

Associational VBS Ministry Actions Timeline

Terms to Know

- VBS – Vacation Bible School
- MVBS – Mission Vacation Bible School
- BBC – Backyard Bible Club
- A-VBS – Associational Vacation Bible School
- S-VBS – State Vacation Bible School
- Clinic – a training event consisting of a variety of age- or interest-related conferences
- Conference – a training session for a specific age or interest group
- DOM – associational Director of Mission
- SBDS – Southern Baptist Directory Services

GETTING STARTED: ACTIONS TO TAKE IN OCTOBER

1. Be aware of what your job involves.

- Review the “Duties” of an Associational VBS Promoter/Director. Your work is Kingdom work and results in life-transformation. Make a personal commitment to fulfill the tasks of administration, promotion, consultations, enlistment, training, and follow up.

The key here is delegation! This is a big job so be sure to enlist members of your A-VBS team and others to help.

2. Plan a calendar and set goals.

- Meet with the DOM and the associational Sunday School director or Associational Council to evaluate previous A-VBS work and plan the new VBS calendar. Plan to recommend additional actions to enhance the work of VBS.
- Work with your A-VBS team to adopt goals for the new year.
 - Use previous VBS records (use SBDS to get this information, if available in your state.) to project goals such as:
 - number of church VBSs,
 - church VBS enrollment,
 - number of MVBSs,
 - number of BBCs,
 - number of new Sunday Schools and churches started by VBSs, BBCs, and MVBSs,
 - number of VBS Link-ups,
 - number of churches represented in clinics,
 - and total attendance in all A-VBS clinics.

3. Publicize the VBS themes and curriculum options.

- Become familiar with curriculum options and be ready to promote their use to the churches in your association.

4. Follow up on schools from the current year.

- Obtain reports from the churches that conducted VBS, and enter or send copies to the VBS Report Desk, MSN 177, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, Tennessee 37234.

For churches that have not reported, determine if the church did not conduct a VBS or has failed to report.

Establish or strengthen contacts with churches to encourage the completing of reports, to discover reasons for not conducting VBS, and to help them plan toward next year. If appropriate seek to involve the church in a VBS Link-up.

5. Report VBS results to the association.

- Request the opportunity to present a summary of the association's VBS statistics during the association's annual meeting. Include testimonies, totals for professions of faith, and number of prospects discovered from VBS. Help church leaders see the evangelistic value of continuing or restarting VBS in their churches.

If a report presentation at the annual meeting is not possible, request permission to create a VBS booth or exhibit that both celebrates the successes of the current year and promotes the next year.

6. Schedule an early planning conference that includes a curriculum preview.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

1. Gather plans for attending the state VBS clinic.

- Start a file for information and materials relating to state VBS clinics.

2. Order team training packages for LifeWay's Premier and Club VBS themes.

- A VBS Team Package discount order form and catalog are mailed to each association office in October. This special discount is only for resources used by associational training teams to conduct VBS workshops and conferences to train church VBS leaders.
- If not already doing so, considering expanding your conference to include training for youth, adult, special needs and Spanish VBS as well as BBC and M-VBS. A way to get pastors and church planters involved is to offer a VBS Evangelism Conference. See Associational VBS Clinic Options chart that shows training options and materials needed. (Chart is listed in the Associational Training Helps section.)

- Club VBS is a great alternative for churches wishing to use a theme other than the premier theme. The Club VBS Associational Team Package contains everything you need to provide a general or age-group training event.
- E-Anytime-Anywhere is available on-line at www.lifeway.com/kids and is a great resource not only for M-VBSs and BBCs but for use throughout the year.

3. Determine the number of clinics and the conferences you will offer at each clinic.

- Once you have determined the number of clinics you will need to select locations that are convenient for the largest number of people. Select churches with adequate facilities for an opening session, all of the conferences being offered, a LifeWay Christian Store display, childcare, and meals if provided.
 - Discuss your needs with the church leadership and provide a written list of them. Visit the church and look at all the available rooms before making a decision. Consider accessibility, size, lighting, ventilation/air circulation, placement of electrical outlets, furnishings and whether or not they can be moved, the suitability of walls for teaching aids, and other room factors that will affect the conference atmosphere.
- The number of people needed for the A-VBS team will be determined by the number of conferences you provide in your clinics.
- Contact your state VBS promoter for conference outlines and suggestions.

4. Identify and enlist associational VBS team members.

- Churches are filled with people who have a passion for the life-transforming ministry of VBS and would love to be a member of the A-VBS team. Ask pastors for recommendations. While training skills can be taught, passion is a key characteristic of a great VBS trainer that can't be taught. Count people with passion as a great blessing and find a way to add them to your team.
- Look for team members who:
 - are enthusiastic and positive,
 - have current experience in VBS work,
 - have personal experience with the age group they will be working with and will be using the LifeWay VBS curriculum they will be representing,
 - have a genuine desire to help the churches and train others,
 - have a desire to be trained and are willing to attend the state clinic,
 - are able to lead the conference in the scheduled associational clinic(s),
 - have a willingness to grow spiritually.

(For last-minute substitutes, contact neighboring associations or your state VBS promoter for a list of leaders for age group(s) needed.)

5. Use the team to promote VBS throughout the year.

- In addition to conducting VBS training, encourage the team to:

- consult with pastors and churches on the benefits of using VBS, BBC and MVBS as an effective evangelistic outreach,
- conduct a MVBS in the association,
- assist churches in need of help with VBS,
- train student summer missionaries on the associational level,
- equip church youth mission groups to conduct VBS and MVBS.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN JANUARY

1. Complete team enlistment.

- Complete the task of enlistment early in January to allow plenty of time to register for training at the state clinic.

2. Distribute team package materials.

- Each A-VBS team member should receive the recommended materials from the Team Package before attending the state clinic.

3. Decide if you will provide materials to churches on a consignment basis.

- Consignment of VBS materials offers substantial financial benefits for the association. Plan to provide materials for sale as well as arrangements to take orders. Arrangements must be made with your nearest LifeWay Christian Store manager. If a consignment plan is not feasible check with your LifeWay store manager about placing advance orders from churches to have materials available at the clinic. LifeWay Christian Store managers will offer a rebate for association consignment orders. Discuss this possibility with your DOM. Notify all churches of your plan and ask them to make a commitment to order their materials through the association.

4. Promote and prepare to lead the VBS Jump Start/Early Bird conference.

- The early planning conference is designed primarily for pastors and VBS directors and should be held in January or February. In promoting the conference, emphasize the importance of these church leaders attending together. Include a display and preview of both themes.
- Promote the conference through associational meetings, pastor's conferences, telephone contacts, and direct mail.

5. Enlist a children's choir to present music from the worship rally or musical as a special feature during associational clinics.

6. Finalize travel plans to state VBS clinics.

- By now you should have received information from your S-VBS promoter concerning the date, location, financial assistance, and agenda or your S-VBS clinic. Share this information plus the travel schedule and any associational financial assistance toward travel, food, and lodging with each team member.
- A day or two before the state clinic, call each associational team member. Be sure they understand their roles and what is expected of them. Confirm

meeting places and departure time. If Team Packages have not yet been distributed, be sure to do so at the clinic.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN FEBRUARY

1. Conduct the VBS Jump Start/Early Bird conference.

- Suggested conference plan is available in the Associational Training Helps section.

2. Promote attendance at associational VBS clinics.

- Involve the A-VBS team in creating new ways to enlist church leaders for the clinics.
- Enlist VBS leaders from a variety of churches to provide clinic refreshments (assign a different refreshment or meal item to each church), serve at registration tables, consignment materials, and assist with displays and decorations. Attendance will increase considerably with each additional church represented in clinic preparations and leadership.
- Conduct a telephone blitz. Assign churches equally to all team members. Call church VBS directors to remind them of the meeting in sufficient time to get commitments from their workers.
- Advertise in the association's newsletter and Web site.
- Advertise by adding dates of your meetings to the VBS calendar at www.lifeway.com/vbs.
- Notify your nearest LifeWay Christian Store of clinic dates. Provide promotional information for store employees to share with customers.

3. Develop a MVBS strategy.

- In some associations, the BBC/MVBS emphasis is the responsibility of a MVBS director. If you follow that plan consider these suggestions:
 - Review duties with the MVBS director.
 - Meet with the associational missions committee, MVBS director, and DOM to plan ways to encourage churches to conduct BBCs and MVBSs.
 - Compile a list of possible locations where MVBSs or BBCs are needed. Send each church a letter requesting help in sponsoring the MVBS or BBC in those communities.
 - Check with the state convention office about the possibility of getting a Sunday School contract worker to help conduct a MVBS in a location where a new Sunday School is scheduled to begin.
 - Discuss whether student summer missionaries can be assigned to work with churches planning to conduct MVBSs or BBCs.

4. Take A-VBS team to the state clinic.

- During the state clinic a time may be scheduled for you to meet with the A-VBS team to plan the details of your clinics. If team-planning time is not scheduled, conduct one in your association prior to your clinics.
- During the meeting confirm clinic details such as

- room arrangements and setups,
- audiovisual and printed material needs,
- bookstore arrangements for purchase of materials,
- general session and program plans,
- promotion and registration,
- goals for clinic attendance,
- and decide how MVBS, and BBCs will be covered.

An important step will be to identify from associational printouts the churches not reporting a VBS the previous year. Assign team members to contact the churches and encourage conducting a VBS.

5. Complete A-VBS team planning reports.

- A copy of this report form is available in the Associational Team Planning Helps section. Send one copy to your S-VBS promoter and file one for your permanent records.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY

1. Intensify promotion of clinic dates and details.

2. Follow up on goals agreed upon by the team.

- Set in motion plans or actions that will lead toward the accomplishments of your goals.

3. Finalize arrangements for clinic childcare, meals, and equipment.

4. Promote the third Sunday of May as National Day of Prayer for VBS.

- Encourage church leadership to recognize or commission VBS workers in morning worship, and consider asking the pastor to preach a sermon with VBS emphasis.

5. Make final preparation for clinics.

- Plan the opening session. Consider including the theme scriptures, motto/cheer, a brief overview of the Bible stories for each of the five sessions, and video clips. Review the VBS Promotional DVD (mailed to each association in October along with a catalog and Team Package order form), and video clips on the Worship Rally DVD and Children's Mission Rotation DVD and decide which clips will be used during the general session.
- Check for theme and VBS resource updates at www.lifeway.com/vbs.
- Prepare and duplicate a clinic evaluation form.
- Make signs to identify each conference location.

6. During clinics.

- Arrive early to assist the church and conference leaders with final details. (Remind conference leaders to leave rooms as they found them.)
- Assist with leading the opening session.

- Lead the conference for pastors and/or VBS directors.
- Recognize churches with good percentages of leaders present for training. Spotlight churches that are doing exciting work and churches conducting VBS for the first time. Consider recognizing churches that are planning to participate in VBS Link-up. (Theme-related promotional items make good recognition prizes.)

7. After the clinics.

- Complete the clinic report form (available in the Associational & Church Report section). Wait until after you have conducted the last clinic to file your report. Mail a copy of the report to your S-VBS promoter and keep a copy for your records. Do NOT mail a copy of this report to LifeWay. Your S-VBS promoter will compile information from all associations and send a final report to LifeWay.
- Express appreciation to host churches and associational VBS team members.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST

1. Evaluate and follow up on associational VBS clinics.

- Review clinic evaluation forms. Plan to meet the needs raised by the churches. Assign volunteers to churches that need help in conducting VBS.
- Compare clinic attendance with the list of churches that did not report a VBS last year. Check if any of them sent workers to the A-VBS clinic. Contact any church that was not represented in at least one clinic.
- Compare clinic attendance in churches that are without pastors. These churches may need special help this year. Contact the VBS director or church secretary to offer assistance.
- Encourage churches to conduct MVBS and BBCs. If not already scheduled, consider offering an associational MVBS clinic and/or BBC clinic.

2. Note the churches that are conducting VBSs this month.

- Encourage each church to report its VBS immediately after the school. A personalized VBS Report Form will be mailed to every church in May or early June. The form includes the church's SBDS identification number and password. Encourage churches to enter the report via the internet or send a paper copy to the association, state, and LifeWay. Make a special effort to get a report from each church before September 1.
- To show interest and to offer encouragement, visit churches during their VBSs.
- Recognize churches doing outstanding VBS work. Write a letter to the pastor and/or VBS director; write an article for the associational newsletter; publicly recognize a pastor in the pastors' conference or executive meeting; ask the pastor or VBS director to give testimony in an associational meeting.

- Work with the associational Sunday School director to encourage churches to enroll in Sunday School any unenrolled VBS pupils and family members.
- Continue to emphasize BBCs and MVBS. Encourage churches to report their mission VBS/BBCs on the Annual Church Profile (in addition to sending in the VBS Report).
- Check www.lifeway.com/vbs to sign up to receive an e-newsletter to receive early notice of next year's VBS theme.