

VBS 2024 LEADING A CHILD TO CHRIST CONFERENCE PLAN (45 MINUTES)

Purpose Statement

This 45-minute plan is designed to equip children's ministry leaders and volunteers to share the gospel to kids and best practices of how to present the gospel.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop* (005847616)
- *VBS 2024 Gospel Guide* (005846982) — Gather 1 per conferee.
- *VBS 2024 Tablecloths* (005846832)
- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* (005567177)
- *Leading a Child to Christ* (005813582)
- *The ABC's of Becoming a Christian* (005125105)
- *I'm a Christian Now* (005810305)
- *Growing in My Faith* (005793051)
- *Ages & Stages* (005827406)
- *Giant Inflatable Game Cube* (005841133)
- 6 pieces of colored paper — Print one of the following best practices on each piece. Place in each game cube pocket.
 - 1 on 1
 - Start small
 - Ask open-ended questions
 - Utilize Scripture
 - Keep it simple
 - Response
- TV with HDMI hookup

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle. Cover the focal with a *VBS 2024 Supersized Backdrop*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2024 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum, visuals, and other tabletop decorations.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome and Introduction (5 minutes)

- Say: "One of the most incredible opportunities we have as ministry leaders is leading kids to Christ. That's why we do VBS, so that boys and girls can hear the Good News of the gospel through crafts, snacks, Bible study, worship, and recreation."
- Say: "In this conference, we will discuss how to share the gospel with kids, best practices for sharing the gospel with kids, and a step-by-step process for gospel presentations with kids."
- Share with conferees the different tools and resources from Lifeway that are available for leading a child to Christ.
- Pray, asking God to bring boys and girls to VBS this year who don't know him and for the truth of the gospel to be seen, heard, and experienced so that they can believe and be saved.

2. Remember Your Audience (10 minutes)

- Say: “One of the most important things to remember when presenting the gospel to children is remembering that they are children. What we say, how we say it, and where we say it truly matters.”
 - **What we say** — Try to be very intentional with the words you choose when sharing the gospel. Try to avoid large theological terms.
 - **How we say it** — Open ended questions are great. When trying to gauge where a child is at spiritually, try to avoid “yes” or “no” questions when possible.
 - **Where we say it** — When sharing the gospel with a child, try to avoid loud and distracting areas.
- Refer to *Ages and Stages* younger kids, middle kids, and preteens. Talk with conferees about what children are able to understand about salvation at various ages.
- Remind conferees that kids have short attention spans. Say: “Remember that kids have short attention spans, about 1 minute per age of the child. A lack of focus doesn’t always equate to disinterest in the conversation. Try to regain attention and if lack of focus continues, it might be best to try again later.”
- Explain to conferees the importance of having patience when sharing the gospel. Sometimes it takes several seconds (especially for boys) to verbalize complex thoughts and answers. It’s okay if it takes a few seconds to respond to questions.

3. Best Practices for Sharing the Gospel with Kids (20 minutes)

- Explain that the following are recommendations and tips for sharing the gospel with kids. Use the Giant Inflatable Cube to discuss best practices.
- Toss the cube to a conferee and lead her to read one of the best practices written on the cube. Discuss, then toss to a new person. Continue until all six best practices have been discussed.
 - **1 on 1** — While you may present the gospel in a large group or in worship, it is best to give kids an opportunity to respond in a small setting.
 - Counsel male to male and female to female, if possible.
 - Be visible. Meet with a child in an area with low distractions but also while maintaining visibility.
 - **Start small** — Before jumping into the gospel, begin with questions like, “How are you liking VBS so far?,” “What’s been your favorite part about VBS?,” and “What’s your favorite VBS song?” Remind the child that this is a conversation, not a pass or fail test.
 - **Ask open-ended questions** — Say: “The best way to gauge a child’s understanding of the gospel and where they are spiritually is through open-ended questions.” Example: “Hey Sarah, can you tell me why you want to become a Christian?” or “Caleb, can you share with me what sin does to our relationship with God?”
 - **Utilize Scripture** — Scripture helps kids recognize that what you are saying is not your words, but God’s words. “God’s Word says _____”. When possible, also refer to age-appropriate witnessing tools like *The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me* or *The ABC’s of Becoming a Christian*.
 - Helpful Scriptures include:
 - Romans 3:23
 - Romans 6:23
 - John 3:16
 - 1 John 1:9

- Show *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* and briefly review the five points of the plan with conferees:
 - God Rules
 - We Sinned
 - God Provided
 - Jesus Gives
 - We Respond
 - **Keep it simple** — Don't complicate the gospel. While there are some complex elements of the gospel, the gospel itself is simple.
 - Remember to keep the age of the child in mind and don't assume a child has any prior knowledge of the gospel.
 - **Response**
 - Say: "After sharing the gospel, give the child an opportunity to ask you any questions they have about the gospel. If the child seems ready to respond, asking if she is ready to respond to the gospel—to Admit, Believe, and Confess." If she seems hesitant and not quite ready, that is okay. Explain that she should go home and talk with her parents about it. Be sure to follow up with the parents about the conversation as well.
 - Trust the Holy Spirit to do the saving work.
 - Remember that the results are not up to us. The only thing we are responsible for is sharing the gospel and making it clear.
 - Do not pressure the child for a response.
 - It is okay if the child is not ready to make a profession of faith.
 - After the meeting, take notes about the conversation for future follow up.
- 4. Enlist a Team (3 minutes)**
- Enlist a team of adults who are mature in their faith to help with decision counseling—whether church staff or church members.
 - Offer training for the decision counseling team and share best practices with the team.
 - Provide them with helpful scriptures and witnessing tools.
- 5. What Not to Do (5 minutes)**
- Ask for a volunteer to come to the front of the room. The volunteer will role play a child interested in becoming a Christian.
 - Stand up while the volunteer is in a chair with no Bible in hand. Ask the volunteer the following questions:
 - Do you know what sin is?
 - Do you know who Jesus is?
 - Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins?
 - Do you want to become a Christian?
 - Great, let's pray.
 - Ask the conferees: "What did I do wrong?" Allow conferees to share what could have been done better.
 - Explain to conferees that you only used "yes" or "no" questions, didn't allow the kid to really explain their understanding, stood above the kid and wasn't on their level, didn't have a bible.
- 6. Closing (2 minutes)**
- Close in prayer, asking God to give us wisdom, the right words to say, and to trust the Holy Spirit's leading as we share the gospel at VBS.