

BELONGING OPENING SESSION | DAY 5



Key Question	How do I belong?
Life Application	I can create spaces of belonging by seeing others the way God sees them.
Bottom Line	I am created to belong and help others feel the same.
Basic Truth	I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

DAY 5 | With Jesus, you always belong

Are you a friend who helps others feel like they belong?

Supplies:

- Vesper's Playbill and a giant pencil
- Her roll of paper that has every Camper and Crew Leaders' name on it
- Video: zoomed in view of Campers' names on Vesper's roll of paper
- Clothes for Jesus, Zacchaeus, and crowd people
- Tree cardboard with a ladder behind it (already on stage for Campers to see when they walk in)
- Quilt for VESPER
- Vesper Good Samaritan video cued and ready

Host: Good morning VISTO! (Hold out V-shaped fingers. Wait for a response from the Campers)

Today's the day! Showcase Day! (jazz hands) I am so happy you are here today.

This week of camp has been amazing!

Vesper runs onstage with their Playbill, a giant pencil, a roll of camper names, and a quilt

VESPER: Hi, everyone! (Let Campers say, Hi, Vesper!)

Sets quilt and roll of Camper names down on the stage.

Host: Hi Vesper.

VESPER: I got to tell the story of the Good Samaritan to both my parents after doing the chores that I was talking about yesterday! *Vesper waves their Playbill in the air

Host: Wow! Did you write their names down in your Playbill? Let me see.

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Host peeks at Vesper's Playbill and whispers

Do you think the Campers had a chance to tell their families the story?

VESPER: (whispering) Let's ask them!

Host: Raise your hand if you got a chance to tell someone at home the story of the Good Samaritan!

*Applaud those who were able to complete the Take Action

VESPER: I think it was on their wristbands for last night, but can I show everyone my retelling of the Good Samaritan?

Host: Sure, Vesper. Let's play it for everyone.

Play Vesper's Good Samaritan video

Host:
Amazing! Everyone, give yourselves a pat on the back in celebration of doing your Take Action. (Make arm clapping motion for Take Action)

VESPER: Guess what else I brought with me, _Host's name_!

Host: I'm not sure. What do you have?

VESPER: Autographs! Autographs! (jumping up and down) There are some VERY SPECIAL people who have signed my roll of paper. I have (# of signatures) of people who all belong here at VISTO. Want to see them?

Host: Oh, yes! I do!

Vesper slowly unrolls her paper to show the names to the Host.

Cue video of Campers' names

VESPER: Isn't that amazing! What a special group of people here at VISTO this week! And guess what? I'm planning to use my costume-making skills to make a quilt of all the names together, kind of like this quilt!

Host: That's a great idea, Vesper! What a great way to show that we all belong together!

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Call & Response **WE ARE KNOWN, HEAR OUR SONG. ALL TOGETHER, WE BELONG!**

Host: Hasn't it been pretty awesome learning about BELONGING and how you belong in your family and with great friends?

You belong when you welcome others in and when you care for others in selfless ways. Who feels like they belong?! (Host raises their hand to encourage Campers to raise theirs.)

VESPER: I belong! I love it here at VISTO! But now it's time for me to go. Bye, everyone!

Vesper exits.

Host: Bye, Vesper! Campers, listen closely. Here's what I want you to always remember. (Host leans forward as if about to tell a secret.)

Maybe you join a new club or sports team and know no one. Perhaps when you arrived here on Monday, you knew no one. It takes courage and initiative to say, "Hi" and to meet people, but you might meet your next best friend.

Remember that you belong in your family and with great friends. You belong when you welcome others in and when you care for others in selfless ways.

Bible Story – Zacchaeus - Luke 19:1-10

Cue Bible Story Time SFX

Characters:

- Jesus
- Zacchaeus
- Crowd of 3-4 people

Host: Now, I always loved a story from the Bible of a man who felt like he didn't belong. When I feel like I don't belong, I think of this story. (Host thumbs through Bible to Luke 19.)

He wanted so much to belong that he climbed a tree! Who has climbed a tree before?

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(Host holds up their Bible) What is the Bible? The Bible is...(Wait for the Campers to shout) TRUTH!

Narrator: One day, as Jesus was traveling through a town called Jericho, a crowd of people followed Him.

Character Jesus and Crowd walk in from behind the Campers and Jesus says to the Campers as if they are the people in Jericho.

Jesus: Hey, everybody! Jericho is a nice town. You are nice people.

Narrator: A rich man named Zacchaeus wanted to meet this Jesus. So when Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming through town, he thought...

Zacchaeus: Maybe today is the day I can meet Jesus.

Narrator: Now, I already told you that Zacchaeus was rich. What I haven't told you is that he is a tax collector. No one liked tax collectors because they took money from the people.

Zacchaeus was also short. So, when the crowd surrounded Jesus, he found it really hard to see Jesus. He stood on his tiptoes and stretched to be as tall as he could, but it wasn't tall enough.

Zacchaeus stretches and stands on his tip toes while looking off into the distance for someone as the Narrator says this.

Zacchaeus: I know! I will climb that sycamore tree. Points to cardboard tree. That will make me tall enough to see Jesus.

Jesus and His crowd of 3-4 followers finish walking down the aisle among the Campers and up on the stage.

Narrator: So Zacchaeus climbed the tree and sure enough, Jesus came walking down the path toward Zacchaeus. When he got to the tree, he stopped, looked up, and said...

Jesus: Zacchaeus, hurry up! Come down from that tree. I want to come to your house today.

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Zacchaeus: To my house? Puts hand on his chest and looks around in surprise.
Be right down!

Narrator: Can you imagine how surprised and excited Zacchaeus felt? Jesus was coming to his house!

Jesus and Zacchaeus do a handshake.

Narrator: Now the crowd around Jesus began to grumble.

Crowd: Zacchaeus! Jesus is going to Zacchaeus' house?! What's He thinking? That rich, short, tax collector?! He's just takes all my money for taxes!

Narrator: Jesus cared for and welcomed everyone. He didn't send anyone away, even if other people thought they didn't belong. Jesus is the best example for welcoming others in and helping them feel like they belong. I want you to know today that with Jesus, you always belong.

Host: And we know this story is true because the BIBLE IS....

I love this story about Zacchaeus. Sometimes we might feel like Zacchaeus did; sometimes other people don't welcome us in, and we don't feel like we belong. But Jesus welcomed Zaccheaus in, no matter what he did or what other people thought about him! This story helps us to remember that with Jesus, we always belong. Jesus already loves us so much, and he wants to get to know us!

And this story also reminds us to be someone who welcomes others in and makes them feel like they belong, instead of being like the crowd that didn't think Zacchaeus belonged with them. We want to be like Jesus.

I want to know: Are you the kind of friend who helps others feel like they belong by how you care, encourage, smile at them, and welcome them in? Or do you sometimes ignore, or not say hello because you don't feel like it? Will you be a friend like Jesus, making everyone feel like they belong?

This might be our last day of VISTO this week, but I encourage every one of you campers to look for selfless ways throughout the day to be kind, helping, encouraging, so that everyone feels like they belong. Even after we leave camp, I encourage you all to be friends like Jesus, welcoming everyone in and helping everyone to belong.

Call & Response **WE ARE KNOWN, HEAR OUR SONG.**
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We don't have to try to be like Jesus on our own. Through prayer, we can ask God for help welcoming others, acting selflessly, and making others feel like they belong.

Let's pray right now for that, and for an awesome VISTO Showcase day!

Dear God, thank you so much for being with us all this week as we learned about belonging. We've learned that we belong with our families, great friends, and that we belong when we welcome others in and do selfless things for others. Thank you that You love us and that we belong with You, no matter what. Help us to have an awesome Showcase day, showing our family and friends what we've learned this week. And help us to be friends like Jesus, who make everyone feel like they belong. Thank you, God! Amen.