

WORSHIP ILLUSTRATION

Lesson 30, Unit 6

The Bible Barn

Letters to the Seven Churches

Running time: Approximately 7 minutes

Revelation 2 and 3 summary

Focus Verse: Revelation 3:20

Setting: This series (Units 5 & 6) is set in a barn area of an outdoor camp.

Set: The set is designed to look like the interior of a barn. There's a door to enter, a fireplace with stuffed animal heads over the mantle, and a ramp to invite kids up to participate in object lessons. There is a mailbag or box that sits on a high shelf, it can have a trap door or simply tip over to dump a pile of letters and a Bible into counselor's hands. There are different openings, trapdoors and windows that the animal of the day can fall out of. For extra fun, build windows where the characters and puppets can pop up unexpectedly.

Characters:

Ranger Reggie is the Head Counselor and Bible teacher at Camp Venture. He is a former explorer and animal seeker, like the "Crocodile Hunter". (for fun pronounce all "R"s and "L"s as a "W") Safari Sam is the assistant Bible teacher and Ranger Reggie's longtime friend. Like Reggie, he loves animals, kids and the Bible. (for fun pronounce all "S"s with a "Th" sound) Wild William is a video character that recites the poem. (As an alternate, the rhyme can be found on a slip of paper or appear on a slide) Orville is a klutzy carrier pigeon (silent toy bird attached to a zip line) that delivers messages.

Creature Feature's Camp Critter:

Elephant

Note: Each episode introduces a different creature. These may be ten separate puppets, stuffed animals, or one basic sock puppet to represent the 10 following creatures:

Lovebird (Lesson 22), Meerkat (Lesson 23), Serpent (Lesson 24), Lamb (Lesson 25), Dove (Lesson 26), Race Horse (Lesson 27), Kitten (Lesson 28), Gorilla (Lesson 29), Elephant (Lesson 30), Lion (Lesson 31)

Plot: Safari Sam is nervous about opening a letter marked "warning." Ranger Reggie tells him that those who love us warn us when we are heading for trouble. We read about letters to the seven churches. We learn that Jesus warns us and promises rewards in heaven for those who are faithful.

Costumes: Safari hats, shorts, boots, vests, camp t-shirts.

Props: Clip board, Bible, letters, one envelope marked Warning!, elephant trunk and ears, 7 envelopes with 2 index cards in each, corkboard with a Warning sign on the left half and a Reward sign on the right half, pushpins

Sound effects: (SFX)

1. Intro/outro music suggestions:
"Hoe-down Throw down" by Miley Cyrus.
2. Moo SFX
3. "I Like to Move It, Move It" from Madagascar
4. Mail Time Song from Blues Clues
5. Elephant trumpeting

Visual effects: (VFX)

Video Intro is available at

www.childrensministrywarehouse.net.

1. Video Intro: Video featuring Reggie exploring and teaching Bible lessons.
2. Mailbox overhead, whenever it is opened letters and Bible pour out. (Song: "Mail Time" from Blues Clues)
3. Creature Feature slide
4. Wild William is a video character who appears to give us a rhyming hint at the "Creature Feature," animal of the day.
5. Slide of poem
6. Slide of Camper's Code

THE BIBLE BARN: Lesson 30
Letter to the Seven Churches
Revelation 2 and 3 summary
Focus Verse Revelation 3:20

(VFX: short video intro)

Reggie (enters)
 Hello campers! It's so good to see you! Welcome back to the Bible Barn. (SFX: Moo) You haven't seen Safari Sam, have you?

Sam (runs in carrying letter)
 Ranger Reggie! Ranger Reggie! Look what I got!

Reggie
 What is it?

Sam
 I don't know but it looks important. It says: "Warning!"

Reggie
 Well, open it up.

Sam
 I'm not going to open it. Who knows what's inside?

Reggie
 We'll never find out if you don't open it.

Sam (hides behind Reggie)
 You open it.

Reggie
 I don't want to open your mail!

Sam
 I give you permission, go ahead.

Reggie
 Well...okay

Sam (hides behind box)
 Wait! Okay, now go.

Reggie
 Safari Sam! It's not going to explode!

Sam
 You don't know that.

Reggie (opens envelope)
 Fine, I'll open it. (pauses) BOOM!

Sam (jumps)
 Ah! Don't do that! What's it say?

Reggie
 It says: "Dear Safari Sam, You have two days to submit your medical forms if you want to run in this year's Ranger Runaround Rally Race. Love, Ranger Drosslemeyer."

Sam
 Is that all? Why did he have to send it in a big old envelope marked, "Warning!"

Reggie
 Because he wanted to warn you.

Sam
 I know but, warnings are scary.

Reggie
 No, they're not. Warnings are a good thing. People who love us send us warnings to keep us from getting into trouble. Even God sends warnings to His children.

Sam
 He does?

Reggie
 He sure does. He loves us enough to give us a big warning when we're heading for trouble.

Sam

I think I know what's coming. It's Mail Time! (SFX: "Mail Song" from Blues Clues plays when the mailbox is opened.) This is from the book of Revelation! "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." What churches? What is the Bible talking about?

Reggie

Oh, those words are found in each of the letters to the seven churches. The apostle John had a vision where Jesus told him what to write in letters to seven different churches.

Sam

What did the letters say?

Reggie (pulls out seven letters)

They included encouragements or warnings, and promised rewards in heaven for those who were faithful. Here, why don't I show you? I've got seven envelopes right here.

Sam (takes out index card)

Let's take a look. To the church in Smyrna, He encouraged them to not be afraid of the hard times ahead that they would suffer for their faith. (pins card on left of corkboard)

Reggie (takes out 2nd index card)

And He promised them if they stayed faithful they would get the crown of life as a reward in heaven! (pins card on right of corkboard)

Sam (takes out index card)

That's good news! This one is to the church in Sardis. Jesus warned them to wake up their faith, repent and obey! (pins card to left of corkboard)

Reggie (takes out 2nd index card)

Jesus promised all who repented and obeyed, He would keep their name in His book forever! (pins card to right of corkboard)

Sam

That's great news!

Reggie

It sure is! Let's see what Jesus wrote to the church in Philadelphia. (takes out index card) He told them that they were running out of strength but... (pins card on left of corkboard, takes out 2nd index card) ...if they would stay strong until the end, He would write His new name on them! (pins card on left of corkboard)

Sam

That's great! Who's next? (reads envelope) The church of Ephesus! (takes out index card) Jesus was pleased with what they had done, but now they were starting to put other things first. He warned them to return to the ways they did things when they first started to follow Jesus. (pins card on left of corkboard)

Reggie (takes out 2nd index card and pins on right of corkboard) **Look! Jesus said if they would return to obeying Him they would eat from the tree of life!**

Reggie

Excellent! Who's next?

Sam

The church in Pergamum. (takes out index card) **They were doing good things but believing in false teachings about God!** (pins card on left of corkboard, takes out 2nd card) **Jesus promised if they came back to His teaching, He would give them a stone with a new secret name on it and hidden manna! Is that like the bread that God sent to His people in the desert?** (pins card on right of corkboard)

Reggie

It is! Give us this day our daily bread! Next is the church in Thyatira! (takes out index card) **Jesus encouraged them for their love and good deeds, but warned them about following the false teachings.** (pins card on left of corkboard)

Sam (takes out 2nd index card) **But, Jesus promised that those who stayed away from sin would rule other nations.** (pins card on right of corkboard)

Reggie

Well, here's one last letter. It's to the church in Laodicea.

Sam (takes out index card) **It says, Jesus told them they were lukewarm? I don't know what that means.**

Reggie

Well, Sam, when we first decide to follow Jesus we are so excited that our hearts feel like they are on fire! We want to be with Him and talk about Him all the time. But sometimes, after a while, people cool off a little and begin to put other things first.

Sam

Oh, so Jesus wants us to stay close to Him and if we do... (takes out 2nd index card) **...He invites us to sit with Him on His throne!** (pins card on left of corkboard.) **Say, that reminds me of the letter Orville showed me! Hey campers, let's call Orville? Are you ready?**

Children and Counselors

"Hey Orville, come on down!"
(Orville slides down and crashes through window; egg drops down into fireplace.)

Sam (picks up egg) **Here's the egg with the letter in it!**

Reggie

Open it and read it to us!

Sam

Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in."

Reggie

Jesus knocks at the door of everyone's heart. We can each invite Him to come in and be our Lord forever.

Sam

And anyone who believes in Jesus gets to be close with Him forever here on earth and later in heaven.

Reggie

Right! And did you know that even after we believe in Him, Jesus is knocking on the door to our hearts.

Sam

Why's that?

Reggie

He's there with forgiveness, love warnings, power, and second chances!

Sam (Point to warning column)

Well, when I look at this column of warnings, I feel like they are all things that I have done.

Reggie

That is true. The warnings in the letters to the churches are for us, too! Many of us have suffered hard times and we all disobey God sometimes.

Sam

We may run out of strength and sometimes we don't put Jesus first.

Reggie

And sometimes we believe false teachings or have lukewarm faith. But Jesus loves us enough to warn us and give us another chance! He always stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, remember?

Sam

If we invite Him in, Jesus helps us do things His way.

Reggie (Point to reward column)

And if we are really faithful, look at all the rewards we could get in heaven!

Sam

That is awesome! There's only one thing I don't understand. What did Jesus mean when He said, "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit says..."? Don't we all have ears?

Reggie

We do all have ears. I think our featured creature can help us figure it out! It's Creature Feature time! (SFX: "I Like to Move It, Move It") (VFX: slide reading: Creature Feature) Wild William, give us a clue!

Wild William (VFX: Wild William)

"His legs are thick, his ears are grand, largest animal on land." (VFX: clue slide)

Reggie

"His legs are thick, his ears are grand, largest animal on land."

Sam

I know, I know! It's an elephant!(elephant ears drop in his hands, he puts them on) Look at me! I've got big ears! I'm an elephant! (SFX: elephant trumpeting)

Reggie (elephant trunk reaches out of curtain and grabs him) Help! Help! Mad Elephant on the loose!

Sam (saves Reggie)

Oh no! Down Jumbo! Get back! (trunk backs offstage) Ranger Reggie! Are you all right?

Reggie

Now I'm going to smell like peanuts all day!

Sam

Wow, your screams sure sounded super loud with these ears on!

Reggie

That's it Sam! That's why God picked the elephant. God is showing us that if we listen with super ears and hear His warnings we will always know the right choices to make!

Sam

That's a reward I can live with!

Reggie

Okay Campers, on your feet! Let's sing our Camp Critter song? (SFX: outro)

ALL (Reggie, Sam, children, worship leader, adults)

(Sing Critter Kingdom Song Verse 9)

I spied an elephant overhead.

Here's what that elephant said,

(clap three times)

"Just use your ears,

(clap three times)

God's warning you'll hear!"

I spied an elephant,

who followed a gorilla,

who followed a kitten,

who followed a racehorse,

who followed a dove,

who followed a little lamb,

who followed a serpent,

who followed a meerkat,

who followed a lovebird

and the lovebird hollered,

"Yippee-kigh-yay!"

...at Camp Venture today!

(VFX: lyric slide or poster cue cards:

I spied an elephant overhead;

Here's what that elephant said,

(3 claps) "Just use your ears,

(3 claps) God's warning you'll hear!"

I spied an elephant,

who followed a gorilla,

who followed a kitten,

who followed a racehorse,

who followed a dove,

who followed a little lamb,

who followed a serpent,

who followed a meerkat,

who followed a lovebird

and the lovebird hollered,

"Yippee-kigh-yay!"

...at Camp Venture today!)

Reggie

Now let's have a special time of worship around the campfire– we can listen for Jesus to knock on the door to our hearts!

(SFX: Play music as children settle around the campfire for worship and an invitation to pray a prayer the ABC prayer of salvation available at www.childrensministrywarehouse.net.)