

STEPS TO BUILDING A VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

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Building a program mentally, spiritually and physically for either edification or evangelization, or both, is no small task. The rewards from a great VBS program is a boost in morale among workers as co-laborers see a display of spiritual fruit that reconfirms a workers' divine purpose. But before even starting, our goals must be decided. When, where and the type of VBS must be determined and your experienced and inexperienced worker base must be acquired. The type of program must be determined. A theme for the program and then a time line for getting lessons prepared, props purchased or built is your starting place. Your staff must be instructed and prepared. We will teach the various methods of approaching a daily schedule and why we do what we do to achieve the most of our time, talents and workers present. Size of church, lack of experience in workers and poor organization is not a valid excuse for not having a VBS program that will produce visitors, souls saved and young Christians who will grow in grace and knowledge because of your efforts.

I. **HAVING _____ BASED GOALS**

"Blessed is the man that trusted in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is." Jer. 17:7 "Every prudent man dealeth with knowledge: but a fool layeth open his folly." Prov. 13:16

A. **FOUNDATION – What are you wanting to achieve?**

- Please the Lord
- Evangelize the lost
- Edify the believer
- Produce prospects for the Sunday School
- Build, motivate and encourage teachers

B. **ACHIEVABLE – How many available Christians will serve?**

- How many workers are available to serve?
- How many have served in VBS before?
- How many workers have teaching experience and know how to use an assortment of visuals?
- How many workers can and will lead someone to Christ?

C. **INCLUSIVE – WHO WILL BE INVITED TO THE VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL?**

- Nursery Age – Is there a need for a nursery for worker's children? Are there workers available and capable of caring for the nursery age?
- Pre-school Age – Normally, the pre-school age cannot sit through a non-traditional 1 ½ hour program. They would need their own class and program. You must determine if there is a need and workers enough to encourage this age.
- Kindergarten – Sixth Grade – This is your target age group for traditional and non-traditional VBS programs.

- Teenagers – If you are not using teens as workers, teens are a great target age group and a good program will not only hold their attention but can produce spiritual and physical fruit.
- Adults – Children are the greatest producers of visitors to a VBS program. Often they will invite neighbors and family members to the program. This should never be discouraged and is a great opportunity to display your church's love and concern for the community. It often produces souls being saved.

D. TIMELY - WHEN DO YOU HAVE YOUR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL?

- Summer Program – June, July or August
- When do your public and private schools dismiss for the summer and when do they return to school in the fall?
- When do the other churches in your area have their VBS program? (We have found that if you start on the Sunday PM service and go through Wednesday or Thursday it produces more fruit.)
- Is a Spring or Fall "Children's Crusade" an option for you? Many churches children's base for inviting their friends is only at school. This means that the best time for evangelization is during the school year.
- What time of the day will you have your program? This is determined by your worker base, your bus and van drivers work schedules and demographics of your church location.

E. HELPFUL – _____ HOW VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL HELPED YOUR COMMUNITY, CHURCH FAMILY AND WORKERS

- Salvations
- Prospects and contacts
- Produce new workers and teachers
- Encourage your workers and produce harmony in your church family
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II. DETERMINING THE TYPE OF VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHURCH

A. TRADITIONAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

- Rally Time
- Lesson
- Craft
- Game Time & Snack
- Return to Rally for dismissal

B. PRO'S AND CON'S TO THE TRADITIONAL VBS PROGRAM

- **Pro's**
- Everyone knows how a traditional VBS is run.
- You assign workers to different areas and usually there is a place for everyone to work.
- The children get to move around from room to room which creates an energy release.

- All children are taught a lesson on their grade level.
- **Con's**
- You need multiple rooms.
- You need multiple workers experienced in all needed areas.
- Order and discipline is difficult when moving children from station to station.
- Time is lost in moving and establishing order with the children.
- More teachers are required to teach all grades.
- More organization and communication is required.

C. NON-TRADITIONAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

- The entire 1 ½ hour program is conducted in one room with a Program Director and staff. His staff consists of spiritually, faithful, experienced and talented workers.
- The rest of the workers consist of faithful bus drivers, soul winners and pew missionaries.
- The Program is designed to maintain the attention, create mystery and provide a platform for the Holy Spirit to convict for salvation or instruction in righteousness for the believer.

D. PRO'S AND CON'S TO THE NON-TRADITIONAL VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

• PRO'S

- Workers are _____ on the program and being _____ to the children.
- The Program Director has a visual on all aspects of the program and the children.
- The physical aspect of the worker is diminished enabling them to concentrate on their children.
- You are using your most faithful, capable and experienced workers to run the program.

• CON'S

- The bulk of the labor is placed on the Program Director and the workers involved in presenting the program.
- The Program Director's message must be simple enough to reach all ages.

III. DEVELOPING YOUR THEME

- Broad platform of Biblical truth with a specific target: Examples of three slides
- Daily Memory Verses used as a daily message theme points to the broader platform from a different angle each day. (Daily edification with the gospel presentation in each lesson)

IV. DEVELOPING AN OUTLINE OF YOUR PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- A. The program should be constantly changing in tempo, direction and activity but always pointing to the truth found in the theme.**
- B. Every _____ to _____ minutes the program should change activity and often include the audience in some manner.**
- C. Anticipation comes from a structured order of daily services and mystery is maintained by variation in the program and activity.**
- D. The message time should be about fifteen minutes and include visuals that support not only the message but the weekly theme with evangelization and edification as the goal.**

E. The invitation should be given as much time as the message. This is why a review game is included. This allows the personal work to be accomplished and for the director to see how much of the program the children learned.

F. Example of our program.

- Opening Welcome (Magic Trick, Present Theme, Opening Song, etc.)
- Pledges (American, Christian, Bible)
- Program Explanation, Rules & Prizes to be given away
- Theme Song
- Spotlight: Puppets, Skit, Magic, etc.
- Song
- Offering: Full Explanation
- Memory Verse: Explanation
- Spotlight: Puppets, Skit, Magic, etc.
- Message:
- Invitation: Full Explanation
- Review Game:
- Award Prizes, Best Boy and Girl, Most Visitors
- Closing Statements and Dismissal (According to bus route, age or grade)

CONCLUSION: Vacation Bible School is not just an accepted part of every church schedule but an opportunity for _____. Service to our Lord is displayed by serving others. Reaching children was the heartbeat of our Savior and a church that budgets its' stewardship to reaching children will always be a visionary, growing and a blessed church.

Answer Key: FAITH, EVALUATE, focused, missionaries, three, seven, church wide revival