

Kids Cycle Two-Shift Ten

VBS or Summer Surge

Primary Objective

Mobilize your staff and volunteers to implement a major evangelistic summer outreach, such as Vacation Bible School (VBS) or an alternate strategy.

How This Can Help You Reach Kids

Summer is the perfect time to invite children to church through VBS or some type of Summer Surge (camps or special events). Vacation Bible School continues to be the most evangelistic outreach of churches, and statistics prove that churches baptize more people, because of hosting VBS, than any other event. Whether you have a traditional VBS or some type of summer camp, make sure it is viewed as an outreach event.

Suggested Strategy

Having an evangelistic VBS doesn't "just happen." Churches must be intentional throughout the entire process of planning, implementing, and following up from VBS. As the promotion process begins for VBS, think about the target audience. VBS should never be viewed simply as a fun activity for the children who already attend church. Look for ways to invite children in the community to VBS through posters, flyers, social media, targeted emails, and creative outdoor scenes. Make it easy for families to come to VBS by offering dinner to the family for an evening VBS. Think about unreached people groups in your community that you can invite to VBS. This may be an apartment complex, a mobile home park, a new housing development, or an international group near the church.

During each day of VBS, teachers and rotation leaders should tell the Bible stories and share the good news of Jesus. In addition to the daily emphasis, one day the plan of salvation should be shared with the large group, and a time should be given for children and students to respond. This should be done in an age-appropriate way, and enough counselors need to be on hand, so that children can be counseled one-on-one.

Family Celebration is another prime way churches can connect with families at the close of VBS. Look for ways to encourage families to attend the family celebration, by having their children sing songs or having pictures of the children in a slideshow. Having games that family members can enjoy during the Worship Celebration is another way to make connections with them. Family Celebration Worship is a great time to once again present the plan of salvation to the children and their families, even as you announce how many children accepted Christ during VBS. Encourage church members to engage guests in conversation and to invite them back to Sunday services and ministries. Have a packet of information to give to families describing the different ministries of the church.

Alternate Ideas

Some churches may decide not to have VBS, but they should have some type of Summer Surge by having summer camps or special event days. These camps can be traditional, music, sports, science, or even brick (LEGO) camp. If a church decides to take the camp route, they should look at their congregation to see what strengths and hobbies some of the members may have and plan accordingly. Whatever type of Summer Surge is decided upon, leaders should find a time to tell a Bible story and encourage the children to learn a Bible verse, as well as build relationships with the children. The plan of salvation should be shared and counselors need to be available to talk with the children about any decisions that are made. Follow-up should be made with families who send their children to camps.

Churches who have the resources can offer children a week of VBS, as well as additional weeks of camps. Another approach would be to offer Music camp in the afternoons after VBS. This approach helps parents who are looking for childcare options for the summer. Each year, LifeWay offers great curriculum for VBS and Music Camp; but they also have another resource called “Zip for Kids”, which provides 10 Bible studies and ideas for churches to host various types of camps. There are other publishing companies (Group, Orange, David C. Cook) that have VBS options as well.

Consider these possibilities:

- Marvelous Monday, Terrific Tuesday, or Wonderful Wednesday - These days could be filled with different activities or even field trips to local attractions. You could also utilize VBS materials on a weekly basis.
- Wet N’ Wild Days one day a month during the summer - Planning fun games to cool off in the water always attracts young families.
- Ministry Days - Children could come to the church one day a week to make and deliver goodies (cards, flowers, brownies, bottled water, toiletries) to people in your community, such as firefighters, nursing home residents, homeless shelters, or lifeguards.

Key Steps for Preparation

- Meet with the church staff to schedule the date, time, and budget for VBS.
- Cover VBS in prayer with a prayer team, prayer walk, and prayer calendar.
- Choose a curriculum and order the needed amount.
- Develop a format and schedule.
- Enlist and train leaders.
- Promote both inside and outside the church.
- Decorate the church to fit the theme.
- Pre-register and register children, students, and adults.
- Have a great VBS!
- Host a Family Night event or VBS celebration.
- Continue the connections made at VBS.

Looking Ahead

Preview: (11) (Re)Lunch Groups & Faith Development Plan

Plan: (12) Fall Festival Family Outreach

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