

VBS 2026 GRADES 1–6 MUSIC ROTATION CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This 90-minute conference plan is designed to train and equip VBS leaders to conduct Lifeway's Illumination Station™ music rotation for 1st–6th graders. NOTE: To accommodate shorter or longer conference times, this plan can be adjusted by giving more or less time to motion instruction for each song.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2026 Music Rotation Leader Guide* (005853425)
- *VBS 2026 Music Book* (005853430)
- *VBS 2026 Worship Rally Pack* (005853494) (which includes the *VBS 2026 Worship Rally Guide*, *VBS 2026 Music CD Set*, and *VBS 2026 Media Set*)
- *VBS 2026 Music for Kids CD* (005853488)
- *VBS 2026 Bookmarks* (pkg. of 50) (005853583)
- TV/DVD player and screen or chosen method for projecting the videos
- Handheld mirrors (1 for each group of 5–6 people or several to share)
- Room decoration suggestions: *VBS 2026 Supersized Backdrop* (005853613), *VBS 2026 Tablecloths* (005853575), *VBS 2026 String Flags* (005853579), mirror balls

Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semicircle. Cover the focal wall with a *VBS 2026 Supersized Backdrop*. Cover a table with a *VBS 2026 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum. Drape *VBS 2026 String Flags* across the doorway.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome (10 minutes)

- Play VBS music from the *VBS 2026 Music for Kids CD* or audio files as conferees arrive.
- Introduce yourself and welcome participants to the Mirror Ball Music Rotation Conference.
- Ask conferees how many of them have been to a concert and held up the flashlight on their phones during a song. Ask those who have a flashlight on their phones to turn it on and hold it up. (Encourage those who don't have one to give a thumbs-up.) Direct them to lower their phones. Explain that churches all over the world use a variety of methods to provide audio and video music at VBS. Ask participants to hold their lights (or thumbs) up for any and all of the following methods they use in their VBS settings:
 - CD for audio music
 - DVD for video music
 - A piano player
 - A praise band
 - A praise band with accompanying music tracks
 - Acapella
 - Other methods (be sure and ask what those methods are)
- Remind conferees to turn off their flashlights. Explain that the wonderful thing is that all these ways work and are great!
- Share a few spotlight tips. (Show each product as it is described.)

- Lead sheets (melody line only and lyrics) are found in the Worship Rally Guide as well as the Music Rotation Leader Guide.
- Full sheet music and guitar charts are available only in the *VBS 2026 Music Book*. Explain that this is also the resource needed to do a VBS musical as a VBS kickoff, family night, or follow-up event.
- A little-known resource offered by Lifeway's VBS is an online-only product called Music Stem Mixes (005853754). Churches who have some instrumentalists but need to add a percussion line, more guitar, etc., can purchase this as a digital download and add in as much or as little of each individual vocal and instrumental part as desired.
- The *VBS 2026 Music CD Set* offers audio files in 3 formats: stereo (full mix), split track, and instrumental. All the VBS songs are available for whatever needs you have. This 2-disc set contains all the Grades 1–6 VBS songs on disc 1 and all the preschool VBS songs on disc 2.
- The *VBS 2026 Media Set* is also a 2-disc set. Disc 1 is for use with a DVD player and includes the daily drama videos, Grades 1–6 lyric videos, Grades 1–6 choreography videos, a Gospel Presentation video, and a video trailer. Disc 2 has downloadable HD video files (mp4), PowerPoint® presentations, downloadable graphics designed for incorporation into presentation software, editable Worship Rally and VBS Musical scripts, overhead cel masters, and a font list.
- **NOTE:** Each year, many well-intentioned individuals post videos to YouTube, which violates federal copyright laws. This is illegal and not permissible under federal law. Please only use the files you get from Lifeway for church and classroom use. And please refrain from publicly posting or sharing VBS music (audio) and music videos online.
- **HOWEVER,** there are legal ways to share the VBS music with families! In addition to the *VBS 2026 Music for Kids* and *VBS 2026 Music for Preschoolers* CDs that can be distributed to families, you can also share with families where to find the VBS songs on streaming platforms. A printable handout for families can be found in the *Administrative Guide* redemption files in the "Directors Helps" folder and in the *Backyard Directors Guide* redemption files in the "Plan and Prepare" folder. A QR code for the streaming links is also available in the kids Bible study leader guides.
- What if my church wants to livestream our VBS Celebration or use VBS songs during our livestreamed worship services? Good news! You can do that! Consult the "Streaming Guidelines" document, which can be found in multiple places: the *Administrative Guide*, the *Administrative Guide* redemption files in the "Directors Helps" folder, the *Backyard Directors Guide* redemption files in the "Plan and Prepare" folder, the *Worship Rally Guide*, the *Media Set*, the *Kids Music Rotation Leader Guide*, and the *Music Book*. (Open one of the books to the streaming guidelines or hold up a copy printed from one of the redemption files.)
- Say: "Whew! That's a lot of tips, but I wanted to be sure you weren't in the dark! I think it's time to light up Illumination Station!"

2. "Illumination Station" Theme Song (8 minutes)

- Teach the motions, one section at a time.
- Practice any tricky spots until the group can do them well.
- Play the song and lead the group to do the motions.

3. Day 1 – Activity (6 minutes)

- Form groups of five to six people. Give each group a handheld mirror. Direct each group to pass the mirror around their group while the music plays. When the music stops, the person holding the mirror will look in the mirror and say, "My name is _____. The Messiah's name is Jesus."
- Play "God's Promised Son," pausing at random times to allow several to respond. (OPTION: If your group is large, start mirrors at the ends of a few rows and direct the conferees to pass the mirrors up and down the rows. When the music stops, allow each person holding a mirror to respond.)
- Collect the mirrors and emphasize that the purpose of VBS 2026 is to shine a light on who Jesus really is. Guide the group to say, "JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD!"
- Remind leaders that every moment of VBS is a Bible-teaching moment. Music is a particularly useful way to lock in biblical truths. Explain that the activity they just did is based on an activity from Day 1 of the Music Rotation Leader Guide.
- Say: "In today's Bible story Jesus asked His disciples who people said He is. The kids in your VBS may think Jesus is just a word people say when they are frustrated, or some may think He was a person like any other person. This week we have the blessed opportunity to help kids know who Jesus truly is. The Day 1 focus is on Jesus, God's promised Son."
- Point out the following lyrics that focus on Jesus:
 - Jesus is God's promised Son
 - (He is) light and life for everyone who believes
- Share that the name of the Day 1 song is, "God's Promised Son."

4. Day 1 – Song "God's Promised Son" (8 minutes)

- Teach the motions.
- Lead the group to perform the motions with the music.

5. Day 2 – Activity (6 minutes)

- Ask for a volunteer to share what today's Bible story was about in just 2 or 3 sentences. (Or read the Bible story recap from page 8 in the Music Rotation Leader Guide.)
- Challenge conferees to form groups of three or four. Explain that you will play music for a few seconds. When the music stops, everyone in the group should freeze in a pose depicting something from the Bible story. Choose one group and lead everyone else to guess what the poses represent from the story.
- Repeat the game 2 or 3 times, then ask everyone to be seated. Explain that this activity is similar to a game from Day 2 in the Music Rotation Leader Guide.
- Say: "Jesus is God's Son and He always obeyed the Father. Jesus is the perfect Son of God."
- Ask conferees to share what they think it means that Jesus is the Light of the world.
- Explain that, because Jesus is God's perfect Son, He sheds light on sin and provides the way for us to have forgiveness and a relationship with God the Father.
- Introduce the song, "Perfect." Ask for volunteers to point out lyrics in the song that describe Jesus. (*He did things no one else can, not just an ordinary man, God's plan, the Light of the world, sinless Son of God, perfect*)

6. Day 2 – Song “Perfect” (8 minutes)

- Teach the motions.
- Lead the group to perform the motions with the music.

7. Day 3 – Activity (6 minutes)

- Remind conferees that VBS can be the first time a child hears about Jesus and who He really is. The Holy Spirit can use any moment to speak to a child's heart about his or her need for a Savior. We have heard about a child trusting Jesus as Savior during snacks! That's why EVERY VBS leader needs to be prepared to share the gospel with a kid (or a student or adult!) at any time.
- Ask conferees to share how their church equips leaders to share the gospel and what follow-up steps their church has established.
- Point out that a gospel presentation is found on the inside front cover of every leader guide. (If available, briefly display other gospel presentation products.)
- Give each conferee a *VBS 2026 Bookmark*. Call attention to the simple gospel outline printed on the back. This is an easy item to tuck in a pocket or a Bible.
- Explain that the Day 3 song, “Shine,” also helps kids remember how they can respond to the gospel.

8. Day 3 – Song “Shine” (8 minutes)

- Teach the motions.
- Lead the group to perform the motions with the music.

9. Day 4 – Activity (6 minutes)

- Remind conferees that on Day 3 kids were introduced to the gospel and how to respond when they understood their need for a Savior.
- Explain that on Day 4 kids will be given a closer look at who Jesus is and why He came. They will focus on how Jesus is the true Light of the world and the proven Son of God.
- Direct conferees to stand and “mirror” the motions you do. Perform the following motions without saying anything:
 - Stretch arms out straight on both sides.
 - Roll hands forward.
 - ASL for *Jesus*.
 - ASL for *love*.
 - Reach hands above head and twinkle fingers.
- Congratulate conferees on doing a good job with the motions! Direct them to sit.
- Explain that, if they truly “mirrored” you, they used their right hands when you used your left and vice versa. The truth is, with VBS choreography, it doesn't matter.
- Explain that the first two motions (cross and rolling hands) were simple reminders of the Bible story (the cross where Jesus died and the rolling away of the stone).
- Explain that the next two motions were sign language. *Jesus* can be performed in either direction as long as it is consistent for the signer. *Love* is the same also since it is not a directional sign.
- Explain that the twinkle fingers are part of the song choreography. (And just fun!)
- Reinforce the truth that “performance perfection” is not the goal of VBS music rotation. The goal is ensuring that kids understand the biblical truth and associate it with the joy of participating in an environment that is encouraging and loving!
- However, to have some consistency, remember this tip: The “instruction video” by a single leader is provided for the leader to practice and mirror in order to learn it

“backwards.” The “demonstration video” with a group of kids is provided if desired for kids to watch and mirror so they can perform as written. Again, IT IS OK whichever direction they go, as long as they are having fun and learning about Jesus.

10. Day 4 – Song “Bright” (8 minutes)

- Invite one volunteer to read verse one of “Bright” and another volunteer to read verse two. Challenge conferees to remember a time when Jesus left them “speechless and amazed” as they sing “Bright.”
- Teach the motions.
- Lead the group to perform the motions with the music.

11. Day 5 – Activity (6 minutes)

- Show page 20 in the Music Rotation Leader Guide and remind conferees that the first page of each day provides a snapshot for music leaders to help them know what kids are learning that day of VBS. While many churches choose not to use all the songs or even choose to use them in a different order (and they have the right to do that), the songs are written with prayer and intentionality to focus and emphasize that day's biblical truth.
- Read (or invite a volunteer) to read the Bible Story Recap on page 20. Point out that the word *repent* is a key word in today's biblical truth. Salvation involves repentance by us and forgiveness from Jesus.
- Since repentance involves turning away from self and sin and toward Jesus, guide conferees to do a short about-face marching exercise. Direct conferees to stand and turn to their right. Everyone will march in place while you play “Forgiveness in You.” When you say, “About-face!” they will turn, facing the opposite direction, and keep marching.
- Play “Forgiveness in You,” calling “about-face” about every two measures (or as you feel the rhythm). You can stop after the first verse or at whatever point you choose.
- Allow the group to take a few seconds to catch their breath and invite volunteers to point out favorite lyrics in this song before teaching the choreography for “Forgiveness in You.”

12. Day 5 – Song “Forgiveness in You” (8 minutes)

- Teach the motions.
- Lead the group to perform the motions with the music.

13. Closing (2 minutes)

- Remind conferees that music can have one of the greatest lasting impacts on a child. Kids remember words set to music. The lyrics and biblical truths taught during VBS will live in the hearts and minds of the kids long after VBS.
- Answer any questions.
- Guide conferees to grab their cell phones one more time and take a selfie with one or two people standing nearby. Share names, training event dates, and VBS dates. Encourage participants to pray for those friends when their photos “light up” on their phones.
- Close in prayer. Pray for the participants in your conference, their VBS, and the kids who will spend a week learning about Jesus, the Light of the world.