

Get organized now for a great VBS this summer.



If you love planning, then this section is for you. If you hate planning, then this section is for you, too! Group makes it so easy to stay organized in the months and weeks ahead of your VBS.

We've been doing this for more than 27 years. We know what works well, and we've tried all the things that don't. These planning calendars give you a taste of just how simple it will be for you to make goals and track your progress Every. Step. Of. The. Way.



3 to 6 Months Before VBS



- ❖ Begin regularly praying for your church members, workers, and children who will attend VBS.
- ❖ Select a VBS director. (It might be you!)
- ❖ Meet with your core team to focus on your "why"
- ❖ Choose your VBS format, date, and times.
- ❖ Create a budget.
- ❖ Consider fundraising ideas. (We've got lots.)

2 to 3 Months Before VBS



- ❖ Plan VBS publicity.
- ❖ Set up your VBS website. (Super easy with VBS PRO.)
- ❖ Encourage preregistration.
- ❖ Estimate your enrollment. This will help with budgeting and determining the number of volunteers you'll need.
- ❖ Order VBS materials.
- ❖ Network.
- ❖ Begin recruiting Station Leaders.
- ❖ Schedule a staff training meeting.
- ❖ Explore your church facilities to find the right spots for your stations.



8 Weeks Before VBS



- ❖ Begin recruiting Crew Leaders.
- ❖ Begin publicity. (We'll guide you through it.)
- ❖ Continue gathering supplies.
- ❖ Plan your daily VBS schedule. (We have examples.)

4 Weeks Before VBS



- ❖ Recruit additional volunteers.
- ❖ Get your congregation excited about Operation Kid-to-Kid.
- ❖ Continue publicity.
- ❖ Continue preregistration.
- ❖ Hold your scheduled staff training meeting.
- ❖ Meet with each Station Leader.
- ❖ Provide VBS details to your church office.

2 Weeks Before VBS



- ❖ Check your registration count. Do you have enough Crew Leaders?
- ❖ Check your supply collection. Have your church help collect anything that's missing.
- ❖ Continue publicity.
- ❖ Update backup and emergency plans.

1 Week Before VBS



- ❖ Dedicate VBS staff during your church service.
- ❖ Meet with Station Leaders again. Smooth out any last-minute details.
- ❖ Help Station Leaders decorate their rooms.
- ❖ Decide when and where Station Leaders and Crew Leaders will meet each day.
- ❖ Plan for registration at VBS.
- ❖ Assign kids to Crews.
- ❖ Put together supplies for each Crew Leader.

During VBS



- ❖ Before registration begins, be sure Crew signs are posted.
- ❖ Hand out Crew bags as Crew Leaders arrive.
- ❖ Hand out the daily schedules each day.
- ❖ Register new children.
- ❖ Huddle and pray with your Crew Leaders.
- ❖ Make sure all Station Leaders and Crew Leaders are present each day. Be prepared for substitutes, if necessary.
- ❖ Peek into as many stations as you can.
- ❖ Make sure leaders have the supplies they need each day.
- ❖ Meet with leaders after each day's program.
- ❖ Stock and maintain a first-aid site.
- ❖ Prepare VBS completion certificates.
- ❖ Send the memories home with CDs or streaming cards.

After VBS



- ❖ Collect reusable leftover supplies.
- ❖ Send in your Operation Kid-to-Kid donations.
- ❖ Leave rooms decorated for your next church service. New visitors will feel comfortable in a familiar environment.
- ❖ Follow up after VBS ends. (We've got great ideas.)

By the way, you'll get the full-on chockablock version of this planning calendar in your *Ultimate Director Go-To Guide*. It leaves no VBS stone unturned.

Top 5 Tips

for a Successful VBS

Here's some wisdom for a successful VBS from directors just like you!



1. Start out with prayers. For yourself, the program, the volunteers, the children, the week, and even the weather. I also put a prayer team together. I call them prayer warriors. Start praying now. —Ivy P.

2. Get your youth involved! For teen/middle school volunteers, we offer service hours. We have kids entering 6th grade volunteer as well and they look forward to being “big kids” for the week. They do amazing.
—Raquel C.

3. Pay attention to the parents in your ministry. Get to know them and their interests. Look for ways those interests match with VBS. Recognize their gifting when you ask them to help. They'll be blessed that you appreciate their skills and you'll be blessed with a motivated volunteer.
—Sharon S.

4. Use a program like Group's VBS Pro. I sent out an email to all of the people who preregistered last year. I got 20 registrations in a matter of 2 days. I also posted the link on our website and our church Facebook page to the sign-up website... We never had as many preregister before we started doing it online. You can also offer a prize for the first X amount of registrations.
—Stephanie H.

5. Remember that kids don't know what it is supposed to be, so whatever it ends up as, they will love it! They won't know any different.
—Kylene S.

Budgeting & Fundraising Tips



Yeah, we know. It's not our favorite part of VBS either. But having a well-planned budget is one of the keys to a successful VBS and the first step to VBS fundraising.

Remember how there are no wasted moments at a Group VBS? Budgeting and fundraising will ensure there are no wasted cents, either!



How to figure out your budget:

- ❖ Determine your Starting Budget: If you haven't been given a budget by your church leadership, take a look at what you spent recently and use that as your starting point.
- ❖ Next, add up what VBS will cost. To keep it simple, you can break VBS into four basic buckets:
 - ❖ Decorating—backdrops, paint, hanging supplies, etc.
 - ❖ Per-kid resources—items that you want to send home with each kid.
 - ❖ Volunteer resources—things like staff t-shirts and volunteer appreciation items.
 - ❖ Program resources—station resources, registration resources, etc.

To determine your overall program costs, look for a Master Supply List for your program on group.com/vbsTools.

- ❖ Compare your starting budget and estimated cost to determine the amount of funds you need to raise.

Fundraising (and tips) for awesome decorations:

- ❖ VBS decorating is all about thinking outside the box...and then using the box as your prop! Keep things like boxes, packing paper and poster tubes on hand to become part of your set!
- ❖ Ask your congregation members to donate or lend items that match your theme.
- ❖ Check with your local hardware store to see if they offer discounted rates or supplies. Be sure to recognize them for their generosity!

Raising funds for your per-kid VBS resources:

- ❖ Invite congregation members to "sponsor" children by contributing a per-child amount.
- ❖ Charge a per-child registration fee for VBS. Give discounts to families who register more than one child.
- ❖ Invite other church groups to "sponsor" a crew or resource. For example, if you have a prayer ministry, they could sponsor the Watch for God Wristbands.

Fundraising for VBS program & volunteer resources:

- ❖ Collect a VBS dedicated offering to cover expenses.
- ❖ Ask your congregation members to donate or lend items for your VBS stations.
- ❖ Reach out to local grocery and office supply stores who might offer discounted rates and supplies.
- ❖ Invite congregation members or groups to sponsor snacks for one day.

BUILD A WISH LIST!

Group's Gift Registry is an easy-to-use online program designed for churches and the families who love to support them.

Register all your VBS Wish List items online, and invite your church members to actively participate in making those wishes an online order reality! Bless them (and your program) by giving them an easy way to support your VBS.



group.com/giftregistry



Rounding Up Volunteers

It's no secret that good VBS volunteers are worth their weight in gold! If your volunteer base has grown smaller recently, here are some tips on how to recruit and train volunteers for VBS this summer:



Recruiting volunteers

- ❖ **Send a survey** to your previous volunteers.
- ❖ **Remind everyone of the fun they've had in the past.** Some people may just need to remember the teamwork and excitement of serving! Create a video of past VBS or other ministry programs, set to upbeat music. You can even ask for some video testimonials from kids and families, telling how much those events, and the relationships formed there—made a difference.
- ❖ **Start young.** Reach out to your youth group, Christian college groups, and high schools.
- ❖ **Offer volunteer hours.** High school students are often looking for hours to help them qualify for National Honor Society or ways to improve their college applications.
- ❖ **Develop new volunteer roles.** For example, someone who loves to organize could help arrange the daily supplies for each session, even if they can't volunteer at VBS.

Training volunteers

- ❖ **A good volunteer is an equipped volunteer.** But we know trying to get all your volunteers in one place for training is a bit like herding cats.

Appreciating volunteers

- ❖ Volunteers put in the time, prayer, and heart that makes VBS a success! Be sure to show how much you value their role in helping kids grow in their relationship with Jesus. Here are some ideas:



- ❖ **Set up volunteers for success** by placing them in roles that fit their gifts. For example, place a shy person in a role that doesn't require public speaking.
- ❖ **Enhance relationship-building opportunities** with small, multi-age crews. The emphasis here is on small. It's much easier for crew leaders to create relationships and give attention to each child when there are only five kids in a crew.
- ❖ **Set up a VIP room at VBS.** Designate an area where volunteers can gather before or after VBS. Make sure it has some comfy places to relax, and stock it with fun themed treats. Need ideas? Check out [pinterest!](#)
- ❖ **Show your gratitude.** Make sure volunteers feel valued and acknowledged. Ask their opinions at the end of the week, and act on any ideas or suggestions that are relevant. Recognize them at a Sunday service. Give them a unique thank-you gift. Share examples of how they helped change kids' lives.

We're serious about you having the best VBS experience ever.

Whether you have a question about which of our VBS programs is the best fit for you or it's the day before VBS and you can't figure out how to make that gizmo work...we're here for you. We have tools, communities, and teams of real live people who are just a phone call, a chat, or an email away to help you have a spectacular VBS.

