

## VBS 2026 RECREATION AND SNACK ROTATIONS BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (1½ HOURS)

### Purpose Statement

This 90-minute conference is designed to train and equip VBS leaders to effectively lead the recreation and snack rotations for Illumination Station VBS!

### Needed Resources

- *VBS 2026 Recreation Rotation Leader Cards* (005853426)
- *VBS 2026 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards* (005853427)
- *VBS 2026 Visual Pack* (005853615)
- *VBS 2026 Wall Art* (005853616)
- *VBS 2026 Whirleys* (005853580)
- *VBS 2026 String Flags* (005853579)
- *VBS 2026 Large Neon Sign Inflatable* (005853775)
- *VBS 2026 Glitter Beach Balls* (005853774)
- *VBS 2026 Rotation Signs* (005853618)
- *VBS 2026 Floor Prints* (005853578)
- *VBS 2026 Supersized Backdrop* (005853613)
- *VBS 2026 Cups* (005853562)
- *VBS 2026 Tablecloths* (005853575)
- *VBS 2026 Music for Kids* (005853747 or 005853488)
- Item 1: “Handout” — Copy 1 per conferee.
- Snack supplies and kitchen tools to make samples of the five Bible-related snacks in the *VBS 2026 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards*
- 8 orange cones
- Glow sticks (2 matching sets of 4 colors)
- (12) Neon plastic cups (6 of same color for both teams)
- (12) Tennis balls (6 balls for each team)
- Neon painter’s tape
- (4) 8-ounce water bottles (about half-full)
- Glow-in-the-dark paint, tape, or mini glow sticks (optional) — Consider adding to the 8-ounce water bottles to make them glow in the dark.
- 1 sheet of black poster board
- Painter’s tape
- 40 ball pit balls (20 of each color, one color per team)
- 3 buckets
- Scissors
- CD Player or Bluetooth speaker

### Room Setup

Arrange chairs in a semi-circle with an open center for playing games. Preset game supplies in the open area of the room for easy access as well as to serve as decorations. Hang the *VBS 2026 String Flags* across the ceiling and the *VBS 2026 Whirleys* from the door frame. Place the *VBS 2026 Tablecloths* over two tables against the focal wall to display any additional game supplies, as well as snack ingredients and samples. Position the *VBS 2026 Large Neon Sign* over the display table. Place the *VBS 2026 Floor Prints* at the doorway leading to the chairs in the room. If wall space allows, hang the *VBS 2026 Visual Pack* on a focal wall to reference throughout the session.

## Teaching Steps

### 1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Play Illumination Station music as conferees arrive.
- Welcome guests to Suncatcher Recreation and Neon Snacks.
- Say: “Today we will have fun discovering VBS 2026 Recreation and Snacks to see that these rotations can be a catalyst to reveal who Jesus really is during Illumination Station!”
- Remind conferees that while rec and snack are often some of the highlights of VBS for kids, and maybe some adults too, that it’s not just a time filler to get energy out, but an intentional time to share the gospel in a creative and tasty way!
- Ask conferees which rotation they will be leading and for volunteers to share their favorite VBS recreation or snack memory.

### 2. Suncatcher Recreation (25 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and explain that recreation area this year is called “Suncatcher Recreation.”
- Say: “Today, we will play some of the games found on the *VBS 2026 Recreation Rotation Leader Cards* to give you a small sample of the fun games kids will experience at VBS.”
- Explain that there are three different types of games: Bible Story games, water games, and tabletop games. Mention that the recreation cards include everything leaders need to know for the game, how to connect it to the Bible story, the supply list, preparation and setup, instructions, tips to help each game flow well, as well as additional options for variations.
- Say: “Let’s go over the different types of games offered in the rec cards.”
  - **Bible Story Games:** Share with conferees that for each day of VBS, there are three Bible Story game options. Show an example of a *VBS 2026 Recreation Rotation Leader Card* and point to the column on the left to highlight the Bible Story, Theme Verse, Spotlight Question, Today’s Point, and Bonus Verse.
    - Play Day 1 “Capture the Glow Stick” (Rec Card 1).
      - Choose six volunteers to form two teams. Read the instructions aloud from the card, then play the game.
      - If time allows, repeat the game for another round.
      - Once finished, read the left column on the card and ask conferees what the connection is to the biblical truth that day.
      - Share with conferees the Bible/Life application from the rec card.
    - Play Day 3 “Flipping Frenzy” (Rec Card 8).
      - Choose four volunteers and give each volunteer a water bottle.
      - Invite them to the middle of the open area. Read the instructions from the Rec Card.
      - If possible, dim the lights to make the bottles glow.
      - Explain that on “Go”, you will start a two-minute timer and players should begin trying to flip their water bottles upright.
      - The first volunteer who flips his bottle successfully wins!
      - Again, point to the column on the left and remind conferees of the Bible content and the importance of always making that connection.
  - **Water Games:** Explain that the rec cards include four water game options provided on cards 16–19. The water games are designed to be played outside

and are not tied to a specific day or Bible story, so they can be supplemental throughout the week or played when desired.

- NOTE: Since most conferences are held indoors, it is difficult to play a water game. However, encourage conferees to review the water game options and encourage them to include one in their VBS, or maybe during Family Night.
- Remind conferees that the water games include allergy alerts due to the latex in water balloons.
- **Tabletop Games:** Share that the Rec Cards include six tabletop games that require minimal space, are low prep, and can be played almost anywhere.
  - Say: “The tabletop games are on cards 20–22 front and back.”
  - Play “Black Hole Roll” (Rec Card 21).
    - Show conferees the supplies required and how to set up the game.
    - Give instructions for the game and ask for six volunteers, three players for each team.
    - On “Go,” the game will begin and will end when the first team gets five points.
  - Briefly go over the other tabletop games that weren’t played.
  - Ask conferees if they have any questions about the games so far and how they might modify the games for a smaller or larger group.

### 3. Recreation FAQs (10 minutes)

- Go over the “What ifs” of Recreation. Draw special attention to the Recreation FAQ card and ask conferees the following questions and how they would adapt as a recreation leader:
  - What if I have a small group of kids?
  - What if I have a lot of kids in my rec time?
  - What if my group is all younger kids?
  - What if all my kids are older?
  - What if some of my kids have limited mobility?
  - What if my rec is outside/in a place I can’t dim the lights?
- Share that these questions are all answered on the cards and have helpful suggestions to accommodate various situations, needs, and contexts. Review some of these answers as time allows.

### 4. Rec Time Is Teaching Time (10 minutes)

- Say: “Everything we do at VBS is a teaching opportunity, and that includes rec and snack. Every VBS leader may not be a Bible Story rotation teacher, but every VBS leader is a teacher. “
- Help conferees understand that recreation is about much more than games, it’s a gospel opportunity.
- Mention that in the rec and snack cards, the second card includes a Sharing the Gospel with Kids card to use as a guide for sharing the gospel.
- Remind conferees that the most important element of these two rotations aren’t the games or snacks themselves but using them as a conduit to point to the daily Bible content.
- Share with conferees the importance of being familiar with the daily Bible content at VBS.

- Say: “Sometimes leaders skip the Bible content during recreation to give more play time. They may think ‘The kids have already learned it during Worship Rally or their Bible study time.’ While the play time is important and fun, repetition is key for helping commit the biblical truths to memory. So is experiencing the truths in different ways for different learning styles.”
- Say: Let’s put this into practice by playing a Day 2 Bible Story Game, “Twinkling Tic Tac Toe (Rec Card 6).
- Read the instructions aloud and ask for two volunteers to play the game.
- Share the Bible Story name and the Spotlight Question and Answer. Ask the conferees if they can see the connection from the game to the daily Bible content and Spotlight Question. Refer conferees to the Bible/Life Application Debrief on Rec card 4 if they need help.
- Call attention to the “Rec Time Is Teaching Time” card and highlight other helpful tips.

#### 5. Recreation Tips (10 minutes)

- Remind conferees that these tips help maximize the fun and effectiveness at recreation.
- Say: “Keep some of these tips in mind as you help everyone enjoy a fun, successful recreation time:”
  - Be prepared.
    - Review the daily Bible story and Today’s Point
    - Recruit helpers for setup, cleanup, and additional supervision.
    - Practice the games ahead of time. Make tweaks to your plans as necessary.
    - Be sure to gather and organize supplies ahead of time.
    - Talk to your VBS director to know how many kids to plan for.
    - Always have an extra game or activity ready as a Plan B should you need it.
  - Keep rules simple and short.
    - Kids will be excited and more interested in the game than the instructions for the game. Make the rules simple, short, and clear so that all ages can understand quickly.
  - Interact with the kids.
    - Recruit enough help so that you have the margin to be actively involved with each game.
    - Break up adult huddles and encourage other adults to participate.
    - Encourage the kids as they play.
    - Be on the lookout for the kids on the periphery who may be shy or disinterested and be intentional to be their buddy during rec.
  - Enforce rules for fairness.
    - Kids are competitive and if something isn’t fair across the board, they will tell you quickly.
  - Remind kids that winning and losing are opportunities to show good sportsmanship.
  - Address issues quickly and discreetly.
    - Never isolate or embarrass a child. Address any issues quickly but don’t make a spectacle of it.
  - Choose age-appropriate, space appropriate, and ability appropriate games.
    - Keep younger and older kids in mind as you plan.

- Be prepared for any children with health issues or disabilities who may need to participate in a different way or provide a game option that they can participate in.
- Design a “cooldown area.”
  - If a child gets too competitive or becomes angry, use this location as a place to rest.
  - Find an adult to sit with them to discuss the situation and allow them to return to the games when they are ready.
- Encourage kids to play their best and encourage one another.
  - Practice good sportsmanship.
- Remove sunglasses, get on their eye level, and direct attention away from distractions while making Today’s Point and debriefing the game.
- Use consequences when needed. Focus on positive reinforcement as much as possible.
- Change the game or activity before kids lose interest.
  - Be prepared to switch to the next game or activity. Also, if kids really enjoy a particular activity, don’t be afraid to continue it or play it again later in the week.
- Seek help from your VBS director, pastor, or children’s minister for help if difficult situations arise.
  - On occasion, heat, fatigue, stress, or anger can result in a hard situation that may require additional assistance.
- Pray. Ask God for wisdom as you plan and prepare, as well as for patience and guidance to deal with difficult situations.

#### 6. Neon Snacks (5 minutes)

- Ask conferees: “If you could only have one snack for the rest of your life, what would it be and why?”
- Explain that you are going to review the VBS 2026 snacks and how to make Neon Snacks a memorable and tasty experience for kids at Illumination Station!
- Show conferees the *VBS 2026 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards* and explain that the snack cards include snacks for both preschoolers and elementary age kids and that a purple icon denotes a preschool-friendly snack.
- Share with conferees that five of the cards contain the daily biblical content information. Say: “The front of each card tells the session title, Bible story summary, and the theme verse reference. Today’s Point is listed for both preschool and children. The back of each card contains a Kid Connection (conversation starter) and a Bible-related snack!”
- Explain to conferees that this set contains 20 theme recipes in addition to the 5 Bible-related snack ideas, as well as dinner menu suggestions for churches who provide meals at VBS.
- Briefly highlight snack leader responsibilities. Say: “Every rotation leader at VBS has responsibilities and it’s important for snack leaders to be well prepared, organized, and aware of special food requirements.”

#### 7. Bible-related Snacks (8 minutes)

- Refer to the snack samples on the table by the focal wall. Remind conferees of the Day 1 story and Today’s Point. Ask conferees if they can guess which snack on the table is the Day 1 snack. Once it has been guessed correctly, highlight the Day 1 snack, refer to the Day 1 snack card and share the ingredients and prep.

- Continue with each snack until all 5 days' snacks have been guessed. Be sure to connect each snack to the daily Bible content.
- Briefly share about the additional 20 themed recipes to choose from at VBS and how they can be used as part of a lunch or dinner and even Family Night.

#### **8. Snack Safety (3 minutes)**

- Say: "With the growing number of kids who have food allergies, it's vitally important to keep record of the number of kids who have food allergies and the names and classes they are in."
- Offer the following suggestions:
  - Include a place to list allergies on the registration form.
  - Provide the list of snacks that will be served on which day throughout the week so arrangements can be made for children with allergies. This may mean providing an allergy free snack or asking parents to provide an alternate snack.
  - Throughout the recipe cards, some snacks have been labeled as gluten free with a green icon. Always double-check ingredient labels before serving kids with gluten sensitivities or other allergies.
- Say: "Safety is the number one priority, and that includes food safety. One of the ways we can show families that we care deeply about their children is by taking safety seriously."

#### **9. Dinner Options (3 minutes)**

- Remind conferees that dinner options are provided in the snack recipe cards that can be utilized for lunch or dinner at VBS, volunteer training, or Family Night.
- Refer to the Dinner Options cards and share that the 10 options provided include many of the recipes from earlier in the cards.
- Say: "You likely aren't having 10 days/nights of VBS, but this list gives you plenty of fun and tasty options to choose from, whether your VBS is 2–3 days or a full week!"

#### **10. The Gospel Through Snacks (3 minutes)**

- Say: "One of the neat things about the snack rotation is how we can associate food with memory. With food, multiple senses are used: Sight, taste, and smell. The more senses we use in a learning environment, the easier it is for information to stick!"
- Remind conferees that is why it is vital to connect the daily snack to the daily Bible content.
- Encourage conferees not just to be prepared with their snacks, but with knowledge of the Bible stories and Today's Point and to be intentional to take the time to point kids from their tasty snacks to the gospel.
- Remind conferees that while we may not typically think of the snack rotation as the most prime gospel opportunity, we never know when the Holy Spirit is going to nudge a child's heart. Point out that we need to be ready to respond when the opportunity presents itself.

#### **11. Neon Snack Tips (5 minutes)**

- Remind conferees that the snack area is a classroom too! Suggest they decorate the snack area to reinforce the theme and refer to the "Decorating Ideas" card in the *VBS 2026 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards*.
- Offer the following helpful tips to make Neon Snacks one of the most memorable and successful rotations for leaders and kids alike:
  - Be prepared.

- Plan ahead and decide early what snacks you and your VBS director would like to serve at VBS.
- Know the number of kids and leaders you will be serving each day.
- Have the allergy checklist available and ensure that the allergy-friendly snacks are separated and in a designated area.
- Have some hand sanitizer or wet wipes available for hand washing if bathrooms are not nearby.
- Clean is good!
  - Be sure that those serving food are maintaining good hygiene with hand washing, pulled back hair, and/or gloves.
  - Clean supplies and equipment used each day after use. Use separate equipment for allergy-friendly snacks.
- Pray—Ask God's blessings over every napkin, plate, and snack that is served that represents a child at VBS. Pray that God would use Neon Snacks to shine a light on who Jesus really is!

**12. Closing** (3 minutes)

- Thank conferees for coming.
- Ask the conferees for questions or ideas regarding Suncatcher Recreation and Neon Snacks.
- Pray over the conferees that God would bless their planning and preparation and that lives of boys and girls would be changed for eternity through Illumination Station.

## Suncatcher Recreation

- **3 Types of Rec Games**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- **FAQs**

- What if \_\_\_\_\_?

- **Rec Time is \_\_\_\_\_ !**

- **Neon Recreation Tips**

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_
2. Keep rules \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ with the kids.
4. Enforce \_\_\_\_\_ for fairness
5. Remind kids that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are opportunities to show good sportsmanship.
6. Address issues \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Choose \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate, \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate, and \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate games.
8. Design a \_\_\_\_\_ area.
9. Encourage kids to \_\_\_\_\_ one another
10. Get on their \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Use \_\_\_\_\_ when needed.
12. Change the game before kids lose \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Seek \_\_\_\_\_ for difficult situations.
14. \_\_\_\_\_!

