

*A Quick  
Start*  
GUIDE



VACATION  
BIBLE  
SCHOOL  
DIRECTOR

**A Quick Start Guide for the Vacation Bible School Director**

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**Printed in the United States of America**

**ISBN #: 978-1-57756-534-5**

## Introduction

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a fun and educational summer program for children of all ages. By helping with VBS, you will have the opportunity to show children how to interact with Jesus in a fun way. Children remember the fun times and Christ-centered lessons long after VBS is completed.

The VBS director plays a key role in leading the church's largest annual outreach program for children and their families. The following information is a general guide for the VBS director. As you read, think about how you can adapt these suggestions for your local church. Use this material as a starting point for your own creativity.

## Tasks for Vacation Bible School Leaders

1. Get an up-to-date picture of your church's VBS program. Research what has been happening; talk to current and former VBS leaders. Take an inventory of supplies available and assess what new materials may be needed. Find out what has worked well in the past.
2. Select a curriculum for your church's VBS program. See the list of resources on page 11 for ideas.
3. Recruit volunteer staff to lead main areas of VBS – story time, games, crafts, etc.
4. Create a budget.
5. Conduct regular VBS staff meetings where you can provide training and encouragement.
6. Train your staff in how to invite children to accept Jesus in an age-appropriate way.
7. Mentor a promising leader for future VBS leadership.
8. Share your plans, calendar, budget, and any other pertinent information with the children's ministries committee and local conference.
9. Demonstrate an awareness of child safety by completing a volunteer ministry form and returning it when asked, and by observing the guidelines for volunteers and caregivers. See page 9 for guidelines.

**VBS leaders must be committed to:**

- Jesus Christ and a growing personal relationship with Him
- Christ-centered ministry to children
- The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its beliefs
- A balanced Christian lifestyle
- Teamwork
- An attitude of servant leadership
- Cooperative ministry
- Personal growth and learning

**Find Out Who You Are Serving**

The ages of children attending VBS vary by the practice of each church. Generally, VBS includes kindergarten through grade 4. Some churches include a program for preschoolers during VBS week. If your church chooses to go this direction, you will want to find a separate leader for this age group so the activities will be age appropriate. Once children outgrow VBS attendance, start recruiting them as junior helpers.

**Sample Planning Schedule****6 months before VBS**

- Establish a VBS planning committee
- Choose a director
- Establish VBS dates and times
- Outline goals for VBS
- Inventory available supplies
- Begin ordering VBS materials
- Begin selection of staff
- Create budget

**3 months before VBS**

- Announce date and time of VBS in church bulletin and list any remaining staff vacancies
- Contact all volunteers to confirm assignments and announce training opportunities

***Incentives that Keep Children Coming Back to VBS***

There are lots of reasons children enjoy coming back to VBS: friends, stories, songs, crafts, learning about Jesus, and fun things to do. Some keep coming back because of the incentives offered to motivate attendance. That's okay. By offering them incentives, they will continue to attend and perhaps find what they really need: their Friend, Jesus. Incentives do not have to be gifts. They can also be special activities. Examples include:

- Book from ABC
  - Small toys that will remind children of each night's theme
  - Coloring book
  - T-shirt
- Use your imagination!

- Plan a volunteer dedication service and training
- Order any remaining supplies
- Plan publicity
- Add a VBS page to your church's website

**2 months before VBS**

- Finalize the VBS schedule
- Make sure any remaining volunteer spots have been filled
- In the church bulletin, list donated-material needs

**6 weeks before VBS**

- Begin publicity campaign
- Plan preregistration
- Make room assignments

**4 weeks before VBS**

- Publicize preregistration
- Organize preregistration booth and materials
- Inventory materials
- Update VBS information on church website
- Prepare a flier to hand out at church
- Contact leaders to check on their preparations
- Make announcements in children's Sabbath school classes
- Make announcements during church service

**3 weeks before VBS**

- Begin preregistration
- Check registration numbers against materials ordered and order additional materials if necessary
- Encourage children to invite their friends and neighbors to VBS

***How to Promote VBS***

- Set up a VBS page on your church's website
- Write an article for your church's newsletter
- Send a mass announcement to everyone on your church's email list
- Place posters on bulletin board
- Show video announcements
- Print brochures
- Offer preregistration
- Place announcements in your church's bulletin
- Make sure your VBS is listed in the local newspaper
- Display colorful signs outside your church
- Mail postcards to previous attendees
- Make announcements during Sabbath school and church

**2 weeks before VBS**

- Distribute curriculum to program leaders
- Check with custodian regarding his or her function during VBS
- Have all equipment ready to transfer to VBS locations
- Conduct volunteer training
- Make sure volunteers know the songs
- Check with your church's communication director about writing an article for the conference newsletter, union paper, and local newspaper

**1 week before VBS**

- Remind children to invite their friends and neighbors
- Conduct volunteer dedication service

**During VBS**

- Remind staff of closing program preparation
- Invite parents to closing program
- Post group activity photos on church website
- Make sure photographers and videographers cover all activities

**1 day after VBS**

- Conduct a clean-up session
- Registrar collects all registration cards from director and prepares VBS report online at [www.childmin.com](http://www.childmin.com). Click on "Programs," then select "Vacation Bible School."

**1 week after VBS**

- Conduct a staff meeting to evaluate the VBS program
- Complete all records
- Make written suggestions for next year's VBS
- Mail VBS report to conference
- Give registration cards to the pastor's secretary for filing
- Report on your program to the church – video or slide show
- Collect reusable supplies
- Return borrowed supplies
- Send thank-you notes to volunteers and donors

## Sample Volunteer Job Descriptions

Volunteers are the key to running a successful VBS program. When recruiting volunteers, be sure to include parents, teens, and people who enjoy working with children. There is room for people with many talents to join your team.

Depending on the size of your church and the number of children you expect, you may need a large or small team. You may not need a different person for each job. One person can do two jobs, if necessary. The important thing is to be sure that someone is responsible for each task. The following is a list of suggested workers and their job descriptions.

### **VBS Director**

The VBS director plans for the overall needs of the staff and organizes the dates, time, and room arrangements. The director is a behind-the-scenes organizer and may also be the up-front leader. The director contacts the conference Children's Ministries department to find out about supplementary materials, training, and possible financial support.

### **Assistant Director**

The assistant director is responsible for welcoming the children to VBS each day and planning the general sessions and closing program. The director could also take on this role.

### **Bible Story Leaders**

Bible story leaders coordinate the lesson activities, materials, and room decorations for Bible Learning time. They also teach songs related to the Bible lesson, tell the Bible stories, divide the children into classes, take responsibility for the children in the assigned age-level division, keep daily attendance records to turn in to the registrar, and recruit and train class teachers.

### **Small Group Leader**

Each division needs one leader for every 5-6 students. The small group leader sits with the children during each segment of the VBS program, helps them complete their activities, leads the class in discussion or activity as indicated by the leader, and calls children who miss a day.

### **Craft Director**

Before VBS begins, the craft director lists supplies needed and works with the business manager to solicit donations from the congregation, local businesses, and community organizations. During VBS the craft director leads a team responsible for presorting and organizing materials, making at least one of each craft in advance to be sure crafts work and to show a finished sample to the children,

demonstrating the crafts, answering questions, praising the children, guiding them in cleaning up, and organizing a display of crafts for closing night.

**Nature Director**

The nature director is responsible for setting up and changing nature displays, planning and presenting daily nature talks or activities, and organizing a nature display for closing night.

**Skit Producer**

The skit producer coaches a team that acts out skits for each general session. The skit producer also obtains and organizes materials as necessary.

**Preschool Leader**

The preschool leader works with children ages 3 through kindergarten. When they arrive, preschoolers go straight to their room for the entire VBS program, which will be conducted by their division leader. It works best for preschoolers to do most of their activities in one room. The preschool leader will need their own team of craft and refreshment leaders.

**Music Leader**

The music leader consults with the VBS leader when choosing the repertoire of songs for VBS. The song leader needs to be a confident singer who reacts to children in an outgoing, friendly manner.

**Pianist**

The pianist works closely with the music leader. You may choose to have a variety of instruments rather than using only piano. Select musicians who can provide a strong, energetic rhythm.

**Publicity Director**

The publicity director is responsible for communicating VBS plans and needs to the congregation. This is achieved by placing announcements in the church bulletin, making announcements at church, and featuring VBS in the church newsletter and on the website. The publicity director should also make sure VBS is listed in the local newspaper's community pages.

**Business Manager**

The business manager creates a budget and presents it to the church board. If sufficient funding is not available from the church, the business manager, publicity director, and VBS director can plan a strategy for involving local businesspeople.



### **Registrar/Receptionist/Secretary**

The registrar compiles a list of students according to divisions, passes registration cards to division leaders and collects them at the close of VBS, helps division leaders record names from the registration cards onto the appropriate Class Record cards, passes the Class Record cards to the division leaders and collects them at the close of VBS, and does any additional typing the VBS director may need.

### **Refreshments Director**

The refreshments director and helpers plan and prepare healthful refreshments, deliver refreshments to the designated spot, and consult with the VBS leader and business manager about the cost of refreshments and ways to solicit donations from the congregation and local merchants. Note: try to provide snacks corresponding with each night's theme.

### **Safety Patrol**

The larger the VBS, the more important the role of safety patrols. Older children and teens may be coached to serve as safety helpers alongside adults. The safety team should patrol the parking lot and exits. Children should not leave VBS without the permission of a patrol.

As an extra security precaution at some churches, each child is given a numbered wristband when they arrive at each VBS session and their parent or guardian is given a matching wristband. Children are not allowed to leave with anyone except the adult with a matching wristband.

### **Photographer/Videographer**

Find a volunteer photographer or videographer to capture highlights from each day's VBS. Show slides or a video as part of your closing night program.

### **First Aid Volunteer**

The first aid volunteer keeps the first aid box well supplied (especially with bandages), keeps a record of children with special medical problems, and notifies refreshments director of children with food allergies.

### **Custodian**

The custodial crew helps set up for the opening night and tidies up in between meetings. (Leaders need to tidy up in the area where they work; the custodial crew watches out for anything that is overlooked.) Their largest job is putting things away after the close of VBS.

## Recruiting Volunteers

### Vacation Bible School and Junior Volunteers

Kids who are too old to attend VBS can make good helpers. Juniors can help with the organization, decorations, traffic flow, skits, singing, refreshments, crafts, nature centers, and more. Serving as helpers allows them to explore their leadership skills while still having fun experiencing VBS. Also, the younger children love looking up to older role models. Another benefit of involving juniors as VBS helpers is that by the time they are teens, they will be ready to step into leadership roles.

### *Screening Volunteers*

Screening volunteers is important for two reasons:

1. To be sure all your volunteers are helping in an area that matches their gifts.
2. To be sure your volunteers have a clean record and to protect your church from lawsuits.

You can find more information about the NAD's volunteer management and screening guidelines at [www.nadeducation.org/dynamic/files/1215.pdf](http://www.nadeducation.org/dynamic/files/1215.pdf)

The key to using juniors at VBS is training. If you show them what to do and why, they can easily take over and do it. It's helpful to bring all the junior helpers together for one or two training sessions in the weeks prior to VBS. Throughout the training sessions, help juniors see that what they are doing is ministry. There is no limit to their effectiveness if they open themselves to be used by God.

### Training and Equipping Volunteers

One important key to a successful VBS is to properly equip your helpers to do the best possible job. In order to accomplish this goal most effectively, your staff should meet for planning and training purposes. Emphasize that the volunteers are the face and hands of Jesus. Other topics that could be discussed include:

- Information about this year's program
- Volunteer expectations and job descriptions
- How to interact with children in a way that promotes Jesus
- The ultimate mission of VBS: bringing children to Christ

Focus on prayer, training, and VBS preparation during each training session. Offer affirmation, encouragement, and suggestions for making their ministry effective. The more responsibility you turn over to volunteers, the more time they will be willing to spend on VBS.

### Prayer

Talk about prayer and the power it brings. Read Matthew 7:7; look up *pray* and *prayer* in a concordance; search for texts about prayer. Encourage each volunteer to adopt a prayer text and pray it every day. Pray earnestly for God's empowerment of the children. Give them a chance to pray for each other and the children who will attend. Share personal answers to prayer. Continue praying and sharing all the way through VBS.

### Guidelines for Volunteers

Be sure to share the following guidelines with all VBS volunteers. By being proactive about child safety, you will protect yourself and your church from unfortunate situations.

1. Never leave children you are responsible for unattended. Provide adequate supervision at all times, no matter what.
2. Never be the only adult serving as a caregiver. Always have at least one other person present.
3. Always ask a child's permission before touching him or her anywhere, even when responding to an injury or problem. This is especially true for any area that would normally be covered by a t-shirt and shorts. If an injury is within this area, make sure another adult works with you as you provide care.

#### ***6 Ways to Show Love at VBS***

It is important for VBS to have a friendly atmosphere. To promote friendliness at your VBS, try some of the following:

1. Be a role model for friendliness, especially to children.
2. Greet the children each evening and be sure to learn their names.
3. Take a genuine interest in the children's families.
4. Invite families to other church activities you think they may enjoy.
5. Reinforce friendliness shown by children. Publicly recognize each child with a tangible reward such as a sticker, small toy, or an "I love VBS" button, etc.
6. After VBS, send thank-you notes to people who helped make it special.

4. Children need to be touched appropriately. However, keep hugs brief and shoulder-to-shoulder or side-to-side. Always keep your hands at (not below) the shoulder level. A caregiver kiss is to the forehead or cheek only. For small children who like to sit on laps, encourage them to sit or stand next to you with your arm around them in an appropriate manner.
5. When taking small children to the bathroom, take another adult along or leave the door open.
6. If the door to the classroom does not have glass in or around it, the door should be left open so the teacher is in full view.

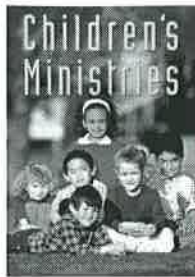
## Conclusion

Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and enthusiasm through your church's VBS program. Through your efforts, the children in your church and community will have exciting opportunities to get to know one another and their new Friend, Jesus.

## Recommended Resources

AdventSource offers VBS curriculums, children's ministries resources, and incentive items you can give to children for attendance and rewards.

Visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org) or call 800-328-0525 for a complete listing.



### ***Children's Ministries Manual***

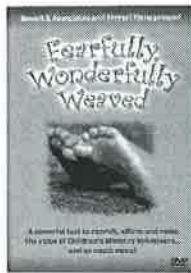
This book is full of innovative ideas and strategies for working with today's children. Discover the ages and stages of childhood learning, simple steps for leading a child to Jesus, preferred learning styles, exciting Bible learning activities, ministering to children with special needs, and how to recruit and keep volunteers. This book also includes personal inventories, charts, graphs, and disruption preventers.

Edited by Ann Calkins (AdventSource)

Catalog #021992

Also available in French and Spanish

## Resources for Volunteers

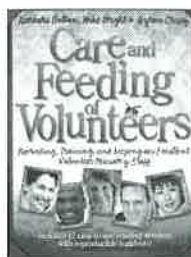


### ***Fearfully, Wonderfully Weaved DVD***

Based on a powerful song written by artist and worship director Clarence Church, performed by artist Wendy Newell, this DVD combines compelling comments from seasoned children's ministry volunteers, powerful images, and a dynamic song to create the perfect tool for recruiting children's ministry volunteers. This DVD can also be used as a gift for volunteers, to inspire others to invest in your children's ministry program, and to affirm current volunteers.

By Al Newell (Newell and Associates)

Catalog #011080

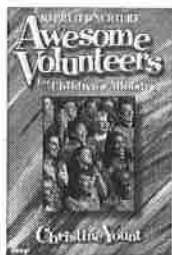


### ***Care and Feeding of Volunteers***

This discipleship-minded handbook focuses on biblical principles of spiritual growth, accountability, and encouragement. This book seeks to counter the widely used "warm body" method of recruitment by helping ministry personnel model excellence that transfers to others. This book includes 12 easy-to-use training sessions with reproducible handouts.

By Barbara Bolton, Mike Bright & Byron Cressy (Standard)

Catalog #010370



### ***Recruit and Nurture Awesome Volunteers***

A how-to book for recruiting, training, and keeping volunteers fired up. This book provides practical tips for recruiting, rewarding, reminding, training, and empowering those special individuals whom we cannot do without! Includes extensive interviews with dynamic ministry words, practical insights, useful principles, and a reassuring dose of encouragement.

By Christine Yount (Group)

Catalog #012000

## **VBS Promotional Items**



“I Love VBS” Buttons *Catalog #037200*



“I Love VBS” Pencils *Catalog #035500*



VBS Shoe Pockets *Catalog #035500*



“I Love VBS” Magnetic Frame *Catalog #038180*

Review and Herald Publishing offers a VBS kit designed specifically for Seventh-day Adventist Churches. This kit is available from the Adventist Book Center at [www.adventistbookcenter.com](http://www.adventistbookcenter.com) or 800-765-6955.

Group Publishing offers a selection of non-denominational VBS kits. Group's website features free samples, promotional videos, a newsletter, and more. Visit [www.group.com/vbs](http://www.group.com/vbs)

The Ministry Tools Resource Center offers articles about VBS, tips for planning VBS, recommended programs, and more. Visit <http://mintools.com/resources-5.htm>

# Vacation Bible School Director Ministry Description

## Introduction

Responsible to: The children's ministries committee.

Relates closely with: The children's coordinator, the VBS staff.

Ministry mission: To help children develop a friendship with Jesus, with the Bible, with the church, and with each other.

## Responsibilities

The Vacation Bible School leader plays a key role in directing the church's largest outreach program for children and their families and has the following responsibilities:

1. Organization and administration.
2. In consultation with the children's coordinator, recruits volunteers.
3. Represents VBS on the children's ministries committee.
4. Develops a VBS budget with the help of the children's coordinator.
5. Plans the VBS space – which rooms of the church will be used and for what.
6. Plans the VBS time – the date, time of day, and program schedule.
7. Takes responsibility for reporting the VBS event to the local conference.
8. Leads the team in follow-up events.
9. Demonstrates a concern for child safety by completing the volunteer ministry information form and returning it when asked, and by observing the guidelines for volunteers and caregivers.

## Coordination of the Vacation Bible School

Delegates leadership of the learning stations to able and responsible leaders; holds them accountable (stations include Bible learning, craft, games, etc.).

Makes routine staff assignments, as follows:

1. Drama ministry – training a small team to do skits for the general session.
  2. Family visitation ministry – organizing VBS staff to visit students at home.
  3. Follow-up ministry – sending birthday cards and invitations to follow-up events.
  4. Hospitality ministry – providing daily snacks, organizing food for parent night and follow-up.
-

5. Guiding ministry – training and mentoring teen and adult guides who are each assigned a group of five students to accompany throughout VBS (guides and assists station leaders when asked, but does not teach).
6. Music ministry – learning VBS songs, leading the singing at VBS and follow-up events.
7. Publicity ministry – communicating and publicizing VBS at church and in the media.
8. Registration and record keeping – maintaining and updating student files, name tags.
9. Welcoming ministry – greeting, finding name tags, showing where to go.
10. Optional – safety patrol, videographer, medical, custodial, parenting seminar.

### **Screening Volunteers**

Helps volunteers match their spiritual gifts with a ministry task as a leader, guide, or aid. Accept only volunteers whose volunteer ministry information forms are up-to-date and who have been approved by the screening committee.

### **Training and Equipping**

1. Attends a conference VBS workshop where VBS programs are demonstrated or checks online for church-recommended programs.
2. In consultation with the children's coordinator, selects a VBS program and orders the materials.
3. Holds VBS staff meetings to communicate the mission and goals of VBS, distribute curriculum materials to station directors and job descriptions to the staff, explain logistics, the schedule, procedures, and traffic flow.
4. Conducts regular VBS staff meetings; encourages volunteers in their personal prayer life.
5. Trains the staff in how to invite children to accept Jesus in an age-appropriate way.
6. Mentors a promising leader for future VBS leadership.



**Time Commitment**

Approximately 10-15 hours per week; 3-6 hours per day during VBS.

**Length of Commitment**

One or two years, depending on the practice of the local church.

**Training**

Basic children's ministries certification (ongoing).

**Qualifications**

1. Volunteer Ministry Qualifications – A commitment to:
  - a. Jesus Christ and to a growing personal relationship with Him.
  - b. Christ-centered ministry to children.
  - c. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its beliefs.
  - d. A balanced Christian lifestyle.
  - e. Teamwork.
  - f. Cooperative ministry under the leadership of the pastor and church board.
  - g. Personal growth and learning, continually upgrading methods and skills.
  
2. Special Qualifications
  - a. An attitude of servant leadership.
  - b. A passion for children and children's ministries.
  - c. Leadership experience in a ministry to children.
  - d. A current recommendation from the volunteer screening committee.

## Vacation Bible School Director

This Quick Start Guide for Vacation Bible School is full of important information to help you start or revitalize a ministry at your local church. This guide contains a job description, instructions for getting started, tips for maintaining a successful ministry, troubleshooting suggestions, recommended resources, and more. Whether you're new to this ministry or a seasoned volunteer, this Quick Start Guide will inspire you with lots of great ideas you can immediately put to use in your local church.

Other Children's Ministries titles in the Quick Start Guide Series

- Children's Ministries Coordinator
- Beginner Sabbath School
- Kindergarten Sabbath School
- Primary Sabbath School
- Junior Sabbath School

For a complete listing of Quick Start Guide titles visit [www.adventsource.org](http://www.adventsource.org)



**AdventSource**

ISBN: 978-1-57756-534-5



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