

VBS 2025 DIRECTORS CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute conference plan is designed to train and equip VBS directors and pastors to plan, prepare, and lead Lifeway's Magnified!™ VBS.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2025 Administrative Guide*
- *VBS 2025 Decorating Kit Made Easy*
- *VBS 2025 Directors Kit*
- *VBS 2025 Preschool Starter Kit*
- *VBS 2025 Kids Starter Kit: Grades 1-6*
- *VBS 2025 Multi-age Starter Kit*
- *VBS 2025 Kids Activity Books*
- *VBS 2025 Memory Makers*
- *VBS 2025 Wall Art*
- *VBS 2025 Floor Prints*
- *VBS 2025 Visual Pack*
- *VBS 2025 String Flags*
- *VBS 2025 Inflatable Acorns*
- *VBS 2025 Cups*
- *VBS 2025 Supersized Backdrop*
- *VBS 2025 Inflatable Waterdrop*
- (4) *VBS 2025 Tablecloths*
- *VBS 2025 Pencils*
- *VBS 2025 Notepad*
- *VBS 2025 Sticker sheet*
- *VBS 2025 Gospel Wristbands*
- *VBS 2025 Gospel Guides*
- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* (9781430066965)
- *Magnified Devotional: Exploring God's Greatness in the Smallest of Things* (9798384521938)
- Item 1: "Scrambled Words" — Print and display on the focal wall.
- Markers
- Bluetooth speaker
- Green bulletin board paper or posterboard — Cut into a large flower stem with no petals. Attach to the focal wall.
- 6 pieces of colorful construction paper — Cut each piece into one large flower petal. Label and place under six different chairs. Conferees will attach the petals to the stem in Teaching Step 4. Label each petal with the following statements (one per petal):
 1. Know the Purpose and Theme
 2. Plan!
 3. Enlist & Train Leaders
 4. Promote & Publicize
 5. Registration
 6. Make the Family Connection
- Scissors
- Tape

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing the front of the room. Hang the *VBS 2025 Supersized Backdrop* on the focal wall. Cover a table with a *VBS 2025 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum, visuals and other tabletop decorations on top. Attach the bare flower stem to the focal wall. Place petals under chairs. Attach the scrambled words (item 1) to the focal wall.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome (2 minutes)

- Play music from the *VBS 2025 Music for Kids CD* and greet conferees as they enter.
- Say: "In VBS 2025, Magnified!, we are going to proclaim the greatness of God, exalt His name together and magnify the Lord! Doesn't that sound GREAT? Let's try it!"
- Lead conferees to each find a partner and sit together. Instruct them to introduce themselves, tell how long they've been directing VBS, and how they were chosen for this role.

2. Understanding the Why (10 minutes)

- Explain that there are three things we are all going to do during this VBS.
 1. Proclaim the greatness of God.
 2. Exalt his name together.
 3. Magnify the Lord.
- Say: "Let's make sure we know what we're doing! Repeat after me:
 - God is great! (*Echo: God is great!*)
 - Magnify the Lord! (*Echo: Magnify the Lord!*)
 - Exalt his name together!" (*Echo: Exalt his name together!*)
- Repeat the echo chant, this time asking partners to do the call and response to each other. Lead the oldest of the pair to do the first part and the younger to do the echo. Lead them to echo "God is great! (echo) Magnify the Lord! (echo)" and then together say, "Exalt His name together!" while high-fiving each other.
- Repeat several times with different actions: stand when you say your part, ladies echo men, men echo ladies, one side of the room echo the other, etc.
- Lead conferees to make it personal. Guide them to turn to their partner and think about and answer the following:
 - Think about how God is great to you. Share with partner.
 - Think about ways you have seen God magnified in the small things in your life. Share with partner.
 - Think about why you want to exalt the name of God with others. Share with partner.
- Explain that God made us for one purpose. Say: "You were made to magnify God. God has intentionally chosen you for a very important role ... to magnify him to children, adults, students, leaders, parents, your church, and your community. You were made to magnify God as the director of VBS at your church!"
- Lead the group to turn to their partners and say, "I was made to magnify God."
- Continue: "Here's why. Over 2 million people enroll in VBS each summer. Each person in the VBS you lead needs Jesus. They need to know God sees them, cares about them, loves them, forgives them, keeps His promises to them. Imagine if every child, student, leader, parent knew those things deep in their heart when they left VBS 2025 at your church."
- Lead the group to shout out how many attendees were at their VBS last year. Using some of their answers, say: "Imagine if all 99 people at your church this year know God

sees them, cares about them, loves them, forgives them and keeps His promises to them!”

- Share that over 65,000 people give their lives to Jesus last summer in VBS. Remind conferees that there are children, students, adults and parents in their VBS who need Jesus and need to be one of the 65,000. They need eternal life. Salvation. Hope and purpose.
- Explain that these statistics come from page 5 of the Administrative Guide. Challenge VBS Directors to use these stats to SHOUT the why (why we do VBS) to their church leaders and volunteers. We get to be part of something BIG in VBS!
- Say: “And God has chosen you. Created YOU to magnify him, proclaim His greatness, exalt His name this VBS so that can happen!”
- Share this leadership truth: “As the leader goes, so go the people.” Lead conferees to repeat this to their partners. Elaborate:
 - As much as you pray, the people will pray.
 - As much as you proclaim the greatness of God, the people will proclaim the greatness of God.
 - As much as you exalt His name, the people will exalt His name.
 - As much as you love the children, the leaders will love the children.
 - As much as you laugh and have fun, the leaders will laugh and have fun.
 - As flexible as you are, the leaders will be flexible.
 - As prepared as you are, the leaders will be prepared.
 - As organized as you are, the leaders will be organized.
 - As clear as the expectations are, the closer leaders will be to meeting them.
- Encourage VBS Directors: “You are important! And one day you are going to stand before Jesus and you have the awesome privilege of giving an account for VBS 2025! And when He looks at you, I hope He you and says, well done, good and faithful servant.”

3. Pray for Leaders (3 minutes)

- Lead partners to pray for one other, with the oldest praying for the youngest and vice versa. Lead them to pray that we will magnify the Lord, proclaim His greatness and exalt His name.
- After praying, remind leaders that the most important thing they can do as a director for VBS is to saturate the week in prayer.
- Reference pages 54-56 and the ways to pray before, during, and after VBS.
- Share that the National Day of Prayer for VBS is May 18, 2025. Encourage them to make this special and let their pastor know.
- Point out the Prayer Calendar that is available in the book and the digital downloads. Suggest they use this to guide their prayer life leading up to, during, and after VBS.

4. Add Petals to Your Flower (65 minutes)

- Ask: “Have you ever seen a flower without petals? It’s so sad. It doesn’t look like what it’s supposed to. We’re going to add petals to complete our flower today. There are 6 petals we need to have.”
- Invite conferees to look under their chairs to find the six petals. Lead each person holding a petal to read it (in order). Attach each petal to the flower stem on the focal wall as you discuss the point.
 - **Petal 1: Know the Purpose and Theme** (10 minutes)

- Say: “We’ve actually already covered the purpose. What three things are we going to do? (*Proclaim, magnify, exalt*) What were we made to do? (*Magnify God.*)
- Open the Administrative Guide to pages 7-10 and show the overview of the theme and Bible content. Show the Bible story pictures and read the titles of each Bible story.
- Remind leaders that they cannot teach what they do not know. And they cannot expect God’s Word to go forth if they don’t know it themselves.
- Suggest that over the course of the next week each leader take 5 days to read one of the Bible stories each day during their quiet times.
- **Petal 2: Plan!** (20 minutes)
 - Reference the *VBS 2025 Directors Kit*. Explain that this kit contains everything a VBS Directors needs to get started planning.
 - Share a quote from Benjamin Franklin: “The person who fails to plan, plans to fail.” Acknowledge that there is a lot to plan with VBS, but they will be successful if they follow the plan laid out in the Administrative Guide.
 - Say: “It’s always a good strategy to begin with the end in mind.” Show pages 11-32 of the Administrative Guide. Explain that there are five great tips outlined on these pages.
 - Invite conferees to discover the tips by unscrambling the following words, then discuss:
 - Acorn: Start early
 - Butterfly: Include prayer
 - Ladybug: Set goals
 - Ant: Delegate responsibilities
 - Magnifying glass: Keep your focus
 - Encourage leaders to evaluate and set goals. Suggest VBS Directors be able to answer the following questions to kickstart their planning:
 - Ask: “What is your goal?” Look at last year’s numbers. How many total kids in birth through 6th grade? How many volunteers? How many professions of faith? How many baptized? How many first time guests came after VBS?
 - How many children can we anticipate attending? (Typically 10% of children attending will make professions of faith.) How many children would we like to see make professions of faith? How many new families would we like to see start attending after VBS?
 - What ages will we serve? (This will affect curriculum ordering, budgeting, rooms, etc.)
 - Ask: “What is the greatest factor is seeing God move in these areas?” (*Prayer.*)
 - Talk about calendaring. Offer the following suggestions. Remind leaders that all of these answers impact strategy, budget, format:
 - Settle on the date early. (Tip: Always set the date for next year’s VBS early enough that you can announce it at the end of the current VBS. This creates excitement and people attending this year can go ahead and add it to their calendars.) Take advantage of early promotion/save-the-dates and continue all year long.
 - Decide whether you will have a day or night VBS.

- Choose a schedule and format (how many hours).
- Talk about budgeting. Refer to pages 14-15 in the Administrative Guide. Offer the following tips:
 - Know how much was spent last year.
 - Follow the suggested budget in the Administrative Guide.
 - Walk through your schedule and see how much every single part costs. Budget by age groups and rotations (curriculum and supplies).
 - If it exceeds last year's budget, ASK! There may be extra money that can be reallocated. If not, it's okay if they say no. You may be planting seeds for the next year!
- Discuss options for formatting. Refer to pages 16-31 as you talk through each of the following:
 - Ages attending (preschool, children, special needs, students, adults, etc.)
 - Space (How much space do you need? Have? Assign rooms and create a map.)
 - Create a schedule that matches how you plan to group children and format your time. Be sure to include time for rotations, Bible study, and worship rally (or rallies).
- Discuss curriculum.
 - Explain that there are three essential resources every church needs: the Directors Kit, the Worship Rally Pack, and then the Starter Kit(s) that matches how they plan to group kids for Bible study.
 - For closely-graded resources, order the Preschool Starter Kit and Kids Starter Kit. For broadly-graded resources, order the Multi-age Starter Kit.
- **Petal 3: Enlist & Train Leaders** (15 minutes)
 - Refer to pages 33-41 of the Administrative Guide. Suggest VBS Directors follow these ideas:
 - Create a spreadsheet of needs. This will help you determine the minimum number of people you must enlist. Everything else is gravy! You may need:
 - Rotation leaders
 - Age group leaders
 - Worship Rally host/dancers/actors
 - Prayer team
 - Tech team
 - Decorating team
 - Student team
 - Adult team
 - Communications/marketing
 - Photography
 - Pray for exact needs based on your spreadsheet. Trust God to provide what you need.
 - Plan! Always think the process through to the end.
 - How will they sign up to serve—paper? Digital?
 - What will they receive when they sign up? (Example: confirmation e-mail, printed instructions, follow-up text.)

- How will they get their background check? What are the safety and security procedures they need to know/follow?
- How will they be communicated with from the moment they sign up until next year?
- How will they know about and register for trainings when they sign up?
- How will they know where they are serving and who their leader will be?
- Ask. Create a system to ask everyone in your church. Statistically speaking, people have to hear something seven times before they say yes and you will get five no's for every one yes.
 - Suggest a 5-month recruitment plan:
 - January: Invite everyone who served last year to sign up again.
 - February: Set up a recruiting booth at your church
 - March: Recruit parents and special groups (such as deacons, choir, daycare, etc.). Assign groups to leaders who have already been recruited.
 - April: Recruit from student and adult Sunday School classes and small groups.
 - May: Hold a VBS Kickoff event. Invite everyone that hasn't already been asked.
- Train. Suggest that training can take place in or outside of your church. Check to see what trainings are available in your local area. Leader training is well worth the time!
 - Refer to pages 33-40 in the Administrative Guide and offer the following tips:
 - Feed them and they will come!
 - Get EVERYONE to training a month in advance so that they feel committed.
 - Use the training plan and PowerPoint in the digital downloads of the Administrative Guide.
 - Give leaders their curriculum and allow time for team planning after the training.
 - Train everyone on how to share the gospel. Explain expectations and what decision day will look like.
 - Do follow-up training to help leaders know how to connect to families during and after VBS.
- Appreciate and communicate. Communication is key to a volunteer feeling successful. And appreciation goes a long way toward retention year-after-year. Suggest the following ideas:
 - Serve a breakfast snack for leaders each morning when they arrive (or snack supper if doing a nighttime VBS).
 - Say thank you. Ask how they are doing.
 - Lead kids during large groups times like Worship Rally to look at their leaders and say THANK YOU! We couldn't do this without them!
 - Send personal thank-you notes at the end of VBS to each person who served.

- **Petal 4: Promote & Publicize** (10 minutes)
 - Lead partners to turn to one another and share ways that their church publicizes its VBS. After a few minutes, invite volunteers to share ideas with the large group.
 - Refer to pages 42-45 in the Administrative Guide. Point out any that have not already been mentioned.
 - Point out Lifeway's Prospect Services on page 42 of the Administrative Guide. This is a great way to identify families to invite to your VBS.
 - Show the calendar on page 45 of the Administrative Guide. Highlight a few of the great ideas provided there.
 - **Petal 5: Registration** (5 minutes)
 - Reference pages 46-49 of the Administrative Guide. Discuss each of the following:
 - Enlist a registration team.
 - Pre-enrollment strategies
 - Kick-off events
 - Registration tools (like Lifeway's KidEvent Pro)
 - **Petal 6: Make the Family Connection** (10 minutes)
 - Lead conferees to think about the families they serve. Encourage them to talk through the following with their partners.
 - Who: Who are the families we serve? Who can be on the team?
 - What: What is your church like? Describe it in 10 words or less. What are the needs of families? What is your goal? What resources are available?
 - When: When is the best time to connect with families?
 - How: How is God at work in your church's family ministry? How can you best meet the needs of families? How do they respond (digital, social media, in-person, etc.)?
 - Offer suggestions based on your personal experience.
 - Include ideas covered in the Administrative Guide such as music, VBS Celebration, events (page 53), and so forth.
- 5. Closing** (5 minutes)
- Lead conferees to tell their partner three things they need to start now (if a new Director) or that they want to try differently (if an experienced Director).
 - Remind conferees: "Remember, YOU are the leader! As the leader goes, so go the people. This is an awesome opportunity to see many children hear and receive the gospel of Jesus! Have fun! Smile! Be FLEXIBLE! Have grace and see the good in people! Give clear expectations. Say what needs to be done and don't be afraid to say and say it with joy, passion and purpose Get ahead of the game! Always be 2-3 steps ahead of the group. Set goals! Begin with the end in mind. And most importantly, proclaim the greatness of God. Exalt His name together. Magnify the Lord!"
 - Lead partners to pray for each other.
 - Close in prayer, then dismiss.



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