

Dear Friends:

**Welcome to the 2013 VBS Fair!** We hope you'll make yourselves at home, browsing freely and evaluating the materials first-hand. The computer closest to the circulation desk is available for your use for watching DVDs or visiting publisher's websites. You will also find a CD player on a table in the exhibit area to listen to music CDs. Note that all of the reviews and videos are also available on our website: <http://www.vts.edu/cmt> Let us know if you need anything more, and please enjoy your time in Key Hall.

We would like to call your attention to our "**Top Picks.**" These merit serious consideration based on the following criteria:

- Theology: The love of God is emphasized more than the sinfulness of humans.
- Unity: A distinctive theme is supported by a cohesive program of developmentally-appropriate stories and activities.
- Inclusiveness: Text and graphics represent all God's people with respect and stereotypes are avoided.

"**Perennial Picks**" is also on display in the exhibit area. Many of these programs have been our "Top Picks" in previous years, and all are still being published and available for purchase. If your parish has not yet used them, we recommend that you consider them for VBS or other kinds of programs, such as summer and Lenten series.

We understand that there may be other criteria that are important in your congregation and may lead you to choose a VBS program other than our "Top Picks" or "Perennial Picks." We look forward to learning how and why you choose the program that you do. Be sure to keep us informed!

Attached is a copy of the VBS review list. For each curriculum in the Fair, the list gives a brief description, some strengths and weaknesses, and publisher/price information.

Thank you for visiting us. Please complete the brief evaluation form before you leave to help us meet your future resource needs. Best wishes in planning a 2013 VBS!

In Christ,

The CMT Leadership Team

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Virginia Theological Seminary  
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## **VBS Reviews 2013**

### **CMT Top Picks:**

Breathe It In – God Gives Life  
HayDay! Weekend VBS  
God’s Backyard Bible Camp – Under the Sun

### **Perennial Picks:**

The Abundant Life Garden Project  
Aslan is on the Move!  
Dare to be Different  
Festival of Faith  
Pilgrimage: Seeking the Kingdom of God  
ReNew: the Parable of the Sower  
Wild Willy’s Candy Factory: A new look at the Prodigal Son  
Wizards and Wonders: A Hero’s Journey with Harry Potter  
Rita Mosquito

### **Other Reviewed Programs:**

Hip-Hop Hope: Jesus Makes Me Glad  
SonWest Roundup  
Athens: Paul’s Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth  
Everywhere Fun Fair: Where God’s World Comes Together  
Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God  
Cool Adventures – in Spanish  
Tell It on the Mountain: Where Jesus Christ is Lord  
Peaceable Kingdom

**Name God's Backyard BIBLE CAMP \*under the SUN\***

Publisher: Standard Publishing  
Cost: \$199.99  
Contact: 800-243-9232  
Web Address: <http://standard.ssw.com>

We have always heard that service starts in our own backyard and this Vacation Bible School does just that. Standard started with five simple premises – Serve Family, Serve Friends, Serve Neighbors, Serve Community, Serve Jesus – and has shown that it does start in our own backyards. Each day starts with a particular group of people identified, and the Bible stories tie in well with the theme of each day. I don't know of any church that isn't looking for ways to engage their children and youth into mission/service and this is a good introduction to get not only the kids and youth but their entire church looking at mission/service in each of their own communities. Even the crafts and snacks can be adjusted to both the individual participant or something to give to others.

**Age Levels:**      Preschool (ages 3-5)  
                          Elementary/Preteen  
                          Teen  
                          Adult – purchase separately

**Includes:**

<b>X</b>	Director's Manual	<b>X</b>	Clip Art/Reproducible CD
<b>X</b>	Music CD		Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> )
<b>X</b>	Alternate schedule		Skits/Drama DVD
			On-line resources (photos, calendar of activities, slide show)

**Strengths:**

- Music is done by the Christian artist Yancy and is reproducible.
- Very service/mission oriented.
- All resources are on disc – each age-level has its own with all necessary information.
- The Bible stories chosen and the theme for each day work very well together.
- Includes one set of three different poster packs and the decorating guide.
- All the leader resources are included in the starter kit.
- Partnered with Back2Back Ministries for mission work with kids in Mexico.

**Weaknesses:**

- Some of the craft components might be pricey or hard to find but there are choices for each day.
- All resources are on a CD; it might be overwhelming at times to locate and print all the items you would need.
- All the leader guides are on 5x8 cards or booklets. Could be easily misplaced and the print is small for those of us with old eyes.

*Kellee Wattenbarger*

**Name Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God**

Publisher: Group Publishing  
Cost: \$165.99  
Contact: 800-447-1070  
Web Address: [www.group.com/vbs](http://www.group.com/vbs)

Described as an easy VBS, *Kingdom Rock: Where Kids Stand Strong for God* focuses on how to stand strong for God in every part of our lives. Each day, a different Bible point and story are used to show the children how followers of God and Jesus have helped others and themselves to stand strong through the use of God’s love, prayer, family and friends, trusting God, and the Bible. Elementary-age children are divided into multi-age crews of five with a crew leader; several crews rotate together through activity stations each day. Preschoolers have their own age-appropriate program. Opening sessions, snacks, and closing sessions are all done together. There is a mission project – “God’s Love for You,” a kid-friendly Scripture piece, written in Hindi for children in India.

**Age Levels:** Preschool (ages 3-5)  
Elementary (K-6)  
Teen – purchase separately  
Adult – not available

**Includes:**

X	Director’s Manual	X	Clip Art/Reproducible CD
X	Decorating video	X	Music Action Training DVD
X	Music CD	X	Skits/Drama DVD
X	Alternate schedule	X	On-line resources (photos, calendar of activities, slide show)

**Strengths:**

- The Director’s guide is clear, complete, and easy-to-use, regardless of program size.
- Program is fast-paced; activities are fun and engaging.
- Games are focused on cooperation, not competition.
- An online tool, “VBS P.R.O.” is available for planning registration.
- Children prepare the snacks.
- Science-related ideas have taken the place of crafts for elementary kids, which should appeal to boys.

**Weaknesses:**

- A separate “outlet catalog” sells many decorating ideas at [www.groupoutlet.com](http://www.groupoutlet.com).
- Chadder is animated again and is not as engaging as the live-action was in years past.
- Music is not reproducible.

*Kellee Wattenbarger*

## Name Athens: Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth

Publisher: Group Publishing  
Cost: \$132.99 for Starter Kit  
Contact: 800-447-1070  
Web Address: [www.group.com/vbs](http://www.group.com/vbs)

*Group* continues its exploration of the lives of real Biblical people in real places with this year's VBS program: *Athens: Paul's Dangerous Journey to Share the Truth*. Each day, intergenerational families gather in "oikos time" for Bible stories, they talk with the apostle Paul about his life and ministry, and they visit the Marketplace to learn about ancient Greek culture. Times of celebration begin and end each day, and parents are invited to participate fully. The hope is that VBS children will discover the joy of sharing belief in Jesus with an "anything goes" culture, while learning more about a key area of learning and influence in the ancient Near East. Paul's overarching message is "God loves us." The suggested mission project is to provide simple, short Bible story books to poor children in India. Online support for a parish VBS website and other administration details is available free.

**Age Levels:**     Preschool  
                      Elementary (younger and older)  
                      (Middle-school students and teens are invited to staff the program)

### Includes:

<u>  X  </u>	Director's Manual	<u>  X  </u>	Clip Art/Reproducible CD
		<u>  X  </u>	Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> )
<u>  X  </u>	Music CD	<u>  X  </u>	Skits/Drama DVD
<u>  X  </u>	Alternate schedule	<u>  X  </u>	On-line resources (assistance)

### Strengths:

- The "Ultimate Director Go-To Guide" is exactly that: All conceivable questions about running a VBS program are answered. Alternate schedules are clearly laid out.
- Volunteers can count on support and resources for learning about Paul's ministry.
- The theme is catchy, and should prove interesting to children.
- Snacks (served in the Marketplace) look wholesome and true to Middle East diets.

### Weaknesses:

- The craft kits, plus other items deemed essential for the full experience, can make this an expensive program.
- Extensive volunteer help will be needed to decorate either with materials sold by Group, or by setting up areas using homemade materials.
- Even a small program needs a lot of staff, preferably for the full week.
- Other than the opening and closing melodies, the music is somewhat uninteresting. Lyrics are repetitious.

*Joyce Walker*

**Name Breathe It In - God Gives Life**

Publisher: MennoMedia, an agency of the Mennonite Church USA  
Cost: \$134.99 for the boxed set  
Contact: 800-245-7894  
Web Address: [www.MennoMedia.org/vbs](http://www.MennoMedia.org/vbs)

Through Bible stories of breath and wind, youngsters explore how God’s own breath was used to create people, and how the wind of the Spirit helped the young church to grow.  
Daily Themes: Breathe in life (Gen. 1, 2); Breathe in hope (Ezekiel 37); Breathe in new life (Acts 2).

**Age Levels:**     Preschool (ages 4-5)  
                          Elementary (grades 1-5)

**Includes:**

- |                                     |                    |                          |   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Director’s Manual  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clip Art/Reproducible CD  |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> )                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Music CD           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skits/Drama DVD   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Alternate schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> | On-line resources (photos,<br>calendar of activities, slide show) |

**Strengths:**

- Broadly graded, therefore useful for smaller programs.
- No major decorating options required or on sale.
- A set of post-VBS activities is available.
- Separate guides for use with preschoolers.

**Weaknesses:**

- Session plans do not show “how to” drawings for craft projects, or suggestions for timing.
- Broadly graded, therefore some activities may be less appealing to older children.
- No specific mission or outreach component.

*Joyce Walker*

## **Name** Everywhere Fun Fair: Where God's World Comes Together

**Publisher:** Cokesbury  
**Cost:** \$89.99 for Starter Kit  
**Contact:** 800.672.1789  
**Web Address:** cokesbury.com

*Everywhere Fun Fair: Where God's World Comes Together* uses various scripture stories to teach five themes about the qualities of being a good neighbor, and explores five different places around the globe. Each day participants visit a different country – Japan, Zimbabwe, United Kingdom, Australia, and Mexico – and learn traditions, games, and sometimes words from that country as well as the themes for each day – that neighbors are friendly, giving, bold, forgiving, and welcoming. This curriculum includes a variety of teaching options on each lesson: storytelling, drama, art, music, dance and even science projects and mission/outreach opportunities with local and international options.

### **Age levels:**

Preschool (4-5)	Elementary (younger and older)
Teens – purchased separately	Adult – purchased separately

### **Includes:**

Director's Manual  
Guides for preschool and elementary leaders, as well as separate guides for music, crafts, discovery time, assembly, recreation, decorating, snack, reflection time, and mission.  
Samples of preschool and both elementary students' books and various crafts, and other promotional items.  
Music CD and introductory DVD.

### **Strengths**

- There are options of either purchasing various materials or doing things from scratch for each lesson.
- Director's guide is very extensive and could be used by someone who had never done a VBS program before.
- Options for scheduling over a week, for full days, half days, and even one day.
- Music is very upbeat and easy to sing.
- Leaders' guides are very complete, including complete scripts for people who haven't taught or led programs previously.
- Outreach projects are extensive and could be extended beyond the length of VBS programming.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Multiplicity of options at all levels could be overwhelming for people who are new to programming.
- Music was limited culturally and stylistically; only one song used words from a region that was included in the countries that are "visited."
- While there are options to do this on a limited budget, many of the activities and crafts would require additional purchases.
- Only one scripture translation is used – The Common English Bible.

## **Name Tell It on the Mountain**

**Publisher:** Concordia (Lutheran)  
**Cost:** \$129.99, with many items for optional additional purchase  
**Contact:** 800-325-3040  
**Web Address:** Vbs.cph.org

*Tell It on the Mountain* presents five Bible stories that occur on mountaintops and demonstrate the might and power of God. The program intends for participants to embrace and share the Good News that “Our God is the One True God.” The setting and themes are On Mount Sinai: God Is with His People; On Mount Carmel: God Shows He Is the One True God; On the Mount of Transfiguration: Jesus is God’s Son!; On Golgotha: Jesus Saves Us All; On a Mountain: Jesus says, “Go to All!” (Matthew 28:16-20). Participants are “on expedition” to explore the stories in a mountain adventure setting. It is designed in a rotation model, with daily opening and closing ceremonies and movement through stations for storytelling, activities, games, crafts and snacks.

The core format is for 150 children and five rotation sites in a traditional three-hour, five-day setting, but variations are provided for smaller and larger programs and different schedules (i.e., evening, weekend). Spanish and bilingual versions are also available. The opportunity to contribute to the denominational Ready Now mission project for disaster relief is integrated into the program, with video clips that show participants how food, water, and shelter are needed in disaster settings.

**Age Levels:** Preschool, elementary, youth (purchased separately)

**Includes:** Lots!

### **Strengths:**

- The mountaintop setting is natural, not contrived.
- Numerous DVDs and guidebooks are provided to support volunteers in each area (Director, Music Leader, Storytelling, Snacks, Games).
- May be used indoors, outdoors, and in combination.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Crafts are cookie-cutter and lack opportunity for participants’ interpretation.
- Songs and dances are cheesy.
- Total costs could be significant, depending on options purchased.
- The program assumes ample volunteer resources, including the construction of large sets.

*Day Smith Pritchett*



**Name SonWest Roundup – A Rip-Roarin’ Good Time with Jesus!**

Publisher: Gospel Light  
Cost: \$199.99 for Super Starter Kit; - \$79.99 for Starter Kit  
Contact: 800-4-GOSPEL (800-446-7735)  
Web Address: GospelLight.com

The theme for this VBS is based on the Old Testament stories of Moses and relates to God’s plan of salvation through Jesus. Some may find the hook of an Old West town and cowboy theme a bit hokey, but it’s just a way to get kids interested – it does work if you think of the journey of Moses and the Israelites as a trail to be ridden! As always, Gospel Light has the extra salvation/evangelical component to each lesson, but that’s not always bad. We do want our children to have a relationship with Jesus, after all. The music is run-of-the-mill but easy to sing and remember.

**Age Levels:** Preschool and Kindergarten (ages 3-6)  
Elementary (grades 1-2; 3-4; 5-6)  
Teen – purchase separately - \$12.99/study guide  
Adult – purchase separately - \$12.99/study guide

**Includes: (in Starter Kit only – Super Starter Kit has one of everything)**

X	Director’s Manual	___	Clip Art/Reproducible CD
		___	Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> )
—	Music CD	___	Skits/Drama DVD
—	Alternate schedule	___	On-line resources (myvbsparty.com)

**Strengths:**

- Leaders’ guides have daily reflection called “heart prep.”
- Decorating ideas for each class/station included in leaders’ guides.
- Includes a separate nursery/toddler lesson plan using the same stories.
- You can determine how you want this VBS to be run – rotation vs. classroom model.
- Successfully connects the Old Testament/Moses stories to New Testament/Jesus stories.
- Director’s Manual CD has modifiable PDF forms that can be customized.
- The music CD is reproducible so you can create your own music CDs for the kids. They offer an option of purchasing 10 music CDs in a pack if you don’t want to create your own for distribution.

**Weaknesses:**

- Crafts are front-loaded as far as prep time, with lots of cutting out and assembly before the kids arrive each day, which could be very time-consuming depending on the number of kids.
- Not a major weakness, but the Director’s Manual is on a CD that takes time to maneuver through and then to print out all the pages that you would need.
- Snacks and crafts have no clear connection to the stories.

*Kellee Wattenbarger*

**Name HayDay! Growing in Friendship with Jesus**

Publisher: Group Publishing  
Cost: \$64.99  
Contact: 800-447-1070  
Web Address: www.group.com/hayday

This VBS is unique in that it is a 2-½ day program. It’s a “weekend” VBS, and it’s good for churches that are small or haven’t done VBS before or in a long time. There are two 2-½ hour sessions with another 1-hour celebration on Sunday. It’s easy for families (less time commitment and few schedule conflicts) and easier on volunteers and leaders. Also, because it’s half the time of a regular VBS, you don’t have quite the monetary commitment. The farm theme works and the two lessons chosen – Zacchaeus and Jesus’ death/resurrection – are sound ones. The crafts/games/snacks all work well with the theme. This would be a great way for small churches to get back into the VBS mode.

**Age Levels:** Preschool (ages 3-5)  
Elementary (grades 1-6)

**Includes:**

- |          |                    |     |  |
|----------|--------------------|-----|--|
| <b>X</b> | Director’s Manual  | ___ | Clip Art/Reproducible CD                     |
|          |                    | ___ | Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> ) |
| <b>X</b> | Music CD           | ___ | Skits/Drama DVD                              |
| <b>X</b> | Alternate schedule | ___ | On-line resources (photos,                   |
| <b>X</b> | Leader Manuals     |     | calendar of activities, slide show)          |

**Strengths:**

- This program would be wonderful for a small church with time restraints or few volunteers .
- Music is upbeat and easy to remember.
- A service project built into the craft section can be used for either your own church, your community or for children in India.
- Decorating can be as elaborate or as simple as needed – farm theme is easy to do!

**Weaknesses:**

- The Sunday celebration may not work with a liturgical church setting but could be adapted to an afternoon session.

*Kellee Wattenbarger*

**Name Hip-Hop Hope: Jesus Makes me Glad**

Publisher: Abingdon Press/Cokesbury

Cost: \$74. 99 for Starter Kit

Contact: 800.672.1789 (Cokesbury)

Web Address: abingdonpress.com or cokesburyVBC.com

The focus for *Hip-Hop Hope: Jesus Makes Me Glad* is the intersection of Gladness of life with Jesus and the world of Hip-Hop through scripture, song and dance. Each program element emphasizes these lessons – worship, giving thanks, teachings, salvation, and being glad – with a focus word for each lesson – community, thanksgiving, hope, salvation, and excellence. Included is a significant amount of background material on the culture of hip-hop – its history; origins in love, peace, unity and having fun; and that this is an intersection that the traditional black church needs to address to keep the hip-hop generation engaged. This program is aimed primarily at urban populations and African-American communities.

**Age Levels:**

Preschool (3-5)

Younger Elementary (grades 1-3)

Older Elementary (grades 4-6)

Teens – purchase separately

Adult – purchase separately

**Includes:**

Director's Manual

Music CD

Manuals for Music & Movement, Heritage & Drama, Arts & Crafts, Outreach & Follow-up, and Recipes

Worship DVD – with background material

Samples of Student Handbooks – Preschool, Elementary (both ages) and Teen

Various other samples of crafts, promotional, and certificate awards

**Strengths:**

- Provides extensive background information on culture, music, and how to intersect with the church.
- Multiple scripture translations are used – NIV, NRSV, CEB, and KJV.
- Background scripture information for teachers.
- Each day includes learning about a famous African American.
- Daily meditation and prayers are included for leaders and teachers.
- Art materials are mixed between purchased craft kits and made-from-scratch.
- Music is upbeat and includes movement, and the materials easily teach those movements.
- Full day of celebration is a feature for the conclusion of the program.
- Decoration and set up is minimal and much is done within the program content.
- Limited program costs beyond the basic materials and what is included in the starter kit.

**Weaknesses:**

- Snacks are good but would require an extensive amount of preparation.
- Only one schedule suggestion, as the curriculum assumes that only an evening format would be used.

*L. Sue von Rautenkranz*

**Name Cool Adventures Vacation Bible School**

Publisher: Concordia

Cost: Leader’s Packet: \$54.99 (Spanish only)/ \$59.99 (Bilingual)

Lesson Worksheets for five students: \$15.49 (Spanish only)/ \$17.49 (Bilingual)

Phone number: 1-877-450-8694 (Spanish)/1-800-325-3040 (English)

Web Site Address: www.cph.org

*Cool Adventures Vacation Bible School* is a flexible five-day program with about two hours per day of teaching and activities. The program focuses on five gifts given to us in Jesus Christ: forgiveness, salvation, joy, life, and hope. The series of Bible studies, to be presented through drama to all ages and then processed through discussion and activity within each age group, is framed by a larger story of a journey of a group of children to the snowy lands of the north. Most of the materials needed are included in the leader’s packet in a reproducible format, but lesson worksheets must be purchased separately. All of the materials are available in either Spanish or a bilingual format (Spanish on one side, English on the other). The accompanying songs have verses in Spanish and English. The key Bible texts for each day are Mark 2:1-12 (the forgiving and healing of the paralytic), Acts 11:1-18 (the household of Cornelius), Acts 8:26-39 (Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch), Ezekiel 37:1-14 (the valley of the dry bones), and Luke 7:1-17 (Jesus and the son of the widow of Nain).

**Ages Levels:** Group 1: 3-6 years  
Group 2: 7-10 years  
Group 3: 11-14 years  
Adults

**Includes:**

- |                                     |                    |                          |   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Director’s Manual  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clip Art/Reproducible CD  |
|                                     |                    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Music Action Training DVD ( <i>limited</i> )                      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Music CD           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skits/Drama DVD   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Alternate schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> | On-line resources (photos,<br>Calendar of activities, slide show) |

**Strengths:**

- This flexible program would be easy to plan given the materials included.
- The variety of activities associated with each presentation engage different types of learners.
- The bilingual worksheets allow students the flexibility of doing their written reflection in the language in which they are most comfortable. This is advantageous for students who speak Spanish in the home, but may not read/write well in Spanish.
- The bilingual leader resources might help one incorporate those who are not fully bilingual into the leadership team, and they give one the option of presenting certain portions of the program in Spanish and others in English.

**Weaknesses:**

- Although bilingual materials are available (a definite plus), thoughtful guidance about how to present the material in a way that includes people with various linguistic capacities would be helpful. Some of the narratives are very long, so it is hard to imagine presenting them in both languages.
- The Bible stories selected for this VBS series were clearly chosen to help encourage children to tell others about the gifts that they have received in Jesus. However, the simplified versions of a couple of these stories may unintentionally exaggerate certain cultural stereotypes. Leaders should approach the work of story-telling with this awareness.

*Eileen O’Brien*

## **Name Real Heroes versus Rita Mosquito : A Children's Program on Malaria**

**Publisher:** Episcopal Relief & Development and NetsForLife Inspiration Fund  
**Cost:** Free. All materials are available for download from the ERD website.  
**Contact:** Episcopal Relief & Development (ERD), New York, NY  
**Websites:** [www.er-d.org](http://www.er-d.org) [www.inspirationfund.org](http://www.inspirationfund.org).

Rather than a traditional Vacation Bible School curriculum, *Real Heroes versus Rita Mosquito* might best be described as a rich set of resources and ideas for teaching children, teens and adults about malaria and its prevention. A further goal of the program is to encourage children to participate in raising funds for the *NetsForlife Inspiration Fund*, a wing of ERD that provides mosquito nets and training for their life-saving use, especially in Africa. Materials are broadly graded, and may be used with children or intergenerational groups. Their flexibility allows use in a variety of educational venues, including VBS. Music is drawn from Episcopal hymnals (*LEVAS II; Wonder, Love & Praise; My Heart Sings Out*), and ERD can provide support for groups that undertake this program. Each lesson includes a pertinent Scripture text to study, and a story book for use with younger children. Timing and scheduling of program segments are not specified.

These wide-ranging educational resources might be of particular interest to a church already focused on mission to countries in Africa. In such a congregation, a weekend program, open to all ages, could prove to be a valuable tool in furthering that mission focus and building community at the same time.

**Age Levels:** All ages can use this program.  
Materials are marked as suitable for Young Children, Older Children, Teens, and Adults.

### **Strengths:**

- The curriculum is free. Materials, such as those for making crafts, are purchased locally, allowing some cost control.
- The resources provided are especially appropriate for use with teens and adults.
- Suggested snacks are nutritious, and directions include nutrition information.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Churches that are used to the very clear and specific directions often given in commercial VBS programs may find the lack of specificity in much of *Real Heroes* a deterrent. Strong staff training and support will be required; a director cannot simply hand out a teacher book.
- Internet searches will be needed to take full advantage of the teaching outline. Not all referenced resources are easy to acquire
- The topic and the goals of providing nets through ERD may limit use by churches other than the Episcopal Church.

*Joyce Walker*

**Name Peaceable Kingdom**

Publisher: Leader Resources  
Cost: \$69.95  
Contact: 1-800-941-2218  
Website: [www.LeaderResources.org](http://www.LeaderResources.org)

“Peaceable Kingdom” is the most recently published curriculum written by the late Trudy Ardizzone. It explores anti-bullying themes through the use of favorite children’s literature characters such as Horton the Elephant, Yertle the Turtle, Gertrude McFuzz, Mama and Papa Bear, Old Turtle, and Gerald the Giraffe. This curriculum could be used at any time, not just Vacation Bible School, since the theme is so universal and relevant for our times. The children spend time together learning how to be nice to everyone and to identify what bullying looks like in their worlds. The themes for the five days include Be Your Best Self, A Place for Everyone, Turn the Other Cheek, Made in God’s Image, and Be Courageous; these themes are explored through Bible stories and children’s literature. The curriculum also includes major bullying research results that are incorporated into each day’s presentation.

**Ages Levels:** PreSchool (ages 4-5)  
X Elementary (younger & older)  
Teen  
Adult

**Includes:** Leader Guide (downloadable)

**Strengths:**

- The theme is a timely one, and the program could be used at any time, in any venue.
- Set-up is minimal, so those on a tight budget could easily do this program.
- No set snack ideas, so you can do whatever you please. The authors do recommend a lunch component to end the time together.
- Activities such as games and gathering time are based on cooperation instead of competition.
- Only three major volunteers are required, for recurring speaking parts each day.

**Weaknesses:**

- The activities are geared for an older audience; they probably wouldn’t work with children under the age of five, due to attention span

*Kellee Wattenbarger*