

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL IDEAS UNLIMITED

**The Ultimate Guide**



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# Introduction

## To You: The Director

Isn't being a Vacation Bible School Director a fulfilling ministry opportunity? The responsibility is tiring, at times frustrating, and often difficult. But you play a key role in directing your church's largest outreach program for children and their families.

What a terrific way to impact the boys and girls of your church, their friends, and your community. In one week, every child receives the time equivalent of an entire quarter of Sunday School instruction.

As you press through the challenges, you'll sense God depositing something priceless and eternal within you. When the exhaustion passes, you'll realize your life has been changed forever. And won't it be fun when we all get to heaven and attend the great VBS Directors' Reunion in the sky!

The task before you is an awesome one, with a variety of components needing to mesh together for a great VBS experience. There are so many people with whom you will need to work in accomplishing this task, and to whom you must convey your passion for this event and its life-changing possibilities.

As VBS Director, your agenda will be filled with exciting challenges and necessary deadlines. But leave yourself open to the wonderful blessings that will occur in the lives of everyone touched by this ministry, including you!

If you are a new VBS Director, this manual is your guidebook. If you are a veteran, you will find exciting ideas to enhance your efforts. May you, your staff, your church, and the children and families impacted be blessed by this endeavor.

## History

VBS began more than a century ago, with the intention of teaching children the Bible because of the Christian education deficiency. A pastor's wife in Hopedale, Illinois, concerned over the Sunday School not offering a thorough knowledge of the Bible, conducted a month-long school. In 1898, *Everyday Bible School* was held at Epiphany Baptist Church in New York City. Bible stories and Bible memorization were emphasized. In 1901, Dr. Robert Boville, executive secretary of the New York Baptist City Mission Society, held a series of schools. He is credited with formal organization of the VBS movement. Response to VBS was favorable because worthwhile activities were provided for bored or idle children. The movement continued to expand.

In an age where so much in churches is being changed and even discarded and where traditional approaches to church programming are under increasing scrutiny, it's reassuring to see the enduring value of Vacation Bible School. The format of Bible stories, songs, crafts and recreation is essentially unchanged since the beginning. And for very good reason: VBS is probably the church's most effective means of leading children into a personal understanding of faith.

## **What Is VBS?**

Vacation Bible School is a fun-filled spiritual adventure for children, providing concentrated time learning Bible stories, memorizing scripture and participating in Bible-based activities. For most churches, it is the premier outreach effort of the year.

## **Values of Vacation Bible School**

“Should we have a VBS this summer?” Vacation Bible School is often viewed through the distorting lens of problems, hassles and disorganization. VBS should be the core of every church’s summer ministry to children.

To obtain a clear focus, it helps to take a panoramic view of the values:

1. Concentrated Bible study for pupils and a unique evangelistic tool. More children make a decision for Christ during VBS than at any other time during the church year.
2. Opportunity to strengthen the spiritual life of teachers as they present God’s Word and to increase their concern for children’s needs.
3. A passport into non-church homes.
4. Increased Sunday school and church attendance.
5. A demonstration to your community that your church chooses to care by providing a ministry designed for their children.

# Administrative Planning

## Define Your Purpose for Having VBS

If a genuine “WOW! I’M SO EXCITED” doesn’t well up within your spirit as you think about directing VBS this year, you may need to prayerfully define, or re-define, your purpose for having Vacation Bible School. Perhaps the overwhelming responsibility of planning has blotted out your vision of sharing with boys and girls a living, loving Jesus.

God knows the best way to get things done at your church. God knows the most effective method for reaching children within the sphere of your church’s efforts. Ask Him! Pray until you receive a God-given, clear vision of how to reach the boys and girls in your community.

Then always make a connection between your prayers and what you hear people saying. For instance, maybe you’ll start hearing: “We sure have lots of kids in our neighborhood. Sure wish there was some way to reach them.” Perhaps this year, instead of a traditional VBS, you feel God leading your church to sponsor one or more backyard Vacation Bible Schools. Your major purpose would then be community outreach and evangelism.

Or maybe after praying, you’ll realize your biggest headache each year are the crafts which means getting the needed personnel to help and rounding up the supplies. By eliminating crafts, this time slot can be used for playing Bible games to reinforce concepts, showing biblical DVD’s, and presenting special features.

To stay focused on your purpose, write down what God tells you through prayer and use it as a standard of measurement. An example might be, “To bring as many children to salvation in Jesus Christ as possible.” Karen Brinkman set four basic VBS goals at her church: (1) education--the children will learn about God, (2) witness--the children will take home crafts and newsletters to share with family members, (3) community--program will include children from outside the church, and (4) recreation--the children will have fun.

The “We’ve Always Done It This Way” syndrome can quench what God wants to accomplish at your church this year. Complacency stands as an enemy to change. Are you willing to step out of your comfort zone? Are you willing to be flexible? Are you willing to try something only God can do? Are you willing to accept His purpose for your VBS? Are you willing to do everything possible to make this event life-changing?

Once you have a clear vision, share it passionately with your volunteers. Repeatedly communicate the vision with clarity and purpose, until your staff becomes of one mind and heart together and rises to the challenge ahead.

## Choose What Kind of VBS You're Going to Hold

### **2x4x4**

This equation stands for "2 days a week, 4 hours a day, for 4 weeks." First Baptist Church in Pleasant Grove, Alabama, offers this VBS option for grades 1-6.

### **A Traditional VBS**

"Traditional" used to mean a two-week school held during the day. Now "traditional" usually means a 5-day VBS either in the morning or at night.

### **Advent Adventures** (Submitted by Lynne L. Iversen)

Instead of a traditional Vacation Bible School during summer months, our church created a Bible School during the advent season. "Advent Adventures" for children aged two years through sixth grade, was offered from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., on the first three Saturdays of Advent.

The leaders divided each session into 20-minute segments that included crafts, a Bible story, singing of Christmas carols, story time, snacks, recreation, and hand bell instruction. Each age group rotated through the various activities. At the end of the morning, the children met in the dining hall for lunch. In addition to providing the kids with worthwhile instruction, the school allowed the parents some "kid-free" Christmas shopping time!

### **Adventure Week**

A.K.A. Vacation Bible School

### **Backyard Bible Blast**

An effort to get outside the church walls and reach children of the community and neighborhoods.

Families in the church

are invited to host a Backyard Bible Blast which is an hour of exciting activities focusing on God's love. The purpose is to create memorable events that plant seeds which can easily be watered in the future.

### **Camp MAD**

Camp focused on **M**usic **A**nd **D**rama which takes the place of a traditional VBS.

### **Church Camp for Kids**

The purpose is to attract community boys and girls to the church for a week so they can learn Bible lessons plus receive special training, but it isn't called VBS. Rather, it's announced, advertised, and presented as "camp." The program offers everything from soccer and basketball to science and drama, plus lessons from the Bible which are adapted from VBS programs offered by Christian publishers.

### **Kid's Crusade**

In most cases, the differences between a VBS and a Kids' Crusade are much like the differences between Sunday school and children's church. Typically, a VBS program involves multiple VBS workers teaching individual age groups, with a complete offering of activities. The typical Kids' Crusade utilizes less hands-on workers. Names of evangelists who hold children's crusades can be found at [childrensministry.net](http://childrensministry.net) and [childrensministry.org](http://childrensministry.org).

### **Kids' Reachout Roundup (KRR)**

Action-packed week of Bible teaching, singing, activities, and crafts

### **Kidventure**

Summer day camp program which replaces the traditional VBS

### **Kidz Blast**

Incredible week in the summer designed especially for children, Kindergarten to 6th grade, to experience the truth of God's Word through Bible stories, dramatic adventures, crafts, games, snacks, and more.

### **Modular VBS**

This program runs for 2 hours with a 15-minute combined opening and a 15-minute closing. Children are divided into groups by age and rotate to 3 modules:

(1) Bible Adventure - Bible story/study and life application; (2) Singing and Memory Fun - teach songs and verses; and (3) Special Features - beach ball, volleyball, relays, films, videos, crazy contests, hat day, etc. Preschool children follow traditional VBS scheduling.

### **Monthly VBS**

Schedule one month for preschool and kindergarten children; another for primary and middlers; and the final time slot for junior and teens. This alternative plan works great for churches short on space and staff.

### **Musical Mania**

Select a children's musical with a good message and spend at least two intensive weeks learning it, preparing for presentation. Present the musical on a Friday night or Sunday morning, inviting parents and friends. During practice sessions, you may want to include a brief devotional, activities, crafts, or games.

### **Neighborhood Bible Club**

A Neighborhood Bible Club is similar to VBS but instead of meeting in a church building, it takes the Gospel to where the children live, right into their neighborhood. This 5-day summer ministry meets Monday through Friday for 1 hour, 15 minutes. A clear Gospel message is presented at each meeting, along with a Bible lesson, upbeat musical memory verses with hand motions, a review game, and a hands-on craft activity that the children take home daily.

There are four primary goals for the clubs:

*Salvation:* The children will hear a clear Gospel message and be encouraged to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

*Growth:* The children will seek to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart, soul, and might.

*Witness:* The children will share their faith in Christ through personal witnessing and by bringing their friends to Bible club where they, too, can hear the Gospel message.

*Family Involvement:* The families of children attending will become involved in a local church where the Bible is believed and taught.

### **Parables in the Park** (Submitted by Jim Robnolt)

The traditional weekday VBS format wasn't working well at our church, yet we didn't want to abandon the children in the community. "Parables in the Park" pleased everyone. Once a week throughout the summer, the children assembled on the church lawn in a shaded area. The event consisted of recreation, an adult storyteller who shared a Bible story, and refreshments. We received a positive response from the community including two daycare centers who brought their children to these events.

### **Praise and Play for Preschoolers**

Includes Bible stories, crafts, music, outdoor play, observing nature in God's great world, and guided indoor play.

### **Site Rotation VBS**

Students rotate to teaching teams, who present the same Bible story to five different groups in five separate sessions. Activities vary by age group. Adult or youth guides accompany students to each team's area. If you have large numbers of children, you may need multiple teaching teams for each lesson. Preschoolers have separate classes. Specialty teachers may lead select activities.

Key benefits to this option include: learning activities which are age-appropriate; teachers learn and prepare less content since they focus on one story, instead of five; fewer teachers may be needed;

students meet and work with many different adults and youth; specialty teachers can lessen the workload. Many VBS curriculums now provide needed resources for implementing site rotation.

**Spring Break VBS** (Submitted by Steve Irwin)

In our community, so many churches were having Bible schools in the summer that our attendance was poor. So we scheduled ours during Spring Break from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., the normal school hours. Attendance doubled. Community outreach was also a winner.

**Summerama**

Another name for VBS.

**Summer Fun Week**

The week is packed with games, crafts, music, and creative learning opportunities. Each day, children learn a different truth about God, Jesus, and the Bible.

**Summer Kinder Camp**

VBS alternative for preschoolers.

**Summer Sunday School**

VBS curriculum is used both during the regular Sunday School hour and children's church time for 5 weeks in the summer.

**SUMMER VBF (Vacation Bible Fun)**

Youngstown Baptist Church conducts a VBF each summer, built around a central theme and that includes skits, great kids' music, fun games, crafts, and a grand finale on Sunday with a Family Fun Fair.

**Sum-Time Fun**

Plan a series of five field trips to places of interest in your area. Take along a special guest for each day to present the devotional. Work on Bible memory verses as you travel to the places of interest, and have your music time in transit, too. Concentrate on kids bringing friends and making new contacts for your church.

**Sunday Morning VBS** (Submitted by Teresa Higgins)

Because many members of our congregation are employed on weekdays, they are not available to teach a traditional Monday through Friday VBS. So our church conducts VBS every Sunday in July from 9 a.m. to noon. Student attendance has increased and teachers are easier to recruit. In addition, several non-parent church members volunteered to assist because the Sunday timing suited them.

**Super Summer Saturdays**

All age groups meet on Saturday for a 5-10 week period, using VBS curriculum.

**Super Summer Spectacular**

Conduct VBS for five weeks during the summer on Sundays, combining Sunday School and morning worship. Encourage church members to bring neighborhood children. Besides the regular program, add videos or special speakers. Option: Give your regular Sunday School teachers a break by recruiting a "Super Summer Spectacular" staff.

**Vacation Bible Experience**

A traditional VBS, but the negative word "school" has been eliminated.

**Vacation Bible Fun**

Removing the negative context of "school" from the traditional VBS.

**VBS Day Camp**

Day camping involves a planned program of experiences for children in an out-of-doors setting during the day. It can be conducted at the church, making use of the parking lot and other available nearby space; at

a local park; at a nearby state park or resort area; or anywhere that camp-like activities can be conducted.

The director has overall responsibility for the camp. Duties include: (1) stating the basic objectives of the camp; (2) deciding upon the location of a campsite and becoming familiar with this area; (3) outlining a suggested schedule of activities; (4) reading the curriculum materials which are to be used; (5) organizing the publicity; and (6) correlating the day-camp activities with the total Christian education program of the local church.

VBS Day Camp is an open-ended program, offering many of the opportunities of resident camping (nature study, recreation, crafts, outdoor education, and fellowship) without the extended absence from home.

Program activities include:

*Bible Adventure Time:* Usually the regular VBS curriculum materials are used. The counselors are responsible for telling the Bible story each day, making maximum use of visual aids. They help the campers learn the suggested Bible memory verses and carry through on other activities as suggested in the teacher's manual. Classes are informal and are held outdoors to make it more like "camp."

*Worship:* The program should include both planned times of worship and spontaneous worship. (The outdoor setting will prompt the latter.) Counselors who are alert will find many opportunities when campers can be led into a genuine experience of recognizing the presence of God.

*Singing:* Appropriate songs help lead into a worship experience. Singing also helps to bind the campers into a whole unit.

*Games and Recreation:* These should be well-planned, have a definite purpose, and be supervised carefully.

*Crafts:* Materials found in an outdoor environment should compose the basis for the craft activities. Possible projects are making a nature collage, a terrarium, spatter leaf-prints, nature boxes, and seed pictures.

*Outdoor Fun:* Various activities centering around the study of nature/God's creation give the campers opportunities to use their God-given senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, and smelling. Examples are: following nature trails, flying kites, studying the growth of trees, taking discovery hikes, bird watching, plant observation, and so on.

*Field Trips:* Opportunities in a local area might include trips to a museum, art gallery, planetarium, newspaper office, zoo, or manufacturing plant.

*Special Feature Time:* The creativity of the director and counselors may be given full use here. Some ideas which have been used successfully are: Hat Day (everyone wears a hat, and the hats are judged in such categories as funniest, most original, ugliest, prettiest, and campers' choice); Peanut Hunt (some peanuts are marked with numbers; when time is up - teams count the number of peanuts found and get a bonus for the specially numbered ones); Treasure Chest Day (everyone receives a free gift); videos; and lunch hike.

*Lunch:* Each camper brings a sack lunch. Drinks are provided.

Group vs. Activity Organization - Most day camps are organized for programming either according to age-grade groups or according to activities.

Group Organization - Major part of program handled by regular counselors:

1. Since the counselors are constantly with the same children, they become well-acquainted with the individual challenges and habits of each camper.

2. Tends to develop well-rounded counselors.
3. Group sizes can vary.
4. Allows a camp to handle a much larger enrollment of children.
5. Easier to set up and administer. Movement to and from each area, supervision during every part of the camp day, and the bulk of the activities are all handled by the person running a group.

Organization by Activities - Children move from place to place and counselors remain at a specific area as specialists:

1. Counselors work in activities for which they are particularly well-qualified and which they enjoy.
2. The children are exposed to many talented teachers, rather than just the one who heads their group.
3. Limits enrollment, as no group can be any larger than can be comfortably accommodated in the smallest specialty area.

Combinations and variations of these two types of programs are often most practical!

### **VBS Summer Day Camp**

Lawrenceville First United Methodist Church offers children an exciting summer full of fun, and nurtures spiritual growth in a loving, Christian environment. They balance arts, crafts, recreation, and sightseeing with nature, reading, relaxing, and devotions each week to ensure variety. VBS Summer Camp is open to children ages 4-13 who are entering grades pre-K through 8th. It runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Extended care hours are available at no additional charge. Children may come as early as 7 a.m. and stay as late as 6:15 pm. Campers are placed in appropriately-sized groups according to age.

The Pre-K / Kindergarten group consists of 4 & 5 year-olds who learn to sing, play, and grow together through the summer as they participate in art, recreation, rest time, story time, play time, and an occasional field trip. While VBS Summer Day Camp workers provide plenty of activity for these campers themselves, they also bring puppet shows, storytellers, bubble fun, and a whole lot of laughing to them. Their daily routine is one of comfortable structure and is sensitive to the needs of these younger children.

The Elementary ages (grades 1-5) are always on the go. Each age group participates in arts & crafts, recreation, and devotions on a daily basis, and goes swimming and on one or two field trips each week in conjunction with weekly themes. Each grade's schedule, trips, and curriculum are unique and tailored to the needs of that particular age group. These groups develop lasting friendships and make great memories as they go through their summer camp adventure together.

### **Very Big Sports (VBS) Camp** (submitted by Justeen Hill)

One year, instead of the usual VBS we introduced Very Big Sports Camp. We rented a junior high for one week which offered a large gym, small gym, tennis courts, track field, swimming pool, soccer field, etc. The day began with wacky games in the big gym and then the kids were able to sample a sport of their choosing for one hour. Each sport was staffed with volunteers from the church. Fun was emphasized rather than drills and skills. A snack was served and then campers were off to the gym bleachers for the Bible lesson. We closed the day with a 15-minute message from a well-known Christian athlete highlighting the importance of keeping one's Christian integrity and attitude while playing sports. The event pulled in kids who normally would never have attended a regular VBS. T-shirts were included in the \$25.00 registration fee.

### **Video Series**

A children's video series could be used as the basis for a VBS.

### **Weekend VBS**

The hours can be on Friday (6 a.m. - 9 p.m.), Saturday (9 a.m.-3 p.m.), and Sunday (9:15 a.m.- noon) or whatever works best for your situation. The VBS refreshment team can prepare a simple lunch on Saturday for the children, with many of the items donated by Sunday School classes or individuals in the church. Adult classes are usually open to relocating and making the necessary adjustments for this once-a-year program. Having the VBS during the Sunday morning service attracts non-Christian parents and

those who do not have a church home. To provide enough time for Bible stories, songs, and Scripture memorization, the crafts and recreation periods are shortened. There are two major advantages to this option: (1) the schedule rarely competes with Vacation Bible Schools at other churches since most are held Monday through Friday and (2) more men are usually willing to help on the weekend.

### **Winter Vacation Bible School**

Activities include: mini carnival, crafts, games, Bible stories, music, videos, and snacks.

## **Select Dates**

When choosing a date for your VBS, check not only your church calendar but such conflicting events as sports or other community traditions which would compete for your participants. Determine the normal pattern of family vacations based on past Sunday School attendance. Find out the availability of volunteers for proposed dates. After accumulating this information you will be ready to set the date for the school, and put it on the church calendar.

## **Establish a Time Line**

### **Five Months In Advance**

- Prayerfully set goals
- If you are a new director, meet with former directors and volunteers
- Talk with VBS director from other churches to get ideas
- Choose format
- Determine site
- Decide target group
- Preview curriculum options
- Develop workable budget and set into motion necessary fund-raisers
- Establish and maintain good communication with all areas of your church affected by your VBS

### **Four Months In Advance**

- Pray for guidance in finding the people God wants to serve in this ministry
- Design organization
- Estimate attendance
- Order curriculum
- Write job descriptions
- Enlist department leaders

### **Three Months In Advance**

- Continue to pray
- Complete recruitment
- Outline advertising plan
- Order T-shirts for staff

### **Two Months In Advance**

- Keep praying
- Provide staff training for all those persons involved in VBS. By holding trainings on more than one date, more people may be able to attend. Also, consider videotaping training for those unable to attend on your scheduled dates. Consider serving a light lunch following worship service or prior to a

weeknight event to encourage staffers to attend training.

- Outline ways to increase enrollment
- Begin publicity
- Make room assignments
- Meet with department leaders
- Keep VBS in front of your people through announcements and advertising

#### **One Month In Advance**

- Pray for staff and students
- Determine offering incentives
- Purchase supplies
- Complete final details
- Finalize follow-up plans
- Work on closing program or VBS wrap-up event
- Organize transportation
- Designate entrance and exit doors for all activities
- Arrange traffic patterns for moving children
- Print facility maps
- Develop specific prayer guide and put as bulletin insert until VBS opens

#### **One Week**

- Pray without ceasing
- Make necessary adjustments
- Conduct final staff meeting and have prayer time
- Canvas a 3-mile radius around your church
- VBS decorating
- Post facility directory at multiple sites, listing room locations and ages of children

#### **The Day Before**

- Double-check everything!
- Contact leaders for any last-minute problems
- Have leaders check with their workers to be sure all assigned responsibilities have been fulfilled

#### **During**

- Pray constantly
- Provide extra greeters for Day One
- Supervise
- Encourage
- Assist
- Pray daily with staff
- Keep necessary records
- Make necessary adjustments

#### **After**

- Collapse!
- Organize a clean-up party
- Pray for the children who accepted Jesus as personal Savior
- Contact every child who attended (write, call, and visit)

- Give names of VBS visitors to appropriate Sunday School teachers for follow-up
- File records
- Store materials
- Express appreciation to staff, including a post VBS staff party
- Evaluate and make notes for next year and file in your church office

## **Preview Curriculum Options**

Choose biblically-based, powerful lessons that will have a lasting impact on children's lives.

The Christian Ed Warehouse is the #1 source for Vacation Bible School materials. You can also go directly to these web sites to check out curriculum offerings: Augsburg Fortress, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Cokesbury, Concordia Publishing House, Cook Communications, Gospel Light, Group, Jericho Junction, Marketplace 29 A.D., Regular Baptist Press, Standard Publishing, Truth Quest, Veggie Town Values, WordAction.

## **Develop Workable Budget and Plan Fund-Raisers**

If your church has had VBS before, you will probably be given an estimated budget figure based on previous years. If you find there are no designated or an inadequate amount of funds, you will need to come up with your own estimate of costs. Write down the price of each item you'll need, then tally the total cost to set your budget.

If your church doesn't have a VBS budget in place, don't worry! Inadequate fund for a quality VBS program needn't be a stumbling block. Under "Search" on The Egid Ideas internet site (<http://www.egadideas.com>), type in "Fund Raisers" and you'll find a huge collection of ideas. There are countless ways to painlessly raise the funds you need: collect an offering to cover expenses; charge a per-child registration fee; invite congregation members to "sponsor" children by contributing a per-child amount; sponsor a yard sale; or sell items on eBay.

Pastor Amy Alletzhauser shares that for several weeks, members tried to unravel the acronym "T.G.I.L" that was written on posters throughout the church. Finally, they revealed the title of their fund-raiser: "Thank God I'm Living!" Everyone was encouraged to donate one dollar for each year of life to the VBS fund. Although they were a small congregation with many older members on fixed incomes, everyone responded to this challenge. The event raised \$3,200!

Another way to save money is to start cleaning out the closets and cupboards at your church. Often hidden cob-webbed covered crannies you'll find useable supplies. A resource center is not only a money-saver, but a time-saver.

Once you've determined your needs, get the budget approved by church leadership. Know which areas you can reduce, if needed. You may want to find someone to serve as your VBS financial coordinator to keep track of monies received and sent, to handle reimbursements, and to make sure that you stay within your budget.

# Cost Estimate Worksheet

## 1. CURRICULUM

### Preview Kit

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Age-Group Curriculum

___ Nursery Teacher Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Nursery Pupil Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Kindergarten Teacher Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Kindergarten Pupil Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Primary Teacher Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Primary Pupil Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Middler Teacher Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Middler Pupil Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Junior Teacher Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____
___ Junior Pupil Books Needed	x	\$ _____	@	= \$ _____

↳ Curriculum Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. SPECIAL SPEAKER (including travel, meals and housing)

Travel	\$ _____	Housing	\$ _____
Meals	\$ _____	Other	\$ _____

↳ Special Speaker Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 3. CRAFTS (Are you using Craft Kits or allocating a certain amount for crafts per age group?)

↳ Crafts Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. REFRESHMENTS

Day 1 Snack	x	_____	estimated total attendance	= \$ _____
Day 2 Snack	x	_____	estimated total attendance	= \$ _____
Day 3 Snack	x	_____	estimated total attendance	= \$ _____
Day 4 Snack	x	_____	estimated total attendance	= \$ _____
Day 5 Snack	x	_____	estimated total attendance	= \$ _____

↳ Snacks Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 5. CREATIVE TEACHING SUPPLIES (videos, supplemental books, puzzles, music, puppets)

_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____

↳ Creative Teaching Supplies Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 6. GENERAL SUPPLIES

Enrollment Cards	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Pencils	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Paper	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Prizes	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Poster Board	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Markers	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____
Crayons	\$ _____	_____	\$ _____

↳ General Supplies Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 7. ADVERTISING

Newspaper ad	\$ _____	Postage	\$ _____
Radio	\$ _____	Banner	\$ _____
Paper	\$ _____	Posters	\$ _____
Printing	\$ _____		\$ _____
Envelopes	\$ _____		\$ _____

↳ Advertising Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### 8. STAFF APPRECIATION

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

↳ Staff Appreciation Estimated Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## Write Job Descriptions

Potential volunteers often misunderstand the task they are asked to perform. No one can satisfactorily function in a given role unless it is clearly understood what is expected. Included in the job description should be some indication of what the volunteer may expect from the church, as well as what the church expects from the volunteer.

A job description is a list of the general tasks, essential functions, and responsibilities of a ministry area. Each description should include: position title, essential duties to be performed, and to whom the position reports.

It's helpful to begin each responsibility with an action verb, such as: approve, assist, conduct, coordinate, delegate, design, establish, evaluate, facilitate, guide, handle, implement, improve, instruct, maintain, manage, operate, plan, prepare, present, recruit, schedule, strengthen, teach, train, troubleshoot.

For instance, for your Recreation Director you might write: *Select age-appropriate games and activities for the 30-minute recreation time; demonstrate games and activities to the VBS staff at the training session - so teachers and helpers are familiar with the rules; direct each recreation segment.*

The Music Director job description might say: *One of the most effective ways to learn Christian truths is through music. Words or concepts which are difficult to memorize in prose form may be learned quickly when combined with a memorable tune. Long after VBS is over, many children will still be singing the songs they have learned. You have the opportunity to select the songs which each group will be learning during the Music Segment and to creatively teach them. You are responsible for obtaining needed audio and/or visual equipment for use during the Music Segments. You will lead each age group in performing at the VBS Closing Program.*

Here are more Vacation Bible School Ministry Opportunity Job Descriptions to assist you:

**Class Guide:** Sits with children during opening and closing, leads the children to each of their activities; no preparation needed.

**Craft Team:** Helps prepare the needed items for the children's craft projects; preparation dates to be set by craft team leader; work in the craft room each morning of VBS.

**Snack Team:** Help prepare snacks needed each morning at VBS; serve and clean up snack area each

morning of VBS; may work one or more mornings during the week.

**Recreation Team:** Work with the children during recreation time; games to be prepared by the Recreation Team Leader; help with "crowd control".

**Activity Room Coordinators:** Attend training meeting; prepare daily lessons in cooperation with the other coordinators in your age group for each day of VBS (ideas will be given); purchase materials needed (will be reimbursed from the church); work with two groups of children each morning of VBS.

**Story Tellers/Skits:** Act out or tell the story of the day (at several different times during the morning) to a large group of children; volunteers one or more days depending on availability; will need to be available for practice prior to the day your skit is performed, time to be determined by Story Room Coordinator.

**Making Scenery:** Trace and paint scenery needed for VBS week; work will be done during May and the first week of June, times to be set by Decorating Coordinator.

**Registration:** Help prepare nametags and signs needed for VBS; volunteer during the week of VBS to help children that need to register.

**Nursery:** Provide tender loving care to the children of VBS workers.

**Decorating Team:** Help decorate the church during the week prior to Vacation Bible School.

**Follow-Up Team:** Contact each child who prayed and asked Jesus into his heart during VBS.

## Enlist Staff

People are often reluctant to help in VBS because they feel unqualified; think someone else can do the job better; fear the unknown; are afraid they will fail; do not understand what is involved in the specific assignment; or are turned off by the poor enlistment technique of "there's no one else who will do it."

If VBS is God's work, you can count on Him to provide the needed help. Rather than a general call from the pulpit (*"anyone interested in working in VBS see so-and-so after church"*), directly contact people. Sixty percent of people in any congregation do NOT respond to general announcements! One-on-one recruitment is always the most effective, and also eliminates the possibility of individuals responding for a position who are not qualified. Ask specific people for a specific job.

Running an effective Vacation Bible School requires an excited, dedicated and coordinated staff. Have in hand a list of all needed positions, such as: advertising, Bible discovery, nursery child care, class coordinator, crafts, decorating, games, mission project, music, photography, preschool, puppetry, registration, set-up/dismantling cew, supplies shopper, snacks, teacher assistants, transportation, etc.

Prayer is the foundation and cornerstone of everything which is done and is the source of each staff member's energy, strength and direction. Consider recruiting a prayer partner for each member of the VBS team.

## Staff Dedication

Speak to your pastor about a staff dedication before your VBS begins. The dedication will only last a few minutes, but it serves as a powerful reminder of whom we go to for our strength and guidance, as well as the purpose of our service.

## Organize Prayer Emphasis

Enlist a personal prayer partner for each worker from those not directly involved in VBS.

Ask your congregation to under-gird your school and staff in prayer. Feel free to adapt the following *VBS Prayer List* (used with permission from [www.sschoo.com/vbs](http://www.sschoo.com/vbs)):

God's guidance for faculty and staff as we prepare for VBS this year

Spiritual understanding of the content of the Bible passages to be taught

Physical stamina for the workers during the week of VBS

Safety and health for all our workers and students

God's watch care, to avoid accidents, trials, temptations, and distractions

Wise use of time in planning, preparing, and teaching

Positive attitude of excitement and enthusiasm for each teacher and helper

Understanding, loving, helping relationships with the children in each department

Supportive team relationships with other workers in the department and school

Strengthened relationship with God

Relationships with spouse and family

Developing relationships with the parents of each child enrolled, particularly the non-churched

VBS publicity as we attempt to reach the children from our community

Follow-up efforts to contact every child enrolled with an invitation to Sunday school

Spiritual direction in discerning the "teachable moment" for each child

Children will come to know Jesus as personal Savior or build the foundation for that experience.

## Effective Advertising

Keep the word "pizzazz" in the forefront of your mind when planning your publicity! Video games, shopping malls, and swimming pools now compete with VBS each summer. Vacation Bible School must be publicized with enough "whiz-bang" excitement and enthusiasm to attract prospective children and parents. Include in your promotional materials such things as: action-packed activities, unforgettable special events, fun and safe environment, caring adult team leaders, valuable life principles, FREE gifts!

Don't forget to raise visibility of your VBS among your congregation through promotion. The more excited people become, the more likely they will want to be involved.

### Check that each promotional piece is:

- Attractive
- Clear (all pertinent information is available and clearly understood)
- Relevant
- Personal
- Colorful
- Unusual (Creativity forces readers to take a second look)
- Accurate (Have someone who has never seen the copy proofread it. Don't rely upon a computer spell check.)

### Ideas

#### Banner

A large, colorful banner on the outside of your church building or on the lawn helps to attract attention.

#### Direct Mail

Send direct mail letters to all church families with children and all on your church prospect list.

#### Early Publicity

Start publicizing VBS as soon as you have confirmed the dates. Alert members through your church bulletin, newsletter and phone tree.

#### Free Tickets

For maximum effectiveness, people in the community must be aware of your upcoming VBS. There is something about "free" which captures attention. Print tickets on heavy, bright paper with the heading: FREE ADMISSION to Vacation Bible School. Include the name, address, and phone number of your church along with the dates and times of the event. Distribute these within a 3-mile radius of your church, at parks and swimming pools.

#### Neighborhood Outreach

Prepare and distribute attractive flyers to homes within a 3-mile radius of your church. It's often helpful to make these interactive by offering a FREE PRIZE to everyone who attends the first night of VBS. Don't forget to also target any parks or community swimming pools in the area.

If you plan to canvas your church neighborhood with VBS flyers, do not put them in any type of mailbox. Mailboxes are considered government property and are designated for postal mail only. If you place literature in a mailbox and the recipient reports it to the authorities, you could find yourself and your organization in some legal trouble.

#### Newspaper Ad

To catch attention with your ad, be creative. One church bought a small space in their community

newspaper. In the center of the space, was a black dot approximately one-inch in diameter. Under the dot it said: *"Blow on this dot. If it turns red, go to your doctor. If it stays black, bring the dot to Vacation Bible School at (name of church) on (date) at (time) and receive a FREE GIFT!"*

### **Newspaper Article**

A newspaper article is often more effective than an ad and it's free! Let your religion editor know about any special feature that could be highlighted in such an article.

### **One-on-One**

Word of mouth is still the most effective advertising method. Motivate children in your church to tell their school and neighborhood friends by giving prizes for each new child brought on the first night of VBS.

### **Phone-A-Thon**

Enlist volunteers to call all members of the children's division Sunday School and all boys and girls who attended your VBS last year. The first call should be made two weeks prior to the event. The last call needs to be made two days before the event starts.

## **Increasing Enrollment**

### **Balloon Burst**

Write names of prizes on paper, fold, and insert into balloons. Blow up the balloons, tie a string on the end, fasten to a long string stretched across the room. All who qualify can break the balloon of their choice with a hat pin, and receive the prize listed inside. (Adult supervision is required to ensure safety with the pin.)

### **Battle of the Sexes**

Have the boys and girls compete against each other. Award 500 points for individual attendance by sexes and 1,000 points for each new visitor brought by either a boy or girl.

### **Bring 3**

Thomas Road Baptist Church implements a "Bring 3" campaign. They encourage church members to build relationships with friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors; find prospects; and bring three new children to VBS. This has proven to be an effective way of boosting VBS attendance; finding unchurched children; and growing their overall children's ministry.

### **Buddy System**

The theme one summer for the First Evangelical Congregational Church of Reading, Pennsylvania was "The Ten Commandments." They had over 100 children and most of them did not attend any Sunday School or church. Each new child who attended was given a T-shirt with the Ten Commandments printed on the front and a picture of their church on the back. In order to pay for the shirts, they developed a sponsorship program called the "Buddy System." All children had their pictures taken when they enrolled in VBS and each picture was made into a name tag which also included the name, address, and birthday of the child. Sponsors contributed \$5.00 to pay for the T-shirt and receive a picture of the child they were sponsoring. Sponsors were given the responsibility to pray for the child and were asked to send a card on the child's birthday and for special holidays. When contacting the children, many sponsors included their own phone numbers and told the children to call if they needed a ride to church. Numerous new children started attending this church as a result of this effective program.

### **Free Gifts**

In your VBS publicity, announce a free gift to all who attend the first session.

### **Gift Pyramid**

Businesses in the community will often donate items for you to use as prizes. Be sure there is an

extensive display of prizes, so numerous children can receive something. The person who brings the most friends may choose first what they want. The next runner-up may then choose. This way, a child can select a gift they will really enjoy and use.

### **Kid-to-Kid**

The children who regularly attend your church are the best outreach tools you have! Plan a pizza party before your public school is out for the summer where you educate them on helping their friends hear and learn about God. Have each child write down as many names of friends as they can think of who they would like to invite. Have prayer together for these prospects. Before they leave, give them invitations to give to their friends (regardless of when your VBS is scheduled). Save all these names and a week before VBS, have them re-invite their friends.

### **Millionaire Acres**

Print play money in \$10 denominations. In the center of each piece write, "This is valuable to you! You may spend it at *Millionaire Acres* the last day of VBS." Award the money daily for attendance and visitors brought. Set up a bank where children may turn in their money and accurate records are kept. Organize *Millionaire Acres* with gifts containing price tags. Each child may withdraw his money the final day of VBS and "shop" for items at *Millionaire Acres*.

### **Mystery Names**

Daily select mystery names from the VBS enrollment. Each child who is present receives a small gift.

### **Newspapers**

Let people in the community know you care about their children. Do one or more of the following:

1) News item or release - double-spaced with one-inch margin around. In the upper left corner type "For Immediate Release" or give a future date if you want the information held. Under these words type the name and address of the church. In the upper right corner, place the name and telephone number of a contact person.

2) Feature Story - longer and more informative than a news release.

3) Paid Advertisements - arranged attractively using key information.

### **Operation: Invasion**

The Saturday prior to VBS, distribute promotional flyers within a 3-mile radius of the church, at shopping centers, playgrounds, and parks. Enlist commitments from children and parents by pre-registering the boys and girls.

### **Person-to-Person Contact**

No greater communication system exists than one person telling another. Get the boys and girls excited so they will invite their friends. Be sure parents and adults in the church are aware of your program and dates.

### **Pre-registration**

The week prior to VBS, start pre-enrolling children in their Sunday School classes or at a special booth set up in the church foyer. This not only reminds the boys and girls of the upcoming event, but serves to decrease the first-night registration hassle line.

### **Promotional Flyers**

Send out at least two colorful, attractive publicity flyers.

### **Radio Spots**

Send basic information to the "community calendar" of your local radio station, including the who, what, when, and where details of your event.

**Signage**

Place an attractive sign in your church yard.

**Telephone**

Call all Sunday school members and those who attended last year's school and let them know about the exciting, upcoming VBS. Extend a personal invitation. Talk with parents to see if transportation is needed or if they can be involved in helping.

**Tickets**

On the Saturday after VBS, you can have a "Fun Fest" and invite the parents. During the week, the children attending Vacation Bible School are awarded tickets for attendance and bringing friends which they can spend at the fair. Adult Sunday School classes can sponsor booths.

**Trophies**

Boys and girls love to receive trophies. Award trophies to all who bring three friends who have never attended VBS before.

**VBS Pre-Registration Carnival**

Held the Saturday before VBS, the carnival provides an opportunity for attracting neighborhood children to the church.

## Crafts

Crafts allow children to express themselves with hands-on activity. Crafts can also provide a break for short attention spans, reinforce a lesson, and serve as a take-home tool to interact with parents.

If you need additional ideas to supplement your curriculum, the internet provides a wealth of resources. Be sure and check out [www.daniellesplace.com](http://www.daniellesplace.com) , [www.kidssundayschool.com](http://www.kidssundayschool.com) , [www.mssscrafts.com/index.htm](http://www.mssscrafts.com/index.htm) and [www.geocities.com/Heartland/6580/vbs.html](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/6580/vbs.html) .

## Refreshments

Be sure on your registration forms to include a place for parents and/or children to indicate allergies to such things as nuts, peanut butter, milk, etc.

Alternate snacks should be available.

**Ants on A Log**

Spread peanut butter on celery; top with raisins.

**Apple Krispies**

Slice apples. Spread with peanut butter. Dip in Rice Krispies.

**Banana Popsicles**

Cut each banana in half. Dip in a mixture of half lemon juice and half water. Insert a popsicle stick into each banana. Roll in crushed Grape Nuts. Freeze.

**Bananawich**

Slice bananas thin and place between two vanilla wafers to form a sandwich.

**Catch A Fish!**

On each child's plate, place 1/3 cup Goldfish crackers, 10 pretzel sticks and 2 tablespoons peanut butter. The kids can pretend the pretzels are fishing poles and by dipping the "poles" in peanut butter, they can then "catch" fish!

**Cheese and Crackers**

Cheese with whole wheat crackers is delicious and easy to fix.

**Cheeze Pretzels**

Melt Cheese Whiz in the microwave or on top of the stove, according to directions on the jar. Allow the cheese to cool slightly. Dip and twist the tip of each pretzel stick into the cheese, lift out, wait twenty seconds, then dip again. Set onto a sheet of waxed paper. Allow to cool at room temperature for ten minutes or until cheese is firm. Gently pull off waxed paper.

**"Cinna"-pedes**

Use cinnamon stick cookies! Lay one cookie upside down and frost with brightly colored icing. Then, cut red licorice pull apart candy approximately 1 1/2 inches long and place them crosswise for legs. Top the cinnapede with another cookie right side up.

**Gorp**

1 box unfrosted cereal; 1 large box raisins; 1 jar dry roasted peanuts; 1 large package candy-coated chocolate pieces.

**Jell-o Cones**

Make Jell-o. Once it sets, cut into small squares. Fill ice cream cones. Top with whipped topping. Insert a plastic spoon.

**Kix Balls**

Melt 6 ounces semisweet chocolate chips. Pour over 5 cups of Kix cereal. Stir gently to coat the cereal. Form into balls. Place on waxed paper. Chill for at least 24 hours. Makes about 60 balls.

**Oatmeal Chocolate No-Bake Cookies**

2 cups white sugar; 1 stick margarine; 1/2 cup milk; 1 teaspoon vanilla; 1/2 cups peanut butter; 2 tablespoons cocoa; 3 cups oatmeal. Mix the first three ingredients in saucepan. Boil for one minute. Remove from the heat. Add the remaining ingredients. Mix all ingredients together. Scoop and drop by tablespoon onto waxed paper and cool.

**Peanutwich**

Spread peanut butter on Ritz crackers. Top to form sandwiches.

**Popcorn in a Cup**

Pop popcorn and put into a large paper cup.

**Popsicles**

Make with fruit juice.

**Pretzels**

The children can be involved in making these, if so desired. Soften a package of yeast in 1 1/2 cups warm water. Add 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar. Mix in 4 cups of flour. Knead into a soft, smooth dough. The children can roll and mold to their hearts content. Place shapes on a cookie sheet. Brush with a beaten egg. Bake at 425 degrees for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

**Pudding Treat**

Follow instructions on the sugar-free pudding package. Pour into Styrofoam cups, about half-full. Top with

whipped topping. Insert a plastic spoon.

### **Rice Krispies Pops**

You will need: 5 cups of Rice Krispies; 1/4 cup of butter or margarine; 4 cups of small marshmallows; Popsicle sticks.

Melt margarine or butter in a saucepan. Add marshmallows, stirring constantly until melted. Remove from the heat, add the Rice Krispies and stir until coated. Shape an oval around a Popsicle stick.

### **Snack Mix**

½ cup butter or margarine - melted; 2 tablespoons Cocoa; 2 tablespoons sugar; 4 cups Apple Cinnamon Cheerios; 4 cups Crispex; 1 cup almonds - silvered; 1 cup raisins. In 4-quart microwave-safe bowl, melt butter. Stir in sugar and cocoa. Add cereals and almonds. Stir until evenly coated. Microwave on high 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Stir in raisins. Microwave at high 3 minutes more, stirring every minute. Cool completely and store in airtight container in cool, dry place.

## **Safety**

Churches of all sizes must take the welfare of children seriously. Sadly, when churches are held to the standards our culture now expects for child-care facilities, most ministries fail to achieve even the minimum standards in terms of child registration procedures and documentation.

Our challenge today: Is the church willing to do what it takes to meet and exceed all applicable child-care safe practices, not because we have to, but because we're committed to demonstrating to the world that it's Christ's church that best loves and cares for children?

Make plans for keeping your children safe. Regarding safety of the children, put on the registration form a section saying, "Who will pick up your child at the end of the day?" Parents receive a letter 1-2 weeks before VBS stating they will need to park and come in the building to pick up their child/children from specified rooms. To avoid confusion as to where to go, send a map of the church to the parents clearly labeled as to where to pick up the different grade levels. Maps and signs all over the church also eliminate confusion. Requiring parents to come inside to pick up their children also provides the opportunity for you and the pastor to make contact with them.

Child abuse is a real issue today. Be sure your staff are screened so a known abuser is not involved with the boys and girls. With ACCUFAX ([www.accufax-us.com](http://www.accufax-us.com)), getting records is quick and easy, and you can be confident the information you get is complete, compliant, and accurate.

Because of the complexity of these issues and due to the changing nature of state and federal laws, it is helpful for churches to utilize legal help in this area.

## **Staff Appreciation**

### **Appreciation Dinner**

Enlist help from those who were unable to serve during VBS. A slide-show presentation could be a fun special feature.

### **Certificates of Appreciation**

Perfect way to say, "Thank You!" for devoted ministry and extra hours of labor.

### **E-'em**

It doesn't take long to E-mail words of appreciation to your staff each day of VBS.

### **Pay Day Candy Bar**

Attach a note which reads: "Thank you for all the seeds you planted this year in the lives of boys and girls during VBS. Your real Pay Day will come when Jesus tells you 'Well done'."

**You've Made a Difference Poem** (Copyrighted by Linda J. Stevenson. May copy for local church use.)

Thank you for the time you give  
To each child who looks to you;  
You truly make a difference  
By all you say and do.  
For as you touch each tender heart,  
You leave your imprint there;  
And always they'll remember you--  
How much you really cared.  
Keep on loving, keep on caring,  
Sharing Christ as you do,  
For one day they'll return to say,  
"Teacher, I do thank you."  
"You've made a difference in my life.  
I'm who I am today,  
Because you gave your time to teach  
And show to me God's Way."

## **Considerations for Closing Program**

Parents, grandparents, and family members love seeing their children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews on stage! A closing program provides this opportunity and allows many who have never attended your church to come for this event.

The electronic equipment explosion enhances your ability to quickly produce a professional presentation of slides and/or video of your Vacation Bible School highlights. The children can share Bible verses they memorized and songs they learned. A special puppet presentation, Bible story, or other special feature will make for an unforgettable program.

Some churches are successfully concluding VBS with a Family Festival, which combines a program, special speaker or musician, carnival-type games, and a meal on the grounds.

## **Follow-Up**

Few ministries of the church have the evangelistic impact and potential of VBS. However, the number of decisions recorded during VBS is really just the tip of the iceberg for churches that follow-up well with children, parents, grandparents, and siblings of children discovered through VBS.

In the week or two following VBS, the family of every new child who attended should receive a personal visit from someone in the church who shares information about children's programs and other ministries in which the family might be interested. It's an all-out effort to let first-time visitors know they are welcome and that church members really care about them and their children.

You may want to have your regular church visitation team handle the VBS visitation follow-up, as they are trained to share their witness and the plan of salvation with people who don't know the Lord. Family members often accept Christ due to the message, excitement and involvement of their children in VBS.

# TRAINING TEACHERS

Thrusting volunteers into areas of services without training is totally unfair, both to them and to the boys and girls who attend your Vacation Bible School. Many of your staff may be veteran teachers, but challenging them with new and creative ideas will help them reach new potential. There will always be those willing to help, but who have no teaching experience.

Staff training can provide both a clear concept of the responsibility for each position and a challenge to meet the needs of the children who attend beyond the program. The brass tacks training of understanding how the part they play in the big picture of this year's VBS is critical to each volunteer. Understanding how each component builds upon the daily theme, and how integral it is to repeat the same words or phrases to write those words on the hearts of the children, will assist the volunteers in successfully fulfilling their role. The preparation they receive for this week may lead them to future service in children's ministry directly or to serve as advocates for its vital role within the life of your church.

Training your staff prepares the hearts and minds of those who serve. It provides them with the necessary tools to implement the program, the skills needed to meet the challenges they will face during the week, and a greater understanding of the purpose and importance of children's ministry for your church, our world, and eternity. Ultimately, staff training will develop more confident volunteers who are then more easily able to share their faith with others while deepening their personal relationship with God.

The Bible contains countless admonitions to train and teach. Proverbs 19:20 expresses a training theme: "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise." God considers training vitally important in His kingdom.

The weakest area in Vacation Bible School planning is training. The problem often starts because planning has been last-minute and desperate attempts are made to find adequate personnel.

This section contains brief *How To's* for training your VBS staff. Adding your own illustrations to the outlines will make them relevant for your situation.

Feel free to duplicate copies of the handouts for your local church or ministry use and/or reproduce them on PowerPoint.

## **How to Avoid Discipline Problems Rather Than Being Forced to Deal With Them**

### **1. Prepare thoroughly.**

Lessons should be action-packed with creative, exciting presentations

### **2. Anticipate problems and act to prevent them.**

### **3. Have the room prepared when that first pupil arrives.**

The children must have something constructive to do immediately. Those first few minutes set the tone for the class time which follows.

### **4. Give choices within acceptable limits.**

In this way you are setting up the environment to make positive encounters more likely. With young children you might say, "Would you like to draw a butterfly or bird?" With older children, "Would you like to research these questions in the Bible dictionary or draw an illustration from the story?"

### **5. Determine how your actions and responses can be carried out in love.**

When disciplining children, they should be corrected in a way that shows them they are loved. When boys and girls sense our loving concern, they're much more willing to emulate our values and our relationship with God. The key to disciplining children is to model Christ-like behavior for them while assuring them in every way possible that we truly love them.

### **6. Evaluate the reasons for misbehavior.**

It could be a need for attention, boredom, upset emotions, insecurity, illness, hunger, or inner tension expressed by wiggles.

### **7. Make your children feel valued.**

Use such phrases as: "I'm glad you're a part of our class"; "You are important to me"; "How special you are"; or "Do you know that God created you one of a kind?"

### **8. Pray regularly.**

Ask God to give you wisdom to respond, not react, to situations and that your inner attitude will always be appropriate when exercising authority.

### **9. Pray for each child by name and need.**

God created the boys and girls in your class. He knows them better than anyone else. When your heart yells, "I don't know what to do" -- go to God and seek His wisdom. If we go to Him seeking answers, we will find them!

### **10. Make expectations clear by setting up a few classroom rules.**

- a. Follow directions
- b. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself
- c. Be respectful - that includes respecting the teacher, visitors, other students, and property

### **11. When giving the rules, explain reasons behind.**

Children have a right to know that when we all obey the rules we are safer and have more fun. The goal of discipline is to teach children and to lead them increasingly toward self-discipline.

### **12. Share consequences of not following the rules.**

Specific positive and negative consequences will be different at each age and stage of development. What works in the preschool class will need to be different in the middler group.

### **13. Once policies have been stated, allow no infringements.**

Be consistent.

**14. Talk less, act more.**

Instead of asking children to be quiet over and over, wait for them to give you their attention. Or flip a light switch if it gets too noisy.

**15. Follow a set plan for desirable behavior.**

- a. Deal with the problem individually.
- b. Have the child tell what he did and share "What rule was broken?"
- c. Ask what rule was broken.
- d. Be sure child understands why the behavior is not acceptable.
- e. Let the child experience the consequences of his behavior.
- f. Give love and reassurance.
- g. Redirect the child into positive activity.

## How to Avoid Discipline Problems Rather Than Being Forced to Deal With Them

1. Prepare \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ problems and act to \_\_\_\_\_ them.
3. Have the room \_\_\_\_\_ when that \_\_\_\_\_ pupil arrives.
4. Give \_\_\_\_\_ within acceptable \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Determine how your \_\_\_\_\_ and reactions can be carried out in \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Evaluate the \_\_\_\_\_ for misbehavior, such as: needing attention, bored, upset emotions, insecurity, illness, hunger, inner tension expressed by wiggles.
7. Make your children feel \_\_\_\_\_ with such phrases as: "I'm glad you're a part of our class"; "You are important to me"; "How special you are"; or "Do you know that God created you one of a kind?"
8. \_\_\_\_\_ regularly for yourself that God will give you wisdom in respond, not reacting, to situations and that your inner attitude will always be appropriate when exercising authority.
9. Pray for each child by \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. God created the boys and girls in your class. He knows them better than anyone else. When your heart yells, "I don't know what to do" -- go to God and seek His wisdom. If we go to Him seeking answers, we will find them!
10. Make \_\_\_\_\_ clear by setting up a few classroom rules, such as:
  - a. Follow \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Keep hands, feet and objects to \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Be \_\_\_\_\_ - that includes respecting the teacher, other students, and property
11. Children have a right to know that when we all obey the rules we are safer and have more fun. The goal of discipline is to \_\_\_\_\_ children and to lead them increasingly toward self-discipline.
12. Share \_\_\_\_\_ of not following the rules.
13. Once policies have been stated, allow no infringements. Be \_\_\_\_\_.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ less, \_\_\_\_\_ more.
15. Follow a set plan for desirable behavior, such as:
  - a. Deal with the problem \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Have child tell what he \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Ask, "What \_\_\_\_\_ was broken?"
  - d. Be sure child understands \_\_\_\_\_ the behavior is not acceptable.
  - e. Let child \_\_\_\_\_ consequences of behavior.
  - f. Give \_\_\_\_\_ and reassurance.
  - g. \_\_\_\_\_ child into positive activity.

## Leading Children to Christ

### 1. Let the Holy Spirit convict of sin.

Children can know real conviction.

### 2. Be clear and specific in your conversation.

Give clear step-by-step guidance which they can understand and follow.

### 3. Omit symbolism.

"Let Jesus into your Heart" is confusing to a small child who takes everything literally. "Accept Jesus as Savior," or "Ask God to forgive" are terms which will not need to be changed as the child grows older.

### 4 Use the Bible.

Children may forget your words, but God's Word stands.

### 5. Insert the child's name into Scripture verses.

For instance, *"For God so loved (Sherri), that He gave His one and only Son, so if (Sherri) believes in Him, (Sherri) will not perish but have eternal life."*

### 6. Go through the steps of salvation, using language the child can understand.

a. God wants you to become His child. Do you know why God wants you in His family?" (See 1 John 4:8.)

b. "You and I and every person in the world have done wrong things. The Bible word for doing wrong is 'sin.' What do you think should happen to us when we sin?" (See Romans 6:23.)

c. "God loves you so much, He sent His Son to die on the cross for your sin. Because Jesus never sinned, He is the only one who can take the punishment for your sin." (See 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 John 4:14.)

d. "Are you sorry for your sin? Tell God that you are. Do you believe Jesus died to take the punishment for your sin? If you tell God you are sorry for your sin and tell Him you do believe and accept Jesus' death to take away your sin, God forgives all your sin." (See John 1:12.)

e. "The Bible says that when you believe in Jesus, God's Son, you receive God's gift of eternal life. This gift makes you a child of God. (See John 3:16.) This means God is with you now and forever."

### 7. Pray with the child and have the child pray, too.

### 8. Ask the child what God has done for him.

The Holy Spirit can witness to the heart of a child.

### 9. Offer a prayer of thanks to Jesus for what has happened in the child's life.

This will help strengthen the child's faith.

### 10. Follow-up with the child on a regular basis.

This will help the child grow in the essential areas of the Christian life and help him remain true to the commitment made.

## Leading Children to Christ

1. Let the \_\_\_\_\_ convict of sin.
2. Be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in your conversation.
3. Omit \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4 Use the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Insert the child's name into \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Go through the steps of salvation, using \_\_\_\_\_ the child can understand.
  - a. "God wants you to become His child. Do you know why God wants you in His family?" (See 1 John 4:8.)
  - b. "You and I and every person in the world have done wrong things. The Bible word for doing wrong is 'sin.' What do you think should happen to us when we sin?" (See Romans 6:23.)
  - c. "God loves you so much, He sent His Son to die on the cross for your sin. Because Jesus never sinned, He is the only one who can take the punishment for your sin." (See 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 John 4:14.)
  - d. "Are you sorry for your sin? Tell God that you are. Do you believe Jesus died to take the punishment for your sin? If you tell God you are sorry for your sin and tell Him you do believe and accept Jesus' death to take away your sin, God forgives all your sin." (See John 1:12.)
  - e. "The Bible says that when you believe in Jesus, God's Son, you receive God's gift of eternal life. This gift makes you a child of God. (See John 3:16.) This means God is with you now and forever."
7. \_\_\_\_\_ with the child and have the child pray, too.
8. Ask the child what God has \_\_\_\_\_ for him/her.
9. Offer a prayer of \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus for what has \_\_\_\_\_ in the child's life.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ with the child on a regular basis.

# Telling Bible Stories Effectively

## 1. Prepare Prayerfully

### a. Choose Your Story

- (1) Does the story have a strong point, idea or theme?
- (2) Do the characters appeal to the age group?
- (3) Is the vocabulary appropriate for your age level?
- (4) Is the length suited to the age? (Rule of thumb: attention span is about one minute more than the age)
  
- (5) Is the story sprinkled with quotation marks, indicating back and forth dialogue?
- (6) Does it hold your interest? If so, it will probably hold the pupils attention!

### b. Begin with a bang!

## 2. Practice Profusely

### a. Read the story over and over

The purpose is to absorb the story until it become second nature to you - so you can tell it from your HEART, not just by rote. Read the story as a whole. Read it from different

Bible translations.

- (1) Lose yourself in it
- (2) Think as you read - picture the story; set the scenes clearly in your mind.

### b. Think about the characters

- (1) What do they look like?
- (2) What are their respective traits?
- (3) Why do they say what they do?

### c. Make the characters of the story come alive, using your voice, arms and face.

### d. Change your rate of speaking to fit the story's action.

### e. Vary the inflections of your voice to give meaning.

### f. Talk with your whole body.

- (1) Intensify body language when the story intensifies.
- (2) Relax when the mood of the story changes.

### g. Be sure your eyes are alive.

- (1) Eyes reveal emotion to be conveyed.
- (2) Animation shows you are enthusiastic.

### h. Project your voice.

- (1) Everyone should be able to easily hear.
- (2) Dropping the chin sends the sound down, instead of out.
- (3) Always aim your voice at the last row

### i. Tell the story aloud to yourself over and over IN FRONT OF A MIRROR! Make eye contact with yourself!

- (1) Do not concentrate on memorizing word for word -- although you should always know

- your first and last lines by heart for a comfortable start and finish.
- (2) Become familiar with it so you can tell the story the story from your HEART, rather than read it.

### **3. Plan Purposefully**

#### **a. Variety**

Don't tell your stories in the same, old way every time. Use your imagination. Have fun with your presentation. Be creative.

#### **b. Visuals**

A well-told story can stand alone, particularly for older children. But since we're looking for variety and creativity in our teaching -- so as to really make a

difference in the lives....

you'll want to add visuals whenever possible.

### **4. Present Professionally**

#### **a. Let your nervousness be a plus.**

- (1) Breathe deeply before starting.
- (2) A certain amount of tension will help make your story telling come alive.

#### **b. Have everyone's attention before starting.**

- (1) Wait quietly.
- (2) Never raise your voice to speak above the noise.

#### **c. Be natural.**

- (1) Stand or sit in a natural position.
- (2) Do not force or overdo gestures. Meaningless gestures only distract.

#### **d. Look directly at the children, including all members of the group.**

- (1) Don't look over the heads or out the window!
- (2) Take in the whole group.

#### **e. Hold your Bible when telling a Bible story.**

- (1) Helps the children associate
- (2) Tuck your notes inside.

#### **f. Banish backtracking.**

- (1) If you leave out a vital point, find a way to work it in.
- (2) Saying, "Oh, I forgot" and backtracking interrupts the flow. You don't want to interrupt the flow of the story in any way.

#### **g. If you lose someone's attention, pause and wait.**

- (1) Eyeball the pupil distracting.
- (2) Communicate non-verbally.

#### **h. When you come to the end of the story, STOP.**

- (1) Don't tack on morals.
- (2) Don't tack on explanations.

## TELLING BIBLE STORIES EFFECTIVELY

1. Prepare \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Your Story

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- (2) Do the characters appeal to the age group?
- (3) Is the vocabulary appropriate for your age level?
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- (5) Is the story sprinkled with quotation marks, indicating back and forth dialogue?
- (6) Does it hold your interest? If so, it will probably hold the pupils attention!

b. Begin with a \_\_\_\_\_ !

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Profusely

a. Read the story \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Think about the \_\_\_\_\_.

- (1) What do they look like?
- (2) What are their respective traits?
- (3) Why do they say what they do?

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d. Change your \_\_\_\_\_ of speaking to fit the story's action.

e. \_\_\_\_\_ the inflections of your voice to give meaning.

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a. Variety

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(2) Communicate non-verbally.

h. When you come to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the story, STOP.

(1) Don't tack on morals.

(2) Don't tack on explanations.

## **Making Bible Memorization Meaningful**

### **1. Explain the significance of the verse.**

Too often children are required to memorize biblical words before they understand biblical meaning.

### **2. Be sure the class understands the meaning of difficult words.**

Otherwise, it's going to be like trying to build a model airplane without glue. Nothing will really stick for they are trying to remember things they don't even understand. And they may develop wrong concepts.

### **3. Have the children look up the verse in their Bibles.**

### **4. Help children make visual associations, when the verse lends itself to that.**

What mental image comes to your mind when you hear the word "Nike"? It's that celebrated swoosh emblem -- and when you see it your mind conjures up a vast line of athletic products. It's because the company has visually associated that emblem. Visual associations will help God's Word STICK in the hearts of boys and girls.

### **5. Weave the verse into every aspect of the lesson.**

Repeat the verse together while working on crafts; set it to music; find creative ways to review the Scripture.

### **6. Be prepared as a teacher.**

- a. Know the Scriptures you are teaching by memory.
- b. Be sure the Scripture is posted in the room for everyone to see

### **7. Recognize accomplishments through verbal praise or awards.**

Memorization is achieved with maximum efficiency only when there is some external reward given to the learner: praise, approval, certificate, trophy, prize, etc. As we read through Scripture, we can't miss the fact that God Himself uses incentives frequently to motivate.

### **8. To lock in the chapter and verse, say it before and after the verse.**

### **9. For all age groups, the key to memorization is repetition.**

Make it fun! Be creative! Verses studied once are easily forgotten. Review helps children retain what they have learned and helps make the verse a part of the child's life.

### **10. Be selective.**

It's better to learn a few verses and remember them, than try to memorize a lot and not learn them well. If your church has a master plan of goals to be accomplished in children's ministry, it may include a list of Scripture verses which children should learn. You may want to select from those.

Or you could choose from the "Power for Living ABC Verses":

"All things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28 KJV)

"Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)

"Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart" (Psalm 37:4)

"Every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17)

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God" (Isaiah 41:10, NKJV)

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1)

"He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23)

"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13)

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8)

"Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His" (Psalm 100:3)

"Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me" (John 14:1 KJV)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9)

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5)

"Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8 NKJV)

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you" (John 14:27)

"Quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15 NKJV)

"Run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus" (Heb.12:1,2)

Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life (Psalm 23:6a)

"The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10)

"Underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27)

"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19 NKJV)

"When I am afraid, I will trust in You" (Psalm 56:3)

"EXcellent is Your Name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1, NKJV)

"You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your Word" (Psalm 119:114 NKJV)

"Be Zealous for the fear of the Lord" (Proverbs 23:17)

**Or you might want to use Scriptures which teach values (fundamental truths and measures to conform by):**

"Hate what is evil; cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)

"Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31)

"Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27)

"Do what is right and good in the Lord's sight" (Deut. 6:18)

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have (Heb. 13:5)

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men" (Col. 3:23)

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might" (Ecc. 9:10a)

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

"God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7b)

"A friend loves at all times" (Prov. 17:17)

"Honor your father and mother" (Ex. 20:12)

"You shall not murder" (Ex. 20:13)

"You shall not steal" (Ex. 20:15)

**11. Do not undermine self-esteem or contribute to a sense of failure in slow learners.**

**12. Send the verse home in printed form.**

Deut. 11:18-21: *"So keep these commandments carefully in mind. Tie them to your hand to remind you to obey them, and tie them to your forehead between your eyes! Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting at home, when you are out walking, at bedtime, and before breakfast! Write them upon the doors of your houses and upon your gates so that as long as there is sky above the earth, you and your children will enjoy the good life awaiting you in the land the Lord has promised you."*

**13. Be creative!**

All we are doing week after week after week in Bible memorization is sequencing -- putting words in the right order. Have fun - use your imagination. The key to teaching memory verses to boys and girls is found in one word: "VARIETY." The effective teacher will use many ways to teach pupils the Word of God.

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**13. Be \_\_\_\_\_!**

# Using Puppets

## Why Teach With Puppets?

1. Appeals to children of all ages.
2. Develops coordination and timing.
3. Helps boys and girls gain self-confidence.
4. Can be used with a variety of themes and seasons.
5. Develops creativity and variety for both teachers and children.
6. Opportunity to release fears and frustrations in an acceptable way.
7. Aids in overcoming inhibitions because of speaking through an object.
8. Motivates children to become involved because puppets are high interest objects.

## What Is A Puppet?

A puppet is any object that is given personality and can "act out." A pencil can be a puppet! (*"Hi! I'm Peter Pencil. I'm going to write down the names of our class helpers for today. When you see your name - will you stand?"*) A face drawn on the side of a fist hand can be a puppet! A stuffed animal can become a puppet! A professionally-made puppet can be a puppet!

## Determine Your Use

1. Presenting stories
  - a. Read the story carefully, picking out the important parts.
  - b. Keep the play short. Attention span is one minute beyond age.
2. Teaching Scripture verse
  - a. A puppet could be named *Detective Dan*. His purpose would be to search through Scripture to find verses for the boys and girls to learn.
  - b. A hound dog could actually look like he's searching for a verse and then dialogue with the children to help them learn it.
3. Reviewing previous lessons

A *Question Kid* puppet can be created. Attach a question mark to your stage. Children take turns pushing the question mark circle which is the "doorbell" to bring up the *Question Kid* who, in turn, asks review questions.
4. Making announcements
5. Involving with music
  - a. Those who normally don't like music will become involved when they use a puppet.
  - b. Creative way to learn new songs.
6. Reinforcing a biblical principle or providing information

## 7. Teaching behavior

A church mouse named *CM* could be used in a non-threatening way to help children learn proper behavior at church, because a church mouse sees all and knows all!

### Homes / Stages

1. Everyone has a portable puppet stage: your arm!
2. Boxes of all sizes and shapes, or large cans
3. Card table turned on its side
4. Bar across doorway opening
5. Traditional stage using PVC pipe or aluminum tripods and corner joints

### How To Operate Puppets

1. Make puppets look alive.
  - a. If the mouth is moveable, use it to indicate talking. If not, move the head rhythmically when speaking.
  - b. Puppets should look at whom they are speaking, with head tipped forward.
2. Puppets should speak and act realistically, according to the kind of person, animal, or object represented.
  - a. Voices
    - (1) Vary pitch: high/low
    - (2) Vary tempo: fast/slow
  - b. Characters
    - (1) Accents
    - (2) Mannerisms
    - (3) Physical characteristics
    - (4) Idiosyncrasies
    - (5) Likes, dislikes
    - (6) Age
3. When using a stage, follow basic techniques:
  - a. The puppet should not just pop out of thin air, but enter and exit as though walking up or down 3 steps, using depth of the stage.
  - b. Lock in elbow to keep arm straight.
  - c. Keep wrist down so puppets can "look" at audience.
  - d. Space puppets apart to look realistic.

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7. Teaching proper \_\_\_\_\_

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5. \_\_\_\_\_ stage using PVC pipe or aluminum tripods and corner joints

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## **GUIDELINES FOR USING BIBLE LEARNING GAMES**

"There will be a TEST next Sunday. Everyone be sure and come!"

The boys and girls in your class would not jump for joy upon hearing such an announcement, yet the basic goal of teaching is learning! Acquiring knowledge comes through reinforcement, and reinforcement comes as a result of continual review.

A *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon pictures Calvin sitting in class, eyes half-closed, about ready to drift off to sleep. Suddenly he sits upright and screams, "*BORING!*" "*UNINTERESTING!*" "*HO-HUM!*"

I've seen it often. The child who sits in class like a zombie, showing no interest, will be almost automatically drawn into a Bible game. Or Joe Cool who wouldn't be caught dead singing or participating in any way, can't resist participating in a game.

"*A little bit of sugar makes the medicine go down,*" sang Walt Disney's Mary Poppins. Her point, of course, was that even things which are distasteful can be made pleasant - in fact, downright fun.

This same principle applies to Christian Education. The primary purpose of Bible games is to review Bible facts, verses, and concepts. Educational experts tell us that one-third of our teaching time should be spent in review! Application of knowledge is important for utilization. Reviewing helps learning become a meaningful part of a child's life. One way to accomplish this goal is to teach with Bible games. The components of games are the same as for tests: questions and answers, with the added ingredient of fun!

### **1. Enjoy the game with your children!**

As you enter into the spirit of the activity with them, you will grow closer to them on a personal level. Relax class rules slightly, but keep control.

### **2. Write your questions in advance.**

Keep in mind your objective which is to review and re-emphasize. The questions used in the games determine their effectiveness as a teaching tool. Always think FIRST of what you want to accomplish with the children. Review questions fall into two basic categories: (1) Bible truth: facts, truths, and verses, and (2) Bible application: applying truths and concepts to life - encouraging children to use the facts and apply them to life in problem solving.

One of the best sources of questions is the pupil's workbook which accompanies your age level curriculum. In fact, it is more effective to turn the weekly reading-writing activities found in most pupil books into Bible games. The material is easily adaptable. As you do this, lesson review will change from drudgery to exciting adventure.

### **3. Try out the game ahead of time and think through potential problems.**

By so doing, the purpose for playing the game, which is review, is not lost. If the children will be tossing for points - how far back should they stand? Is it best to place the toss game on the floor or on a table? What happens if they miss? How many times can they try again? Write down the rules.

### **4. Do not embarrass pupils.**

Use pairs or teams. If you have pupils who come irregularly or who not present when some of the Bible material was taught, team them with pupils who were present when the material was presented. This will save an irregular attendee from embarrassment and allow him to enjoy the Bible game.

### **5. Read the answers to questions pupils miss.**

In this way, the activity will aid learning as well as helping reinforce material previously learned.

### **6. Bring the game to a close while still at peak level.**

Conclude the game while the students are still enjoying it and wanting more. About 10 minutes is normally enough time to play a review game.

**7. Rotate games so they will stay new and fresh.**

Use one for a few weeks and then put it away for a period of time. When you use it again, the pupils will respond with enthusiasm.

**8. Be creative.**

Don't be afraid to experiment, for this is how new ideas are developed.

## GUIDELINES FOR USING BIBLE LEARNING GAMES

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6. Bring the game to a close while still at \_\_\_\_\_ level.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ games so they will stay new and fresh.

8. Be \_\_\_\_\_.

# How to Use Music in the Classroom

## Principles for Selecting Music

1. Short songs with repetition of phrases and melody.
2. Singing range reasonable (not too high / not too low).
3. Simple rhythms.
4. New words to familiar tunes is an excellent place to start.

Perhaps you'll telling the story of Joshua and need a song to go with it. Here are some examples:

JOSHUA TRUSTED GOD (Tune: "God Is So Good")

Joshua trusted God  
Joshua trusted God  
Joshua trusted God  
And I'll do the same.

Joshua loved God  
Joshua loved God  
Joshua loved God  
And I love Him, too.

GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES (Tune: "Jesus Loves Me")

Yes, God keeps His promises  
Yes, God keeps His promises  
Yes, God keeps His promises  
The Bible tells me so.

## 5. Select songs with a particular purpose in mind.

- a. To teach a lesson idea (curriculum connector). The wonderful thing about being a religious education teacher in the new millennium is the abundance of excellent resources which are available. But again -- if you can't find the particular song you want -- be creative! Make it up -- using a familiar tune. Here are some examples:

ADAM AND EVE (Tune: "Mary Had A Little Lamb")

Adam and Eve they had it made,  
Had it made, had it made.  
Adam and Eve they had it made,  
Then they went and blew it.

God said not to eat that fruit,  
Eat that fruit, eat that fruit.  
God said not to eat that fruit,  
Then they went and blew it.

They made the choice to disobey,  
Disobey, disobey.  
They made the choice to disobey,  
They knew they shouldn't do it.

God knows best, we should obey,  
Should obey, should obey.  
God knows best we should obey,  
Then we won't go and blow it.

APOSTLES (Tune: "*Jesus Loves Me*" - Source Unknown)  
Jesus called them one by one, Peter, Andrew, James and John,  
Next came Philip, Thomas too, Matthew and Bartholomew.  
James the one they called the less, Simon, also Thaddeus,  
The twelfth apostle Judas made, Jesus was by him betrayed.  
Yes, Jesus called them, Yes, Jesus called them,  
Yes, Jesus called them, The Bible tells me so.

- b. To teach a Bible verse. It's easier to learn Scripture when you add rhythm and melody. If you can't find a song, use a familiar tune. Here are some examples:

COLOSSIANS 3:23 (Tune: "*Happy Birthday*")  
Whatever you do,  
Work at it with all your heart  
As working for the Lord,  
And not for men.

EXODUS 20:12 (Tune: "*Happy Birthday*")  
Honor your father  
Honor your mother  
Honor your father and mother  
Exodus 20:12

GENESIS 1:1 (Tune: "*Three Blind Mice*")  
In the beginning  
In the beginning  
God created  
God created  
The heavens and the earth  
The heavens and the earth  
Genesis 1:1  
Genesis 1:1

HEBREWS 13:5 (Tune: "*On Top of Ole' Smokey*")  
Keep your lives free  
From the love of money  
And be content  
With what you have.

PSALM 56:3  
(Tune: "*London Bridge is Falling Down*")  
When I am afraid I will trust in You  
Trust in You, trust in You  
When I am afraid I will trust in You  
Psalm 56:3

ROMANS 12:9  
(Tune: "*Are You Sleeping?*")  
Hate what is evil, hate what is evil;  
Cling to what is good; cling to what is good.

Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.  
Romans 12:9; Romans 12:9.

- c. To teach Bible facts. A teacher reports that while teaching public school, he wrote a song about the circulatory system (inferior vena cava, superior vena cava, etc.) to help his students remember the facts. All the students who learned the song scored PERFECTLY on their science exam! Twelve years later, his students still went to him -- singing the entire song!
- d. To teach a concept
- e. To praise and worship God. An abundance of songs are now available in this area.
- f. To have fun or to have action. There's nothing wrong with singing songs just for fun or just for action, but that's what the purpose should be.

**6. Stay away from songs which have symbolism and imagery which are foreign to a child's literal mind.**

## **Problem Areas In Teaching Music**

### **1. Comfort zone**

We often teach what we know. It's easier to teach the songs we know than to try and learn the new ones that are now available with dynamic messages that relate to a child's life. "I've always done it this way." Not wanting to try anything new or different.

### **2. "Can't Sing" syndrome**

If you haven't had professional training, we often say "I can't sing." Someone may have made a derogatory remark about your singing sometime in your life and you decided, "I can't sing." You may not be able to sing as well as someone else you know and so you claim, "I can't sing." SO -- you never include singing in what you're trying to do. The bottom line with music for boys and girls is: just have FUN with it! Be creative! Enjoy!

### **3. Collector skills need improving**

There is a need to constantly be looking for music and how to make music more effective in children's ministry. Create a file for future reference.

## **Suggestions for Making Music Come Alive**

### **1. Mr. Echo Puppet**

When wanting to teach the children the words to a song, a Mr. Echo puppet could be brought out. He sings one line...the pupils echo it.

### **2. Play "Follow the Leader"**

The leader sings one line, the children follow.

### **3. Use key words**

Print key words of the song to be learned on slips of paper. Pass them out to the children. As the song is sung, pupils stand as their word is sung. This keeps the boys and girls alert to the words and helps them to learn them faster.

### **4. Power Point**

Be sure your church has a CCLI license (Christian Copyright Licensing, Inc., 17201 NE Sacramento, Portland, OR 97230 / 800-234-2446).

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Yes, Jesus called them, Yes, Jesus called them,  
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- b. To teach a Bible verse.
  - c. To teach Bible \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. To teach a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. To \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ God.
  - f. To have fun or to have \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Stay away from songs which have symbolism and imagery which are foreign to a child's \_\_\_\_\_ mind.

#### **Problem Areas in Teaching Music**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ zone
- 2. " \_\_\_\_\_ " syndrome
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ skills need to be improved.

#### **Suggestions for making Music Come Alive**

- 1. Mr. Echo Puppet
- 2. Play "Follow the Leader"  
The leaders sings one line, the children follow.
- 3. Use key words  
Print key words of the song to be learned on slips of paper. Pass them out to the children. As the song is sung, pupils stand as their word is sung. This keeps the boys and girls alert to the words and helps them to learn them faster.
- 4. Song charts on overhead or Power Point

## Rooms Teach, Too!

Allow your room to be a partner in the teaching/learning process. Surroundings affect children's attitudes and resulting learning. Your classroom is a silent partner that has the potential to aid or hinder the learning of your pupils. A learner is influenced by the environment as well as by teachers and peers.

All of us learn to some extent by "osmosis" from our surroundings. This is particularly true about children. Boys and girls "read" the environment we create for them and these impressions become their first lessons with deep significance for every other lesson that follows.

### 1. How do you FEEL about your room? Why?

### 2. Does the furniture add or detract from the atmosphere of the room? Why?

### 3. Is there a central theme to room decorations? If so, what?

### 4. Does the room say, "We are proud of your work in class?"

- a. Work displayed - Displaying work helps students gain a sense of ownership of their classroom while showing the teacher values their work.
- b. Names visible - What are different ways names can be made visible in a classroom? . . .

### 5. Does the room say, "Come in?"

- a. Decorations on door
- b. Walls painted with colors carefully chosen to be a supportive element in the teaching/learning environment
  - (1) Bright colors stimulate and excite - best for small areas
  - (2) Pale yellow and white look well on large wall areas with northern window exposure or rooms without much natural light.
  - (3) Soft blues and soft greens create a feeling of coolness - good choice for rooms having southern and western window exposure or rooms where natural lighting is adequate.
- c. Well-lighted  
Natural lighting preferred, but adequate lighting at least provides a much warmer, more cheerful space. Wattage may need to be increased to provide adequate light for activities.  
Check with the maintenance personnel in your church to see if you can put in higher wattage. Another way to get light into a classroom is to install white window shades.
- d. Bulletin boards attractive
  - (1) Should be used as a tool to motivate, teach, and enrich the lesson
  - (2) Whenever possible, let the children be involved in the construction of the board and in the lesson it's designed to teach.
  - (3) Pictures mounted on brightly colored paper or wall paper - Pictures allow children to identify with different types of situations. Pictures provide a valuable substitute when personal experiences are impossible.
  - (4) Changed frequently - All visible teaching materials should be from the current unit of study!
- e. Cabinets for storage  
Hinged shelves on rolling casters allows flexible space for storage. Hinges allow the shelves to be out of sight when not in use.
- f. Pictures displayed at eye level

### 6. Does your room say, "We understand children?"

- a. Choice of activities - Children learn in different ways. Interests vary.
- b. Are there activities children can do alone if they don't want to work with another person?

- c. Enough space to move about - 25 to 30 square feet of floor space per person should be provided in each children's department. If not, participation in activities will be limited. (If this is impossible, infants should have 20 square feet; toddlers - 15; children's classes - 8.) If there are too many children in your room, the class may need to be divided. When a group has grown to occupy 70% of its available space, growth strangulation occurs. The room size actually deters further growth. Since we are working toward the growth of our Sunday Schools, children's classes should be kept at a size where maximum teaching/learning can transpire and numerical growth can be stimulated. Also, too much furniture or equipment may give the children a fenced-in feeling which is counter productive to learning.
- d. Furniture correct size  
Survey the furnishings in your classroom. If they are too small or too large, exchange furniture with another class. Appropriately sized furnishings are important if the child is to be comfortable in his learning environment.  
Preschool 10"-12" chair height; 20"-22" table height  
Grades 1-3 12"-14" chair height; 22"-24" table height  
Grades 4-6 14"-16" chair height; 24"-26" table height
- e. Chalkboards/bulletin boards at eye level
- f. Flexibility of room arrangement - Is there another way in which the necessary furniture and equipment might be arranged to increase open space and flexibility? Can some of the tables be removed? Many activities require a flat surface which can be done on the floor. Would the younger children be content to sit on a rug or carpeted area? Stop and think! Is it really necessary for every child to sit on a chair at any one time? If not, perhaps it will be possible to gain additional space by removing some of the chairs. Placing bookcases back to back makes a divider while creating work areas.
- g. Class rules posted - The same class rules should be posted in all children's room. Even if more than one teacher uses the room, the rules remain the same. Children need a clear vision of rules so they know what is expected. Rules provide limits. Children need limits to feel secure.
  1. Follow directions.
  2. Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
  3. Be quiet and listen when told to.

#### **7. Does your room say, "Learning is fun?"**

- a. Visually- appealing activities
- b. Variety of resources available
- c. Visuals, charts, maps available
- d. Special points of interest: books, puzzles, games, nature's treasures

#### **8. Does your room say, "We care?"**

- a. Neat - The most common complaint about most classrooms is that they are too small. Often the problem is the amount of clutter.
- b. Clean - You may want to plan a special fix-it night where parents come to help with cleaning and doing small repairs or painting.
- c. Smell fresh
- d. Out-dated materials tossed or recycled

#### **9. What if you have a temporary classroom?**

- a. If you cannot have your own locked cupboard, you may have to carry your supplies in your own carton, back and forth each week.
- b. Meet with other users of the room to come to an agreement of the best arrangement. If possible, try to have the same age groups using the same rooms.
- c. Establish policies for the use of shared equipment. What can be placed on the walls and bulletin boards? When are wastebaskets to be emptied?

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## Principles for Playing Games During Recreation

Through games children develop socially, discover how to relate, and learn how to cope with success or failure. Games are an excellent way to build cohesion in the group as the children learn to trust and work together. They also break the ice and help any new boys or girls become better acquainted.

### **1. Organize extensively.**

Be sure you know how to play each game and what the rules are. Think about the location where the game will be played and imagine your group being there. What problems might be encountered?

### **2. Be prepared with creative alternatives.**

Be ready at a moment's notice to meet the needs and mood of your group. Always have several games "up your sleeve" just in case what was planned will not work.

### **3. Keep it simple.**

Spend as little time as possible in organizing the game or dividing into teams. It's during this time children become restless and problems begin.

### **4. Be quick to recognize teaching opportunities.**

Children constantly learn. Playing games provides numerous opportunities for teaching Christ-like attitudes and proper behavior responses.

### **5. Plan games where all pupils can participate.**

Except for physical reasons, everyone should be involved.

### **6. Be creative.**

Use a variety of games, rather than letting even a favorite monopolize each play time.

### **7. Watch for lagging interest.**

If interest lags in a game, another one should be started immediately. If not, pupils will want to begin to drop out.

### **8. Exhibit enthusiasm.**

Enthusiasm is contagious!

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## How Teachers Can Show Their Love

The need for love is the greatest of all human needs. Children who don't receive love cannot fulfill their God-given potential for a fulfilling, contributing life. While VBS workers at church spend relatively brief amounts of time with children, our effect on boys and girls must not be minimized. Small tokens of love from a children's teacher can sometimes have an impact way out of proportion to the significance of the event.

Here are simple ways to show your children you love them.

### **1. Learn their names.**

This isn't always easy in VBS, since you only have the children for only a brief time. Help your memory by using name tags. Mentally try to link the child's name with something memorable, such as Ben has brown hair or Sam's smile is sensational.

### **2. Be a patient listener.**

Children's narratives can sometimes be tedious, filled with long pauses, repeated words, and more details than anyone really cares to hear. However, really LISTENING to a child says, "I care. I'm interested in you." To show that you are listening, it sometimes helps to interject a question or comment in the narrative. For example, "That must have been a lot of fun," or "How did you feel when your brother did that?"

### **3. Make eye contact.**

While you will want to avoid prolonged stares, making brief eye contact with a child communicates that you are listening and attentive.

### **4. Welcome children warmly.**

### **5. Notice things about your children.**

Is Jessica wearing a particularly attractive dress? Tell her so. Has Nathan lost a tooth? Let him tell about it. Is Corbin sporting new shoes? Admire the special features he points out. This attentiveness tells children they are important to you.

### **6. Praise good work, good behavior, and good effort.**

According to some specialists, it takes several positive remarks to undo the effect of one negative comment. Some children hear mostly commands and negatives, such as: "You never . . ." or "You always . . ." Help to balance these with honest praise of the good things you notice: "You're doing a great job on that picture," "You're really improving in raising your hand before you talk."

### **7. Say good things about a child to his or her parents, in the child's hearing.**

### **8. Pray daily for each child.**

Prayer suggestions: accept Jesus as Savior, grow as Jesus did, make wise decisions, respect authority, and choose right friends.

## How Teachers Can Show Their Love

1. Learn their \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Be a patient \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Make \_\_\_\_\_ contact.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ children warmly.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ things about your children.
6. Praise good \_\_\_\_\_, good \_\_\_\_\_, and good \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Say good things about a child to his or her parents, in the child's \_\_\_\_\_.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ daily for each child (accept Jesus as Savior, grow as Jesus did, make wise decisions, respect authority, and choose right friends).

# The Art of Praising Children

(by Victor M. Parachin. Reprinted from *Standard*. Used by permission.)

Children flourish and thrive when they receive praise from the important adults in their lives. Conversely, the healthy development of a child's self-esteem can be arrested and even damaged when praise is limited or nonexistent.

Praise is an essential component of a child's life. Through it a child receives positive, ego-building messages that say: "You are unique"; "You are important to me"; "You can do it!" Praise frees a child to be creative, energetic, and self-confident.

Perhaps that is why the Bible emphasizes the importance of praise. In the Old Testament we are reminded of the power that praise has over us: "Anxious hearts are very heavy but a word of encouragement does wonders!" (Proverbs 12:25, TLB). Here are some of the most effective ways to offer the gift of praise to children.

## 1. Increase your praise level

Praise children at every opportunity. Praise is the world's greatest teacher.

## 2. Be specific

Rather than using vague and general terms, shape your vocabulary to be explicit and precise about what you want to commend. Here are some examples. Instead of saying, "I love your painting," try "I really like the colors you chose." Or rather than saying, "You are such a good helper," say, "Thank you for putting the toys on the shelf where they belong."

## 3. Stay honest

When a child hears applause no matter how he performs, the sound can soon turn hollow and lose its effectiveness as a source of motivation. Children are quick to sense when you don't really mean what you're saying. They need honest feedback.

## 4. Identify progress

Like adults, children want to know they are developing and improving. "Wow! You were able to quote the entire verse. That's something you weren't able to do last week."

## 5. Don't compare

Stay away from statements like, "You are the smartest child in class"; or "You're the only one in the class who can memorize quickly." Statements of comparison not only put someone else down, they can work against a child by promoting unnecessary competition and the fear of failure.

Also, don't compare a child negatively with another pupil: "Why can't you be good like Billy?" Such comments are damaging to a child's self-esteem. Each little comparison may seem unimportant in itself, but added together can cause a child to believe he/she will never be able to measure up.

## 6. Avoid negative compliments

Comments such as "It's great to see you being good for a change" or "I can't believe you actually listened through the entire story today without causing trouble" are not praise, but attempts to manipulate a child into doing what you want. Another danger with such sentences is that the child will identify only with the negative aspect.

## 7. Praise a child for accomplishments, not innate abilities or looks.

Focus on praising a child for what he has done with what he was given. For example, "I know you tried your best. Keep up the good work."

## The Art of Praising Children

(by Victor M. Parachin. Reprinted from *Standard*. Used by permission.)

1. Increase your \_\_\_\_\_ level .
2. Be \_\_\_\_\_ .
3. Stay \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Identify \_\_\_\_\_ .
5. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ .
6. Avoid \_\_\_\_\_ compliments.
7. Praise a child for \_\_\_\_\_, not innate abilities or looks.

## Special Needs Children: Attention Deficit Disorder

(by Pamela J. Kuhn - Open Door Ministries - Used by Permission)

Did you know that one child in every classroom has attention deficit disorder? Below are eight ideas for helping that ADD child hear and comprehend the truths being taught-bringing them closer to Jesus.

### **1. An ADD child has a very short memory span.**

You did tell him to sit in his seat a couple minutes ago, but he has already forgotten it. Patiently remind him, "Don't forget to sit in your seat, Joshua." But don't forget that even when he remembers and wants to sit, his legs begin to tingle and he just has to move. Use these times to your advantage. When you notice him beginning to wiggle, say, "Joshua, why don't you come and put up the picture of this big fish that swallowed Jonah?"

### **2. Make eye contact with the child.**

Often an ADD child's mind will wander. When telling the story about Daniel in the Lions' den, look at his eyes and say, "Joshua, what do you think the lions did when they were hungry?" With eye contact you can pull them back from their wandering thoughts.

**3. Because ADD children need activity to use some of their extra energy, plan movement into your class time.** Walk around the room seven times with Joshua at Jericho, allow your class to stand and swing David's slingshot at Goliath, and dip seven times in the muddy Jordan with Naaman.

### **4. ADD children may get angry because you tell them "Don't," "No," "You can't."**

They don't see what they were doing wrong; they just hear you correcting them again. Instead, reinforce the times of good behavior-even if observed for a short amount of time. "Brittany, you are sitting so quietly. Why don't you help me pass out the crayons?" "Joshua, you have been listening so well. I think you'd make me a good helper to hand out the instruments." Catch them being good.

### **5. Use nonverbal activity to remind the child of classroom rules.**

Take a zipper to class and explain to the students that the zipper is like their lips when you are speaking. Pass the zipper around so each child can open and close it. Now when you are in the middle of the story and your ADD child begins to talk, all you need to do is walk toward them until you have their attention and use the motion for zipping your lips.

### **6. Because of their short-term attention span, ADD children often fail to finish what they start.**

During coloring time, don't tell the child to color her picture. Instead say, "Brittany, look at Jesus' robe. Why don't you color it?" When the robe is colored, say, "That's a pretty robe, Brittany. Look at the sun in the sky. Can you color it?" One instruction at a time keeps them from becoming jumbled in her mind.

### **7. The ADD child learns best when using the four senses of hearing, smell, touch, and sight.**

In telling the story of Jesus working in His father's carpenter shop, bring in a piece of wood and a plane. Allow the children to push the plane back and forth over the wood. Encourage the child to smell and feel the wood curls. Instruct him or her to listen as you sweep up the wood-a chore that probably belonged to Jesus. You won't have to single out the ADD child for this activity; your whole class will want a turn.

### **8. The most important thing to remember is that ADD children cannot help their disease any more than those with leukemia can help theirs.**

Love, don't just tolerate, the child with all your heart, and he or she will respond to that love. What a joy it is to have Joshua run up to me and say, "Teacher, I got new shoes." Or to have Brittany say, "I want to sit by my teacher."

Children with attention deficit disorder want to please you, but often their brain doesn't tell them how to do what you want. Take time to see them as individuals, love them, and encourage them in their walk with Jesus. Each tiny step you see will bring you a joy beyond description. I know Joshua got the quiet seat this week.

## Special Needs Children: Attention Deficit Disorder

(by Pamela J. Kuhn - Open Door Ministries - Used by Permission)

Did you know that one child in every classroom has attention deficit disorder? Below are eight ideas for helping that ADD child hear and comprehend the truths being taught-bringing them closer to Jesus.

1. An ADD child has a very short \_\_\_\_\_ span.
2. Make \_\_\_\_\_ contact with the child. .
3. Because ADD children need activity to use some of their extra energy, plan \_\_\_\_\_ into your class time.
4. ADD children may get \_\_\_\_\_ because you tell them "Don't," "No," "You can't."
5. Use \_\_\_\_\_ activity to remind the child of classroom rules.
6. Because of their short-term attention span, ADD children often fail to \_\_\_\_\_ what they
7. The ADD child learns best when using the four \_\_\_\_\_ of hearing, smell, touch, and sight.
8. The most important thing to remember is that ADD children cannot help their \_\_\_\_\_ any more than those with leukemia can help theirs.

### TEACHER'S PRAYER

Lord, help me be aware of the potentiality  
That lies within each precious child that You have sent to me.  
Help me to see through Heaven's eyes their possibility  
And daily instill values that will last eternally.

You've shown your faith in me with this responsibility  
And, Lord, I pray you'll never be dissatisfied with me.  
But, God, I must ask you for Your strength to meet the task;  
That daily You will help me—that's all I really ask.

For when I grow impatient, slow me down and speak to me  
And remind me of the child that I once used to be.  
God, grant to me the wisdom that I need to thus impart  
And nurture the potential you have planted in their heart.

For they're like a tender flower awaiting to unfold  
And oh the awesome beauty that one day we will behold.  
So, Lord, I want to thank you for your trust and confidence,  
And for the opportunity to make a difference.

The task will not be easy, but if you will work through me  
Together we will change a life for all eternity.

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