

## **BIBLE TRUTH 3, LESSON 2: PLANNER/OVERVIEW**

**GETTING STARTED: Welcome and Opening Songs** (*introduce unit and get kids moving with these songs*)

**Welcome to Praise Factory:** PFI: Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 1*

**Rules to Help Us Worship God and Love Others:** WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 2*

**Big Question Under Investigation:** Big Question 1 Songs *PFI NIV Songs 5, Tracks 3,4*

*Extra Song: The Days of Creation PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 5*

**Big Question Bible Verse:** Genesis 1:31 Song *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 6*

**DIGGING DEEP DOWN: Key Concept and Story** (*introduce the Bible Truth and tell the related story*)

**Bible Truth 3:** God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him

**Bible Truth Hymn:** Doxology *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 13*

**Bible Verse:** Psalm 148:7-10

**Bible Verse Song:** Then God Said *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 14*

**Lesson 2 Story of the Saints Story:** The Case of the De Beata Vitae

**TAKING ACTION: Response Activities** (*choose from among these activities*)

**Snack and Discussion Planner:** The Tempting Pear Tree and the Professor of Speech

**ACTS Prayer:** Prayer Sheet

**Bible Truth Review:** Discussion Questions and Game: Inspecting the Troops

**Bible Truth Hymn:** Doxology *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 13*

Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Big Voice, Little Voice **PFI NIV Songs 5 BOOK or ONLINE**

**Bible Verse Review:** Psalm 148:7-10: Discussion Sheet and Game: Take a Step Back

**Bible Verse Song:** Then God Said *PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 14*

Song, Sign Language and Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean? **PFI NIV Songs 5 BOOK or ONLINE**

**Story Review:** Discussion Questions and Game: Triple Play Baseball

**Case RePlay, Jr: Drama Activity for Youngest Children** (children do same story actions together)

**Case RePlay, Sr: Drama Activity for Most Children** (children re-tell story with individual parts)

**Craft:** A Fig Tree

**VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) Prayer Time:** Coloring Sheets (back of book) & Game: Picture Run

**TAKING IT HOME: Take Home Sheet for Review and Family Devotions**

**PFI Pronto:** Bible Truth 3, Lesson 2 **PFI NIV Prontos 5 BOOK or ONLINE**

**The Case of the De Beata Vitae**

by Connie Dever

**Our story is called:****The Case of the De Beata Vitae.****As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:**

1. What was the De Beata Vitae? Who wanted it?
2. Where did he look for it and where did he find it?

This story doesn't take place in Bible times. It takes place about 1650 years ago in Tagaste, a little farming town in the green, fertile mountains of Algeria, North Africa.

Among the schoolboys of Tagaste was a boy named Aurelius Augustine, or just Augustine as everyone called him. Now Augustine was a very, very clever little boy. He had a mind so quick that he only had to read something once and it was memorized. Augustine was good at everything, but he loved learning Latin and giving speeches most of all.

You might think Augustine would be the teacher's favorite student since he was so smart; but, that was far from the truth. Augustine was so bored with the simple lessons, that he entertained himself by playing mean tricks on the other children. It was an unusual week when Augustine did not feel the "Whack! Whack! Whack!" of the teacher's whip across his back as punishment for something he'd done. But no matter how many times Augustine was punished, he kept getting into trouble.

His parents—especially his mother, Monica-- were troubled by his behavior. Monica was a strong Christian and she raised Augustine knowing the good news of Jesus. "Augustine, why do you keep getting into trouble?" she would ask him. "It will lead to nothing good. God created you in His image to praise and glorify Him. He has given you such great gifts of mind and speech. Use these to know Him and find your pleasure there, not in these childish pranks. Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is the happy life," she told him.

But Augustine refused to listen. He thought being a Christian meant giving up everything fun, and Augustine loved to have fun. Sometimes he would pray to God, but it wasn't a real heart-felt prayer. Usually it was just to ask God to spare the teacher's whip for the last mean prank he had played on another child. These are

not the kinds of prayers God answers! When Augustine saw that he couldn't use God for his own mischievous purposes, he gave up on Him completely.

One day, Augustine talked his friends into skipping school and stealing all the pears off of his father's prize pear tree. They ate their fill of the juicy, sweet fruit and then when they could eat no more, they tossed the rest to the pigs. Augustine knew what he was doing was wrong, but he didn't care. He lived for the happy life; and for Augustine, that meant doing whatever he felt like doing.

When Patricus, Augustine's father, found out what had happened, he was furious! He punished Augustine and sent him to sleep that night out with the pigs who ate his pears! Once more, Monica pleaded with her son to turn from his wicked ways, but Augustine refused to change.

Not too long after this, Augustine's parents decided the best thing for their smart, trouble-maker would be to send him away to get good teaching. Augustine could become a great teacher or lawyer, if only he could get good training and stay out of trouble. So off Augustine went. He went to high school in the nearby town of Madaura. When he finished there, he went to university in Carthage, a great city near the Mediterranean Sea.

At last Augustine had the good teachers he needed, yet even they were amazed at his gifts. What beautiful Latin he wrote! What powerful speeches he made!

Augustine loved the challenge of these new schools, but he loved the new thrills of life he now had even more. He was away from home and could do whatever

**Story-telling Tips****Ahead of time:**

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Create story cue cards on index cards (or highlight text).
3. Practice telling story dramatically, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary to fit your allotted time.
4. Decorate area with story props that help bring your story alive.

**During your presentation:**

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story. Point to/use props at important points in the story. Include the kids in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
2. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

**STORY OF THE SAINTS**

he wanted to do. He went to the theatre. He watched the gladiators fight. He found friends to join him in playing mean tricks on others. Best of all in Augustine's mind, there were lots of girlfriends to have and lots of wine to drink. Surely this was the happy life he was looking for.

All the time Monica worried about her son. By letter or in person, she kept pleading with him, "Augustine, why do you do spend your time on all of these terrible things?" she would ask him. "It will lead to nothing good. God created you in His image to praise and glorify Him. He has given you such great gifts of mind and speech. Use these to know Him and find your pleasure there, not in wasting your life on all this wickedness. Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is the happy life." But Augustine refused to listen.

Augustine finally finished his schooling and began to start teaching. For the first time in his life, he began to ask such deep questions as "Who am I? Why am I here in the world?" None of the sinful pleasures he had tried really made him happy. Monica pleaded with him to become a follower of Jesus Christ, but Augustine still refused. Even though his wicked ways did not make him happy, Augustine still did not want to give them up.

Augustine was a good teacher. He started out in a little school in Tagaste, but before long he was made a professor of Speech at the university in Carthage, then in Rome and finally in the great city of Milan.

Milan was one of the most important cities in the world. It was home to two very, very important men: King Valentinian II, the king of the great Roman Empire; and Bishop Ambrose, a great church leader and powerful preacher.

Augustine was treated like an important man in Milan, too. He was given a huge, beautiful villa to live in there with room enough for all his friends, cousins and his mother, Monica, to come live with him. Never had Augustine had such splendid things and such good students. Surely this was the good life he was looking for, but to his surprise, Augustine found his life empty.

One day Monica asked Augustine to go hear the great Ambrose preach. Augustine agreed, saying "Well, I am a Professor of Speech. Everyone says what a

powerful preacher Ambrose is; I guess I should at least hear him once. I will go with you, but not to listen to WHAT he says. I am only going to listen to HOW he says it. I will decide for myself about his skills as a speaker." Monica was overjoyed. At last her son would hear the Word of God preached.

From the moment Ambrose began to preach, Augustine was impressed. "How well he speaks. Surely he is as good a speaker as I was told," Augustine thought. But before long, Augustine found that he wasn't just listening to HOW Ambrose spoke; He was listening to WHAT Ambrose spoke: "In Christ are all things. Christ is everything to us," Ambrose said.

"Could it be that here is the happy life I've been looking for all along? Could Mother have been right?" Augustine wondered.

Augustine kept going back to hear Ambrose preach. The more he heard, the more the Holy Spirit worked inside of him, showing him the truth of God's Word. Augustine became so ashamed of his sin, but what could be done?

One morning in his garden, things came to a breaking point: "How long will it be until you confess your sins and turn to Christ?" he said to himself. "You always say 'tomorrow, tomorrow': why not now, why not let this hour be an end to my sinfulness?" he thought as he tossed aside his New Testament and threw himself down on the ground under a fig tree.

Just then he heard the voice of a child next door, singing, "Tolle lege, tolle lege! Take up and read! Take up and read!"

The simple words seemed like a message to Augustine. He took up his New Testament to read and when he did, his eyes fell on these words: "Don't keep on living in wicked ways. Let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you." (Romans 13:13-14, paraphrased)

At last Augustine he took God at His Word. He confessed his sins and believed in Jesus as his Savior. God took away the shame of his sin and filled his heart with peace for the first time in his life. At last Augustine had found the happy life.

The news that Augustine had become a Christian spread quickly. When Monica heard her son's decision, so fell on her knees and thanked God! Thirty-one years

of prayers had been answered at last!

When Easter came, Augustine was baptized by Ambrose himself, rejoicing that he had found peace in his heart, trust in his mind, and joy in his life, by giving up selfish pleasures and devoting his life to the service of Jesus Christ.

Augustine had spent his first thirty-one years looking for pleasure in selfish ways. Now he would spend the rest of his life—the next forty-three years—knowing pleasure in praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as he had been created to. Augustine went back to Africa and became a powerful preacher and church leader, like Ambrose. He used the cleverness and ability to speak that God had given him to encourage believers and to fight against those who tried to teach lies about God and the Bible. He studied and prayed to know God better. And the more he knew of God, the greater was his pleasure.

It was all as his mother had told him from the beginning: “Turn from your sins and believe in Jesus. That is where you will find the happy life.”

Augustine spent over thirty years trying to make himself happy in selfish pleasures. In the end, he found the happy life in living for the God who created Him, just as his mother always told him.

What about you? Where are you looking for the happy life? Is it in getting a new toy? Or having more friends? Is it in being the smartest student at school or the best soccer player? If you have parents who know the Lord Jesus as their Savior, they will tell you the same thing that Monica told her son, Augustine: the happy life is only to be found when we live to praise and glorify God as He created us to.

Let’s praise God for being the Giver of the Happy Life of knowing, loving and obeying Him, to all who will confess their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior. Let’s ask Him to help us to find our happiness in Him. Let’s ask Him to help us to use all the good gifts He’s given us to encourage other believers and know Him better ourselves, that we might enjoy Him even more.

*Close in prayer.*

### Cracking the Case:

**It’s time to answer our Case Questions.**

**1. What was the De Beata Vitae? Who wanted it?**

The good life. Augustine wanted it.

**2. Where did he look for it and where did he find it?**

He looked for it in pleasure--in doing whatever he wanted to do. He found it in knowing and enjoying God.

### Something for You and Me

**Our Bible Truth is:**

**God Created All Things to Praise and Glorify Him**

**Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 148:7-13**

“Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.”

### Closing ACTS Prayer

**A** God, praise You for being the Source of the Happy Life!

**C** God, we confess that many times we don’t think that loving God and obeying Your good ways is the happy life. Many times we want to do things our own way, just like Augustine. We need a Savior!

**T** God, we thank You for Your great patience and mercy towards sinners, like Augustine and like us.

**S** God, work in our hearts that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, like Augustine. Help us to know the happy life of knowing, loving and obeying You.

### Special Words

**De Beata Vitae:** Latin for “the Happy Life.”

**Ambrose:** A great church leader in Milan, famous for his preaching.

# **ACTS PRAYER ACTIVITY**

Use this sheet to write down your ACTS Prayer

## **Instructions:**

Use this sheet to help the children apply the Bible Truth into a prayer. You can use the ACTS provided or even better, have the kids think of their own applications. Also have the children add their personal requests to the prayer, too. Lead the children in the prayer or let them pray sections, with your help. Never force a child to pray! Non-readers can participate by you whispering a section of the prayer into their ear and allowing them to pray it aloud for the group.

## **ADORATION:**

God, we praise for being our great Creator who is worthy of all our praise. His glory is in all the earth!

God, we praise You for being.....

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Add your own Adorations:

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## **CONFESSION:**

We confess we often forget You and do not praise You as we should. We too often are trying to get other people to glorify us for good things we do, instead of You. We need a Savior!

God, we have sinned against You....

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Add your own Confessions:

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## **THANKSGIVING:**

Thank You, God for making us in Your image so that we, more than any other creature, can have the pleasure of enjoying and praising You.

God, we thank You for...

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Add your own Thanksgivings:

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## **SUPPLICATION:**

God, work in our hearts that we might love, know and obey You, as You created us to, know Him and obey Him as we were created to. Work in our hearts, that we might turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.

God, we need Your help...

Add your own Supplication:

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## **SNEAKY SNACK**

Can you figure out how this snack relates to the story?

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### **Snack: The Tempting Pear Tree and the Professor of Speech**

Pear pieces and (for a real tricky snack addition) a piece of red fruit roll up rounded off on one end like a tongue (Augustine's job as a professor of speech).

This is only a suggestion. Feel free to modify. Be mindful of allergy issues among your children!

**Case Tie-in:** Before Augustine became a Christian, he was known for being very smart and for doing whatever he wanted to do, even if it was bad. He and his friends ate the pears from his father's prize pear trees when they knew they weren't supposed to, then threw the rest to pigs! This was just the beginning of many bad things Augustine did. Augustine grew up and became a professor of speech in Milan. It was there that he heard the great preacher, Ambrose, believed the good news of Jesus and found in God, the happy life he had been looking for his whole life.

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## **SOUL FOOD**

Food for thought during snack time

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1. What does the snack have to do with the story?

Choose a few questions from the other activity discussion sheets to talk about during this snack time.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

### **God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him**

God did not create the world because He was lonely or bored. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been perfectly happy, enjoying each other in perfect fellowship. He had no need for anyone or anything else to be happy. God created the world because He wanted to. He created it all as a display of His glory (who He is).

Everything God created praises and glorifies Him by being little pictures of what He is like. Because God made people in His image, we have the greatest ability to praise and glorify Him. To people alone, of all the earthly creatures, did God give a spirit to know and love Him. Only we can understand how His creations tell us about Him as we look at them.

God placed us in this wonderful world of His creation to enjoy it, and for the pleasure of praising, glorifying and enjoying God, as we see what it shows us about Him.

### **Understanding the Bible Truth**

1. Did God create people and the universe because He was bored or lonely? Why or why not? *God did not create them because He was bored or lonely. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always been perfectly happy, enjoying each other in perfect fellowship.*
2. Why did God make the universe? *For His own pleasure, as a display of His glory. For us to enjoy.*
3. How do all things praise & glorify the LORD? *By being little pictures of what He is like.*
4. What is special about how people can praise and glorify God? *God made them in His own image. Of all the earthly creatures, they alone can see how God's creations reflect the great way He is and praise Him for it.*
5. Why did God place people in His creation? *To enjoy creation and to enjoy God. And, for the pleasure of praising and glorifying God even more, by what God's creations shows them about Him.*
6. Why would it be selfish for us to do things for our own glory, but good for God to do things for His own glory? *We are just creatures. We were never meant to be worshiped or glorified for what we do. We can accept people's encourage when we do a good job, but we know that everything talent we have, every good thing we do is a gift that God has given us. In the end, God should be praised for the good things we do. But God is different. He is the like no other. He is completely good and loving. He is far wiser and far more powerful than anyone else. No one helps Him do what He does. It is right for Him to do things for His own pleasure and for the praise of His name because He is the God. It would be wrong for Him NOT to seek His own glory or pleasure.*

### **Bible Truth Story Connection Questions**

1. What does our story have to do with our Bible Truth? *Even though Augustine's mother taught him about that the happy life was to be found only in praising, glorifying and enjoying the LORD, Augustine refused to believe. He thought he would only find the happy life in doing whatever he wanted to do. After thirty years of pleasing himself with whatever he desired, Augustine found that the happy life truly was found only in the LORD.*

### **Bible Verse Connection Question**

1. What does our Bible Truth have to do with our **Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10**: "Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.?"

*This verse is a call for all of God's creatures to praise Him, as they were created to.*

**Life Application Questions**

1. How can you praise and glorify God today?
2. What is the first thing we should do if we want to praise and glorify God? *We should turn from our sins, confess them to God, and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

**ACTS Questions**

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible Truth? *Praise God for being the great Creator who is worthy of all of our praise and glory.*
2. What is something we can confess to God from this Bible Truth? *Confess that we often forget Him and do not praise Him as we should. We deserve His punishment! We need a Savior!*
3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible Truth? *Thank God for creating us so that we can have the pleasure of enjoying Him and praising Him. Thank Him for making us able to see how wonderful He is through the things He has created.*

**The Gospel**

1. God created us to praise and glorify Him, but we have all chosen not to. We deserve God's punishment! Is there any hope for us? What is the gospel?

*Yes, there is! God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who've rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son, Jesus to earth as a man to save sinners. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who's ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

## Game: Inspecting the Troops

### Materials

Crown (if desired)  
Bible Truth Questions

### Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Bible Truth Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Write the Bible Truth questions on small thin strips of paper (or make a photocopy of the Bible Truth Discussion Questions and simply cut them into strips) and put them in the bag/bowl.

### Playing the Game

Tell the children that they are the Queen's/King's soldiers and are to follow her/his every command. Have the soldiers march, pretend to hold out their swords, ride their horses, etc. Then, finally have them stand at attention, very still and showing no emotion. Tell them that you are the Queen/King and have come to inspect the troops. (Put on the crown). You have to remove anyone who is not very straight and still, and show no emotion. As you inspect the troops, make faces or say things to try to get the troops to break into a smile, etc. Watch them for movement. Whoever breaks a smile or moves, etc. told to step forward and must answer a question to be reinstated to the Troops. If it is just one soldier, he/she may choose two other soldiers to help them answer the question. If the soldier (and the soldiers he chose to help him) answer the question correctly, everyone goes back into the line. If they get it wrong, they must wait out one turn. If desired, let some of the children take turns being the king/queen.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

NOTE: Have the children who remain out help you to give commands to the troops.

### Non-competitive Option

Don't exclude the soldiers from the Troops, even if they get the wrong answer. Do put the answer back in the bag to be reviewed again.

### Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

**Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song**

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

**Doxology**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
 Praise Him, all creatures, here below;  
 Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;  
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

**Listen to it on PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 13**

**Understanding the Song**

1. What does it mean to praise God? *To tell of the greatness of who He is and what He does.*
2. What is a blessing? *Good things that we enjoy that have been given to us, particularly from God.*
3. From whom do all blessings "flow" (come from)? *From God.*
4. Who should praise God? *All creatures here below; the heavenly host above.*
5. What does "here below" mean? What creatures are here below? *Creatures that live below heaven; that is, earthly creatures. This would include everything God created in the universe.*
6. Who is supposed to praise God above? Who are they? *The heavenly host, which are all the different kinds of angels of heaven.*
7. Who are the creatures below and heavenly host above supposed to praise? *God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost*
8. What can we praise the Father especially for? *For His great plan of creation and salvation. For His great love in sending His Son to save sinful people, like you and me.*
9. What can we praise the Son especially for? *For being willing to leave the close fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit to come to earth, that He could suffer and die that His people would be saved from their sins.*
10. Is the Holy Ghost really a ghost? *No. That's just another way of saying Spirit.*
11. What can we praise the Holy Ghost especially for? *For coming to live within the hearts of God's people when they turn to trust Jesus as their Savior. For changing them and giving them more and more love for God and a greater desire to serve Him.*

**Bible Truth Connection Question**

1. How does this song relate to our **Bible Truth: God Created All Things to Praise and Glorify Him**? *All creatures here below on the earth and all the heavenly host above in heaven should praise God. He is their Creator and He made them to praise and glorify Him. All the good blessings they enjoy come from Him.*

**Story Connection**

1. How does this song relate to our story? *Even though Augustine's mother had taught him from a young age about the LORD and that all blessings came from Him, Augustine chose to not believe. He treated his brilliant mind and gifts of speaking as if they were his very own. He used his body to do whatever pleased him to do. After thirty years of doing whatever he wanted to do, Augustine finally came to understand that all blessings came from the LORD. Most of all, he learned that the greatest blessing of all was the pleasure of knowing and praising the LORD.*

**Bible Verse Connection Question**

1. What does this hymn have to do with our Bible Verse: **Psalm 148:7-13**: "Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."?

*This hymn calls us, along with all creatures to praise God, as He created us to. He is our God and He is the one from whom all the blessings we enjoy come from.*

**Life Application Questions**

1. How can God's people be affected by the message of this song? *They can praise God for not just creating them, but providing for their every need, every day, so that they stay alive. They can ask God to help them to know and love Him more as they look at His creations. They can ask Him to make them more grateful for all He is and gives them each day.*
2. How can we become God's "folk", His people? *By turning away from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior.*

**ACTS Questions**

1. What is something we can praise God for from this hymn? *Praise God for being the Giver of all blessings that all creatures enjoy.*
2. What are sins we can confess to God from this hymn? *That many times we don't thank God for His many blessings or praise Him for being our good Creator. We think too much about ourselves and forget Him and who He is. We deserve His punishment. We need a Savior!*
3. What is something we can thank God for from this hymn?  
*We can thank Him for all His blessings, especially the blessing of forgiveness of our sins through Jesus.*
4. What is something we can ask God for from this hymn? *We can ask Him to work in our hearts that we might want to receive the greatest blessing of salvation, by turning from our sins and trusting in Jesus as our Savior. We can ask Him to give us eyes to see the many blessings He gives us every day and become more grateful for them.*

**Life Application Questions**

1. What are some blessings that the LORD has given you?
2. How can God's people be affected by the message of this song? *We can think of blessings that we have and praise God for giving them to us. We can ask God to help bring to mind the blessings He gives us each day and thank Him for them.*
3. What is the greatest blessing that God offers to sinful people like you and me? *The forgiveness of our sins when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior.*

**Gospel Question**

1. Why do God's people of all creatures have great blessings to praise God for? What is the good news of Jesus? What is the gospel?

*God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

## **Song Game: Big Voice, Little Voice**

### **Materials**

Sign Language Signs and Song

White board and marker

Eraser

### **Preparing the Game**

1. Write the words to the song on a white board.

### **Playing the Game**

1. After children have learned the song and signs well, then tell the children that you are going to leave out words from the song (that you've learned signs for) and just do the sign in its place.
2. Have the children help you choose a word to take out. Erase the word from the board. Review the sign the for erased word.
3. Sing the song, trying to remember to NOT sing the word and do only the sign.
4. Continue to take out words until all of the words (with signs) have been taken out.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

choose a FEW questions for discussion, then choose the game and/or music activity

**Bible Truth 3 BIBLE VERSE****Meditation Version: Psalm 148:7-13, NIV 1984**

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

**Shortened Memory Version: Psalm 148:7,9,10,11, NIV 1984**

"Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures ...you mountains and trees, wild animals...and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations. Let them praise the name of the LORD."

**Understanding the Bible Verse**

1. What is being called on to praise the LORD in this psalm? *The sea and everything in it; the weather; the trees; the land; the animals; and, all sorts of people.*
2. How can people praise the LORD differently than all the rest of God's earthly creations? *They, alone, are made in His image. They can know Him and see Him reflected in creation. They know right from wrong and can talk with Him. All the rest of God's creations can only praise Him by reflecting the way He is in the way He made them.*
3. What does it mean to praise the name of the LORD? *It doesn't mean to talk about how pretty the name sounds when you say it. In Bible times, to talk about someone's name meant to talk about what they were like. Praising the name of the LORD means to praise Him for the wonderful ways He is and the wonderful things He does.*
4. Why should all creatures praise the LORD? *His name is exalted & His splendor is above the earth & the heavens.*
5. What does 'exalted' mean? *He is greater and better than anything else.*
6. What does it mean that His splendor is above the earth and the heavens? *He is more wonderfully glorious than anything in all of heaven and earth.*

**Bible Truth Connection Question**

What does this verse have to do with the **Bible Truth: God Created All Things to Praise and Glorify Him**? *These verses are a call for all of God's creatures to praise Him as they were created to.*

**Story Connection Questions**

1. How do these verses relate to our story? *Augustine was taught as a young boy to praise the name of the LORD. He was told that His name was more splendid and more exalted than anything in heaven or earth. Augustine thought to follow the LORD and praise Him would be the end of his fun and happiness. It took over 30 years of seeking happiness in all sorts of worldly pleasures for Augustine to finally turn to the LORD and find that because God is greatest, most wonderful person of all, that to know and praise Him means to know the happy life.*

**Life Application Questions**

1. What are things God's people can praise Him for today?
2. What is first step we must take if we want to truly praise God? *We need to turn away from our sins, confess them to God, and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

**ACTS Questions**

1. What is something we can praise God for from this Bible Verse? *Praise God for being our Creator, who created us with hearts that can know and praise Him.*
2. What is something we can confess to God from this Bible Verse? *That we are all sinners made to praise God, but we have all chosen to disobey Him and His good ways. We praise ourselves and others, instead of Him. We deserve His punishment! We need a Savior!*
3. What is something we can thank God for from this Bible Verse? *We can thank God for all the wonderful, good ways His name tell us about Him. We can thank Him that there is nothing about Him that is NOT worthy of being praised.*
4. What is something we can ask God for from this Bible Verse? *We can ask God to work in our hearts that we would want to turn away from disobeying Him and trust in this wonderful Jesus as our own Savior. That God would help us to praise Him with our whole hearts.*

**The Gospel**

1. What is the good news of salvation that reflects God's holiness and His merciful love?  
*God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

## Game: Take a Step Back

### Materials

Bible verse written up in large print so that all can see  
1 beanbag for every 2 children

### Preparing the Game

None.

### Learning the Verse

Some or all of your children may be non- or early readers. Teach the verse in sections, having them say it after you. Repeat a few times. Add clapping or other movement as they say it.

### Directions

1. Pair up the children, giving a beanbag to each pair. Line up one child from each team, then have the partners face their team partner, about one foot apart from each other, forming a second line.
2. Have all the children say the verse together, then have the partner throw the beanbag to the other partner. Those who successfully catch the beanbag stay in for the next round.
3. Have each child take a step back.
4. Lead the children in saying the verse again, then have them throw the beanbag to their partner. Those who successfully catch the beanbag stay in for the next round.
5. Have the children take another step back, and so on.
6. Continue until only one team remains.

Alternate Play: Continue to allow all children to play the game, even if they drop their beanbag, but keep track of how many successful catches each team makes. The team with the most successful catches, wins.

### Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during TAKING IT TO OTHERS time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children. Make sure you read the Bible verse aloud before you ask your questions.

Directions:

1. Write words to song in large print before class.
2. Play the song for the children, helping them follow along on the song sheet.
3. Discuss the song, using a few questions from the discussion sheet. *Don't use them all!*
4. Introduce sign language for key words of your choice from sign language sheet for your song. Use as few or as many as you think the children can learn.
5. Sing and sign the song. Sign language as well as large format lyrics and sheet music are found in the PFI Unit Songbook or online.
6. If desired, play the Song Game.

**Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Presenting and Singing the Song**

1. Sing and sign the song, encouraging the watching children/parents to join in.
2. Ask the class some of the questions listed below. The Bible Truth Connection Question is particularly good to help them understand how the song ties in with the Bible Truth.

**Praise the LORD, from the Earth**

Listen to it on PFI NIV Songs 5, Track 14

Praise the Lord, from the earth,  
All you creatures of the sea,  
and all ocean depths,  
lightning, hail, snow and clouds,  
Stormy winds that do his bidding.  
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord, from the earth,  
you mountains and all hills,  
you fruit trees and cedars,  
animals, flying birds, kings and rulers, men and maidens,  
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.  
Praise the Lord, from the earth, Praise the Lord.

## Song Game: Sign It, Say It, What Does It Mean?

### Materials

Sign Language signs used in song, particularly choose words with important meanings you want the children to learn, such as "grace", "redeem", etc.

Bag or bowl

### Preparing the Game

1. Cut out signs and put in bowl.

### Playing the Game

1. Practice the song and signs until the children know them well. Then put all the signs we've learned in this bag/ bowl and mix them up.
2. Ask one of the children to choose a sign, but not show it to anyone...but you, if they need some help.
3. Ask the child to do the sign for the rest of the children and see if the other children can guess which one it is. Do the sign with the child, if desired.
4. When the children guess the sign, ask them the meaning of the word. If no one guesses the sign, put it back in the bowl to be picked again.
5. Choose another child to pick a new sign from the bag and continue.

NOTE: You might want to sing the song after you do each word or couple of words.

Game continues as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

**STORY REVIEW**

Directions: Read and discuss Bible Truth, using a FEW of the questions. Play game. Feel free to modify the game to fit your children.

**General Story Questions**

1. In what subjects was Augustine an especially good student? *Latin and speech.*
2. Why wasn't he a favorite with his teachers? *Played pranks on the other children.*
3. What did his mother encourage Augustine to do instead of playing pranks? *Find the Happy Life in praising and glorifying God.*
4. Where did Augustine think he would find the Happy Life? *Doing whatever pleased him.*
5. What did Augustine do that made his father furious? *Stole the pears off of his prize pear tree, ate some, then threw the rest to the pigs.*
6. What did Patricus do to Augustine to punish him for taking the pears? *Punished him and made him sleep with the pigs.*
7. Why did Augustine's parents send him away? *Go to a good high school & university.*
8. What did Augustine do when he went away to school? *He finally had good teachers who challenged him, but he started to do many more bad things.*
9. What kinds of bad things did Augustine like to do? *Went to the theatre and the gladiatorial games; made friends with others who enjoyed doing bad things; had a lot of girlfriends, and got drunk.*
10. What did Augustine do after he finished school? *He began to teach.*
11. Where did Augustine teach? *Tagaste; the University of Carthage; Rome; and Milan.*
12. What was special about Milan? *It was one of the most important cities. It was home to the Roman Emperor, Valentinian II, and to the great preacher and church leader, Ambrose.*
13. What did Augustine enjoy in Milan? *His huge villa and teaching speech to his students.*
14. Why did Augustine go to hear Ambrose preach? *To see if he was as good of a speaker as everyone said he was.*
15. What happened to Augustine when he listened to Ambrose preach? *He began to listen to what Ambrose preached on. He began to wonder if the Happy Life really was found in praising and glorifying God, as Ambrose and his mother said.*
16. What happened in the garden? *Augustine lay on the ground, crying out to God. He heard a little girl sing "Tolle lege", he took up his Bible, read it, confessed his sins and trusted in Jesus.*
17. What did Augustine do after he became a Christian? *He went back to Africa, became a great preacher and church leader. He used the gifts God gave him to know and praise God, and encouraged others to do the same.*

**Bible Truth Connection Questions**

1. What does this story have to do with our **Bible Truth: God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him?** *Even though Augustine's mother taught him about that the happy life was to be found only in praising, glorifying and enjoying the LORD, Augustine refused to believe. He thought he would only find the happy life in doing whatever he wanted to do. After thirty years of pleasing himself with whatever he desired, Augustine found that the happy life truly was found only in the LORD.*

**Bible Verse Connection Question**

1. What does the story have to do with our **Bible Verse: Psalm 148:7-10:** "Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, lightning and hail, snow and clouds, stormy winds that do his bidding, you mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, wild animals and all cattle, small creatures and flying birds, kings of the earth and all nations, you princes and all rulers on earth, young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."?  
*This verse is a call for all of God's creatures to praise Him as they were created to. Augustine spent the first 33 years of his life NOT in praise of the LORD, but seeking his enjoyment in other things. He learned that there is no real pleasure in these things without the LORD. After he turned from his sins and trusted Jesus as his own Savior, Augustine DID praise the LORD: for His great mercy shown towards him all those years. This was the happy life Augustine had been looking for. He learned that nothing is more enjoyable than knowing, loving and obeying the LORD.*

**Life Application Questions**

1. What gifts has God given you that you can use to know, praise and glorify Him?
2. What is the first thing that God wants us to do to know, praise and glorify Him? *To turn from our sins, confess our sins to Him and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

**ACTS Questions**

1. What's something we can praise God for from this story? *Praise God for being the Source of the Happy Life!*
2. What's something we can confess from this story? *Confess that many times we don't think that loving God and obeying His good ways is the happy life. Many times we want to do things our own way, just like Augustine. We deserve God's punishment. We need a Savior!*
3. What's something we can thank God for from this story? *We can thank God for His great patience and mercy towards sinners, like Augustine and like us.*
4. What is something we can ask God for, from this story? *We can ask God to work in our hearts, helping us to turn away from our sins and trust Jesus as our own Savior, like Augustine. We can ask Him to help us to know the happy life of knowing, loving and obeying Him.*

**The Gospel**

1. What is the good news of Jesus that Augustine heard and believed? What is the gospel?  
*God is the good Creator and King of the world. He made people to worship Him and live by His good laws. But we are all sinners who have rebelled against Him. We all deserve death--God's just, eternal punishment for our sins. How terrible! But God has good news for us. In His great mercy, God sent His Son Jesus to earth to save sinners. Yes, Jesus, the perfect Son of God, left His home in heaven and became a man. He lived the perfect life that pleases God. (He's the only one who has ever done that!) He offered it up to God His Father as the perfect sacrifice for sins when He suffered and died on the cross. Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead in victory. He had fully paid for the sins of God's people, so they wouldn't have to! Now all who turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life with God. They will be His very own special people who will know Him and enjoy Him forever. We can be God's people, too, if we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior.*

## Game: Triple Play Baseball

### Materials

- 4 carpet squares or construction paper for bases
- 3 balls of different sizes, such as a foam ball, tennis ball, and soccer ball.
- A basket or cardboard box
- Masking tape
- Paper and pencil
- Story Review Questions

### Preparing the Game

1. Choose 20+ questions for your game from the Story Review Discussion Questions, or make up your own.
2. Place the carpet squares at the four corners of a diamond, like for baseball, approximately 10 feet apart.
3. Place the basket with the balls in it next to "home" base.

### Playing the Game

Divide the children into two teams. Team A will be up to bat, Team B will be out in the field. One player from Team B stands behind the batter as catcher. The leader will read a question to the batter. If the batter answers it correctly, he then picks up all three balls from the basket and tosses them out into the "field" in rapid succession. He then tries to run as many bases as possible around the diamond,, touching each base ,before the Team B players in the field return all three objects to the catcher who puts the balls into the box. The batter scores as many points as bases he was able to get to: 1 point for first base, 2 points for 2nd base, etc.. The next person on Team A becomes batter now, and repeats the process. A team incurs an "out" if a batter is unable to answer a question; or, if a batter is caught in between 2 bases when all the items are back in the box, then they are out. Teams switch positions after 2 outs.

Game continues until all children get to bat, or as number of questions, time, and attention span allow.

WARNING: You may want to have the children only walk (rapidly) around the bases if you have slick floors. If you do this, you can also have the catchers have to crawl on all fours/do a crab walk to slow them down.

### Non-competitive Option

This game is difficult to play in a completely non-competitive way. You can take the "edge" off of the competitive nature of it by not assigning point values and simply letting each child have a chance to see how far around the bases they get on their turn. When all the children on Team A have a turn, switch batters and catchers and let the Team B children become the batters.

### Optional **TAKING IT TO OTHERS** Activity: Quiz Questions

Have the children choose a few of the questions from the game to ask the parents/other children during **TAKING IT TO OTHERS** time. Help pre-readers by whispering the question in their ear and letting them ask it aloud to the parents/other children.

**CASE REPLAY ACTIVITIES**

Use this guide to review the Case Story and act it out for others to enjoy!

**CASE REPLAY, JR: YOUNGEST CHILDREN**

**Description:** The children will act out the story together, everyone doing the same action/sound effect at the same time. This activity is most suitable for kindergarteners.

**Materials**

The Case RePlay, Jr. script for younger children

**Preparation**

1. Read through the script and write in the blanks along the side possible actions/sound effects the children could do to act it out.

**Instructions**

1. Tell the children that they will be re-enacting the story together as you tell it.
2. As you read the script, lead the children in actions/sound effects to do with you.
3. If desired, you can read the script and stop at certain sentences and ask them what a good action/sound effect would be to act out what you just read.
4. Repeat the re-enactment one or two times more.

**CASE REPLAY, SR: OLDER CHILDREN**

**Description:** The children act out the story as a three-scene play. You will narrate it using the Case RePlay, Sr. script and they will act it out (no spoken words, for the most part), with each child assuming a different character's role. This activity is most suitable for first grade and up. You will review the story, then practice it a few times before performing it for others.

**Materials**

The Case RePlay, Sr. script  
White board or other large format paper  
Costumes and props

**Preparation**

1. Prepare for the play by choosing costumes and props for each character in the story. Decorate the area with any scenery props.
2. Write the words "Beginning," "Middle," "End" on a large piece of paper/whiteboard with plenty of space under each heading. You will use this paper to help the children think about the story as a three-scene play, as it is presented in the script.

**Instructions**

1. Tell the children that they will get to act out the story as a three-scene play, with a beginning, middle and end section. Tell them that before they can act it out, they need to think it out. as you narrate it with your script.
2. Take the children's answers as they recount the story, helping them put key incidents in the right order.
3. If desired, when they have filled in their Beginning, Middle, End, read through your whole (real) script, so they hear exactly what you will have them act out.
4. Then tell the children that it's time to practice acting out the story.
5. Assign parts to each child. If you are using costumes, do NOT give them out at this point. They will be a distraction.
6. Have all the children sit on the floor or in chairs on one side of the "stage," then call the characters up in place as their part in the story comes.
7. As you read the script, guide the children in where you want them to move or do to act it out.
8. After going through the whole script once, give out any costumes and props and act out the script once or twice more.

**Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Re-enacting the Story**

Read the script as the children act out together (younger) or assuming different roles (older) as the other children or the parents watch.

**CASE REPLAY, JR--YOUNGER KIDS (KINDERGARTEN) P.2**

Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the De Beata Vitae.

Our story takes place in the 1650's in Africa and in Italy.

And now we present: "The Case of the De Beata Vitae."

**Scene 1:**

Augustine was a very smart boy who lived in Tagaste, Algeria. He was very good at Latin and giving speeches. But instead of being a favorite with his teachers, he was bored and spent his time getting in trouble because of pranks he played on other children. Augustine's mother, Monica, urged him to stop getting into trouble, but find his pleasure in using his great gifts to know God better. She told him he would only finally find happiness when he praised and glorified God. Augustine refused to listen to his mother. He kept seeking the happy life doing whatever he wanted to do. Often what he wanted to do was very bad. Once he and his friends took all the pears from his father's prize pear tree. They ate some and threw the rest to pigs. Patricus was furious. He punished Augustine and made him sleep with the pigs. Monica once more encouraged him to find the happy life in praising God, but Augustine refused.

**Actions:**

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**Scene 2:**

Augustine's parents sent him away from home to good schools. Augustine liked what he learned, but he sought the happy life doing all sorts of bad things. He went to the theatre and gladiator fights, too much. He spent too much time with bad friends, girl friends and drinking. His mother kept urging him to find the happy life in praising God, but he refused. Augustine finished school and began teaching, first back in Tagaste, then in Carthage and Rome. Finally he got a really good job as a professor of Speech in Milan, the home of the Emperor of the Roman Empire and of a very important church leader named Ambrose. Augustine enjoyed life in a huge villa and invited his friends, his cousins and his mother to live with him. He enjoyed teaching, too. He kept trying to find the happy life doing whatever he wanted to do, but it didn't work.

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**Scene 3**

Monica invited Augustine to go to church with her to hear Ambrose. Augustine agreed to go NOT to listen to what Ambrose said, but to see if he was as good of a speaker as everyone said he was. But when he listened to Ambrose, the LORD began to work in Augustine's heart. He saw that he was a sinner. One day he was so upset that he put down his New Testament and lay down under a fig tree in his garden, crying out to God about his sinful way of life. A little girl sang, "Tolle lege, tolle lege—take up and read!" Augustine took up his Bible and read, "Don't keep on living wicked ways. Let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you." Augustine confessed his sins to God and trusted in Jesus as His Savior. God filled his heart with peace. At last he had found the Happy Life he had been looking for. Augustine quit his job as a professor and went back to Africa. He became a great preacher and church leader like Ambrose. He delighted in using his gifts to know and praise God more; and to help others do the same.

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**Bible Truth Tie-In:**

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him.** Augustine did whatever he wanted to, looking for the Happy Life; but he found it in praising and glorifying God.

## **CASE REPLAY, SR--OLDER KIDS (1ST GRADE AND UP) P.3**

Welcome to our play! The name of our story is called: The Case of the De Beata Vitae.

Our story takes place in the 1650's in Africa and in Italy.

The characters in our story are: Augustine and his parents, Augustine's friends, Augustine's teacher, Ambrose.

And now we present: "The Case of the De Beata Vitae."

### **Scene 1: (Beginning)**

Augustine was a very smart boy who lived in Tagaste, Algeria. He was very good at Latin and giving speeches. But instead of being a favorite with his teachers, he was bored and spent his time getting in trouble because of pranks he played on other children. Augustine's mother, Monica, urged him to stop getting into trouble, but find his pleasure in using his great gifts to know God better. She told him he would only finally find happiness when he praised and glorified God. Augustine refused to listen to his mother. He kept seeking the happy life doing whatever he wanted to do. Often what he wanted to do was very bad. Once he and his friends took all the pears from his father's prize pear tree. They ate some and threw the rest to pigs. Patricus was furious. He punished Augustine and made him sleep with the pigs. Monica once more encouraged him to find the happy life in praising God, but Augustine refused.

### **Scene 2: (Middle)**

Augustine's parents sent him away from home to good schools. Augustine liked what he learned, but he sought the happy life doing all sorts of bad things. He went to the theatre and gladiator fights, too much. He spent too much time with bad friends, girl friends and drinking. His mother kept urging him to find the happy life in praising God, but he refused. Augustine finished school and began teaching, first back in Tagaste, then in Carthage and Rome. Finally he got a really good job as a professor of Speech in Milan, the home of the Emperor of the Roman Empire and of a very important church leader named Ambrose. Augustine enjoyed life in a huge villa and invited his friends, his cousins and his mother to live with him. He enjoyed teaching, too. He kept trying to find the happy life doing whatever he wanted to do, but it didn't work.

### **Scene 3: (End)**

Monica invited Augustine to go to church with her to hear Ambrose. Augustine agreed to go NOT to listen to what Ambrose said, but to see if he was as good of a speaker as everyone said he was. But when he listened to Ambrose, the LORD began to work in Augustine's heart. He saw that he was a sinner. One day he was so upset that he put down his New Testament and lay down under a fig tree in his garden, crying out to God about his sinful way of life. A little girl sang, "Tolle lege, tolle lege—take up and read!" Augustine took up his Bible and read, "Don't keep on living wicked ways. Let the Lord Jesus Christ take control of you." Augustine confessed his sins to God and trusted in Jesus as His Savior. God filled his heart with peace. At last he had found the Happy Life he had been looking for. Augustine quit his job as a professor and went back to Africa. He became a great preacher and church leader like Ambrose. He delighted in using his gifts to know and praise God more; and to help others do the same.

### **Bible Truth Tie-In:**

The Bible Truth we are learning is: **God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him.** Augustine did whatever he wanted to, looking for the Happy Life; but he found it in praising and glorifying God.

## A Fig Tree

### Description

Children will make a fig tree out of pipe cleaners and “pony” beads.

### Materials

3”x4” piece of corrugated cardboard per child

10 brown pipe cleaners per child

Purple and green pony beads (plastic with holes large enough to thread onto a pipe cleaner)

Green felt with sticky back (or you will need craft glue) OR Green markers and scissors

Something sharp to poke holes in the cardboard

### Preparing the Craft

1. Cut out rectangles of cardboard.
2. Poke 9 holes in a circle as shown in Figure #1.
3. Group together 9 of the 10 pipe cleaners, lining up ends. Starting about 2 1/2” from one end. Wrap the 10th pipe cleaner around the other 9 for about 3 1/2”. Secure the end of the pipe cleaner by twisting the end around a piece of pipe cleaner from the group.
4. Cut leaves out from green felt using Pattern #1. OR Make a copy of the leaves and cut out a set for each child. (If you are working with older children, you can let them cut out their paper leaves themselves.)

### Making the Craft

1. Show the sample of the craft you have made.
2. Insert each root end (2 1/2” side) of the pipe cleaners into holes in the cardboard. Twist each end to hold in place.
3. Have children bend out the longer ends of the pipe cleaners like branches.
4. Thread purple and green “fig” pony beads onto ends of each pipe cleaner. Twist ends of each pipe cleaner to make a stop for the beads.
5. Stick/glue green felt/paper leaves onto branches above the fig beads.

### Making a Bible Truth Connection

Once the children have settled into their craft, use the Bible Truth- Craft Connection Sheet to lead discussion about the craft. Note that most of these questions echo the questions on the case board, providing a review of what the children learned earlier.

### Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Craft Presentation

If you are presenting the craft to other children or parents the children can hold up their crafts (or your model craft) and read their Bible Truth Connection answers to explain the importance of the craft.

**CASE CRAFT****Discussion Guide****Instructions:**

As the children are settled into making their craft, ask them these questions to help them understand the craft's significance. Use the answers provided to guide the children's answers.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Where was Augustine when he got so upset about not finding the happy life? *Under a fig tree, in Milan, Italy.*
2. What made him so upset about how he tried to find the happy life? *He had done so many, sinful things.*
3. Where did he finally see happiness could only be found? *In knowing and loving God.*
4. What is Bible Truth that we are learning? *God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him.*
5. What does our craft have to do with our Bible Truth: God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him?  
*For many years Augustine refused to find his happiness in praising and glorifying God as he was meant to. God in His mercy softened Augustine's heart that he would turn from his sins and trust in Jesus. Then Augustine found out that the happy life really was found in living for God.*
6. What can our craft help us remember?  
*There may be many things we think will give us the happy life, but we will only find it in praising and glorifying God as He created us to.*

**TAKING IT TO OTHERS****Craft Presentation****Instructions:**

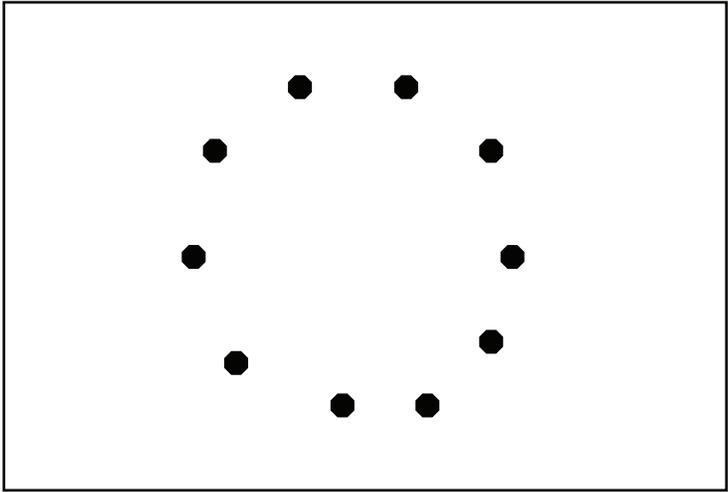
Have children hold up your model craft/their crafts. Choose five children (or you say) the five sections below to explain the craft's importance.

**Presentation:**

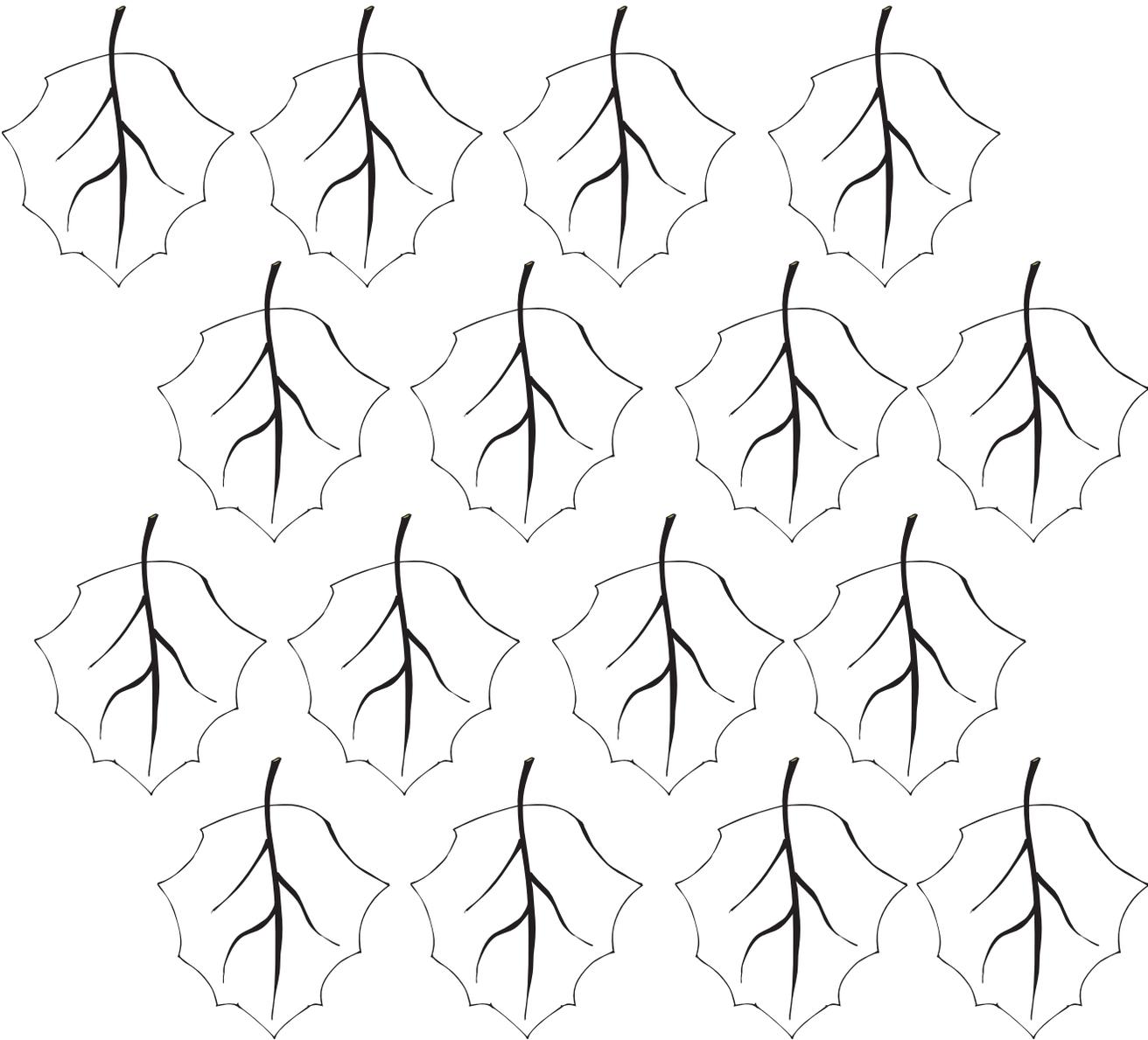
1. Our craft is: A Fig Tree.
2. In Milan, Augustine threw himself down under a fig tree because he was so upset about the sinful way he had lived for years as he tried to find the happy life outside of knowing and loving God.
3. Our Bible Truth is: God Created the World to Praise and Glorify Him.
4. For many years Augustine refused to find his happiness in praising and glorifying God as he was meant to. God in His mercy softened Augustine's heart that he would turn from his sins and trust in Jesus. Then Augustine found out that the happy life really was found in living for God.
5. Our craft can help us remember that there may be many things we think will give us the happy life, but we will only find it in praising and glorifying God as He created us to.

Note: Even non-readers can participate in presenting the craft, if you will whisper what they are to say in their ear and let them say it aloud for the others to hear.

Figure #1 Picture of Tree Base



Pattern #1 Leaf Shape





**BEFORE CLASS:****1. PICK YOUR PERSON**

VIPPs can be anyone in your church! Typically, they fall into 6 categories: Church staff, Elders, Deacons/deaconesses, Special Volunteers (people who aren't paid, but spend a lot of time helping out in particular ways), Supported Workers (a.k.a. missionaries), and Church Members.

**2. GATHER YOUR FACTS**

Use the VIPP Information Sheet to write down the facts about your VIPP. The information on this worksheet is used in the VIPP activities, listed in the "Choose an Activity" section below.

**DURING THE ACTIVITY:****1. INTRODUCE YOUR VIPP**

Introduce your VIPP to the children, using the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. If desired, you can even have the actual person come into class for the children to meet.

Need help describing what someone does for the church in a kid-friendly way? Click on the list of common VIPPs and how to describe what they do to kids. See if your VIPP is one of these. It may save you some time.

**2. PRAY!**

Lead the children in praying for the VIPP. Ask the children if they would like to pray for one of the VIPPs prayer requests. Even non-readers can pray for the VIPP if you whisper the prayer request in their ear, then let them say it aloud. Never force a child to pray!

**3. CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY**

There are two activities you can use to help the children learn about the VIPP:

**VIPP Clue Cards:** These are 9 coloring sheets in which children fill in the 9 things they learn about the VIPP from the VIPP Information Sheet. Photocopy a set of each child. Use as few or as many of these Clue Cards as you desire.

**VIPP Game:** This is a game that uses a set of Clue Cards for one or two VIPPs.

Choose a VIPP and fill in his/her information on the VIPP Information Sheet. Fill in a set of VIPP Clue Cards with the information for your VIPP. Tell the children about the VIPP, having them fill in the VIPP Clue Cards with the key facts as they learn them. Write any words the children need to write on a white-board or other piece of paper so they can see how to spell them. Help younger children write these words on their clue cards. Ideas for how to tell the children about many common VIPPs are listed at [praisefactory.org](http://praisefactory.org) with the resources for this Bible Truth.

**Optional TAKING IT TO OTHERS Activity: Introduce and Pray for the VIPP**

If you are presenting the VIPP to other children or parents you can assign children to hold up the 10 clue cards and say what each card tells about the VIPP. (Or, you can have the children hold them up as you tell what each one means.) Then lead the children in praying for the VIPP.

## Game: Picture Run

### Materials

Information for two VIPPs

2 Sets of Clue Cards

Tape

Different color construction paper for each picture.

### Preparing the Game

1. Fill in one set of clue sheets for each VIPP you are using.
2. Put all the Clue Cards in a bag, except for the ones with the names and pictures of the VIPPs.
3. Use tape to put up the pictures of each VIPP on a piece of construction paper. Tape each up in a different location/wall around the room.

### Playing the Game

**Reveal:** Tell the children about the VIPPs, showing them your filled-in clue cards as you tell about them.

**Review:** Put the Clue Cards for the VIPPS put in a bag. Mix up. Have children stand together in middle of the room. Tell them that you will pull out a clue card, show it to them, and they are to run to the picture of the person who it belongs to. Give them the answer after everyone has run to their guessed person. Continue until all clues have been used up. (If you have a slick floor, you may want to avoid running. Make it fun by giving them a different way to go to each picture, such as skip or hop.)

**VIPP INFORMATION SHEET**

**VIPP NAME:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT VIPP LOOKS LIKE**

Man or Woman? \_\_\_\_\_

Hair color? \_\_\_\_\_

Eye color? \_\_\_\_\_

**FAVORITE ANIMAL**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**FAVORITE FOOD**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**FAVORITE FREE TIME ACTIVITY**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT VIPP DOES DURING WEEK**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**VIPP GROUP OF SERVICE:**

Church Member

Deacon

Elder

Church Staff

Special Volunteer

Supported Worker  
(Missionary)

**3 WAYS VIPP SERVES CHURCH**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**3 WAYS TO PRAY FOR  
THE VIPP**

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

