
WILL YOUR VBS BE A SUCCESS?

TOP FIVE WAYS TO BOOST VBS EFFECTIVENESS

It is no secret that VBS is a resource intensive ministry. First there are the countless hours spent planning by you, the organizer. Add to that the hundreds of volunteer hours invested in building displays and decoration, learning songs and preparing class materials. VBS also requires precious funds to be spent on materials and curriculum. With all of this time, money, and effort invested, you certainly want to make sure you are getting the greatest results possible.

Here are five ways that you can leverage all of that time and energy to boost effectiveness and get the most out of your VBS this year.

1. **WHAT: GET CONTACT INFORMATION**
WHY: TO ENABLE FOLLOW-UP.

This might seem obvious, but many VBS planners forget this important step. With the contact information of children and parents who attend, you will be able to follow-up not only after VBS, but send invitations to other outreach events like a Christmas Eve service or Movie Night.

NOTE: Exercise caution using phone numbers. Most people do not like to be called by strangers. On your contact form you should have a place where the visitor can indicate how they prefer to be contacted (phone, email, or mailing address).

After VBS is over, it is a good idea to send a “thank you” card to parents for sending their kids to VBS. With effective follow-up, VBS can be the beginning of forming a meaningful relationship with the family.

Safety: getting contact information is also something that will increase the safety and security of your event. In case of emergency, you will need this contact information. This is also the information that should be in your check-in system so you can be sure only authorized people are picking up children from your VBS. (If you don't have it already, check out Servant Keeper Check-In [HERE](#) (it's on sale this month!))

EVEN BETTER: To encourage folks to give contact information, and to make it “fun”, incorporate some type of “door prize” drawing or give “take-home” bags after contact forms are completed.

2. WHAT: TAKE-HOME ITEMS

WHY: TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS

Create “take-home” goodie bags for each night of your VBS. You could opt to only send take-home bags on the first or last night of VBS, but many children are not able to attend every day of your VBS, and so they may be missed.

The take-home bag could have things kids like (small toys, dollar store items, etc) and a note to their parents. In the note to the parents can you can summarize what took place that day and take a moment to express one of the reasons your church does VBS.

EVEN BETTER: in the note indicate how the parents can contact you, as well as a link to an inquiry form or your VBS micro-website.

3. WHAT: CD

WHY: TO HELP KIDS REMEMBER THE SONGS YOU TAUGHT THEM

One of the greatest vehicles for sharing doctrines of faith with children is music. Almost every VBS has a bunch of songs that help children remember the teachings of the week.

What better way to have a lasting impact on your kids than to send them home with a CD of all of the songs from that week. Check with your church to make sure you have the proper licensing to do this legally. Many VBS “kits” allow you to reproduce, or purchase copies of their music cheaply with the intent to give away to kids. You may already be covered by your churches media license.

EVEN BETTER: make the CD downloadable on your Micro Website! (check licensing restrictions)

4. WHAT: MICRO WEBSITE

WHY: SHARE INFORMATION, RESOURCES, AND ENGAGE FAMILIES

Don't worry you don't need a whole new website, just a single page. (if you don't have a “web-guy” you can easily make a facebook page.)

When you have an easy to remember “landing page” for your VBS event, you will have a great opportunity to engage and communicate with kids and parents alike. To engage your visitors you can run contests (i.e. - video submissions on why VBS is awesome) or prize drawings (draw a name from everyone who “liked” your page or filled out a form) during the course of VBS.

HERE'S HOW: Ask your web developer to add a page to your church website that contains all-things VBS. There should be links on this page to things like permission slips, safety policies, and downloads of any resources like music (follow copyright rules) that the kids learned that week or coloring pages based on the content of your VBS.

EVEN BETTER: Purchase an easy to remember domain name (yourtownVBS.com) and have it re-directed to that page (your “web guy” can do all of this in just a few minutes).

5. WHAT: VBS REUNION

WHY: MAKE YOUR IMPACT LONG TERM

For many churches, once VBS is over, that's it. They may never see those children again and the impact and relationship ends there. It doesn't have to!

By planning one or more VBS Reunions you can build relationships with the children and parents throughout the year. When VBS is coming to a close you can remind them about the "Reunion" and you'll be able to send a post-card in the mail because you got their contact information.

At a VBS Reunion (typically a Sat or Sun afternoon) you can do anything you do at VBS. It's a good idea to sing the songs the kids learned at VBS, do some similar crafts/snacks, do one of the most popular games from the week, and have a teaching moment.

EVEN BETTER: If you have classes, usually by age group, during your VBS, then break up into those classes for a short time at the Reunion. This gives kids a chance to talk to each other and their teacher, and to re-kindle relationships.

6. BONUS:

WHAT: MAIL AN INVITE TO EVERY FAMILY IN YOUR COMMUNITY THAT HAS CHILDREN.

WHY: IT'S PROVEN TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION MANY TIMES OVER!

Often churches spend a ton of resources on a VBS with a mindset toward outreach, to then see mostly or only "church" kids attend. If your goal is to reach children from families who don't go to church, then mailing an invitation/flyer to those families will see your results sky-rocket.

Your invitation or flyer should look good! It should be designed using professional templates (see stocklayouts.com or poweredtemplates.com) or by using your church's graphics arts designer. It should be engaging with a well-thought out "call-to-action". The basic information (date, time, age range, location) should be easily read in bold type and include a phone number and the URL for the webpage you created. NOTE: The phone number should be a number that is answered by a live person (people calling a church often chicken out when they hear voice mail).

EVEN BETTER: go to our website at www.skneighborhood.com and you will be able to get a list of families with children who live in your community (i.e. within 2 miles from your church). People who live close to your church are much more likely to respond than those who live farther away. Make every postage \$ count by targeting your immediate community!

WHAT'S YOUR IDEA for making the most of VBS this year? Share with other churches on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/servantkeeper