

## VBS 2025 Grades 3–4 BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

### Purpose Statement

This 90-minute plan is designed to train and equip leaders to teach kids using the Grades 3-4 curriculum for Lifeway's Magnified!™ VBS.

### Needed Resources

- (6) *VBS 2025 Grades 3-4 Leader Guide* — Display one leader guide for the conference leader and place the other five inside the VBS Days 1–5 plastic flowerpots (see below).
- *VBS 2025 Grades 3–4 Leader Pack*
  - Items 1–5: “Days 1-5 Bible Story Pictures” — Hang on the focal wall.
  - Item 6: “Magnified Banner” — Display on the focal wall.
  - Item 7: “Magnified! Banner Add-ons” — Place the banner add-on on a table near the focal wall.
  - Item 9: “Zoom In Cards” — Photocopy onto cardstock and cut apart along dotted lines. Provide enough cards for each conferee. Place one card in each chair.
- *VBS 2025 Kids Activity Books*
- *VBS 2025 Memory Makers*
- *VBS 2025 Bible Study Location Sign*
- *VBS 2025 Wall Art*
- *VBS 2025 Floor Prints*
- *VBS 2025 Visual Pack* — Display the VBS Scripture poster on the focal wall.
- *VBS 2025 String Flags*
- 2 sets of *VBS 2025 Inflatable Acorns* — Gather clear tape and place strips of tape on five of the acorns, one on each acorn. On separate acorns (on the strips of tape) write each of the following phrases: *Know the Role, Know the Kids, Know the Content, Know the Plan, and Know it Continues*. Place inflatable acorns under five chairs throughout the room.
- *VBS 2025 Cups*
- *VBS 2025 Supersized Backdrop*
- *VBS 2025 Inflatable Waterdrop*
- *VBS 2025 Tablecloths*
- *VBS 2025 Gospel Wristbands*
- *VBS 2025 Gospel Guides*
- *The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me*
- *Magnified Devotions: Exploring God’s Greatness in the Smallest of Things*
- 5 plastic flowerpots — Label the pots *Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, and Day 5*. Place one leader guide in each.
- Potting soil
- Packet of flower seeds
- Plastic flowerpot — Place on table by entry door. Fill with potting soil and place a small jar of seeds next to the flowerpot. Be sure to have at least one seed for every conferee.
- Clear tape
- Supplies to create a DIY large magnifying glass (hula hoop, 1-inch PVC pipe cut to 3-feet long, black spray paint, zip ties, and clear shower curtain) — Paint the hula hoop and PVC pipe black. Drill two small holes into the end of the PVC to attach hula hoop with zip ties. Cut the shower curtain to fit the size of the hula hoop and attach with black electrical tape.
- Item 1: “Grades 3–4 Handout” (at end of document) — Photocopy one for each conferee.
- Item 2: “Little Words—Big Truth” (at end of document) — Photocopy one per conferee onto cardstock and cut out. Place one card in each seat.

- Fine-tip permanent marker — Place on table near door with the flowerpot.
- TV with HDMI chord

### Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle. Cover the focal with a *VBS 2025 Supersized Backdrop* and the VBS Scripture poster from the Visual Pack. Add pack items as described above. Cover a table with a *VBS 2025 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum, visuals, and other tabletop decorations. Decorate the remainder of the room using the resources listed above as appropriate.

### Teaching Steps

#### 1. Welcome and Teach the VBS Scripture (8 minutes)

- Play *Magnified!* music and greet guests as they arrive.
- Encourage them to “plant their seeds” into the flowerpot and write their names on the side of the flowerpot with a marker.
- Introduce yourself and briefly share your VBS experience with the conferees.
- Encourage conferees to read the VBS Scripture together from the verse poster: *“Proclaim the LORD’s greatness with me; let us exalt his name together”* Psalm 34:3.
- Say: “Psalm 34:3 is not only the VBS verse, but should be the goal of VBS; that kids would hear the truth of the gospel and live to proclaim the Lord’s greatness. The goal of today is to help prepare and equip you to make that happen.”
- Say: “As you arrived, you planted seeds into the flowerpot. That’s exactly what we will be doing as Bible study leaders at VBS. We’re proclaiming the Lord’s greatness at VBS through the teaching of His Word. Now look at the names on the flowerpot. Just imagine how many boys and girls will hear the truth of God’s Word from just the names on the flowerpot. When you think about it, it’s truly amazing to think how many seeds will be planted this summer from all the Bible study leaders across the nation. We may not see the fruit of the seeds, but God knows, and we can trust that through these seeds, boys and girls will come to faith in Christ and one day, plant more seeds in their church and at VBS!
- Point conferees’ attention table towards the curriculum you have displayed and highlight the leader guide, leader pack, and activity book.
- Say: If you want to know the details of being a Bible study leader, the leader guide is how we zoom in. The leader guide is a step-by-step guide for leading and teaching kids at VBS and we will refer to this today. If you already have one, you’re welcome to follow along today during the session.

#### 2. Acorn Intro (4 minutes)

- Explain that many things go into a successful Bible study for kids, whether at VBS or on a typical Sunday morning. The steps shared today can be helpful for any Bible study setting.
- Invite conferees to look under their chairs for acorns. Encourage conferees to hold up the acorns, read the statement, then pass them to the front of the room.
- Place acorns on a focal table for reference while teaching. Read the statements on the acorns in order: “Know the Role, Know the Kids, Know the Content, Know the Plan, and Know it Continues.”
- Say: “During our time together, we will see how these five steps play a vital role in VBS and how we can prepare for the best week of the summer at *Magnified!* VBS!

**3. Know the Role (8 minutes)**

- Point to the first acorn: Know the Role.
- Ask conferees, “What all goes into the role of a Bible study leader at VBS?” Explain that being a Bible study leader isn’t about filling a spot because the VBS director asked you. Being a Bible study leader isn’t just a role. It’s a role that we should take seriously and prepare accordingly because through the work of the Holy Spirit, His Word, and how He works in and through us, lives can be changed forever.
- Ask for volunteers to share the name of a Bible study leader they had as a kid who made a profound impact on their lives, whether at VBS, Sunday school, etc.
- Explain that Bible study leaders play a vital role in the success of VBS. God has uniquely gifted Bible study leaders to prepare, lead, and teach kids about Jesus at VBS.
- Every role at VBS is important, but being a Bible study leader is an amazing opportunity and one of the most important roles of VBS because it is our role to help kids learn and know the truth from God’s Word that kids were created by God, they are known by God, they are loved by God and were made to magnify God. That’s life-changing truth and we have an incredible privilege to be the ones who get to share that with kids.
- There is a lot that goes into leading a Bible study at VBS. There’s a lot of preparation, planning, studying, but it’s all worth it!

**4. Know the Kids (20 minutes)**

- Point to the second acorn: Know the Kids.
- Explain that regardless of the age group you teach, it’s important to understand who children are, what they’re like, how they’re wired, and where they are physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Say: “Page 4 of the leader guide gives characteristics for each of those categories for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders.” Review the following characteristics:
  - Physically and Socially
    - Active, energetic, and enthusiastic
    - Need an outlet for those physical characteristics with active learning experiences
    - Building relationships, tend to have mostly friends of the same gender, want to be helpful and included in groups or teams
  - Emotionally
    - Increasing in their self-concept
    - Can be strong-willed especially when seeking independence
    - Can be anxious and withdrawn, hesitant to try new things, and feelings can be easily hurt
  - Bible Skills
    - Can locate some books and verses in the Bible
    - Can discover and apply truths from a Bible passage
    - Learn that the truths of God’s Word never change
    - Can begin to use the Bible daily
    - Know that the Bible teaches people how God wants them to live
  - Spiritually
    - Developing values and thinking in terms of right and wrong
    - Learning that the Bible tells of God’s plan for salvation
    - Ask deep and serious questions about faith
    - Can follow examples, teachings, and commandments of Jesus
    - Know that God loves and values people

- Explain that part of being a good Bible study leader is making VBS a fun and safe learning environment for all kids in your group. Kids come with different experiences, abilities, skills, backgrounds, and stories. It can be challenging to make them feel welcome and engaged if you're not ready for it.
- Ask conferees: "How many of you will have several unchurched kids at your VBS? How many of you will have kids with special needs at your VBS? How many of you have ever had a kid in your group who presented a challenge you weren't expecting?"
- Say: "On page 5, there are tips for adaptations for unchurched kids, kids with special needs, and more. A big key to success is being flexible, being willing to adapt, and being patient. Every kid God brings to us at VBS is a gift and every kid deserves an awesome VBS experience." Mention that special needs adaptations are also listed in the margins of the actual teaching plans later on in the leader guide. This will help teachers make adaptations to activities on the fly to accommodate all learners.
- Ask conferees to share how they have adapted their Bible study plans in the past based on dynamics of different kids.
- Briefly share adaptations for kids unfamiliar with church:
  - Play name games
  - Explain expectations
  - Be patient with kids who don't know "church" rules
  - Stay away from "church-ese"
  - Teach Bible skills as if no one has ever heard them
  - Remind kids of details
- Briefly share adaptations for kids with special needs:
  - Make environmental changes
  - Adapt activities
  - Modify content
  - Provide a buddy

#### 5. Know the Content (20 minutes)

- Point to the third acorn: Know the Content.
- Show page three of the leader guide and point out the overview of the Bible content.
- Say: "It seems obvious that we should know the Bible content, but I want to encourage you to spend more time with it than you think you should and to start preparing earlier than you think you should."
- Remind conferees that the more familiar we are with the Bible content, the less we need to depend on notes and the more we can engage with kids as we teach.
- Say: "Once again, the VBS Bible stories are fantastic this year."
- Guide conferees to grab the "Little Words—Big Truth Card" (item 2) that was in their seat. Ask conferees to take out their phones to zoom in on the tiny print to figure out what the words say. Ask conferees to read each phrase out loud.
- Say: "In the Bible Study sessions, there is a big picture truth and then a zoomed in truth kids can learn."
- Overview the biblical content for each day:
  - **Day 1**
    - Session Title: Magnify God
    - Bible Story: Jesus and the Children (John 1:1-3,12; Mark 10:13-16)
    - Today's Point: God Sees Me
    - The Big Truth: God created everything there is, and yet He still wants to spend time with me.
    - Zoom In: I am important to God

- **Day 2**
  - Session Title: Magnify God's Care
  - Bible Story: Jesus Calmed the Storm (Mark 4:1, 35-41)
  - Today's Point: God cares about me
  - The Big Truth: God keeps the whole universe going, and yet He still cares about what's happening to me.
  - Zoom In: I can trust God to take care of me.
- **Day 3**
  - Session Title: Magnify God's Love
  - Bible Story: The Woman at the Well (John 4:1-42)
  - Today's Point: God loves me
  - The Big Truth: God is not OK with sin, and yet He still loves sinners like me.
  - Zoom In: I can be confident God loves me
- **Day 4**
  - Session Title: Magnify God's Forgiveness
  - Bible Story: Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21; 18–20; 1 Corinthians 15:6)
  - Today's Point: God forgives me
  - The Big Truth: Jesus came to save the world, and that includes me.
  - Zoom In: I can trust Jesus as my Savior
- **Day 5**
  - Session Title: Magnify God's Faithfulness
  - Bible Story: Jesus Taught about Worry (Matthew 6:25-34)
  - Today's Point: God keeps His promises
  - The Big Truth: God is faithful with the big things in my life, and He will be faithful with the small things too.
  - Zoom In: I don't have to worry because God keeps His promises.
- Remind conference that when preparing to lead a Bible study, it's important to start early. Study and review the Bible content, pray over the kids who will hear it, and pray that God would use His Word to change the lives of the boys and girls in your group.
- Say: "As Bible Study leaders, it's important to remember that we aren't responsible for the outcome. God has called us to be the mouthpiece by which the stories are told to kids. We pray, prepare, and plan, then trust the Holy Spirit with the results."

## 6. Know the Plan (20 minutes)

- Point to the fourth acorn: Know the Plan.
- Say: "Failing to plan is planning to fail. Thankfully, with the leader guide, it walks you through everything you need to plan a VBS session for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders."
- Direct conferees to page 6 of the leader guide. Explain that there are five key elements to a kids Bible study teaching plan: Start It, Learn It, Know It, Live It, and End It. These five elements help divide the Bible teaching time into smaller portions which is a huge asset for planning.
- Walk through and explain each of the five sections:
  - **Start It**
    - Start It is exactly what it sounds like. It's an opening activity to kick off the session. This helps get kids excited, gets them moving, helps them feel welcome, and ready to learn.

- Lead conferees in the Start It activity from Day 1 (leader guide, p. 12). Direct attention to the “Zoom In Cards” (pack item 9) conferees found in their chairs at the beginning of the session.
- Point out the “Magnified! Banner” (pack item 6) and add the Day 1 “Magnified! Banner Add-ons” (pack item 7). Explain that every day kids will place a new add-on on the “Magnified Banner.”
- **Learn It**
  - Explain to conferees that this section is where the Bible story is told to kids. Share tips for helping kids learn the Bible story:
    - Provide Bibles for kids who need one. Encourage kids to find the passage in their Bibles and invite them to follow along in the story.
    - Teach with the Bible open and in your hand. Kids need to know that the story isn’t your story, it’s God’s story from God’s Word.
    - Display the daily Bible story picture at kids’ eye-level.
    - Initiate active learning by walking around the room while teaching, fluctuating your voice to highlight key parts of the story, using props, or asking for volunteers to role-play the story in biblical costume. These methods help capture the attention of kids with all learning styles.
  - Highlight the *Helpful Info* in the margin of page 12 and the cross symbol on page 13. Explain that each day has helpful tips and symbols to help leaders know additional information and when may be a great time to share the gospel.
  - Remind conferees that while days 3 and 4 are the primary gospel days, every day is a gospel day at VBS.
- **Live It**
  - Point out that Live It is the application portion of the Bible study session.
  - Share with conferees that the Live It activities tend to be low prep.
  - Show conferees how each Live It activity connects to the *VBS 2025 Kids Activity Book*.
- **Know It**
  - Share with conferees that the Know It section is a time dedicated to learning the VBS Theme Verse each day.
  - Ask: “Can anyone remember the VBS Scripture?” Ask for a volunteer to say the verse with the group.
  - Invite the group to repeat Psalm 34:3 together.
  - Lead the conferees in the Day 3 Know It activity on page 28.
- **End It**
  - The End It time completes the session. End It connects each day to the *VBS 2025 Memory Maker*.
  - Say: “As you wrap up the Bible study session, the leader guide will give you prompts to remind kids what they learned.”
- Comment: “On pages 7–8, the leader guide contains a detailed list of all supplies needed for Bible study from decorations, to everyday supplies, to supplies specific to each day. This is extremely helpful for planning ahead, ordering and organizing supplies early. It also helps in case you get sick and need someone to fill in. It’s all spelled out for a substitute to teach.”

**7. Know it Continues** (5 minutes)

- Point to the fifth acorn: Know it Continues.
- Say: “When VBS is over, God continues to work. Stories of life change often happen at VBS, but many occur weeks or months after VBS has ended. A lot of that has to do with what we do after VBS.”
- Refer to page 9 for tips on continuing VBS at home. Say: “There are many ways to encourage families to continue VBS at home.”
- Ask conferees to share success stories of how they have done this before.
- Share the tips in the Leader Guide:
  - *VBS 2025 Note Card*
  - *VBS 2025 Postcard*
  - *VBS 2025 Kids Activity Book*
  - *VBS 2025 Memory Maker*
  - *VBS 2025 Parent Guide*
  - *VBS 2025 Kids Fun Bundle*
  - *VBS 2025 Outreach Bible for Kids*
  - *VBS 2025 Magnified Devotions*
  - *VBS 2025 Music for Kids CD*
- Explain that these items can be giveaways after VBS, or prizes at Family Night or on the following Sunday morning to encourage families to return after VBS.
- Say: “Equipping parents is the best way we can ensure kids continue to learn that they were created to magnify God! As the church, our best way forward for discipleship is to partner with and encourage families, not only during VBS, but long after VBS is over.”

**8. Closing** (5 minutes)

- Invite conferees to share something they learned today.
- Answer questions from conferees about the training.
- Close in prayer. Ask God to help conferees as they prepare to lead at VBS. Ask Him to bless the conferees as they proclaim the Lord’s greatness to kids at VBS and that through VBS, kids would know they were made to magnify God.

## Grades 3–4 Handout

1. Know the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Know the \_\_\_\_\_.

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3. Know the \_\_\_\_\_.

- Day 1 -
- Day 2 -
- Day 3 -
- Day 4 -
- Day 5 -

4. Know the \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Know the \_\_\_\_\_.





