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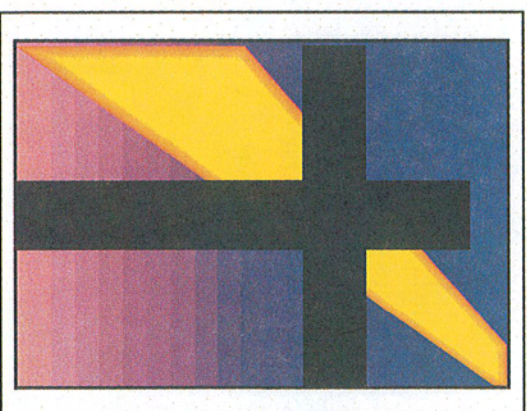


Of
VBS

Ideas to help your congregation's VBS
ministry

- Hold a follow-up VBS on Tuesdays (or another day) from 4:00 - 5:00 P.M. throughout the year. Include a snack, game, Bible story, craft, and music.
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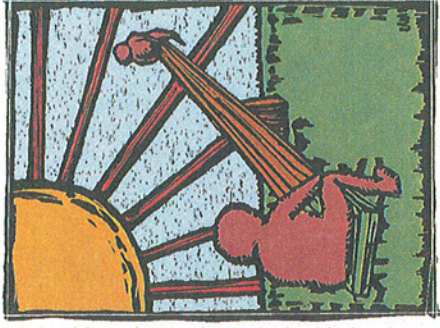
*The purpose for all of our efforts
is that everyone might
believe in the Lord Jesus Christ
and be saved
(Romans 6:23).*



Produced by
WELS Commission on Youth Discipleship
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Milwaukee, WI 53222-4398

Following is a list of ideas to help with the important work of Vacation Bible School follow-up:

- Involve the congregation's Evangelism Committee. Provide names, addresses and telephone numbers.
- Pray for continued opportunities to develop relationships and opportunities for sharing the Gospel.
- Conduct family visits. Since there already is a connection, send a member of the Vacation Bible School staff. Ask the non-member family if you can put them on your congregation's mailing list. If the family has small children, ask if they would be interested in receiving cradle roll mailings.
- Have the Vacation Bible School teacher send a personal note thanking them for attending. Include with this thank you an invitation to attend Sunday school.
- Send a personal invitation to attend Sunday school and Adult Bible class.
- Send personal invitations to attend worship services at Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter.
- Encourage families of the congregation to maintain contact with the families. Friendships made during Vacation Bible School can provide many evangelism opportunities.
- Begin making plans for inviting these same unchurched families to your next VBS.



What are the children in your community doing this summer?

Remember the song "*The Lazy, Hazy Crazy Days of Summer?*" The song suggested that summer was a time to slow down, enjoy warm afternoons, and sip lemonade on the front porch. Summer is a time where laughing children play in the yard and where hungry children drink Kool Aid and make cookies for the neighborhood children.

What are the children in your community doing this summer?

Are they playing in the yard?

Are they in child-care centers?

Are they home alone?

How are you meeting the needs of the children and families in your community? More than 73% of mothers who have children age six and older work outside the home.

Is the traditional half-day vacation Bible school meeting the needs of working families in your area?

Are there ways to meet the needs of families while reaching out to the unchurched with the Gospel?

Could it be that people will come to us through the doors of children's ministry if we offer programs that meet their needs and schedules?

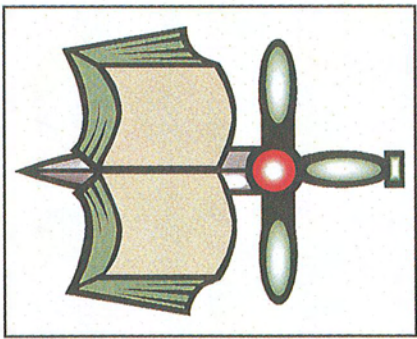
We hope that this collection of Vacation Bible School ideas will help you strengthen your outreach to families and children. Change for change's sake doesn't make sense. But change with the goal of reaching the unchurched is healthy. Change sometimes comes about slowly. As always, the Christian first seeks God's guidance and then proceeds with planning and implementation.

Vacation Bible School Models

Family Vacation Bible School

By meeting in the evening, a congregation can conduct a vacation Bible school for the entire family. This format allows for a strong family emphasis.

Sometimes congregations avoid the weekend conflicts by beginning on Sunday evening. This allows for a Sunday morning family emphasis as a kick off for VBS. A good way to end a family VBS is with a special closing service and picnic the following Sunday.



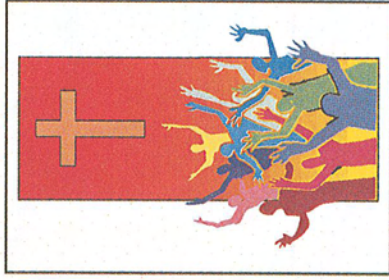
Vacation Bible School Follow-up

Vacation Bible School has come and gone for another year. VBS is a lot of work.

Think of all the effort your congregation put into publicity, recruiting teachers and volunteers, organizing games, preparing crafts, selecting games, and teaching children that they have a Savior who loves them.

What have you done to follow up on the unchurched families who attended this year's VBS? Sometimes in the hustle and bustle of the end of summer and the beginning of the busy fall schedule, congregations forget about the unchurched families who participated in Vacation Bible School.

- Give your parade a theme such as "Marching with the King's Kids."
- Invite children of the community to join the parade before VBS begins.
- Schedule your parade for the last day of VBS.
- Determine a suitable and safe parade route around the church
- Sidewalk parades are easy to get approved.
- Write a letter to the city manager and police department asking for approval.
- You will need parental permission slips.
- Make clickers, shakers, and other musical instruments as craft projects during VBS.
- The children can also make invitations and flyers for the closing worship service.
- On the day of the parade, organize your parade in the church parking lot.
- Prepare a banner for the front of the parade.
- Have fun sharing Jesus.
- Video tape your parade and show it to the congregation on Sunday. Invite the newspaper and television station to come and take pictures.
- Use decorated wagons and bicycles. The children can dress as Bible characters.
- Form an honor guard with the church's flags.
- The children can carry placards and give away religious crafts and balloons with religious messages they have written on them with magic markers.



Sample Schedule

Hold the opening devotion and first session in a large meeting area. Seat adults and children together around tables.

6:30 - 6:45

Joint Devotion for Children and Adults
The devotion leader models and provides encouragement for the adults to conduct home devotions. Distribute copies of *Wellspring* at the end of the session.

6:45 - 7:45 Tell or dramatize the Bible lesson. Afterwards ask each table to discuss the questions that have been duplicated and provided to each table. Be sure to include the truth and an application. Have a simple project/activity for each table to complete together. Review with the group and allow them to share.

Sing children's Gospel songs together.

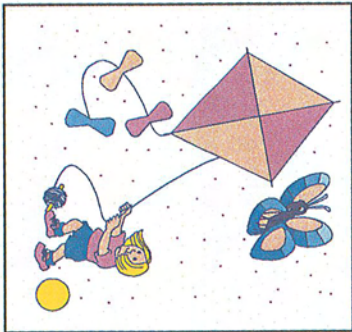
7:45 - 8:00 Refreshments/Recess

8:00 - 8:45 Have the children proceed to classrooms where they can review the story, complete learning activities, and work on handicrafts.

Adults and teenagers have a choice of several

elective Bible classes. Be sure to offer something on Christian parenting.

8:45 Dismissal



Vacation Bible School in the Park

If there are not a lot of children in a neighborhood, why not take VBS to a place where there are children. Setting up VBS in a neighborhood park will require lots of publicity. Make provisions for a shelter in case it rains. Perhaps the congregation can rent a large tent or obtain permission to use a pavilion if one is available. Or you can team up with several congregations.

August may be the best time for this approach. Park recreation programs have begun to cut back. Children and their parents will welcome the structure and activity you have to offer. It is also only several weeks away until the start of Sunday school. Vacation Bible school's goal is to invite children and parents to attend Sunday school.

The schedule for a VBS in the park could be very much like

Hold Vacation Bible School More Than Once

Congregations can reach a larger number of children by conducting schools in July and August. That way the children who go on vacation one month may still attend VBS. By varying the crafts, activities, and music, children can attend both sessions without being bored.

Have a Vacation Bible School Parade

It's A Parade!

Parades are designed to get people's attention. They are exciting and fun! Why not plan a parade for the last day of Vacation Bible School?

Design the parade so that the children can sing the songs they have learned and to invite members of the community to a closing program for families in the evening. Be sure to have the children hand out flyers and information along the parade route. A portable boom box will give you more than with parents and church members. It can follow the format of a closing VBS service.

Here are suggestions for planning a VBS parade:

- Start making your plans at least 2-3 months ahead of time.

Invite a Bible Character

For example, invite Moses to attend this year's Vacation Bible School. Have the children study selected Bible stories about the life and ministry of Moses. Involve the children in activities related to the Exodus event. Make plaques of the Ten Commandments, play drums and tambourines, and construct banners for each of Israel's Twelve Tribes. Divide the children evenly. Give the children a headdress like that of Moses and the Israelites. Use tents so the children can get a sense of living and being outside like the Israelites.

Children can make crosses for hanging on the walls or use as bookmarks to relate to the "fiery serpents" event through the crucifixion of Jesus.

Kids Camp

Some congregations have developed a Kid's Camp or a Bible Club program as a summer ministry to children. It is usually conducted one day weekly (afternoons or evenings) in the weeks following Vacation Bible School. The program lasts two hours and follows the content and format of a VBS program except with more emphasis on recreation and less concern on craft projects. Bible story videos and special topics (i.e. Paul's Journeys, evangelism, etc.) are offered as part of the curriculum.

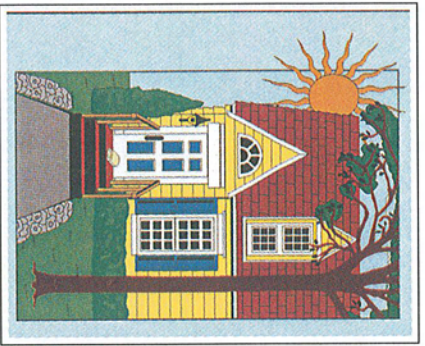
a normal Vacation Bible School. In the park students can engage in crafts and recreation suitable for outdoor activity. You can also bring in animals to dramatize the story or have a petting zoo.

An outdoor VBS also lends itself to a learning center approach. Instead of meeting according to grade level, the children are organized into smaller groups regardless of age. Each period the children travel to a different learning center. Each teacher receives material for one lesson that is repeated throughout the week. Other volunteers teach crafts, singing, recreation, and offer snacks.

Sample Schedule

9:00 - 9:15	Devotion
9:15 - 9:45	Bible Lesson
9:45 - 10:30	Snacks/Games
10:25 - 10:50	Craft 1
10:50 - 11:15	Craft 2
11:15 - 11:35	Craft 3
11:35 - 11:55	Closing with Review
11:55 - 12:00	Gather Everything into Bags

Rather than four or five days, do a one-day camp at a park with a sleep over.



Backyard Vacation Bible School

These schools are designed to reach children who likely would not be touched by programs held at the church. Members of the congregation offer their backyards (garage, if it rains), provide snacks, and promote their particular backyard school in the neighborhood.

Children of members offering their backyards promote the school among their friends by word-of-mouth. The congregation can provide the children with invitation cards that they may give to their friends. Each backyard VBS is limited to 10 students. This is a great setting to dramatize the story. Have the children invite their parents over to view a performance. Serve lemonade and cookies.

Because children do the inviting, the children who gather at a home are all pretty the same age. Use pairs of teenagers to staff the backyard VBS. Be sure to use the curriculum to thoroughly train the teens. Each backyard site is provided with a large footlocker or box in which to store material.

Parents who are reluctant to send their children to a Lutheran Church are often happy to have their children learn about Jesus in a neighbor's backyard.

from the church building preclude the possibility of any guesswork in terms of numbers and participants.

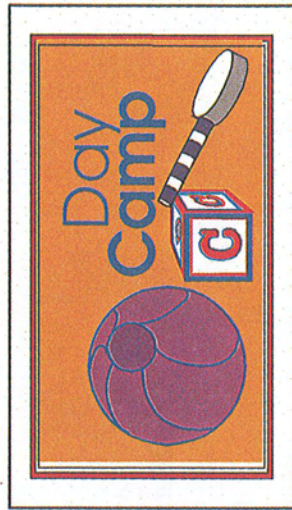
Scheduling should take into account the fact that the program is conducted outdoors for the entire day. A **sample schedule** can serve as a guide.

Meet at church - 9:00 A.M. Arrive at Camp - 9:30 A.M.
Bible Lesson - 9:45 A.M. (Learning Activities, Story Application) Team Activities #1 - 10:55 A.M. (Crafts, Singing, or Recreation)
LUNCH - 11:50 A.M.
Team Activities #2 - 12:40 P.M. (Craft, Singing, or Recreation) Team Activities #3 - 1:35 P.M. (Craft, Singing, or Recreation)
Missions - 2:30 P.M. Worship - 3:00 P.M. Depart Camp - 3:30 P.M. Arrive at Church - 4:00 P.M.

A closing program will help the children to share what they have learned with parents and church members. It can follow the format of a closing VBS service.

Sample Schedule

9:00 - 9:15	Devotion
9:15 - 9:45	Bible Lesson
9:45 - 10:15	Snacks/Recreation
10:25 - 10:50	Craft 1
10:50 - 11:15	Craft 2
11:15 - 11:30	Closing with Review



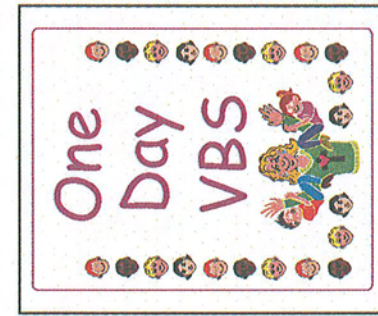
Day camping is still another possibility for summer programming. A day camp is a teaching program conducted at a church, school, farm, park, or campsite. Day camps are sometimes conducted for five or more days in succession, but can be a one or two day event. The regular VBS curriculum may be adapted easily for the sessions.

To keep travel at a minimum, the site shouldn't be too far from the church building. It needs to be located in somewhat of a private spot. Water and rest rooms are essential; trails and shelter are desirable.

Staffing must be done carefully. A director for the day camp functions much as a VBS director does. Counselors, one for each eight to ten children, carry the major load of Bible teaching. Craft leaders, a recreational director, and song leader are key personnel. Although the children may bring sack lunches, a food chairman may be helpful for preparing snacks and drinks.

Pre-registration cannot be ignored for a day-camp program. The length of time spent in the program and the distance

One Day Vacation Bible School



Lutheran congregations have many opportunities to reach out with the Gospel. A one-day Vacation Bible School during Easter or Christmas can be an effective way to meet families in the neighborhood and community. While the world promotes the Easter bunny and Santa Claus, why not host an *Easter for Kids* or *Christmas for Kids* event?

One-day events can also be developed around biblical themes such as creation, Noah and the ark, David and Goliath, and others. Saturdays work well for this type of activity.

Make your own lessons, saved unused Sunday school

materials, or contact the Commission on Youth Discipleship for materials.

Sample Schedules

8:30 – 12:00

8:30 - 8:45 Registration
 8:45- 9:00 Devotion
 9:00 - 9:50 Bible Lesson
 9:50 - 10:25 Snacks/Music/Break
 10:25 - 10:50 Craft 1
 10:50 - 11:15 Craft 2
 11:15 - 11:35 Craft 3
 11:35 - 11:55 Closing with Review
 11:55 - 12:00 Gather Lesson, Crafts into Bags

8:30 – 1:30

8:30 - 8:45 Registration
 8:45- 9:00 Devotion
 9:00 - 9:50 Bible Lesson
 9:50 - 10:25 Snacks/Music/Break
 10:25 - 10:50 Craft 1
 10:50 - 11:15 Craft 2
 11:15 - 11:35 Craft 3
 11:35 - 12:00 Lunch
 12:00 - 12:25 Recreation
 12:25 - 12:40 Singing
 12:40 - 1:15 Video/Puppet Play
 1:15 - 1:25 Closing with Review
 1:25 - 1:30 Gather Lesson, Crafts into Bags

invited. Divide the Sunday school children into two groups: lower grades (N-2), middle grades (3-5), and upper grades (6-8). The children's curriculum can be Sunday school lessons or Bible story videos with activity sheets to reinforce the lesson applications.

Offer teenagers and adults several choices of Bible studies and topics throughout the summer. Teens can either participate in the Bible studies or assist with the lower grades.

On the first night of WEBS, have a potluck supper or provide sandwiches and chips for everyone. That night everyone should show up a half-hour early. Everyone can share in bringing light refreshments for the closing at 7:45.

The Sample Schedule might look like this:

<p>6:30 – Group Singing 6:45 – Multiple Bible Study (for Youth & Adults) 7:45 – Closing & Refreshments 8:00 – Dismissal</p>

Sample Schedule

Class	6:00-6:20	6:25-6:45	6:50-7:10	7:15-7:35	7:40-8:00	8:05-8:25
Pre-K	Worship	Recess	Lesson	Snack	Crafts	Music
Kdg	Worship	Snack	Recess	Crafts	Lesson	Music
Gr 1-2	Worship	Crafts	Snack	Recess	Music	Lesson
Gr 3-4	Worship	Lesson	Crafts	Music	Recess	Snack
Gr 5-6	Worship	Music	Recess	Lesson	Snack	Crafts



Midweek Vacation Bible School

Midweek ministries are an action packed one-day-a-week program that introduces elementary-aged children to the Bible. Designed as an outreach program, it effectively reaches unchurched and member families. The format includes Bible study, a meal or snack, activities - recreation and/or crafts - music time where the children learn songs to share with the congregation during worship services.

Children in kindergarten through grade six and parents respond enthusiastically to these programs and often invite their friends to join them. There are a number of advantages to a weekday children's Vacation Bible school.

- It is enjoyable.
- Pastor is available during the midweek and can become better acquainted with the children and parents.
- All of the children who come to a midweek program become part of the music program. Both the choir and instrumentalists should participate in the church service.
- Children in the program bring their families.
- Provides opportunity for churched and unchurched families to become involved.

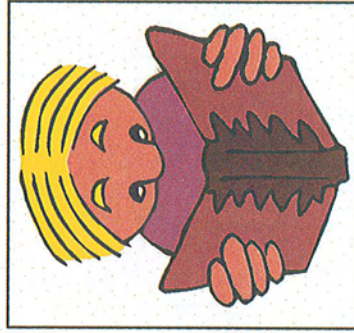
Wednesday Evening Bible Study (WEBS)

Praise God! No more "vacation" from the study of God's Word during the summer months! Now congregations can offer WEBS!

WEBS offers Wednesday Evening

Bible Study for youth and adults throughout the summer.

WEBS is for all members of the congregation - children, teenagers, adults, married, and single. Guests can also be



- Grows the youth program. The children can be invited to attend Sunday school in the fall.
- Gives men an opportunity to participate. Flexible work schedules and the time of the day may be an encouragement for men of the congregation.
- Provides church-family table time. Central to the midweek program is the opportunity for children and adults to talk with one another. An adult should sit with children at every table.

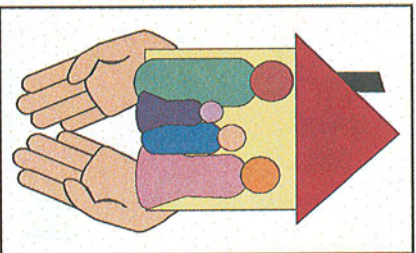
Midweek Models

Midweek models all follow a basic four-part format (activities, Bible study, music, and snack), but there are many variations in which these parts may be implemented.

<u>Afternoon Program</u>	
3:45-4:00	Recreation and "early bird" craft specials
4:00-5:00	Snack and table talk
4:15-4:45	Bible study
4:45-5:15	Music/Worship

<u>Evening Program</u>	
5:30-5:50	Early bird crafts
5:50-6:30	Supper and table time
6:30-7:10	Music/Worship
7:10-7:40	Bible study
7:40-8:00	Recreation

A Center-based Approach to Vacation Bible School



Traditional Vacation Bible School curriculums can be used to develop a center-based approach. Every VBS activity takes place at a learning center. The children can be grouped by ages. You can also mix the age groups. The children have maps to get them around each night. Try to give each learning center an exciting name (i.e., Smuggler's Cove: snacks).

Spend thirty minutes at each station. Arrange the center so volunteers only have to work one or two nights throughout the week. Use teenagers as helpers and guides.