

COVID-FRIENDLY STATION MODIFICATIONS

# WILDERNESS

# ESCAPE

WHERE GOD GUIDES & PROVIDES



Group

# DIRECTOR'S NOTES

**VBS is on for summer of 2021!** You can do in-person VBS with some simple modifications. We realize that every church has different comfort levels when it comes to gathering as a group. So if you're uncomfortable with a "higher-contact" experience, consider using these station specific modifications, in addition to the tips in the COVID-19 Protocol section below.

Adjusting how we do ministry will allow for ministry to keep happening! Your kids and families will thank you. You've got this!

## COVID-19 Protocol

**Always follow the CDC guidelines for your state and local government restrictions as well as any denominational directives.**

For example, if your area is requiring masks, have volunteers and kids wear masks when physical distancing is not possible or if you're meeting inside.

When prepping supplies that will be distributed to kids, have a packing party. Volunteers can maintain physical distancing, respecting the 6-foot rule and wear gloves and masks as they get station supplies ready. Safety first!

Preregistration will allow for you to comply with COVID-19 in-person ratios. Plus, you'll know how many volunteers to recruit. VBS PRO is a great management tool option.

Space Tribes 6 feet apart in station rotations, and use a one-way traffic flow, if possible.

Consider having a pool noodle for each child to use as a reminder to keep physical distance. Or have each child bring a beach towel to sit on as a visual reminder to spread out from Tribe members.

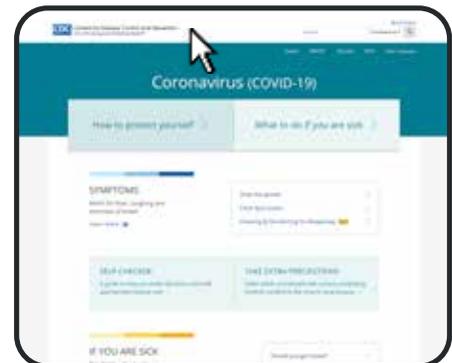
Provide hand sanitizer and have participants use it before beginning each VBS station. Add a small bottle to each Tribe Basket Or supply multiple hand-washing stations.

Have wipes or disinfectant spray to frequently clean items.

For games, have multiple sets of the games supplies so each Tribe gets its own clean set.

If you include the "Bakery," consider preparing the daily snack only using store-bought items.

Consider holding most of your VBS outside at your church. Use the Neighborhood Checklist as a guide.



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## Recruiting & Staffing

**Flexibility is the key.** Don't worry! We always make it as easy as possible for every Station Leader! Two people can co-lead activities, especially to help with sanitizing and reloading supplies for the next rotation.

**Tribe Leaders play an important role.** During such a challenging season, these leaders matter! These individuals establish relationships with children, are listeners during discussion time, and show Jesus' love in tangible ways. Tribe Leaders, are a key part of the VBS experience, especially if VBS may be your first in-person event.

And how cool for kids to know they have a Tribe Leaders praying for them every day of VBS. Next-level the relational aspect by having Tribe Leaders reach out to parents at the end of each VBS day.

**Consider shifting your staff training to online.** Utilize platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Google Meet for your volunteer meetings. These platforms allow you to share your screen easily with a PowerPoint or Keynote, so you can get everyone onboard. Be sure to address how station supplies will be gathered and content delivered. We've included two blank Wilderness Escape slide images at [group.com/VBSTools](http://group.com/VBSTools) for you to easily create slides for your staff training. Just add a text box and type in your content or add images.



The graphic features a light blue background with faint icons of a microscope, a lightbulb, and a gear. At the top center is the 'VBS Training Lab' logo, where 'VBS' is in green, 'Training' is in blue, and 'Lab' is in red and orange. Below the logo are the words 'Learn and Belong' in blue, red, and orange respectively. The main text 'Interactive! \* Online! \* Made for you!' is in green. Two thought bubbles are present: a blue one on the left and an orange one on the right. A green rounded rectangle at the bottom contains registration information. The entire graphic is framed by a light blue border with small star and circle icons.

**VBS Training Lab**  
Learn and Belong

**Interactive! \* Online! \* Made for you!**

**You'll LEARN...**  
how to plan, decorate, coordinate, and pull off an amazing VBS.

**and BELONG...**  
Network with other people who share your passion for children's ministry. Befriend VBS leaders in your neighborhood or across the country!

**Register your church...**  
for an innovative on-demand experience with live follow-up sessions.  
Go to [group.com/vbsTrainingLab](http://group.com/vbsTrainingLab) for more info.

(The latest innovation from the creators of VBS FunShops!)

# Content

**Consider modifying your VBS schedule.** You may want to do a three-hour program, and add five minutes to each Wilderness Escape station or do it as it's written and it's 2 ½ hours. You could trim the opening and closing so it's closer to 2-hours. A shortened VBS schedule may allow you to skip the snack option in the Israelite Camp, eliminating much COVID-19 worry. You have everything you need to lead a powerful, experiential, memorable, and life-changing VBS—no matter how many kids you have!

## **Make a few simple modifications.**

### Opening & Closing Celebration and Tribe Time

Create a “sing line” with a piece of masking tape. Encourage Tribes to sit behind the line to create physical distance between kids, the station leader, and the drama people. The CDC recommends “at least 12 feet of distance when singing or musical instruments are involved, from performers to spectators.”

Refrain from having kids come up front to lead singing, unless you can space them out appropriately (from each other, as well as from those in the audience). Keep all singers facing the same direction, except for the station leader. This is the easiest solution for VBS worship time.

Modify the motions for these two songs. “God Will Guide Us, has everyone get into a large circle and join hands. Have Tribes stand in rows all forward facing and omit holding hands. “Shalom,” omit standing in a circle and have Tribes stand in a forward -facing line with arms stretched out.

Space Tribes 6 feet apart, if possible. Lay out blankets for kids to sit around with their Tribes. Sitting around the edge of a large blanket can encourage physical distancing. If you use chairs or pews, leave an empty row in between Tribes.

Have stage helpers maintain social distancing —6 feet apart. Put five tape marks on the floor for the volunteers who will hold up the daily Bible Point Posters.

### **Day 1:**

Page 19: During Closing Tribe Time, have hand sanitizer or wipes available in case one of the Tribe Members wants to try the Crazy Critter.

Page 21: Omit having Tribe members link arms for the prayer.

### **Day 2:**

Page 29: In Opening Celebration, have the Tribe Leaders maintain 6 feet from each other as they place the God Sighting footprints,” on the God Sightings Maps for the next three days of VBS.

Page 31: During Closing Tribe Time, have Tribe Leaders give a squirt of hand sanitizer before Tribe members use the “Way-to-Glow Pens”

### Day 3:

Page 43: During Closing Tribe Time, have Tribe Leaders give a squirt of hand sanitizer before Tribe members use the “Surprise Ariser.”

### Day 4:

Page 51: During Closing Tribe Time, have Tribe Leaders give a squirt of hand sanitizer before Tribe members use the “Spray Away Writer.”

### Day 5

Page 63: During Closing Tribe Time, have Tribe Leaders give a squirt of hand sanitizer before Tribe members use the “A-Maze-ing Map.” Have a paper clip for each Tribe member, rather than sharing one.

### Moses’ Tent

Create a “drama line” with a piece of masking tape. Encourage Tribes to sit behind the line to create physical distance between them, any actors, and station leader. Have Tribes maintain 6 feet of distance, as much as possible. Give participants a squirt of hand sanitizers as they enter your station each day.

### Day 1:

Page 17: If you’re uncomfortable with Tribes circling up in a knee-to-knee circle, have them sit a pool noodle distance apart or on individual beach towels, today and on the next four days of VBS.

### Day 2:

Page 19: Make sure you use a new shower curtain liner or disposable tablecloth for each rotation and wear gloves and a mask when putting out the peeps and cereal. Remind participant to only pick up two pieces of “manna” and not touch other pieces. If you’re uncomfortable with this, simply put two pieces of “manna” in a small paper cup for each person. Offer Tribes a wet wipe to clean their hands after eating.

### Day 3:

Page 27: Have enough water bottles for two complete rotations so they can be sanitized between groups.

### Day 4:

Pages 30-32: Create a supply basket for each Tribe or have at least two sets of supplies so you can sanitize the baskets and paint containers and brushes and reload the supplies between rotations. Put the pita bread into a resealable bag. Throw away the plate, pita bag and any leftover pita bread after each group. Offer Tribes a wet wipe to clean their hands after eating.

## Israelite Camp

There are so many exciting things to do in the Israelite Camp! We recommend handwashing or kid-friendly hand sanitizer before this rotation so you can keep as many of these experiential activities as possible. Encourage Tribes to travel together to a tent.

For the “craft like” tents, create a supply basket for each Tribe or have at least two sets of supplies so you can sanitize the baskets and reusable supplies and reload the supplies between rotations.

Determine if you’ll include Operation Kid-to-Kid. Kids across the globe have been impacted by COVID-19, and the children in your community will gain a sense of empowerment by helping kids in Ecuador! However, if you’re not incorporating this missions project, simply omit that option in the Israelite camp.

Have your “Baker” team prepare the snack wearing gloves and masks. For the making of fresh rolls, have participants wash hands before and after touching the dough. The hot oven will kill any germs. Simply modify the snack ideas on pages 49-54 the Israelite Camp Leader Manual so each participant receives his or her own snack plate, rather taking their own snacks from a serving table. If possible, let kids gather outside for snack time—preceded and followed by hand-washing! If you want to be extra cautious, provide a store-bought snack for kids. If you are shortened VBS program, you could skip the snack rotation entirely.

## Fun & Games

Gather kids outdoors if weather permits. Give kids a squirt of hand sanitizer at the very beginning of the rotation. Have multiple sets of the games supplies so each Tribe gets its own clean set or have enough for two rotations so they can be sanitized between rotations. Game modifications below allow for non-contact games.

### Day 1:

⊘ Omit Croc Tag or use a pool noodle to “tap” the feet

### Day 2:

⊘ Omit Quail Tag.

For “Mouse in the House,” create a circle but do not join hands.