

The Verbs of God: G-Force –
Move, Act, Care, Follow & Share
Acts 17:28a

This is VBS Sunday and it is a wonderful culmination to a fantastic week of fun and Christian learning. Now, before we hear the scripture passage for the day, we need to get into VBS mode and take the advice of Miss Marsha, who was one of our Bible story leaders this week. Miss Lois and Miss Marsha were our Bible story teachers, and before Miss Marsha would start speaking to the kids, she would ask them to put on their listening ears by going like this: (hold hands up to ears). So let's try this now, go ahead, put on your listening ears and we'll listen to the sermon. Miss Marsha always has good advice for the children and for us.

Our scripture passage for the day is very short and was the overarching passage for the entire VBS experience. It comes to us from Acts 17:28 and it says this: "In God we live, move and exist." This year's VBS was all about moving, about doing and about becoming active and energetic disciples of Jesus Christ. As Christians, we are not called to just sit there – no! - we get up and move with God and put our faith into action. Now, I have a question here, this if for all of the teachers in the crowd - what are all of these words that I am using – live, move, exist, act, care, follow, share? What part of speech are all of these words? They are all verbs, of course, so this morning we need to focus on these **verbs of God**.

Each day of the week, we focused on a different verb, and these verbs were move, act, care, follow & share. So, the first day, we started with the verb Move! Now, when I say the verb of the day, who remembers what we are supposed to say in response? Let's Go! I say, "Move," you say, "Let's Go!" To teach us about moving, we heard the story of Moses moving the Israelites out of Egypt to escape from the Pharaoh. They moved for forty years in the wilderness until they made it to the Promised Land. That's one of the very best stories from the Old Testament and it shows us how moving with God is a necessary part of the Christian life. And when we move, we trust and believe that God moves with us. Christians don't just sit in our easy chair – no- we move!

I must tell you that this was an easy one for the kids and volunteers to learn. When you get a roomful of 150 kids and 80 volunteers, you are going to have a lot of movement. Let's just be honest, kids do not sit still. I would say that the most moving was found at VBS during the music segment, when the kids gathered in the middle of the Covenant Center and sang and danced to the VBS music. We did the songs twice very morning and Miss Darla and friends led us in the songs. Everyone was expected to get up and move to the music. And most people did. But we had the help of the dance police, aka church member Chick Carlisle going around the room and trying to get every last person to get up and dance – I understand he even offered some folks \$10 to start moving, but that may just be a rumor! So move, we did!

The second verb that we learned in VBS was “act.” (Let’s go!) We learned to put our faith into action. The daily scripture verse was: “I’ll show you my faith by putting it into practice in faithful action.” Some of the best action (and acting) at VBS was found right up here on the stage where Coach Don and his trusty sidekick Checkers the Cheetah met twice each morning to make the kids laugh and teach them a little lesson. Some of the best memories of VBS here at the COTC will always be Danny Kephart, aka Checkers the Cheetah, and his hilarious, ad libbed sense of fun.

The rest of the action at VBS was found in the games that the kids played both inside and outside under the leadership of Don Nixon and Ashley Bashoum. They did obstacle courses, noodle hockey, tic tac toe, and a game that required throwing a ball through some holes cut in a tarp. The kids seemed to have trouble getting the balls through the holes in the tarp until some of the counselors started putting their faces in the holes, then, as if by magic, the kids threw much harder and more accurately so that they could hit their counselor in the face with the ball. Now – don’t worry – no counselors were harmed in the acting out of this game! So act, we did!

The third verb of God we learned about was “care.” (Let’s go!) To care. The scripture verse for the day was “Carry each other’s burdens and so you fulfill the law of Christ.” Caring is also an easy verb to live out during VBS. You know, in church world, we often struggle to find ways to bring all generations together in one grand activity that is honoring to God. VBS is the best intergenerational activity we have because it allows everyone to come together and care for the children. We have folks in their 70s & 80s making food, we have folks in their 50’s & 60’s leading the kids around from station to station, we have folks in their 30’s & 40’s making crafts every day, and we have folks in their teens and twenties jumping around like fools to the silly VBS songs. Everyone gets involved to care for the kids.

We might disagree on worship style or the best hymnal to use or what to serve at the all-church picnic, but everyone agrees that we must care for the children and introduce them to the Love of Christ. Caring for kids is one of the things we do best here at the COTC – through VBS, through our famous 25 year-old pre-school (the best in Washington, I hear), or through our Sunday School program and children’s choir, we truly care for children. So care, we did!

On the fourth day, the children learned about the verb “to follow.” (Let’s go!) The daily scripture verse came straight from the mouth of Jesus when he said, “Come, follow me.” You know, in secular society, I often hear the phrase, “It’s better to be a leader than a follower,” and this kind of makes being a follower sound like a bad thing, but at this week’s VBS, we really saw how following Jesus is the most admirable thing we can do.

We did some following this week by singing “If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands” led by Miss Marsha and Miss Lois; we did some following by playing Simon Says with Mr. Chick Carlisle (you give Chick microphone and you don’t know what is going to happen); and we did

some following by repeating the Bible verse every day until we knew it by heart. (In God, we live, move & exist – they repeated that until they knew it by heart). By modeling how to follow Jesus, we all learned that follow is a great verb of God. So follow, we did.

On Friday, we learned what may be the most important verb of God, which is share. (Let's go!) Now, this is a Presbyterian church and just the idea of trying to share our faith can make us all break out into a cold sweat. But we heard the story of the empty tomb – how the women came to Jesus' tomb on that first Easter morning and found that he was alive and was offering them new life as well. We read the scripture verse which was, "Go and make disciples of all nations." And we got up the courage to go and tell at least one friend or neighbor about Jesus. We can share our money, we can share our food, we can share our toys, but the most important thing to share is the gospel message. Jesus loves us and cares for us and will be with us always, so we need to share this with others. So share, we did! I think you all should try it!

Well, you get the idea about our week from my words, from the kids who came up here, and from the video that we saw. At the picnic following this service, please feel free to come up to the kids and ask them what they thought about VBS. And at the picnic today, I hope you all will find a moment to go up to our wonderful CE Director Stacy Philips and congratulate her on a wonderful week of VBS and thank her for her hard work.

Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray." We tried to train the children in the right way at VBS this year through the verbs of God – move, act, care, follow & share. I was honored once again to be a part of it. I was honored to be with so many children who came to learn about Jesus and act out the verbs of God. Church is not just about adults being spiritual and growing in their faith; it is about the entire family of God coming to worship and learn about Jesus Christ. The future of the church rests in the hands of those little ones who came through our doors this week. The future of the church is found at VBS.

Praise be to God.