



# VACATION BIBLE CAMP: WATER



**Free Resource for  
Households,  
Churches and  
Individuals**

## **What You'll Find Inside**

---

- Water-themed Goldy Play recorded story resources
- Five modules with Way of Love activities to explore
- Adaptations for churches or households, at home, hybrid, or in person

# VACATION BIBLE CAMP: WATER

## Table of Contents

### Front Matter

---

- Welcome p. 1
- How to Use the Modules + Wondering p. 2
- Introduction to the Way of Love p. 3
- The Rhythm of Godly Play pp. 4-6
- Biblical Connections p. 7

### Modules

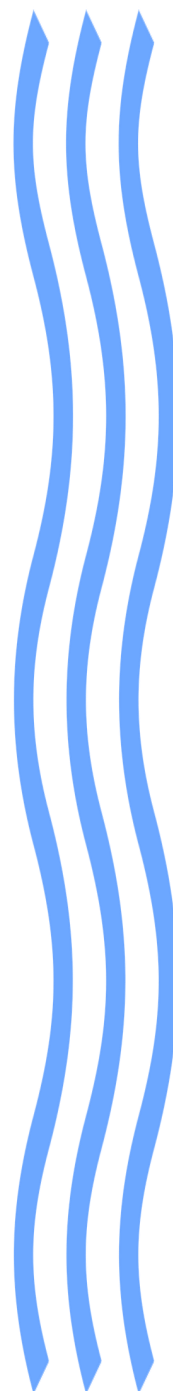
---

1. The Parable of the Deep Well / LEARN pp. 8-9
2. The Story of the Exodus / TURN pp. 10-11
3. Jonah, The Backward Prophet / PRAY pp. 12-13
4. The Parable of the Good Shepherd / BLESS pp. 14-15
5. Jesus Meets His Disciples / GO pp. 16-17

### End Matter

---

- Further Resources p. 18
- Acknowledgements p. 18





**Welcome** to the shared Godly Play Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) experience, envisioned and assembled by members of the Diocese of Maine.

### Potential Use in Churches:

---

- in-person experiences
- sharing with individual households
- hybrid model, such as completing the videos and activities at home but coming together at the end of the summer to share the learning with your wider community

### Scheduling to Fit Your Needs:

---

These modules could be used one per day, over the course of a week as a traditional Vacation Bible Camp structure, or could be used at various points over the summer. You can adapt these ideas to meet your needs.

### Please Use As You See Fit!

---

This resource is for use by anyone interested in a Christian formation experience this summer.

There are no expectations for use at the diocesan level. Rather, this program is offered as a tool that may, or may not, be helpful to you and your worship community.

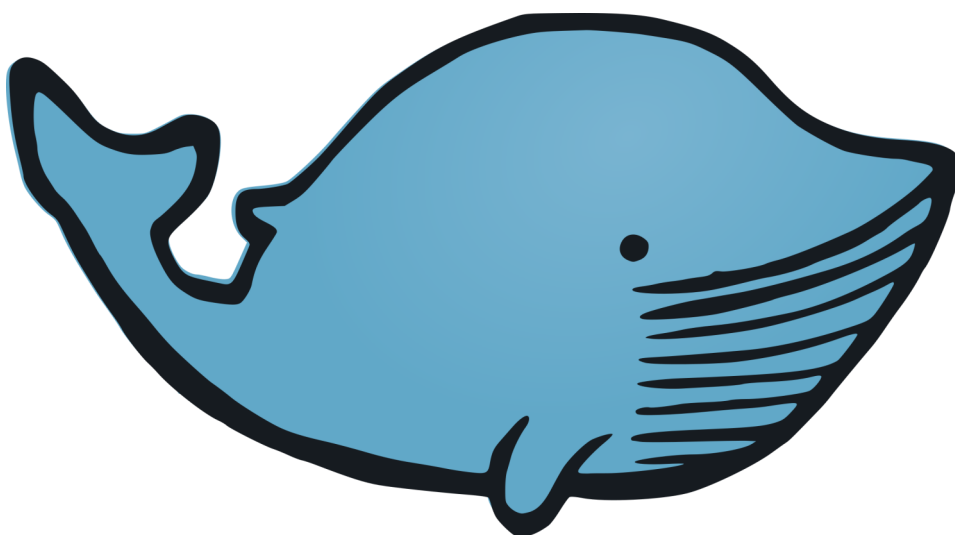


## How to Use the Modules

---

Inside, you'll find five modules that highlight a Godly Play story related to *water*. Each module includes a video of one adult telling a Godly Play story. The Response Time framework can be used as open-ended "wondering" for children to find ways to respond to the story. The same practice can be used following each story.

The value isn't only in the story told- it's also in learning how to quiet the mind and wonder about metaphor and imagination and God's true presence with us. It is part of the Godly Play approach to Christian formation and allows children to work with the story they've heard in their own way.

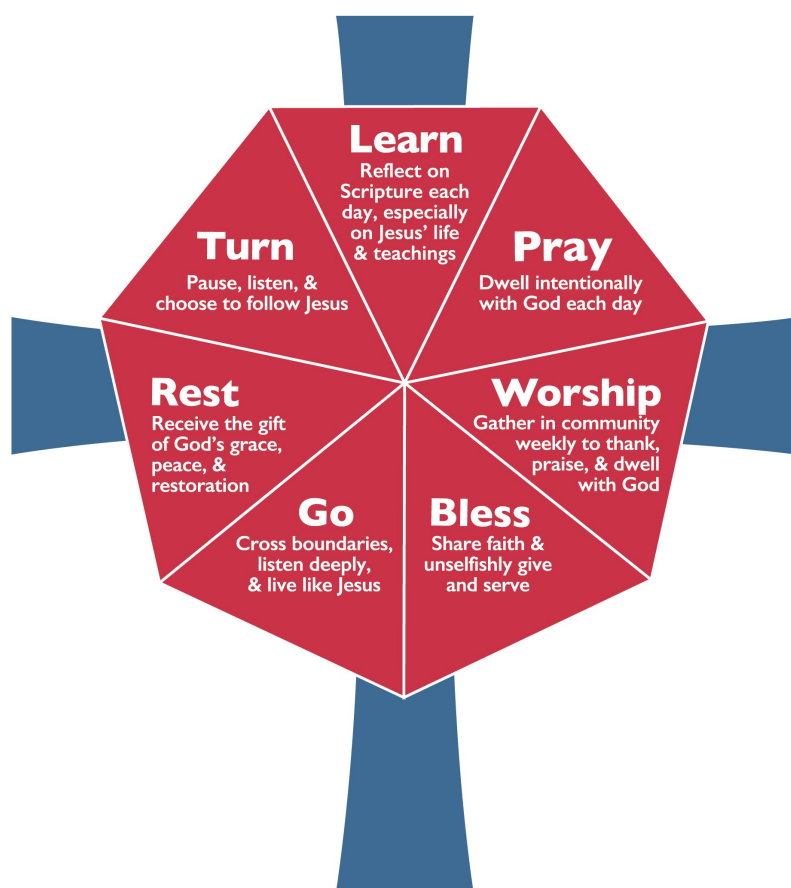


### Wondering

---

You will notice each story ends with a series of questions posed by the adult. These questions can be wondered about/responded to by whomever is present in your context. There are NO right or wrong answers- remember, it's not "wondering" if you think you know the answer already.





## THE WAY OF LOVE

*Practices for Jesus-Centered Life*

## The Way of Love—VBC and Beyond

The Way of Love can be used to guide us toward a Jesus-centered life, and can help keep our spiritual lives balanced by encouraging us to connect with God in ways that are familiar and also ways that are new to us.

In the graphic above, you'll find a few suggestions for you to explore the parts of the Way of Love wheel. You may have lots of other ideas! No way that you may choose to respond to the story is wrong! Just as each one of us is unique, so are the ways we may use the wheel to respond to God in our lives.

You'll notice that each module includes a set of extension activities following the [Episcopal Church's Way of Love](#).

Consider using one, some or all of these extension activities based upon the Way of Love, or using this time in a way that feels right for your context.

This set of practices is independent of the Godly Play method, and is offered as suggestions to use in addition to the stories and responses.

The Way of Love practices could be used by a group or household. You know your context best!



# The Rhythm of Godly Play

---



## Get Ready

---

A big part of Godly Play is practicing how to “get ready,” which is good for people of all ages! Still your mind, heart and body. Take deep breaths. Look others in the eye and smile warmly. Give yourself a hug or practice tightening your muscles one at a time, then releasing them.

Before you begin the watching the story video, everyone should be calm and “ready” to openly receive the story.

In a Godly Play classroom, children are welcomed to step across the threshold by a doorkeeper, someone who helps children get ready and invites them into the sacred space by name, one by one, to take their place in the circle.



## The Story

---

Each module includes a link to watch a Godly Play story. These stories are a unique way of engaging our Biblical and faith traditions.

## Diversity at Work:

### My Ready is Not Your Ready

---

A note about people who find “getting ready” to be challenging, or whose “ready” may not look like it does for others in the community:

It is important that we craft our circles to be welcoming and inclusive for everyone.

Having a second adult present is often helpful. The adult can partner with someone who may need to be seated apart from others to be “ready,” and can respond most fully to additional needs a person may express.

It is critical that everyone understands there are no punishments in our circles—that the story is for everyone and that our “ready” is as diverse as we are.

## Process-Oriented Responses

---

In a Godly Play classroom, children are invited to use stories they've heard before, open-ended art supplies, simple sketch books or model altars.

Any number of simple materials designed to allow individuals to process or inwardly digest what they've just experienced.

### It's Not About the End Product

---

One important note about response time: the goal is *not to create a beautiful product*. Response time is a rare place to experience the process of making and to notice thoughts and feelings, not to produce a beautiful piece of art or poetry to share with others.



## Wonder

---

Each story will end with a series of questions posed by the storyteller. Remember, everyone is welcome to engage, and there are NO right or wrong answers.



## Respond

---

When you feel the wondering has ended, invite those in your context to choose a way to respond to what they've experienced.

You might offer playdoh/wiki stix or beeswax and watercolor, space outside to walk and wander, musical instruments, space to dance or notebooks for journaling.

The key is to offer a few choices but not to overwhelm, and to offer only activities that are open-ended. Worksheets or scripted craft projects are not the goal of response time- rather, we encourage participants to choose how to respond to God touching their hearts, souls and minds. It is a good idea to offer the same response time activities after each module so individuals can really reflect on the experience of the story and wondering rather than the new material.

## Feast

---

The Feast is enjoyed together. In a classroom it is often crackers and grapes or grape juice. Regardless, as the sequence of the Godly Play session follows the Eucharist, so we share this sacred meal together.

You know what is best in your context. Perhaps a snack with grace said, and serving passed from one person to another with some conversation is feasible.

## Bless and Go

---

When all the work is done, the feast is cleaned up, and the space is looking neat and ready for the next session, the leader must thank each participant (by name, if possible) for being a part of the circle.

We value each person there and must express that verbally. We must thank God for the gift of being together and to ask blessing until the next time we can be together.

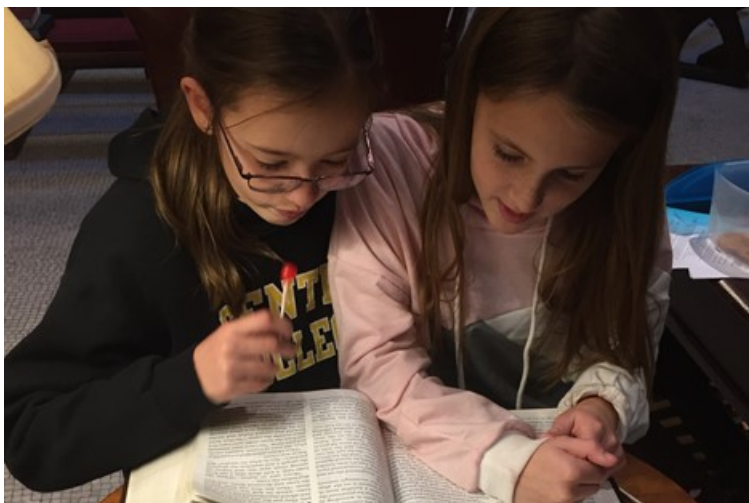




# Biblical Connections in the Modules

---

Module 1	The Parable of the Deep Well <i>John 4:13-15, Revelation 21:6</i>	LEARN
Module 2	The Story of the Exodus <i>Exodus 11:1-15:21</i>	TURN
Module 3	Jonah, The Backward Prophet <i>Jonah</i>	PRAY
Module 4	The Parable of the Good Shepherd <i>John 10:1-21</i>	BLESS
Module 5	Jesus Meets His Disciples <i>Luke 24:13-44</i>	GO



## Online Bible Resources

---

- [Common English Bible](#)
- [New Revised Standard Version](#)
- Dozens of different translations available at [Bible Gateway](#)

# Module 1: The Parable of the Deep Well / LEARN

---



## Get Ready

---

Pause and calm bodies and minds so all people gathered are ready to hear the story and be part of the circle.



## The Story

---

Watch the [video of The Deep Well](#) Godly Play story, told by Sally Thomas, Godly Play trainer and member of the Diocese of Maine.



## Wonder

---

Pause and reflect on each of the wondering questions with those in your context.



## Respond

---

Invite participants to choose from a pre-selected array of open-ended materials for people to use as they work through what they've experienced in the story, the wondering and as they make connections to their lived experience.



## Feast

---

Use the Eucharist as a model for holy time offering a prayer and sharing a simple meal. Chat freely and make good human connections with one another.



## Bless and Go

---

Thank each participant by name and share a prayer of thanksgiving to God, asking for blessings until you are able to be together again.

## Remembering The Rhythm

---

Refer back to the detailed description of how to enact the Godly Play rhythm on pages 4-6 of this document.

# Module 1: The Parable of the Deep Well / LEARN

---

## Way of Love Extension Activities

LEARN encourages us to read scripture every day, especially about Jesus' life and teachings. We can practice learning in a variety of ways, drawing things we learn back to Jesus and his ministry.

- Learn how to make your own “golden thread” by practicing tying knots and making a bracelet or keychain loop. Perhaps you might use golden yarn or embroidery floss or fabric for added inspiration. [Click here to see directions and a video.](#)
- [Learn how real engineers in the ancient world](#) developed technology to get water from their own wells! This is a device called an Archimedes Screw and it really works (you need PVC pipe, clear vinyl tubing, duct tape, scissors and food coloring).
- Learn something about someone in your life, or in your VBC group. [These questions will inspire you!](#)
- Learn by choosing a story from the Bible you have never read before. Talk about where you found some “golden threads” and “deep wells” in your Bible story. No one around to talk to? Choose a beloved stuffed animal, toy, pet or plant to share your ideas with, or maybe draw a picture to share your ideas with someone at another time.



## Module 2: The Story of the Exodus / TURN

---



### Get Ready

---

Pause and calm bodies and minds so all people gathered are ready to hear the story and be part of the circle.



### The Story

---

Watch this [video of the story of the Exodus](#), told by Godly Play trainer Doug Watts.



### Wonder

---

Pause and reflect on each of the wondering questions with those in your context.



### Respond

---

Invite participants to choose from a pre-selected array of open-ended materials for people to use as they work through what they've experienced in the story, the wondering and as they make connections to their lived experience.



### Feast

---

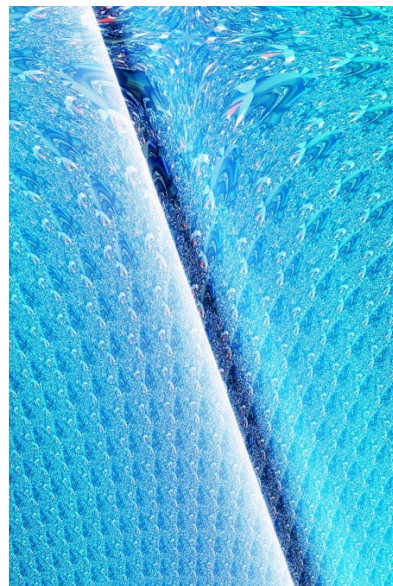
Use the Eucharist as a model for holy time offering a prayer and sharing a simple meal. Chat freely and make good human connections with one another.



### Bless and Go

---

Thank each participant by name and share a prayer of thanksgiving to God, asking for blessings until you are able to be together again.



## Module 2: The Story of the Exodus / TURN

---

### Way of Love Extension Activities

TURN encourages us to practice pausing and noticing Jesus in our midst. This is hard to do sometimes! Here are some tangible ways to walk Jesus's path, caring for all creation.

- The Red Sea is a real place! [Click here to explore the coral reefs](#) there with your family or group.
- [Here's some more advanced information](#) about the reef environment.
- Make your own coral reef using resources you can find at home. [Try this fun craft idea](#) or, for younger participants, this [other fun craft idea](#).
- Part of noticing God and participating in God's dream is caring for all of creation. You might research ways you can care for the Earth's oceans. [Find some suggestions for home, town, and on the water here](#).



- Try a simple conservation exercise: turn off the water when you brush your teeth tonight!
- Practice saying a prayer each time you notice you are using water. When you turn on the tap for a drink of water, a bath, or to water your garden. What about when you put on clean clothes today? Thank God for the water that washed them. How about the sweat on your forehead from playing? Thank God for your body's use of water to power and sustain. Is it raining? Thank God for the fresh, sustaining power of rain.

TURN helps us to remember to notice God at work in our lives. The United Thank Offering, a ministry of the Episcopal Church, helps us to develop a daily practice of gratitude. They invite us to give each time we notice a blessing in our own lives, so others may receive blessings from our own. [Learn more about using UTO](#) to turn our blessings into blessings for others.



## Module 3: Jonah, The Backward Prophet / PRAY

---



### Get Ready

---

Pause and calm bodies and minds so all people gathered are ready to hear the story and be part of the circle.



### The Story

---

Watch this [video of Jonah, The Backward Prophet](#) told by friends at a Presbyterian Church in Decatur.



### Wonder

---

Pause and reflect on each of the wondering questions with those in your context.



### Respond

---

Invite participants to choose from a pre-selected array of open-ended materials for people to use as they work through what they've experienced in the story, the wondering and as they make connections to their lived experience.



### Feast

---

Use the Eucharist as a model for holy time offering a prayer and sharing a simple meal. Chat freely and make good human connections with one another.



### Bless and Go

---

Thank each participant by name and share a prayer of thanksgiving to God, asking for blessings until you are able to be together again.



## Module 3: Jonah, The Backward Prophet / PRAY

### Way of Love Extension Activities

In the belly of the whale, Jonah was left with nothing but prayer. How do you think whales helped Jonah learn about what was important to him and his relationship with God? How might the story have been different if another animal was used?

#### Conversations to Have with a Trusted Adult

Has there been a time in your life when you felt all you had left was prayer? Did you feel God was listening and responding? Talk with someone you trust, or a stuffed friend, plant or pet rock- about how that time felt for you and how you did, or didn't, feel God's presence at that time.

There are so many great ways to pray. Check out the following.

- A coloring prayer! Yes, really! Check out [Praying in Color](#), and [here are a few free Praying in Color](#) pages to try.
- Try out these fun and easy [Five Finger prayers](#).



- Try body prayer- moving your body as you say the words of a prayer in your mind, out loud, or with no words at all, only movement. The Psalms are great places to start.

Whales are amazing creatures! Perhaps you'd like to explore more?

- [The Octonauts](#) explore under the ice.
- Find more [from PBS](#).
- Make a [fun whale friend](#) to remind you of how Jonah found God in his darkest spaces.

## Module 4: The Parable of the Good Shepherd / BLESS

---



### Get Ready

---

Pause and calm bodies and minds so all people gathered are ready to hear the story and be part of the circle.



### The Story

---

Watch this [video of The Parable of the Good Shephard](#) told by Godly Play Trainer Ryan Campbell.



### Wonder

---

Pause and reflect on each of the wondering questions with those in your context.



### Respond

---

Invite participants to choose from a pre-selected array of open-ended materials for people to use as they work through what they've experienced in the story, the wondering and as they make connections to their lived experience.



### Feast

---

Use the Eucharist as a model for holy time offering a prayer and sharing a simple meal. Chat freely and make good human connections with one another.



### Bless and Go

---

Thank each participant by name and share a prayer of thanksgiving to God, asking for blessings until you are able to be together again.



## Module 4: The Parable of the Good Shepherd / BLESS

### Way of Love Extension Activities



BLESS invites us to share faith and unselfishly give to others.

- Find an animal to care for. You can start by feeding, brushing or walking a pet you have at home. Or, you can care for animals around you. One way is with a [bird feeder](#) or by [making an insect hotel](#)
- Local animal shelters do amazing work. Learn about an animal shelter in your neighborhood. Is there a way you could go and help? Share the shelter's wish list?
- Meet some animals in person or on the internet. Visit a farm, neighbor, or wildlife park. Research an animal you haven't seen and watch it move! Can you move in the same way? What are differences and similarities you notice? How could you bless this animal for the joy and learning it has brought to your life just by being itself?
- Being a blessing starts with noticing need in the world, as Jesus did. When you pause and look around, where do you see need in your community? God gives us all ways to respond to need with blessing. How can you respond to a need you see in a way all your own?

### Being A Blessing

Remember that "blessing" doesn't always mean "solving." Could you offer encouragement or participate in a larger effort to share a blessing with others? What questions could you ask to help you understand where your blessing might be best offered and received? What do you especially love or are especially good at? Is there a way to offer that gift in a way that it would bless others, animals, the planet and God?

Clean water is needed in many communities worldwide. The Good Shepherd leads sheep to good, clear, fresh water. Are there ways that you could help to offer fresh water? Learn more about [Episcopal Relief and Development's global efforts to clean water](#) and how you can help.

## Module 5: Jesus Meets His Disciples / GO

---



### Get Ready

---

Pause and calm bodies and minds so all people gathered are ready to hear the story and be part of the circle.



### The Story

---

Watch this video [Known in the Morning](#) told by friends at Trinity Episcopal Church in Portland, Oregon.\*



### Wonder

---

Pause and reflect on each of the wondering questions.



### Respond

---

Invite participants to choose from a pre-selected array of open-ended materials for people to use as they work through what they've experienced in the story, the wondering and as they make connections to their lived experience.



### Feast

---

Use the Eucharist as a model for holy time offering a prayer and sharing a simple meal. Chat freely and make good human connections with one another.



### Bless and Go

---

Thank each participant by name and share a prayer of thanksgiving to God, asking for blessings until you are able to be together again.

\*This video has more of the full Godly Play session, like being met at the door and welcomed into the space, changing the calendar and guidance about getting ready. The lesson is told in a series that lasts the season of Easter. We are focused on the lesson about Jesus being known to his disciples in a new way after his death and resurrection, and making the fishing nets full and eating with his friends on the beach.



## Module 5: Jesus Meets His Disciples / GO

---

### Way of Love Extension Activities

GO tells us to cross boundaries, listen deeply and live like Jesus. That means we have to step out of our comfort zones, wherever they are, to be bold and ask how we might serve others. Jesus appears to his disciples on the beach after the resurrection- he certainly crosses borders! Jesus encourages Peter and the others to go everywhere and tell everyone, no matter the cost to themselves.

[Episcopal Migration Ministries](#) works on behalf of the Episcopal Church to help people fleeing crisis, war, persecution and famine worldwide. Find out ways that you can support their mission to cross borders and meet needs for the most vulnerable, just as Jesus did.

- Jesus invites his disciples to trust and their nets overflow! Consider [hosting your own feast](#) by making some food to share with those around you:
- The disciples decided to stop their journey and go fishing. Think about [making your own boat](#). You can decorate it with nets, fish, or prayers like Peter did!
- Print and play [Go Fish](#) with a friend or with your group. Consider sharing a way Jesus been known to you in your life each time you get a match! Or perhaps you can share a way you might offer someone else a blessing each time you have a match.



## Additional Resources

Episcopal Maine [website](#)

Introduction to Godly Play [video](#)

Godly Play Foundation [website](#)

Episcopal Church's [Way of Love webpage](#)



## Acknowledgements

Emily Keniston, Consultant for Christian Formation; Curriculum Writer

Sophia Berry; Curriculum Collaborator

Sara D'Angio White, Canon for Youth Ministry; Design Collaborator

Maine Episcopal Christian Education Collaboration; Curriculum Collaborators

