

VBS 2024 DIRECTORS BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute conference plan is designed to train and equip new and experienced VBS directors to conduct Lifeway's Breaker Rock Beach™ VBS.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2024 Administrative Guide* (included in Directors Kit)
- *VBS 2024 Decorating Made Easy* (included in Directors Kit) — Use the redemption code in the front of the book to access the digital files. Print the 5 seashells with the daily points from the clip art folder. Cut out, laminate, and place on focal table. Put a piece of tape on the back of each seashell.
- *VBS 2024 Music for Kids CD* (005846976)
- *VBS 2024 Directors Kit* (005845726)
- *VBS 2024 Preschool Starter Kit: Babies–Kindergarten* (005845727)
- *VBS 2024 Kids Starter Kit: Grades 1–6* (005845719)
- *VBS 2024 Multi-age Starter Kit* (005845722)
- *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop* (005847616)
- *VBS 2024 Tablecloths* (005846832)
- *VBS 2024 Supersized Postcards* (005846972)
- Item 1: “Marshmallow Paper” (or Missions Insert Item 4 from Missions Leader Guide) — Print 1 per conferee.
- (6) Sand buckets — Label the buckets 1–6. Line up in order in the focal area.
- (6) 1/8” dowel rods cut to 18”
- Cardstock — Cut 6 triangle pieces and glue to dowel rods to resemble flags. Write one of the 6 steps of directing on each triangle:
 - *Step 1: Know Your Purpose and Theme*
 - *Step 2: Start Planning*
 - *Step 3: Enlist and Train Your Leaders*
 - *Step 4: Promote and Publicize*
 - *Step 5: Register Participants*
 - *Step 6: Continue the Connection*
- Days 1–5 “Bible Story Pictures” from any Bible Study Leader Pack — Place the daily pictures in the empty Directors Kit bag with tape on each picture.
- (5) Orange pool noodles
- White duct tape — Use the tape on the orange pool noodles to create 5 life preservers rings. Use a permanent marker to label each life preserver *Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, and Day 5*. Place on focal table.
- Large beach ball — Write the 7 distinctives of Lifeway's VBS on the beach ball with permanent marker: *Gospel-centered, Trustworthy Content, For All Ages, In-depth Bible Study, Flexible and Customizable, Equips Parents, and Custom Music*.
- Tape
- Markers
- Pens/Pencils
- CD player or Bluetooth speaker
- TV with HDMI port

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle. Hang the *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop* on the focal wall. Cover a table with a *VBS 2024 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum, visuals, and other tabletop decorations. Line up the 6 sand buckets in front of the focal wall.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Play the *VBS 2024 Music for Kids CD* as conferees enter.
- Welcome conferees. Introduce yourself and briefly share your experience as a VBS director.
- Ask conferees: "If you had to write a job description for your position as a VBS director, how many pages do you think it would be?"
- Comment: "It would be several pages for sure because there are many hats we all wear. Being a director is an adventure. You never know what may come your way. It comes with a lot of responsibility but it's also an incredible privilege. As directors, our role is to lay the foundation for VBS so that our volunteers and kids have the best VBS yet this year at Breaker Rock Beach."

2. S'more Prep (3 minutes)

- Say: "Being a VBS director is always exciting, but a successful VBS doesn't just happen on its own. It takes a lot of prayer, preparation, planning, and organization. As directors, it can be overwhelming thinking about all that has to be done for VBS to happen, but this breakout and the Administrative Guide are designed to help you every step of the way to know what needs to be done and when it needs to be done."
- Encourage conferees to write down ideas or notes on their marshmallow page during the breakout (Item 1).

3. Pier-side Purpose (15 minutes)

- Place the first flag (Step 1: Know Your Purpose and Theme) in the first sand bucket.
- Say: "Before any plans for VBS are made, it's important to start with the 'why.' VBS brings a unique level of excitement and energy to your church like probably nothing else. For many of us, VBS has been on the church calendar for years and always will be, but that's not our 'why.'"
- Ask conferees: "What's your why and your purpose for VBS at your church?"
- Grab the beach ball and lead the group through the 7 distinctives that help build our "why." Explain that each of these distinctives is the first step in making VBS a success. Refer to page 5 of the Administrative Guide.
 - 7 Distinctives of Lifeway's VBS:
 1. Gospel-centered
 2. Trustworthy Content
 3. For All Ages
 4. In-depth Bible Study
 5. Flexible and Customizable
 6. Equips Parents
 7. Custom Music
- Lead the group to read the Theme Verse, Romans 12:2, together. Refer to the VBS Motto on focal wall. Point out that every day kids will focus on how God's way is best, despite what the shifting sands of culture says is true. Through the daily content, kids

will be challenged to know that God's truth never changes—even when it's radically different from what some people say.

- Briefly cover the daily Bible stories. Pull each Bible Story Picture from the Directors Kit bag and place it beside the matching day's foam noodle life preserver ring.
- Encourage conferees to familiarize themselves with the curriculum highlights on pages 6–7 of the Administrative Guide.

4. Map It Out (20 minutes)

- Place the first flag (Step 2: Start Planning) in the second sand bucket.
- Direct the group to turn to page 11 of the Administrative Guide. Walk the group through the key planning steps detailed on the next several pages of the guide.
- #1 VBS Planning Calendar (pages 12–13)
 - Mention that the most important part of planning for VBS is prayer. No amount of planning, organization, experience, or leadership has an impact on VBS like that of a group of people committed to praying over VBS before it even begins.
 - Refer to the first box on page 12.
 - Direct conferees to pages 54–56 in the Administrative Guide. Highlight the following:
 - Page 54 – National Day of Prayer is May 19, 2024.
 - Page 55 – Prayer Strategies (Before, During, After VBS)
 - Enlist a prayer team.
 - Create a texting prayer list.
 - Share VBS prayer requests with your church.
 - Page 56 – Prayer Calendar
 - Distribute paper and digital copies to your church.
 - Share with conferees that there may be people in your church who cannot serve due to health concerns, work, or other responsibilities, but everyone can participate through prayer.
- #2 Create a Budget (pages 14–15)
 - Say: “I doubt anyone directs VBS because she loves budgeting, but it's a vital part of our role as directors. As you work through your VBS budget, the Administrative Guide is a great resource for that process.”
 - Refer to page 14 — Determine Your Budget.
 - Point out the 3 Categories (Before, During, and After VBS).
 - Page 15 – Sample Budget Forms
 - Start planning 6–9 months out.
- #3 Choose Your Format (page 16)
 - Say: “The Administrative guide has options for different age groups, space, budget, volunteers, and participants.”
 - Highlight the following:
 - Share VBS format varieties.
 - Begin planning 6–9 months out.
 - When thinking through your next VBS, ask what worked well last year and what didn't work as well.
- #4 Make a Schedule (pages 17–23)
 - Highlight the sample schedules for varying age groups.
 - Ask for volunteers to share their VBS schedule with the group.
 - Discuss 5 day/3 hour schedules versus abbreviated schedules
 - Suggest VBS Directors start planning 6–9 months out.

- #5 Order Curriculum (pages 24–30)
 - Highlight the following:
 - VBS is available for anyone. Curriculum is available for preschool through adults.
 - Choose resources to best fit the needs of your VBS.
 - Start purchasing curriculum 4–6 months out.

5. Prepare the Crew (10 minutes)

- Place the third flag (Step 3: Enlist and Train Your Leaders) in the third sand bucket.
- Say: “The foundation of VBS begins with the prayer, planning, and preparation of the director, but leaders are the infrastructure that make VBS happen! Leaders are only as good as they are trained and equipped for their role at VBS.
- Turn to page 31 of the Administrative Guide. Highlight the following:
 - **Pray:** First and foremost, start with prayer. Pray that the Lord would not just send workers, but that He would send the right workers for the harvest! Pray that God would give you eyes to see potential leaders in your church.
 - **Plan:** Start enlisting volunteers 4–6 months before. After determining your schedule, format, and rotations, figure out how many volunteers you need. Share the schedule, needs, and expectations.
 - **Share:** Explain leader qualifications, expectations, and goals for VBS.
 - Encourage VBS Directors to provide job summaries (physical and digital copies) during enlistment.
 - **Ask:** Ask potential volunteers individually. Think and pray about which people in your church could successfully fill your volunteer roles.
 - **Train:** Equip and train your volunteers for success. The Administrative Guide provides a training sample beginning on page 33 and continuing through page 40.
 - Remind conferees that gospel conversation training is crucial as these conversations could happen at any time during the week. Equip them to be ready for when the opportunity presents itself.
 - Encourage volunteers to attend any associational training available in your area.
 - **Appreciate:** Show support and appreciation to your volunteers. See the printable files for specific leader appreciation ideas.
 - Ask conferees to share ideas they have for volunteer appreciation.

6. Breaker Rock Promo (10 minutes)

- Place the fourth flag (Step 4: Promote and Publicize) in the fourth sand bucket.
- Lead conferees to turn to pages 41–44 in the Administrative Guide. Comment: “Like other parts of the planning process, promoting your VBS early and often is crucial. Many families start making summer plans at the beginning of the year. Getting the VBS dates out to your church and community early is a big win.”
- Say: “On page 43, there is a promotion calendar that will help you map out when to spread the word about your VBS.”
- Say: “On page 42 of the Administrative Guide, you’ll notice that promotion is broken down into two parts; Church Promotion and Community Promotion.
 - Church Promotion – Briefly overview the seven steps of church promotion.
 - Community Promotion – Briefly overview the six steps of community promotion.
- Ask for volunteers to share promotion success examples.

- Look at pages 43 and 44 and reference the Promotion Calendar as well as Promotion Ideas.

7. Seaside Signups (10 minutes)

- Place the fifth flag (Step 5: Register Participants) in the fifth sand bucket.
- Turn to pages 45—48 and overview the four steps of registration in the Administrative Guide.
- Say: “The registration process can be one of the most stressful parts of VBS for Directors and parents, but it doesn’t have to be. You want your registration team to be W.E.T. We want to be Welcoming, we want to be Efficient, and we want to capture the Total information. We need to have a lot of information but want to capture as much information as possible without it being a burden for parents. Over the next few minutes, we’re going to look at four ways to make registration as smooth as possible.”
 - 1. Enlist a Team — “Teamwork makes the dream work” and that certainly applies to registration. Enlist a group to oversee registration and plan to double or triple your registration team on the first day.
 - 2. Set a Registration Goal — Set a goal to have 80% of your participants pre-registered before the first day of VBS. This will help minimize stress on Day 1.
 - 3. Think of Portable Options — Clipboards, iPads, or computers on a rolling cart are great options.
 - 4. Review All Registration Information — Details matter. Be sure that every participant has completed their registration information. Safety and security, allergies, and pick-up at the end of the day are some of the most important details you don’t want to miss! This also helps follow-up go smoother.
- Explain that there are two main pieces of VBS registration: Pre-registration and Registration. Share with conferees the difference between the two.
 - Pre-registration: Capturing information on each child/family before VBS
 - Determine the “must have” information that is needed for each participant/family.
 - Keep your church policies and procedures in mind.
 - If possible, have a paper and digital pre-registration option.
 - Refer to KidEvent Pro on page 47.
 - Registration at VBS: Capturing information on each child/family the week of VBS when they arrive.
 - Have a strong registration team in place that is trained and equipped to handle a high volume of “walk-ups.”
 - Refer back to the previous year’s VBS “walk-up” registrations as a ballpark idea of how many to prepare for.
 - Remember that for people who don’t attend your church, registration is likely going to be the first interaction they have with your church. Having a solid plan with an equipped registration team will help make a solid first impression.
- Say: “When it comes to registration, accuracy matters. Remember, capturing information is important, but accurate information is what counts, not just for the week of VBS, but also for follow-up, allergies, medical needs, and so forth.”

8. Flip-flop Follow Up (10 minutes)

- Place the sixth flag (Step 6: Continue the Connection) in the sixth sand bucket.
- Say: “As tired as we all are on the last day of VBS and all we feel like doing is taking a nap, VBS doesn’t end on the last day of VBS. As we mentioned earlier, VBS builds a lot

of momentum, so having a plan in place for immediate follow-ups is crucial to continue the momentum.”

- Look at page 49 for continuing the connection. Overview The 4 follow-up tips.
 - Enlist a follow-up director
 - Say: “The follow-up director may be unable to serve the week of VBS but want to help in the days or weeks after.”
 - Embrace a relationship-building approach to follow-up
 - Say: “Follow-up is about much more than a postcard, it’s about relationships. When you look at follow-up through the lens of relationships instead of a task, it changes the entire perspective on follow-up.”
 - Train
 - Say: “Train church staff and VBS volunteers to be intentional with parents during the week of VBS. This is a huge advantage for follow-up.”
 - Bridge VBS with other ongoing programs for kids in your church
 - Say: “Having church staff and key leaders involved from regular church programming provides familiarity when they come back to your church. A familiar face can be a big encouragement to parents and kids.”
- Ask: “What follow-up strategies have worked well for you?”
- Share: “According to research, your retention rate is highest when you follow up within 48 hours. Follow-up within 24 hours averages an 85% return rate while a 7-day follow-up averages only a 15% return rate.”
- Look at page 51 and overview the 5 tips for Three Touchpoints in Three Days.
 - Make it Personal — Phone calls, home visits with goody bags, and handwritten notes go a long way. It’s one thing to send a generic postcard, but a handwritten note from the child’s teacher arrives in the mail addressed to the child, it’s a game changer.
 - Put them at ease — Providing service times, drop-off and pick-up details like check-in information and room numbers can take away a lot of the stress new families feel when visiting a new church.
 - Make it relational — An invitation to come back is nice, but an invitation to come back from someone they know from VBS, school, or their neighborhood makes an invitation more appealing.
 - Involve the church staff — Share guest updates and contact information with staff for follow-up.
 - Plan to follow up again — Have a plan in place to follow up again after a family visits your church for regular services.
- Say: “Churches do all different types of VBS celebrations, from family nights, musical dramas, and more. There are many different strategies, but the most important thing is to provide an opportunity for the families of your church to connect with unchurched families.”
- Ask: “What kind of VBS Celebration do you do? Have you had positive results?”
- Mention that there are several ideas for VBS Celebrations on page 53 of the Administrative Guide.

9. Closing (3 minutes)

- Thank the conferees for coming. Remind them that as they plan and prepare for VBS, always go back to their “why.”
- Close by praying for conferees.



Item 1. Marshmallow Paper