

—Leading & Directing VBS—

Helpful Tips:

Enlist a Prayer Team: Look for people in your church that are prayer warriors! Ask them to begin praying for you as the VBS Director that you may have Godly wisdom with all aspects of planning VBS in your church.

Plan a prayer walk the day before VBS.

Put each VBS volunteer's name on a slip of paper and have people pick one up to dedicate to pray for that volunteer during the week of VBS. One idea is a couple of weeks before VBS have the slips of paper lying on the altar for people to pick up after church or during the invitation time. Be creative and have something that goes along with your theme.

Get the Pastor on Board: Be sure to work with and have your pastor on board with what you are doing for VBS. Keep him in the loop with all your planning. Let him be your voice! He can promote VBS from the pulpit. He needs to be seen and heard during the week of VBS. Don't let him hide in the office. Give him a job!

Set Your Date Early: By this time, you should have your date on the calendar and start to enlist leaders. Set your date according to what is best for your church and volunteers.

Enlist Leaders: Pray, pray and pray more before asking! Ask personally: NO email, and/or text! Make it face to face.

Are you going to enlist youth volunteers? I suggest only using older youth 9/10/11/12 graders. Be sure to have a meeting with the youth and share your expectations with them. Be very specific. Have a dress code, no phones, and stay in your assigned area. Go over guidelines about hugging, carrying children, etc.

Enroll: Get your registration forms out early. Publicize where and how people can register. I know you young folks like to be all digital, but remember, we old folks like paper forms to fill out. Your registration forms need to have a place for any known allergies, who can pick up the kids, and if they can be photographed.

Pick the Right Curriculum: WOW! There are so many curriculums to choose from! Do your research. Choose a curriculum that will be the best for your church. Focus on bible story content!

Budget: Set and know your budget! Ask Sunday School classes to help fund crafts and snacks! Curriculum is the most expensive item for VBS but is important. Scale back on decorations!

Decorate—Less is More: Number one rule for decorating, “Less is Better”. Don’t go overboard! Yes, you want the kids to be excited when they enter your church. Focus on one or two areas: foyer, sanctuary, and/or fellowship hall, and areas that all children will pass through. The classroom doesn’t need to be so overloaded with “stuff” that it is overstimulating to the children. Number one priority is Bible Study!

Go on Mission: Incorporate missions in your VBS! Some curriculum will have a mission project for you to follow and a mission curriculum. If not, you can still incorporate a mission project in your VBS. Here are some ideas:

- Collect canned food for food banks
- Collect items for a men’s or women’s mission
- Collect items (i.e. paper goods, etc.) for a local Associational camp
- Collect supplies for your church’s summer mission trip
- Collect school supplies for underprivileged children

There is always something you can do in your community to promote missions. Children need to learn the importance of helping others and showing God’s love to others.

Make the mission project a fun contest. Children love competition! You may need to be ready to get slimed or get a pie in the face!!!

Contact Arkansas Baptist State Convention Missions Team for additional mission ideas.

Incorporate a Family Night: There are lots of ways to have church and family night. It can be Sunday night, Friday night, or Wednesday night. Wednesday night is a good time. People are already used to going to church. Even if you have VBS at night, you can let Wednesday night be for the family to come and see what their child is doing. Have parents attend the worship rally, show off rooms, or have someone tell what the Bible stories have been that week. Share a snack with them. Have teachers there to visit with parents, especially those families that do not attend church anywhere.

Follow Up: Important, Important! Don’t let this slip through the cracks! VBS is for children and families that are unchurched. Reach out to them. You need to follow up within the next two weeks following the end of VBS. You may even have to reach out to a family more than once. Invite the child’s Sunday School teachers to go with you to see the family. Take the church schedule with you! Take information of any upcoming children’s events. Give them your number! Make a visit, don't just call.

Protect & Secure: Have people that are posted throughout your church. Have them identified by a hat shirt or name tag. Children and leaders need to know who they can go to for assistance. It is important to have your safety team posted at designated areas during dismissal time. Parents should come in and pick children up from their child’s teacher; especially preschoolers!

Promote: Promote early; get your information out there! Use word of mouth, newspaper, flyers, and/or social media. There are many ways to advertise. Do it early.

Have members that live in apartment complexes post flyers on community boards. Just do it early.

Transport: Cover all your bases. Check with an insurance agent to be sure you are covered. Be sure to have a signed parent permission form for each child. Driver must be properly licensed and have an additional adult rider or two for crowd control and safety precautions.

Resources:

- Pinterest
- www.teacherspayteachers.com
- Bible Fun for Kids
- Bible Kids Fun Zone
- DLTK Bible activities
- <https://vbs.lifeway.com/>
- Mardel (Christian Book Store)
- Arkansas Baptist State Convention (Emily Smith or Leah Jo Wilson)
- Arkansas Baptist State Convention (Travis McCormick-Missions)

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