

VBS 2024 GRADES 1–4 BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute plan is designed to train and equip VBS leaders to teach kids using the Grades 1–2, Grades 3–4, and Multi-age Kids curriculum for Lifeway’s Breaker Rock Beach™.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2024 Grades 1–2 Bible Study Leader Guide* (005846806)
- *VBS 2024 Grades 1–2 Bible Study Leader Pack* (005846898) — Gather and prepare items 1–10, 18, and 19. Hang items 1–6 in the focal area. Tape one set of “Ocean Shells” (item 8) around the room. Cut apart the “Whale Watching” cards (item 19) and place in a gift bag.
- *VBS 2024 Grades 3–4 Bible Study Leader Guide* (005846899)
- *VBS 2024 Grades 3–4 Bible Study Leader Pack* (005846900) — Gather and prepare items 5, 8, 15, and 24.
- *VBS 2024 Multi-age Kids Bible Study Leader Guide* (005846901)
- *VBS 2024 Multi-age Kids Bible Study Leader Pack* (005846902)
- *VBS 2024 Kids Activity Book* (005846805)
- *VBS 2024 Memory Maker* (005846493)
- *VBS 2024 Cups Pkg 5* (005846481)
- *VBS 2024 Floor Prints* (005846827)
- *VBS 2024 Giant Inflatable Orca* (005847242)
- *VBS 2024 Gospel Guide* (005846982)
- *VBS 2024 Gospel Wristbands* (005846817)
- *VBS 2024 Inflatable Sea Lion* (005847243)
- *VBS 2024 Kite* (005847245)
- *VBS 2024 Logo Stickers* (005846487)
- *VBS 2024 Sandcastle Molds* (005847241)
- *4 VBS 2024 String Flags* (005846824)
- *VBS 2024 Super Duper Sized Backdrop* (005845724)
- *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop* (005847616)
- *VBS 2024 Tablecloths* (005846832)
- *VBS 2024 Theme Stickers* (005846797) — Place 3 sheets on the display table ready to give to winners.
- *VBS 2024 Visual Pack* (005845725)
- *VBS 2024 Wall Art* (005846918)
- *VBS 2024 Whirleys* (005846821)
- Colored paper — Cut into three simple kite shapes. Write one of the following words/phrases on each kite: *Plan*, *Prepare*, and *Plenty to Do*. Tape each kite under a random chair.
- Tub of sand
- Empty clear water bottle
- Funnel
- Cup to pour sand
- Real seashells (1 per conferee)
- Additional real seashells or extra copies of “Ocean Shells” (Grades 1–2 pack item 8) for half the group — On some of the shells, write one word of Romans 12:2 per shell. Place a shell or a piece of firewood (see below) in each chair.
- Cardboard tubes or copies of “Firewood” (Grades 3–4 pack item 15) (enough for half of the group to each have one piece)

- Towel
- Tape
- Gift bag

Room Setup

Arrange chairs into five groupings. Cover the focal wall with a *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2024 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum on the tabletop. Cover another table with a towel and place a small tub of sand, funnel, and an empty water bottle on the towel. Decorate the remainder of the room using the resources listed above as appropriate.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome and Teach the Motto (10 mins)

- Play Breaker Rock Beach music as conferees arrive.
- Greet each guest as they arrive, welcoming them to Sandcastle Cove.
- Say: “Welcome conferees to Sandcastle Cove where kids will dig deep into the Bible to learn God’s truth each day. You will need a partner throughout the session. Find someone you do not know around you to be your partner. Take 1 minute to introduce yourselves, share where you are from and what your role will be in VBS this year.”
- Teach the motto (God’s truth never changes) with a call-and-response.
 - Lead conferees who have a seashell in their chairs to say, “God’s truth.”
 - Lead conferees with a piece of firewood in their chairs to say, “Never changes!”
 - Hold up firewood or a shell to indicate who should speak as groups say the motto.
 - Challenge each group to be the loudest.
 - Extend the activity by leading them to say the motto in fun ways such as while swimming, with the beach wind blowing in your hair, or while climbing Breaker Rock.
- Hold up the water bottle and tell conferees: “You have a very important role at Vacation Bible School. You are the Bible study leaders. You are teaching kids the truth that will change their lives forever. Your impact will make an eternal difference! You are the vessel God uses to share the gospel, to save lives, to get His truth into children’s hearts. It’s like putting sand in a water bottle.”
- As you talk, try to pour some of the sand into the water bottle without using the funnel. Say: “If I just start pouring sand, how much will go in the bottle? If I use a funnel that fits on top of the bottle, each little grain of sand will enter the bottle.”
- Add the funnel to the bottle and add the rest of the sand. Say: “You are that funnel! When you allow God to prepare your heart and mind for what He’s called you to do, He will use you as the funnel to make sure all of His truth is placed in each heart.”
- Explain that the goal today is to get conferees prepared to make this happen.
- Introduce yourself & pray for the conference.
- Describe the curriculum pieces for Breaker Rock Beach. Show the three leader guides and leader packs and explain that these will be used to prepare an age-appropriate session.
- Point out that while Grades 1–2 and 3–4 are self-explanatory, Multi-age is designed to be used by churches who (by necessity or preference) put multiple ages/grades together in one classroom. Explain that it is written especially for churches who have multiple ages together in one classroom and gives suggestions for how to age activities up or down depending on the kids in the room.

2. Kite Intro (5 mins)

- Explain that you will share some basic tips for those who serve in kids ministry, whether at VBS, on Sundays or Wednesdays, or at an event.
- Lead conferees to look under their chairs to find a kite. Invite those with kids to bring them to the front of the room and take turns reading the words on their kites. Lead them to tape their kites to the wall. Then give each a sheet of stickers from the VBS Theme Stickers as a thank-you for helping as they return to their seats.
- Read the headings on the kites: “Prepare, Plan, Plenty to Do!”
- Say: “During our time together we will see how each part plays a vital in VBS. How are we going to prepare for the GREATEST week of our lives?”

3. Prepare (41 minutes)

- Point to the first kite: Prepare.
- Explain that all leaders have a vital role in teaching. They are the people God led to be involved in VBS and they will use their gifts and talents to connect with boys and girls. Because of this, their preparedness will make a difference in how much of God’s truth kids grasp during VBS.
- Say: “Here are some ways important ways for leaders to prepare themselves.”
- **Prepare Your Heart:**
 - Guide conferees to say, “Prepare my heart!” together. Ask: “How do we prepare our hearts?”
 - Instruct conferees to point to each body part as you talk through the following:
 - Eyes—Explain the importance of noticing kids. Suggest that conferees open their eyes to see and be aware of each child’s needs.
 - Ears—Encourage leaders to be good listeners, sensitive to the questions kids ask.
 - Mouth—Leaders should speak life, love, and truth.
 - Heart—A joyful heart is good medicine. Encourage leaders to have fun, to smile, laugh, and enjoy teaching!
 - Head—Remind leaders that it’s important to study and have knowledge about what to say.
 - Hands—Say: “Do the things God has called you to do.”
 - Guide conferees to take a moment and pray for their partners (chosen earlier).
 - Mention that another good way to prepare your heart is in worshiping God. Suggest that conferees listen to Breaker Rock Beach music in the car each day to help them worship and prepare to teach.
- **Prepare Your Mind:**
 - Hold up a leader guide. Show conferees the table of contents.
 - Say: “Your leader guide is your best tool! Take the time to read it. It may be tempting to rush to get into the stories but don’t! Read the whole leader guide and memorize Romans 12:2. Meditate on it. Think about it. This year’s theme is what our kids need. They are hearing what the world says and we must make sure they know exactly what God says so they can stand firm on it!”
- **Prepare for Kids (WHO you are teaching):**
 - Open any of the three leader guides to the page about characteristics of children.
 - Explain that each leader guide has a section that teaches about the characteristics of the age groups covered in that leader guide. Say: “It’s important to understand the unique needs and characteristics of the age group you’ll be teaching in order for your teaching to be most effective.”

- Show conferees the section in each leader guide with tips for kids who are unfamiliar with church. Offer tips such as avoiding using churchy words and explaining churchy words and concepts to help unchurched kids.
- Explain that a new feature throughout the leader guides is daily margin notes with adaptations for kids with special needs. Point out a few throughout the leader guide. Comment that it is important to make kids with special needs feel comfortable at church.
- Point out that the multi-age curriculum has an article in the beginning explaining how to make a multi-age classroom work and includes tips such as letting older kids be assistants/helpers or leaders in small groups so that they don't feel bored or talked down to.
- Lead conferees to play a game to review. Say: "Let's see how well you know your kids already!"
 - Explain that you will read some characteristics of kids and conferees should hold up fingers to represent the age group it applies to. (For example, hold up 1 finger on left hand and 2 fingers on right hand for 1st and 2nd graders.)
 - Comment: "If the characteristic applies to all ages, then stand up and pretend to jump the Breaker Rock Beach waves!"
 - Read the following characteristics and offer commentary to give real life examples for understanding:
 - Like to work in groups and focus on fairness. (3rd & 4th graders)
 - Are limited in their ability to think abstractly. (1st & 2nd graders)
 - Are beginning to take more responsibility for their actions (3rd & 4th graders)
 - Love discovering things and being creative. (1st & 2nd graders)
 - Are active, energetic, and learn by doing. (ALL ages)
- Comment: "Now that you know your kids, it's time to prepare your space."
- **Prepare Your Teaching Space (WHERE you are teaching):**
 - Lead everyone to stand up, give his/her partner a Breaker Rock Beach high five, and say, "We got this!"
 - Lead conferees in a couple of stretches and say: "Be flexible! Be flexible! Be flexible! This is the best way to prepare yourself for getting your room ready! We have to be flexible with our classroom space."
 - Remark that VBS space is not always an ideal teaching environment. But they can make it the best space possible by asking questions of their VBS Director from the beginning.
 - Talk through the following questions:
 - How many kids should I expect?
 - Where is my teaching space?
 - What are our safety and security procedures?
 - Will I share space with another class that week?
 - May I move furniture?
 - What are our safety and security procedures?
 - How would you like me to hang things on the walls?
 - Is there anything I should not take off the walls?
 - How may I play music in the room?
 - Are there markers, crayons, and other basic supplies in the room that I could use? Where else can I find supplies?
 - How many Bibles will be available for children to use?

- What information do I need to know about gospel conversations with kids?
 - Explain that there are also questions to ask yourself. These will help you think through how you like to teach and what you know about how kids learn best. Then you can be flexible and make adaptations to make the environment the best it can possibly be.
 - Talk through the following questions to ask yourself:
 - Do you prefer floor seating or table seating?
 - Say: “This depends on the church’s supplies, your teaching style, the size of your room, and how long you will be in the classroom.”
 - Suggest that if leaders use the floor they may consider using a large blue tarp/tablecloth and brown burlap to look like the ocean or sand. Children can sit around this. It defines the perimeter for sitting and gives leaders space to walk around. Kids also have space to place their Bibles in front of them.
 - Which wall will be my focal wall?
 - Suggest they guide kids to sit with their backs to the door to avoid distractions.
 - What will fit in my room?
 - Recommend minimizing classroom decorations that can be distracting for kids.
 - Suggest that a focal wall with the following is best:
 - Breaker Rock Beach Banner (from leader pack)
 - Breaker Rock Beach Add-ons (from leader pack)
 - Teaching pictures, Bible verse, and motto (from leader pack)
 - Explain that the focal wall needs to be simple so kids can focus.
 - Quickly mention other possible room decorations such as:
 - Breaker Rock Beach wall mural (Supersized Backdrop or Super Duper Sized Backdrop)
 - A sand tub on a tarp with toys and a lid, as well as a small vacuum for cleanup.
 - Blue tablecloth for water or burlap for sand.
 - A *VBS 2024 Giant Inflatable Orca* hanging from the ceiling.
 - Sand buckets to store markers or pens.
 - String flags hanging from ceiling.
 - Beach balls
 - Explain that the leader guides and the *VBS 2024 Decorating Made Easy* book have plenty of ideas.
 - Suggest that leaders spend time praying in the room while they decorate, and each day before the kids arrive.
 - Comment: “Now that you’ve prepared your heart, your mind is prepared for the kids, and your room is ready, it’s time to prepare for teaching! What are you going to teach?”
- **Prepare for Teaching (study WHAT you are teaching):**
 - Say: “The VBS Bible stories are amazing! For the next month, make it a goal to read one Bible story each week. In some cases, you may want to take even more time to focus on and prepare for each Bible story.”
 - Go over the biblical content briefly with conferees.
 - **Week 1 | Day 1**

- Session Title: Truth Comes from God.
- Bible Story: Satan Tricked Adam and Eve (Gen 2–3)
- Some People Say: Truth can be different for different people.
- God Says: Truth comes from Me.
- Today's Point: Truth comes from God.
- **Week 2 | Day 2**
 - Session Title: God's Plan Is Best
 - Bible Story: Daniel Chose God's Way (Daniel 1)
 - Some People Say: Do what makes you happy.
 - God Says: My plan for you is even better.
 - Today's Point: God's plan is best.
- **Week 3 | Day 3**
 - Session Title: Everyone Needs Jesus
 - Bible Story: The Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)
 - Some People Say: Being a good person gets you into heaven.
 - God Says: Everyone sins and needs a Savior.
 - Today's Point: Everyone needs Jesus.
- **Week 4 | Day 4**
 - Session Title: Jesus Is the Only Way
 - Bible Story: John Wrote about Jesus (John 14:1-6, 18–20, Acts 1:9-12)
 - Some People Say: There are many ways to get to heaven.
 - God Says: Jesus is the only way to get to heaven.
 - Today's Point: Jesus is the only way.
- **Week 5 | Day 5**
 - Session Title: Speak the Truth in Love
 - Bible Story: Paul Encouraged the Ephesians (Acts 9:1-6, 19:1-10,21-31, 20:1, Ephesians 3:14–4:16)
 - Some People Say: If you don't agree with me, you don't love me.
 - God Says: Speak the truth in love.
 - Today's Point: Speak the truth in love.
- Suggest that before reading and studying the Scriptures, conferees should review the day's point and "Some People Say/God Says" statements, then spend time in prayer over these ideas.
- Emphasize that it's important for leaders to prepare themselves. That part needs to begin early. Comment that once leaders have prepared themselves, they can begin to plan their VBS sessions.

4. Plan (24 mins)

- Point to the second kite: Plan.
- Explain that there are five key elements to a children's Bible study teaching plan: Start it, Learn it, Know it, Live it, and Finish it.
- Comment: "The leader guide has your plan laid out for you! Let's take a look!"
- Walk through each of the five key elements, pointing them out in the leader guide.
 - **Start It**
 - Explain that on each day of VBS, "Start It" is a welcome activity to help kids feel comfortable, welcome, and introduced to what they will learn that day.

- Lead conferees in the Start It activity from Day 1 in the *VBS 2024 Grades 3–4 Bible Study Leader Guide* (page 10).
- Explain that every day leaders and kids will place a new add-on on the Breaker Rock Beach Banner.
- **Learn It**
 - Explain that this is the portion of the session where a leader will tell the Bible story to kids. Share these helpful hints with leaders to help kids learn the Bible story:
 - Make sure your Bible is open and in your hand!!
 - Hold the Bible story picture or attach it to the wall at the children's eye-level. (The story is written on the back of the picture, but you won't need it because you've prepared so well.)
 - Refer to the leader guide for suggestions on how to engage children with the story.
 - Provide Bibles for each child. Let them follow along as you are reading or invite older kids to read certain passages!
 - Vary your storytelling method to accommodate different learning styles in the room. Some kids will need extra action and movement. Others have a more reflective style.
 - Lead conferees in the Learn It activity (including telling the Bible story) from the *VBS 2024 Grades 1–2 Bible Study Leader Guide* (pages 10–11).
 - Show conferees the cross symbol on page 11. Explain that each day of VBS has these symbols to help leaders identify an opportune time to share the gospel as led by the Holy Spirit. Days 3 and 4 focus more directly on the gospel story but leaders should be sensitive to share the gospel every day of VBS.
 - Show conferees the pack items that will be used to share the gospel more directly later in VBS (Grades 1–2 pack item 18 and Grades 3–4 pack item 24).
- **Know It**
 - Lead anyone with a shell in their chair that has a word written on it to bring it to the tub of sand and bury it in the sand for an activity you will do together later.
 - Explain that “Know It” is a time to learn the VBS Scripture each day. For Breaker Rock Beach, the theme verse is Romans 12:2. Lead conferees in the Day 5 Know It activity from the *VBS 2024 Grades 3–4 Bible Study Leader Guide* (page 40).
- **Live It**
 - Point out that “Live It” is the application portion of the session. Leader guides will often provide an activity and connect with the *VBS 2024 Kids Activity Book*.
 - Lead conferees in the Day 3 Live It activity from the *VBS 2024 Grades 1–2 Bible Study Leader Guide* (page 26).
- **Finish It**
 - Explain that this time wraps up the entire session. The leader guide will show you how to use the Memory Maker and give you some words to remind kids of what they have learned that day.
 - Draw attention to the Memory Maker and show conferees each token, asking them if they can guess how each icon connects to the day's Bible content.

- Comment: “We’ve prepared and planned. What is on our last kite?”

5. Plenty to Do (6 mins)

- Point to the final kite on the wall. Ask a volunteer to read it aloud: “Plenty to Do!”
- Explain that leader guides provide additional activities that can be used every day. Encourage conferees to prepare at least one activity for early arrivers, in case another activity finishes more quickly than expected, or if there is a change to the VBS schedule.
- Point out that the activities have different purposes. Each day there are options for application, learning the bonus verse, and learning a Bible Skill. In Multi-age, activities focus on application and the bonus verse, but two activities are more suited for younger kids and two for older.
- As time permits, walk conferees through the following activities from the leader guides or highlight a few of your own favorites.
 - Salmon Swimming (Grades 1–2, page 20)
 - Land Ho! (Grades 1–2, page 21)
 - Building Sandcastles (Grades 3–4, page 27)
 - Jellyfish Volleyball (Multi-age, page 13)
 - Lighthouse Stacking (Multi-age, page 14)

6. Closing (4 mins)

- Invite conferees to share one they learned and one thing they plan to do as a result of this conference with their partners.
- Close in prayer. Ask God to go with conferees as they prepare to lead at VBS. Ask Him to guide their preparation and give them the words they need to teach kids the wonderful truth of the gospel.