: 5 minutes*
- **Praying for Discernment and Guidance:** a prayer is included in each session. However, feel free to use your own words, or to ask others to offer prayer. Remember, silence is a form of prayer, too. *Suggested time: 5 minutes*



# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



## Introduction to this VBS

*Living Waters for the World* is the mission project of the Synod of Living Waters, Presbyterian Church (USA). Believing Jesus Christ to be living water for our bodies and our souls, we are called to serve people of the world who need safe drinking water. *Living Waters for the World* provides training and equipment to establish water purification systems throughout the world, in partnership with the communities in need of safe water. Part of the process is also to conduct educational programs with the people who will be using the water. These partnerships usually take place in places where no safe water is available, or where safe water is too expensive for people to buy. And the need grows larger each year! So, it's very important for people in the US, including our children, to learn about this mission and how to participate in it.

*Water All Around the World* is designed to enable children to understand the importance of access to clean water for health, and to make them aware of the way in which this access (or lack of access!) affects the lives of children in other countries. It also teaches the value of water in our own lives and encourages conservative use. This material can simply raise awareness in children of the world's great need for access to safe water, or it may educate a church preparing to send a Living Waters team on an international mission partnership visit.

The curriculum emphasizes student and teacher creativity and is open to modification for various age groups. Participation by the congregation and governing body is encouraged through offerings to be used to purchase water purification equipment or to sponsor a mission team to engage in this mission.

Each day of this five-day VBS includes an opening time which focuses on a different country, a Bible story, a mission story, activities and crafts, recreation and snacks, music, reflection, and a closing time. A "bonus section" is included as well (Water Magic), which illustrates some of the surprising characteristics of water. The VBS is easily adapted for use by very large or very small congregations.

This VBS is not flashy or expensive, but it is thoughtful and respectful of our children's ability to be sensitive to the needs of others. It is designed to expose them to lifestyles far different from ours, and to give them an opportunity to reflect on a deeper level about the significance of the selected Bible stories and the ways in which they might be able to share the love of Jesus with children around the world, in spite of differences in nationality, language and culture.

Millions of people die every year from *preventable* water-related diseases. And most of them are children under the age of five. *Tens* of millions more are living with chronic illnesses caused by unsafe water - children who will never reach their God-given potential due to the toll that chronic illness takes on their developing bodies and brains. What better way for *our* healthy children to begin to do mission than to participate in this Bible School and look toward the goal of clean water for *all* God's children everywhere! For more information, visit [www.livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org).



## Visit Five Countries

Each day of this five-day VBS includes an opening time which focuses on a different country, a Bible story, a mission story, activities and crafts, recreation and snacks, music, reflection, and a closing time. You will visit the following countries:

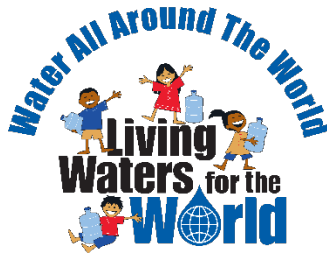




## Sample Schedule – Option 1 (5 age groupings, 5 activity stations)

| Time<br>(5 min. transition) | Group 1  | Group 2         | Group 3         | Group 4         | Group 5         |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| (15 min.)                   | Opening Assembly   |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| (20 min.)                   | Bible Story  | Mission Story   | Crafts          | Music           | Rec/Snack       |
| (20 min.)                   | Rec/Snack  | Bible Story     | Mission Story   | Crafts          | Music           |
| (20 min.)                   | Music  | Rec/Snack       | Bible Story     | Mission Story   | Crafts          |
| (20 min.)                   | Crafts   | Music           | Rec/Snack       | Bible Story     | Mission Story   |
| (20 min.)                   | Mission Story  | Crafts          | Music           | Rec/Snack       | Bible Story     |
| (20 min.)                   | Reflection Time  | Reflection Time | Reflection Time | Reflection Time | Reflection Time |
| (10 min.)                   | Closing Assembly<br>( on Day 5 only: option for Closing Program) |                 |                 |                 |                 |





## General Instructions: Opening and Closing Assembly

The **Opening Assembly** is designed to introduce children to the way in which children in various countries typically access and use water. This time can be tailored to fit your situation but should include a daily welcome to the children and the presentation of information about the featured country of the day. If you wish to use projection equipment to enhance this time, you will find the PowerPoint presentation for Opening Assembly helpful – you’ll find it in the digital files link for this curriculum.

This time is designed as a dialogue between the VBS director (script in black) and a "travel guide" (script in blue) who talks about the day's country. Be dramatic! It makes the time come alive for the children!

A map of the world and flags of the featured nations also make the room interesting and colorful. Use your imagination for other props! Perhaps members of your congregation have traveled to these places and have interesting items with which to decorate the room.

The **Closing Assembly** is designed to teach the children about the problems with water around the world, and to demonstrate the ways in which *Living Waters for the World* is helping to improve access to safe water in the featured countries. The director may wish to wear a costume from the day's country while he/she tells of the problem of unsafe water there, and what is being done about it, encouraging the children to bring offerings to help. Photographs of Living Waters purification systems in that country may be shown to help students see the good results of this work. The goal of this time is for the children to understand the importance of getting clean water to all of God's children everywhere. Photos in the file may be printed and displayed around the room as well. If you wish to use projection equipment to enhance this time, you will find the PowerPoint presentation for the Closing Assembly helpful - you'll find it in the digital files link for this curriculum. The final day's closing is a presentation of some of the activities of the week, especially singing, to which parents and friends may be invited. The design of this final closing is entirely yours!

### Countries that will be “visited” each day:

| Country               | Mission Focus                   |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Children in Guatemala | Water is necessary to life.     |
| Children in Cuba      | Water is sometimes very scarce. |
| Children in Mexico    | Water can be dangerous!         |
| Children in Haiti     | Water is a sign of grace.       |
| Children in Ghana     | Jesus Gives us Living Water.    |

For more information or to purchase this curriculum, go to  
[www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/vbs](http://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/vbs).