

2017 VBS Planning Calendar



Start Date: _____

Format date as mmmm d, yyyy (i.e. June 17, 2017)

5-6 Months Before VBS

- _____ **Pray for VBS planning and recruitment.** Ask your Pastor to pray for VBS in worship regularly. Recruit a Prayer Coordinator and engage your church’s ongoing prayer support. Ask that volunteers, VBS leaders like yourself, and children who attend would be lifted in their prayers. Keep in touch with your prayer supporters and let them know the specific needs for your volunteers and VBS.

- _____ **Get to know the resources for *Mighty Fortress*.** Review the materials in your *Starter Kit*, the *CPH 2017 VBS Catalog*, or online at vbs.cph.org to understand how to use the materials. Plan any adaptations—this *Director Guide* provides suggestions!

- _____ **Start reading the *Director Guide*.** Read with a pen, a highlighter, and sticky notes to mark great ideas, highlight questions, jot down people who would be ideal for certain roles, and more! Next time you look at the *Director Guide*, you’ll say, “I’ve done more than I thought I had!”

- _____ **Start identifying and recruiting a Leadership Team.** These roles could include an Assistant Director, leaders for the sites, and a Secretary or Recruitment Coordinator. See editable job descriptions on *Director CD*.

- _____ **Learn from last year’s VBS.** Review notes and reports from previous planning groups. Talk to last year’s VBS leaders to get suggestions and insights.

- _____ **Attend a VBS workshop with other VBS leaders.** Find out if a local church or Christian bookstore sponsors VBS workshops. Plan to attend. Often there will be free stuff and chocolate!

- _____ **Write your VBS purpose statements and goals.** Talk to your Pastor about these. Give your Pastor the *Pastor’s Overview* and files in the “Pastor” folder on the *Director CD*.

- _____ **Choose dates; reserve space.** Add VBS dates to your church calendar, including all before- and after-VBS events. Make sure rooms and spaces are reserved.

- _____ **Plan and schedule other events,** such as pre-VBS events, volunteer training and appreciation, closing programs, and a follow-up celebration.

- **Set your budget.** Determine how your budget is set (from church line items, donations, a special offering, registration fees, fund-raisers, etc.). Set registration fees, if required, and plan fund-raisers.
- **Make initial plans for using your space.** Consider alternative spaces, if needed, including outdoor locations or local schools.
- **Announce VBS dates** in church publications.
- **Check out the Mission Brochure** to find out how you can get involved with local and international missions.

4-5 Months Before VBS

- **Check in with volunteers you already recruited.** Provide resources and assistance, as needed.
- **Plan before and after events for VBS.**
- **Inform your Pastor and church staff.** Keep them up to date on the progress and needs of VBS. Let them advocate for you and the program within the congregation. Ask them to be involved during the week of VBS so visitors can get to know them! Be sure to give your Pastor the *Pastor's Overview*.
- **Begin recruiting key volunteers,** including Site Leaders and a Decorating Committee.
- **Distribute materials to all leaders early** so they can plan and prepare ahead of time.
- **Develop a publicity plan with tasks and target dates.** Recruit a Publicity Coordinator, if you need one. See the job description on the *Director CD*.
- **Get Music resources** to people responsible for music.
- **Adopt recruitment strategies** that will draw children and families to your VBS. Send invitations to church children and previous VBS attendees.
- **Begin student registration.** Put registration and volunteer forms in church publications to begin preregistration. Explore and sign up for the free online registration at vbsmate.com.
- **Start registration lists.**

3-4 Months Before VBS

- **Plan your order for student resources** such as *Elementary* and *Early Childhood Leaflets*, *Collectibles*, *Team Identifiers*, and *Passalong CD and DVDs*. Don't forget the crafts and decorating items! Be an early bird and beat the rush in May and June!
- **Encourage volunteers.** Monitor progress of the various committees or individual volunteers regularly. Establish a regular time to check in either face-to-face or via email. Offer help. Remove roadblocks. Encourage support!
- **Check out CPHVBS on Facebook** for great ideas and encouragement.
- **Communicate!** Get the word out about VBS needs, opportunities, and information. Make a sign-up poster. Use the bulletin, newsletter, emails, Facebook, webpages, word of mouth, printed invitations, and announcements from the pulpit to get the word out. And don't forget to tell your Sunday School, Day School, Midweek, and Bible study classes.
- **Get help!** VBS is the church's ministry. Involving others creates support as more people understand the VBS mission. Ask for help and delegate. Spread the work around.
- **Plan volunteer training.** Order the *VBS Tote Bags* for your volunteers to use as supply bags during VBS and as a thank-you gift.
- **Check on the status of fund-raisers.** Find ideas at vbs.cph.org.

2-3 Months Before VBS

- **Order student books, crafts, and follow-up materials.** Order early to make sure you get what you need. Some items cannot be reordered if stock runs out. Order online or call our great customer service center!
- **Purchase *Passalong CD and DVDs* to hand out as kids register.** This gives them a jump on learning the songs.
- **Check in with volunteers and provide help, if needed.**
- **Continue student and volunteer recruitment and publicity efforts.**
- **Continue preregistration and list updates.** The online registration will download all the recruitment information into a spreadsheet! If needed, recruit additional volunteers.

- **Update your Pastor and church staff regularly** on the progress and needs of VBS so they can help, advise, and pray for you. Confirm the date and time of Volunteer Commissioning in the worship service and any places where they will be involved.
- **Begin gathering or purchasing local supplies.**
- **Make final space assignments.**
- **Decide how you will do walk-in registration and check-in at VBS. See your *Director Guide*.**

1-2 Months Before VBS

- **Check progress with your volunteers.**
- **Check preregistration lists.**
- **Order or purchase materials you still need.**
- **Conduct volunteering training.** Hand out resources. Share plans for all VBS events, including Volunteer Commissioning.
- **Review and update safety procedures and emergency plans.**
- **Relax and enjoy!** Take a look back and see all that has been accomplished by God's grace, mercy, and blessing! Praise and thank our mighty God! Lift up your needs to Him!

2-4 Weeks Before VBS

- **Check preregistration lists.** Order additional student materials and recruit additional volunteers as needed.
- **Finalize plans for volunteer appreciation.**
- **Finalize plans for VBS events** and follow-up plans with your Pastor and church staff.
- **Check the progress of site volunteers regularly.**

1-2 Weeks Before VBS

- **Acknowledge and pray for VBS volunteers** in a worship service. A Volunteer Commissioning is included on the *Director CD!*
- **Distribute supplies and equipment.**
- **Decorate and set up your space.**
- **Prepare lists, signs, welcome letters, and other materials for registration.** Set up the registration area. Use the table banner provided in the *Starter Kit*.
- **Make nametags for volunteers and kids.**
- **Check and replenish the first-aid kit.** Make sure safety and emergency plans are in place.
- **Relax and enjoy.** Plan how you will take time to enjoy the week and all that God is accomplishing through His Word and your efforts! God will bless your VBS!

During VBS

Do these things every day:

- **Pray, encourage, inform.** Gather staff before the daily openings to pray, make announcements, share needs, and hear concerns. Ask Site Teams to meet and check plans for the next day.
- **Make sure all volunteers have arrived.** Find substitutes or be ready to step in if needed. Some Directors recruit “floaters” to step in as substitutes and extra hands.
- **Welcome children and families.** Get plenty of volunteers to help with first-day registration, using the procedures described in the registration section of the *Director Guide*.
- **Check in with registration and address questions from volunteers and parents.** This is especially important the first couple of days at VBS!
- **Make sure all children are signed in and out** by their own parents or by people authorized by the parents.
- **Join Opening & Closing activities.** Get to know the children and their parents.
- **Send information home** about your program, Mission Project, and Closing Program.

- **Spread VBS joy!** Visit sites, greet families and children, and encourage volunteers.
- **Observe and guide volunteers.** Anticipate problems and preempt them. Provide guidance and advice for struggling leaders.
- **Check attendance.**
- **Collect offerings.**
- **Support volunteers.** Check in on sites to encourage leaders and children.
- **Thank volunteers.** Appreciative words, small gifts, notes, and prayer show volunteers your care for them. See your Director Guide for ideas.
- **Be available.** Leaders may need guidance and help with discipline and child control. Be ready and able to step in and assist or take the lead, if necessary. Have a support plan for yourself with a Pastor and with church leadership.
- **Coordinate health concerns.** Some children have allergies or special needs. Work with the Snack Leader and other leaders to accommodate the needs in a discreet and confidential way.
- **Put out fires.** Work with volunteers, parents, and church leaders to address their concerns and frustrations.
- **Make announcements.** Remind children of the mission offering and other information.
- **Tend to injuries.** Prepare a first-aid kit, keep it close at hand, and have emergency contact information recorded and easily accessible for all children and adults in your VBS. Have a list of local emergency numbers on hand. Keep important information on a clipboard to travel with you for easy reference.

Do these things sometime during the VBS week:

- **Prepare attendance Certificates and Volunteer Certificates** or gifts for volunteers to give on the last day or at the Closing Program. See the gift suggestions in the *Director Guide*. Certificates are in the folder on the *Director CD*.
- **Document.** Items to add to your clipboard for convenience include team assignments, room assignments, complete registration, emergency contacts, and the Lessons-at-a-Glance schedule. In addition, be sure to be prepared to collect and document supply requests, prayer requests, comments from volunteers/parents/ church workers, and general observations for improvement.

- **Distribute the *Passalong CD and DVDs*.** We recommend purchasing one per family to give out at registration or some other time during the week. This is the longest-lasting memento you can give your VBS families. Kids will sing these songs for years to come, and it may be the only connection unchurched children have to God's Word.
- **Invite parents and friends to a closing program.** Share photos of the week in a PowerPoint slide show. Sing favorite songs, recite Bible memory verses and Take-Home Points. Find an outline for a closing program correlating with PowerPoint slides on the *Director CD*. As you finalize closing-program plans, notify volunteers of any changes.
- **Invite children and families to follow-up activities.** Keep reaching attendees and newcomers with follow-up activities.
- **Give volunteers the CPH online survey.** Ask volunteers to fill out our survey (cph.org/vbsfeedback). We want to hear from you!
- **Help returning visitors feel at home.** Display the week's decorations, crafts, photos, and student projects for a few weeks after VBS. Members will enjoy seeing these too!

1-2 Weeks After VBS

- **Gather and store supplies;** return any borrowed items.
- **Evaluate your VBS.** Discuss successes and opportunities for improvement with your volunteers. Record all comments and ideas for use next year.
- **If written, send survey to Concordia Publishing House;** or remind volunteers to fill out surveys at cph.org/vbsfeedback or through VBSMate.
- **Make final report.** Include statistics on expenses, attendance, food, and supply amounts and cost, as well as ideas for improvements.
- **Finish notes for next year.** Insert publicity pieces, reports, and any other pertinent information in this workbook for next year's planners.
- **Continue communication.** Mail postcards or letters to children and families who attended and invite them to worship services, Sunday School, Midweek programs, and other church activities.
- **Share your VBS results** with your congregation, administrative boards, and church staff. Provide your pastor and evangelism committee with information about families who are interested in your church. Get started on your follow-up events and strategies.