

## VBS 2023 VBX PRETEEN BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ Hours)

### Purpose Statement

This 90-minute plan is designed to train and equip church leaders to teach preteens using Lifeway's *Twists & Turns VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Curriculum*.

### Needed Resources

- *VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Bible Study Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Bible Study Leader Pack*
  - Pack Item 1: "Matching Up Cards" — Cut apart cards. Mix up cards and place on display table.
  - Pack Items 4, 6, 10, 14, 23, 27: "Daily Verse Posters" — Display posters in order on the focal wall, with the Gospel Poster in the center.
  - Pack Item 7: "Small Group Discussion Questions"
  - Pack Item 17: "Gospel Poster" — Display on the focal wall in the center of the Daily Verse Posters.
  - Pack Item 18: "Response Cards"
- *VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Activity Book*
- *VBS 2023 Administrative Guide*
- *VBS 2023 Memory Maker*
- *VBS 2023 Music for Kids CD*
- *VBS 2023 Tablecloth*
- *VBS 2023 Floor Prints*
- *VBS 2023 Wall Art*
- *VBS 2023 Cups* (only 2 cups needed)
- *VBS 2023 Devotional Bible*
- *VBS 2023 Decorating Made Easy* — Locate the daily icons from the clip art resources (digital downloads). Print one icon per participant. Cut out icons and keep together to distribute for the closing challenge.
- Item 1: Understanding Preteens Spinner — Print and photocopy one per expected participant on cardstock. Place in each seat.
- Item 2: Daily Bible Content Cards — Print 1 copy per session on cardstock. Cut apart each card and organize to create one set per color. Place each color set inside individual bags for each team (5 sets total).
- 5 gift bags
- ½" colored dot stickers (red, blue, yellow, green) — Each participant should receive 4 stickers of each color for 16 total stickers per conference attendee. Place in each chair paperclipped to Item 2: "Understanding Preteens Spinner."
- Gold or silver brads (1 per conferee) — Place on display table in a *VBS 2023 Cup*.
- (5) Playing card organizers — Place one Include one playing card organizer in each team's bag along with the daily Bible content cards for each team.
- Pens (1 per conferee) — Place in a *VBS 2023 Cup* on the display table.
- Painters tape
- TV with HDMI port

### Room Setup

Arrange chairs in rows facing the focal wall. Create a focal wall gameboard with the *VBS 2023 Floor Prints*, *VBS 2023 Wall Art*, "Daily Verse Posters" (pack items 4, 6, 10, 14, 23, and 27), and "Gospel Poster" (pack item 17) in the center. Place a display table off to one side covered with the

*VBS 2023 Tablecloth.* Display the Preteen resources on the table alongside a *VBS 2023 Devotional Bible*, *VBS 2023 Administrative Guide*, *VBS 2023 Music for Kids CD* and *VBS 2023 Memory Maker*. Place the cup of beads, cup of pens, and the “Matching Up Cards” (pack item 1) on the display table. Incorporate various gameboards and game pieces behind these items for creative decoration.

### Teaching Steps

#### 1. **Welcome and Prayer** (2 minutes)

- Play the *VBS 2023 Music for Kids* playlist as conferees enter. Allow participants to choose a pen and one “Matching Up Card” (pack item 1) from the display table and then find a seat.
- Welcome conferees to the VBX Preteen Bible Study Game Room. Say: “You’ll need to bring you’re A-game for this session! During VBS, the preteens you lead are going to discover that trusting Jesus as Savior and following Him changes the game entirely! But you will see that just like in life, teaching preteens is going to be full of twists and turns and you have to be ready for anything!”
- Lead in prayer, asking God to guide the time together. Thank God for each person in the room as they prepare for the greatest outreach to children and families all year.

#### 2. **Ice Breaker/VBS Motto & Christ Connection** (8 minutes)

- Call attention to the “Matching Up Cards” (pack item 1) they received as they entered. Lead conferees to find the person in the room who has their matching card. Once they have found their match, participants should share their name, what church they are from, and one thing they love the most about VBS. Once both partners share answers, all participants can have a seat.
- Share a few responses with the group if time allows to meet new friends (Note: This is an adaptation of Day 1 Excite Match Up activity).
- Share the VBS 2023 Motto: “Following Jesus changes everything.” Explain that during VBS, kids will see Jesus through the eyes of one of His closest friends. Peter wasn’t perfect, but God still worked through Peter in a mighty way. Say: “Jesus guides us through the twists and turns in life and He is trustworthy. Jesus is for everyone!”
- Share the Christ Connection: “Jesus changes everything.” Explain: “When we trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, He forgives our sin and give us new purpose. We can invite others to follow Him too.”
- Explain that preteens need this truth now more than ever! VBS is a great opportunity to share the truth of the gospel to many who are hearing this for the very first time.

#### 3. **Understanding Preteens** (10 minutes)

- Share the Level of Biblical Learning: “Jesus transformed people through His love.”
- Call attention to the “Understanding Preteens Spinner” handout (Item 1) and colored dot stickers in each chair. Explain: “We will be building a color spinner as we discuss the characteristics of the preteens we lead.”
- Once finished, participants will use their paperclip and a brad in the center to create a spinner on their gameboard. Say: “The development of preteens is spinning at a rapid rate. We have to understand how all characteristics work together in the lives of those we lead.” (Note: This is an adaptation of Day 2 Finger Twist Craft Template.)
- Talk about the importance of understanding how preteens develop, how preteens think, and understanding the spiritual growth of preteens.

- Share a few examples in each category. Participants will build their spinner with 4 colored dots for each area of development. Each point will be a different colored dot sticker:
    - **Physical:** Many enjoy sports and competition (boys vs. girls games are always a win with preteens!). Plan activities with both gross and fine motor skills. Incorporate movement breaks often. Give preteens choices whenever possible.
    - **Social/emotional:** Preteens are worried about rejection and not fitting in. They may experience emotional highs and lows, even during the week of VBS. They are beginning to question authority and expect perfection. They need proof that you are trustworthy ... they need proof that Jesus is trustworthy! The proof they are searching for is in the Bible!
    - **Mental:** Preteens are creative, curious, and critical. They have a good sense of humor but will question everything! Do not give preteens “fluff” answers. Point them to the truth always and lead them to know how to find it for themselves.
    - **Spiritual:** Preteens are beginning to develop a value system of their own based on their understanding of Scripture. They value what their peers think. They need you to model Christian behaviors and teach them how to apply Scripture to their daily lives.
  - Reference page 5 in the *VBS 2023 VBS Preteen Leader Guide* and mention the importance of making adaptations and modifications whenever possible to include preteens with special needs.
  - Mention that the world preteens are living in is upside down and inside out. Preteens are looking for the right answers. They need the truth of Scripture now more than ever from trustworthy adults.
4. **Introducing Lifeway’s VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Teaching Resources** (10 minutes)
- Refer conferees to the focal table and share that Lifeway has provided excellent resources for a successful VBX this year:
    - **The Bible — VBS 2023 Devotional Bible for Kids**
      - The Bible is the most important resource. When teaching, be sure to teach from an actual Bible (not an app on your phone or iPad). Allow time for preteens to look up the Bible passages when you teach so they can experience hands-on learning. Whenever possible, pair preteens who are more familiar with the Bible with those who aren’t. Make a plan to provide a Bible to any child who does not have one at home.
    - **VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Leader Guide**
      - This guide contains 5 daily session plans. Show the overview page on page 3 of the leader guide. Call attention to “Sharing the Gospel with Preteens” on the inside cover and the cross icon throughout each daily session. Explain that the cross icon identifies an opportune time to share the gospel as led by the Holy Spirit.
      - Show the supply checklist on pages 43-44. Explain that this is a master list of everything included in the leader guide. If leaders opt to forgo an activity, they will no longer need those supplies.
      - Explain that each Bible study leader will need his/her own copy of the leader guide.
    - **VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Leader Pack**
      - The leader pack contains fun-filled and colorful items to help you as you lead. They are designed specifically with preteens in mind.

- Point to the “Daily Verse Posters” on the focal wall (pack items 4, 10, 14, 23, 27). Encourage leaders to be sure to incorporate these as a visual tool each day. Note that these posters are available in CSB and KJV versions.
- Call special attention to the “Gospel Poster” (pack item 17). Mention that this can be displayed in your room all week on the focal wall.
- Explain how to use the “Small Group Discussion Questions” (pack item 7). Suggest leaders place preteens in small groups of 4-5 to discuss these questions each day. Whenever possible, pair preteens who are more familiar with the Bible with those who are not. Try to have a small group leader per small group to facilitate questions and discussions with preteens.
- Show the “Response Cards” (pack item 18). Explain that each preteen will need a copy. (These are written into the Day 3 Excel activity.) Encourage leaders to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leading and not to pressure preteens to mark a certain choice. These answers should remain confidential. Be sure to follow up with any preteens who wrote questions in the blanks or marked they are ready to trust Jesus as their Savior.
- Explain that each Bible study class will need one leader pack.
- **VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Activity Book**
  - The activity book is written into each session in the *VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Leader Guide*. Each preteen will need their own copy of the Preteen Activity Book. (As an adaptation, each small group could work through one activity book together if needed.)
  - These books are designed specifically with preteens in mind and contain a daily overview for each day’s Bible story as well as the Bible passage, bonus verse, and daily point.
  - These books also contain fun challenges and activities to engage preteens and reenforce what they have learned in VBX that day.
- **VBS 2023 Administrative Guide**
  - This guide contains valuable leader helps such as prospect cards, sample follow-up letters, registration forms, a planning calendar, decision log, and much more! This guide also contains a PowerPoint presentation with the Children’s VBS Bible Content helpful for leader trainings.
- **VBS 2023 Memory Maker**
  - These daily tags are a mnemonic device to help preteens remember each day’s Bible story. The included bag provides a place for preteens to collect their daily tags as well as other memory reminders each day. It is recommended that each child have his own Memory Maker.
- **VBS 2023 Music for Kids CD**
  - Mention that the Music for Kids CD makes a great gift to send home with families after VBS. But Twists & Turns music is also available on digital and streaming platforms. You can purchase the digital album from [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com) as well as iTunes.
  - Lyric videos and choreography videos can be found on the *VBS 2023 Worship Rally DVD Set*, [lifeway.com](http://lifeway.com), and the DVD included with the *VBS 2023 Music Rotation Leader Guide*.
- **Lifeway.com/VBS & ministrygrid.com**
  - These websites are a great tool for administrative helps. Clip art, music, videos, safety and security checklist, font lists, a special door hanger

invite template, and more can be found at [lifeway.com/vbs!](http://lifeway.com/vbs!)  
[Ministrygrid.com](http://Ministrygrid.com) is a subscription service that provides video-based leadership training.

#### 5. Overview the Daily Bible Teaching (40 minutes)

- Introduce the Session Debrief and VBX Checklist (leader guide, page 4).
  - Mention that in each daily session plan, the *VBS 2023 VBX Preteen Leader Guide* includes Excite, Explore, Excel sections and a Small Group Time section.
    - **Excite** introduces the theme and daily Bible content with an icebreaker game and introductory activity. There are several options to choose from each day.
    - **Explore** engages preteens in the Bible story and makes the Bible connection to daily life. This is the core content.
    - **Excel** reviews the Bible story and life application for the day. There are several options to choose from.
    - **Small Group Time** includes the opportunity to discuss the “Small Group Discussion Questions” (pack item 7) each day. Remember to pair preteens who are more familiar with the Bible with those who are not.
  - Explain that if your church follows the VBX 3-Hour Schedule, it will include Worship Rally (30 minutes), Excite (20 minutes), Snack (15 minutes), Explore (55 minutes), Missions (20 minutes), and Excel (40 minutes).
  - If your church follows the traditional VBS rotation plan, use the Explore section as your core Bible study time. If additional plans are needed, use the activities from either the Excite or Excel sections.
  - Note: It is written that preteens will break for missions and snacks. Recreation and crafts will take place during the Bible Study Time (Explore). Some churches offer a separate recreation rotation, or a separate craft rotation for preteens. Encourage the group to follow the plan that works best for their church, using the curriculum as their guide.
  - Remind participants to consider the characteristics of their preteens and their space as they choose activities for each day.
- Form 5 teams and assign each team a color: Green Team (Day 1), Blue Team (Day 2), Red Team (Day 3), Yellow Team (Day 4), Purple Team (Day 5).
- Give each team a bag containing their color of “Daily Bible Content Cards” (Item 2) and one playing card organizer.
- Explain that each team member should draw a card. Once all cards have been drawn, team members must work together to put the cards in this order: session title, Bible story title, Bible passage, bonus verse, and daily point. Cards must be placed in their playing card organizer in this order.
  - For example - Green Team’s card order should be:
    - Day 1: Jesus is Holy
    - Peter Followed Jesus
    - Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-11
    - Acts 2:21
    - Jesus is holy and that changes everything
- Allow 5 minutes for teams to complete their assignment. Once each team’s Bible Content cards are in order, guide the teams to look up their daily Bible passage in the Bible and discuss as a team one thing they want preteens to remember about this story.

- Starting with Green Team, lead each team to share its daily Bible cards in order and the one thing they discussed as a team. Call special attention to each daily point as each team shares.
    - Invite one person per team to tape their daily point card to the focal wall next to the daily verse.
  - As each team shares, ask the following to discuss how this story is applicable to the life of a preteen. (This is adapted from each day's reflection questions in the leader guide.)
    - Green Team (Day 1) — How can you help the preteens you teach know that Jesus is real and that He loves them?
    - Blue Team (Day 2) — How can you help preteens to know they are not alone, and that Jesus is walking with them?
    - Red Team (Day 3) — Jesus has a unique plan for each of the preteens you lead. How can you help preteens to know that even when they fail, Jesus still loves them and has a plan for their life?
    - Yellow Team (Day 4) — How has Jesus proven himself faithful in your life? Lead the group to reflect on examples in their own personal lives that they could potentially share with preteens. Note: Remind participants to only share appropriate responses with preteens.
    - Purple Team (Day 5) — Ask God to reveal at least one person preteens can share the good news of the Gospel with. Remind the group that Jesus is for everyone.
  - Remind conferees of the daily leader devotion and reflection questions in the leader guide (pages 8, 15, 22, 29 and 36). This is an important part of preparing to teach each day.
6. **Learn the Memory Verse** (5 minutes)
- Guide the group to play an adapted version of a spin and solve game to recall the VBS Scripture: Psalm 25:4. (This is an adaptation of Day 3 "Spin and Solve Game," leader pack items 19 and 20.)
  - Guide conferees to stay in their teams from the Bible Teaching section. Lead each team to take turns guessing a letter (consonants first). They may "buy a vowel" only if they first correctly guess a consonant. If the team guesses an incorrect consonant, play moves to the next team. Teams may only guess one correct consonant and one correct vowel before play moves to the next team.
  - Once all vowels are guessed, players may "buy a number" to complete the reference.
  - Once all letters and words are guessed correctly, lead the group in reciting the Scripture Memory verse together.
7. **Post-VBS Follow Up** (10 minutes)
- Remind conferees to be sure to capture correct contact information on each preteen's registration sheet at the beginning of VBX. Show the *VBS 2023 Administrative Guide* and explain that your church's VBS Director can provide you with many helps for follow up.
  - Refer to the Post-VBS Follow up card template from the Administrative Guide.
  - Call attention to the prospect log and encourage VBS leaders to use this throughout the week and make note of any families who do not have a church home.
  - Develop a plan to creatively invite families back to your church soon (such as hosting a board game night or a family night after VBS). Be sure to include your contact information so parents can reach out to you for questions about your church.

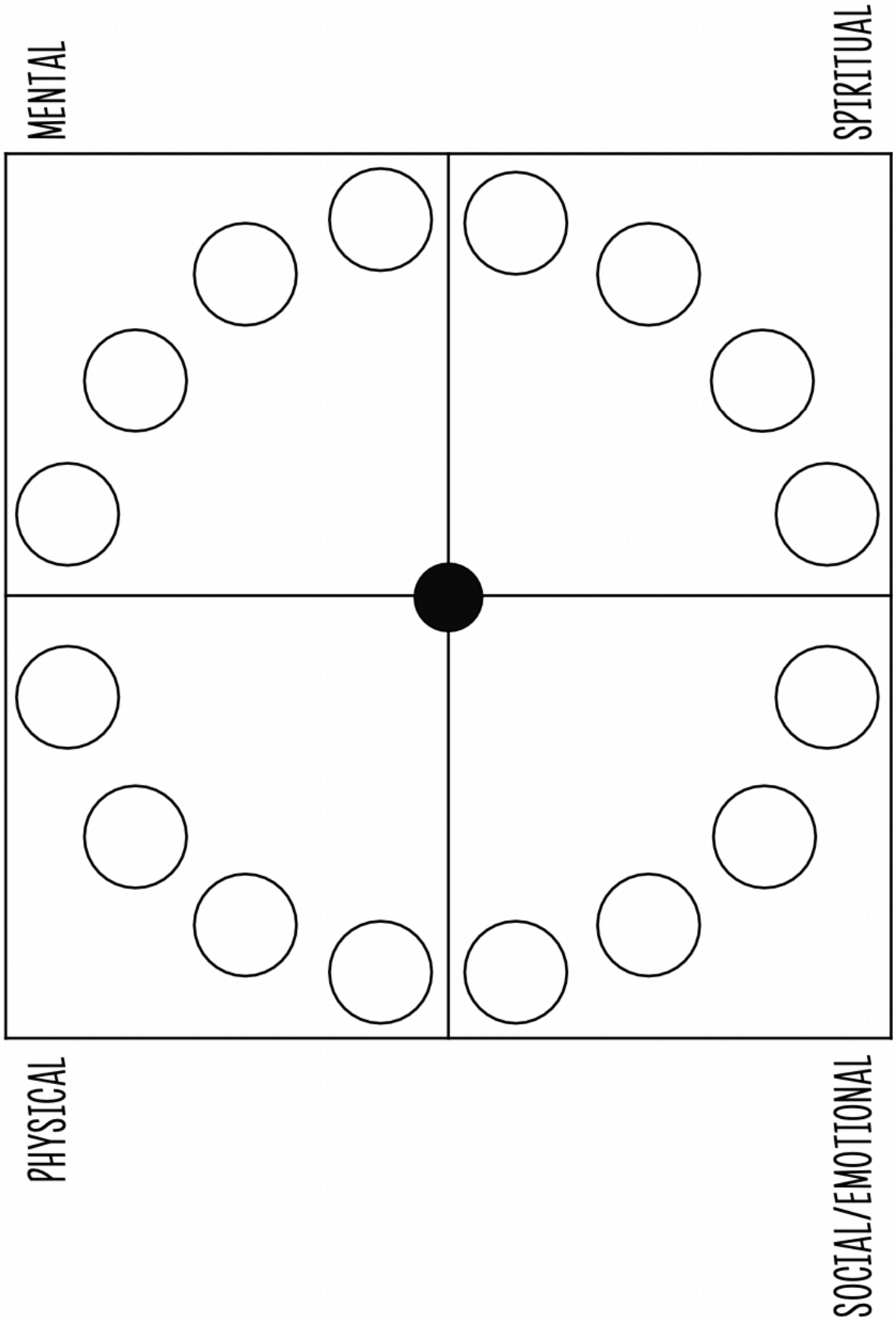
- Follow up on any decisions for Christ, interests in baptism, or any child who expressed interest in receiving their own Bible.

8. **Closing Challenge and Prayer** (5 minutes)

- Give each participant a daily icon. (This is an adaption from Day 5 Excel activity). Lead her to write on it the date of her VBS and then tape it on the focal wall next to her favorite of the 5 Bible stories using painters tape.
- Guide the group to recite the motto together: "Following Jesus changes everything."
- Lead participants to reflect on the Day 2 Bonus Verse: Isaiah 41:10.
- Close in prayer, asking God to bless each person as she prepares to lead VBS. Pray for protection over families, church leadership, and teams. Pray that God would bring many boys and girls to a personal relationship with Jesus during Vacation Bible School this summer.



# UNDERSTANDING PRETEENS





1  
DAY 1  
JESUS IS HOLY

PETER  
FOLLOWED  
JESUS

MATTHEW  
4:18-20;  
LUKE 5:1-11

ACTS 2:21

JESUS IS HOLY AND  
THAT CHANGES  
EVERYTHING

2  
DAY 2  
JESUS IS  
TRUSTWORTHY

PETER WALKED TO  
JESUS ON THE  
WATER

MATTHEW  
14:22-33

ISAIAH 41:10

JESUS IS  
TRUSTWORTHY  
EVEN WHEN I  
DOUBT

JESUS IS  
FORGIVING EVEN  
WHEN I SIN

JESUS IS WORTH  
FOLLOWING EVEN  
WHEN IT GETS TOUGH

COLOSSIANS  
1:14

ACTS 4:12

LUKE 22:31-34,  
54-62;  
JOHN 18:15-18;  
21:1-19

ACTS 3:1-4:24

PETER DENIED  
JESUS AND WAS  
RESTORED

PETER SPOKE  
BOLDLY ABOUT  
JESUS

DAY 3  
JESUS IS  
FORGIVING

DAY 4  
JESUS IS WORTH  
FOLLOWING

**5**

DAY 5  
JESUS IS FOR  
EVERYONE

**5**

PETER TOLD  
CORNELIUS  
ABOUT JESUS

ACTS 10

ACTS 10:43

JESUS IS FOR  
EVERYONE,  
INCLUDING ME