



# VBS

## PLANNING CALENDAR

## DEAR VBS DIRECTOR,

You amaze us. Really, you do. You have stepped up to handle the task to lead Vacation Bible School this summer, which may well be the largest evangelistic event your church hosts all year. That's impressive!

You have a dream to see people come to faith in Christ at an early age. You are committed to seeing God's Word rooted in the lives of children so that their faith withstands tests of time. You build community between the church and families, fulfilling Jesus' commandment to spread the gospel and make disciples. And we want to help you!

At Christianbook.com, we want to help you plan and organize for VBS – simply, easily, and successfully. This PDF package includes inspiration and encouragement for you as a leader plus simple month-by-month checklists to take you through each stage before, during, and after VBS. And on those rare days when VBS feels like a daunting task, may the words of Apostle Paul encourage you as you plan VBS: *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being* (Ephesians 3:16).

### YOU ARE A PART OF HISTORY

Christian groups started offering summer educational programs to children as early as the 1870's near Lake Chautauqua, NY. The precursor to VBS as we know it today is often traced to Mrs. Walker Aylette Hawes in New York City in the late 1890's. She rented the only space available to her – a saloon – to run a six week long summer Bible school for children that included Bible stories, music, Scripture memorization, games, crafts, and skill development such as cooking. Over a century later, Vacation Bible School remains an essential means of reaching the next generation with the love of Christ.

### YOU HAVE A TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

You are building the Kingdom of God. VBS is not only important to reaching the "4/14 Window" of children between the ages of 4 and 14, but it also ministers to the larger community. VBS draws families to the church and gives you opportunities for establishing relationships with unbelieving parents of kids in your program. It also draws the entire congregation together to use their gifts and talent. Young and old, male and female, extrovert and introvert – there's a place for everyone to serve during VBS.

### YOU ARE PART OF A GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Millions of children across the country and millions more around the world attend a Vacation Bible School event every summer. Just let this sink in for a minute...God is working through every VBS director and volunteer with a global impact. So, if the attendance at your particular VBS feels small, please remember that each and every child you reach is important, and that you are part of something immeasurably more than we could ever think or imagine! (Ephesians 3:20)

### YOU HAVE ETERNAL IMPACT

VBS changes lives. Children hear the gospel message for the first time and make decisions to follow Jesus. Teens in the church who question if God will work through them, find a place to serve and deepen connections with other youth. New families in the church meet other adults, establish friendships, and keep returning. Long-standing church-goers experience the joy of watching new believers come to salvation and grow in their walk of faith.

Thank you for your dedication to reach children and families. Thank you for serving your local congregation and larger community. Thank you for your stewardship of time, talent, and tithes put into planning VBS. The work is great, but the rewards are still greater.

Sincerely,

THE VBS TEAM AT CHRISTIANBOOK.COM

# START HERE

Please take a quick minute to read a few tips to help you get the most out of our VBS Planner.

Use the **FUTURE LOGS** to schedule events, place tasks, and plan additional priorities tailored to fit your own needs. It's also a great place to map out your promotional events, training, and decorating activities. Alternatively if you prefer to use the monthly **CALENDAR** to keep track of plans, print as many copies as you need.

Use the **MONTHLY LOGS** to track your progress on the VBS checklists for *People*, *Process*, and *Planning*, and then use the *Postscript* corner for jotting down your own notes, ideas, and VBS checklist items. We'll help you walk a month-by-month countdown to VBS and include VBS follow-up.

Feel free to use your own system to indicate a task that is just started, half-completed, and finished. One simple way to do this is outlining a box, coloring or shading  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the box, and then filling the box completely.

Take a little time at **REMEMBER & REVIEW** to look backward after VBS is done. It's the perfect place to record what God has done in the lives of children and families during VBS. Plus, don't forget testimonies of your volunteers! Also jot down notes on what worked well, what did not work very well, and ideas for improvement next year.

Write in simple sentences or bullet points with phrases to keep it short. Include something that will motivate and inspire you next year when you start planning VBS again.

We hope this VBS planning calendar with checklists is a help and a blessing to you.

# FUTURE LOG #1

VBS DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

9 MONTHS BEFORE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

6 MONTHS BEFORE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

4 MONTHS BEFORE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

2 MONTHS BEFORE: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE







# CALENDAR

MONTH: \_\_\_\_\_

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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# MONTHLY LOG: 6 MONTHS BEFORE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Establish a VBS prayer team
- Create a core VBS leadership team
- Connect with previous VBS leaders for their availability this year

## PROCESS

- Choose your format (1, 2, 5, or 10 days; mornings or evenings)
- Decide if preschoolers will be self-contained or if they will rotate with older children
- Set the dates on the church calendar
- Choose and order VBS starter kit
- Determine the groups you will include in VBS (preschoolers, children, youth, adult, participants with special education needs)

## PLANNING

- Set goals for VBS (attendance, missions offering, other VBS outcomes)
- Establish your budget & plan fundraisers
- Learn from last year (review what worked well and what didn't, and grow from there)
- Start brainstorming decorating ideas & make list of items for donation
- Plan your promotional strategy in church, in the community, on social media platforms

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES





# MONTHLY LOG: 4 MONTHS BEFORE

DATE: -----

## PEOPLE

- Continue recruiting rotation site leaders, age-group leaders, and other volunteers
- Estimate student enrollment

## PROCESS

- Read the Director's Guide and leader manuals
- Estimate enrollment & order student supplies
- Post materials & supplies lists for church
- If you are planning intricate set designs, start building foam core, carpentry, and other pieces for decorating
- Create Social Media platforms – FaceBook event page, group invites, Instagram & Twitter hashtags for your church VBS

## PLANNING

- Finalize plans for promotion, including VBS Kick-Off day
- Schedule training days
- Create a VBS Calendar of events, distribute to team leaders and church secretary
- Plan decorating for all areas
- Determine if you will use skits or puppet scripts – recruit actors or puppeteers
- Plan VBS Family Day, Closing Event, and/or VBS review to the full church on a Sunday

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES



# MONTHLY LOG: 2 MONTHS BEFORE

DATE: -----

## PEOPLE

- Announce dates to the church and show promotional videos
- Encourage early registration, set up a display in church making forms or the website link available
- Hold leader training day & distribute leader guides

## PROCESS

- Finalize VBS daily schedule
- Ensure child-safety background checks on adult volunteers
- Begin Phase 1 of VBS Promotions
- Begin pre-registration
- Practice science experiments and crafts at home
- Order student supplies (if not done so already) & continue gathering other supplies
- Check supplies to give children who make decisions of faith (Bibles, New Testaments, tracts, etc.)

## PLANNING

- Plan each VBS rotation location based on your church facilities
- Determine how you will follow-up with VBS visitors – letters, visits, family-related events
- Prepare VBS follow-up letters
- Plan Family Night or Closing Event Activities

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES

# MONTHLY LOG: 1 MONTH BEFORE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Continue VBS Registration
- Conduct second VBS training day for full team of volunteers
- Meet with all site and age-group leaders reviewing the VBS content, schedule, and updating supply lists
- Start rehearsals for skits and/or puppets

## PROCESS

- Begin Phase 2 of VBS Promotions (outdoor banner, community boards, store windows)
- Continue social media
- Finalize follow-up contacts, procedures, visits, and events
- Making decorations goes into high-gear
- Review church emergency procedures and communicate with VBS leadership team

## PLANNING

- Communicate VBS set-up day with volunteers
- Gather supply request lists from site leaders
- Develop a daily prayer guide for VBS
- Plan your own 'down time' after VBS for rest
- Prepare parental/guardian permission forms if you'll post images of minors on social media

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES

# MONTHLY LOG: 2 WEEKS BEFORE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Assign pre-enrolled participants to their age-groups or crew teams
- Check with church facilities regarding air conditioning, bathrooms, kitchen equipment and appliances, media & soundboard, and other equipment needed

## PROCESS

- Distribute VBS daily prayer guide
- Sort supplies into major sections by site, age-group, and location
- Prepare check-in / registration table master lists, name tags, & supplies
- Continue publicity

## PLANNING

- Review attendance numbers and assign additional age-group leaders and assistants as needed
- Continue publicity

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES



# MONTHLY LOG: 1 WEEK BEFORE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Update attendance numbers
- Create final group assignments
- Visit Sunday school / Children's Ministry to personally invite everyone to VBS
- Dedicate VBS staff in prayer during church service

## PROCESS

- Review walk-in registration and check-in procedures
- Finalize supplies for & remind volunteers VBS Set Up / Preparation Day schedule
- Check First-Aid boxes around the church or establish a first aid location
- Assemble supplies for site and age-group leaders

## PLANNING

- Check supply counts and purchase additional items as needed
- Prepare post-program evaluation sheets
- Confirm helpers for your 'VBS-Take-Down', restoring the church to its normal environment

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES

# MONTHLY LOG: 1 DAY BEFORE

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Thank your team for their generosity before VBS begins
- Remind volunteers of arrival time for Day 1
- Pray as a team before decorating

## PROCESS

- Decorate all rooms used for VBS
- Set up main entrance and Registration Table

## PLANNING

- Finalize supplies for each day of VBS
- Complete plans for Family Night or the Closing Event

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES



# MONTHLY LOG: DURING VBS

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Daily Devotions: Encourage, thank and pray for your team each day before VBS begins
- Enroll participants as they arrive
- Notify parents of Family Night or Closing Events
- Note those who make decisions made to follow Jesus & confirm information for follow-up
- Connect with leaders after each day's program to ensure things are running well or make necessary adjustments

## PROCESS

- Make announcements during large group assemblies
- Make last minute adjustments as needed – extra helpers, bottleneck traffic flows
- Copy and distribute daily schedules & news sheets for leaders, volunteers, and families
- Update records and refresh supplies daily
- Prepare certificates & distribute to leaders and teachers for the last day
- Lead & oversee Family Night or Closing Event activities
- Obtain parental permission forms from parents and guardians if you'll post images of minors on social media

## PLANNING

- Jot down quick notes daily of thoughts and improvements for next year
- Distribute an evaluation form to leaders, teachers, and families on your VBS
- Invite everyone to return next year

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES

# MONTHLY LOG: 1 MONTH AFTER

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## PEOPLE

- Personally contact children and parents who made decisions of faith during VBS
- Follow up with all VBS guests with an invitation to Sunday school or church
- Personally thank every volunteer who helped with VBS

## PROCESS

- Return the church to its standard arrangement for services and classes
- Collect, return, or replace all church supplies
- Return unopened packages for refund, if your supplier allows, or share them with other churches
- Provide a summary of VBS to church leadership
- Present an update of VBS to the entire church with photos and/or videos
- Send missions offering to recipients with an encouraging letter about VBS

## PLANNING

- Collect and summarize evaluation forms
- Summarize strengths and weaknesses, and make notes on how to do even better next year
- Most VBS themes and kits are announced by September of the year before, so you can pre-order your kit and wait for it to arrive
- Finally, praise God for his guidance, strength, and power to reach children and families with your VBS. Take a well earned, and by now a much needed, rest!

## POSTSCRIPT NOTES





# REMEMBER & REVIEW

REMEMBER WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE:

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REVIEW OUR MINISTRY THIS YEAR:

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