

VBS 2021 SHARING THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN CONFERENCE PLAN (50 MINUTES)

Purpose Statement

This 50-minute conference plan is designed to train and equip VBS leaders to share the gospel with children.

Needed Resources

- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* tract
- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* study (leader guide, younger/older activity books)
- *I'm a Christian Now* materials
- *VBS 2021 Devotional Bible for Kids*
- *VBS 2021 Parent Guide*
- *VBS 2021 Bookmark* (1 per conferee)
- *VBS 2021 Tablecloths*
- *VBS 2021 Music for Kids CD*
- *VBS 2021 Kids Gospel Guide*
- *VBS 2021 Gospel Wristbands*
- *VBS 2021 Supersized Backdrop*
- *VBS 2021 String Flags*
- Item 1: "Handout" — Make one copy for each conferee.
- Item 2: "Expedition Cards" — Photocopy onto cardstock and cut apart along the lines. Each conferee will need one of the cards.
- Bucket filled with sand or shredded paper
- 4–5 small plastic shovels
- Clay pot — Break the pot into at least 8 pieces. Write one of the following statements on each piece, then place the pieces in the bucket:
 - Rely on the Holy Spirit
 - Deal with Each Child Individually
 - Use the Bible
 - Ask Open-ended Questions
 - Use Simple Language
 - Be Careful with Emotions
 - Guide Children to an Appropriate Decision
 - Follow Up with the Child
- 5 ziplock sandwich bags
- Index cards — Write one letter from each of the following 5 words on a separate index card (one letter per card): *RULES*, *SINNED*, *PROVIDED*, *GIVES*, *RESPOND*. Place the letter cards from the same word together in a ziplock bag.
- CD player

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle. Cover the focal with a *VBS 2021 Supersized Backdrop*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2021 Tablecloth* and display the evangelism books and tools on top. Add small shovels, broken clay pot pieces, and a bucket for tabletop decorations. Drape *VBS 2021 String Flags* across the doorway.

Teaching Steps

1. Search and Seek (5 minutes)

- Greet conferees as they arrive and give each an "Expedition Card" (Item 2), *VBS 2021 Bookmark*, and handout (Item 1). Ask conferees to fill out their "Expedition Card" while they wait for the conference to begin.
- Welcome conferees. Say: "Today we're going on an expedition to unearth how to share the gospel with children."
- Lead the group to play a game called, Search and Seek. Instruct conferees to stand up with their Expedition Card. Explain that on "Go," conferees should roam around the room and search and seek out others with the same expedition tool as they have on their card (shovel, pickaxe, magnifying glass, jeep).
- Say: "On your mark, get set, Search and Seek!" Play "Destination Dig" (Music for Kids CD, track 1) while conferees seek out the others in their group.
- After all conferees have found their groups, ask them to introduce themselves and share their answers to the question on the card.
- Allow 2–3 minutes to work, then ask conferees to return to their seats.
- Invite a few volunteers to share something they learned about children and salvation in their group discussion.
- Use the following to discuss information about children and salvation. Some people may have these thoughts:
 - A child is too young to become a Christian.
 - A child needs to be a certain age to decide to follow Christ.
 - Can a child understand the gospel?
 - Children need to become a Christian before they are teenagers.
- Say: "Many people have different opinions and ideas about salvation and children, but what does God's Word say about children? Let's search and seek out the truth by reading Matthew 18:1-5." After reading the passage to the conferees, ask them to fill in the blanks on their handout (item 1). This passage teaches that:
 - Kids are important to Jesus.
 - God's will for kids is to be saved and have a relationship with Him.
- Read the following stats about children and salvation at VBS: (taken from *VBS 2021 Administrative Guide*, page 5):
 - Over 170,000 unchurched families connect with churches during VBS.
 - Over 58,000 professions of faith are made.
 - Over 800 kids respond to God's call into ministry or missions.
- Say: "We know that Vacation Bible School is an excellent opportunity for kids to learn about Jesus. This year in VBS at your church, you and your team will be able to share the gospel with kids. By preparing now, you will be ready to share Christ when a child is ready."

2. Dig Up Some Practical Tips on Sharing the Gospel (20 minutes)

- Say: "Our expedition today will help us dig up some tips on sharing the gospel to kids. To unearth some great artifacts, we'll need some tools—like a shovel. Let's see what these shovels dig up."
- Point the conferees to the bucket filled with sand or shredded paper. Distribute the small plastic shovels and inform conferees that they will dig up the eight artifacts (broken pieces of a clay pot).
- Say: "Each artifact will have a practical tip about sharing the gospel with children."
- Let the conferees dig up the artifacts and take them back to their seats. Ask conferees to, one at a time, read the practical tips on their artifacts. Discuss and explain each practical tip using the following talking points:

- Rely on the Holy Spirit.
 - Be ready to lead a child to Christ when the opportunity presents itself.
 - Practice sharing the gospel.
 - Pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the child to make a salvation decision.
- Deal with each child individually.
 - Avoid large group appeals.
 - Allow each child time to ask questions.
 - Avoid distractions.
 - Position yourself at eye-level with the child, which will help the child feel at ease.
 - Building a relationship with a child first helps them be open to you. Then you can share with them how to accept Jesus.
- Use the Bible.
 - Explain concepts, but be sure to use God's Word as your primary tool. Mark verses in your Bible and let the child read along with you.
 - Use a witnessing tract to help guide you through the Scriptures to share. Let the child follow along.
 - Share your personal testimony and what these verses mean to you.
- Ask open-ended questions.
 - Ask questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no.
 - Ask questions that require a more detailed answer, allowing the child to explain his feelings or share what he knows.
- Use simple language.
 - Remember, children are concrete thinkers, and abstract concepts are hard to understand. Use words and phrases that a child can understand.
 - Know how to explain words like Christian, saved, sin, repent, baptism, the Lord's Supper, and church membership to a child.
 - The gospel is the good news for all people, no matter what age they are. Do not water down the gospel.
- Be careful with emotions.
 - Emotions are not bad, but a child needs to make a genuine commitment to Christ on her own.
 - Each child responds differently.
 - Avoid situations where a child makes a decision only to please an adult, or is rushed into making a decision.
- Guide children to an appropriate decision.
 - A child can make one of these three decisions:
 1. Steps toward God: A child may not be ready to make a decision.
 2. Profession of Faith: The child is ready to make a decision.
 3. Assurance of Salvation: Affirm child of a previous decision.
 - Be attentive when a child shows interest in receiving Christ to determine if he is ready to make that commitment.
 - Determine the spiritual condition of the child.
- Follow up with the child
 - Share with the child's parent or guardians about the child's decision.
 - Provide material to help the family understand how to lead the child in the next steps and help them disciple their child.
 - Encourage the child to share her salvation story with family and friends.

3. Uncover the Truth (20 minutes)

- Say: "There are several gospel presentations that can be used as tools to share the gospel with children. In this conference, we will use a tool called, *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me*.

This gospel presentation has five points that we will discover by playing a game called 'Uncover the Truth.'"

- Form 5 groups. Give each group one of the bags with letter cards. Lead each group to unscramble the letters in their bag to discover a word that will help children uncover the truth about the gospel.
- Once each group has unscrambled its word, call on each group in turn to share their word. (NOTE: If conferees have their Bibles, ask them to mark their Bibles as you go through this presentation, or write the information on their handout.)
- Use the tract, *The Gospel: God's Plan For Me*, to help explain each point.
- Say: "The word gospel literally means, 'good news.' It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Here is the truth you can uncover for kids:
 - God Rules: Genesis 1:1
 - We Sinned: Romans 3:23
 - A child needs to understand the meaning of sin.
 - A child needs to realize that he/she has sinned.
 - A child needs to realize that he/she has sinned against God.
 - God Provided: Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Jesus Gives: Romans 5:8
 - We Respond: Romans 10:9-10
 - A—Admit to God you are a sinner, repent, and turn away from your sin.
 - B—Believe that Jesus is God's Son and receive His gift of forgiveness.
 - C—Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- After presenting the gospel, lead the child in a prayer of forgiveness if he/she is ready. You can give an example of a prayer to pray, but encourage the child to use his/her own words."

4. Explore & Examine Resources (3 minutes)

- Discuss some additional resources that can prepare you to share the gospel with children and grow in their relationship with God:
 - *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me Gospel* tract
 - Inside front cover of any leader guide
 - *VBS 2021 Kids Gospel Guide*
 - *VBS 2021 Parent Guide*
 - *VBS 2021 Gospel Wristbands*
 - *VBS 2021 Devotional Bible for Kids*
 - *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me*
 - *I'm A Christian Now* materials

5. Adventure Awaits (2 minutes)

- Say: "Get ready for the adventure of a lifetime! Sharing the gospel with a child is a great experience. Pray and prepare now for God to point you to opportunities to share the gospel with kids."
- Lead conferees to take out their *VBS 2021 Bookmarks*. Ask each conferee to write her name, church name, and date of VBS on the back of her bookmark. Encourage conferees to swap their bookmarks with someone in the room they do not know. Suggest they use their bookmarks as a reminder to pray for their new friend. Ask conferees to pray for the person on their bookmark from now until the VBS date listed on the bookmark.
- Close the conference in prayer.



HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH CHILDREN

SEARCH & SEEK THE TRUTH

Read: Matthew 18:1-5

Children are _____ to Jesus.

God's will for kids is to be _____ and to have a _____ with Him.

DIG UP PRACTICAL TIPS

1. Rely on the _____.
2. Deal with each child _____.
3. Use a _____ or an _____.
4. Ask _____ - _____ questions.
5. Use _____ language.
6. Be care with _____.
7. Guide children to an appropriate _____.
8. _____ - _____ with the child.

GATHER THE ARTIFACTS

God _____. Scripture: _____.

We _____. Scripture: _____.

God _____. Scripture: _____.

Jesus _____. Scripture: _____.

We _____. Scripture: _____.

A _____ B _____ C _____

EXPLORE & EXAMINE RESOURCES



What comes to mind when you read this phrase: **Children and Salvation?**



What comes to mind when you read this phrase: **Children and Salvation?**



What comes to mind when you read this phrase: **Children and Salvation?**



What comes to mind when you read this phrase: **Children and Salvation?**