

VBS 2025 STUDENT & ADULT CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute plan is designed to prepare, train, and equip church leaders to conduct Lifeway's Magnified!™ VBS for students and adults.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2025 Student Starter Kit* (005849629) — Display the following items on the focal wall.
 - Student Kit Item 1: Promotional Poster
 - Student Kit Item 2: VBS Scripture Poster
 - Student Kit Item 3: Session 1 Poster
 - Student Kit Item 6: Session 2 Poster
 - Student Kit Item 9: Session 3 Poster
 - Student Kit Item 13: Session 4 Poster
 - Student Kit Item 14: Sharing the Gospel with Students
 - Student Kit Item 15: Session 5 Poster
- *VBS 2025 Adult Starter Kit* (005849623) — Display the following items on the focal wall.
 - Adult Kit Item 2: VBS Theme Verse Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 3: Motto Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 4: Gospel Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 5: Session 1 Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 6: Session 2 Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 7: Session 3 Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 8: Session 4 Poster
 - Adult Kit Item 9: Session 5 Poster
- *VBS 2025 Administrative Guide* (005850180)
- *VBS 2025 Decorating Made Easy* (005850181)
- (2) *VBS 2025 Tablecloths* (005850169)
- *VBS 2025 Recreation Rotation Leader Cards* (005850081) (Rec Card 10)
- *VBS 2025 Visual Pack* (005850170)
- OPTIONAL: *VBS 2025 Supersized Backdrop* (005850086) OR *VBS 2025 Super Duper Sized Backdrop* (005850087) (depending on room size)
- *VBS 2025 Whirleys* (005850176)
- *VBS 2025 String Flags* (005850175)
- *VBS 2025 Floor Prints* (005850174)
- *VBS 2025 Music for Kids CD* (005850227)
- *VBS 2025 Inflatable Acorns* (005850883) (Option: Toss an acorn to those who answer questions or wish to speak, like a “talking stick.”)
- Printable items from digital downloads — Follow the instructions in the leader guides to redeem the code and access the digital downloads. Print all items (from both Student and Adult), place in a binder, and display.
 - *VBS 2025 Clip Art “Oak Leaf”* (Adult printables) — Print and cut out five leaves with one word each: *Prepare, Plan, Gather, Teach, Continue*. As conferees enter, distribute these to select people to use later in the session.
- *CSB Explorer Bible for Kids* (005836549)
- 3 small colorful buckets — Use these to put posters and all of the guides in for display.
- 2 display stands — Use these to prop up each Starter Kit for display.
- CD player with speaker

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Room Setup

Hang posters and kit items on a focal wall (use surrounding walls if room is smaller). Place a TV or projector screen centered on the focal wall. Cover two tables with *VBS 2025 Tablecloths* and place on each side of the TV or projector screen. Use display stands (or another creative item) to prop up items for the Starter Kits for display. Optional: Hang the *VBS 2025 Whirleys* around the ceiling and other items from the *VBS 2025 Decorating Made Easy Guide* to create the atmosphere for this year's theme. Arrange chairs in a semi-circle with enough room between the chairs and tables to play games and move around.

Teaching Steps

1. Let's Get Started + Learn the Motto (5 minutes)

- Play songs from the *VBS 2025 Music for Kids CD* as conferees arrive.
- Introduce yourself to the conferees and make them feel welcome.
- Say: "I have some good news for you! Are you ready? We were made to magnify God! As a matter of fact, let's say it together. Ready?" Lead the group to repeat: "We were made to magnify God!" Do this again to prompt a louder response if needed.
- Continue: "That's right! From the tiniest ant to the tallest redwood tree, all were made to magnify our amazing God—including you and me! During *Magnified!*, we will 'zoom in' on some of the most wonderful qualities of our amazing God and take a close look at how He demonstrates His love for us!"
- Teach the motto (Made to Magnify God) with a call and response.
 - Lead conferees on the left side of the room to say, "Made to ..."
 - Lead conferees on the right side of the room to say, "... magnify God."
 - Use your left and right hands to signal who should be speaking their part of the motto.
 - Encourage the conferees to be as loud as they can be.
- Say: "One of my favorite parts of a Lifeway VBS is that it can be for all ages and stages of life—including our teenagers and grown-ups! This will be an amazing tool to bring families together and unite churches as we teach biblically foundational truth to our kids, teenagers, and adults. Now before we get any further, let's find out who is serving where."
- Ask conferees which area they are serving in. Guide them to make binoculars with their hands if they are serving with students. If they are leading adults, lead them to stand up and flap their wings like butterflies. If they are doing both, encourage them to attempt both.

2. Set the Stage (5 minutes)

- Explain that you will be exploring some tips to help make this one of the greatest weeks of the year for students and adults.
- Say: "Your role at VBS—no matter what age you teach—is vital and important. God has led you to this point, and He will use you for that week to reach this often-overlooked area of VBS."
- Invite volunteers to bring their oak leaves to the front and read the words printed on them: *prepare, plan, gather, teach, continue*.
- Ask the conferees if they are ready to begin the planning and preparation for one of the greatest weeks of the year. Let's go!

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3. Ask “Why, How, and What?” (10 minutes)

- Ask: “Now before we get too far, we must envision why we do what we do: Why have a Student or Adult VBS?” Wait for responses. Share the following if not mentioned:
 - Reach the unreached in your surrounding neighborhoods and cities.
 - Continue discipleship for those in your church.
 - Provide another opportunity for community and connecting.
 - Offer a united study across all age groups.
- Say: “By offering a VBS to non-traditional ages from what we typically associate it with, you can offer this as one more tool or one more opportunity to connect with that teenager or adult in your church or community to let them see His love for them. Whether it’s the truth-seeking teenager or the anxiety-filled mom or dad, your church has a place for them during this VBS! You can show them how wonderful God’s love is for us and that forgiveness and rest is found in Him!”
- Ask: “So what do you think a Student or Adult VBS looks like?” Wait for responses. Share the following if not mentioned:
 - Same week and time as traditional VBS.
 - Student event such as a retreat or conference.
 - Once a week as a midweek option or Sunday night service.
 - Parenting seminar over a weekend.
 - In a housing area or neighborhood using Backyard Kids Club or Go & Tell materials.
- Explain that choosing a method to host a VBS for students or adults is dependent on knowing your community. Know the community rhythms and pick a time that will work best with the community calendars. Say: “There is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to this. There are additional tips to consider scheduling in the *VBS 2025 Adult Leader Guide* (page 5).”

4. Prepare your Heart (5 minutes)

- Prepare in the Word.
 - Guide conferees repeat after you, “Prepare your heart.”
 - Call attention to the *VBS 2025 Theme Verse Poster* (*VBS 2025 Visual Pack* or *VBS 2025 Student Kit* Item 2) and guide the conferees to read it aloud with you.
 - Let them know that we must put the “B” (Bible) in VBS first and begin with God’s Word. To zoom in on God, we need the best tool of all: the Bible. (Hold up a Bible.) Say: “With this, we can truly proclaim His greatness and exalt His name together and forever! This is why we do VBS!”
 - Remind the conferees to read the Bible passages for each daily session so they can understand and pray over what God is saying.
- Prepare for God to lead.
 - Say: “We need to remember that this is not our VBS. This is the Lord’s VBS. Along this preparation journey, seek God often and ask Him for ideas, insights, and ways to reach and teach students and adults for the gospel.”
- Prepare by praying.
 - Let your conferees know to begin to pray over adults and students to attend your VBS. While they may drive themselves, many things can distract them along the way and excuses can be made. Pray specifically for the names of those you wish to come.
 - Encourage the conferees to pray over their volunteers by name and for those still needed to serve. Pray for their excitement and that they will be blessed by this week.

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5. **Plan** (10 minutes)

- Lead conferees to repeat after you, “Let’s plan it!”
- Say: “Everyone take a minute and look at the top of your index finger. From here, it looks as we see it every day but take a minute and hold it close to your face (move finger close to your eye). What do we see now? We see our fingerprints—the lines that swirl and provide uniqueness to you. As we prepare for VBS, we want to remember the details as this will help us plan and have a great VBS year. Lifeway has some amazing tools to help you in this planning journey.”
- Hold up the leader guides for both students and adults. Remind attendees that these are fantastic tools, so they need to get to know them well. This can help set the course for daily lessons, so it is crucial!
- Explain that these leader guides are REPRODUCIBLE and can be accessed in the digital resources provided by a unique code in each leader guide. These can be downloaded at my.lifeway.com/redeem. Along with the digital leader guides, you can find teacher aides and printable items to assist your leaders.
- Explain to the conferees that it is vastly important for them to know their audience. Each leader guide has some helpful tips for consideration for both students (page 5) and adults (page 4).
- Hold up a *VBS 2025 Student Learner Guide* and a *VBS 2025 Adult Learner Guide*. Say: “These Learner Guides are available to aid learners in engaging with the leader each day. Inside you will find a helpful note taking page, engaging biblical content, and a game or two to keep everyone on their toes.”

6. **Gather and Get Ready** (30 minutes)

- Direct conferees to repeat after you, “I’ll be ready!”
- Say: “First, we need to get to know our 2025 VBS Bible stories—and they are amazing! As you get ready from now to VBS, read one of the daily Bible passages each week and immerse yourself into the story. Be prepared to ask God, ‘What are You telling me here?’”
- Go over the daily Bible content with the conferees:
 - Day 1 or Week 1 — Magnify God
 - Bible Story: Jesus and the Children (*John 1:1-3,12; Mark 10:13-16*)
 - 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.
 - Today’s Point: God sees me.
 - Bonus Verse: But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name. (*John 1:12*)
 - Day 2 or Week 2 — Magnify God’s Care
 - Bible Story: Jesus Calmed the Storm (*Mark 4:1,35-41*)
 - 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.
 - Today’s Point: God cares about me.
 - Bonus Verse: He will not leave you or abandon you. Do not be afraid or discouraged (*Deuteronomy 31:8b*)
 - Day 3 or Week 3 — Magnify God’s Love
 - Bible Story: The Woman at the Well (*John 4:1-42*)

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- 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.
 - Today's Point: God loves me.
 - Bonus Verse: But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)
 - Day 4 or Week 4 — Magnify God's Forgiveness
 - Bible Story: Jesus and Nicodemus (*John 3:1-21; 18-20; 1 Corinthians 15:6*)
 - The Big Truth: Jesus came to save the world, and that includes me.
 - Zoom In: I can trust Jesus as my Savior.
 - Today's Point: God forgives me.
 - Bonus Verse: For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (*John 3:16*)
 - Day 5 or Week 5 — Magnify God's Faithfulness
 - Bible Story: Jesus Taught about Worry (*Matthew 6:25-34*)
 - 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.
 - Today's Point: God keeps His promises.
 - Bonus Verse: For the LORD is good, and his faithful love endures forever; his faithfulness, through all generations. (*Psalms 100:5*)
- Explain that it is crucial to know these Scriptures well and to spend time praying over the "The Big Truth" ideas for inspiration on how to highlight them well to our students and adults.
- Say: "Since we know what we are teaching, let's talk about some questions on HOW we can get ready to teach." Guide the conferees through the following questions.
 - How many students/adults will I have attending?
 - Where will my teaching space be? Is it big enough? Is it too big?
 - Is my schedule finalized?
 - Do I have a way to check participants in?
 - Do I have safety and security procedures in place? (Especially important if adults are attending in the same area as kids/minors.)
 - Do I have permission to change the room layout?
 - Can I hang things on the wall?
 - Do I need media or have a way to play music?
 - Do I have enough Bibles for everyone?
 - Are there supplies for me to use? Can I get more?
 - Am I ready (or have people who are ready) to share the gospel with students or adults?
- Say: "Thinking through these questions now can shrink the heartache and stress level later. It's so easy to miss details but know that is why we are here—to help you plan and prepare for this fantastic week!"
- Give the following tips to help both students and adults feel at home at your church during VBS:
 - Learn names. Everyone wants to feel known or seen. Make it goal to learn everyone's name as quickly as possible. Use name tags to help you connect faces to names.

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- Who else can help connect? It's important for you to make a connection to someone as the leader, but you shouldn't be the only one. Help build connections with other people in your church with similar interests to help them have more than just one connection to your church.
- Watch your language. Non-church people do not know churchy words. Be mindful of these words such as sanctification or repentance. Assume that some people do not know their meanings, so if you say them, follow up with a quick definition. Always give context and background as you teach so no one feels singled out when asking a question.
- Think about everyone. Not all students/adults are the same, so consider having extra space for larger individuals, having wheelchair accessible space. Having an interpreter for a language barrier or a "buddy" for those with a special need. Being willing to adapt to meet these needs will provide a welcoming experience right from the start.

7. Teach (10 minutes)

- Guide the conferees to repeat after you, "I'll teach it!"
- Direct participants to stand up, fist bump a person they are standing beside, and repeat what you say: "We can do this ... " (We can do this) "because our God is a BIG God" (Because our God is a BIG God).
- Encourage conferees to give the people around them a high five and sit down.
- Emphasize to the conferees that teaching should be treated seriously. Say: "We need to prepare well, know the material inside and out, and pray over it immensely, but it doesn't all have to be done in a serious manner."
- Form two teams and play the game "What's the Answer?" (Rec Card 10) according to the instructions on the card. Tip: Use the words *honey* and *dirt* as "answers."
- After playing, explain that every game can have a biblical application. In this case, Nicodemus asked Jesus questions about the kingdom of God. He could tell Jesus had the answer even if he didn't fully understand it. Jesus came to save the world, and that includes me and you! That is the best answer we could be given!
- Mention that one of the biggest things about teaching is to have fun and enjoy what you do. If you are not having fun, your audience will tune you out.
- Share these tips for teaching:
 - Relax — Don't be uptight in your teaching. When you are tense, your actions and responses will be rigid. Take a few minutes before you teach to pray and form a healthy habit that helps you clear your head.
 - Build relationships — One easy way to build connections to your audience is to build relationships. Spend time with them when you are not teaching. Ask them questions about what is going on in their lives or about their school or job. If you show you care about them, they will often be more intrigued about what you have to say.
 - Don't lecture — This is not a course just to talk about a subject. Ask questions to create conversation and navigate the discussion—like a good captain of a ship. When the conversation gets too off course, just steer them back in. Ask open-ended questions to allow a broader response. Be okay with silence when people do not respond right away, and don't answer your own question immediately.
 - Be flexible — Adjust your plans if anything changes. This will make the best experience possible for both you and your attendees.

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8. **Continue** (10 minutes)

- Guide conferees to repeat after you, “I’ll follow up!”
- Say: “Once VBS is over, you can take a breath, but the work is not yet over. One of the greatest parts of VBS is the friendships and relationships we make. It is often through these relationships that people will come to know Christ as Savior of their lives.”
- Remind conferees that follow up is “all hands on deck” for everyone involved with VBS. Everyone should be involved with cultivating relationships during VBS and keeping them afterwards.
- Emphasize that a good follow-up and communication plan is important and should be a part of the VBS planning process from the beginning. It should not be an afterthought as this is a key part of VBS.
- Share the following tips and invite conferees to share their own successful follow-up strategies:
 - Contact information — Ensure that your church has the correct contact information for each attendee at VBS. This can be ensured and verified in the registration process.
 - Appoint a follow-up team — You you will be tired after VBS, so recruit people who can follow up with those who attended. It will help to have a fresh team ready to go once the “VBS tired” sets in.
 - Use those connections — Try to connect people to others in your church with a mutual or common interest. Encourage those other members of your church to follow up and reach out to visitors and invite them back to church or out to lunch or for coffee.
 - Host a VBS Sunday — Invite everyone who came to VBS back to church on the next Sunday. Alter programming to welcome guests back and include some special activities that could include a meal or have some parts of VBS during the worship service. This can help people transition from a much higher sensory week and ease them into Sunday mornings.
 - Plan an event shortly after VBS — Plan an event within a month or so after VBS to connect people back to your church or invite them into your ongoing calendar. This may be a men’s/women’s gathering or a special family night for young families. Make sure they are invited through multiple channels.
 - Social media — So many adults and students are on social media. Seek them out and connect with them there. For students, seek permission from your church student group to connect with them through social media.
- Encourage conferees to not lose heart during follow up. Even if participants do not come back, you planted a seed. Pray for that seed to take root and for continued connections to be made for the sake of another opportunity share the gospel.

9. **Closing** (5 minutes)

- Invite conferees to share one thing they plan to do as a result of this conference.
- Thank everyone for attending and show appreciation for their time and attention.
- End by inviting everyone to pray silently for one minute over their VBS. This could be over names of people they want to come, their volunteers, and their worries or concerns.
- Close by praying aloud for conferees and their Vacation Bible Schools.