July - August 2016
Rainbow Express® Mission Trip
Curriculum and Planning Packet
We are so grateful that the Lord is sending your group to Mission Arlington® / Mission Metroplex® for a 2016 July/August Rainbow Express® Mission Trip! Our team is praying faithfully for you as you prepare spiritually and logistically to serve with us here.

This packet should contain everything you need to prepare for your trip to Mission Arlington®. Please take the time to go carefully through this information. Here is how the information is organized:

1) **Trip leader planning material**: information for the student minister or other overall trip leader with details about accommodations, responsibilities, expectations, and preparation. These pages have a blue border.

2) **Student planning material**: some of the same information, but formatted specifically so you can hand it out to your students. Includes things like dress codes, packing lists, schedule information, etc. These pages have a green border.

3) **Rainbow Express® material**: the curriculum and schedule for each day’s Rainbow Express® programs (which your group will be leading). These pages have a red border.

If there is anything at all that we can do to help you prepare, please do not hesitate to let us know.

- **Heather Young, Steven Burgin, and Jim Burgin** lead our team of groups scheduling coordinators, with help from several other team members. You can reach them at 817-277-6620 or via e-mail at hyoung@missionarlington.org, sburgin@missionarlington.org, or jim@missionarlington.org.
- **Matt Hart** is our Rainbow Express® coordinator and will be one of your primary contacts while you are on your trip. You can reach him at the same phone number or via e-mail at matt@missionarlington.org.
- **Tillie Burgin** is our founder and Executive Director and always happy to answer questions. Her office phone number is the same or her e-mail is tillie@missionarlington.org.
A church group praying outside our offices as they prepare to serve. (This was this particular church’s 17th year serving with Mission Arlington®)

Group Leader’s Preparation
Materials

Contains:

- Trip terms defined
- Schedules
- How do I prepare?
  - FAQs: accommodations, dress code, rules, etc.
  - Rainbow Express®: how to train your students to lead a Rainbow Express® program
- Logistics Questionnaire (to be filled out and sent to Mission Arlington® before your trip)
- T-Shirt Orders
Overview: So what are we doing on this trip anyway?

A visitor to Mission Arlington®/Mission Metroplex® once told us that we sometimes speak in code. We readily admit that so many different things are happening here that it can become a little confusing. This is an explanation of some of our key terms:

- **Mission Arlington® / Mission Metroplex®:** We are an evangelical ministry functioning in partnership with most of the local churches in Arlington from across all denominations. Essentially, we do two basic things (which are closely intertwined): 1) we begin Bible Studies which over time grow into churches in neighborhoods (mostly low-income apartment communities) all over this city and 2) we meet a variety of physical needs through free “benevolent” programs like medical clinics, food pantries, afterschool tutoring, and more. You will be partnering with us by leading evangelistic programs in the apartment communities and other neighborhoods where we have ministries and by supporting our benevolent programs.

- **Apartment Churches:** Mission Arlington® began in 1986 with a very simple philosophy: take church to people who, for whatever reason, were not coming to a church building anywhere. On the first Sunday of August of that year, a Bible Study met in the living room of a woman who lived in a local apartment community. That first morning, seventeen people found that they could meet Christ in a church that met right where they lived. Today, we have teams ministering in different ways in more than 300 apartments, mobile homes, community centers, playgrounds, laundry rooms, and wherever people will gather. Any given Sunday, more than 5,000 people attend a Mission Arlington® congregation in their own neighborhood.

- **Rainbow Express®:** Rainbow Express® is the name of the Backyard Bible Clubs you will be leading while you are here. Mission Arlington® has been leading outdoor Vacation Bible Schools for our many apartment churches since the beginning. When these programs first began the volunteers that were leading them had a large portable stage built on a trailer that they pulled from site to site for puppet shows. This trailer, which was decorated with a rainbow, came to be known to the children as the Rainbow Express®. Rainbow Express® then became the name for all of the Vacation Bible Schools.

- **Work Projects:** Mission Arlington® follows Jesus’ model of ministry: meet both physical and spiritual needs to provide a tangible expression of the Father’s love and people will be drawn to Him. Part of each day you are here will be spent leading Rainbow Express® programs. With the remainder of each day you will participate in some of Mission Arlington’s many other ministries. This might include picking up donations, delivering furniture to families, working in the clothing room or the food warehouse, passing out flyers to invite people to an event, holding field days or other fun events in one of the apartment communities, or any number of other opportunities. Any special materials or training that you may need will be provided while you are here.
Week Overview  The most normal shape of a Rainbow Express® week is this:

- **Saturday:** Most groups arrive Saturday afternoon to check in. We are open for check in until 8 pm. If there is a situation that prevents you from checking in by that time, please contact us before your trip and we will be happy to make arrangements to check in.

- **Sunday:** In the morning you will help us hold church services in the neighborhoods we work with. That afternoon you will join all the groups here for the week, plus our staff, for a worship time.

  *Note—some groups (because they have responsibilities in their home church services on Sunday morning) do not participate in Sunday’s activities because they travel and check in that day instead. As with Saturdays, we are available to check in until 8 pm. (If for some reason you cannot have at least one adult check in by 8 pm, contact us ahead of time and we will make arrangements.)*

- **Monday—Thursday:** You will lead Rainbow Express® these days. All groups will meet together twice: in the morning for a devotional time and in the afternoon for a brief worship service.

- **Friday—Saturday:** Friday is an optional day. Some groups continue to serve with us. Some groups go home Friday morning. Others take Friday as a free day for Six Flags or other recreational activity. All groups check out by Saturday morning.

More detailed schedules for each day are below and on the following page.

**Sunday Schedule**

9:00 AM  Meet at Mission Arlington® with all groups for welcome, prayer, and orientation

10:00 AM  Participate in Mission Arlington’s apartment churches by helping invite, serve, and teach Sunday School in an apartment community or other Mission Arlington® congregation.

12:30 PM  Return from apartment churches, take lunch break

1:30 PM  Pass out flyers in apartment communities where Rainbow Express® will be taking place this week.

3:15 PM  Return to Mission Arlington®

4:00 PM  Join Mission Arlington® missionaries for weekly prayer, worship, and preparation time

5:00 PM  Meeting for all group leaders with Matt Hart, Rainbow Express® Coordinator

5:15 PM  Leave Mission Arlington®, pray and make any last minute preparations for beginning Rainbow Express® tomorrow

**Every group’s situation is different. If you need to adjust this schedule for whatever reason let us know. We can work together to help create a week that works well for everybody.**

**Tillie (our director) discusses the day’s assignments with a volunteer group**
## Schedule Information: Tentative Monday—Thursday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td>Meet at Mission Arlington® for morning worship and devotional time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45</td>
<td>Morning Rainbow Express® groups leave for their site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>Morning Rainbow Express® begins.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOON</td>
<td>Morning Rainbow Express® ends. Clean up, walk children home, etc., then take a lunch break.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30</td>
<td>Meet for worship and announcements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30</td>
<td>Depart for Rainbow Express®.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>Rainbow Express® begins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30</td>
<td>Rainbow Express® ends. Clean up and walk kids home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>Turn in daily report to Mission Arlington®. Options for projects in the evenings will be made available during the week.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note—if your group is here one of these weeks, each Rainbow Express® team will lead two sites, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.*

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**Don't be *that* group**

Please be on time to all the meeting times on your schedule. It affects everybody else if your group shows up late because you made a coffee run on the way.

If anybody asks, tell them we had a flat tire... and that we witnessed extensively to the guy that helped us change it.
We are praying that God will reveal Himself to your students during their time at Mission Arlington® in ways that bring about permanent, life-changing discipleship. We believe these rules help us keep that focus.

**DRESS CODE**
Mission Arlington’s dress code is very basic. We ask all participants to dress modestly, comfortably, and in something where they are ready to work. Casual dress is fine all week long, Sunday included. Here are a few specific requests we make of all groups:

- Shorts are fine all week long. **Please no short shorts.**
- Footwear is up to you, but because we do so much work and active play outside we recommend tennis shoes over flip-flops.
- T-shirts are great to wear, but please no tank tops or any other kinds of sleeveless shirts.
- Baseball caps are fine, but please wear forward at all times. Do not wear bandanas or any other type of head gear.
- We are asking that students and leaders **not wear leggings/tights/yoga pants/“jeggings” unless they are also wearing shorts or a long shirt that would cover everything normally covered by a pair of shorts.**
- **Note**—if a student chooses to dress in something that does not fit with our dress code, a Mission Arlington® staff member will ask them to change before you begin your day’s assignments. This only slows down your group and gives you less time to effectively minister during the day. So, please stick to the dress code.

Please remember that there are certain things you might wear at home working outside in the heat but that may not be the right image for knocking on doors and asking parents to let their children go with you.

**CONDUCT GUIDELINES**

- **Be focused on the most important thing:** Mission work is full of surprises. God has a specific plan for you, and for the many lives He will use you to touch. The best preparation for this experience is spiritual. Keep reading your Bible daily, both before you come, and while you are here. Make sure you keep your quiet time with the Lord as a firm commitment. Don’t miss your moments with Him.
- **Let's be good stewards together:** All of Mission Arlington’s facilities are donated to us. Any money that goes into repairs and maintenance is less money we can use in our assistance programs. So, let’s be good stewards of what the Lord has given us:
  - Don’t adjust thermostats
  - There is no housekeeping staff. So, help clean up spills, take out trash, and generally be clean and neat. Don’t do things that will create clean up jobs for other people (for example, don’t use sidewalk chalk at Rainbow Express®. It leaves work for apartment staff to wash it off.)
  - Don’t do anything silly. We don’t want to be unable to buy prescriptions for our medical clinic because we had to patch sheetrock or replace windows. (This includes in the apartment communities.) Don’t roughhouse. Don’t use any balls anywhere that aren’t foam.
  - **Help us present a good image to everyone** people that may come through your activities or facilities and maintain a good relationship and a positive witness with the neighbors around your activities or facilities.
    - Make sure that your noise level is under control. Do not play loud music, stay up too late at your accommodations, etc. Help us be a good picture of Christ to those around you.
    - Be sensitive to other people’s needs. Be courteous and grateful everywhere you go. It is especially **crucial** that you control the noise level where you are staying. We cannot have loud music, parties, outside games, etc. We want **everywhere** to be our mission field, and that includes where you sleep at night.
Accommodations: Where are we staying?

Some of you, we know, will be spending the nights in a hotel or other location that you have set up. This page answers common questions for the rest of you who have chosen to stay in the accommodations that we provide.

- **Where will we be staying?** Mission Arlington® uses several different types of facilities to house guests. All of them boil down to the same basic concept: a safe, clean floor to sleep on, showers, and a kitchen. Smaller groups (anything up to about twenty people) generally stay in one apartment in an apartment community where we minister. Larger groups generally stay in one of our community centers or in a local traditional church that partners with Mission Arlington®. Because group sizes have a tendency to fluctuate so much at the last minute, we do not make final assignments of who will stay where until the week before your arrival.

- **How much does it cost?** We do not charge anything to stay in any of our accommodations. There are costs involved for items such as utilities, rent, maintenance, etc. Voluntary donations are very welcome, but not necessary. We believe God always provides.

- **What do I need to bring?** It is a good idea to plan as if you were coming into a completely empty facility. Often our supplies get accidentally packed up by groups when they are leaving and they don’t realize it is not a part of what they brought. So, to be on the safe side it is wise to bring or buy here everything you might need: toiletries, kitchen supplies, air mattresses, and more.

**Here are some other tips to prepare for a successful experience in our accommodations:**

- **Be flexible and unpack only what you need each day:** Mission Arlington®/Mission Metroplex® is a very busy place. All of our facilities are constantly being used to reach people for the Lord. When you check in for your trip, you will be given a schedule of any activities that might be happening in the location where you are staying. In other words, while your group is out leading Rainbow Express® there may be activities happening in the rooms where you are staying.

- **View your accommodations location as another ministry opportunity:** Every place where you will be staying, whether in an apartment or at one of our gyms, is surrounded by other apartments or neighborhoods where the people might know nothing of church except what they see in you. When you park your church van and climb out, the people around you know that you represent Mission Arlington®, and much more importantly, our Savior. They may come over to ask you questions. The neighborhood children might want to play tag. Represent Christ in all that you do while you are there, from your behavior in the parking lot, to noise level inside, to how clean you keep the place. Let people see Him in you, and you will find that your “mission trip day” will not end when you return to your home away from home in the evenings.
Packing Lists

Here are some items you will need for your trip. We want to minimize costs as much as possible. If there are some items you are not able to bring, check with us (our contact info is on page 2). We might be able to loan you some of the items you need.

**For Rainbow Express®, bring with you:**

- Some of the memory verse activities require simple supplies like balloons or popsicle sticks.
- Tarp (at least 10’ by 10’): excellent to use for the children to sit on during Rainbow Express®
- Posterboard: use it for memory verse posters, puzzles, etc.
- Puppets: Mission Arlington® has some to loan if you don’t have access to puppets
- Some kind of staging for the puppets. If you don’t have a puppet stage the two easiest/cheapest options are 1) hang an extra tarp or blanket across a broom handle or PVC pipe and have 2 volunteers hold it up or 2) many appliance stores will give away free large cardboard boxes you can use as an impromptu stage (see the illustration.)
  - Any music you might need for your puppet time at Rainbow Express®.
  - Water cooler and drinking cups.
  - Snacks. Mission Arlington® will have some things available, but it helps if your church can also bring cookies, candy, chips, crackers, etc.
  - Craft supplies: Mission Arlington® will provide some glue, scissors, crayons, etc. You may find it helps your group run smoother if you have some extras.
  - Games equipment: cones, hula hoops, etc. will be very useful during your game time. *Note: Please do NOT bring balls or frisbees unless they are of the soft, “Nerf” foam variety.*

**If you are staying in our accommodations:**

(Prepare as if your were coming to a completely empty facility)

- Materials for meals: remember that you are responsible for all your own food. Most groups do sack lunches or fast food for lunch. Breakfasts and dinners are up to you. If you plan to cook remember that you are only guaranteed access to a normal, residential apartment-sized kitchen and make sure to bring any pots or pans you might need.
- Paper products: paper towels, plates, cups, plasticware, etc.
- Cleaning supplies
- Each person will need their own sleeping bag, pillow, and air mattress. (Encourage everybody to bring twin-sized air mattresses. You probably won’t have room for large air mattresses in the apartment.)

If you are bringing a trailer for luggage, be sure to bring a hitch lock with you. We will have a place you can park your trailer during the week so you don’t have to pull it around the city but you will want a hitch lock for added security.
For our July/August Mission Trip this year we will be going to Mission Arlington® / Mission Metroplex® in Arlington, Texas. We will be serving with Mission Arlington® through participating in apartment churches, leading Rainbow Express® (Mission Arlington’s version of a Vacation Bible School), and a variety of work projects.

- **Mailing Address:** 210 W. South Street, Arlington, TX, 76010.  
  (Note—you are welcome to send students mail while they are at Mission Arlington®. On the outside envelope indicate the name of the student *and the name of the church or school with whom they are on Mission Trip*. Please allow time for mail delivery and for the Mission Arlington® staff to sort it and deliver it to our group. You will want to have mailed things by Monday for your students to receive them during their trip here. Any unclaimed mail at the end of the week will be returned to sender.)

- **Website:** [www.missionarlington.org](http://www.missionarlington.org)
- **Phone:** 817-277-6620
- **Fax:** 817-277-3388
- **E-mail:** mission@missionarlington.org
Preparing for Rainbow Express®

For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.” But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

Romans 10:13-14

Rainbow Express® is Mission Arlington’s version of a backyard Bible Club.

Your group will be leading one or more Rainbow Express® program during the week you are here.

The following pages will help you prepare your team.
• Step one: How many teams will we be?

- Rainbow Express® is held in the apartment communities where Mission Arlington® is holding, planting, or hoping to plant a church. The average daily attendance at any given Rainbow Express® is 20-30 elementary aged children and a few youth. A team from your group of 8-10 college students, 10-15 high school students plus their sponsors, or 12-18 junior high students plus their sponsors is ideal for leading one Rainbow Express®. Thus, a group bringing 15 people will be one team, a group with 20 is probably two teams, and a group of 45 could be anywhere from three to five teams, depending on the ages. Note—decide how many teams you will be based on the size of your group, not on your transportation situation. We can make site assignments that will work with any transportation configuration: whether you are carpooling or renting charter buses.

Don’t form your teams much larger than recommended. There’s a discipleship reason for this: teams of 10-15 size allow each of your students to have a specific, important role and gently pushes them to “step up to the plate.” Forming teams too large leaves room for some students to not have to take ownership and initiative in leading a Rainbow Express®. Let God have the opportunity to help your students rise to the occasion and use them in ways they won’t expect.

• Step two: Who’s on each team?

- Each team will need at least one adult sponsor (not necessary if the team is college students). The 10–18 students will each need one or more of the team member assignments explained on the next page. Use the descriptions and the worksheet provided to make team assignments

• Step three: Start practicing.

- Assign your students their roles, pass out the Rainbow Express® materials (later in this packet) and then let them start learning their jobs. We recommend holding at least a couple of practice run-throughs if possible. One good option is let your team use their Rainbow Express® material to lead children’s Sunday School at your church for a couple of weeks.

• Step four: Gather what you need.

- We try to make the cost for your trip as low as possible. You should not need to spend much (if any) money on Rainbow Express® supplies. On page 9 you will find lists of what you need to provide for leading Rainbow Express®. We will have everything else.

Leader’s Information Packet: each adult leader needs this section—pg. 12
Each Rainbow Express® Team will have the following functions. Assign each student and adult per team to at least one of these jobs. More detailed instructions for each job are in the red section.

- **Adult team leader/Sponsor:** You will need at least one adult per team. College students can fill this role as well.
- **Song leader**
- **Memory Verse teacher**
- **Large group leader**
- **Puppet wrangler**
- **Games leader**
- **Attendance taker:** this person’s responsibility is to make sure we have good contact information for everybody you make contact with during your mission trip so that Mission Arlington® / Mission Metroplex® can provide follow-up discipleship after you are gone. If possible, this is a good job for an adult.
- **Youth leader:** this does not refer to the youth minister but to a member of your Rainbow Express® team that will be in charge of working with any teenagers that attend your Rainbow Express®
- **Small group teams:** much of the Rainbow Express® program will take place in small groups. All team members will help during the small group time. Assign each team member a partner. That pair will lead a small group together.

There is a blank team roster on the next page. Make one copy for each of your teams and write in who will be fulfilling each responsibility. These sheets should be passed out to each adult sponsor in your group and to Mission Arlington® coordinators while you are here. (You will not be able to fill in the Rainbow Express® site names until you are at Mission Arlington®.)
## Rainbow Express® Team Roster: Team

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<th>Adult Sponsor(s):</th>
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<th>Team Leader:</th>
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<th>Large Group Leader:</th>
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<th>Memory Verse Teacher:</th>
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<th>Puppet Wrangler:</th>
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<th>Game Leader:</th>
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<th>Attendance Taker:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Youth Leader:</th>
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<p>| Small Group Partner pairs:|</p>
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<th>(This is all students in your group, matched in pairs to lead small groups)</th>
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Remember that one person can have more than one responsibility.
Logistics Questionnaire

After reading through the entire blue section of this packet, please answer the following questions. The sooner you can provide this information to Mission Arlington®, the more successfully we will be able to prepare for your time here. You can turn this information in one of two ways: e-mail it to Matt Hart at matt@missionarlington.org or fax it to us at 817-277-3388. **Please have this to us at least one month prior to your arrival.** Please answer all questions, even if you have already given us some of this information. It helps us double check our records. We know last-minute changes are common on youth trips. It is no problem for any of this information to change, just let us know as soon as possible.

1) Confirm the correct wording of your group name (so we don’t accidentally call you First Baptist instead of First Christian the whole week, etc.)
2) Who will be our primary contact while you are here?
3) Is there anything we can do to help you prepare for Rainbow Express®?
4) How many students do you expect to bring? How many sponsors?
5) Confirm the date and approximate time of your arrival at the Mission? (We are in the office until 8 pm each evening. If extenuating circumstances require you arrive later than that please make sure we know so that we can work with you on a plan to check in, receive your keys, etc.)
6) Confirm the date and approximate time you will be leaving from Mission Arlington®
7) If you are going to be helping us on Sunday mornings please send us a list of names with a “T” by those people who are comfortable teaching a Bible Study and an “H” by those who prefer to help.
8) What type of transportation are you bringing (vans, buses, etc.) and how many vehicles?
9) How many Rainbow Express® teams will you have? How many will be on each team? (Our suggested team size is about 10 to 15 people.)
10) What is a cell phone number where we can reach you as you are traveling or when you arrive?
11) Are you planning to stay in accommodations arranged by Mission Arlington®?
12) Is there anything else we need to know about your accommodations situation?
13) Many of our accommodations are upstairs in apartments, etc, so please make sure we know if your group requires handicapped access.
14) Some of the local churches that are housing groups have kitchenettes (refrigerator and microwave but no stove/oven—meaning only the ability to prepare sandwiches, cereal, etc.) as opposed to full kitchens. **We will make sure that every group that will be cooking has access to a full kitchen.** If you know your group does not need a full kitchen because you are eating out in the evenings, etc. it will help us to know that ahead of time so we can match you with one of those churches.
Every year Mission Arlington®/Mission Metroplex® makes mission trip t-shirts available for groups. This is an optional expense—no one is required to buy shirts. Shirts are available in sizes from Adult Small to XXX-Large for $10 each.

There are three ways to order shirts: 1) buy them while you are here. 2) pre-buy with check or credit card and pick them up during your trip and 3) order with check or credit card and have us mail them to you (there will be an extra charge for shipping that will depend on how many shirts you purchase).

If you need more information about shirts, or to place an order, call Matt Hart or Debbie Musgrave at 817-277-6620 or e-mail matt@missionarlington.org.

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**T-Shirt Order Form**

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<th>Group:</th>
<th>Date of order:</th>
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<td>Contact name and phone number:</td>
<td>Method of payment:</td>
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<th>Size</th>
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<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
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**For those paying with Credit Card:**

- Card type:
- Name as it appears on card:
- Billing address of credit card:
- Credit Card Number:
- Expiration date:
- Total amount to be charged:
- E-mail:
- Contact # (in case of questions regarding credit card):
Student Preparation Materials

Contains:

- Packing List
- Spiritual Preparation Helps
- Dress Code and Rules
Packing List

Here are some items you will need for your trip:

1) Bible: keep it with you all the time. It will be your most important lifeline for the week.
2) Sleeping bag or other bedroll
3) Air mattress or other cot (nothing bigger than twin size)
4) Towels, washcloths, toiletries
5) Your Rainbow Express® material: your copies of the lessons for small group, plus any materials you need for your specific assignment (memory verse posters for the memory verse teacher, puppet music for the puppet wrangler, etc.)
6) Clothing: see dress code on the next page. Bring plenty of comfortable clothing and be ready for Texas summer weather, which can mean temperatures above 100°. Note—if you choose to dress in something that does not fit with our dress code, a Mission Arlington® staff member will ask you to change before you begin your day’s assignments. This only slows down your group and gives you less time to effectively minister during the day. So, please stick to the dress code.
7) A daily backpack: (This optional suggestion is borrowed from some of our groups, and it has worked great for them.) Bring a backpack with any or all of the following items:
   8) Extra Bibles to give away
   9) Small, basic first aid kit
  10) Trash bags for cleaning up while you are at Rainbow Express®
  11) Water bottle (very good idea)
  12) Candy or small prizes to give away
  13) Extra activities to do with the children and youth at your Rainbow Express® that match up with your skills. Whether it’s a hacky sack or extra nail polish (pictured to the right) what hobby or talent do you have that you can share with the children you are ministering to on mission trip?
DRESS CODE
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- Shorts are fine all week long. Please no short shorts.
- Footwear is up to you, but because we do so much work and active play outside we recommend tennis shoes over flip-flops.

Please remember that there are certain things you might wear at home working outside in the heat but that may not be the right image for knocking on doors and asking parents to let their children go with you. Because of this, please follow these additional guidelines all week long:

- T-shirts are great to wear, but please no tank tops or any other kinds of sleeveless shirts.
- Baseball caps are fine, but please wear forward at all times. Do not wear bandanas or any other type of head gear.
- We are asking that students *not wear leggings/tights/yoga pants/“jeggings”* unless they are also wearing shorts or a long shirt that would cover everything normally covered by a pair of shorts.

CONDUCT GUIDELINES

- **Be focused on the most important thing:** Mission work is full of surprises. God has a specific plan for you, and for the many lives He will use you to touch. The best preparation for this experience is spiritual. Keep reading your Bible daily, both before you come, and while you are here. Make sure you keep your quiet time with the Lord as a firm commitment. Don’t miss your moments with Him.

- **Let’s be good stewards together:** All of Mission Arlington’s facilities are donated to us. Any money that goes into repairs and maintenance is less money we can use in our assistance programs. So, let’s be good stewards of what the Lord has given us. There is no housekeeping staff. So, help clean up spills, take out trash, and generally be clean and neat. (For example, don’t use sidewalk chalk at Rainbow Express®. It leaves work for apartment staff to wash it off.)

- **Help us present a good image to everyone** that may come through your activities or facilities and maintain a good relationship and a positive witness with the neighbors around your activities or facilities.
  - Make sure that your noise level is under control. Do not play loud music, stay up too late at your accommodations, etc. Help us be a good picture of Christ to those around you.
  - Be sensitive to other people’s needs. Be courteous and grateful everywhere you go. It is especially *crucial* that you control the noise level where you are staying. We cannot have loud music, parties, outside games, etc. We want *everywhere* to be our mission field, and that includes where you sleep at night.
In Acts chapter 4 Peter, when threatened if he ever spoke in the name of Jesus again, responded “we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.” Do you feel that way about your salvation? Are you so thrilled by the fact that God would save a sinner like you that you cannot help but talk about it. Unfortunately, sometimes we convince our selves it is hard to talk about our faith. When we share our testimony, we are being witnesses, reporting the Good News of the everything-changing difference Christ has made in our lives. Here are some tips to help you share your testimony at Rainbow Express® this week.

- **Be Brief**—Remember the age of the children you are working with. They have short attention spans. You want them to understand and remember your point. The longer you talk, the less they may walk away with. Your goal should be not more than five minutes each for two testimonies, six to seven minutes for one, tops.

- **Be Simple**—Your children will not understand the phrase “I used to really struggle with trying to keep the reprobate, carnal impulses of my fleshly nature under control until I accepted the sanctifying work of the Lamb on the cross”. They will understand “When I pray and ask Jesus for help, He helps me do what God wants me to do”. Avoid the temptation to speak *churchese* while you share. Talk like you really talk.

- **Be Animated**—Let your love for Jesus show in your words, face, gestures, and tone of voice. If you share your testimony like you would share a school report on 18th century garbanzo bean farming techniques, the children will not care. If you are excited about what Christ has done in your life, the children will be too.

- **Be Excited**—Sometimes there is a temptation to think that your personal testimony may not be as interesting as somebody else’s. Remember that we never need to compare our relationship with Christ to another. It took just as much of Jesus’ sacrifice to save us as it did any other human being on the planet. Be excited and grateful for what God did in your life, whether it happened as an adult in prison or a five-year-old in Sunday School.

- **Be Prayerful**—Like everything else you do this week, sharing your testimony must be bathed in prayer. Ask God to give you the right words and demeanor. Ask Him to prepare the hearts of the people that will be hearing.

- **Give God the Glory**—This may sound obvious: but remember to make your testimony about God. Your testimony is not about the bad things you used to do. It’s not about the good things you do now. It is about the change that Jesus brought in your life. It is about His sacrifice and His forgiveness. Make sure people walk away from your testimony impressed by Jesus, not by you.
Prayer Guide

We will be serving with Mission Arlington® this July/August because we believe that our Father, the Lord of the Harvest, is sending us into His harvest fields. With that in mind, we need to spend time each day as we prepare for this trip asking the Lord to make it exactly what He wants it to be. Here are some thoughts to help you in your prayer times for this mission trip.

- Pray for our team as we prepare to go. Help us to be ready logistically and, most importantly, spiritually. We can’t be effective sharing the gospel until we ourselves are above all else in love with the Father.
- Pray for the Mission Arlington® missionaries who will be “preparing the soil” before we arrive and following up with discipleship after we leave.
- Pray for each neighborhood where we will be ministering. Pray that God will draw exactly the people He wants to hear the message.
- Pray that the gospel will be presented clearly in all that we do.
- Pray that God will draw people to Himself and that they will respond to our message by putting their faith in Him.
- Pray for more year round missionaries for Mission Arlington® who will continue to plant churches in these neighborhoods.

Some Scripture to Help You Pray

- As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. 1 Samuel 12:23 **We don’t want to sin by not praying for the people God is sending us to teach.**
- Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. Ephesians 3:20-21 **We want this week to be according to God’s plan, not ours. His perfect plan will be above and beyond anything we could plan.**
- Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! 1 Chronicles 16:24. **We go on mission because God is worthy of being shared about. Let’s help Arlington see His marvelous works!**
Rainbow Express®

Preparation Materials

- Outline for each day’s Rainbow Express®
- Instructions for each team member
- Supplemental materials for each activity: memory verse, games, songs, etc.
Rainbow Express® Overview

♦ When you arrive at your site, have one adult leader check in with the office of the apartment community each day to let them know you are there. Always offer to help with anything the office staff might need.

♦ Begin by gathering the children and teenagers that will be attending. This will involve knocking on all the doors of the apartment community to invite people. The games leader and attendance taker will wait for the children at the site. All other team members need to knock on doors.

♦ As the children arrive, begin playing games. Write down each child’s name and apartment number on the attendance sheet.

♦ After finishing the games, begin singing songs as you gather the children into a large group to begin. You may want to sing a couple of songs, then do a puppet song, then sing another song, then a puppet song. This will give the puppet team a chance to rest their arms in between songs.

  ♦ The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

♦ Each day the Large Group Leader will welcome the children and provide an introduction to the day’s themes and activities. The more creative and engaging the Large Group Leader acts, the more interested and involved the children will be during the large group.

♦ A couple of students share their testimony. (There are tips on preparing your testimony on the student preparation packet.)

♦ Ask for prayer requests and pray.

♦ The Memory Verse leader will lead the children in learning the memory verse during the first memory verse activity. (There are suggested memory verse activities for each day in the memory verse teacher instructions portion of this section. Remember that you need to provide whatever materials you need for the memory verse activities.)

♦ Divide up into small groups, as small as you can depending on the number of children and people in your group. Plan on dividing your small groups based on age and gender (for example: 1) preschool, 2) younger elementary boys, 3) younger elementary girls, 4) older elementary boys, 5) older elementary girls, and 6) older elementary.)
girls, and so on. Depending on who actually attends your Rainbow Express® site be prepared to flex if need be in the way you divide.)

- Each small group team will share the day’s Bible Story while in their small group.
- Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.
- Hands on activity: you will have an activity for the children in your small group to do during this time. Days 1, 2, and 4 you will have activity packets with coloring sheets, word searches, mazes, and memory-verse related word games. Day 3 you will make salvation bead bracelets. All of these materials will be provided by Mission Arlington® while you are here.
- While still in small groups, review the week’s memory verse. You can do a small group version of the same memory verse activity you used in large group time, or choose from one of the other suggested activities in the memory verse teacher material. (Remember that you need to provide whatever materials you need for the memory verse activities.)
- Reassemble for a large group closing time. The Large Group Leader will lead a short review time to help wrap up the day’s activities.

- Play games until it is time for Rainbow Express® to end.
- Pass out snacks to each child. Have the children eat snacks there so you can make sure all trash is cleaned up.
- It is mandatory that you walk each child home after Rainbow Express®.
- After everything is cleaned up and all children are walked home, come back to Mission Arlington® to turn in your reports for the day.
Tips for a Successful Rainbow Express®

- **PRAY!** This is what will make or break your week. Everything you do must be bathed in prayer.
- When you first get out to the apartment community, most of the team needs to go door to door and round up the children. Some children will come early, so one or two people need to be ready to stay at the site to play games with the children (rather than knock on doors).
- Parents and older youth will probably stand around the perimeter. Get to know them, talk with them, and invite them to the Bible study at that particular apartment complex. You will receive the information about these Bible Studies when you are here.
- The opening and closing Large Group Times can be a difficult time to keep the children’s attention. The more energy, preparation, and creativity you put in, the more interested and involved the children will become.
- Be sure you are always with the children. You can make a difference in their lives this week. They want and need your undivided attention.
- Love all the children. Try to get to know each of them.
- Remember that you have important jobs to be done. Don’t forget your responsibilities.
- If you are not leading the singing or telling the story, sit among the children.
- Have fun! If you are having fun, the children will have fun. Likewise, if your attitude isn’t the best, they will imitate your attitude.
- Everyone needs to make sure that every child and his/her apartment number are on the attendance list.
- Everyone work together and help each other.
- **PRAY!** Remember to **pray without ceasing** the whole week.

**don’t be that group**

Don’t just carry your comfort zone around with you. When you’re on mission, stow the electronics. Be 100% present with the kids so they know God is 100% with them.

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I tweeted what you told me after devotional. That was inspiring.

I texted Robyn what that kid just said. He’s too cute!

I just checked in at Mission Arlington® on Foursquare. Because people still do that I think.

I put our song time this morning on youtube so I can remember it when we get back.

Something something Instagram . . .

Do you think they might actually **interact** with us at some point?

It doesn’t look promising.
Adult Team Leader / Sponsor

♦ Be the prayer leader for your group. Pray for your team, the people you will encounter in Arlington, and for the Mission Arlington® workers that are preparing the way and will be doing follow up.

♦ Communicate with Mission Arlington® staff with any questions or problems during Rainbow Express®: if you get lost, if you’re not sure where to set up, if you need extra supplies, etc. Your primary Mission Arlington® contact during the trip will be Matt Hart, cell phone number 817-929-2749.

♦ Make sure your team is getting good contact info for everybody that attends so that Mission Arlington® missionaries can follow up.

♦ Make sure that each day during the trip your report is turned in to Mission Arlington® at the end of the day (this will involve the day’s Rainbow Express® attendance and information on any special follow-up needs you encounter.)

♦ Each night during your trip: oversee the preparation of all other team members for tomorrow’s Rainbow Express®. Ensure that any advance preparation needed for crafts, memory verse activities, or closing activities has been done.

♦ Be very familiar with the lessons and activities for each day. Make sure EVERY child gets walked home at the end of EVERY Rainbow Express®.

♦ The first day of Rainbow Express®, be sure to connect with the apartment manager and any other office personnel in the neighborhood where you are leading Rainbow Express®.

don’t be that group

Mission Arlington® will give you directions and instructions for every neighborhood where we send you. Please compare your GPS to these instructions. If they disagree, check with us before you go. We once had two groups miss the entire first day of Rainbow Express® because they trusted their GPS and ended up miles from where the kids were waiting for them.

Yes, Aubrey, as a matter of fact I do think that this must be Shady Canyon Apartments. The GPS said to turn right . . .
Small Group Teams

♦ You will be telling the stories to your small group. Pray that God will prepare the hearts of the kids you will be sharing with to hear His message.

♦ All the Bible stories this week are intended to help the children see that they can trust God’s way for life and salvation.

♦ Before you come, read all of the stories in the Bible and as they are retold for children in the following pages. Know each story well. As you tell the story have your Bible open to the story. **Never read to the kids word for word from the packet!**

♦ Help your children or youth to understand that the story they are learning comes from the Bible. Be very familiar with the scripture and then use the retelling as a guide to communicate the themes to the children you are working with.

♦ Be excited about the story you are teaching. Have fun as you share the love of Christ. The kids need to know that you believe what you are saying and really want them to understand. Make eye contact with the kids and give them 100% of your attention and energy.

♦ Take the time to get to know the children in your small group. They need to know you care about them.

♦ Watch the kids as you teach. If you are losing their attention, try to involve them more. Make sure the kids hear the message.

♦ Review the story at the end by asking questions.

♦ Always have your Bible with you while you are leading your small group. Help the children understand that the stories you are teaching this week are true stories from the Bible that help us know how to follow Jesus.
You will be leading songs with your Rainbow Express® group. Pray that God will help the kids to learn the songs so they can carry the message of Christ’s love with them.

The following pages contain some suggested “Sunday School songs” to get you thinking about songs to use.

You are not limited to doing only the songs in the list. Feel free to do any other children’s songs that your group knows. If you see songs you don’t know in the packet, you can find lots of them on youtube.

Have songs chosen ahead of time that you will sing each day. You can take requests, but have a list of songs ready.

Sing “stand up” songs with lots of motions first, then sing “sit down” songs to prepare the children for the puppet show or Bible story.

Be sure all of the team members know the songs you are going to sing. All team members should sing with enthusiasm.
1. **Bubbling**
It's bubbling, it's bubbling, it's bubbling in my soul
There's singing and laughter since Jesus made me whole
Folks don't understand it, I cannot keep it quiet!!
It's bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, bubbling, bubbling day and night

2. **Come and Go with Me**
Come and go with me to my Father's house
Come and go with me to my Father's house
It's a big, big house with lots and lots of room
A big, big table with lots and lots of food
A big, big yard where we can play football
A big, big house, it's my Father's house

3. **Deep and Wide**
Deep and wide, deep and wide
There's a fountain flowin' deep and wide
Deep and wide, deep and wide
There's a fountain flowin' deep and wide

4. **Do You Love my Jesus**
Deep, deep Ohhh deep down down
Deep down in my heart, I love you Jesus
Deep, deep Ohhh deep down down
Deep down in my heart
Do you love my Jesus deep down in your heart?
Yes I love my Jesus deep down in my heart!

5. **Father Abraham**
Father Abraham had many sons
Many sons had Father Abraham
I am one of them, and so are you
So let's just praise the Lord - Right Arm!

...Left arm, right foot, left foot, nod your head, turn around, sit down!

6. **God Is So Good**
God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good, He's so good to me
He answers prayer...
I love Him so....

7. **Give Me Oil in my Lamp**
Give me oil in my lamp,
Keep me burning, burning, burning
Give me oil in my lamp, I pray
Give me oil in my lamp,
Keep me burning, burning, burning
Keep me burning til the break of day
Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the King of Kings
Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the King

Give me gas in my Ford,
Keep me truckin' for the Lord....
Give me wax on my board,
Keep me surfin' for the Lord....
Give me umption in my gumption,
Make me function, function, function....

8. **The B-I-B-L-E**
The B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me
I stand alone on the Word of God
The B-I-B-L-E

9. **He's a Peach of a Savior**
He's a peach of a Savior
He's the apple of my eye
He prunes away the branches when my branches get too high
He stomps my grapes of wrath when my life gets too tough
That's why I'm bananas for the Lord
He's the vine and we're the branches
He's the vine and we're the branches
That's why I'm bananas for the Lord

10. **I'm All Wrapped Up**
I'm all wrapped up, I'm all tied up,
I'm all tangled up in Jesus
I'm all wrapped up, I'm all tied up,
I'm all tangled up in God
I'm all wrapped up, I'm all tied up,
I'm all tangled up in Jesus
I'm all wrapped up, tied up, tangled up in God

11. **I'm Gonna Sing, Sing, Sing**
I'm gonna sing, sing, sing
I'm gonna shout, shout, shout
I'm gonna sing, I'm gonna shout,
Praise the Lord
When those gates are opened wide
I'm gonna sit by Jesus' side
I'm gonna sing, I'm gonna shout,
Praise the Lord

12. **I'm in the Lord's Army**
I may never march in the infantry,
rade in the cavalry, shoot the artillery
I may never fly o'er the enemy
But I'm in the Lord's army, Yes sir!
I'm in the Lord's army, Yes sir!
I'm in the Lord's army, Yes sir!
I may never march in the infantry,
rade in the cavalry, shoot the artillery
I may never fly o'er the enemy
But I'm in the Lord's army

13. **I've Got a River of Life**
I've got a river of life flowing out of me
Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see
Opens prisoners' doors, sets the captives free
I've got a river of life flowing out of me
Spring up oh well (gush gush gush gush)
within my soul
Spring up oh well (splish splash) and make me whole
Spring up oh well (whoosh) and give to me
That life abundantly

14. **I've Got Joy Down in my Heart**
I've got joy down in my heart
Deep deep down in my heart
Spell it J-O-Y Down in my heart
Deep deep down in my heart
Who put it there? Jesus put it there
And nothing can destroy it, destroy it, destroy it — UGH!
I've got joy down in my heart
Deep deep down in my heart

15. **I've Got Peace Like a River**
I've got peace like a river, I've got peace like a river
I've got peace like a river in my soul
I’ve got peace like a river, I’ve got peace like a river
I’ve got peace like a river in my soul
I’ve got joy like a fountain.....
I’ve got peace, love, and joy like a river mountain fountain.....

16. I Have So Much
I have so much, so much, so much, so much, so much, so much, so much (clap) to be thankful for. (REPEAT)
I have Jesus to be thankful for.....
I have the Bible to be thankful for.....
I have you to be thankful for.....

17. Little Square Box
If I had a little square box to put Jesus in,
I’d take Him out and hug His neck and share Him with a friend
But if I had a little square box to put the devil in,
I’d take him out and STOMP HIS FACE and put him back again.

18. I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy
I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart
Where? Down in my heart
Where? Down in my heart
I’ve got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart
Down in my heart to stay
And I’m so happy, so very happy
I’ve got the love of Jesus in my heart
Down in my heart
And I’m so happy, so very happy
I’ve got the love of Jesus in my heart

And if the devil doesn’t like it
he can sit on a tack! Ouch!.....
And if the devil doesn’t like it
he can swallow a bomb! Boom!.....
And if the devil doesn’t like it
he can fall off a cliff! Ahhh!.....
I’ve got the wonderful love of my blessed redeemer way down in the depths of my heart....

19. If You’re Happy and You Know It
If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands
If you’re happy and you know it then your face will surely show it
If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands
If you’re happy and you know it stomp your feet...
If you’re happy and you know it say Amen...
If you’re happy and you know it Praise the Lord...
If you’re happy and you know it say Yee-Haw...

20. Jesus in the Morning
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the morning
Jesus at the noon time
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus when the sun goes down
Love Him....
Serve Him...
Praise Him...
Share Him...
Thank Him...

21. Jesus Is my Rock
Jesus is my Rock, and He rolls my blues away
Bop shoe Bop Shoe Bop Woo!! (Repeat 2x)

22. Jesus Loves Me
Jesus loves me this I know,
for the Bible tells me so
Little ones to Him belong
They are weak but He is strong
Chorus:
Singing na na na na na na na na na - Heh!
Na na na na na na na na – Huh!
Yes, Jesus loves me, Yes, Jesus loves me,
Yes, Jesus loves me, The Bible tells me so

Jesus loves me when I’m good
When I do the things I should
Jesus loves me when I’m bad
Though it makes Him very sad
(Chorus)

23. My God Is So Big
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
There’s nothing my God cannot do
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
There’s nothing my God cannot do
The mountains are His, the rivers are His
The stars are His handiwork too
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty
There’s nothing my God cannot do, for you

24. No One That I Know
No one that I know walks like you,
Talks like you, or looks like you
No one that I know is like you
No one else does what you do

25. Sheep Song
I wanna be a sheep baa baa,
I wanna be a sheep baa baa
Cuz Jesus loves sheep
I wanna be a sheep baa baa
I don’t wanna be a goat nope nope
I don’t wanna be a goat nope nope
Cuz there ain’t no hope for goats
I don’t wanna be a goat nope nope

26. Satan Didn’t Like It
Satan didn’t like it when we Came outta the wilderness
Came outta the wilderness
Satan didn’t like it when we Came outta the wilderness
Walkin’ with the Lord, Walkin’ with the Lord
Walkin’ with the Lord
Satan didn’t like it when we Came outta the wilderness
Walkin’ with the Lord
Swimmin’ with the Lord...
Dancin’ with the Lord...

27. Shake a Friend’s Hand
Shake a friend’s hand,
Shake the hand next to you
Shake a friend’s hand and sing along
Shake a friend’s hand,
Shake the hand next to you
Shake a friend’s hand and sing,
Sing ha-la-la-la-la-la-leluah,
Ha-la-la-la-la-lehuah (repeat)

Scratch a friend’s back, ...
Hug a friend’s neck...

28. Swing Low, Sweet Chariot
Swing low, sweet chariot
Comin’ fo’ to carry me home
Swing low, sweet chariot
Comin’ fo’ to carry me home

29. On a Day Like This
On a day like this (clap, clap)
On a day like this (clap, clap)
On a day like this (clap, clap) Ohhhhhhh
I need the Lord to help me
On a day like this (stomp, stomp, clap, clap)
On a day like this (stomp, stomp, clap, clap)
On a day like this (stomp, clap, clap)
Ohhhhhhh
I need the Lord to help me

On a day like this (toot, toot, stomp, stomp, clap, clap)...
On a day like this (pat, pat, toot, toot, stomp, stomp, clap, clap)...
On a day like this (bounce, bounce, pat, pat, toot, toot, stomp, stomp, clap, clap)...

30. The Fruit of the Spirit
The fruit of the Spirit’s not a banana
The fruit of the Spirit’s not a banana
If you wanna be a banana
You might as well hear it
You can’t be a fruit of the Spirit
Cuz the fruit is love, joy, peace and patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control
The fruit of the Spirit’s not a coconut...
The fruit of the Spirit’s not a lemon...

31. This is the Day
This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made, that the Lord has made
I will rejoice, I will rejoice
And be glad in it, And be glad in it
This is the day that the Lord has made

I will rejoice and be glad in it
This is the day, this is the day
That the Lord has made

32. This Little Light of Mine
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine
This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
Hide it under a bush, oh no!
I’m gonna let it shine
Hide it under a bush, oh no!
I’m gonna let it shine
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine
Won’t let satan blow it out,
I’m gonna let it shine

33. Walk, Walk, Walk, Walk in the Light
It’s a great day to praise the Lord.
It’s a great day to praise the Lord.
Walking in the Light of Love.
Walk, walk, walk, walk in the light (Hey!)
Walk, walk, walk, walk in the light (Hey!)
Walk, walk, walk, walk in the light (Hey!)
Walking in the Light of Love.

It’s a great day to hug a neck...
It’s a great day to say “Amen!”...

34. What a Mighty God We Serve
What a mighty God we serve
What a mighty God we serve
Angels bow before Him
Heaven and earth adore Him.
What a mighty God we serve.

35. Who’s the King of the Jungle?
Who’s the king of the jungle? ooo ooo
Who’s the king of the sea?
wiggle wiggle wiggle
Who’s the king of the universe, and who’s the king of me?

36. With Jesus in your Boat
With Jesus in your boat,
you can smile through the storm
Smile through the storm, smile through the storm
With Jesus in your boat,
you can smile through the storm
When you’re sailing home
Sailing, sailing home, sailing, sailing home
With Jesus in your boat, you can smile through the storm when you’re sailing home
Memory Verse Teacher

♦ Pray that they will learn the verse of the week, so they can carry a piece of the Bible with them always.

♦ The children will have two opportunities to hear the memory verse each day: once in the opening time in a large group and once after the story time in a small group. You will be responsible for leading the memory verse activity in the large group.

♦ Read through the suggested activities ahead of time. Some require additional planning and/or materials. Make sure you have what you need.

♦ Make sure everyone on your team knows the activities you plan to use. Help the other small group leaders decide which memory verse activities they will do each day.

♦ Do more than just lead the activities as they are described in the packet. Spend time explaining the meaning of the verse and how it applies to life. Help the children understand what the memory verse means.

♦ The following page contains suggested memory verse activities that you can choose from. Remember that you need to provide whatever materials you need for the memory verse activities.

♦ The verse of the week is:

There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ . . . You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

Spanish: De hecho, aunque el cuerpo es uno solo, tiene muchos miembros, y todos los miembros, no obstante ser muchos, forman un solo cuerpo. Así sucede con Cristo. Ahora bien, ustedes son el cuerpo de Cristo, y cada uno es miembro de ese cuerpo. 1 Corintios 12:12, 27
Memory Verse Teacher (continued)

- **Teams:** Divide the kids into two teams. Let one side say the first part of the verse and let the others complete it. See how loud and soft and fast and slow each side can be. (Remember you can be creative in your team divisions: Boys v. Girls, Sandals v. Tennis Shoes, Eye or Hair Colors, kids wearing shorts v. kids wearing jeans...etc.) Compliment both teams on a job well done.

- **Memory Verse Challenge:** Make signs using construction paper with one or two words of the verse on each. Have several workers or children stand at the front and hold the signs so that everyone can see the words. Lead the children in saying the verse together a few times. Then, one at a time, have the sign holders hide their sign, and say the verse together again. Repeat this until all the signs are hidden and say the verse one more time.

- **Hand Signs:** Assign a hand motion for each word of the verse. Teach the children the hand signs and the words at the same time. Then say the words while the children only do the hand motions. And then do the hand motions while the children say the words.

- **Volley Verse:** Sit or stand in a circle. Take a soft ball or balloon and pass it around in a circle, each person saying one word of the verse as they hold the ball and pass it on. Go fast and slow, repeating the whole verse each time. When the kids feel comfortable saying the verse, volley the ball from person to person across the circle, letting each person say one word as they pass the ball.

- **Verse Pop:** Gather several small strips of paper and write one or two words of the verse on each strip. Put each paper inside a balloon and inflate the balloon. Let the children who are sitting the most quietly pop the balloon handed to them, and say the word they find inside. Have all the children repeat the word and continue until all the balloons are popped. Have a copy of the entire verse ready so that, in the end, the children can see the whole verse on one page. Repeat the verse several times with all the children. (It is a good idea to write numbers on the balloons so you can hand them to the children in the correct order. Also, be aware of smaller children who might be afraid of the popping noise.)

- **Verse Puzzle:** Write the verse on a piece of paper and cut the paper into 6-10 pieces. Let the children put the puzzle together as a team. Make sure everyone gets a chance to help. When it is finished, say the verse altogether. Put the puzzle together again. See how fast the children can finish the puzzle and say the verse.

- **Verse Sticks:** Write phrases of the verse on several craft sticks. Work together to put the sticks in the correct order.

- **Verse Chain:** Gather several small strips of paper and write one or two words of the verse on each strip. Working together in your small group, tape the links together in circles to make a paper chain. When you finish, say the verse all together.

Be sure to make a visual aid to help teach the memory verse.
Puppets have a power to draw people. Obviously a simple puppet show holds the most charm for young children. You will be amazed, however, how many parents, grandparents, aunts, and uncles will come to watch puppets just because they are curious. This gives you a great opportunity to connect with them and potentially share the gospel. So don’t be afraid to try using them, even if you never have before. Here are some tips on how to easily incorporate puppets into your Rainbow Express® program:

SONG TIME—Have the puppets sing along with the songs. This is fun for young children.

MEMORY VERSE—Have the puppets help teach the memory verse. We have found it to be especially helpful to have the children teach the memory verse to the puppets. Let the puppets “play dumb” so that it takes them several tries to learn it.

GATHERING—Have the puppets going while you are out knocking on doors and taking attendance. You will find the puppet show attracts plenty of curiosity.

CLOSING TIME—Have the puppets ask the review questions in the final large group time. Alternatively, you could have the puppets give funny answers to the review questions asked and let the children help correct them.

PUPPET CONCERTS—One of the simplest and surprisingly effective ways to use puppets is to let them give a one or two song “concert” each day during your Rainbow Express® program. We have had great response with upbeat Christian music, especially if there is an easy chorus the kids can catch on to and sing along with.

A NOTE ON PUPPET MUSIC—It is very important to remember that some songs that might be youth group favorites may be more likely to drive away than attract some parents. Keep in mind that the goal is to find opportunities to interact with all age groups, not just children and teenagers. If you would like to purchase puppet music instead of using what you already have, consider a series called RPM-Righteous Pop Music. You can order from them on-line from the company that produces them at onewaystreet.com.

Remember that you can borrow puppets from Mission Arlington® / Mission Metroplex® if you do not have any.
 Attendance Taker

- Pray for the children that will attend your Rainbow Express® and for the Bible Study leaders that will follow-up with the children.
- The multi-housing communities where you will hold Rainbow Express® are places with ongoing Mission Arlington® Bible Studies, After School Programs, and other activities. The information you gather will be a valuable resource for the Mission Arlington® teams doing follow-up after you are gone.
- THIS IS AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT JOB! We need to know about every child, teenager, and parent you meet (and where they live) so that we can get them involved in weekly Bible study. Also, if a child accepts Christ as their Savior or needs special attention, you will mark this on the attendance sheet so the appropriate follow-up takes place.
- As children arrive for each day of Rainbow Express®, ask for their name (first and last), age, apartment number, and building number (if applicable). Please do not allow children to write on the attendance sheet. Please neatly write down the information they give you.
- Be sure you have the attendance sheets before you depart for the site each day. Make sure you turn in these sheets after Rainbow Express® each day. Mission Arlington® will provide the blank sheets.

Dude, great day today. We had a one parent and two kids who accepted Christ, a teenager looking for a church, and a whole family that need Bibles in Spanish.

Awesome, I’ll get those names to that neighborhoods’ missionary tonight so they can start following up right away.

Yeah. We actually lost our attendance sheet. I remembered about half of the names and wrote them on this napkin. Some of their apartment numbers are under the ketchup spot. There’s also one guy who wants to get baptized. He usually wears socks, so he should be easy to find again . . .

*don’t be that group*

We take discipleship seriously at Mission Arlington®. We know you do too. Help us by making sure we get good reports from you each day so we can follow up with all the people you make contact with.
Large Group Leader

♦ Pray for the children you will be teaching. Pray that this week the word of God will change their lives.

♦ It is your responsibility to help the program flow from one activity into the next activity while in a large group.

♦ At the beginning of each day, lead a brief introduction to help transition into the small group times. During the opening time, ask the kids questions about what they learned the day before. See if any of them know the memory verse.

♦ In each day’s introduction you will want to help the children learn to love God’s words. You want them to have a heart like Peter in John 6:68-69 when he said: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”

♦ Keep the kids involved and interested in everything you do.

♦ Always have your Bible with you while you are leading the large group. Help the children understand how much you love your Bible.

♦ It will not be your job to tell each day’s Bible story. That will happen in the small groups.
Games Leader

♦ Be prepared to play some games before Rainbow Express® begins as a way to gather and meet children. Play again afterwards to allow more interaction time with those who have come.

♦ Kids are more likely to listen to and interact with people they know care about them. Playing games is one way to build relationships with the kids. Pray that God will use the game time to build relationships between your team members and the children.

♦ Find ways to incorporate the concepts of the memory verse and lessons for each day into games you are playing.

♦ There is a list of games on the next page. You are not limited to the games on the list. Decide which games you are going to play each day. Involve everyone. Have some games prepared to play with older children and other games prepared to play with younger children.

♦ The apartment managers in the places you will be serving have asked Mission Arlington® not to use balls, Frisbees, or anything else that could potentially break windows in the apartment communities. Bring soft, Nerf® type balls and toys that cannot cause any damage.
• **Big, Bad Wolf**: Have the children stand in a line at one end of the game area. One leader or child is the “Big, Bad Wolf” and will stand at the other end of the area with her back to the children. In unison, the children shout, “What time is it Mr. Wolf?” The wolf answers with an hour, “4 o’clock”, for example. The children take that number of steps forward. If the wolf said “4 o’clock,” the children would take 4 steps toward the wolf. When the wolf thinks the children are close enough to her, she answers their question with, “It’s eating time!” Then she chases them back to their starting line. Anyone she tags joins her as a wolf. The game ends when all but one participant has been tagged.

• **Overall Understanding**: Players are divided into two teams. Teams line up in parallel rows with players standing behind one another. The first player on each team is given a beach ball, or balloon. When the leader says, “Go,” the first player on each line passes the ball backward over her head to the second player. The second player passes the ball under his legs to the next person in line, and so forth. The ball continues to be passed backward down the line, alternately over and under, until it reaches the last player. The last player, receiving the ball, runs to the front of his or her line and begins to pass the ball back again. This continues until every player on the line has a chance to be at the beginning. The team whose first player gets to the front of the line again is the winner.

• **Parachute**: You will have a tarp with you to use for the children to sit on each day. The tarp can double as a “parachute”. Have the kids stand on all sides of the tarp and hold it at waist level. Each side of the tarp is a team, making four teams. Put a beach ball on the tarp. Have the kids shake the tarp. They should try to shake the tarp so that the beach ball falls off another team’s side. Whenever the beach ball falls off the tarp, the team on that side gets a point. The team that has the fewest points at the end of the game wins.

• **Sharks and Minnows**: You will need a good size running area for this game. Have the children line up along one side of the area. They are the “minnows”. Have the leader stand in the middle of the area. The leader is the shark. When the shark yells “Go!”, the minnows run to the other end of the area. The shark runs around and tags as many minnows as possible before they reach the other end of the field. When a minnow is tagged, he or she must freeze wherever tagged. When all of the untagged minnows reach the end of the area, the shark yells, “Go!” again. This time the shark and the frozen minnows may tag the runners. The game continues until there is only one minnow left. That minnow is the winner and begins the next game as the shark.

• **Everybody's It Tag**: There are two rules: (1) everybody is It, and (2) when a player is tagged, he or she is frozen. Have everyone stand in a circle. Then the leader shouts “Everybody’s it!” and the game starts (and quickly ends).

• **Hospital Tag**: The first time a player is tagged, she puts her hand on the part of herself that was tagged. The second time she is tagged, she must put her other hand on that area. The third time, because she is out of hands, she must sit down.

• **Trust Walk**: Chose a landmark in your area to be the “goal” of this game. A mailbox or tree will probably be readily available for this purpose. Blindfold one player and choose another player to be the “guide.” Have the rest of the children scatter themselves between the blindfolded person and the goal. The guide leads the blindfolded person through all the people to the goal while the children in the way will call out other directions. The blindfolded player must listen carefully to the guide's instructions. Let the children take turns being blindfolded and being the guide.

• **Circle Spot Rush**: All players stand in a circle, arms’ length apart, facing inward. In the center of the circle are small markers (paper plates, pieces of construction paper, etc.). The number of markers is always one less than the number of players. The leader of the game stands just outside the circle and calls out various types of movement: run, skip, hop, etc. The players move clockwise around the circle in the way directed by the leader. The game leader can also call out stop (all players freeze wherever they are) or about face (players continue to move in the same manner but reverse directions). When the game leader yells rush all players run to the center of the circle and try to stand on one of the markers. Whichever player does not stand on a marker is eliminated. One marker is removed and play continues. The object of the game is to be the last player remaining.

• **Animal Relay**: Each small group will be a team. Teams stand in single file lines, facing a finish line about fifty feet away. The first player runs across the finish line, runs back, tags the next player, and goes to the end of the line. The relay continues until each player has run twice. While they run the game leader calls out various animals. All players must run like that animal until the next one is called. The first team to have all their players finish twice wins.

• **Elbow Tag**: Assign all players a partner. Spread pairs out evenly across the playing area. Have the pairs link arms. Choose one pair to start out as the chaser “It”, and the chasee. Just like regular tag, It tries to tag the chasee. If the chasee is tagged, he or she in turn becomes it and the chase reverses. The chasee’s goal is to link with another player. When the chasee links arms with one side of a pair, the other player must unlink, becoming the chasee.
Youth Leader

Teenagers will often gather around the periphery of your Rainbow Express®. Choose at least one person (if possible one male and one female) to be ready to work with any youth.

- **PRAY!** Youth have always been a part of Rainbow Express®, because groups like yours have always worked at making friends with the older students that hang out around your activities. However, we have really felt led to make a concentrated effort to expand the scope of Rainbow Express® to include youth. Ask God to use the Rainbow Express® that you lead exactly as He would desire.

- Be sensitive to the youth. Some may enjoy participating in parts of the regular Rainbow Express® program, especially if they have younger siblings that are attending or if they are involved in helping in some way. Others will feel more comfortable staying completely separated from the children for the entire time.

- Be flexible. Every apartment community is different and every teenager is different. You might have no teenagers, you may have one, and there might be a dozen. Be prayerfully ready for whatever happens.

- Be sure to report any youth that attend on the Rainbow Express® attendance sheet so that the Mission Arlington® missionaries can effectively follow up.

There is no sure-fire method for working with youth, but here is one possible suggested schedule for a youth Rainbow Express®:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>While the children are:</th>
<th>The youth leaders are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in opening large group: singing, puppets,</td>
<td>meeting any teenagers, going with them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in small groups: story, crafts</td>
<td>having the youth help to pass out craft supplies to children’s small groups, then gathering in their own location. Lead a Bible Study based on the children’s Bible Story for the day. Help the youth learn the memory verse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in games time</td>
<td>having their own youth recreation time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Continued on next page*
TIPS ABOUT WORKING WITH INNER-CITY YOUTH FROM A MISSION ARLINGTON® MISSIONARY

As you are gathering the younger children for Rainbow Express®, inevitably you will see older youth who seemingly couldn’t care less about hanging around with the little kids. Some of these youth will, however, hang out around the periphery of your Rainbow Express® acting, of course, like they’re not interested. But don’t be fooled. If they’re hanging out, they are interested.

- **Introduce yourself:** Don’t wait for the youth to walk up to you—it won’t happen. You (2 or 3 of you) should walk up to them, stick out your hand to shake theirs & introduce yourself. If you’re meeting guys, invite them to throw the football, play soccer, or even wall-ball (at an appropriate place). Try to do this event somewhat removed from the younger kids because they may get distracted. If you’re meeting girls who aren’t interested in football, soccer, or wall-ball, just be prepared to sit with them and get to know them.

- **Engage them:** Maybe they can help you unload, carry boxes, pick up trash, help translate (lots of Spanish speaking kids will be attending Rainbow Express®), play with the younger kids after Rainbow Express® is over, etc. During this time, you will continue to get to know them.

- **Develop a Relationship:** Remember that in Jesus’ ministry, he met physical & emotional needs a lot of time before he addressed a person’s spiritual needs. Don’t be judgmental even if their looks, language, or conversation startles you. Hopefully you will have four days with them, so get to know them and when the Spirit leads you, begin the conversation about a relationship with Christ. Don’t make assumptions about whether or not they are believers. You’ll come across both.

- **Make Them Feel Special:** You want them to know that you have planned this time for them. Come prepared with football, soccer ball, basketball, etc. Maybe bring an additional snack for them. Sit around with the youth & munch on chips or cookies while you get to know them. Bring a few Bibles (pick an easy to read translation like NIV) so as one reads they can all follow along. Keep the actual lesson time short—most of the time should be spent getting to know them & discussing the lesson.
2016 July/August
Rainbow Express®
Curriculum

Stories, crafts, memory verse activities, and opening/closing activities for all four days of Rainbow Express®
Day One

- **Large Group**
  - Songs
  - Puppets
  - Testimony
  - Memory Verse: Fast and Slow

- **Small Group**
  - Story: Ruth
    - Scripture for today’s story: The Book of Ruth
    - Memory Verse Review

- **Large Group**
  - Story review questions

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**Pre-Rainbow Express® Gathering**

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express®.

**Song Time/Puppets**

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

Each day at this time you will have a brief puppet show. There are several simple ways to do this. Suggestions on how to use puppets to help teach children are on page 34.

**Testimony**

The theme for this whole week of Rainbow Express is *The Body: how we fit together in God’s perfect plan*. Each day you will be sharing stories, songs, crafts, and other activities that help the children understand that God has a perfect plan for our lives which involves being united in following Him. They will learn that Jesus came to save us from sin and restore us to a new life with God. Obviously, the decision to follow Christ is an incredibly personal decision. It is important that the children and youth who attend your Rainbow Express understand that a personal relationship with Christ is a very important reality for the members of your group. Every day during the opening time one or two members of your group can share a short version of their testimony in front of the large group. The goal is to let the children see how listening and obeying as God has spoken in your life has made a practical and meaningful difference. *(For help on sharing in a way that will be age-appropriate and meaningful with children, each person who plans to give their testimony should read the sheet Tips on Preparing Your Testimony in the training materials section of this packet.)*

**Memory Verse Activity**

When the Large Group Leader finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse Teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day one is “Fast and Slow”. Have your poster of...
Day One

the memory verse available. Read through the verse all together several times to practice. Practice saying the memory verse faster and faster. Try saying it slower and slower. Say it in “slow motion”, using exaggerated hand motions and deep slow motion voices.

Introduction of Today’s Story—Building the Foundation

When the memory verse teacher is finished, the Large Group Leader will return to the front to provide a brief introduction to the day’s theme and story. Each day you will re-introduce the concept that the Bible tells us the truth about God’s love and the Savior He sent for us. Take time to sum up the previous day’s stories and themes. Be sure each day to introduce the theme for the day’s story. The stories for the whole week are intended to show that we can be confident in Jesus as our Savior. Help the children understand that God wants desperately for all people to know Him and accept Christ as their Savior. When you have finished this introduction, divide the children into small groups to hear the Bible story.

Below is a suggested narrative to help with the day’s introduction.

Did you know that God has a special plan just for your life? It’s true! God loves you. He made you just the way that you are. You are an important part of God’s plan. If you came to Rainbow Express last month you learned a lot about that, didn’t you? You learned that God designed each of us exactly the way that He wants us to be. You learned that He has a special plan for our lives, a plan to give us hope and a future.

This week we’re going to be learning more about God’s plan for us. We’re going to learn something really important: that God’s plan for us doesn’t actually involve just us following Him. God’s plan is about our following Him together. God loves every single one of us equally. You are very special to Him. He wants you to know Him and follow Him and love Him. One of the greatest things about God is that He loves all of us that way. He has enough love for every single person on the planet. God loves us all, and He wants all of us to love each other, too.

The Bible teaches us that God designed each of us to be different for a reason. By being different, we are better able to learn to love each other. We have to learn to work together. Think about it this way: what would life be like if every single person were good at the same things and bad at the same things? If we were all good painters and bad singers, we would have lots of beautiful pictures to look at, but no good music to listen to. Instead of making us all the same, God made us so that we’re all good at different things. When we all work together, we’ll find that we’re the happiest.

The Bible compares us to a body. I’m going to read to you from a book in the Bible called 1st Corinthians. This is from chapter 12, verses 14-15. It says “Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot say, ‘I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,’ that does not make it any less a part of the body.” What do you think that means?

God is telling us in these verses that He designed us to all need each other, no matter how different we are. In that sense, we’re just like a body. Your foot will never decide not be a part of your body just because it’s different than your hand. In the same way, people can never decide that they’re not a part of God’s plan just because they feel different than other people. God loves us too much for that. He promises that we all fit into His perfect plan, just like all the parts of your body work together to make you you.

We’re going to divide into our small groups now. We’re going to learn a true story from the Bible about two
women that might not have felt like they fit into God’s plan because they were different. You will see that God had a perfect place for them in His perfect plan.

Small Group Story Time

*When the Large Group Time is over, divide the children into small groups for story time. The text provided here is to serve as a guide for you while you tell the story. Read it through several times and be able to tell it from memory. It is not important to be able to recite this story word-for-word. Your goal is to be able to relate the story to a level children will understand. Use the wording included here as suggestions to help you make these concepts understood by elementary age children. Feel free to adapt these words to fit well with your own style.*

**Today's Story:** Ruth—read the book of Ruth to prepare

The Bible tells the true story of a woman named Naomi, a very happy woman who lived a long time ago in a place called Judah. Naomi’s life was good: she had a husband she loved very much and two adult sons that made her very happy. In fact, the name Naomi means happy.

One year the land of Judah went through a very hard time. There was hardly any rain for a very long time. No rain means no plants can grow, so it became very hard to find enough food to eat. Naomi, her husband, and her two sons decided to leave Judah. They travelled to a nearby land called Moab to find food. This was a tough decision. It is always a little scary to leave someplace you know to move to a place you do not know. Moab turned out to be a good place to live. Naomi’s two sons even married two Moabite women, and Naomi was still happy. Then everything changed. Naomi’s husband died. Then her two sons died too. Naomi lost the people she loved. She became so sad that she did not even want to be called Naomi any more. She asked her friends to call her Mara, which means bitter.

Naomi decided to go back to Judah. There, maybe she could find somebody who would help her. Naomi called in the two women that had married her sons. “Go back home now to your parents’ homes,” Naomi told them. “May God be kind to you, just like you have been kind to me.” One of the two women hugged Naomi and kissed her goodbye. The other young woman, Ruth, did not leave.

“Don’t send me away from you,” Ruth said to Naomi. “I will go to Judah with you. Where you live, I will live. Your God will be my God. Your people will be my people.” Ruth was very brave. She was going to leave her home, her parents, even her country, to stay with her friend Naomi. Ruth was even leaving behind her parents’ religion to believe in the one real God, the God of the Bible. Ruth loved Naomi and wanted to take care of her. She knew that they needed each other, just like different parts of the body need each other.

Together, Naomi and Ruth travelled to Judah. Life would not be easy for them there. In those days there were not many jobs that women could do. It was hard for them to find food. They did not even have enough money to keep their own farm land. Ruth and Naomi returned to Judah just as it was time for the farmers to begin picking the food they were growing.

Ruth decided to help. She went to the field of a man named Boaz, a relative of Naomi’s husband who had died. Boaz’s workers were in the fields, using long knives called sickles to cut down the grain plants that grew on Boaz’s farm. Every time they cut some of the plants, a few would get missed. As the workers passed through the fields a few plants would always be left over. Ruth followed behind the workers, picking up the left-over plants so that she and Naomi could eat them.
It was hard work. The fields were hot and Ruth had no water to drink. She had nothing to eat for lunch. Ruth and Naomi might have felt like nobody cared for them except each other. We know the truth though: God loved Ruth and Naomi very, very much. He had a plan to send somebody to help them. Remember what we’re learning this week: God always loves us, no matter what. He has a plan to help us and for us to help others.

One day Boaz came to the fields to say hello and eat lunch with his workers. He saw Ruth there, hard at work to care for Naomi and herself. Boaz could see how hard she worked and how much she cared for Naomi. He went to speak to her. “Don’t go to any other fields to work,” Boaz told her. “Stay here and you will be safe. I have ordered my workers to be kind to you. You may drink from the water I send for them. You may eat from the lunch I send for them.”

“What have I done that you would be so nice to me, a person from a different country?” Ruth asked Boaz.

“I have heard all about how you help Naomi,” Boaz said. “You left your own home and land to take care of her. Now God will help take care of you. He will care for you just like a bird cares for the baby birds under its wings.”

Ruth went home to Naomi and told her all that had happened. They expected to find barely enough food to survive. Instead, Boaz, following God’s instructions to love all people, had given them more than they could ever have imagined. Every day Ruth went back to Boaz’s field to work. Boaz always made sure she was taken care of. He even secretly told his workers to leave extra food on purpose for Ruth to pick up.

God cared for Ruth and Naomi, even when they thought nobody did. They felt alone and unloved, but God loved them very much. God used Boaz to take care of everything they needed. God has the same plan for us. He wants all of us to take care of each other. We’re supposed to work together to share God’s love, just like the different parts of a body work together. Ruth and Boaz were two very different people: Ruth was a poor young woman from a far-off country. Boaz was a rich man from Judah. God used them both to care for other people and help them know about His love.

Over time, Ruth and Boaz came to know each other very well. One day, they were married. Naomi’s heart was happy again. God had cared for her. Naomi learned that we are all a part of God’s perfect plan, no matter how different we may all be.

God still has a perfect plan for us. It still involves all of us. God wants all people to know Him and know how much He loves them. God shows His love for us in many ways, but there is one that is more amazing than all the others. God sent His son Jesus to help us.

We need help, because none of us has completely followed God’s perfect plan. We make mistakes; we disobey what God asks us to do. The Bible uses the word sin for all the things we think, do, or say that are not what God would want. God loves us very much, but sin keeps us away from Him. Jesus came to take away sin. He died on the cross, even though He never did anything wrong. He died because of our sin. Then, on the third day, Jesus came back to life. Now, anybody that wants to can accept Jesus’ free forgiveness. He wants to take away our sin and help us follow God’s perfect plan for all of us. We can believe in Jesus. We can know for sure that He really does love us and wants to save us. God has shown us that over and over again. He cared for Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. He had a perfect place for all of them in His plan. He has a plan for us too. If you would like to know how Jesus can take away your sin and help you follow God’s plan, please ask us. We would love to help you know how.

Each day you will close the story time with an invitation to accept Jesus. Say something like this: God wants everybody to follow Him. The problem is our sin. Sin includes all the ways we disobey His instructions in what we think, do, or say. Sin means all the ways we treat God as less important than He really is and all the things we give
the love and respect that God deserves. God still loves us, even though our hearts are sinful. That’s why Jesus came. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for our sins. Then on the third day He came back to life. Now, for anybody who asks, Jesus will take away our sins and become a part of our lives. He will help us to follow Him. The Bible says that if we believe Jesus in our hearts and follow Him, He will save us from our sin and help us to follow God. Then one day we will be with Him in heaven. Anybody that wants to choose to follow Jesus can do that today. We would love to help you know how.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft or filling out the activities packet for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives. Crafts and supplies will be provided while you are at Mission Arlington®.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God’s word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the Supplements and Handouts portion of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is:

_There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ . . . You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it._ 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

_Spanish: De hecho, aunque el cuerpo es uno solo, tiene muchos miembros, y todos los miembros, no obstante ser muchos, forman un solo cuerpo. Así sucede con Cristo. Ahora bien, ustedes son el cuerpo de Cristo, y cada uno es miembro de ese cuerpo._ 1 Corintios 12:12, 27

Wrap Up

Each day you will end your Rainbow Express in a second large group session. Have all the children return to the tarp where you started. Sometimes the movement from small groups to large group becomes distracting, especially to younger children. If you find your children becoming noisy as you return to your large group, consider singing a few songs to help everybody focus again.

In this large group session you will have a short skit/object lesson to help emphasize the theme of the day’s activities. A script is provided below. When you finish the skit, ask the children review questions to help them re-cement in their own minds the day’s Bible Story. Review the memory verse together one last time, then pray before dismissing to games time and snacks.

Object Lesson:
Day One

Each day you will provide a visual object lesson during your large group closing time that is designed to help drive home the day’s theme.

Set-Up:
   Actor 1: Needs a Bible
   Actor 2: Covered in shoes. Use tape, string, elastic, Velcro, or anything else to put as many pairs of shoes on the actor as possible: feet, hands, knees, elbows, ears, shins, torso, etc. The more shoes and the more comical the appearance, the better.

Actor 1 is sitting in front of the group reading the Bible. Actor 2 walks up, clearly encumbered by all the shoes. Actor 2 moves very stiffly, often tripping and falling. Actor 1 looks up, surprised.

Actor 2: I’m sorry I’m late to see you. It has taken me a really, really long time to get here. (Trips and falls again.)

Actor 1: (laughing and rising to help Actor 2 up) Are you okay? No wonder you’re late. How can you even move with all those shoes on you? How many pairs of shoes do you have on?

Actor 2: I don’t actually know. A lot. I stopped counting after a while.

Actor 1: Why in the world do you have so many shoes on?

Actor 2: Well . . . I told you I was trying out for the soccer team, right?

Actor 1: Yes, that was today, wasn’t it? How did it go?

Actor 2: Not well. At all. See, I had a really great idea to help me be the best soccer player out there.

Actor 1: (Amused) It didn’t involve lots and lots of shoes, did it?

Actor 2: Actually, it did. (Confusedly) How did you know? (Actor 1 points to all the shoes.) Oh . . . riiiiight. Well, anyway: here was my idea. Feet are the most important body part of a soccer team of course. You use your feet to run, and you use your feet to kick the ball. They’re the most important. I figured that if I put on lots and lots of shoes . . .

Actor 1: (completing the thought) It would be like being “all feet” and would make you better at soccer.

Actor 2: Well . . . Yes.

Actor 1: (kindly) I don’t even understand how you tied these on your hands. (Begins to help Actor 2 remove all the shoes.) I’m glad you’re trying really hard, but I think there are some mistakes in your thinking.

Actor 2: How so?

Actor 1: Well, your whole idea was based on one thing: that feet are the most important body part during soccer.

Actor 2: That’s true, isn’t it?

Actor 1: Not at all.
Actor 2: But they seem like the most important. They run and kick.

Actor 1: That’s true, they do. But who tells your feet where to go?

Actor 2: My brain?

Actor 1: Exactly. How does your brain see where the ball is?

Actor 2: My eyes.

Actor 1: Right. And your ears listen for the referee’s whistle. Your mouth tells the other players when you’re open for a pass. Your legs help move your feet around. Your arms throw the ball in from out of bounds.

Actor 2: I guess I need more parts of my body than I really thought about.

Actor 1: And which is the most important?

Actor 2: (slowly getting the point) Well . . . really I guess none is the most important. I wouldn’t be able to play the same if I were massing any one part. It takes all of my parts to make me me.

Actor 1: That’s 100% right. We can never say that any one body part is more important than another. It’s no different than how we can’t say that one person is more important than another. God’s plan takes all of us working together. It’s just like what we learned about today during Rainbow Express.

Actor 2: Unfortunately, I didn’t get to hear it. I was a little late . . .

Actor 1: What we learned is that God made each of us different and special, just like the parts of a body are different and special. He has a special plan for us to work together to love Him and tell other people about Him. In fact, the Bible says we’re kind of like the body of Jesus.

Actor 2: What does that mean?

Actor 1: It means that we are what God uses for His plans for us. When God wants to tell somebody that He loves them, He uses us to tell them. That’s kind of like being His mouth. When God wants somebody to have food to eat, He might send us to take it to them. That’s like being His hands and His feet.

Actor 2: That’s really cool. I’m sorry I missed it.

Actor 1: Don’t worry. These boys and girls can help tell you the story.

Use this time as a natural transition into story review. Ask the children questions about what they have learned today until they can reconstruct the story for Actor 2.

Game Time/Snacks

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.
Day Two

- **Large Group**
  - Songs
  - Puppets
  - Testimony
  - Memory Verse: Loud and Soft

- **Small Group**
  - Story: Gideon
    - Scripture for today’s story: Judges 6-7
  - Memory Verse Review

- **Large Group**
  - Story review questions

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Pre-Rainbow Express® Gathering

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express®.

**Song Time/Puppets**

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

Each day at this time you will have a brief puppet show. There are several simple ways to do this. Suggestions on how to use puppets to help teach children are on page 34.

**Testimony**

The theme for this whole week of Rainbow Express is *The Body: how we fit together in God’s perfect plan*. Each day you will be sharing stories, songs, crafts, and other activities that help the children understand that God has a perfect plan for our lives which involves being united in following Him. They will learn that Jesus came to save us from sin and restore us to a new life with God. Obviously, the decision to follow Christ is an incredibly personal decision. It is important that the children and youth who attend your Rainbow Express understand that a personal relationship with Christ is a very important reality for the members of your group. Every day during the opening time one or two members of your group can share a short version of their testimony in front of the large group. The goal is to let the children see how listening and obeying as God has spoken in your life has made a practical and meaningful difference. *(For help on sharing in a way that will be age-appropriate and meaningful with children, each person who plans to give their testimony should read the sheet Tips on Preparing Your Testimony in the training materials section of this packet.)*

**Memory Verse Activity**

When the Large Group Leader finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse Teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day two is “Loud and Soft”. Have your poster of
Day Two

the memory verse available. Read through the verse all together several times to practice. Practice saying the memory verse together. Slowly begin to increase the volume. Divide the children into two or more teams. Have them try saying the verse together as a team. See who can say it loud and who can say it soft. Try playing Telephone by having all the children sit in a circle. Have the verse travel around the circle by having each child whisper the next word in the verse to their neighbor.

Introduction of Today’s Story—Building the Foundation

When the memory verse teacher is finished, the Large Group Leader will return to the front to provide a brief introduction to the day’s theme and story. Each day you will re-introduce the concept that the Bible tells us the truth about God’s love and the Savior He sent for us. Take time to sum up the previous day’s stories and themes. Be sure each day to introduce the theme for the day’s story. The stories for the whole week are intended to show that we can be confident in Jesus as our Savior. Help the children understand that God wants desperately for all people to know Him and accept Christ as their Savior. When you have finished this introduction, divide the children into small groups to hear the Bible story.

Below is a suggested narrative to help with the day’s introduction.

(A Special Note—This curriculum references the previous Rainbow Express Curriculum. This is designed to provide a sense of narrative continuity for children here at Mission Arlington who attend Rainbow Express. For those of you using this curriculum in another location, however, this curriculum will work fine as a stand alone.)

This week we are learning about God’s special plan for all people to know how much He loves them. Yesterday we said that God involves all of us in His plan, no matter how different or “left out” we might feel sometimes. God has a place and a plan for each of us. We don’t get left out because we’re different. In fact, the Bible tells us that God made us different on purpose. Our differences help us fit into the plan. God designed us so that, when we let Him help us, we can work together perfectly.

How does being different help us to work together? Think about a soccer team. Every member of the team is working on the same thing: winning the soccer game. Since everybody’s working on the same thing, you might think it would make sense for all of them to be good at the same things, but that’s not true. Imagine a team where every player was good at the same things. If they were all good goalies, they would never be able to win a game. They would be able to stop the other team from making points, but they would never be able to make any points themselves. They couldn’t win! What if they were all good at making goals? They might get a lot of points . . . but the other team would get even more. Why? Because our team wouldn’t have anybody good at protecting the goal. If we want to win, we need some people that know how to make goals, and other people that know how to protect the goal. A team where everybody is the same would not be a good team at all.

God knows this. That’s why He made each of us ready to do exactly what we need to do in His plan. I don’t have the exact same skills, likes, and dislikes that you do. And you don’t have the same ones as the person sitting next to you. That’s because my part of God’s plan isn’t going to be exactly the same as your part of God’s plan. Both are special. Both are important. Both of us are designed to help the other. That’s why God made us the way He did.

Remember that yesterday we read out of the Bible in 1st Corinthians. We read that God made us different, but all part of one plan, just the parts of a body. I’m going to read a little bit more to you from 1st Corinthians. This is from Chapter 12, verses 17 though 21. The Bible says “If the whole body were an eye, how could you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where He wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’” That sounds like what we said about the soccer team, doesn’t it? We have many different parts that do
many different jobs, but they all make up one body.

God made us different, with different skills and different jobs. But we’re all a part of God’s great plan for the whole world. God can use each and every one of us to help people know Him and His love. Look at your hands. They look very different than your feet, don’t they? That’s because God made each of us to be ready for the special job we have in His body. Isn’t it great to know God has you ready for a very special part of His plan, a part made just for you?

We’re going to divide into our small groups now to learn a true story from the Bible. It’s the story of a man that God had a special job for, even though the man didn’t think he could do anything special. We’re going to see that God made us just right. He knows us even better than we know ourselves.

Small Group Story Time

When the Large Group Time is over, divide the children into small groups for story time. The text provided here is to serve as a guide for you while you tell the story. Read it through several times and be able to tell it from memory. It is not important to be able to recite this story word-for-word. Your goal is to be able to relate the story to a level children will understand. Use the wording included here as suggestions to help you make these concepts understood by elementary age children. Feel free to adapt these words to fit well with your own style.

Today’s Story: Gideon (Judges 6–7)

Long ago, a man named Gideon lived in a place called Israel. He was a farmer, just like his whole family and practically everybody else that lived in Israel. They planted seeds and grew crops to make their living. Israel’s next door neighbors were a group of people called the Midianites. The Midianites were not farmers. They didn’t plant anything. Instead, they would ride into Israel and steal whatever they wanted. They lived in tents that they set up wherever they felt like, even in the Israelites’ own yards. They killed the Israelites’ animals to eat. They took the plants that the Israelites grew. They made life almost impossible for the Israelites. Finally, the people of Israel asked God to save them from the awful Midianites.

One day Gideon was working on his farm, doing his best to hide from the Midianites. Gideon wanted to stay as far away from them as he possibly could. He thought there was no way he could ever fight against them. Gideon was the youngest member of the weakest family in the whole area. He just wanted to grow his food and be left alone by the bullies around him. While Gideon was working, he received a very unexpected visitor.

God had a special plan for Gideon. He was going to use Gideon to save the Israelite people from the Midianite attackers. The Angel of the Lord came to see Gideon. While Gideon was working with his crops, the Angel of the Lord came and sat down under a tree nearby. At first, Gideon did not recognize that this was a message from God.

“Greetings, mighty warrior,” the Angel of the Lord said to him. “The Lord is with you.”

Gideon was probably surprised. Nobody ever called him “mighty warrior”. Remember that Gideon thought of himself as the youngest of the weakest of the least. “If the Lord is with us,” Gideon asked, “why have all these terrible things happened to us? Why hasn’t He saved us from the Midianites?”

God’s response was probably the last thing Gideon expected to hear. “Go and save Israel from the Midianites,” God said. “You will have the strength to do it, because I am the one sending you.”
Gideon finally realized who was talking to him. “But God,” he said. “My family is the weakest around, and I am the least important person in my family.” Gideon did not feel like he could do it. Remember, though, that God designs us to perfectly fit in with the plan He has for us. Gideon thought he was weak, but God knew He had made him to defeat a mighty army.

God’s answer to Gideon was simple. “I will be with you,” God said. “And you will strike down the Midianites.”

Gideon was still not sure he could believe what he was hearing. Three times God showed him amazing things, things that only God could do. He did this to prove to Gideon that God really is strong enough to make us and help us to do whatever He asks us to do.

Finally, Gideon was ready for the Mission God had given him. With only 300 fighters, Gideon prepared to battle the mighty Midianite army. How could 300 people fight against a whole army? Gideon gave each soldier some unusual equipment for a battle: a torch, a clay jar, and a trumpet. In the middle of the night Gideon and his soldiers spread in a huge circle around the Midianite camp. All at once, they smashed their clay jars and waved their fiery lights in the air. They blew their trumpets and shouted as loud as they could.

The sleepy Midianites were confused. They thought a great army had surrounded them. They did not know there were only 300 soldiers. In the darkness the Midianites began to fight against what they thought were their enemies. In all the confusion, the Midianites were actually fighting against each other. They battled as hard as they could, but they were only hurting themselves while the Israelites watched from the darkness around the camp. Soon the Israelites chased the few Midianites left all the way out of Israel. At last, the Israelites were free from their enemies.

At first, Gideon didn’t feel like God could use him. He didn’t feel special enough or good enough to be a part of God’s plan. Sometimes we might feel the same way. There are days when we might not feel good enough to be used by God. It’s true that we have all made mistakes. We have all done, said, and thought things that God does not like. The Bible calls those things sins. Sometimes we can feel like our sins might keep God from loving us. There is good news! God always loves us. He can take away our sins. He can love us and know us and use us, even when we don’t feel “special” enough for Him.

God loves us just like He loved Gideon. He can use us in His plan, just like He used Gideon. God helped Gideon take care of Israel’s big problem: the Midianites. God can help us with an even bigger problem: our sin problem. Jesus came to save us from sin. He gave His own life on the cross to take away our sin. Then He came back to life to offer all of us an opportunity to know God and follow His perfect plan for our lives.

If you ever feel like you’re alone or that God’s not with you, remember that Gideon used to feel that way too. Then God showed him that He really does love us and wants us to know Him. If you want to know more about how you can know God personally and follow Him, just ask us. We would love to help you know how.

*Each day you will close the story time with an invitation to accept Jesus. Say something like this:* God wants everybody to follow Him. The problem is our sin. Sin includes all the ways we disobey His instructions in what we think, do, or say. Sin means all the ways we treat God as less important than He really is and all the things we give the love and respect that God deserves. God still loves us, even though our hearts are sinful. That’s why Jesus came. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for our sins. Then on the third day He came back to life. Now, for anybody who asks, Jesus will take away our sins and become a part of our lives. He will help us to follow Him. The Bible says that if we believe Jesus in our hearts and follow Him, He will save us from our sin and help us to follow God. Then one day we will be with Him in heaven. Anybody that wants to choose to follow Jesus can do that today. We would love to help you know how.
Day Two

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft or filling out the activities packet for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives. Crafts and supplies will be provided while you are at Mission Arlington®.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God’s word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the Supplements and Handouts portion of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is:

*There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ . . . You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.*  1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

*Spanish: De hecho, aunque el cuerpo es uno solo, tiene muchos miembros, y todos los miembros, no obstante ser muchos, forman un solo cuerpo. Así sucede con Cristo. Ahora bien, ustedes son el cuerpo de Cristo, y cada uno es miembro de ese cuerpo.*  1 Corintios 12:12, 27

Wrap Up

Each day you will end your Rainbow Express in a second large group session. Have all the children return to the tarp where you started. Sometimes the movement from small groups to large group becomes distracting, especially to younger children. If you find your children becoming noisy as you return to your large group, consider singing a few songs to help everybody focus again.

In this large group session you will have a short skit/object lesson to help emphasize the theme of the day’s activities. A script is provided below. When you finish the skit, ask the children review questions to help them re-cement in their own minds the day’s Bible Story. Review the memory verse together one last time, then pray before dismissing to games time and snacks.

Object Lesson:

*Each day you will provide a visual object lesson during your large group closing time that is designed to help drive home the day’s theme.*

Set-Up:

*Actor 1: Needs a Bible
Actor 2: Tape plastic drinking cups over both hands*

*Actor 1 is sitting in front of the group reading the Bible. Actor 2 walks up, both hands behind the back, turned to*
Day Two

keep hands out of audience’s view. Actor 2 is clearly a little sheepish. Actor 1 looks up and sees Actor 2 approaching.

Actor 1: Hey! How are you doing today?

Actor 2: (Tentatively) Well, I’m mostly okay. I guess.

Actor 1: (Suspiciously) Are you sure? You seem a little . . . not okay. What’s wrong?

Actor 2: (Breaks down in despair) I admit it! I’ve done something foolish!

Actor 1: What happened? It can’t be that bad. I can probably help.

Actor 2: (brightening) I knew you’d help. You see . . . I can no longer use my hands.

Actor 1: (surprised) You can no longer use your hands? What does that mean?

Actor 2: (shows the hands, each of which has a plastic drinking cup taped over.) I taped cups over my hands to punish them. Now I can’t get them off.

Actor 1: (incredulous) You . . . taped cups over your hands . . . to punish them?

Actor 2: Yes. You remember that yesterday my soccer tryout did not go too well.

Actor 1: I remember. There were some extra shoes involved, as I recall.

Actor 2: Right. Since that didn’t pan out, I tried out for the basketball team today.

Actor 1: That’s great. Basketball is really fun.

Actor 2: Yes, it really is. Sadly, however, I missed all my shots. So, I got mad at my hands. So, I grounded them . . . by taping cups over them. The second one was really hard to do, by the way.

Actor 1: Why in the world would you get mad at your hands?

Actor 2: They’re the ones who missed the shots aren’t they?

Actor 1: No, they’re not.

Actor 2: They’re not? I was pretty sure they were.

Actor 1: No, remember what we talked about yesterday with the feet?

Actor 2: Yes. We said it takes every part of the body to play soccer. The feet weren’t the only important part.

Actor 1: That’s right. And the reverse is true too. When something doesn’t go right, we can’t blame just one part of the body. It takes the whole body to play basketball. Legs to run. Eyes to see the ball.

Actor 2: Just like with the soccer.
Actor 1: Just like it. When you tried to add feet, it didn’t work, did it?

Actor 2: Not at all. And you’re saying it doesn’t work to take away hands either.

Actor 1: Right. God made our bodies perfectly balanced to do what they need to do. He made each part exactly right, and He put it right where it needs to be.

Actor 2: I should have figured that out by now.

Actor 1: God made people that way too. There is not single person in the whole world that is not important to Him. He wants us all to matter to each other, because we all matter to Him.

Actor 2: I like that. I’m glad we’re all important to God.

Actor 1: Sure. Think about the story of Gideon we learned today. Other people who looked at Gideon might not have thought he seemed that important. But God knew the truth: He had created Gideon to rescue Israel from the Midianites.

Actor 2: That sounds like a really cool story. I have to admit: I kind of missed it. I was a little distracted trying to tape plastic cups on my hands.

Actor 1: Here’s what we’ll do: I’ll help you untape your hands, and these boys and girls can help tell you the story.

*Use this time as a natural transition into story review. Ask the children questions about what they have learned today until they can reconstruct the story for Actor 2.*

**Game Time/Snacks**

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.
Day Three

- **Large Group**
  - Songs
  - Puppets
  - Testimony
  - Memory Verse: Teams

- **Small Group**
  - Story: The Crucifixion and Resurrection
  - Memory Verse Review

- **Large Group**
  - Story review questions

**Pre-Rainbow Express® Gathering**

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express®.

**Song Time/Puppets**

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

During this time you will also have the puppets sing their song(s). Doing the puppet show in between songs can help keep the children's attention. You are provided with one song for each day. If the children are responding well and enjoying the puppet music, it is okay to perform more than one of the songs and repeat the songs from day to day.

**Testimony**

The theme for this whole week of Rainbow Express is *The Body: how we fit together in God's perfect plan*. Each day you will be sharing stories, songs, crafts, and other activities that help the children understand that God has a perfect plan for our lives which involves being united in following Him. They will learn that Jesus came to save us from sin and restore us to a new life with God. Obviously, the decision to follow Christ is an incredibly personal decision. It is important that the children and youth who attend your Rainbow Express understand that a personal relationship with Christ is a very important reality for the members of your group. Every day during the opening time one or two members of your group can share a short version of their testimony in front of the large group. The goal is to let the children see how listening and obeying as God has spoken in your life has made a practical and meaningful difference. *(For help on sharing in a way that will be age-appropriate and meaningful with children, each person who plans to give their testimony should read the sheet Tips on Preparing Your Testimony in the training materials section of this packet.)*

**Memory Verse Activity**

When the Large Group Leader finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse Teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day three is “Teams”. Have your poster of the
memory verse available. Read through the verse all together several times to practice. Divide your children into teams. Have the teams compete saying the memory verse many different ways: loudest, softest, fastest, slowest, telephone style, English, Spanish, with hand motions, etc.

**Introduction of Today’s Story—Building the Foundation**

When the memory verse teacher is finished, the Large Group Leader will return to the front to provide a brief introduction to the day’s theme and story. Each day you will re-introduce the concept that the Bible tells us that truth about God’s love and the Savior He sent for us. Take time to sum up the previous day’s stories and themes. Be sure each day to introduce the theme for the day’s story. The stories for the whole week are intended to show that we can be confident in Jesus as our Savior. Help the children understand that God wants desperately for all people to know Him and accept Christ as their Savior. When you have finished this introduction, divide the children into small groups to hear the Bible story.

*Below is a suggested narrative to help with the day’s introduction.*

*A Special Note—This curriculum references the previous Rainbow Express Curriculum. This is designed to provide a sense of narrative continuity for children here at Mission Arlington who attend Rainbow Express. For those of you using this curriculum in another location, however, this curriculum will work fine as a stand alone.*

This week we have been talking about God’s plan for us. We have learned that God made us each special to have a relationship with us. We have also learned that God wants all of us to know Him and follow Him as part of one big family of people that love Him. We have also said God designed us all to work together, just like the parts of a body work together. God has a special place for each of us in His perfect plan.

Sometimes it might seem like things aren’t going according to God’s plan. We all have problems in our lives. There are sad things happening all around us that don’t match up with God’s perfect plan. The Bible tells us how this happened. Something called sin messes up God’s perfect plan for our lives. Sin is all the things we think, do, or say that go against what God wants. The Bible says that all people sin. We all make mistakes. None of us has been perfect at following God’s plan.

Sin is a huge problem in our lives. It pushes us away from God’s love and makes it hard to see His plan. God still loves us very much, but our sin keeps us from getting close to Him. God is so perfect that no sin can be around Him. That means that as long as we have sin in our lives, we can never be the loved children of God like He wants. God loves us so much that He wants to save us by taking away our sin. Today we’re going to learn about how He made a way to take away the sin of this world.

We have been reading from I Corinthians chapter 12 this week. This chapter of the Bible talks about how God designed us to work together as a body. So far, we have seen that all people are a part of the body and that all people are different so that the body will work well. Today we are going to read verse 26. It says, “If one part of our body hurts, we hurt all over. If one part of our body is honored, the whole body will be happy.” What do you think that means?

We all know that hurting even a little part of your body can cause great big pain. Think about what it feels like when you stub your toe on a chair in the dark. Your toe is very small, but it makes your whole body hurt. The same is true if you have a toothache. That tiny tooth can make you feel miserable all over. The different parts of a body are all connected to each other. When one has a problem, all the other parts share the problem. God says that, as people, we’re like that too. He designed us to be together, like a body. If one of us is sad, the others are sad too, so we try to help. If one of us has really good news, we want to share that happiness with others too. That kind of connection can only come from love. That’s why we care about each other: because God helps us to
love each other.

God loves us, too. That’s why it made Him so sad when we were far away from Him because of our sin. He did not want to leave us away from Him. God knew that sin causes suffering. Sin causes us to be away from Him. That’s why He did something amazing to save us from sin. He did that by dying on a cross to save us. Jesus was punished, even though he never did anything wrong. He took sin’s suffering for us. Now we have an open door to follow Him and live in God’s perfect plan.

Today in our small groups we’re going to learn more about how Jesus came to save the world.

**Small Group Story Time**

*When the Large Group Time is over, divide the children into small groups for story time. The text provided here is to serve as a guide for you while you tell the story. Read it through several times and be able to tell it from memory. It is not important to be able to recite this story word-for-word. Your goal is to be able to relate the story to a level children will understand. Use the wording included here as suggestions to help you make these concepts understood by elementary age children. Feel free to adapt these words to fit well with your own style.*


This week we have talked a lot about God’s perfect plan for His people to love Him and love each other. We said that God created each of us exactly how He wants us. He wants us to have a close relationship with Him and for all of us to have strong relationships with the people around us too. The Bible tells us over and over again that God created us to have a joyful life with Him. Do you remember our memory verse from Rainbow Express last time? Jeremiah 29:11 says, “‘I know the plans I have for you,’ says the Lord. ‘I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future.’”

We have also learned that our sin is what separates us from God’s perfect plans for us. The Bible tells us that ever since the first people sinned for the first time God has been working to help us be free from sin. He does this so that we can be free to follow Him. That’s why God sent Jesus. Jesus came so that we could have the wonderful lives of friendship with God that He wants to give us. Jesus said that while He was here with us. He said that the Devil, who tries to get us to sin, only wants to “steal, kill, and destroy.” Then Jesus said, “I have come so they can have life. I want them to have it in the fullest possible way.”

While Jesus was here on Earth He taught us about the kind of lives God wants us to have. He taught us that God wants our lives to be full of love, love for Him and love for other people. In fact, Jesus said the two most important rules in the whole world are to love God with our whole lives and to love other people as much as we love ourselves. Jesus didn’t just teach about love. He showed us God’s love by the way that he cared for the people around Him. Jesus used God’s power to give blind people their sight. He cured sick people. He helped people walk who had never walked before. He fed huge crowds of people and stopped storms just by speaking to them. Jesus’ whole life was spent helping us to know God and His love.

Jesus did not just come to show us how to live, however. He also came to die for us. Every single one of us has sinned. We’ve learned this week that our sin keeps us away from God. Sin is awful, awful stuff. There is no way that we can get rid of it by ourselves. No matter how much we try, you and I are not able to get the sin out of our lives. Sin causes us lots of suffering and sadness in our lives.

Remember the verse we read in a large group from I Corinthians. The Bible says that when one part of the body suffers, all the parts suffer. God designed us to fit together and with Him, just like a body. That means our sin
made Him very sad. He wants to take away our sin, so He took the suffering for us instead of making us go through it by ourselves. This is how it happened:

Not everybody liked the Good News message that Jesus was spreading. There was a group of religious leaders that did not agree with what Jesus said. These men did not want Jesus to teach about God’s love, so they looked for ways to stop Him. They finally decided that they wanted to kill Jesus.

Of course, Jesus had the power to stop them at any time. Remember, Jesus could do amazing things. He knew exactly what these evil people wanted to do to Him. He could have made them stop or He could have just gone back to Heaven and left us alone with our sin problem. Instead, Jesus chose to let His enemies come and arrest Him. He did this because He wanted to die so that He could take the punishment for sin instead of us.

All of us here are sinners. That’s why we can’t take away our own sin or each other’s sin. That would be like one hurt part of the body trying to help another part. If you’re carrying a heavy box with both hands, I can’t help you lift it if I have my own heavy box in both of my hands. In the same way, sinners can’t fix sin. Jesus never sinned. He never said, did, or thought anything that God did not want Him to. That’s why He can help us with our sin, because He doesn’t have any of His own. He took away our sin and put it on Himself. That’s why He let his enemies come and arrest Him.

Jesus’ enemies spent that whole night being cruel to Him. They hit Him and spit on Him and made up lies about Him. The next morning they made Jesus carry a heavy wooden cross up to a place outside the city called Skull Hill. They hammered large nails into Jesus’ wrists and feet to hold Him on the cross. Then they stood the cross up and waited for Jesus to die.

They made fun of Jesus while He hung on the cross. “If you are really the Son of God,” they shouted, “prove it by coming down off the cross. You said you could save other people, but you can’t even save yourself.” Jesus’ enemies were very confused. Jesus was saving other people by staying on the cross. He was accepting the suffering and punishment that we all deserve.

After six hours Jesus died. Some of His friends took His body from the cross and laid it in a cave. They rolled a great stone across the front. They thought they were closing up Jesus’ body forever. They did not understand what had really happened: Jesus had made a way to take away sin forever.

On the third day, something wonderful happened. Jesus came back to life! In His love for us Jesus had chosen to die so that we could live with God. He took the punishment that we deserved for our sin. Now He returned to life. God raised Him from the dead so that we could follow Him. He will help us have the wonderful life together that God created for us.

Jesus spent forty days visiting His friends and showing them that He had returned to life. He told them to spend the rest of their lives loving Him and helping others know how to love Him too. Jesus told His followers to make sure the whole world knows that they can fit together in God’s wonderful plans for us.

Jesus wants you to know how to love and follow Him too. If you would like to know how you can be in this friendship with Jesus, please ask us. We want to help you know how.

*Each day you will close the story time with an invitation to accept Jesus. Say something like this:* God wants everybody to follow Him. The problem is our sin. Sin includes all the ways we disobey His instructions in what we think, do, or say. Sin means all the ways we treat God as less important than He really is and all the things we give...
the love and respect that God deserves. God still loves us, even though our hearts are sinful. That's why Jesus came. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for our sins. Then on the third day He came back to life. Now, for anybody who asks, Jesus will take away our sins and become a part of our lives. He will help us to follow Him. The Bible says that if we believe Jesus in our hearts and follow Him, He will save us from our sin and help us to follow God. Then one day we will be with Him in heaven. Anybody that wants to choose to follow Jesus can do that today. We would love to help you know how.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives. For today’s craft, you will be making salvation bracelets.

Salvation Bracelets

Supplies: For each child—one string or cord for bracelet, and five beads, one each of red, black, white, green, yellow.

For instructions on how to make today’s craft, see the following pages. Step by step instructions on which order to put the beads on the bracelet and bilingual explanations of the colors’ meanings are included. You will also find optional hand out pages to give the children to help them remember the meaning of the bracelet. During this craft you will be explaining God’s plan for salvation. It is very important that you approach it with sensitivity to children that may be ready to make decisions to accept Christ. Please spend time in practice and prayer so that you will be ready when the time comes to clearly explain what salvation means.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God’s word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the Supplements and Handouts portion of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is:

There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ . . . You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

Spanish: De hecho, aunque el cuerpo es uno solo, tiene muchos miembros, y todos los miembros, no obstante ser muchos, forman un solo cuerpo. Así sucede con Cristo. Ahora bien, ustedes son el cuerpo de Cristo, y cada uno es miembro de ese cuerpo. 1 Corintios 12:12, 27
## Day Three

### Wrap Up

Each day you will end your Rainbow Express in a second large group session. Have all the children return to the tarp where you started. Sometimes the movement from small groups to large group becomes distracting, especially to younger children. If you find your children becoming noisy as you return to your large group, consider singing a few songs to help everybody focus again.

In this large group session you will have a short skit/object lesson to help emphasize the theme of the day’s activities. A script is provided below. When you finish the skit, ask the children review questions to help them re-cement in their own minds the day’s Bible Story. Review the memory verse together one last time, then pray before dismissing to games time and snacks.

### Object Lesson:

*Each day you will provide a visual object lesson during your large group closing time that is designed to help drive home the day’s theme.*

**Set-Up:**

- **Actor 1:** Needs a Bible
- **Actor 2:** Needs: The largest suitcase or bag you can find. Place several wadded up pieces of paper inside.

*Actor 1 sits, reading the Bible. Looks up as Actor 2 noisily attempts to pull an apparently very heavy bag. Actor 2 grunts, wheezes, sighs, occasionally trips, and generally has a hard time with what must be a shockingly heavy bag.*

Actor 1: Ummm . . . can I help?

Actor 2: *(panting)* With what?

Actor 1: Well . . . you seem to be having a hard time moving a very, very heavy bag.

Actor 2: Oh . . . you mean this?

Actor 1: Yes. I mean that. What is that anyway?

Actor 2: Well, some of my friends helped me put this together. I call it my: “I wish I hadn’t done that bag”.

Actor 1: What exactly is an “I wish I hadn’t done that bag”?

Actor 2: Well, it’s a pretty good idea, actually. You know how sometimes we all mess up?

Actor 1: Yes, I know that.

Actor 2: Well, this bag is supposed to help me not mess up any more.

Actor 1: How exactly is it supposed to stop you from messing up? So far it just seems to trip you up.

Actor 2: Well, yes, it is hard to move around. But let me show you what’s inside. *(Remove one of the wadded up pieces of paper and give to Actor 1).*
Actor 1: *(reading out loud)* “Stuffed a grilled cheese sandwich in the VCR.” *(Actor 2 gives another paper)* “Threw a fit and yelled in the grocery store when I didn’t get the candy I wanted.” *(Actor 2 gives another paper)* “Tuna fish, chocolate syrup, tortillas, gummy worms, and brussels sprouts”. I don’t think I understand the bag. *(Actor 2 snatches back the last paper)*

Actor 2: Well, that last one was a mistake. That’s my recipe for lunch tomorrow. The first ones are right though. I’m trying to write down every bad thing I’ve ever done. Then I’m putting the papers in this bag and taking it with me everywhere I go.

Actor 1: Why in the world would you want to do that?

Actor 2: I figure that if I always keep all these bad things with me, it will help me remember what they were, then I won’t do them any more.

Actor 1: So you filled this whole bag with bad things?

Actor 2: Technically, this is just one of the bags. There were too many to fit into just one bag, so I had to separate them by theme.

Actor 1: By theme?

Actor 2: Right, these are all food related.

Actor 1: Well, I like that you’re trying to not do these bad things anymore. But I think you’re going about it in a pretty wrong way.

Actor 2: What do you mean?

Actor 1: I think you’re going to get pretty tired of carrying this bag, right?

Actor 2: I’m already tired of it.

Actor 1: Well, there’s a reason for that. The Bible says that all the bad things we do are called sins. Our lives, unfortunately, are full of them. We all do lots of stuff that we shouldn’t do. Just like this bag, those sins weigh us down and mess us up. Our sin separates us from the relationship we could have with God.

Actor 2: I can understand that. This bag of paper sins messes me up a lot. I can imagine the real sins are much worse.

Actor 1: You’re right, it’s much worse. But there’s good news too. Even though our sins are really bad, God never stops loving us. Jesus came to make a way to take away our sin. He died on the cross and then come back to life so that you and I won’t have to be separated from God forever.

Actor 2: Well . . . I know that Jesus died on the cross for me. But I’ve done some pretty bad stuff. Just look at the size of this bag. You should feel how heavy it is.

Actor 1: I don’t really want to feel how heavy it is. I think I’ll take your word for it. But it doesn’t matter how full the bag is. If we all made a list of every bad thing we’ve ever ever done, we’d all have a really big bag. And God knows all those things.

Actor 2: Oh no! God already knows all the things in this bag.
Actor 1: He does. But don’t worry. Even though God knows all about that, He promises that He will never, ever, ever stop loving you. Do you remember our story from today?

Actor 2: Kind of. But nobody had a bag in the story.

Actor 1: That’s true. But we all have a heavy load of sins. Jesus came to live with us without sinning. Then He took our punishment for us. It’s like He took the heavy bag so it wouldn’t crush us. Jesus loves us too, and gives us a special job. No matter who we are, no matter what we’ve done, Jesus loves us. You don’t have to carry that heavy bag around because Jesus already took care of it for us. He made a way to forgive every bad thing. He made a way to save us from our sin.

Actor 2: I want to know more about it.
Actor 1: Well, these guys and girls can help you learn the story.

Use this time as a natural transition into story review. Ask the children questions about what they have learned today until they can reconstruct the story for Actor 2.

Game Time/Snacks

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.
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**Note—When explaining the meanings of the colors refer to the bead and the sin it represents as dark rather than black.**

**DARK** - This reminds us of sin. Sin is anything we do that is not what God wants us to do. The Bible says that everyone has sinned.

**OSCURO** - Este representa el pecado. El pecado es cualquier cosa que hacemos que no complace a Dios. La Biblia nos dice que todos hemos pecado.

**RED** - This reminds us of Jesus’ blood. Jesus was God’s Son and He died on the cross to pay the punishment for our sins.

**ROJO** - Este representa la sangre de Jesús. Jesús es el Hijo de Dios y El murió en la cruz para pagar por las consecuencias de nuestros pecados.

**WHITE** - This reminds us of our new lives. The Bible says that after we have accepted Jesus, we are brand new. He cleans out the sin that was in us. Jesus is in our lives! He will never leave!

**BLANCO** - Este representa nueva vida. La Biblia dice que al aceptar a Jesús como nuestro Salvador, somos hechos nuevos. El limpia el pecado que estaba dentro de nosotros. ¡Esto es porque Jesús está en nuestras vidas!

**GREEN** - This reminds us that we are to grow as a Christian. In order to grow in our relationship with God, we need to pray, read the Bible, and hang out with other Christians by coming to Bible Study.

**VERDE** - Este representa crecimiento como Cristiano. Para crecer necesitamos tener una relación con Dios. Esto es posible orando, leyendo la Biblia, y teniendo convivio con otros Cristianos por venir al Estudio Bíblico.

**YELLOW** - This reminds us of Heaven! The Bible says that every person who has trusted Jesus to be his or her Savior will spend forever in Heaven with Him.

**AMARILLO** - Este representa el cielo. La Biblia nos dice que cada persona que ha puesto su fe en Jesús como Salvador estará por toda la eternidad en el cielo a lado de El.
I don’t love and obey God like I should. The Bible calls that sin.

No amo y obedezco a Dios como yo debo. La Biblia llama este pecado.

Jesus loves me, so He died on the cross to help me.

Jesús se murió en la cruz por mí porque me ama.

Jesus can forgive my sin.

Jesús puede perdonar mi pecado.

I can follow Jesus and learn to be more like Him.

Yo puedo seguir a Jesús y aprender ser más como Él.

One day I will be with Jesus in Heaven.

Un día estaré en El Cielo con Jesús.
. . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God . . . Romans 3:23

Pues todos han pecado y están privados de la gloria de Dios. Romanos 3:23

But here is how God has shown His love for us: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Pero Dios demuestra su amor por nosotros en esto: en que cuando todavía éramos pecadores, Cristo murió por

When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

Por lo tanto, si alguno está en Cristo, es una nueva creación. ¡Lo viejo ha pasado, ha llegado ya lo nuevo! 2 Corintios 5:17

You are children that God dearly loves. So follow His example. Ephesians 5:1

Por tanto, imiten a Dios, como hijos muy amados. Efesios 5:1

My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:2-3

En el hogar de mi Padre hay muchas viviendas; si no fuera así, ya se lo habría dicho a ustedes. Voy a prepararles un lugar. Y si me voy y se lo preparo, vendré para llevármelos conmigo. Así ustedes estarán donde yo esté. Juan 14:2-3
Day Four

- **Large Group**
  - Songs
  - Puppets
  - Testimony
  - Memory Verse: Next Word Relay
- **Small Group**
  - Story: Esther
    - Scripture for today’s story: Book of Esther
  - Memory Verse Review
- **Large Group**
  - Story review questions

Pre-Rainbow Express® Gathering

You will begin each day by knocking on doors and then playing games to help attract children to your Rainbow Express®.

**Song Time/Puppets**

When it is time to begin your activities, have all the children sit down in a large group. It would be helpful to bring a tarp for them to sit on. When the children are together and seated on the tarp, begin your song time.

The Song Leader will come to the front of the group to lead songs. One or two others may also want to come to the front to help show motions. Be sure to have several songs ready to sing and that everyone in the group knows the songs.

During this time you will also have the puppets sing their song(s). Doing the puppet show in between songs can help keep the children’s attention. You are provided with one song for each day. If the children are responding well and enjoying the puppet music, it is okay to perform more than one of the songs and repeat the songs from day to day.

**Testimony**

The theme for this whole week of Rainbow Express is *The Body: how we fit together in God’s perfect plan*. Each day you will be sharing stories, songs, crafts, and other activities that help the children understand that God has a perfect plan for our lives which involves being united in following Him. They will learn that Jesus came to save us from sin and restore us to a new life with God. Obviously, the decision to follow Christ is an incredibly personal decision. It is important that the children and youth who attend your Rainbow Express understand that a personal relationship with Christ is a very important reality for the members of your group. Every day during the opening time one or two members of your group can share a short version of their testimony in front of the large group. The goal is to let the children see how listening and obeying as God has spoken in your life has made a practical and meaningful difference. *(For help on sharing in a way that will be age-appropriate and meaningful with children, each person who plans to give their testimony should read the sheet Tips on Preparing Your Testimony in the training materials section of this packet.)*

**TIP**—The Large Group Leader should serve as a sort of “master of ceremonies” to keep each activity flowing smoothly. He should not, however, tell the day’s Bible story. That will go much smoother in the small group time. Children listen more attentively in smaller groups.
Memory Verse Activity

When the Large Group Leader finishes his opening time, the Memory Verse Teacher will come to the front to lead the memory verse activity. The large group memory verse activity for day four is “Next Word Relay”. Have your poster of the memory verse available. Read through the verse all together several times to practice. Divide the children into two or more teams. Then, split each team in half. Have the two halves face each other in a single file line, about ten feet apart. Have the first person on the team say the first word of the verse. That player then runs across and tags the first player in the line facing them. The first player then runs to the back of that line. The second player then says the next word in the verse, then runs across to tag the player on the opposite line. Keep going until each team has said the whole verse. You may want to bring a stopwatch to time the children and see which team can do it the fastest.

Introduction of Today’s Story—Building the Foundation

When the memory verse teacher is finished, the Large Group Leader will return to the front to provide a brief introduction to the day’s theme and story. Each day you will re-introduce the concept that the Bible tells us the truth about God’s love and the Savior He sent for us. Take time to sum up the previous day’s stories and themes. Be sure each day to introduce the theme for the day’s story. The stories for the whole week are intended to show that we can be confident in Jesus as our Savior. Help the children understand that God wants desperately for all people to know Him and accept Christ as their Savior. When you have finished this introduction, divide the children into small groups to hear the Bible story.

Below is a suggested narrative to help with the day’s introduction.

(A Special Note—This curriculum references the previous Rainbow Express Curriculum. This is designed to provide a sense of narrative continuity for children here at Mission Arlington who attend Rainbow Express. For those of you using this curriculum in another location, however, this curriculum will work fine as a stand alone.)

This week we have been learning that God has a perfect plan for all people. He loves us very much. He wants us to love him back. He wants us to love each other too. We have learned that God designed us to care about each other and help each other. He did this so that we can help each other learn how much He loves us.

Each of us has a special place in God’s plan. He wants us to use us to help other people know about his love for us. He wants us to help share His Good News with all the people around us. That’s why God put each of us where we are in our lives. He gave us our talents and abilities. He put people around us to help us know Him. Now we can help other people to do the same.

All the stories we have learned about this week remind us of that. First we learned about Ruth. Ruth didn’t feel like she fit in with the people around her. She was all alone and from a different country. God loved Ruth very much though. He had a plan to take care of her and Naomi. She fit into God’s body, even though she didn’t know it. Next we learned about Gideon. Gideon didn’t feel very strong or brave, but God wanted to use him to save a whole country. Gideon learned that God helps us to be part of His plan, even when we might not be able to by ourselves. Yesterday we talked about Jesus. Jesus loves us very much. He died so that we can be a part of God’s body. He came to take away our sins so that nothing could keep us away from God.

Today we’re going to learn a story about a very scary time for a group of God’s people. An enemy was trying to destroy them all. They prayed that God would help them, and He did. We’re going to see how He used two surprising people to rescue his followers.

We have been reading this week from the Bible in I Corinthians, the twelfth, chapter. It tells us that in God’s eyes we should all work together just like the parts of a body work together. I Corinthians 12:27 says “You are the
body of [Jesus]. Each one of you is a part of it.” That is the summary of what we have been learning this week. God has a plan for each of us to work together to do the things that He wants us to do. He wants to use us to show the world how much he loves us. God says that makes us like His body. We’re like the hands He uses to touch people and the mouth He uses to tell people He loves them. That’s a great gift to be a part of God’s plan.

Aren’t you glad that God loves us so much? We’re glad He cares for us. We’re glad He helps us care for each other. Today we’re going to see how God helps us follow Him, even when we don’t feel like we can.

**Small Group Story Time**

*When the Large Group Time is over, divide the children into small groups for story time. The text provided here is to serve as a guide for you while you tell the story. Read it through several times and be able to tell it from memory. It is not important to be able to recite this story word-for-word. Your goal is to be able to relate the story to a level children will understand. Use the wording included here as suggestions to help you make these concepts understood by elementary age children. Feel free to adapt these words to fit well with your own style.*

**Today’s Story: Esther** *(The Book of Esther)*

This week we’re learning how we all fit together in God’s plan. God made each of us exactly like He wants us to be. He also put us right where we need to be in our lives. Sometimes that can be a hard thing to believe. There are definitely things in our lives we wish were different. Sometimes things at home can be tough. Sometimes school doesn’t go like we want it to. Sometimes things happen that make us sad. God doesn’t like it when we have to feel that way. He loves us very much and wants us to be okay. Because he loves us, God many times takes the sad things in our lives and turns them into good things.

That’s very true in the lives of the people in our story today. Mordecai was a Jewish man who lived a very long time ago. He lived in a city called Susa, but that was not his home. Susa was the capital of a mighty empire called Persia. Persia had conquered Mordecai’s home. They had destroyed buildings, stolen things, and hurt many people. They had kidnapped many of the people that lived there and carried them back to work in Susa. Mordecai worked in Susa and took care of his niece Hadassah, whose parents had been killed. He tried hard to live the way God wanted Him to live, even though he was very far from his home. It was not an easy life.

Soon, several things happened that made life even tougher. First, the king of Persia decided he needed a new queen. King Xerxes ordered his servants to search the Persian Empire for the most beautiful women. He would have a beauty contest and choose his favorite to be the new queen. Mordecai’s niece Hadassah was very beautiful. Xerxes’ servant took her from Mordecai and carried her away to the palace for the contest. Hadassah won the contest and became the new queen of Persia. They changed her name to Queen Esther.

Life as a Persian queen was not as fun as you might think. True, Esther got to live in a palace, but in Persia the queen was basically a servant of the king. She did not get to leave the palace unless Xerxes let her. She could not go visit her family. She could not even go see the king, who lived in a separate palace, without his permission.

The second terrible thing that happened in Susa was because of an evil man named Haman. Haman was a powerful ruler who was promoted to being second in command of the whole Persian Empire. Haman could tell anybody what to do, and they were supposed to obey him. The only person who could tell Haman what to do was the king himself. Haman was an awful person. He ordered all the people in Susa to bow down in front of him wherever he walked. He wanted them to treat him like he was god.

Mordecai would not bow in front of Haman. He served the one true God and would not bow down in front of a person. This made Haman furious. Haman decided to punish Mordecai. He found out that Mordecai was Jewish. He
decided to kill every Jewish person that lived in the entire Persian Empire. He made a law that on a certain day any Persian who wanted to could attack the Jews and take their things.

It was a very sad time for the Jewish people that lived in Persia. They knew that soon their lives would be in danger. Mordecai sent a message to Esther. He told her everything that Haman was going to do. He asked her to help save the Jewish people, her own people, from evil Haman.

Esther was worried. She wanted to help, but she was scared. King Xerxes could be a cruel man. She knew that she could get in trouble if she went to see him without being invited. She might even be killed. She was worried about what might happen. She sent a letter back to Mordecai saying she was not sure if she could help.

Mordecai sent Esther back a message. “How do you know you did not become queen for exactly this moment?” he asked. Mordecai understood something very important. He knew that God puts us in places in our lives where He can use us to help others. God has a plan for us that is perfect, even when we don’t understand it. Esther and Mordecai might not have understood why they were taken from their homeland. They might not have known why Esther had to leave Mordecai to live in the palace. What Mordecai did understand is that God is always working to help people. Mordecai knew that God wanted to use Esther to save the Jewish people.

Mordecai and all the Jews prayed for Esther for three days. Then, Esther went to see the king, even though he might order to have her killed. God had a plan to protect Esther, just like He had a plan to protect the Jewish people. Instead of being angry, Xerxes was happy to see Esther. He listened to her as she explained what was happening. He became very angry at Haman when he heard that his plan would even hurt the queen. Xerxes got rid of Haman. He made Mordecai a ruler instead. Together, they changed the law to protect the Jewish people.

It’s amazing to see how God worked to protect the people that asked Him for help. When Hadassah was first taken from Mordecai’s home and made Queen Esther, she never could have known what would happen next. She did not know that God would use her to save a whole group of people. Even today, thousands of years later, Jewish people still celebrate a holiday called Purim to thank God for saving them from Haman. Esther was a part of that plan even though she never thought she could be.

God has a plan for you, just like He had for Esther. He wants to use you to help people, just like Mordecai. He wants you to be a part of spreading the Good News about Jesus to everyone around you. The first step in God’s plan for us is that we accept Jesus’ offer to save us. We can’t tell other people about the Good News if we don’t already know it ourselves. Jesus loves you more than you can imagine. He even died and came back to life so that you can be with Him. If you want to know more about how you can be a part of Jesus’ plan for you, just ask us. We would love to help you know how.

Each day you will close the story time with an invitation to accept Jesus. Say something like this: God wants everybody to follow Him. The problem is our sin. Sin includes all the ways we disobey His instructions in what we think, do, or say. Sin means all the ways we treat God as less important than He really is and all the things we give the love and respect that God deserves. God still loves us, even though our hearts are sinful. That’s why Jesus came. Jesus died on the cross to be punished for our sins. Then on the third day He came back to life. Now, for anybody who asks, Jesus will take away our sins and become a part of our lives. He will help us to follow Him. The Bible says that if we believe Jesus in our hearts and follow Him, He will save us from our sin and help us to follow God. Then one day we will be with Him in heaven. Anybody that wants to choose to follow Jesus can do that today. We would love to help you know how.

Prayer Time

Take this time after the story to pray with the children in your small group. Ask them for things they would like to pray
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about. Tell God how awesome He is. Ask Him to help you and the children in your small group to listen to God and obey Him. Pray that the children in your group will get to know God and feel the love He has for them.

Craft

While still in your small groups, lead the children in making the craft or filling out the activities packet for the day. The craft time is not only a way to reinforce the lesson, but it also allows time to get to know the children in your small group. During this time, ask them questions about their families, friends, and school. Invest in their lives. For today’s craft time you will give each child an activity packet with pictures to color and various puzzles to solve.

Memory Verse Activity

Each day the small group time will include a Memory Verse Activity. The Memory Verse time is one of the most important activities of the day. We want these children to remember God’s word and why it is important to them. A list of potential activities is included in the Supplements and Handouts portion of this packet. Use a different idea from that list each day to help the children learn the words of the verse and to explain why it applies to their lives. (Some require extra preparation, so be sure to review the list in advance.) The memory verse for this week is:

*There is one body. But it has many parts. Even though it has many parts, they make up one body. It is the same with Christ . . . You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it.* 1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

*Spanish: De hecho, aunque el cuerpo es uno solo, tiene muchos miembros, y todos los miembros, no obstante ser muchos, forman un solo cuerpo. Así sucede con Cristo. Ahora bien, ustedes son el cuerpo de Cristo, y cada uno es miembro de ese cuerpo.* 1 Corintios 12:12, 27

Wrap Up

Each day you will end your Rainbow Express in a second large group session. Have all the children return to the tarp where you started. Sometimes the movement from small groups to large group becomes distracting, especially to younger children. If you find your children becoming noisy as you return to your large group, consider singing a few songs to help everybody focus again.

In this large group session you will have a short skit/object lesson to help emphasize the theme of the day’s activities. A script is provided below. When you finish the skit, ask the children review questions to help them re-cement in their own minds the day’s Bible Story. Review the memory verse together one last time, then pray before dismissing to games time and snacks.

*Object Lesson:*

Each day you will provide a visual object lesson during your large group closing time that is designed to help drive home the day’s theme.

Set-Up:

*Actor 1: Needs a Bible
Actor 2: Dressed in running clothes. Acting as if he has been running for a long time: sweaty, panting, etc. Bible in one hand, cell phone in the other.*

Actor 1 is sitting in front of the group reading the Bible. Actor 2 comes running up at full speed. Actor 1 stands up...
to greet Actor 2.

Actor 1: Hello. Where are you going so fast... (trails off as Actor 2, not paying attention, runs right into Actor 1. Both fall down in a pile. Actor 2 drops Bible and phone. Both sit up, rubbing themselves like they're sore and clutching their Bibles.)

Actor 2: I'm so sorry. I didn't even notice you there because I was running so fast.

Actor 1: That's okay. It was just an accident. But why are you in such a hurry? (As Actor 1 speaks Actor 2 has already jumped up, dusted self off, collected items, and is stretching as if about to run again.)

Actor 2: No time to explain. But Jesus loves you. Very much. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go tell that to seven billion more people.

Actor 1: (good natured laughing) Thank you for telling me Jesus loves me. That's always good to hear. But did you say you have to tell seven billion more people?

Actor 2: That's right. That's about how many people live in Earth, right?

Actor 1: I think that's right, yes.

Actor 2: And Jesus wants us to tell all of them that He loves them, right?

Actor 1: That's definitely true.

Actor 2: Well, that's a lot to do. In fact, I did a little math about it.

Actor 1: I'm very impressed.

Actor 2: Well, it was a lot of big numbers, but here's what I came up with: If I want to tell seven billion people something in my lifetime, I need to tell almost 27,000 people each hour.

Actor 1: That is a lot of people each hour.

Actor 2: I'll say. That's why I'm in such a hurry. I've been working on this for an hour, and so far I'm 26,999 people behind schedule. I've got my phone to call people as I go. And I've got a map so I can see where to go next.

Actor 1: It's obvious you've put a lot of work into this.

Actor 2: It's important.

Actor 1: It's very important. You're exactly right that Jesus wants us to tell everybody about Him. And you're right that it is a HUGE job to do. And you're right that we need to get to work on it without wasting time. You're only wrong about one thing: you don't have to tell 27,000 people an hour.

Actor 2: I don't? (scratching head) I must have done some math wrong. Maybe I forgot to carry one. Or a billion.

Actor 1: No, it's not that. I'm sure you did your math right. But you still don't have to tell 27,000 people an hour.
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Actor 2: Why not?

Actor 1: Because you don’t have to do it alone.

Actor 2: Really?

Actor 1: Really. What have we been learning about this whole week?

Actor 2: About being the body of Jesus.

Actor 1: That’s right. And what does that mean?

Actor 2: It means that we all have to work together like the parts of a body do. It also means that God wants to use us to do good things, just like our bodies do things.

Actor 1: That’s very good. That means the job of telling the whole world about Jesus belongs to all of us. *(Wave hand at everybody attending Rainbow Express today.*) We’re all a part of God’s plan. So we all have a part in this job of telling people that God loves them.

Actor 2: That’s good news. I think it would have been impossible to do it by myself.

Actor 1: It definitely would have been impossible. Just about anything worth doing is impossible to do alone. But we’re never alone. God is always with us. He is the one who makes His plans possible, not us. Our job is just to do what He asks us to do, which includes working together like a body. He’s the one who makes it possible.

Actor 2: That makes sense to me. But we need to talk about how this works.

Actor 1: What do you mean?

Actor 2: Well, we came here to Mission Arlington all the way from *(insert your hometown)* to help tell these guys about Jesus.

Actor 1: That’s right.

Actor 2: And today is our last day here. We’re going to go back home. We have to keep telling people where we live about Jesus.

Actor 1: Right. There are lots of people there that need to hear about Him.

Actor 2: But when we’re gone, who is going to keep telling these boys and girls about Jesus?

Actor 1: I think I know what you mean. There are a lot more people than the Mission Arlington missionaries can tell all by themselves. These boys and girls have brothers, sisters, neighbors, moms, dads, teachers, coaches, friends at school, friends at the park, friends on sports teams, and more. . . .

Actor 2: Right. Exactly. Who is going to help the Mission Arlington missionaries tell all those people about Jesus?

Actor 1: These boys and girls are.
Actor 2: That’s great!

Actor 1: These boys and girls are just as much a part of God’s plan as you and I are, right?

Actor 2: Right.

Actor 1: When these boys and girls accept Jesus, they become a part of the body of Jesus, just like we do, right?

Actor 2: Right.

Actor 1: That means the mission to tell people about Him belongs to them, just like it belongs to us, right?

Actor 2: Right.

Actor 1: We’re going to make a promise with these boys and girls. We’re going to go home after today. We’re going to promise in front of God that we are going to tell the people where we live about Jesus. We are going to be the body of Jesus where we live. We’re going to pray and ask these boys and girls to promise to keep being the body of Jesus right here. They can keep learning about Jesus from the Mission Arlington missionaries. They can help tell everybody around them about Jesus too.

Gather everybody at Rainbow Express together. Have one person from your group pray for all the boys and girls that came to Rainbow Express this week. Thank God that they came. Ask Him to help them know how much He loves them. Ask God to help them tell everybody around them about Jesus’ love, too. When you finish, go into your games and snack times like normal.

**Game Time/Snacks**

When you are finished, pray together and be ready to play games until the end of the Rainbow Express program. After the game time, pass out snacks, clean up the area, and walk everyone home. Return to Mission Arlington to turn in your materials and attendance sheet.
For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Ephesians 3:14-21