

## Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
<b>Lower Elementary</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> When times are tough, God's love is a solid foundation.</p> <p><b>WATER WEATHER:</b> Kids experiment with sand and water.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Umbrella</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Large (clear) plastic tubs, sand, buckets of water, eyedroppers, 1 cup (¼ L) plastic measuring cups, small wire whips, ice cube trays filled with ice, rulers or measuring tape, copies of Water Weather Observation Page (page 131), large rocks or small bricks, towels; pitcher of water and bowl</p>
<b>Upper Elementary</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> The many layers of God's love help us to form a solid faith.</p> <p><b>ROCK STRATA:</b> Kids study rock strata and consider the layers of God's love in their lives.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Sandpaper, gel pens, wooden block, hammer, hard hat</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Variety of large rocks, index cards, pen or marker, rock hammers and picks, rock identification books, large chart paper and marker, butcher block cutting boards, safety goggles</p>
<b>All Kids</b>		
<p><b>WORKSHOP FOCUS:</b> God's love is a strong foundation for my life.</p> <p><b>THE STRENGTH OF GOD'S LOVE:</b> Kids build with sand and rocks to create a strong foundation.</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bible, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Lego® or Duplo® building blocks</p>	<p><b>SPARK RESOURCES:</b> None</p> <p><b>SUPPLIES:</b> Small children's swimming pool, sandbox sand, river rocks, small bucket of water, large tarps, duct tape, paper and a pen, basket or bucket, white modeling dough, tub with warm soapy water, a towel, digital camera, printer and paper</p>



Visit [www.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.org) for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation's story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.



**Workshop Focus:** When times are tough, God's love is a solid foundation.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids, it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit [www.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.org) to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### House on the Rock Storytelling

Put up the umbrella and hold it as you greet kids at the door. **Welcome, super scientists! Get out your umbrellas because we will be exploring some water weather.**

**Have you ever watched the weather on TV news? What kinds of things do they report?** (*snow, rain, hail, wind, temperature, dawn and dusk, forecast*) **Today, we're going to focus on water weather.**

**The story we will read is called House on the Rock. Let's use our voices and bodies to make some weather sounds to help us read this story.** Form three groups. **This group will be the thunder. How can you use your voice or body to sound like thunder?** Have the group decide how it will make the sound and practice the sound. **This group will be the rain sounds. Start with one drop and then gradually make your rain sound heavier and heavier.** Have the group decide how it will make the sound and practice it. **This group will be the wind, starting like a light breeze and gradually becoming a hurricane wind.** Have the group decide how it will make its sound and practice it. **When I point to your group, you will make your weather sounds. When I hold up my hand, you will stop. Listen carefully and watch me carefully.**

Spark Resources  
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies  
Umbrella

Read House on the Rock in the Spark Story Bible. As you read the text, point to the group with the appropriate weather sound. Suggested points are:

- After “‘Boom!’ echoed the thunder,” page 283 and page 284
- After “heavy raindrops that fell on the roof,” page 283 and page 284
- After “blew against the walls,” page 283 and page 284

**Wow! You made great weather sounds. That weather brought tough times to the people who had built their houses. One house still stood and one house crashed.**

**Why did Jesus use this story to teach?** *(The story provides examples of something that was strong and something that was not strong.)* **God’s love is like the house on the strong rock. The rock was a solid foundation for a house, and God’s love is a solid foundation for our lives that will bring us through tough times like bad weather. How can God’s love help us through tough times?** *(God gives us people to help us in tough times and strength to rebuild our lives.)*

**Great job, Spark scientists! Let’s do some water weather experiments.**

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Water Weather

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**Set Up:** Set up lab stations (3-4 kids will work at one lab station). Each station needs a large plastic tub with 2 inches (5 cm) of sand in the bottom, a bucket of water, an eyedropper, a measuring cup, a wire whip, 4 ice cube trays filled with ice, ruler or measuring tape, a copy of the Water Weather Observation Page, a large rock (or small brick), and a towel.

#### Activity Instructions

**Does anyone like to play with water? Water is 70 percent of the earth’s surface, so when we talk about weather, water is important. Today, we will work in groups of three or four at lab stations to do some experiments with water. Each experiment has directions. Do the experiments in order. When your observation page is full, you may try other experiments with the materials at your lab station. Remember this safety alert: If lots of water is spilled on the floors, they will become slippery. Use the towels at each station to mop up all spills right away.**

Explain the Water Weather Observation Page. **It’s time to experiment! Roll up your sleeves!** Help younger children read the experiment directions. Shepherds can circulate to help kids stay on task. Warn kids a few minutes before cleanup time.

**Okay, it’s time to clean up and talk about our experiments. Leave the tubs with water. Wipe up any spills.** Decide where the whips, ice cubes trays, and other materials should be collected. **Bring your observation page when you come to sit as a large group.**

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Large, clear plastic tubs  
Sand  
Buckets of water  
Eyedroppers  
1 cup (¼ L) plastic measuring cups  
Small wire whips  
Ice cube trays filled with ice, 4 per group  
Rulers or measuring tape  
Water Weather Observation Page (page 131), 1 copy per 3-4 kids  
Large rocks or small bricks  
Towels

**What happened in experiment 1?** (*Water flowed from streams to river. A flood in the streams caused the rivers to flood and the river banks to collapse*). **Does this remind you of the house built on the sand? That house didn't have a good foundation, and the storm brought it down. When houses and people don't have good foundations, they can both fall apart. In Jesus' story, he said that listening to him created a good foundation for people. God is like rock, not sand that washes away.**

**What were your results with experiment 2? How many drops of water do you think it took to bring down the house in our story?** (*too many to count*) **Do you sometimes feel like there are just too many scary things in your life or they are too hard to face alone? What if you know that God is with you, providing a stable foundation?**

**In experiment 3, what did you observe about a whirlpool? Was the sand a strong foundation, or was it easy for a whirlpool to whip it up?**

**In experiment 4, how many inches (cm) did the water level rise when you added the ice cubes? What happens to homes and communities when heavy rains or melting snow cause flooding? Have you ever seen a flood or pictures of a flood?**

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

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Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

**Remember this umbrella? It reminds us of all the weather that has to do with water. What else did we learn about water? Who can share one new thing you learned?** Take as much time as you have to listen to some ideas. **Wow, you learned a lot about water. Water weather can bring tough times to God's people. I wonder how it feels to have your house destroyed by a hurricane, flood, or other water weather.** Expect kids to have stories to share, and share any examples of your congregation helping others or being helped when weather disasters strike. **God's love is a strong foundation when we are going through tough times with water weather or when we are facing other challenges in our lives. God's love is a sure thing we can depend on to help us.** If your community has experienced destructive weather recently, or if your church is supporting people in these situations in other parts of the world, you can find more resources for helping your kids learn about how God's people are a foundation for one another in times of disaster at Lutheran Disaster Response, [www.ldr.org](http://www.ldr.org).

**Let's pray for those people in the world who are having a tough time because of water weather.**

### Spark Resources

Family Pages



### Supplies

Umbrella  
Pitcher of water and a bowl

## Prayer Time

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Pour water as the prayer is read.

**Dear God,**

**Floods, tsunamis, hurricanes, and storms bring tough times to people all over the world. Bless these people. Help them know that you love them. Your love through others is the strong foundation that will bring them through tough times. Help us be part of your strong foundation.**

**Amen.**

**Workshop Focus:** The many layers of God’s love help us to form a solid faith.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids, it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit [www.sparksundayschool.org](http://www.sparksundayschool.org) to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### House on the Rock Storytelling

Wear a hard hat as you greet kids. **Welcome to House on the Rock Science Workshop! Have you ever seen a house being built? I wonder why the builders start with the foundation.** (*because it has to be strong to hold up the rest of the house*)

**Houses are built in layers from the bottom up. There is the foundation and then the floors. Next comes the frame and then the walls. The roof is the last layer. We’re going to read a story about two different houses. I need some people to make building sounds.** Pass out a block and hammer to one person and two pieces of sandpaper to another. **The rest of you will get gel pens so you can circle your favorite words or phrases. Would anyone like to start reading?**

Kids read the verses aloud—five readers can read one verse each. Expect some surprise reactions when building noises are made throughout the reading. **Good job reading and making noises. What were some of the things you marked that you liked in the story?** Affirm all answers. **Is this really a story about houses and building? The people who were listening to Jesus did not have architects**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

Sandpaper  
Gel pens  
Wooden block  
Hammer  
Hard hat

**and construction contractors. They built their own houses. So they knew about building houses and they knew the foundation is very important. When God's love is our foundation, it helps us build a strong faith.**

Kids can put a Something I Like sticker near text that they circled.

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### Rock Strata

**Set Up:** Ask congregation members for donations of a variety of large rocks, and to lend the kids safety goggles. Large rocks may also be available from landscape nurseries or construction sites. Place rocks on a hard surface. (The floor would be best so that tabletops are not ruined. Butcher block cutting boards under the rocks will also help dampen the noise.) Put one hammer or pick and one rock identification book by each large rock. Number the rocks by folding index cards in half, writing a number on each card, and placing one card in front of each rock. On the top of the chart paper, write the title "Rocks." Create a column with the rock numbers down the left side of the paper. In four columns to the right, write these words: "Appearance," "Number of layers (strata)," "Possible name," "Description of pieces" See sample below.

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Variety of large rocks  
Index cards  
Pen or marker  
Rock hammers and picks  
Rock identification books  
Large chart paper and marker  
Butcher block cutting boards  
Safety goggles, 1 per kid

### Rocks

	Appearance	Number of layers (strata)	Possible name	Description of Pieces
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

#### Activity Instructions

Form groups of no more than three kids per rock. Keep safety in mind—require that only one person at each rock hammers at a time and that all kids must wear safety goggles the entire time (even kids with glasses).

**Today's workshop will focus on learning more about rocks. We are going to fill out this chart together. The number of your rock is on the left side. Let's learn some terms.** Point to the words across the top of the chart. **Take a moment just to look at your rock. What words would you use to describe the appearance?**

**Discuss this as a group and send one person up to write some of the words on the chart.**

**Rocks are layered. These layers are called strata. Can you see and count strata on the outside of your rock? You may need to chip away at the rock to count the strata. Send someone up to write the number of strata that you find as a group.**

Demonstrate the proper use of the hammer and pick.

**Next, use the identification books to see if you can find a possible name for the kind of rock you are observing. A group member can add that name to the large chart.**

**And finally, use the hammer or pick to chip away at your rock. What happens to the pieces when they are chipped away? What words describe their shape, color, and composition? Add that information to the chart. Get to work and be sure everyone gets a chance to chip at the rock. Remember, we aren't trying to smash the rock, just chip and pick away to learn new things about it.**

As kids are working on the rocks, encourage discussion in their groups. Emphasize that you will not tolerate any misuse of the tools—absolutely any misuse will result in a kid no longer being able to participate in the workshop.

**Okay, hammers down. Let's read what we have on the chart.** Go through each numbered rock and the four column headings. Emphasize the strata in the rocks.

**I wonder if rocks are stronger with more strata.** Affirm all answers. **God's love comes to us in many layers, just like the rocks are layered. The more layers of God's love we see and understand, the more solid our faith will become. What might some of those layers be?** (*Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, family, church family, Sunday school, church camp, prayer*)

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

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Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

**Today we looked at strata, or layers, in rocks. And we talked about how God's love has many layers in our lives. Our job is to identify the many layers of God's love. By identifying the layers—Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, family, church family, and more—we will build a strong faith.**

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

## Prayer Time

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**We are going to do a layered circle prayer. Let's stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a circle facing inward. We will layer our hands as we speak of life experiences of God's love. When we have all shared, we will raise our hands together and yell, "God's layers of love make my faith solid."**

One kid starts by placing his or her right hand in the middle, palm down, and sharing an experience of a layer of God's love—for example, "God's love is in my family." The next kid puts his or her right hand on top of the other hand, palm down, and shares an experience. Continue until all have shared and all hands are layered.

**God's layers of love make my faith solid!**

**Amen!**

**Workshop Focus:** God's love is a strong foundation for my life.

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## Open the Bible (10 minutes)

### House on the Rock Storytelling

**Set Up:** Begin a building-block structure, with a foundation connected at one peg rather than the two pegs. Make the foundation long and wide. It will be tippy.

#### Activity Instructions

Meet kids at the door. Ask them to add one block to the structure. **Greetings, everyone. As you come in, please add one block to the structure and then sit down in the storytelling area.**

When all kids have arrived and have added a block to the structure, turn their attention to it. **Look at our structure. It seems to be falling down. Does anyone have an idea about the problem with our structure?** Expect that kids will notice that the foundation isn't strong or that the foundation is made with only one peg connected, while blocks added later are connected using more pegs. **So if the foundation isn't strong, the building collapses. To keep the foundation strong, we need to connect in more than one place.**

**Today, we are going to read a story about keeping a strong foundation in our lives. We are going to read from the Spark Bible in groups of three. Each group will have a reader, a listener, and a builder. The builder will build a strong**

#### Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles  
Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers

#### Supplies

Lego® or Duplo® building blocks

**foundation with the blocks.** Form groups of three and assign jobs. The oldest reads from the Spark Bible, and the other kids can look on in either their own Spark Bibles or the Spark Story Bible. Give each group a few blocks. **Begin reading Matthew 7:24-28 on page 1066 of the Spark Bible. Kids using the Spark Story Bible may turn to House on the Rock on page 282.**

Good job, listeners, builders, and readers. **Tell me about the houses.** (*One house was built on sand and one on rock. The house on rock was stronger.*) **Yes, we need our foundation to be strong both in our houses and in our lives. If we have many connections, we can build a strong foundation. God's love is the basis of our strong foundation.** Invite older kids to put a sticker in their Bibles near the text. Younger kids can help them choose a sticker.

## Activate Faith (25 minutes)

### The Strength of God's Love

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**Set Up:** The supplies listed are for 8-10 kids divided into two groups. Double the supplies and set up for more kids. Use the duct tape to tape the large tarps on the floor. Place the small children's swimming pool on one tarp and dump the two bags of sand into it. The small bucket of water goes on this tarp, too. Add just enough additional water to the sand to get it moist. Be aware—setting this up is easy; taking it down is not. If you will need to take this setup down at the end of each workshop, use a hard-sided small pool so it can be dragged outside more easily.

On the second tarp, place the river rocks and the white modeling dough. River rocks have smooth tops and bottoms from the action of the water going over them. They can be purchased at garden nurseries and at craft stores.

Write the words *sand* or *rock* on small pieces of paper, enough for each kid to draw one. Place them in a basket or bucket.

#### Activity Instructions

**We are going to build two structures today. We learned in our opening that building foundations must be strong. Since the story Jesus told involved sand and rock, we will also use sand and rock. I have slips of paper here with either the word *sand* or *rock* written on them. Each of you can take a piece of paper. That will tell you which place to go for building.** As kids choose a slip of paper, send them to the correct tarp.

**This is not a contest for the biggest or the best building. It is about building a strong foundation. Work together to build the strongest foundation you can with your building materials. Each of you has only the sand or the rocks and one item to help. The sand group has water, and the rock group has dough to use to stick the rocks together. We will build for about 10 minutes.** A Shepherd should do all water pouring so that the water does not destroy any building.

#### Spark Resources

None

#### Supplies

Small children's swimming pool (48 inches [120 cm] in diameter)  
Sandbox sand, 2 bags  
River rocks, 20 or more  
Small bucket of water  
Large tarps, 2  
Duct tape  
Paper and a pen  
Basket or bucket  
White modeling dough  
Tub with warm soapy water  
Towel  
Digital camera  
Printer and paper

After about 10-15 minutes, have each group stop and wash hands. Meet in the storytelling area. Take a picture of each of the buildings.

**Who wants to tell us about your group's building project?** Be sure to get a report from each group. **Was it difficult or easy to build a strong foundation with sand?** (*not too hard*) **Most of us have some experience with sand castles. Was it difficult or easy to build a foundation of rocks?** (*This is a little harder. It took more time. We didn't know how to do it.*) **The foundation of rock is harder to build, but we learned in our story that it lasts longer. Remember the blocks from our opening activity? We found out that the connections are important. God's love brings us lots of good connections. Where do we find those good connections to God's love?** (*families, friends, school, church, scouts, community*) **God's love comes to us in many ways and builds a strong foundation for our lives.**

After the workshop, print the pictures and create a bulletin board or display with all the workshop's pictures. Label the display with these words: "God's love is a strong foundation for our lives."

## Send (5 minutes)

### Wrap Up

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Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

**We learned today that through many connections, God's love gives our lives a strong foundation. Here is a rock and a grain of sand for each of you to hold during our prayer. You can take the rock home if you'd like.**

#### Spark Resources

Family Pages



#### Supplies

- 1 rock per kid (from Activate Faith activity)
- 1 grain of sand per kid (from Activate Faith activity)

### Prayer Time

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Each kid holds his or her rock and grain of sand as you pray.

**Dear God,**

**Thank you for bringing us love in so many ways. We find your love in our family connections, our schools, our friends, and in the world you created. Help us build a strong foundation for our lives through love.**

**Amen.**



# Water Weather Observation Page



Safety Alert: Wet floors = slippery floors. Wipe up spills!



## Experiment 1

Wet the sand. Build a river with several streams branching out of it. Pour 1 cup ( $\frac{1}{4}$  L) of water into the streams. What did you observe?

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How do the river and streams work together to move water? 

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Add another 4 cups (about a liter) of water to the streams. What happens if big rains dump tons of water in the streams?

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## Experiment 2

Fill the measuring cup one drop at a time. How many drops of water does it take to fill a cup? \_\_\_\_\_

How many drops of water do you think it takes to fill a river? \_\_\_\_\_



## Experiment 3

Fill the tub with 6 inches (15 cm) of water. The sand will remain on the bottom. Use the wire whip to create a whirlpool. What do you think happens in the ocean if a big whirlpool happens?

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Can you think of any wind weather that is like a big whirlpool?

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## Experiment 4

Measure the water level on the side of the tub. Add all the ice cubes at once. What happens to the water level?

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How many more inches (cm) would the water level have to rise for the tub to flood? \_\_\_\_\_

 Try some of your own experiments with the additional materials.

