



SOLAR
UNDER THE
SUN

An Ecumenical Ministry
of the Synod of the Sun
Presbyterian Church (USA)

Vacation Bible School

This preview offers an overview of the VBS curriculum, plus an example of each of the four modules.

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Introduction

SOLAR UNDER THE SUN is an ecumenical mission ministry of the Synod of the Sun designed to provide solar power to nonprofit groups in communities with great need. It makes no difference where they might be located. We are called by God to help alleviate hardship while also becoming better stewards of God's green earth.

Our Vacation Bible School Material is designed to help participants Kindergarten-5th Grade and young teens consider how the Bible calls us and provides guidance in serving as God's stewards of the earth. Through Bible study, learning centers (Light Rays), and Mission moments in the Sun Center, participants will learn about solar power, and the role of solar power as it: Sustains life, Gives energy, Lights the earth, Brings warmth, and Promotes Growth.

Each day includes: All school gathering in SUN CENTER, Learning Centers (LIGHT RAYS) where everyone will experience Bible Study, Solar Puzzles/ Experiments, Solar Crafts, Snacks and Solar Games, and Solar Mission Moments in SUN CENTER at the end of each day.

While designed as a Vacation Bible School Experience, adaptation ideas are included for use in a congregational retreat setting, and possible Youth Experiences.

It is our hope that each person who is touched by God's Solar Under The Sun Experience will become radiant with its message and involved in its ministry.

God's blessings!

Dee Koza, Writer

Daily Theme and Bible Verse

Each day of VBS will have a unique theme. Suggested bible verses may be used during the opening and closing of each day to spark reflection. Bible verses are encouraged to be printed on large paper and displayed each day!

Monday

“Darkness into Light”

Psalm 18:28 *“You, O LORD, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.”*

Tuesday

“Light of the World”

Matthew 5:14 *“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”*

Wednesday

“Lighting the Way”

John 1:5 *“The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”*

Thursday

“Stand in the Light”

Luke 11:33 *“No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl but Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.” **Note: Younger Elementary (just first section)***

Friday

“Keep on Shining”

Matthew 5:16a *“In the same way, let your light shine before others...so that others may see your good works.”*

Light Rays, Sun Centers, Solar Rays

The VBS day is broken down into four parts:

- 1. Light Rays*
- 2. Opening Sun Center*
- 3. Solar Ray Activities*
- 4. Closing Sun Center*

Light Rays

- Divide your youth into groups or “light rays” by age or grade
- It is recommended to have one chaperone for each six/seven youth

Opening Sun Center (15 minutes)

- Opening Sun Centers are dedicated to greeting your students and welcoming them to a great day of Solar VBS
- Invite each student to find their LIGHT RAY group who they will visit different solar rays with throughout the day
- Next, gather your whole group together and introduce the daily theme and daily bible verse
- Suggested songs are a wonderful way to start your opening and closing Sun Centers!

Solar Rays (30 minutes):

- Solar Rays are educational activity stations designed to teach valuable lessons about God’s gift of solar energy

Closing Sun Center (15 minutes):

- Closing Sun Center is about reflecting on the day’s lesson.
- During this time, re-read the **daily theme and daily bible verse** and reflect on how they relate to what your students learned during their time at the different solar ray centers
- **Mission stories** are suggested to be read at the *closing sun center* as a closing meditation!

Example Schedule (For Morning Meeting)

Time	Event	Notes
9:00 to 9:10	Light Group Meetings	Divide students by age and do introductions/name games
9:15 to 9:30	Sun Center	Opening Sun Center
9:40 to 11:40	Solar Rays	Have light groups go around to the different solar ray centers
11:40 to Noon	Sun Center	Closing Sun Center

Example Solar Ray Schedule

GROUP ONE	GROUP TWO	GROUP THREE
9:40-10:10 a.m. GOD'S SOLAR FUN Snack and Recreation	9:40-10:10 a.m. POWER PUZZLES Games and Experiments	9:40- 10:10 a.m. GOD'S LIGHTBULBS CRAFTS
10:10-10:40a.m. LIGHT OF LIFE Bible Study	10:10-10:40 a.m. GOD'S SOLAR FUN Snack and Recreation	10:10-10:40 a.m. POWER PUZZLES Games and Experiments
10:40-11:10 a.m. GOD'S LIGHTBULBS Crafts	10:40-11:10 a.m. LIGHT OF LIFE Bible Study	10:40-11:10 a.m. GOD'S SOLAR FUN Snack and Recreation
11:10-11:40 a.m. POWER PUZZLES Games and Experiments	11:10-11:40 a.m. GOD'S LIGHTBULBS Crafts	11:10-11:40 a.m. LIGHT OF LIFE Bible Study

Sun Silhouettes

Power Puzzles: Session 1

TIME: 30 minutes

MATERIALS: Cardboard boxes of various sizes; duct tape; scissors; cardstock paper; large pair of scissors; Pictures of Sundials (provided)

I. ENTERING ACTIVITY

- A. As participants enter, divide them into separate “Sun Silhouettes” teams.
- B. Announce that each team is to use the materials they find before them to create a sundial.

II. ENGAGING ACTIVITY

- A. Talk with the participants about sundials, explaining:
- B. A **sundial** is a device that determines the time of day by the **position of the Sun**. In common designs such as the horizontal sundial, the sun casts a shadow from its *style* onto a surface marked with lines indicating the hours of the day. The style is the time-telling edge of the *gnomon*, often a thin rod or a sharp, straight edge. As the sun moves across the sky, the shadow-edge aligns with different hour-lines. (*Wikipedia*)

III. EXPLORING ACTIVITY

- A. You may wish to bring examples of actual sundials to share, or use copies of the ones provided.
- B. Divide the participants into work design groups and give them 15 minutes to create their sundial.

IV. EXITING ACTIVITY

- A. ONCE COMPLETED, each team shares their sundial creation.
- B. If possible, display the sundials at the SUN CENTER at closing and leave up around church for congregation to see.

Moving in the Light

Light of Life Shields: Session 2

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Bibles, balloons in varying colors (one color per small group number); Light bulb passages (provided)

I. ENTERING ACTIVITY

A. In a circle, pass out balloons- one per participant.

B. Have each person blow up their balloons 2/3 full (this keeps the chances of accidental popping down) and tie off their balloons. *NOTE: If Kindergarten-2nd graders, have the balloons blown up ahead of time and kept in garbage bag until needed.*

1. Instruct them on signal, to (as individuals) toss their balloon- just focusing on keeping their person balloon in the air.

2. Call out – find a partner and now have them keep the two balloons going.

3. Keep enlarging the group, having them responsible for keeping ALL balloons in air.

C. Call time and have each person place his or her balloon in a large garbage bag to be either given to them at closing of the evening or stored for another group's balloon activity.

II. ENGAGING ACTIVITY

Walk with class about their balloon experience, noting how it seemed they were best able to keep their personal balloon afloat, but had more fun and a greater time when everyone was working together.

Note that that is what God asks us to do... work together to keep everything going well.

III. EXPLORING ACTIVITY

A. Ask participants to be seated in groups by the color balloon they had in the opening activity. Once all are seated in their color groups, hand out a Light passage. With their Bibles, have them read their group passage and talk together about what it means. * Help younger groups with some of the words/ meaning - if needed.

B. In the total group have each group share what they believe their passage means. Once every group has had a chance to share, NOTE that God has created everything.

C. Including us God cares for us and wants us to care for the world. In our caring we will discover what God wants for all of us – to be good “care takers of the earth” and let God's light shine everywhere.

IV. EXITING ACTIVITY

A. *Popcorn Prayer:* In a circle, hold hands and go around and share one way in which they “SHINE”.... by caring for God's world. NOTE: Leader starts, then squeezes hand of person to their right, that person shares, then squeezes hand of person to their right and so on, until it comes back to leader who started, who then closes the prayer).

Portraits in the Sun

God's Light Bulbs: Session 1

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Large piece of paper, 4 weights or rocks, Markers, Paint, and paint brushes, Leaves, thin branches, etc.

I. ENTERING ACTIVITY

- A. Go outside and circle the group up. Give each participant a large piece of paper.
- B. Have the students place the paper on the ground; weigh down the paper corners with large washers or rocks.

II. ENGAGING ACTIVITY

- A. Have students pair up. Then one member of the pair positions themselves so that their shadow falls across the paper. The other partner outlines the shadowed area.
- B. Repeat the process with the other person outlining their partner's paper.
OPTION: To make a nature collage inside the outline use leaves, small sticks, pressed flowers or whatever else students can find on the grounds.
- C. Students will then walk around the grounds and pick up leaves

III. EXPLORING ACTIVITY

- A. Return inside or to an area with tables for artwork.
- B. Using paint or markers color the outline or create designs inside of the outline.

IV. EXITING ACTIVITY- Dismissal

- A. Once everyone has completed their project, have them bring their artwork into the closing circle.
- B. Have each person place their artwork in front of them facing inward so those around them can see them.
- C. Going around have each other share how it felt to use the sun in creating their work.

Casting Shadows

Solar Fun: Session 1

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: 2 large white sheets, clothespins, twine (or standard clothesline).

I. ENTERING ACTIVITY

A. BEGIN this Sun Ray Center with a light snack.

B. Have the students consider what elements of the sun might have helped to make their snack. (Grains- sugar (beets/cane) - sun helps in growth; baking- electricity- solar energy)

II. ENGAGING ACTIVITY

A. Create silhouette screens with clothesline and pins, by hanging sheets on two separate lines, at angles that will allow for light to be shining on sheets. Do this so that shadows will be seen. (NOTE: If an overcast or rainy day, hang sheets inside and shine a light directly on each sheet).

B. Using one silhouette screen, have the students each stand in front the screen (individually or by pairs) and create shadow shapes. (In some situations, the sun will shadow shape with children behind the sheet – so be sure to check this out before FIRST GROUP arrives.)

C. Challenge them to make tall skinny shapes, short wide shapes, round shapes, shapes with holes, etc.

III. EXPLORING ACTIVITY

A. Once all children have had a chance to do shadow shapes, divide the group in half, and have them come up with an activity to act out behind the sheet (You may want to have each team use one of the following, and then they can come up with their own.) Ex: fishing, swimming across a pool, form a building, create a tabloid of Jesus' birth, crucifixion, etc.)

B. Using a portion or all of one of the teams – have the team act out their activity /event, and the other team guess what they are doing. Then have the other team do their Tabloid/activity. Repeat several times

IV. EXITING ACTIVITY

A. Gather together as a whole group, and have children share which shadow experiences they enjoyed the most.

B. Ask for a volunteer to explain how the shadow in the sun works. Help them to understand the role that the sun plays in creating shadows and light.

SUN CENTER'S FIRST DAY MISSION STORY (CLOSING TIME)

The sun has gone down and if you lived in Haiti or many other countries in the world, your world looks just like this. The monsters tend to come out at night! It's dark, and when we cannot see, we often become scared, anxious, and worried.

Imagine if you lived your whole life with no power after the sun goes down. No television. No computer. No video games. Imagine not having enough money to refill the kerosene lamps on your dinner table or the gas in your generator.

When the sun goes down, there is no light to cook.

When the sun goes down, there is no light to read.

When the sun goes down, there is no light to do homework.

When the sun goes down, there is no light to work.

When the sun goes down, there is not light to finish any projects around the house.

When the sun goes down, the day ends, and many people become scared and sad.

Every day in Haiti, Kenya, and elsewhere in the world, we meet families whose lives are spent in the dark. When the sun goes down, their days are finished. One family is the Fils-Aime family. They live in a little town in the mountains of Haiti called Meyer. The house is wooden with three small rooms – one kitchen and two bedrooms. To stay safe when the sun goes down, they close up the house, and it is pitch black. Everyone goes to bed, a little frightened, as soon as night comes.

We visited the family in August 2011, and Ms. Fils-Aime, who is late in her life, was in the hospital. To show Ms. Fils-Aime that God loves her, Solar Under the Sun installed a solar panel and four light bulbs in her house, one light bulb in each room. It was not much, at least not much compared to what you and I are used to. We worried the four light bulbs would not make a difference.

Two days later, Ms. Fils-Aime was discharged from the hospital. She came home after dark, not knowing there was new solar power or lights for her house. Her son opened the door and turned on the light switch for the first time. For the first time in her life, the sun had gone down and there was light in the house. They could cook. They could read. They could see to eat dinner. They could work. They did not have to worry about monsters or refilling a kerosene lamp.

Ms. Fils-Aime fell to her knees and thanked God for the gift of light and the Light He gives each day through the generosity and love of others. Joy filled the house that evening knowing they would not live in darkness anymore. The gift of light and the Light.

Ashley Broadhurst
Administrative Director, Solar Under The Sun
Las Vegas, Nevada