

VBS 2020 SPECIAL FRIENDS CONFERENCE PLAN (50 MINUTES)

Purpose Statement

This conference plan is designed to train and equip VBS leaders who will teach *LifeWay's VBS 2020 Special Friends*.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2020 Special Friends Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2020 Decorating Made Easy*
- *VBS 2020 Worship Rally Pack*
- *VBS 2020 Recreation Rotation Cards*
- *VBS 2020 Music for Kids CD*
- *VBS 2020 Name Tags*
- *VBS 2020 Sticker Name Tags*
- *VBS 2020 Caution Tape*
- *VBS 2020 Kids Activity Book*
- *VBS 2020 Preschool Activity Book*
- *VBS 2020 Kids Memory Maker*
- *VBS 2020 Preschool Memory Maker*
- *VBS 2020 Tablecloths*
- *VBS 2020 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards*
- *VBS 2020 Crafts Rotation Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2020 Missions Rotation Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2020 Music Rotation Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2020 Super Duper Sized Backdrop*
- *VBS 2020 Visual Pack*
- *VBS 2020 Tablecloth*
- Item 1: "Tool Descriptions" — Photocopy enough for each participant to have a card. Cut apart the cards.
- Item 2: "Blueprint Handout" — Copy 1 per conferee.
- Item 3: Handout 2 — Copy 1 per conferee.
- CD-ROM Items — Print the CD-ROM items for conferees to peruse. Prepare the following according to the instructions:
 - Building Focal Wall — Display on the focal wall.
 - Skyscraper Add-ons — Cut apart and add to focal wall banner.
 - The Point Bricks — Display on the focal wall.
 - Today's Point — Display on the focal wall.
 - VBS Motto — Display on the focal wall.
 - Tool Cards — Print 2 sets and cut apart the cards. Place two of the measuring tape, pliers, saw, and hammer cards in a line in random order on the table or floor. Cover each card with an orange cone to make a matching game.
 - Yes/No Cards — Cut apart the cards. Attach the "Yes" card to one box and the "No" card to another.
 - Labels — Cut out and attach the label "Does It Roll?" to a small toolbox.

- Bible Verse Tool Belt — Print on heavyweight paper. Cut out the tool belt, then cut along the two solid white lines so that tools will fit into the slits of the belt. Cut apart each tool.
- Bible Story Pictures 1–5
- 8 small traffic cones
- Small toolbox — Attach the label “Does It Roll?” to the toolbox. Fill with one each of the following items: clothespin, ball, pencil, straw, glue stick, beanbag, toy construction truck, and water bottle.
- Toy or real tools (hammer, wrench, measuring tape, pliers, level, screwdriver saw) — Place the tools which match the “Bible Verse Tool Belt” inside a box.
- 2 cardboard boxes
- Sturdy foam core board or wood plank — Prop up one end of the wooden plank or foam core board on a chair.
- Gloves

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in rows facing the focal wall. Display the *VBS 2020 Super Duper Sized Backdrop* and the *VBS 2020 Visual Pack* posters around the room. Cover the table with the *VBS 2020 Tablecloth* or orange tablecloth and display the curriculum alongside the tabletop decorations. Add hard hats, toy construction trucks, caution tape, and ladders to your decorations. Place the two handouts in conferees’ chairs before the session.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Play “Concrete and Cranes” (from Music for Kids CD) as conferees arrive. Give each a “Tool Descriptions” card (Item 1) as they enter.
- Invite volunteers to take turn lifting 2 cones to try to find two matching pictures of tools (similar to the game “Concentration”).
- Once a match is found, lead all conferees holding a card that describes that tool to gather together and form a group.
- Lead conferees to introduce themselves to new friends in their group and exchange the following information: name, church, date of VBS, and one thing they hope to gain from today’s conference.
- Comment that people must choose the right tool for the job, such as a hammer to nail pieces of wood together, or a screwdriver to loosen or tighten a screw.
- Remind participants that Jesus chooses to love each one of them.
- Mention that this game was adapted from the Bonus Activity entitled “Match Tools” on Day 1 of the Special Friends Leader Guide.

2. Pre-Construction Meeting (5 minutes)

- Explain that as kids explore a world of concrete and cranes, rivets and rebar, bulldozers and backhoes during VBS, they will learn to build their faith on Jesus and uncover the truth that He who began a good work will be faithful to carry it on to completion.

- Refer conferees to the “Blueprint Handout” (Item 2) in their chairs and invite them to take notes during the training.
- Introduce the VBS motto: “Jesus! Our Strong Foundation!” Lead conferees to stand and shout the motto together.
- Teach the following hand motions and lead the conferees to say the motto again with the hand motions:
 - Jesus! (raise hands to the sky)
 - Our Strong (hold up both arms and show your muscles)
 - Foundation! (lower arms to side with hands out, and stomp two times, which represents the two-syllable word *foundation*)
- Lead conferees to read the VBS Scripture together: “I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:6.”

3. The Administrative Guide (15 minutes)

- Explain that this conference will provide guidelines to help conferees get organized, including helps in choosing a format, adding resources to enhance Bible study, prayer strategies, prepping for the theme, and adapting the VBS resources for children with special needs.
- Begin by introducing three different format options for children and adults with special needs. Explain that it is important that leaders are familiar with the children, students and adults they are serving prior to determining which format will work best for VBS.
- Suggest that leaders ask parents or caregivers during registration to provide them with information about their child’s disability to help better meet each child’s unique needs.
- Refer to the Blueprint Handout (Item 2) for examples of probing questions to ask parents:
 - “Do they like working in groups or individually?”
 - “Does noise bother them?”
 - “What are their strengths and weaknesses?”
 - “Does light bother them?”
 - “Will they need assistance writing?”
- Explain that asking these probing questions will give you a better idea of which format (or formats) to use during VBS.
- Suggest that leaders may want to also schedule a time to have confidential meetings with parents prior to VBS. Keep in mind some parents and caregivers may not want to disclose information about their child’s disability in public.
- Mention that many churches use one of the following three options when planning VBS for people with special needs. Say: “As you prepare, determine which approach would best meet the needs of learners and plan accordingly.”
- Read and describe each format. Point out that these are also listed on the Blueprint Handout:
 - **Inclusion:**
 - Learners who have special needs attend a typically-graded class along with their age-group peers and participate in the same activities. They

may rely on the assistance of a one-on-one helper for some activities, or, on occasion, they may complete an independent-learning activity.

- **Self-Contained:**
 - In these settings the teacher-student ratio is lower, activities are planned for individuals or small groups, concepts are simplified, and everything moves at a slower pace.
- **Combination:**
 - Learners spend a portion of their day in a self-contained setting (perhaps for Bible study) but participate with their peer groups in rotations for crafts, music, missions, and recreation.

4. Planning Extras (5 minutes)

- Tell conferees to BE READY FOR ANYTHING! Planning is crucial. Recognize and plan for all types of situations.
- Explain that not every person with special needs will fit neatly in a self-contained class or function successfully in an inclusive environment. Prepare to offer both options if possible.
- Suggest they enlist a team of workers. They will need teachers to lead activities during Bible study, provide one-on-one assistance during rotation activities (both in and out of the classroom), teachers to prepare activities in advance for learners who need independent activities, and extra teachers to be on call to fill in if someone must be absent.
- Caution leaders to not place adult learners with special needs in the same classroom with children.
- Mention that the needs of parents and caregivers of children and adults with special needs often go unmet. Pray that they will enjoy their moments of respite while their loved ones attend VBS.

5. What's in Your Toolbox? (Resources) (10 minutes)

- Explain that there are many resources available to help enhance the Special Friends Bible study curriculum.” Lead conferees to jot down useful resources in the “What's In Your Toolbox?” section on the back of their handout.
- Briefly describe the following resources and explain how each one can enhance a VBS experience. Hold up or gesture toward each item on display as you describe it:
 - Decorating Made Easy
 - Worship Rally Pack
 - Recreation Cards
 - Music Rotation Guide (and Music for Kids CD)
 - VBS 2020 Name Tags
 - VBS 2020 Sticker Name Tags
 - VBS 2020 Caution Tape
 - VBS 2020 Kids Activity Book
 - VBS 2020 Preschool Activity Book
 - VBS 2020 Kids Memory Maker

- VBS 2020 Preschool Memory Maker
- VBS 2020 Tablecloths
- Snack Recipe Cards
- Crafts Leader Guide
- Missions Leader Guide

6. Spiritual Impact — Signs of Readiness (10 minutes)

- Remind conferees that God loves every person and invites all to be part of His Kingdom. Children and adults with special needs may not understand the vocabulary that we use to express how we feel about Jesus. However, we all can understand and feel the love of God. When explaining the love of Jesus Christ, we can't assume that children and adult with special needs are "safe" or will automatically spend eternity in heaven. As the Bible study leader, it is our responsibility to provide guidance in taking the steps to lead them towards a personal relationship with Christ.
- Here are some signs to let you know that a child or adult with special needs is ready to accept Christ as his Lord and Savior. Invite conferees to take notes on their handout:
 - Children or adults will get excited when you talk about how God loves them.
 - Children or adults may say or use sign language to express how much they love Jesus.
- Refer to the following resources and activities within the curriculum that intentionally focus on what it means to be a Christian and how a person can become a Christian. Encourage conferees to use the resources as directed in the leader guide, but be ready to use them anytime you sense the Holy Spirit may be prompting a learner to ask spiritual questions or indicate a desire to make a decision for Christ.
 - When Is a Person with Special Needs Ready to Become a Christian? (page 8)
 - Sharing the Gospel with Kids (Bible Study CD-ROM, Administrative Helps section and also on the inside front cover of the leader guide)
 - Invite Children to Respond (page 48)
 - Live It (page 74)
 - Gospel Toolbox (page 77)

7. Prayer Strategies (10 minutes)

- Mention that as we prepare to teach learners with special needs, it is important to pray for them and their families. A list of prayer strategies is available on page 10 of the Special Friends Leader Guide. Reproducible copies of the "Prayer Card" (show a copy to conferees) is available on the Administrative Helps section on the Bible Study CD-ROM. Suggest conferees give these cards to church members who are willing to pray for VBS.
- NOTE: Before reviewing the strategies, ask conferees, "What prayer strategies do you currently have in place at your church?" Encourage conferees to listen for any new ideas and write them down on their Blueprint Handout. Allow a minute or two for a few people to share their strategies.
- Give the following suggestions to pray each day for the children, parents, and volunteers participating in VBS:

- **Day 1:** Thank God that Jesus chooses to love us. Ask that He will help kids remain in His love. John 15:9
- **Day 2:** Thank God for sending Jesus to provide forgiveness of our sins even while we were still sinners. Ask that He will help kids know that Jesus loves them regardless of their sins. Romans 5:8
- **Day 3:** Praise God for Jesus' choice to lay down His life for us. Ask God to help kids understand how much Jesus loves them. John 15:3
- **Day 4:** Praise God that Jesus' love and presence is eternal. Thank Him for keeping all His promises. Matthew 28:20b
- **Day 5:** Ask God to help kids continue to build their lives on what they have been taught and believe about Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:14

8. Prepping for The Theme (10 minutes)

- Point out the decorating ideas on page 11 of the leader guide. Encourage conferees to make sure any decorations will not be a distraction from learning.
- Display and show conferees the *Decorating Made Easy* book, along with the different decoration options on display in the room.
- Allow conferees the opportunity to share their own decorating ideas for this theme.
- Conferees may make notes on their handouts.

9. The Blueprint - Biblical Content (30 minutes)

- Walk conferees through the format and Daily Teaching plans in the Special Friends curriculum.
- Explain that the sessions for kids (on pages 13–48) are designed in a pick-and-choose format much like the *Bible Studies for Life: Special Buddies* curriculum. Select one activity under each topic heading or make accommodations for each child as needed. Allow kids to work at their own pace even if it means multiple supervised activities are happening at the same time.
- Sessions for students and adults (see pages 49–84) are designed in a linear format. As time allows, begin on the first page of the session and follow the suggestions from “Start It” to “Finish It.” Bonus activities may be used as needed to meet the needs of individuals, small groups, or the group.
- Explain that each day begins with the Leader Devotion. As the leader, it is important that you know what the story is about. The devotion is a tool to help you prepare for the day's Bible story.
- Each day will have the following features;
 - Today's Point
 - Bible Verse (used all week)
 - The Bible Story modified
 - Leader Devotion — with personal, guided questions to think about
 - Introduce the Bible Story — 2 options to choose from
 - Study the Bible Section — Choose one option for telling the Bible story.
 - Practice Bible Skills — Choose an activity to help children learn and interact with the Bible verse.

- Live It Out — Choose an activity that relates today's Point (there are 2 options).
- Closing Activity — Choose one activity to close the session.
- Bonus Activities — Two options ... these activities extend the learning and are good to use while waiting for parents to pick up their children or as a time filler during times of transition or between rotations.
- Walk through each day's Bible content. Lead conferees to fill in the information on their handouts (Item 3).
- **Day 1: Foundation of Love**
 - **Bible Story:** Jesus Chose Matthew (Matthew 9:9–13)
 - **Day's Point:** Jesus choose to love me.
 - **Bible Verse:** I know that God started a good work in me and He will complete it.
Philippians 1:6
 - Tell the Bible story, adding the movements indicated by italics on page 14 of the leader guide. Ask conferees to listen and look for the accommodations that are added to the story.
 - Ask conferees if they heard the accommodations. Ask volunteers to share what the accommodations are.
 - Display "Bible Story Picture 1."
 - Explain to conferees that "Move with The Story" is located under "Study the Bible, Option 2" on Day 1.
- **Day 2: Foundation of Forgiveness**
 - **Bible Story:** Paul Listened and Obeyed (Act 26: 1-20)
 - **Daily Point:** Jesus loves me regardless of my sin.
 - **Bible Verse:** I know that God started a good work in me and He will complete it.
Philippians 1:6
 - Tell the Bible story. When you tell about the bright light, ask conferees to close their eyes and continue to listen. When you tell about Paul's changed life, ask conferees to open their eyes again.
 - Display "Bible Story Picture 2."
 - Explain to conferees that the "Open and Close Eyes" activity is located under the "Study the Bible, Option 2" for Day 2.
- **Day 3: Foundation of Worth**
 - **Bible Story:** Jesus Prayed in the Garden (Matthew 26: 36-46)
 - **Daily Point:** Jesus chose to die for me.
 - **Bible Verse:** I know that God started a good work in me and He will complete it.
Philippians 1:6
 - Tell the Bible story.
 - Lead four volunteers to practice their Bible skills using the "Option 1: Feel and Name" activity located on page 31 of the leader guide. (items needed: "Bible Verse Tool Belt," gloves, and tools)
 - Scatter the "Bible Verse Tool Belt" item on the floor. Invite volunteers to put on the gloves and reach into the bag to feel a tool.
 - Ask the volunteers to name the tool in their hands without looking. Lead volunteers to pull it out to see if they were correct.

- Guide volunteers to place the tools back in the box so each volunteer can have a turn.
- Place the verse tools on the table in order. Lead the volunteers to arrange the real or plastic tools on the table in the same order as shown on the cards.
- Open the Bible to Philippians 1:6 and lead volunteers to say the verse as it is printed on the tools.
- Mention that God will finish the plan He has started for each person's life.
- **Day 4: Foundation of Promise**
 - **Bible Story:** Jesus Made a Promise (Matthew 28:1-10; 16-20)
 - **Daily Point:** Jesus will always be with me.
 - **Bible Verse:** I know that God started a good work in me and He will complete it.
Philippians 1:6
 - Follow the instructions for "Introduce the Bible Story, Option 2: Does it Roll?" on page 37 of the leader guide.
 - Explain that when something rolls, it turns over and over across a surface. Point out that something that rolls is different than something that slides. Say: "If it slides, it stays on the same side and does not turnover and over."
 - Invite a volunteer to choose one item from the toolbox and guess whether or not it will roll. He may then place the item on top of the wooden plank (or foam core) to test his hypothesis.
 - Lead the volunteer to place his item in the correct box (YES it rolls or NO it doesn't roll).
 - Encourage volunteers to continue until all the items have been sorted.
 - Explain that today's Bible story is about a time when a large rock rolled away from the opening of the tomb.
 - Read Day 4 Bible story (leader guide, page 35).
 - Explain the "Study the Bible Option 2: Draw Pictures" activity which uses drawings as a review of the Bible story with the children.
 - Display "Bible Story Picture 4."
- **Day 5: Foundation for Life**
 - **Bible Story:** The House on the Rock (Matthew 7:24-29)
 - **Daily Point:** Jesus helps me know how to live.
 - **Bible Verse:** I know that God started a good work in me and He will complete it.
Philippians 1:6
 - Follow the instructions for "Introduce the Bible Story, Option 1: Where Do you Live?" on page 44 of the leader guide.
 - Invite conferees to listen to each statement. If the statement describes something about where they live, they should pop up and sit down quickly. For those individuals who may have limited mobility you can modify the activity by having them wave a hand, blink their eyes, or nod their heads.
 - "I live in a house"
 - "I live in an apartment"

- “I have a garage with a car parked inside”
- “I share a bedroom”
- “I have my own room”
- “I have a backyard”
- “I have trees in my yard”
- “I can look out the window of my room”
- Explain that Jesus told a story about men who were building houses.
- Tell the Day 5 Bible story and show the Day 5 Bible Story Picture.

10. Teaching Plans for Students/Adults (20 minutes)

- Look together at the teaching plans for a self-contained class created for youth and adults with special needs. Explain that the plans are designed for 1-hour Bible study sessions.
- Daily Teaching Plans include the same Bible stories:
 - Day 1: Foundation of Love
 - Day 2: Foundation of Forgiveness
 - Day 3: Foundation of Worth
 - Day 4: Foundation of Promise
 - Day 5: Foundation for Life
- Explain that the Student/Adult teaching plans include the following sections:
 - Today's Point
 - Bible Verse
 - Bonus Verse
 - Bible Story
 - Leader Devotion
 - Start It — This is welcome or warm-up activity to introduce the Bible story.
 - Hear It — Tell the Bible story in your own words or read the Bible story provided in the leader guide.
 - Learn It — Learners will have the opportunity to learn the Bible verse.
 - Live It — Learners will have the opportunity to apply the day's lesson to their lives. Learners will use the Kids Activity Book to help apply the lesson to their lives.
 - Finish It — Summarizing what was learned that day
 - Bonus Activities — 4 options ... can be used while learners are waiting to get picked up, or if you finish your lesson early.
- Mention that there are different guidelines for Special Friends for students and adults:
 - Offer VBS at night or at a time when students and adults already attend church. This is important for adult learners who may work during the day.
 - Never mix adults with special needs with kids. Their needs are different and should be met separately.
 - Make sure to enlist one leader for every 4–5 learners.
 - Recruit at least one male and one female leader who can assist with personal care.
- Look together at the following Bible study strategies:

- Use material and activities that are appropriate for adults and students.
- Encourage independence. Challenge students and adults to do as much as they can for themselves.
- Provide opportunities for them to help rather than always be helped.
- Allow students to work at their own pace even if it means multiple activities are happening at the same time.
- Adapt the teaching plans to meet the specific needs of your learners.
- Set realistic time goals. Refer conferees to the “Goal Setting” section of Handout 2 (Item 3).
- Don’t rush adults to move to another activity before they finish the previous one.
- No specific time limits are suggested for Bible study activities.
- Some groups will be able to complete most of the suggested activities while others may only tell the Bible story and complete a few supplementary activities.
- Ask conferees to jot down their goals for their Special Friends VBS on their handouts.

11. Wrap Up (5 minutes)

- Remind conferees that prayer is one of the most important ways to prepare for VBS. Through prayer, we can ask God to bless our VBS and those who attend (and their families). We can also pray that someone will make the decision to accept Jesus as her Lord and Savior.
- Lead conferees to partner up a new friend and take turns interceding on one another’s behalf.
- Close in prayer, asking God to bless all of those who attended the training today. Pray for their leadership, those who will be impacted, and those who will volunteer to teach.

**This tool measures things.
What is it?**

**This is a hand tool
that helps old objects.
What is it?**

**This tool pounds nails
into wood. What is it?**

**This tool cuts wood.
What is it?**

**This tool tightens and
loosens nuts and bolts.
What is it?**

**This tool can make a
hole in wood and metal.
What is it?**

**This tool twists and turns
screws. What is it?**

**This tool shows if an item
is straight. What is it?**

Blueprint Handout

VBS Motto:

_____!

VBS Theme Verse:

_____ (Philippians 1:6)

Probing Questions:

- “Do they like working in groups or individually?”
- “Does noise bother them?”
- “What are their strengths and weaknesses?”
- “Does light bother them?”
- “Will they need assistance writing?”

Format Options:

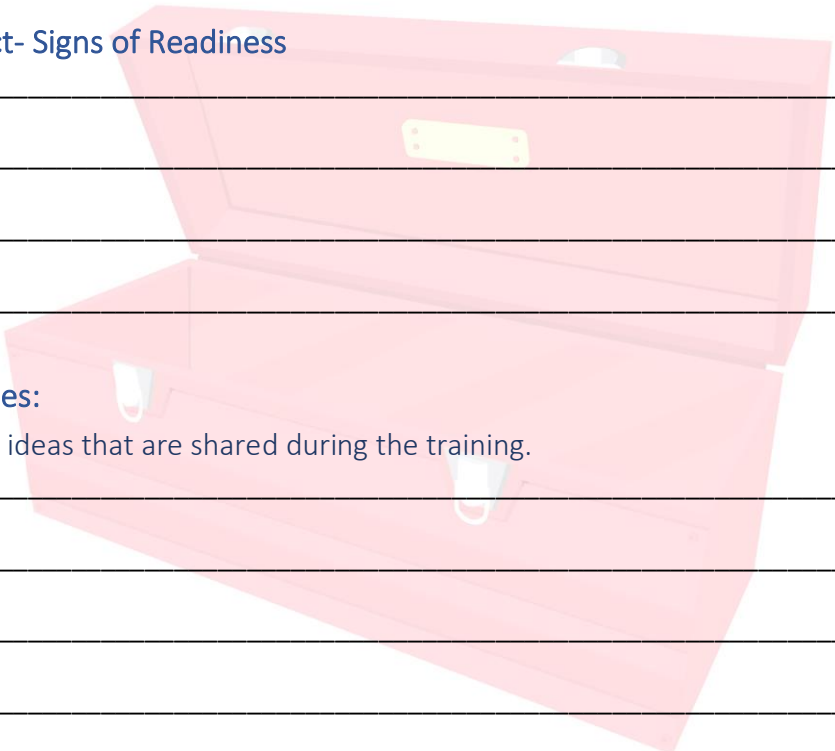
1. **Inclusion** – Learners who have special needs attend a typically graded class along with their age-group peers and participate in the same activities.
2. **Self-Contained** – In these settings the teacher-student ratio is lower, activities are planned for individuals or small groups, concepts are simplified, and everything moves at a slower pace.
3. **Combination** - Learners spend a portion of their day in a self-contained setting (perhaps for Bible study) but participate with their peer groups in rotations for crafts, music, missions, and recreation.

Notes:

Blueprint Handout

What's in Your Toolbox? - Resources

Spiritual Impact- Signs of Readiness



Prayer Strategies:

Write down any ideas that are shared during the training.

Prepping for the Theme: Decorating Made Easy

Kids Bible Study Content

Day 1

Title:
Bible Verse:
Bible Story:

Day 2

Title:
Bible Verse:
Bible Story:

Day 3

Title:
Bible Verse:
Bible Story:

Day 4

Title:
Bible Verse:
Bible Story:

Day 5

Title:
Bible Verse:
Bible Story:

Kids Teaching Plan



Today's Point

- Bible Verse
- Bible Story



Leader Devotion

- Personal Blueprint



Introduce The Bible Story

- Option 1
- Option 2



Study The Bible

- Option 1
- Option 2



Practice Bible Skills

- Option 1
- Option 2



Live It Out

- Option 1
- Option 2

Closing Activity – (Option 1 & Option 2)

Bonus Activities (Option 1 & Option 2)

Students/Adult Teaching Plan

Today's
Point

Bible
Verse

Bonus
Verse

Start It

Hear It

Learn It

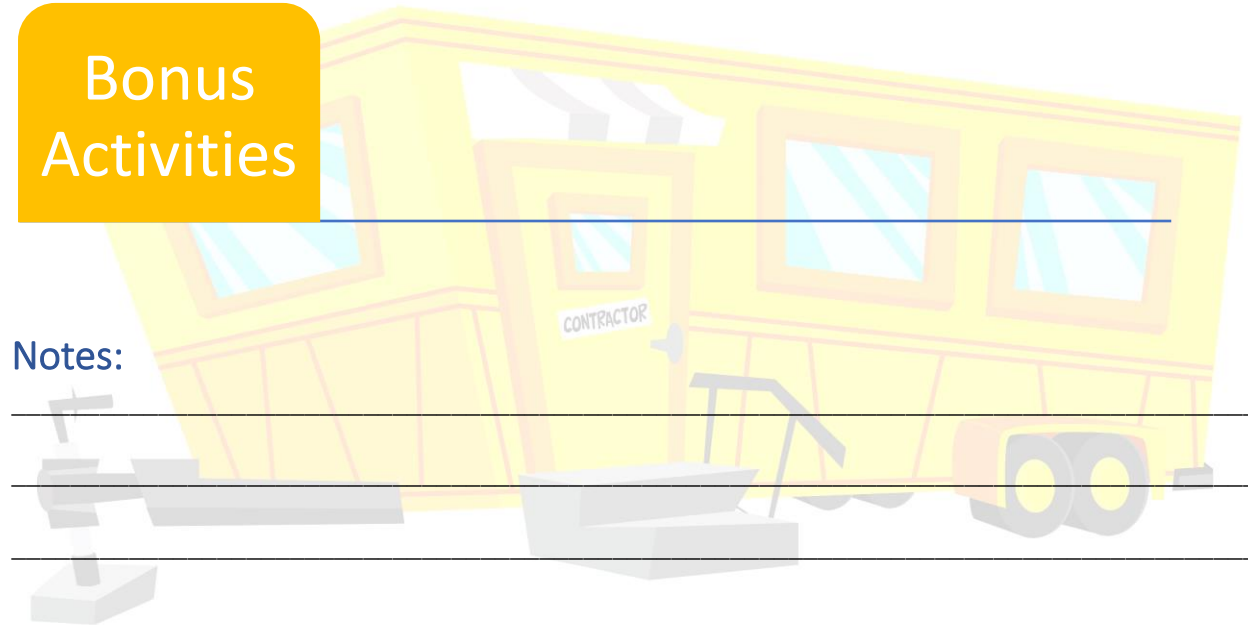
Students/Adult Teaching Plan

Live It

Finish It

Bonus
Activities

Notes:



Goal Setting

What are goals for your Special Friends VBS? Use this space to write them down.

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3