

EPIC Australian Adventure

An Unforgettable Journey with Jesus

Director Guide



1



God Calls Moses

Exodus 3

Jesus calls us.

I have called you by name, you are Mine.

Isaiah 43:1

2



God Leads His People to the Promised Land

Joshua 3–4

Jesus leads us.

The LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

Joshua 1:9

3



The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25–37

Jesus teaches us.

We love because He first loved us.

1 John 4:19

4



Peter and John Race to the Tomb

John 20:1–10, 19–20

Jesus saves us.

Jesus said . . . , “I am the resurrection and the life.”

John 11:25

5



Jesus Ascends to the Father

Luke 24:44–53; Acts 1:1–11

Jesus sends us.

You will be My witnesses . . . to the end of the earth.

Acts 1:8



Director Guide

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Contents

Welcome to VBS!	3	Promote, Publicize, Register	23
Daily Lesson Chart	4	Decorate and Set Up	25
Director Planning Guide	6	Mission Project	27
Plan	8	Student Essentials	27
Budget	9	Safety	28
Site Rotation	10	Reaching Every Child	29
Schedule Options	12	Music, Slides & Videos	30
Early Childhood	14	Closing Program	31
Recruit, Train, Retain	15	Rally Day	32
Site Leaders	16		
Recruiting Success	17		
Training Meeting	18		
Team Leaders	21		



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Welcome to VBS!

Welcome to *Epic Australian Adventure* VBS, where kids journey through the Bible, God’s Word, and discover that Jesus is the way, and the truth, and the life!

Life is an adventure, filled with wonderful things to see, do, learn, and explore! But as we trek through life, we know we will also encounter troubles and dangers along the way. Jesus is our Savior and faithful guide, who shows us the right way to go and guides us on the path of truth that leads to eternal life.

At *Epic Australian Adventure*, kids will learn how Jesus calls, leads, teaches, saves, and sends us to share the Good News with others through five exciting Old and New Testament accounts that trace God’s epic plan of salvation.

New Director? Seasoned Director? This guide is for you!

This *Director Guide* contains all the information you need to plan a Christ-centered, fun-filled VBS—from schedule options and safety concerns to tips for recruiting volunteers, registering kids, and more! We make planning even easier by providing digital resources on the *Director USB* and giving online access to resources through the digital content center.

How *Epic Australian Adventure* Works

Each VBS session starts with the **Opening**, where children gather with their Team Leader and other kids in their Teams (small groups). They sing, hear God’s

Word, pray, watch a skit, and learn the day’s Take-Home Point.

After the Opening, Teams head off to five rotation sites: **Bible Storytelling, Bible Exploration, Snacks, Games, and Crafts**. Afterward, everyone gathers for the **Closing** to sing more songs, hear about the Mission Project, review the Bible account and Bible Memory Verse, and pray. Before they go, kids can get an *Epic Australian Adventure Collectible* and take home *Early Childhood* and *Elementary Leaflets* to help them share the Bible account and Bible Memory Verse with friends and family.

VBS with Purpose—the CPH Difference

All VBS programs are not alike! So what makes Concordia’s VBS different? CPH’s VBS stands out because of our approach to the Word of God. Every VBS lesson clearly distinguishes between God’s Law and His Gospel. Children learn God’s will for their lives and how the Law has been fulfilled for them in the person and work of Jesus Christ. At the center of every lesson is the Gospel: God’s gracious gift of Jesus as their Savior.

We are honored to partner with you! It is our prayer that as kids and adults hear and experience the saving message of the Gospel, they would grow in faith and love for God and for one another.

The CPH VBS Team

Director USB and Digital Content Center

You’ll find a printable version of the *Director Guide* and all the Site Leader Guides plus music, videos, PowerPoints, and other helpful resources on the *Director USB* and through the online digital content center. The digital content can be found by clicking Digital Access Links under the Digital Content section of your **cph.org** account; you can also access it by going to **cph.org/digital** and signing in with the account used to purchase your *Starter Kit*.

We want to know what you think!

Fill out a survey at **cph.org/vbsfeedback**. Thank you!

Daily Lesson Chart

Bible Story Take-Home Point Bible Memory Verse	Law and Gospel	Australian Connection	Bible Storytelling 20 minutes
<p>God Calls Moses (Exodus 3) Jesus calls us. I have called you by name, you are Mine. <i>Isaiah 43:1</i></p>	<p>Law: We forget that God wants to provide for us, and so we look in other places for help. Gospel: Only God truly sees us, knows us, and provides for all our needs. He lovingly calls us to be His own.</p>	<p>Aussie animal sounds Pobblebunks, kookaburras, and boobooks make a cacophony of sounds. The noise of the world is distracting, but God’s call to us through His Word is clear and points us to Jesus.</p>	<p>God called Moses through a burning bush. Jesus calls us through His Word to be His children.</p>
<p>God Leads His People to the Promised Land (Joshua 3–4) Jesus leads us. The LORD your God is with you wherever you go. <i>Joshua 1:9</i></p>	<p>Law: We fail to see how God has been caring for and leading us throughout our lives. Gospel: God gives us His Word to remind us of His promises; He leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus.</p>	<p>The Outback It’s important to have a good guide as you journey through the Outback. God is our never-failing guide on the journey of life.</p>	<p>The Lord led His people through the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Jesus leads us through this life and gives eternal life through faith in Him.</p>
<p>The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) Jesus teaches us. We love because He first loved us. <i>1 John 4:19</i></p>	<p>Law: We think we can earn our righteousness and salvation, and we try to justify ourselves by making rules about who and how we should love. Gospel: Jesus teaches us that He is the one who loves, heals, and saves us. We have received His mercy. As Jesus lives in us, we have life and we show mercy to others, empowered by His love.</p>	<p>Great Barrier Reef There is so much to learn about the Great Barrier Reef! Jesus teaches us about His steadfast love and mercy and shows us what it means to live as redeemed children of God. We love because He first loved us.</p>	<p>In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus teaches what it means to love our neighbor. We love because He first loved us.</p>
<p>Peter and John Race to the Tomb (John 20:1–10, 19–20) Jesus saves us. Jesus said . . . , “I am the resurrection and the life.” <i>John 11:25</i></p>	<p>Law: Because of sin, we experience pain, problems, sadness, and eventually death. Gospel: Jesus died and rose again for us, saving us from eternal death and giving us hope and new life in Him.</p>	<p>Uluru (Ayers Rock) People from around the world travel to see Ayers Rock. Peter and John raced to Jesus’ tomb and found it empty because Jesus had risen from the dead!</p>	<p>Peter and John ran to the tomb and found it empty. Jesus had risen from the dead! Jesus’ death and resurrection saves us and gives us the sure hope of eternal life!</p>
<p>Jesus Ascends to the Father (Luke 24:44–53; Acts 1:1–11) Jesus sends us. You will be My witnesses . . . to the end of the earth. <i>Acts 1:8</i></p>	<p>Law: We think Jesus is no longer with us, and we forget that He sent the Holy Spirit to work in and through us. Gospel: Our loving God wants all people to be saved. Even though Jesus has ascended to heaven, He fills us with His Spirit and helps us share the Gospel with people everywhere.</p>	<p>People of Australia Australia is home to people from many ethnic groups and cultures. Before Jesus ascended, He commanded His disciples to go to all nations and share the Good News.</p>	<p>Before Jesus returned to the Father, He sent His disciples to go and tell the Good News to the world. Jesus sends us, too, and promises to be with us.</p>

Key Bible Verse: Jesus said . . . , "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." *John 14:6*

Bible Exploration 20 minutes	Snacks 20 minutes	Crafts 20 minutes	Games 20 minutes
Learn and sing Isaiah 43:1 . Find out how vibrations make sound with A Powerful Sound .	Crunchy Snack Buffet	Isaiah 43:1 Photo Frame	Answer the Call What's in a Name?
Learn and sing Joshua 1:9 . Observe the power of magnetic force with Lead the Way!	Map-It-Out Snack	Jesus Leads Sand Art	River Rock Walk Who's Your Leader?
Learn and sing 1 John 4:19 . Marvel at an optical illusion caused by refraction with Changed!	Coral Reef-reshments	Jesus Loves Me Pendant	First Aid Brigade Treasures of Kindness
Learn and sing John 11:25 . Experiment with air pressure using Bernoulli's principle with Impossible?	Rocky S'mores Snack	Jesus Saves Suncatcher	Race to the Tomb Easter Egg Pass
Learn and sing Acts 1:8 . Watch a colorful chemical reaction with Go Power!	Sweet Gospel Rounds	Good News Flyer	Divide and Multiply Share and Pair Tag

Director Planning Guide

✓ We have your checklist!

Use this checklist to help you plan for a great VBS!

Before VBS

5–6 months before VBS

- **Pray for VBS planning and recruitment.** Ask your pastor to pray for VBS in worship regularly. Ask that volunteers, VBS leaders, and children who attend would be lifted in their prayers.
- **Get to know the resources for *Epic Australian Adventure*.** Review the materials in your *Starter Kit* and online at cph.org/digital.
- **Read this *Director Guide*.** Mark great ideas, highlight questions, write names of people ideal for certain roles. Next time you look at this, you'll say, "I've done more than I thought I had!"
- **Talk with your pastor.** Share the *Epic Australian Adventure* materials with your pastor. Talk about your VBS goals and vision statement.
- **Inform your church staff.** Keep them up to date on the progress and needs of VBS. Let them advocate for you and the program. Ask them to be involved during VBS so visitors can get to know them!
- **Identify and recruit a Leadership Team.** Site Leaders are essential. You may also want to recruit an Early Childhood Director, an Assistant Director, and a Recruitment Coordinator.
- **Learn from last year's VBS.** Review notes and reports from previous years.
- **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, closing program, and a follow-up celebration.
- **Set your budget.** Determine how VBS will be funded. Check the church budget, consider asking for donations, plan fundraisers, and so on.
- **Announce *Epic Australian Adventure* dates** in church publications.

4–5 months before VBS

- **Check in with volunteers you already recruited.** Provide resources and assistance, as needed.

- **Recruit support team volunteers,** such as a Registration Coordinator, Decorating Coordinator, Publicity Coordinator, Administration and Support Coordinator, and Media Coordinator.
- **Distribute materials to all leaders early** so they can plan and prepare ahead of time.
- **Develop a publicity plan with tasks and target dates.**
- **Get music resources** to Opening & Closing and Music Leaders.
- **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. Sign up for VBSMate, our free online registration tool, at VBSMate.com.

3–4 months before VBS

- **Recruit Team Leaders and Site Helpers.** Set out a sign-up sheet, and personally invite people.
- **Plan your order for student resources** such as *Elementary* and *Early Childhood Leaflets*, *Epic Australian Adventure Collectibles*, and *Passalong Music Download Cards*. Don't forget the craft supplies and decorating items!
- **Encourage volunteers.** Monitor progress of the Site Leaders and other volunteers regularly. Offer help. Remove roadblocks. Encourage and support!
- **Check out CPHVBS on Facebook, YouTube, and Pinterest** for great ideas and encouragement.
- **Communicate!** Get the word out about VBS needs, opportunities, and information. Make a sign-up poster. Use newsletters, emails, social media, word of mouth, printed invitations, the bulletin, and announcements to get the word out. And don't forget to tell your Sunday School, day school, midweek, and Bible study classes.
- **Send volunteer training invitations.** Encourage all volunteers to attend volunteer training.
- **Check out the *Mission: Adventure Outreach* project flyer** to find out about this year's Mission Project.

2–3 months before VBS

- **Order Leaflets, Epic Australian Adventure Collectibles, and Passalong Music Download Cards.**
- **Check in with volunteers and help as needed.**
- **Continue preregistration and list updates.** VBSMate, the online registration tool, will download all the registration information into a spreadsheet!
- **Update your pastor and church staff regularly** on the progress of VBS.
- **Begin gathering or purchasing local supplies.**

1–2 months before VBS

- **Set up VBS information table** in a high-traffic area of your church. Display the *Epic Australian Adventure* theme poster included in your *Starter Kit*. Set out volunteer sign-up sheets, Supply Request Tags, and registration forms.
- **Check progress with your volunteers.**
- **Check preregistration lists.**
- **Order or purchase materials you still need.**
- **Review and update safety procedures and emergency plans.**
- **Conduct volunteer training.** Include everyone who will be involved in VBS, including Team Leaders and Site Helpers. Hand out resources. Share plans for all VBS events, including volunteer commissioning.

2–4 weeks before VBS

- **Check preregistration lists.** Order additional student materials and recruit additional volunteers as needed.
- **Check on supplies needed.** Purchase any remaining supplies needed. Gather and sort donated supplies.
- **Check the progress of site volunteers regularly.**

1–2 weeks before VBS

- **Acknowledge and pray for VBS volunteers** in a worship service. A format for a Volunteer Commissioning is included in the digital content.
- **Distribute supplies and equipment.**
- **Set up and test multimedia equipment.**
- **Decorate and set up your spaces.**
- **Prepare lists, signs, welcome letters, and other materials for registration.** Set up the registration area.

- **Make name tags for volunteers and kids.**
- **Check and replenish the first aid kit.** Make sure safety and emergency plans are in place.

During VBS

- **Pray, encourage, inform.** Gather staff before the daily Openings and after Closings to pray, make announcements, share needs, and hear concerns.
- **Check that multimedia equipment is working.**
- **Make sure all volunteers have arrived.** Find substitutes or be ready to step in if needed. Some Directors recruit “floaters” to fill in as needed.
- **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 parents or people authorized by their parents.
- **Be available and support volunteers.** Check in on sites to encourage leaders and children. Be ready to assist with any issues that arise.
- **Coordinate health concerns.** Work with leaders to accommodate children with allergies or special needs in a discreet way.
- **Thank volunteers.** Appreciative words, small gifts or food, notes, and prayers show thanks and care.
- **Invite families to a closing celebration.** Find an outline for a Closing Program in this guide.

1–2 weeks after VBS

- **Help returning visitors feel at home.** Greet VBS visitors, show them around, and introduce them to other children and members.
- **Gather and store supplies.** Return borrowed items.
- **Evaluate your VBS.** Ask for feedback from all volunteers. Make notes of successes and opportunities for improvement.
- **Make a final report.** Include statistics on expenses, attendance, volunteers, and supplies.
- **Follow up and communicate.** Mail postcards or letters to children and families who attended and invite them to worship services, Sunday School, Bible class, and other church activities.
- **Share your results** with your congregation. Provide your pastor and church leadership with information about families who are interested in your church.
- **Thank volunteers** with a personal note, a small gift, or even a VBS volunteer thank-you party!

Plan

Choosing Dates

Selecting your VBS dates is an important task. Consider the people you hope to reach as you explore options. List your top three date options, then choose a final date as soon as possible so people can avoid making other plans that conflict with VBS.

Issues to Consider as You Choose Dates

Church staff availability. It is vital that your pastor and staff have visibility and opportunities to develop connections with newcomers. Ask staff members to lead worship or music, lead or help with a site, or greet families as VBS begins and ends.

School schedule. Some school districts offer summer school. Avoid scheduling during your district's summer school, if possible. If your community has year-round schools, consider offering VBS during one of the breaks.

Community conflicts. For smaller communities, consider scheduled events such as swimming lessons and day camps. Call other congregations as well to avoid scheduling VBS at the same time.

Weather concerns. If possible, avoid scheduling during traditionally hot or wet weeks.

Work and childcare needs. Help provide for your community's needs by considering an all-day program or free transportation. Provide childcare for volunteers.

Space

Space informs many decisions. Review the space needs below and in the "Decorate and Set Up" section of this guide, and then make space assignments.

Use your largest space for Opening and Closing, because everyone meets together. Choose an area large enough to include all children and volunteers. Some churches choose to hold the Opening and Closing in the church sanctuary. You will need to use multimedia equipment in this area to show the Song-Action Videos and slide presentations.

Sites should be located far enough apart to avoid distractions. The Bible Exploration site also needs multimedia equipment. It is helpful for the Snacks area to be located close to a water source for easy cleanup. If possible, locate Games outdoors or in a large area where children can run around.

Consider any additional spaces needed, such as a volunteer hospitality area, a supply center, an area for registration, and any food-service needs for snacks.

Consider providing a staffed, quiet area where kids can rest a bit if they become overwhelmed or overstimulated.

Early Childhood Space Needs

Preschoolers feel safe and secure with few disruptions and limited time outside of their main space. Rooms with child-size tables and chairs and that are close to restrooms and an outdoor play area are ideal.

It is helpful to have a dedicated Early Childhood area where all preschoolers can gather at the beginning and end of VBS. A dedicated space helps to provide safety and a smoother transition as parents drop off and pick up their children.

Elementary Space Needs

The Elementary Teams start the day together at the Opening. They gather at the end for the Closing in the same space. Space is needed for the following sites: Bible Storytelling, Bible Exploration, Games, Snacks, and Crafts.

Each site has unique space and supply requirements. For more information, consult the "Decorate and Set Up" section in this guide, which gives information about the needs of each site for setup. The individual Site Leader Guides in the *Starter Kit* will also provide guidance on space selection and setup.

Budget

Vacation Bible School is a big event at any church. It takes a commitment of people and financial resources to offer a quality program. Begin by setting a budget, considering the cost per child. Include all costs: curriculum, decorating, food, and any other expenses.

Start a budget worksheet by listing all sources of income. Then make a list of needs and wishes, even if you think you can't afford them right now. Add costs beside each item, then add up costs and transfer them to your budget worksheet. Remember to consider costs for copies, craft supplies, snacks, postage, publicity, and volunteer appreciation.

Common Income Sources

Sponsor a child. Many churches give members an opportunity to sponsor a child's attendance. After you've done your budget, figure out a cost per child and give church members the opportunity to contribute that amount to send a child to VBS.

Sponsor a site. Ask church members to sponsor their favorite VBS site. Figure out the costs of leader and student resources for each site to set a sponsorship price.

Seek donations. Take a special VBS offering at church, or ask church groups to donate for VBS. Visit the groups to share your VBS purpose and goals so they understand how VBS fits into your church's mission. Many churches cover some or all VBS expenses in their congregational budget.

Fundraisers. Fundraising for VBS is growing in popularity. Old standards like car washes, bake sales, ice cream socials, and silent auctions do work! Use the fundraiser event to promote the theme and dates of your VBS.

Give thanks. Publicly thank donors and sponsors by listing their names in bulletins and newsletters. Post pictures of your VBS on a bulletin board during and after VBS and add a thank-you note for all.

More Budget-Stretching Ideas

Coordinate your VBS with other congregations.

Create a co-op with one or more churches. Coordinating your dates is important for this to work! Then work together to create decorating items and props for Bible Storytelling. Share Bible costumes, game equipment, and other VBS supplies.

Invite church members to donate items. Make a list of items needed for each site. Determine which items need to be donated (items that will be used up) and which can be borrowed and returned to the owner. Choose a different color paper for each site, and write each need on a slip of paper, or use the Supply Request Tags on the *Director USB* and in the digital content center. Make sure to include information such as the amount needed, whether the item is to be donated or borrowed, the date item is needed, and a place to list contact information for items that need to be returned to owner. Ask people to attach the tag to the item and leave it in a collection box or area by a certain date.

Ask businesses to donate cups, drinks, or other supplies.

Acknowledge donations in a letter to families and in closing program bulletins. After VBS, send thank-you letters sharing how the donations helped. Include highlights of your program.

Order VBS resources early. Some items can't be reordered if they run out, leaving you to find a costly substitute.

Site Rotation

Epic Australian Adventure activities get kids moving, engage their senses, and get them into God’s Word—all so they can learn about their Savior, Jesus!

How does site rotation work?

Everyone starts the day together at the Opening. They gather at the end for the Closing in the same place. In between, the Teams rotate to five sites: Early Childhood or Elementary Storytelling, Bible Exploration, Crafts, Games, and Snacks.

1. Start Here Together

***Epic Australian Adventure* Opening**

Opening & Closing is where the whole group of VBS kids—plus their Team Leaders, Site Leaders, and Helpers—meet to begin and end their day at VBS.

- Gather with everyone.
- Pray and sing.
- Watch the Opening Skit.
- Hear about the Bible story.
- Learn the Take-Home Point.

2. Get Moving

Early Childhood and Elementary Storytelling Sites

At Early Childhood or Elementary Storytelling, kids hear God’s Word and actively participate in telling the Bible story. With their Teams, they discuss what the Bible account means for their everyday lives.

- Do an activity to get ready for the Bible story.
- Participate in the telling of the Bible account.
- Say the Take-Home Point.
- Review the Bible account with small-group activities and *Early Childhood or Elementary Leaflets*.

Bible Exploration Site

Bible Exploration is where Teams learn the Bible Memory Verse. The Bible Memory Verse Song and actions help them remember and keep God’s Word in their hearts! Then kids watch a cool science demonstration that reinforces the point of the Bible account and connects it to their lives.

- Find the Bible Memory Verse in the Bible and say it together.
- Sing the Bible Memory Verse Song for the day.
- Watch an awesome science demonstration.
- Review the Bible story.

Crafts Site

At Crafts, kids make fun projects that help them remember the Bible account and how God is working in their lives.

- Use creativity to make the daily craft project.
- Make connections with the Take-Home Point and Bible story.

Snacks Site

Snacks is a favorite place for kids to talk and relax as they eat a delicious treat that reinforces the point of the Bible account.

- Make and eat yummy snacks.
- Make connections with the Take-Home Point and Bible story.

Games Site

At Games, kids play great games that make connections between the Bible account and their lives.

- Play games.
- Discuss the “Connect” section to make connections with the Take-Home Point and Bible story.

3. End Here Together

***Epic Australian Adventure* Closing**

- Gather with everyone.
- Sing and pray.
- Review the Take-Home Point.
- Watch the Closing Skit.
- Learn about the Mission Project.
- Review the Bible Memory Verse.
- Take home the *Epic Australian Adventure Collectibles, Early Childhood or Elementary Leaflets*, and a blessing from Team Leaders.

Planning Your Site Schedule

Most five-day VBS scenarios will have an Opening, a Closing, and five rotation sites.

Every site (Bible Storytelling, Bible Exploration, Crafts, Snacks, and Games) takes about 20 minutes. Allow 5-minute transitions between each rotation. If you follow this schedule, your VBS will run 2 hours, 50 minutes. You can adjust site times to fit your situation.

Think of your VBS in team units of six or fewer kids. You can create Teams by age levels or by integrating ages into “family groups.”

Several Teams will travel together in a Group to the five rotation sites. The number of Teams traveling together will depend on the capacity of each site. You will likely not want more than four Teams (24 kids) at a site at a time. Make sure each site has enough space and help to accommodate the Teams.

Also consider the following:

- If you have a large number of preschool children, you may want to create a set of Early Childhood sites that are separate from the Elementary sites.
- If you have a smaller group of preschoolers, you could have the Early Childhood Teams travel as one Group.
- Another option is to group preschoolers with older children, especially if there are only a few children in each age group.
- *Epic Australian Adventure* provides an Early Childhood Storytelling Leader Guide and an Elementary Storytelling Leader Guide with age-appropriate activities for each group.

Adapt to Fit Your Size

The Small VBS = 25 or Fewer Children

If you have 25 or fewer children in VBS, you can have everyone travel together to the five sites. The Site Leaders will lead their activities one time for everyone.

The Medium VBS = 25 to 100 Children

If you have 25 to 100 children in VBS, you can have up to four Teams of six children travel together to the sites. The Site Leaders will repeat their activities for each Group.

The Large VBS = More Than 100 Children

If you have more than 100 children, you can duplicate sites, creating two or more areas for the same site. Bring everyone together for the Opening and the Closing.

