



AN UNDERSEA JOURNEY TO UNDERSTAND OUR LIFE ON EARTH

13-WEEK SERIES LEADER'S GUIDE

Written By David Goebelbecker and Sheila Stringfield

Illustrated by David Goebelbecker

For more information about Kidco Labs, please go to:

www.kidcolabs.com

e-mail: info@kidcolabs.com

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SERIES OVERVIEW & LESSON SUMMARY

SERIES KEY VERSE

“Come follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” – Matthew 4:19

SERIES OVERVIEW

As the session key verse states, we are called to be fishers of men—ones who gather the lost back to the Father. It is the most important thing that we can do while we are still here on earth. But if we are called to become fishers of men, then that makes the people around us fish. In reality, we are no different than they are. We all need Jesus and without Him we are lost in the currents of whatever the world has to offer.

Jesus used the “fisherman” metaphor to help His disciples understand their purpose and calling as they followed Him. They understood what He meant because many of them came from areas where fishing was a common way of life. This series is, in essence, a 13-week parable that follows the same line of teaching that Jesus used. As we explore God’s undersea creatures, we will learn more about the lives of people around us and about ourselves.

The primary goal is to help the children become more confident in being a Christian and learn how to reach out to others—no matter what kind of fish they are. They may be playful as dolphins or quiet as clams, but each has an important place in the community.

WEEKLY LESSON SUMMARY

WEEK 1: AN OCEAN OF POSSIBILITIES

The Ocean/Our World and God

In this first week, the children will understand the power that is on the surface of the ocean based on what we see and understand now, but we plan to go deeper. As believers, we start learning about God only on the surface but it isn’t until we start to live by faith that we really understand the deeper truths.

WEEK 2: A WIDE WORLD OF FISH – Which Kind Are You?

A World of Diversity

Fish were created in all shapes, colors and sizes. They were also created with very distinct personalities and purposes. This week is an overview of many of the fish we will be looking at in the coming weeks as we start to compare them to people around us and ask ourselves ‘what kind of fish am I’?

WEEK 3: ROCK SOLID

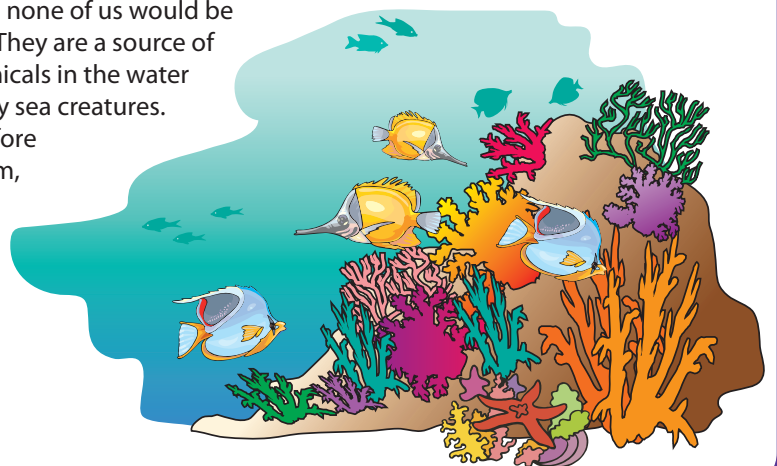
The Coral Reef/The Church

The coral reef is home to countless sea life that makes it home. The truth about coral is that it is both alive and dead. The outer layer is alive and active, but just underneath then is a solid base made on those that have lived before. This is the same with our faith. The church today is alive and active, but it wouldn’t be if it weren’t for countless people who held to their faith before we were born and passed down what they knew to us.

WEEK 4: TINY POWER OF THE SEA

Plankton/Our Faith and Our Deeds

Although most of it is not visible to the naked eye, plankton is one of the most critical forms of life in the ocean. In truth, none of us would be alive today without these tiny particles of life. They are a source of oxygen for the planet, they help balance chemicals in the water and they serve as a major food source for many sea creatures. In the same way, many of the things we do before God are small and unnoticed, but without them, there are many people that would not be touched by the power of God through the church. No one is too small and no act is too unimportant for God.



WEEK 5: SMART FISH STAY IN SCHOOL**Blue Tang/Fellowship with Believers**

A fish that swims alone has only one name... food for larger fish that is. If you have ever watched a tank of fish, most of the time, fish will stay together or look for safe places to stay when they are alone. They are smart because they know they can't make it all alone; they have a better chance of survival if they stick together.

WEEK 6: THE GREATEST WILL SERVE**Whales/God's Power in Our Lives**

God can use us to reach others, whether we are willing or not. The story of Jonah is the perfect example of how God can use anything to get His message across when we are not willing to obey. During this lesson, we take an undersea look at the story from the whale's perspective as one of the largest animals on earth.

WEEK 7: MAKING A SPLASH**Dolphins/Freedom in Christ-Accountability**

Dolphins are lovable, playful creatures. Some scientists say that they are the most intelligent of all sea life. What makes them intelligent is that they know how to stick together and help each other. Dolphins also know how to have a great time. God created an entire world for us to use and enjoy.

WEEK 8: DANGERS OF THE DEEP**Sharks/Knowing Your Enemy**

Although Jesus had crowds of people that came to hear his teaching, there were also those that were looking to harm Him. Jesus warned us that it would be the same with us as we choose to follow Him. No matter how kind we are, there will always be some that will continue to be mean and unaccepting of our kindness. Although we need to be aware of them, we need to keep our focus on God at all times, because He is still bigger than anything that can come our way.

WEEK 9: BOTTOM DWELLERS**Crabs/Gossip and Critical talk**

Just as there are animals that live on the bottom of the sea in the muck as slime, there are those that love to stay where all the garbage is. In the sea, these creatures have a purpose because they help clean up the mess that others make. People who remain in the middle of messes though can become a little "crabby" if they don't know what to do. It's time to stop looking at the mess of problems and try swimming where the water is clearer.

WEEK 10: SILENCE IS PRICELESS**Oysters/Keeping Secrets and True Love**

Last week, we learned about bottom dwellers that choose to remain in the middle of a mess. Sometimes, however, we are stuck in difficult times for a time. Rather than complaining about our situation, we need to close our mouths and open our hearts in prayer. In the end, God's grace and mercy will be shown and our faith will become more precious than the greatest pearl.

WEEK 11: LENDING A HELPING HAND**The Octopus/Helping Others through Actions**

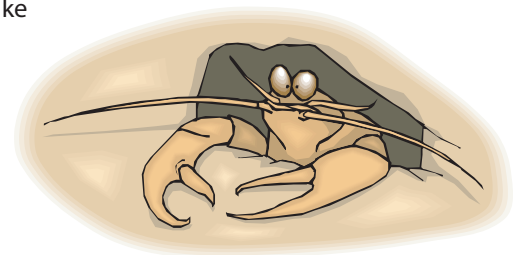
The octopus is a strange creature that always has an extra hand to give. After all, he has eight of them and he knows how to use them. This week, we need to learn that no matter how big or small we are, we can always lend a hand to those in need to help them out.

WEEK 12: SHOW YOUR COLORS**Living on the Coral Reef/Being Yourself**

Over the past few weeks, we have learned about many different sea creatures. We will find that the ones we relate to the most will change from day to day, but if we trust God through every circumstance, we can remain faithful to Him and swim with the confidence in who He created us to be.

WEEK 13: GET OUT OF THE BOWL**Swimming Without Fear/Evangelism**

Fish weren't created to live in a bowl; they were made by God to swim free and follow the currents. This week, the children are encouraged to take what they have learned about fish use it in every day life. They will be challenged to stop thinking small—about only the few people that they surround themselves with—but start to look outward a little further. As they do, they will meet new people and have opportunities to share God's love with them too.



STANDARD LESSON ELEMENTS

At Kidco Labs, we believe that teaching should be tailored to fit the strengths of the ministry team and arranged to suit the needs of the children. This means planning, thought and care should go into each week's lesson preparation to make sure that every class time is special. It should be as unique as each child in the class, and allow each one to walk out with a lasting memory.

Every Kidco series has been written and used in a classroom setting. It is not something that we think works, but we KNOW it works. It has been written in the same order that it was originally taught that worked for us. As you read through the lessons, it is important to realize the various elements that make up the core of the lesson.

There is no perfect order or sequence to make them effective. This is a decision that you will need to make with your leaders. Remember, sometimes trying something new can have a dynamic effect on the overall outcome of the class. It is also important that you use as many of the leaders as possible to share in the teaching. Trading out speakers helps give variety to the message, it helps take the burden out of ministry and helps prevent burnout.

There are other reasons as well. The children will realize that all the leaders do work together as a team and each is knowledgeable in what they are sharing. For some children, there may be a leader that they have a special admiration for and hearing a portion of the message from that person may become the lasting memory that changes a child's life forever. This is what ministry is all about.

THE LESSON ELEMENTS

In each lesson, the following core components are used. These can be arranged in any order that you feel will be most effective to meet the needs of your children.

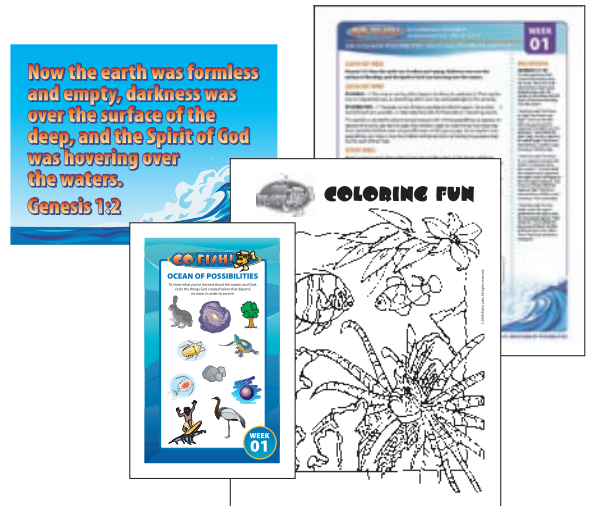
LESSON GOALS* – This is a summary of the overall lesson and should be considered when planning the class time. Your goal should be to make sure that by the end of the time together, the message was clear, understood and received in a way that the children could share with others if asked.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES* – There are times that we make references to passages in the Bible rather than reading the entire text. In these cases, it is helpful for the leaders to read the entire passage ahead of time so that they can answer any questions the children might have correctly when asked. We also believe that reading these Scripture passages ahead of time allows God to minister to the leaders and help us learn and grow in new ways too.

LESSON KEY VERSE – Each week, there is a key verse or memory verse that is part of the lesson. Although the verse will be covered during the class time, it is also the verse that they will need to memorize to gain points next week to complete their exploration mission.

OPENING EXERCISES – This section is comprised of all the normal details that need to be covered at the beginning of class—welcoming visitors, greeting children, giving updates on what happened last week, and encouraging children to keep up the good work. This is also the time to cover the classroom rules, announcements, the message from headquarters and any other updates children need to know about.

MESSAGE FROM HEADQUARTERS – The overall concept of Kidco Labs is about learning through exploration and discovery. Each week, a letter or message from the director at Headquarters is received encouraging the children in the mission and outlining the tasks for the day. The sole purpose of this letter is let the children know what to expect in the class. It doesn't tell them everything; it's just enough for them to know what the focus of the day is all about.



PRAISE AND WORSHIP - We believe that it is critical for children to learn how to praise God when they are young. Each lesson offers suggestions of either music from a DVD or a musical theme to arrange a worship set around. Each set should include high-energy praise, a moderate energy praise/worship song and an intimate worship selection that allows children to enter into God's presence.

PRAYER TIMES – We usually place our opening prayer time directly after praise and worship. The children will have the right hearts and attitudes to focus on prayer needs. We also recommend recording prayer needs from week to week so that leaders can continue to lift them up in prayer throughout the week. It also gives leaders something to check in with the kids later about. The closing prayer time allows the children a chance to make sure that their hearts are clean before God.

NOTE: If your children are not used to praying, we recommend allowing the children to pray for each other's needs. Once they have all given their requests and praise reports, select several of your children to pray for specific needs. It will help give them confidence to pray aloud in a group setting and will build their faith as these prayers are answered.

OFFERING OBJECT LESSON – God commands that we bring our tithes and offerings to the storehouse where we are fed. Each week, there is a portion of the lesson that is dedicated to helping the children understand the importance of giving to the church and to God.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES – Many children have a hard time memorizing things. Each of these activities is designed as a game that helps the children review the key verse several times. By the end of the activities, most of them will have the key verse committed to memory.

GROUP ACTIVITY – This game or activity is designed to be a high-energy segment of the class time. It is strategically placed just before the message to do 2 things. First, it helps burn off extra energy so that the children will be more attentive to the teaching. Second, the activities and games are designed to help the children begin to experience a portion of the message. These activities also serve as intros into the teaching portion of the lesson. In short, the children are doing more than having fun; they are starting to live the message.

EXPLORATION TIME – This is the core of the class time. It is recommended that the children be back in their seats and remain attentive during this portion of the class. During this time, the actual message will be shared.

NOTE: Although we love to use some rather wild props for games, skits and activities, we make it a point to show God all my respect during this time. It doesn't mean that we are somber or overly serious, but it does mean that what we say is to be taken as truth, not for fun! (we have told the children this on numerous occasions if one gets one of line.) Props and gimmicks should only be used to emphasize a point, not purely for entertainment value.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES – For kids, timing is everything. Once the message is over and the closing prayer is done, they are ready to go, even if the parents are not. We have all experienced the awkward times when we have completed our lesson, but no parents have arrived. This is what these games and activities are for—to fill that time productively with additional activities to keep the children's focus, allow them to have fun and further reinforce the message that they have heard.

WEEKLY ACTIVITY SHEETS – On the Resource CD, there are weekly activity sheets that can be printed and given to the children for extra points. Each sheet comes with games, puzzles, a coded message, the weekly memory verse, and a short mission to complete.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – As this series developed, we often found some very helpful information on various Web sites, in books or other sources. At the end of some of the lessons, we have tried to share any resources and links that we feel would be helpful for you.

NOTE: Since most information given is through the Internet, which is subject to change or removal, please let us know via e-mail at content@kidcolabs.com if you find anything we supplied to be inaccurate or unavailable.

was being

From each team select a 'sculptor' or 'sculptress'.
Select one judge (or one of your leaders).

- 3-4 pieces of clay or clay dough (same color)
- A slip-pan or dish
- High-energy music
- Place a chair on the stage with the back to the audience and have the judge sit down.
- Note the judge will call out an animal without looking at the teams. The sculptors need to make that animal from clay within the allotted time (to be set beforehand)
 - i.e. 8 minutes, 2 minutes, 30 seconds, etc.) When the time is up, have the judge look at the sculptures. The score sculptor the better, but there can be only one winner each time! The team that won received a point for the week. 10 points wins the game.


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
Children often have a lot of questions about creation and the Bible because of what they see on TV or hear in school. Here are a few Web site resources that can help you answer some of their questions when asked:

ANSWERS BY GENESIS www.answersingenesis.org
CREATION SCIENCE www.proofsofcreation.com/CIS
CHRISTIAN ANSWERS christiananswers.net

NOTE: These sites and other resources are also available at www.kidcolabs.com

WORSHIP RESOURCE
Hillsong Kids Music: CMT's most between 12-18 depending on where you purchase them. Currently they offer Supernatural, Jesus You're My Superhero and Super Strong God.

We found ordering them online was simple and convenient since local bookstores do not always stock them.



WEEK 01: AN OCEAN OF POSSIBILITIES 8 GO FISH!