



Totally Catholic Preschool

Crew Leader Guide



Our Sunday Visitor

vbs.osv.com

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What's a Crew Leader for Preschoolers?

If you've been asked to be a Crew Leader for preschoolers, you've met two important qualifications: You love the Lord, and you love children.

During Kingdom Rock Totally Catholic VBS, you'll visit different activities with a group of three to five children. *You're not in charge of preparing or teaching activities; your role is to love, encourage, and enjoy the children in your Crew.* The following guidelines will help you be the most awesome Crew Leader.

A Crew Leader for preschoolers is...

- ▶ a friend and helper,
- ▶ someone who helps children complete activities,
- ▶ someone who gets down on the floor to interact with children,
- ▶ someone who encourages kids, and
- ▶ someone who supports Pip's Totally Catholic Preschool Palace staff.



Use these helpful tips:

- ▶ Learn the names of the children in your Crew, and call children by name often.
- ▶ Help children work at their own pace. You'll have 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds in your Crew. You'll probably notice big differences in motor skills (such as cutting and coloring) between older and younger children. Encourage 5-year-olds to help younger children when possible.
- ▶ Look into preschoolers' eyes when you speak to them. You may need to kneel or sit on the floor to do this.
- ▶ Empower children by offering them choices. Ask, "Would you like to make a craft or play with blocks?" Don't ask "What do you want to do?" or children may decide they want to do activities that are unavailable or inappropriate.



Here's What You'll Do!

- ▶ **Arrive at least 10 minutes early each day.** Report to Pip's Totally Catholic Preschool Palace on Day 1 and the Totally Catholic Sing & Play Rock area on Days 2 through 5, and be ready to greet children who arrive early. Your welcoming presence will bring smiles to anxious faces! (Besides, the Preschool Palace Director may have some special instructions for you.)
- ▶ **Greet each child by name and with a warm smile.** Help children put on their name badges each day.
- ▶ **Keep track of your Crew members' Pip's Totally Catholic Bible Books.** Put these in a Crew bag, and keep the bag in a convenient place in your classroom or other designated space at the end of the day.
- ▶ **Keep track of your Crew members' Bible Memory Buddies.** Every day, children receive an adorable Bible Memory Buddy to wear on a Safe-Keeper Buddy Chain during VBS. At the end of each day, have preschoolers leave their Buddies with you. (Keep them in a separate zipper sandwich bag for each child to keep the Buddies organized and tangle-free.) At the end of the week, kids get to take their Buddies home.
- ▶ **Sit with the children in your Crew during group activities.** Keep your Crew members together, and help them participate in the activities at Totally Catholic Sing & Play Rock, Totally Catholic King's Kitchen, and Totally Catholic Fanfare Finale!
- ▶ **Help children think about where they might see God.** Talk about how fun it is to see the amazing things God has made or the way God shows his love to us.
- ▶ **Accompany children to Preschool Totally Catholic Bible Adventures, Totally Catholic Games, Totally Catholic Chadder's Theater, and Totally Catholic Craft & Play.** If necessary, read the instructions at each station, and help children complete the activities. Distribute supplies as needed.
- ▶ **Repeat the daily Bible Point often.** The more children hear or say the Bible Point, the more likely they are to remember it and apply it to their lives.
- ▶ **Always check to make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room!** Be sure children hold hands or a rope (called a Mouse Tail) as you rotate between stations. Never grab, pinch, or pull children as you travel. And remember to use kind, gentle, positive words. If a child lags behind, remind him or her to stay with the Crew. You may want to walk behind your Crew so you can keep all the children in view and avoid traveling too fast.
- ▶ **Report any potential discipline problems to the Preschool Director.** He or she will help you handle problems appropriately.
- ▶ **Help children collect their Bible Activity Pages, Sciency-Fun Gizmos, People of Faith cards, and crafts after Totally Catholic Fanfare Finale.** Children will take these home at the end of each day.
- ▶ **Collect children's name badges after each day's Kingdom Rock.** Keep these in your Crew bag until the end of the week. (These can go in the zipper bags with the Buddies. No need to label the bags—the names on the badges will be visible!)
- ▶ **Release children only to a designated parent or caregiver.** If an unfamiliar adult comes to pick up a child, refer the adult to the Preschool Director.
- ▶ **Assist the Preschool Director with cleanup and preparation for your next meeting.**

Kingdom Crews Are Cool!

Kingdom Crews are small groups of preschoolers who participate together at Kingdom Rock each day. Each Crew consists of up to five children and one adult or teenage Crew Leader. With one leader shepherding five children, you can be sure your preschoolers will get lots of attention, and discipline issues will decrease. Use the developmental information below to guide you as you work with preschoolers at Kingdom Rock.



We're 3 years old. We've just learned how to play together, and we're still learning how to share and take turns. It may be a little hard for us to change from one activity to the next, so give us plenty of warning ahead of time.

We're generally happy and sometimes even silly, but we may be a little shy about trying new things. We enjoy playing games that involve moving and jumping around, but we may tire more quickly than our older playmates.

We'll probably need a little help to complete some of the activities, especially those that involve squeezing glue bottles or cutting with scissors.



We're 4 years old. We're full of imagination and excitement. We love to use our imaginations in make-believe play and art activities. We like to use loud voices and big movements. You may need to remind us to play quietly at Pip's Preschool Palace. We enjoy listening to Bible stories and answering interesting questions such as "What do you think it would be like to live in a castle?"

We're 5 years old. We love to help our Crew Leaders and our other leaders. If you notice us helping, please tell us thank you.

We're proud of the things we can do, but we're also sensitive. Other children may hurt our feelings by blurting out reactions to things we do. We're improving in our coordination. We can cut with scissors and color between the lines. We're also pretty good at throwing and catching balls.



OUR CATHOLIC VIEW

David writes about God's love.

Read Psalm 23

With This in Mind...

- ❖ This is a song of trust; David trusted in God, and the sheep relied on David to care for them. In Old Testament times, God was often portrayed as the good shepherd.
- ❖ While we may think of a rod as a long, narrow walking stick, a rod used during Old Testament times was more like a club that shepherds wore at their waist. A shepherd also carried a staff—like a walking stick—and used it to guide and control the sheep.
- ❖ Shepherds usually had to keep their sheep on the move in order to find lush green pastures that offered plenty of grass. The verb meaning “to lie down” used in the ancient text was mainly used in reference to sheep and small cattle.
- ❖ It was customary during these times for a gracious, generous host to pour fragrant oil on his guest's forehead as a sign of honor.



Bible Point: God's love helps us stand strong.

Why It Matters...

Kids are concrete thinkers, which may make the idea of *relationship* with our unseen God hard to understand. But God desires a relationship with all of us! Children do realize that relationships with others—the love of their family and friends—are necessary for their happiness. So they can begin to understand a relationship with God the Father who loves them more than any human person. That relationship gives us the strength and desire to do the Father's will, to seek him, and to please him. When life's troubles make kids feel like giving up or losing hope, today's Bible Point will be a reminder of *why* we stand firm. Encourage kids with the truth that their gracious, loving God, like their family members and friends who love them, is beside them every step of the way.

CATHOLIC ID: Holy Oils

The act of anointing with oil figures prominently in Scripture as a sign of God's blessing, of mission, and of healing. In Psalm 23, David writes of being anointed. Jesus was anointed with precious oil by the Fallen Woman, and other references to anointing with oil are found throughout the Old and New Testaments. We use blessed oils in many ways in the Catholic Church. The *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (page 205) notes that sacred chrism is used to anoint the newly baptized, to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation, and during the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Orders, when priests and bishops are anointed. The Oil of Catechumens is used for the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Oil of the Sick is used for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

Day 1

Bible Point: God's love helps us stand strong!

Tip From the

TOWER

- ❖ On this first day at Kingdom Rock, meet your Kingdom Crew at Pip's Totally Catholic Preschool Palace.
- ❖ Smile and introduce yourself.
- ❖ Be sure to learn and use the names of the kids in your Crew. Be sure they know your name, too.
- ❖ When Station Leaders ask you to "circle up with your Crew," that means to make a tight knee-to-knee circle for discussions. It's an easy way to help little ones focus in for a short time.

God Sightings®

This week at Kingdom Rock, we're looking for signs of God's presence all around us...we call these things *God Sightings*. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today, help preschoolers discover that because God created us with his own hands, each person is special! Point out things in each child that are special, and identify these as gifts from God. You may even help kids *be* God Sightings, showing God's love to someone else. Here are a few examples...

- ▶ Thank a child for being kind to another preschooler. Say, "God gave you a sweet, friendly smile!"
- ▶ As preschoolers make snacks for the entire VBS, say, "Wow! I see God's helpful hands...right there on you!"
- ▶ During games, say, "God gave you the gift of laughter! Aren't games a fun time to share that gift?"
- ▶ When a child is making crafts, comment, "You're creative...just like God is! I think about God's creativity when I look at your picture."



Tips From Your Director:



OUR CATHOLIC VIEW

Mordecai encourages Esther to do the right thing.

Read Esther 1–9

With This in Mind...

- ❖ Esther lived in a culture that was vastly different from ours today. Persian society viewed women as property, capital punishment was a public event, and kings annihilated entire groups of people in order to establish a kingdom.
- ❖ Mordecai believed in God's sovereign plan for placing Esther in the role of queen so she could save God's People.
- ❖ Haman offered an enormous sum of money to the men who would annihilate the Hebrews. The sum of 10,000 talents of silver was nearly two-thirds of the annual income of the entire kingdom and would be equal to six hundred tons of silver, an incredible amount that can't be interpreted as a literal quantity.
- ❖ King Xerxes gave Haman his signet ring to seal the deal to destroy the Hebrews.
- ❖ The book of Esther ends with the inauguration of a festival called Purim. Today, those of the Jewish faith still celebrate Purim, usually in March. Leaders read the Book of Esther in the synagogue. Congregants cheer when they hear Mordecai's name and hiss when they hear Haman's name.



Bible Point: Family and friends help us stand strong.

Why It Matters...

The kids at Totally Catholic VBS may not face the life-and-death decisions that Esther faced, but they *do* tackle daunting challenges. Bullies, temptation, doubt, divorce in the family, and disbelief can make it hard to stand strong and follow God. But most children have at least one friend or family member they can rely on during hard times. During VBS, you'll be fostering plenty of positive *new* relationships that can bolster a child's courage and faith! This is a great time to also help kids understand the importance of choosing friends who will help them, not hurt them. Today, remind kids that they can look to supportive family, friends, parish leaders—and Church teachings—to help them stand strong when they face tough situations.

CATHOLIC ID: Communion of Saints

Those who believe in Jesus and follow his way are part of the Communion of Saints. This includes people alive on Earth—family, friends, and all who believe—and people who have died and are in Purgatory or Heaven. We join with the Communion of Saints when we celebrate the Eucharist. We can pray with the Communion of Saints and ask for their intercession, finding models of living and heroic virtue among them. The Communion of Saints also includes holy elements, especially the Eucharist (*USCCA*, page 161). Through the Eucharist, we are all joined as the Body of Christ.



Day 2 Bible Point: Family and friends help us stand strong!

Tip From the TOWER

- ❖ When you arrive on Days 2 through 5, go to the Totally Catholic Sing & Play Rock area and sit near the Crew sign that matches your assigned number or name. Wait to welcome your Crew members with a warm smile, calling children by name.
- ❖ It's possible that you'll have new children join your Crew. Be sure to welcome them warmly, and introduce them to their Crew members—and to yourself!
- ❖ Participate in God Sightings. Have fun with your Crew members as you look for God in action each day.
- ❖ You may want to leave Totally Catholic King's Kitchen a few minutes early with your Crew each day to allow time for a bathroom break.

God Sightings®

God Sightings are a great way to help kids see that God is active all around us. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today, help Crew members identify something—or someone—God has given to help us feel better. You may even help kids *be* God Sightings, showing God's love to someone else. Here are a few examples...

- ▶ Thank God for parents or caregivers who give hugs and dry tears.
- ▶ Point out that the Bible is a gift from God. Tell children that the words in the Bible can help us.
- ▶ Tell children that you feel God's joy and happiness when you hear them singing.

Tips From Your Director:



OUR CATHOLIC VIEW

Nehemiah perseveres to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem.

Read Nehemiah 1–6

With This in Mind...

- ❖ After the Hebrews returned from exile, Nehemiah, along with Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah, wrote of the rebuilding of the Temple and Hebrew society.
- ❖ The name *Nehemiah* means “the comfort of God.”
- ❖ As the king’s cupbearer, Nehemiah likely had the king’s trust and confidence. A cupbearer not only brought the king his wine but usually tasted it before the king drank to be sure the drink wasn’t poisoned.
- ❖ Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, destroyed the walls surrounding Jerusalem before Nehemiah’s time. This destruction left the Israelites vulnerable to many surrounding enemies.
- ❖ Ezra 4:17-23 tells that Artaxerxes—the very same king Nehemiah served—had previously stopped the Israelites from rebuilding the wall. It’s a wonder that he allowed Nehemiah the time and permission to attempt this task.



Bible Point: Prayer helps us stand strong.

Why It Matters...

Today’s culture makes it easy to get too busy for time with God. One result is that kids aren’t tapping into one of their greatest sources of spiritual strength—regular, ongoing conversations with God! Prayer is a powerful tool in helping all of us stay tuned in to God’s voice, something that Saint Peter, our first Pope and the “rock” upon which Jesus built his Church (see Matthew 16:18), understood well. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that Peter prayed often; encourage kids to do the same. When kids face opposition or temptation, prayer quickly connects them with the heart of their loving God. Use today’s experiences to help kids realize the awesome power of prayer and how a conversation with God can give them the power to stand strong.

CATHOLIC ID: Feasts & Seasons

The Church prays all year, and we use colors to mark the time on our liturgical calendar: violet for Advent, white for Christmas (gold is a secondary color that may be substituted for the white), green for Ordinary Time, violet for Lent, and white or gold for Easter. These periods of time are called seasons, and Christ and his saving work are present throughout each season of the liturgical year (*USCCA*, page 173). We also have special colors to mark important days and events in our faith history, and feast days to remember the lives of the Saints. The feast days and memorials on the calendar remind us to give God our praise for his accomplishments in Mary, the Mother of God, and the Saints who stood strong and persevered in prayer. These days encourage us to practice the virtues modeled by the Saints.

Key Verse

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer...let your requests be made known to God.” (Philippians 4:6)



Day 3 Bible Point: Prayer helps us stand strong!

Tip From the

TOWER

- ❖ Remind preschoolers that the stories they're learning are from God's Word—the Bible!
- ❖ As the week goes on, take time to get to know new Crew members, and make them feel warmly welcomed into your Crew family.
- ❖ Be an example to your preschoolers of God's patient listening ears.
- ❖ If you have time between stations, talk about how exciting it is that you're helping kids at [name of organization—ask your Preschool Director for details]. Ask preschoolers what good things about God they'd like to tell children at [name of organization].
- ❖ As the week progresses, preschoolers may get tired—or even more energetic! Remember to demonstrate God's loving kindness, gentleness, and patience with these little ones. They're learning so much about God...from you!

God Sightings®

Keep looking for signs of God all around us. The more you incorporate God Sightings into your conversations with kids, the more they'll "get it."

Today, help your Crew members look for special people who show God's love! Here are a few examples...

- ▶ Lead kids in being a God Sighting to your VBS Director. Let preschoolers take time to thank him or her for watching over them and creating so many great ways to learn about God at Kingdom Rock.
- ▶ Point out all the warm, loving people at Kingdom Rock who show God's love and joy.
- ▶ Thank a child for being loving, kind, or gentle to another Crew member.
- ▶ Ask preschoolers to thank the person who brought them to VBS.

Tips From Your Director:



OUR CATHOLIC VIEW

Jesus dies and rises to new life.

Read Luke 22:39–24:12

With This in Mind...

- ❖ Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed, means “olive press.”
- ❖ As he prayed, Jesus knew the physical pain he would soon endure on the Cross. He also knew the spiritual torment that awaited him, so he turned to his Father for comfort. Perhaps that’s why Jesus used the familiar Aramaic term *Abba* when he poured out his heart to God. While our *Roman Missal* translates the word as “Father,” *Abba* can also be translated as “Daddy.”
- ❖ When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple ripped from top to bottom. Most scholars believe this was the curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (also called the Holy of Holies) in the Temple. Once a year, a priest entered the Most Holy Place and made a sacrifice for the people. The torn curtain symbolized that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice and has become the “way” to the Father.



Bible Point: Trusting God helps us stand strong.

Why It Matters...

If you’ve ever asked a child to do something hard or unpleasant, you probably got a whiny response of “Do I have to?” Obedience can be hard...for kids *and* adults! It’s tempting to give up, do things an easier way, or even ignore what God wants us to do. But a steadfast faith in God and openness to his grace can pull us through those temptations, giving us the courage to stand strong and do as he commands. Today you’ll help kids discover that Jesus chose to follow the will of his Father. Jesus trusted God, stood strong, and did something so incredible that it has the power to change our lives for eternity. Guide kids in celebrating what it means to trust God with every part of our lives and to boldly follow his calling in our lives.

CATHOLIC ID: Stations of the Cross

As Jesus carried his Cross, he continued to trust in God. We commemorate his journey with the Stations of the Cross, which focus on fourteen events during Christ’s Passion. The devotional practice of the Stations of the Cross began in the early Church, when pilgrims would visit the various sites in Jerusalem that were associated with Jesus’ suffering and Death. Devotions such as the Stations of the Cross are forms of prayer that are powerful and spiritually beneficial (*USCCA*, page 297). Most Catholic church buildings contain the fourteen Stations of the Cross, which begin with Jesus’ condemnation to death on the Cross and end when he is placed in the tomb. Mary, his Mother, was present throughout the Passion, and she appears in several of the Stations. Her meeting with her Son as he carried the Cross is depicted in the fourth Station. Some parishes also include a fifteenth Station marking the Resurrection of Jesus Christ as the final step in his journey.

Day 4 Bible Point: Trusting God helps us stand strong!

Tip From the

TOWER

- ❖ Preschoolers love to sing and dance during Preschool Palace! Don't worry about the correct motions—children just enjoy moving and singing!
- ❖ If you find yourself with extra time, you can always have the kids take out their Bible Memory Buddies and talk about the Scripture verses and Bible Points they've learned.
- ❖ When you ask kids to share with the group, always repeat their answers so everyone can hear.

God Sightings®

God Sightings can help preschoolers discover that God is doing amazing things all around us every day.

Today, help Crew members look for God's incredible power. Here are a few examples...

- ▶ Point out the sun, and remind preschoolers that only God could create the big, bright sun.
- ▶ If you're meeting at night, peek out at the night sky. Tell preschoolers how awesome it is that God can see everything, everywhere—day or night!
- ▶ Look for animals God created. Point out that God made so many different animals that fly, swim, flutter, and crawl.
- ▶ Lead preschoolers in taking a giant breath, in and out. Thank God for his mighty power that gave us life.



Tips From Your Director:



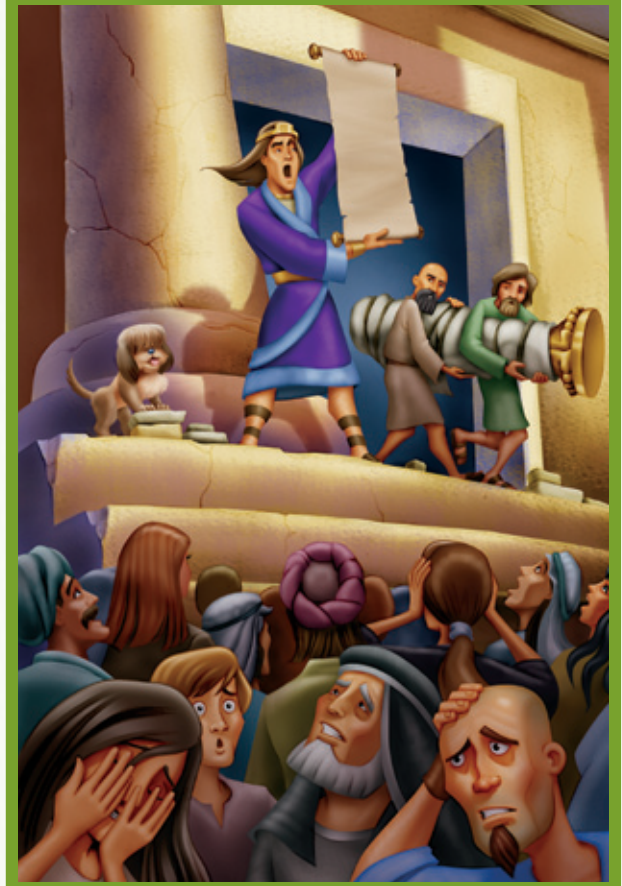
OUR CATHOLIC VIEW

King Josiah follows God's way.

Read 2 Kings 22:1–23:23

With This in Mind...

- ❖ Many of the kings who ruled after King David failed to lead the Israelites in the way God had commanded. By the time Josiah assumed the throne, Judah had adopted many Canaanite and Assyrian cultic practices. Some of God's People even worshipped idols and consulted mediums and spiritists.
- ❖ The Book of the Law found by Hilkiah the priest has long been identified by scholars as some form of the Book of Deuteronomy. It was likely the "Deuteronomic Code" (Deuteronomy 12–26) that was written during the reign of King Hezekiah.
- ❖ In an effort to draw the people of Judah back to God, King Josiah commanded a celebration of Passover. This was a celebration like no other! "No such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah" (2 Kings 23:22).



Bible Point: The Bible helps us stand strong.

Why It Matters...

Kids today are used to having answers to many of their questions right at their fingertips. With easy access to Internet search engines and portable information on smartphones, kids can get any answer with a few mouse clicks or screen taps. What better time to guide kids toward God's Word—the ultimate source of answers! Scripture is timeless, continually guiding, encouraging, challenging, and giving hope. And Church Tradition helps us understand and apply God's written Word. Today's "plugged-in" kids desperately need to experience the unchanging relevance of the Bible in their everyday lives. Guide kids in exploring how God's Word in the Bible can give them strength today.

CATHOLIC ID: The Book of Gospels

Christ is the Word of God, truly present in the written Word, so the Church honors the Scriptures. The Book of Gospels is especially honored because the Gospels tell about the message and Person of Jesus Christ (USCCA, page 26). The Book of Gospels is revered by being carried in procession at Mass, being placed on the altar until the Gospel reading during the Liturgy of the Word, by incensing the Book, and by being kissed by the priest or deacon after reading the Gospel. When the priest or deacon processes from the altar to the ambo to proclaim the Gospel, he lifts the Book of Gospels high to honor the Word. If a bishop is present at the Mass, he will perform these actions. These actions show our reverence for the Word of God.

Key Verse

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)



Day 5 Bible Point: The Bible helps us stand strong!

Tip From the

TOWER

- ❖ Continue building friendships long after Kingdom Rock is over. Fill out the "All About My Crew" information on each Crew member. After VBS, you'll be able to send postcards, birthday cards, and greet kids who attend your parish.
- ❖ Give each child his or her Bible Memory Buddies and other fun goodies from Kingdom Rock Totally Catholic VBS.
- ❖ Thanks for all you've done to help preschoolers learn to trust God!

God Sightings®

Today, help your Crew members look in unexpected places for clues that God has been at work! Here are a few examples...

- ▶ Can you find something in your Pip's Totally Catholic Preschool Palace that *only* God could make?
- ▶ As you travel between stations, point out smiles and listen for laughter. Those remind us of God's joy!
- ▶ Listen for Kingdom Rock songs that tell about God. See if preschoolers can hear words that teach them something about what God is like.

Tips From Your Director:



All About My Crew



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____



Name: _____

Address: _____

Birthday: _____

Family members: _____

Favorite things: _____