

VBS 2025 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 explain the gospel to kids through guidelines, best practices, and a step-by-step process.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2025 Visual Pack* (9798384513469)
- *VBS 2025 Gospel Guide* (9798384514008) – 1 per conferee
- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (CSB)* (9781430066965) – 1 per conferee
- *VBS 2025 Magnified Devotional* (9798384521938)
- *I'm a Christian Now! Leader Kit* (9781535935791)
- *I'm a Christian Now: Growing in My Faith* (9781462740987)
- *I'm a Christian Now: The Life of Jesus* (9781535935784)
- Item 1: "Matching Game" — Photocopy onto cardstock and cut apart.
- Magnifying Glass

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in rows at the front of the room. Cover the focal area with a *VBS 2025 Visual Pack*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2025 Tablecloth* and display the discipleship resources. Place the words on the focal wall for the matching game.

Teaching Steps

1. **Welcome** (2 minutes)
 - Welcome conferees.
 - Say: "Leading a child to Christ is one of the greatest privileges we have as children's leaders. Your involvement in VBS may present you with an opportunity to share the gospel and we want you prepared so that you do not miss out on this incredible blessing."
2. **Stages of a Child's Spiritual Journey** (5 minutes)
 - Comment: "Children move through different stages of spiritual development."
 - Discuss these stages to help leaders better understand the children that they will be leading.
 - Discovery Stage:
 - Characteristics of this stage: curious, asks a lot of questions, gathers information; a child may have many questions about baptism, the Lord's Supper, and other rituals and ordinances
 - Mention that curiosity is NOT conviction
 - Often see this stage in a child approximately Kindergarten–2nd grade
 - Discerning Stage:
 - Characteristics of this stage: concerned, questions/concerns about death, heaven, sin, hell, creation, and God; many have experienced the death of a loved one or pet and these experiences cause questions of "What happens when I die?" or "Where do people go when they die?"
 - Begin to understand the gospel—God Rules, We Sinned, God Provided, Jesus Gives, We Respond; facts begin moving toward understanding
 - Often see this stage in a child approximately 2nd–3rd grade

- Deciding Stage
 - Characteristics of this stage: conviction, child is able to take all that they have learned and put it together, admit that they are sinners and need a Savior, choose to repent
 - Often see this stage in a child approximately at the end of 2nd grade and older
- Discipling Stage
 - Characteristics of this stage: becoming a life-long follower of Jesus and learning and growing in their faith
 - This stage continues for life

3. **Best Practices** (20 minutes)

- Share the following best practices to follow when sharing the gospel with kids:
 - Understand your audience.
 - Mention that a child's attention span is 1 minute per year of age, but we are seeing that become even less.
 - Choose your words carefully.
 - Comment that we say biblical, religious, "churchy" words that may not make sense to a child who is new to the church. Also, some children get confused because we say things in many different ways, but it all means the same thing. For example, becoming a Christian, being saved, accepting Jesus, asking Jesus to be my Savior, asking Jesus into my heart, and born again all mean the same thing.
 - Direct conferees to look under their chairs for some "churchy" words and definitions (Item 1). Lead those with a card to read their card aloud using the magnifying glass and lead the group to help them match their definitions to the words on the wall.
 - Talk with each child individually.
 - Avoid giving a time of response in a large group. If the gospel is presented during large group time, make sure to have time for a child to individually respond. An example of this would be for the gospel to be presented during the Worship Rally but the Response Card to be given to each child in the Bible Study time. If you are sharing the gospel in a small-group setting like Bible Study, continue to allow the children to have individual response time.
 - Be visible. Meet with a child in an area that would have low distractions but would also be very visible to others for safety and security concerns.
 - Be conversational. Sit next to the child. Avoid standing over them. Introduce yourself and ask them about themselves. Get to know the child.
 - Recruit and train a team to help counsel children so that every child has a chance to respond. Provide the actual Bible and Gospel Guide for them to use.
 - Ask open-ended questions. These are questions that require a child to share what they know or how they feel. Examples of open-ended questions: Who is Jesus? What is sin? What is a Christian? Why do you want to become a Christian? How long have you wanted to become a Christian? What made you think about becoming a Christian?

- Utilize the Bible and an age-appropriate witnessing tool. A child can read the verse from the Bible and then you can use the witnessing tool to explain the gospel to the child.
4. **Sharing the Gospel** (10 minutes)
- Distribute the *VBS 2025 Gospel Guide* to each conferee. Ask conferees to follow along as you discuss the resource.
 - Offer the following tips:
 - Give the child time to ask questions. Ask them how they feel about what you just shared with them.
 - If you discern that the child is ready, let the child pray in their own words.
 - If you discern that the child is not ready, encourage them that they are taking steps toward God and that He is working in their life. Avoid pressuring the child to make a decision.
5. **Celebrate** (3 minutes)
- After a child has made a decision to follow Christ, celebrate with them but be cautious about giving rewards.
 - Encourage them to tell the VBS teacher, their parent, and/or a friend.
 - Allow the child to respond in a way that is comfortable for them. Children may or may not be emotional about the decision.
 - Involve parents/guardians. Make sure that the parent is notified of the decision in a timely manner. This may give an opportunity to share the gospel with them too.
6. **Effective Discipleship Resources** (5 minutes)
- Remind conferees of the importance of discipling kids after making the decision to follow Jesus. Kids (and often their parents too) will need guidance in taking the next steps in their spiritual journey.
 - Offer the following as excellent resources:
 - *I'm a Christian Now! Leader Kit* (9781535935791)
 - *VBS 2025 Magnified Devotional* (9798384521938)
 - *I'm a Christian Now: Growing in My Faith* (9781462740987)
 - *I'm a Christian Now: The Life of Jesus* (9781535935784)
 - *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me* (9781430066965)
 - Dismiss in prayer, asking God to move in the lives of children this summer.

Sin

Actions, attitudes, words, or thoughts that do not please God.

Admit

To own up to or agree.
A person must realize that he is a sinner before he can receive Jesus.

Believe

To know and trust that something is true

Confess

To tell about faith in Jesus as his Savior and Lord

Repent

To turn or change from disobeying God to obeying Him

Jesus

God's One and Only Son

Savior

Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for our sin so that He could be this for us.

Holy Spirit

Helps people understand and trust God's plan of salvation

Christian

Name given to people who confessed Jesus as the Savior and Lord

Baptism

When a Christian is lowered into the water to show others that he has confessed Jesus as Savior

Lord

God, the one in charge

Disciple

Follower of Jesus

Saved

Rescued from our sin and delivered from eternal separation from God

Born Again

Given new life into God's family