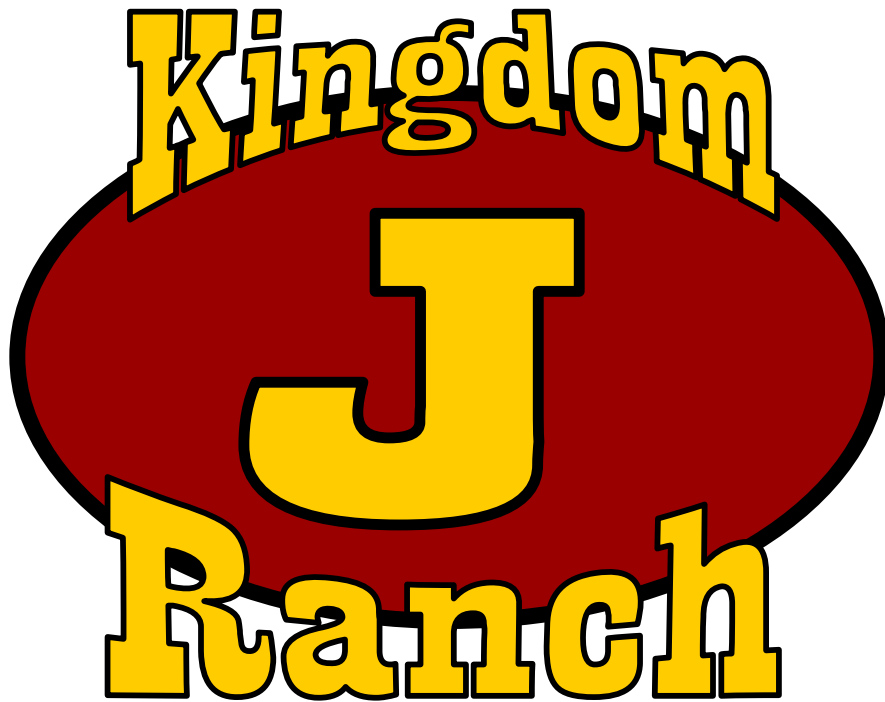


Kingdom J Ranch:

Let's Mosey Through the
Book of Matthew!

An 8 week curriculum



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The Set Up for Expedition Kids!

Did you know that every one of us is on an expedition? We are! God has each one of us on a journey that can bring glory to Him and purpose for us. And like any expedition, we need the right tools to be successful.

Kids are no different. With ***Expedition Kids!*** curriculum, children can come and get equipped to go out and be successful in the expedition God has for them. They need to have the tools of prayer, reading God's Word, knowing who they are in Christ and that God has a purpose and a plan for them.

Our goal is to provide quality curriculum for churches that is affordable, full of energy & fun, while retaining the spiritual depth to make an eternal impact. We want kids to want to come to your church, to hear about how awesome God is, and to want Him in their lives!

Expedition Kids! offers churches a kids' church curriculum that is good, affordable and easy to use. It's aimed at children from 1st – 5th grades and employs a large-group/small-group teaching format. It is fun and sometimes a little crazy, with the room's environment changing to reinforce and reflect the current unit's theme. It is a great help to smaller churches and church plants that currently may not have a large budget, technological resources or volunteer pool.

You're going to have to be willing to cook up several giant pots of slime, put down some tarps in your kids' church room, and catapult eggs. Most activities and games reinforce the lesson point, but sometimes we do something just because it's fun. There are weeks that the curriculum calls for movie or game weeks. This is a time to kick back and enjoy being with your kids – and let them build relationships with each other! These weeks also make the curriculum flexible so it fits into your calendar. While they are having fun, kids will be learning about prayer, how to read their Bible, how to pray for others, and what it's like when God speaks to us.

Expedition Kids! helps get people involved. You don't have to teach if that's not your gifting: there's a place for everyone to pitch in and begin the expedition! Places to serve include: small group leaders for those with pastoral gifting, teachers for those comfortable speaking and entertaining, carpentry opportunities to build games, artistic opportunities with decorating and even a skit or two for those dramatic types!

There are several special items you will need to make as you progress through the curriculum (potato launchers, egg-a-pults, Plinko game, etc.). While these take some time to make, they will be used again either later in the unit or in another unit.

Expedition Kids! is easy. Simply print it out from the curriculum CD, write the dates you plan to teach the lessons on the Table of Contents page and make copies. You can also edit and print so it's ready to go! Another option is to email it and let the volunteers print out the weeks they need.

Expedition Kids! Format:

This curriculum plans for an hour and a half, with a 10 – 15 minute worship time. If your service goes longer, simply stretch out the small group or worship time.

Welcome – This is a time to make announcements, welcome guests, celebrate birthdays, etc.

Worship – Don't have a worship leader? Consider ordering some DVD's from Vineyard Music Group USA (Fruit of the Spirit DVD), Group Publishing (www.group.com), God's Kids Worship company (www.godskidsworship), or use previous VBS worship DVD's.

Small Group Debriefing – This is a time for kids to gather in small groups to discuss their week, review last week's lesson and see how it applied to their lives. It's a chance to "debrief" from their expedition of the past week.

We suggest you give fun names to your groups: Our small groups are called Trek Teams and the leaders are Trek Team Guides. It is recommended to keep the same groups each week so that relationships can be formed among the children and leaders.

Trailbreaking – This is the large-group teaching time. You can have someone double up as the teacher and a small group leader if you're short on volunteers.

Memory verse – *Expedition Kids!* uses the same verse for a month at a time and uses motions to help kids remember.

Small Group Gear Up – This is a time for kids to return to their small groups to discuss the lesson, get "geared up" for the week, and have prayer/ministry time.

Fun Elements You Can Incorporate:

- If you don't already have one, come up with a fun name for your kids' church. Ours is called "Base Camp" because every 3 or 4 months we pack up and move our base camp to a new location to learn about something new. This is when we completely redecorate the room and keep it a surprise from the kids until they walk in the door. We may go

underwater to learn about how immeasurable God's love is, we may go into a cave to dig for treasures represented by answers to our questions, or we may join in with a Mexican fiesta to celebrate the salvation that is available through Jesus!

- Have a Trading Post where kids can spend Bible Bucks on trinkets & toys (www.orientaltrading.com is a great place to find inexpensive treasures!). We usually have ours the last Sunday of each month at the end of class time. Kids can earn Bible Bucks throughout the month for knowing the memory verse, making good choices during class, bringing their Bible, bringing a friend and just being there!
- Decorate the room if you can. Use butcher paper from teacher supply stores, an overhead to copy a scene onto drop cloths, or just decorate the stage. We offer some ideas, so make it as elaborate or simple as you wish. Also, several of the units follow after the theme from some VBS's so you may have some of these decorations already.
- Play a fun country western CD as kids arrive. It really sets the mood!
- Not an artist? There's help! Use Microsoft Office Online for clipart & decorating pictures for backdrops or animals. Print or copy them onto a transparency and then shine them onto paper or fabric. Trace, and voila! Professional looking artwork using less-than professional level talent!

Kingdom J Ranch:

Let's Mosey Through the Book of Matthew

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6. Stories Around the Campfire: The Parables, CM	p. 44
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Upon purchase, the unit also includes a weekly supply list, special order list (like from Oriental Trading or any games that need to be made), and decorating ideas.

Notes: **CM** stands for Cowboy Matt, a slightly zany character who visits us every so often at the Kingdom J Ranch.

Introduction & Special Directions

If Jesus lived on earth today and owned a ranch...what would it be like? Well, let's look back and see how He ran things when He lived among us!

This unit walks kids through the book of Matthew, focusing on how Jesus interacted with people and the miracles he performed.

My desire for this unit is for kids to better understand Jesus' heart, and how much love and compassion was in it during His ministry. I also want them to grasp how different God's Kingdom is, how upside down God's values are compared to what they see in the world.

I love the movie clips this curriculum uses, because they show Jesus laughing and enjoying His time here on earth. I believe that's how He was and that it pleased Him to bring healing and forgiveness to people.

Note: See cow jokes at end of the unit to use for announcements or fun.

Special Directions

You will need to order or find at a Christian bookstore: "Matthew" movie, disc 1, by The Visual Bible (www.visual-bible.com)

CM on the Table of Contents page stands for Cowboy Matt, a slightly zany character who visits us every so often at the Kingdom J Ranch. Find someone who can come in as a recurring character for those weeks.

Things You Can Order from Oriental Trading:

- Horse head finger puppets (if you want to give this out as a prize – it can be whatever you want)
- "Wanted by God" potato sacks
- Deputy badges, one per child

You will need to construct a Plinko board game for week 4 (similar to the game on the Price is Right) and should start making it when the unit begins, if not before. Directions are given with purchased curriculum.

The Round Up

Every Good Rancher has his Ranch-Hands

Supplies:

- Actor for Cowboy Matt
- Rope for Cowboy Matt
- “Matthew” Jesus movie, disc 1
- 2 ropes for kids to lasso
- Something to lasso - A big wooden stand up cow, chair with a picture of a cow, box with horns...
- Transparency of Memory Verse

Kids Will:

- Learn that Jesus looked on the inside of the person when choosing his disciples
- Learn that Jesus needed people who could do the job of spreading the Good News after His death and resurrection when Jesus was gone.
- We also should look at the inside of a person to find their value.

Scripture: Matthew 4:18 – 21, Matthew 9:9

Memory Verse: “Follow me and be my disciple.” Matthew 9:9

Welcome kids as they arrive

Have fun music playing! Everyone should be ready to focus on and welcome kids at this time.

Orientation Welcome

Welcome kids to Kingdom J Ranch! Over the next several weeks we are learning about Jesus and if he had a ranch what life would be like if we lived there. We'll be reading through the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament and seeing what it tells us about how Jesus spent his time, who he spent it with and what things were important to him. I think we'll find that things are often upside down from what we expect on this ranch!

Celebrate any birthdays, welcome guests, give any announcements.

15 minutes Worship

15 minutes Trek Team Debriefing

How is everyone doing? How was your week?

Ask kids the following questions to get their brains going in a western ranch-y way!

- What do you think life was like on an Old Western ranch?
- What are things you would have liked?
- What are things you would have not liked?

Let's practice the memory verse for this month: "Follow me and be my disciple." Matthew 9:9. This is something Jesus said and it's pretty simple so we aren't going to do any motions for it. Basically, Jesus was saying to hang out and learn from Him, then do what they saw Him doing. Sounds easy, right? Except I'm not sure the disciples fully understood what they were getting into! But I know they were glad they did!

25 minutes Trailbreaking

Ask volunteers to share the answers to the questions asked during the Small Group Debriefing about what ranches were like and what they would or would not have liked about them.

Every old-timey western ranch was owned by someone who was in charge of everyone and everything on their ranch. The person in charge decided what life was going to be like: how hard everyone who worked for them on their ranch would work, what each person would do, where they slept & what they ate, how everyone was treated and what consequences were given if the rules of the ranch were not obeyed. So each ranch had its own feel, its own character.

If you owned a ranch, what type of people would you look for to work on your ranch? (chances are they will say things like strong guys, have to know how to ride a horse or rope a cow, someone who works hard and doesn't complain...)

Let's stop and think about what a ranch that was run by Jesus would be like. What type of person would Jesus look for?

We can read in the Bible about who Jesus picked to help him with his ministry. The Bible tells us how Jesus looks at people.

When it came time for Jesus to start his ministry and for people to find out about him, he needed to find some men who would be his closest friends, and the ones he would train to take over after he was gone. Did Jesus look for the strongest, the wealthiest, the most popular? Basically the people who we would probably look for?

Cowboy Matt skit interrupts at this point. Follow the skit to interact with him.

You know what, let's just watch and see what happened when Jesus chose some of his disciples! Watch the clip from Matthew that shows choosing of disciples. You'll have to go to the main menu, choose "Search by Event" then scroll until you see "Choosing of the First Disciples."

So, did Jesus choose people who we would pick? Do you know what's different about Jesus? He doesn't look at the outside of a person – he looks at the inside! He looked at the stinky fisherman and didn't see the stink or the lowly job or the lack of knowledge – he saw the heart of the person fishing. He looked at the tax collector and didn't see a dishonest person – he saw the heart of the person doing his job. *Jesus needed men and women who could do the jobs he needed for them to do, the outside of them and how they looked didn't really matter. Jesus needed people who would be strong and faithful to spread the Good News about His death and resurrection when He was gone. Not just any person would do!*

*****Have you ever had someone look at you, just the outside of you, and think: "He's not very good at sports so let's pick someone else for our team!" Or "She's not very pretty or cool so she can't be in our club!" Jesus would never do that. Jesus would look at your heart – the real you – and he would say "Come, follow me." *Because that's who Jesus is!* (this can get at some heart issues, you may want to address this in small group or ministry time)**

Round 'Em Up Game:* So let's have some fun trying to round up some cows for Jesus' ranch, just like He rounded up His disciples. *Play fun music during game. Divide into 2 teams & have each person try to lasso a cow. Two people can go at a time. If you don't have a big pretend cow 😊, use a chair with poster board horns, or a saw horse.

5 minutes Memory Verse

Practice the memory verse with the kids. Use the overhead so everyone can see it as well. It's pretty easy so I don't think we need hand motions.

"Follow me and be my disciple," Matthew 9:9

Ask the kids who is talking in this verse, and what it means to be Jesus' disciple. You can even look up this section in Matthew and see what was going on, why Jesus said this.

Pray and thank God for His Word, then send the kids to their Small Groups.

10 minutes Trek Team Gear Up

Ask kids to share what they learned today. Based on what they share, see if you need to clarify anything. Ask the kids how Jesus saw the people he was gathering to be his disciples.

Let's not judge others by how they look on the outside this week. Let's practice seeing people how Jesus sees them! Is there anyone who you usually look at and think you wouldn't like them based on how they look on the outside?

Pray with kids if they've been judged by what's on the outside, as well as to help us see people as Jesus does.

Cowboy Matt Skit

(Date: _____)

*Cowboy Matt needs to listen for the following word cues and come running in when the teacher **finishes** saying:*

"When it came time for Jesus to start his ministry and for people to find out about him, he needed to find some men who would be his closest friends, and the ones he would train to take over after he was gone. Did Jesus look for the strongest, the wealthiest, the most popular? Basically the people who we would probably look for?" (Matt runs in)

Cowboy Matt runs into the room circling a lasso overhead, looking for dogies. Rope a kid or two and ask them if they can give you 3 buckets of milk a day. When they say no, then say they aren't the cow you're looking for.

Teacher: *let Cowboy Matt lasso a few kids & then say:* "Whoa, there mister! Who are you and what are you doing?"

Cowboy Matt: "Well, howdy pardner! My name's Cowboy Matt and I'm new to Kingdom J Ranch. Mr. J gave me my first assignment! He told me to round up cows. But not just any cows, no sir-ee! These here dogies need to be able to give 3 buckets of milk a day – apparently we're having a gaggle of young whippersnappers visitin' Kingdom J Ranch and we're going to need a lot of milk for them!"

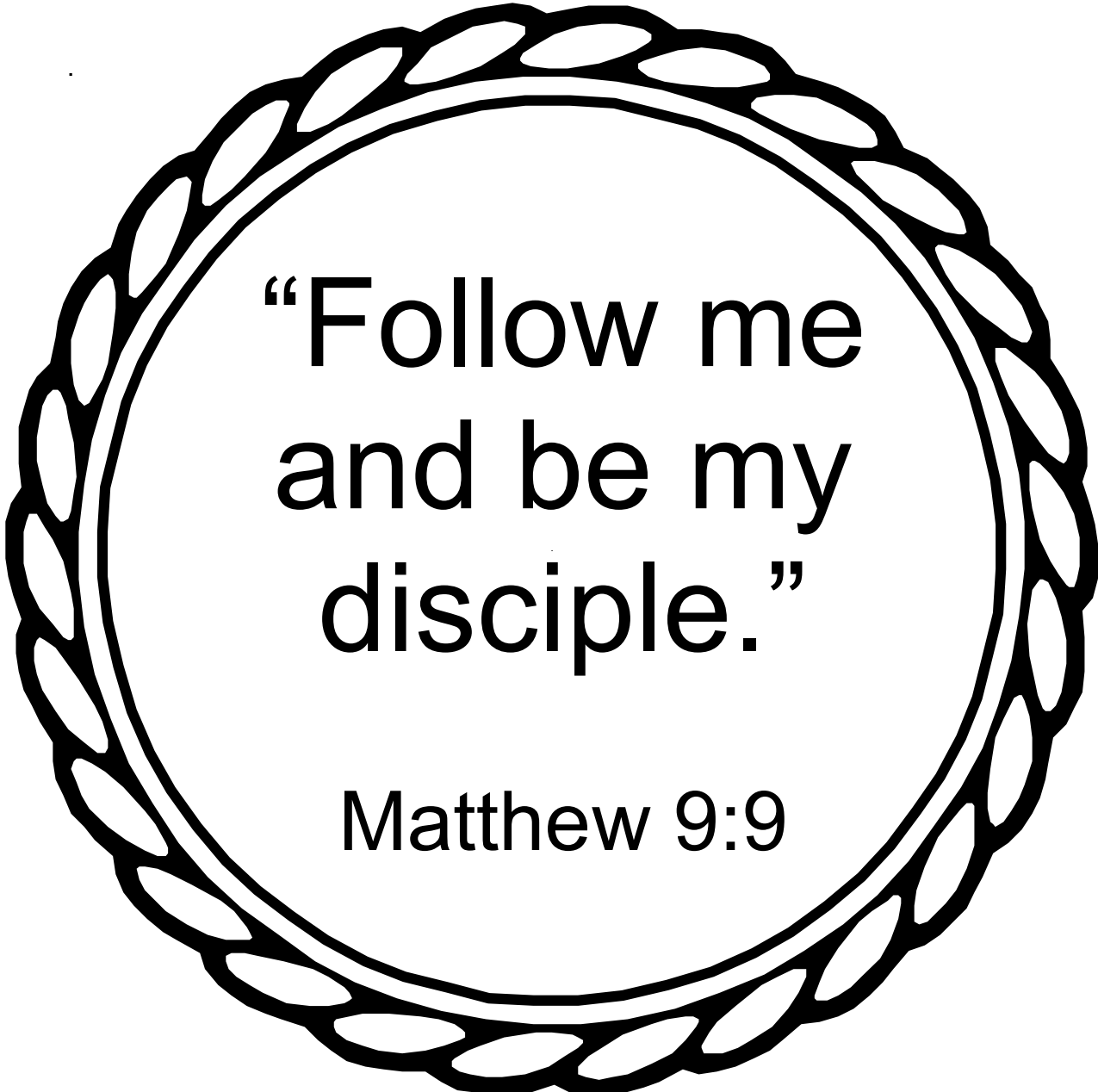
Teacher: "A gaggle of young whippersnappers?' Oh, do you mean a big group of kids? I guess that would be us! We just got here to Kingdom J Ranch."

Cowboy Matt: "Well, jumpin' june bugs! So you are! Maybe you can help me, then. Mr. J said we need a specific kind of cow, one that can do the job we need for 'em to do. We need cows who can give us 3 buckets of milk a day! Have you laid your peepers any cows like that?"

Teacher: Ummm...no, I haven't laid my peepers on any....I mean, I haven't *seen* any cows like that, no. But you know, today we're reading about how Jesus chose his disciples, his closest friends and hardest workers. He was kind of in the same spot you're in. Not just any guy would do, it had to be one who could get the job done – spreading word of the Good News after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Cowboy Matt: Hmmm....sounds like somethin' I need to know! When I get back to the bunkhouse later today, I'm going to read that faster than a horse runnin' from a rattlesnake! I'll see you cowpokes later. I gotta stop wasting daylight. Bye, y'all, and remember: The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket! Chew on that for a spell and I'll see ya later!"

Memory Verse



“Follow me
and be my
disciple.”

Matthew 9:9