



I AM...Because We Are
a **Varick's Children** lesson on Being Original

I AM...BECAUSE WE ARE

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**developed by the
A.M.E. Zion Church Christian Education Department
Varick's Children Ministry**

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Introduction to VC Christian Camps

Christian educators prepare children for living with God right now; not just in the future.

Varick's Children (VC) Christian Camps are 3-day workshops designed to train Zion's children in four key areas of learning and development – faith formation, scholastic engagement, leadership and service. Over the course of the quadrennial, participants in VC Christian Camps are taught how God made them for a specific purpose; how they can unbox their minds to think in big and creative ways; how they can use their gifts to serve the community; and how they can reach their potential.

Student curriculum and teacher resources for VC Christian Camps are distributed in December for the Christian Education Winter Meeting and in June for Children's Day. *I AM...Because We Are* is a hands-on learning experience based on 1 Peter 2:1-3, 9.

Children's Day is traditionally observed the second Sunday in June. This guide offers suggestions for activities to make Children's Day weekend an engaging time for participants and teachers. If you are not able to implement all activities during Children's Day weekend, don't worry, the activities can be done at any time throughout the year.

Day 1: VC Friday Night Fellowship

What God has intended for you goes far beyond anything you can imagine. (Oprah Winfrey)

Do you know how a potter forms a piece of art from a lump of clay? The potter starts with a plan of what the clay will be and then shapes it into a masterpiece. God is our potter. He has plans for each of us (Jeremiah 29:11). Tonight is all about showing Varick's Children how God made them the way they are on purpose.

Suggested time for this session: 120 minutes

Suggested activities:

1. Give students a copy of the lesson found on page 5 of this guide.

Teacher Notes: *Detailed instructions for lesson activities are in the appendix. Encourage children to look up words they do not know in the lesson. This is a strategy for them to build their vocabulary. They can conduct searches on Google or Dictionary.com with their smart phones or tablets.*

The lessons are designed for children ages 8 to 12. There are alternative activities for younger children in the appendix of this guide.

2. View the YouTube video on Juneteenth (<https://youtu.be/2UqqkSWfZgc>). Ask students the review questions.

Teacher Notes: *Review questions and answers are in the appendix of this guide.*

3. Create a skit that will be presented during the Scripture Lesson for the VC Worship Service.

Teacher Notes: *Assign participants to be readers for the scripture in the appendix of this guide. Then ask students to come up with a scenario where children might feel like they can't be themselves because of the crowd that is around them. Ad lib the lines for the scene and incorporate the scripture to end the skit.*

4. Use the Exhibit Design Worksheet to plan creatives pieces for the museum project.

Teacher Notes: *Themes for the museum project are below. Students should select 2-3 themes. They can use the ideas in the appendix of this guide or come up with their own ideas. The art projects will be made on Day 2. Each project will most likely take 30-60 minutes to create.*

Imagine: This exhibit will display a gallery wall of original paintings.

Create: This exhibit will display African games, instruments and masks.

Dream: This exhibit will display original diorama projects of future city plans

Invent: This exhibit will display original sculptures made from recycled materials

Inspire: This exhibit will display original posters and digital media (photos/videos) with motivational messages

Day 2: VC Super Saturday

Art is the ability to tell the truth, especially about oneself. (Richard Pryor)

Revolutions must start with individuals. Jesus was a revolutionary. Today is all about giving participants the opportunity to express their ideas and thoughts about the world around them through art.

Suggested time for this session: 180 minutes

Suggested activities:

1. Set up five work stations (one station for each art theme).

Teacher Notes: *Make sure you have adequate supplies for each station. The necessary materials are listed below.*

Station 1 (Imagine) – Paint, paint brushes small bowls of water, paper towels, thick paper or art canvases, pencils, copies of church window template for younger children on cardstock paper

Station 2 (Create) – Empty egg cartons, empty oatmeal containers, 16 oz. paper cups, paint, paint brushes, modeling clay, small bowls of papier mache paste, newspaper strips, punching balloons, rubber bands, craft glue, white cotton fabric, crayons, markers, craft sticks, copies of African mask template on cardstock paper, scissors

Station 3 (Dream) – Shoe boxes, construction paper, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, glue, markers, crayons, yarn, craft sticks, scissors

Station 4 (Invent) – Old magazines, old newspapers, old church bulletins, old CDs, hangers from dry cleaners, empty cereal boxes, empty coffee cans, paper towel or toilet paper rolls, craft glue, masking tape, scissors

Station 5 (Inspire) – Photo paper, 2-3 laptops, digital camera (can be on smart phone or tablet), printer, glue or tape

2. Take a fitness break.

Teacher Notes: *Allow students to play outside for the last 30 minutes of the session. You can organize a game of kickball or relay races if you prefer more structured play time.*

Day 3: VC Worship Service

Train a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old he will not turn away from it. (Proverbs 22:6)

Children are full of energy so Children's Day will be a lively experience for them to learn traditions of A.M.E. Zion worship and to share contemporary expressions of praise.

Suggested time for service: 60 minutes

Suggested guidance for order of worship:

1. Children should wear red or white tops and khaki bottoms.
2. Assign specific children to lead the Responsive Litany, Affirmation of Faith, Prayer and Acknowledgement of Visitors. Scripture Lesson will be done as a group.
3. Select a 5th or 6th grader to write and deliver the Morning Message. The theme of the message should be "#Free2BMe."
4. Teach all participants the VC Theme Song, "Jesus Loves Me."

Teacher Notes: Consider teaching sign language for the chorus of the song.

5. Creative expressions can be a choir selection, instrumental selection, liturgical dance, step, spoken word or some other type of youthful praise "Because of Who You Are" by Vicki Yohe is a good selection for the theme.
6. Lead the congregation in singing the CED Benediction if you know the tune.

I AM

Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay. You are the potter. Your hands made all of us. (Isaiah 64:8)

Have you ever wished you could change something about your physical appearance? If so, why? God is Elohim (El-o-HEEM), the super Creator. He selected the color of your skin, the color of your eyes, the shape of your nose and the size of your ears. God also determined how tall you would be and the speed at which your body would naturally burn calories. The best part is, God gave you some extra special talents and abilities, too.

God would not take the time to create a nobody. You are special because God made you the way you are on purpose. Anytime you reject any part of yourself, you are rejecting God's wisdom in creating you. We are often concerned about how we look on the outside, but what's more important is how we look on the inside. We must have healthy bodies, pure hearts, nice attitudes and kind ways.

We Are

There is one body. But it has many parts. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it. If one part is honored, every part shares in its joy. You are the body of Christ. Each one of you is a part of it. (1 Corinthians 12: 12a, 26-27)

The African proverb, "I am because we are," describes the unity between people. You are who you are because of every important person in your life. The things you learn from your family, teachers and church shape you into the masterpiece God designed you to be.

It is important to know your heritage. African Americans, like people in other cultures, commemorate historical events that have significant meaning in their culture. This month African Americans are celebrating Juneteenth, the oldest known holiday that commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. Looking back at our struggles helps us to appreciate our progress.

You play an important part in the body of Christ. If you don't make *your* unique contribution, it won't be made. You can figure out your purpose in this world by thinking of something you like to do and are good at doing. God deserves your best effort and expects you to make the most of the gifts he has given you. Do your best to represent him well.

#Free2BMe

Don't pretend to be something you are not. Stop wanting what others have. ...God chose you to be his people. You are royal priests. You are a holy nation. You are a people who belong to God. ...He brought you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2: 1b,9)

When you do not have a good understanding of who God made you to be, you may try to be like someone else. Comparing yourself to others can make you feel like you do not fit in if you cannot do the things they can do. God does not want us to waste our energy trying to be like others. He made us to stand out. Being different or trying something new can be scary. But God's Spirit empowers us. Think of how good a cool drink feels when it satisfies your thirst. That is the same kind of comfort we can get from God when we choose to use the strength he gave us to face our fears.

Things like what you think about, the decisions you make, the books you read, the music you like and the way you dress can make you stand out from the crowd. You can only bring God pleasure by being you. God designed each of us uniquely so there would be no duplication in the world. He intentionally made some people athletic, some people analytical and some people artistic. All abilities bring a smile to God's face.

We are because God is. Never forget that God is Elohim. He is bigger than the world. He is by your side. He is good. He is powerful. He is love. God created the universe so none of your dreams will be too big for him to handle. Use your creativity and imagination to inspire others. Let your light shine and make God happy. Be yourself. There is only one you.

Activities

1. Play "I Am."
2. Play "The Human Knot."
3. Watch the YouTube video on Juneteenth and test your knowledge.
4. Create a skit that will be presented during the Scripture Lesson for the VC Worship Service.
5. Select two themes for your museum exhibits. Use the Exhibit Design Worksheet to plan your project.

APPENDIX

Instructions for Lesson Activities

I Am

Teacher Note: This game is an ice breaker activity. It is best to play it before you begin teaching the first lesson, "I Am." The goal is to affirm gifts and talents.

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Have each participant introduce himself or herself with an "I am" statement. (Examples, "I am athletic". "I am a singer." "I am a good reader.")
3. Ensure each participant takes a turn. Encourage students to say, "I am a Christian" if they cannot think of anything else.

The Human Knot

Teacher Note: It is best to play this game before you begin teaching the second lesson, "We Are." The goal is to show human connectedness.

1. Gather the participants into a circle.
2. Each child should stretch out one hand to grab the hand of a child across from him or her and then use the other hand to join to someone else in the circle.
3. Participants must try to untangle the circle without releasing hands.

Juneteenth Review Questions

Teacher Note: Ask participants the following questions after they view the video on YouTube. The answers are in italics.

1. **What special observance is on June 19?**

Juneteenth

2. **How did slavery end?**

President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862.

3. **When did the Emancipation Proclamation go into effect?**

January 1, 1863

4. **Did the Confederates release their slaves in 1863?**

No

5. **On what day did the slaves in Galveston, Texas learn they were free after the Union army became in charge?**

June 19, 1865

6. **Why do you think this is an important day for African Americans to remember?**

Answers will vary

Activities for Younger Children

Let Me Introduce Myself

Teacher Note: This game is a warm up activity. The goal is to affirm gifts and talents.

1. Sit in a circle.
2. Have each participant introduce himself or herself by stating their name and an affirmation statement. (Examples, "My name is Michelle and I am a dancer". "My name is David and I like music.")
3. Ensure each participant takes a turn. Encourage students to say, "I am a Christian" if they cannot think of anything else.

African Proverb

Teacher Note: You will need approximately 15 sheets of 8.5x11 paper to write each letter in the African proverb below.

"I AM BECAUSE WE ARE"

1. Use call-and-response to teach the proverb to participants.
2. Scramble the letters on the floor or some other large work space.
3. Tell the students to work together to put the letters in the right order.
4. Time how long it takes. You can play the game multiple times to see if the participants can come up with better ways to work together to achieve a faster time.

Anansi and the Sky Kingdom

Teacher Note: Talk to the students about African storytelling. View this Anansi story on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/4RHQYctGYkU>. Ask participants the following questions after they view the video. The answers are in italics.

1. **Why did the animals laugh at Anansi?**

They thought Anansi was too small to reach the sky kingdom

2. **How did Anansi respond?**

He said, My friends and I can do anything if we work together.

3. **Who were Anansi's friends?**

Ant and fly

4. **How many tests did Anansi, Ant and Fly have to complete?**

Three

5. **Did they complete all the tests?**

Yes

6. **What did you learn from this story?**

Answers will vary

Instructions for Museum Exhibits

Teacher Note: Use the Exhibit Design Worksheet as a label to show the name of the artist, and the title and description of the art project.

Make a Gallery Wall

Materials needed: Paint, paint brushes, small bowls of water, paper towels, thick paper or art canvases, pencils, copies of church window template on cardstock paper for younger children

1. Lightly sketch a drawing on the paper or canvas, if applicable.
2. Paint the sketch or church window template.
3. Lay out the painted pictures on a table. The arrangement does not have to be in a straight line.

Make African Games, Instruments and Masks

Materials needed: For Mancala – Empty egg carton, modeling clay, paint, paint brushes, masking tape; For African Drum – Empty oatmeal container or two 16 oz. paper cups, flour and water for papier mache paste, newspaper strips, white sticker paper, punching balloon or cotton fabric, rubber band, paint, paint brushes, craft glue, scissors; For African Mask – Copies of African mask template on cardstock paper; markers, crayons, craft sticks, craft glue

Mancala Game

1. Research how mancala is played and write the explanation in the project description on the Exhibit Design Worksheet.
2. Cut the bottom part of the egg carton with the cups from the top part of the egg carton.
3. Cut two rectangular pieces from the top part of the egg carton and tape them to the short sides of the bottom part of the egg carton.
4. Paint the mancala board.
5. Make playing pieces out of modeling clay.

African Drum for Younger Children

1. Trace the circle of the empty oatmeal container on the cotton fabric.
2. Add two inches around the circle and then cut out the larger circle. This will be the drum head.
3. Cover the empty oatmeal container with white sticker paper. This will be the drum body.
4. Decorate the drum body with paint.
5. Apply craft glue around the edge of the cotton fabric circle and around the top edge of the drum body.
6. Place the cotton fabric over the top of the drum, pressing the glued areas together.
7. Place a rubber band around the top edge of the drum body to hold the fabric in place until it dries.
8. Paint the drum head with a coat of craft glue so it will stiffen when the glue dries.

African Drum for Older Children

1. Mix one cup of flour with two cups of water to make papier mache paste into a small bowl.
2. Cut the bottom out of the paper cups.
3. Tape the bottoms of the cups together.
4. Dip newspaper strips into the papier mache and use them to cover the outside of the paper cups. You don't need to soak the strip to make it stick to the cup. The less paste you use, the faster the cups will dry. This will be the drum body.
5. When the cups dry, decorate the drum body with paint.
6. While the paint is drying choose a punching balloon and cut a circular piece large enough to cover the top of the drum. This will be the drum head.
7. Stretch the balloon over the top of the drum and place a rubber band around it to hold the balloon in place.

African Mask

1. Use markers or crayons to color the mask.
2. Cut out the mask, including holes for the eyes.
3. Glue the back of the chin of the mask to the top of the craft stick.

Diorama

Materials needed: Shoe boxes, construction paper, tissue paper, pipe cleaners, glue, markers, crayons, yarn, craft sticks, scissors

1. Stand the shoe box on its long side as the base for the diorama.
2. Use the materials to design a new playground, school, community garden or city block you would like to see in the future.

Inventions

Materials needed: Old magazines, old newspapers, old church bulletins, old CDs, hangers from dry cleaners, empty cereal boxes, empty coffee cans, paper towel or toilet paper rolls, craft glue, masking tape, scissors

Use the recycled materials to make a product of your choice. (Examples: bridge, car, jewelry, clothes, shoes, toys, furniture)

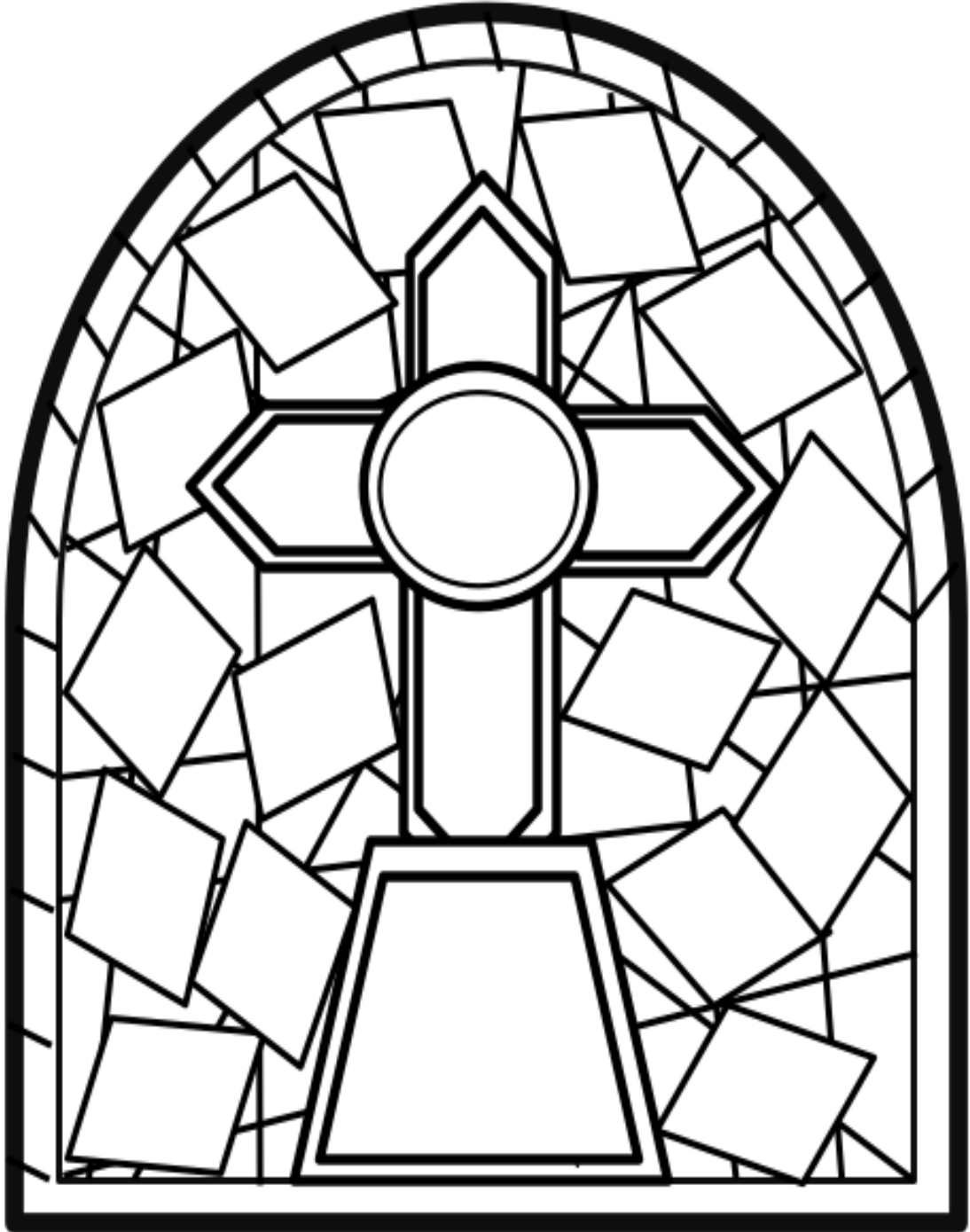
Posters and Digital Media

Materials needed: Photo paper, 2-3 laptops, digital camera (can be on smart phone or tablet), printer, glue or tape.

Create posters or video messages that convince children to be themselves. Include the hashtag #Free2BMe.

Church Window Template

(<http://art-coloring-pages.com/coloring/stained-glass-windows-to-colour.html>)



African Mask Template
(<http://learncreatelove.com/8997>)



Exhibit Design Worksheet

Artist Name: _____

Exhibit Theme: _____

Art Project Name:

Art Project Description:

1 Peter 2: 1-3, 9a (NirV)

Reader 1: Get rid of every kind of evil. Stop telling lies.

Reader 2: Don't pretend to be something you are not.

Reader 3: Stop wanting what others have.

Reader 4: Don't speak against each other.

Reader 5: Like babies that were just born, you should long for the pure milk of God's word.

Reader 6: It will help you grow up as believers.

Reader 7: You can do it now that you have tasted how good the Lord is.

Reader 8: God chose you to be his people.

Reader 9: You are royal priests.

Reader 10: You are a HOLY nation.

Reader 11: You are a people who belong to God.

About the Founder of VARICK'S CHILDREN

Helen C. Scott-Carter, Ph.D. was a teacher in DC Public schools for more than 34 years and an administrator for six years. She was appointed as Director of Children's Ministry for the A.M.E. Zion Church Christian Education Department in 1994 and served in that position until 2012. Under her leadership, Zion's children's ministry became a renewed entity in the Christian Education Department and a new age group at the Winter Meeting. She submitted a resolution to the General Conference in 2004 proposing VARICK'S CHILDREN as the name of Zion's Children's Ministry. Dr. Carter is currently a member of John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church in Washington, DC where she has been a member since she was 11 years old.

About the Co-Directors of VARICK'S CHILDREN

Ms. Nora McNeill and Rev. Dr. Michelle Searles were appointed Co-Directors of Varick's Children Ministry for the A.M.E. Zion Church Christian Education Department in 2012. Ms. McNeill is a Conference Director in the Eastern North Carolina Episcopal District. Dr. Searles is an associate minister in the Mid Atlantic Episcopal District. They both worked with Dr. Carter during her tenure and are continuing her legacy of love for Zion's youngest members. Under their direction, Zion's children are being trained in four key areas of learning and development – faith formation, scholastic engagement, leadership and service.

Children's Day 2017



I AM...Because We Are
a **Varick's Children** lesson on Being Original

Call to Celebration (in unison)

This is the Lord's day.
This is the Lord's house.
We are the Lord's children.
Let the praise begin!

Opening Hymn

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love"

Invocation (in unison)

Lord God, we need your presence to set the atmosphere for our service today. Abide with us Holy Spirit. Let all that we do be pleasing in your sight. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Choral Response

"He is Lord"

VC Theme Song

"Jesus Loves Me"

Responsive Litany

Leader: Jesus wants us to DO what he taught;

People: Not just keep it in our heads or talk about it.

Leader: Even a child is known by his or her actions;

People: So do what is pure and right.

Leader: Our bodies are temples of God.

People: Remember to keep them healthy and holy.

Leader: Train up children in the way they should go.

People: So when they are old they will not turn away from it.

Gloria Patri /Affirmation of Faith**Scripture Lesson**

1 Peter 2:1-3, 9a

Prayer Hymn

"Sweet Hour of Prayer"

Morning Prayer/Prayer Response**Children's Moment**

Creative Expressions

Announcements/Acknowledgement of Visitors**Offering/Offertory****Song of Preparation**

Children's Choir

Morning Message**Invitation to Christian Discipleship****CED Benediction**

Every member a Christian (every member a Christian)

Every Christian a worker (every Christian a worker)

Every worker trained (every worker trained)

That need not be ashamed (that need not be ashamed)

Oh, this we ask in

Jesus' name

Amen (Amen)

Amen (Amen)

A-men.