

VBS to Sunday School Enrollment and Growth Plan

Approximately 300,000 Sunday School prospects are discovered during VBS each year, and every prospect has a younger or older sibling, a parent or grandparent, and possibly other relatives living in the home. How many prospects were truly discovered?

It Starts with a Vision for Growth

When Vacation Bible School has been a good experience for learners, an invitation to continue that experience often is met with enthusiasm and positive responses.

Vacation Bible School is a major strategy for growth in many churches. Sunday School enrollment increases can be dramatic when the VBS to Sunday School Enrollment and Growth Plan is used.

The concept is simple – transfer prospects (persons who are not members of any Sunday School) discovered during VBS to your Sunday School roll.

When properly implemented, the VBS to Sunday School Enrollment and Growth Plan can help your church take advantage of the evangelistic and outreach opportunities of Vacation Bible School.

The VBS director, pastor, and Sunday School director are responsible for interpreting and leading the church to implement this plan.

Preparation Begins Before VBS

Preparation for using the VBS to Sunday School Enrollment and Growth Plan includes these actions:

- Interpret the Plan to the Sunday School Council, and propose that it be adopted as an enrollment plan.
- Present the Plan to all Sunday School workers. Enlist their participation in enrollment, visitation, and other after-VBS follow-up activities.
- Train VBS leaders and others who are involved in VBS pre-enrollment to get complete information on each person when filling out VBS enrollment forms.
- Discuss with appropriate Sunday School workers possible schedules for home visits. This is the time parents would give their permission to enroll preschoolers and children in Sunday School.
- Lead the VBS Promotion Team to plan actions to reach unsaved and unenrolled persons to attend VBS.
- Use direct mail, e-mail, the telephone, and personal visits to pre-enroll in VBS persons who are Sunday School prospects.
- Provide transportation to Sunday School, and advertise the availability of this service.
- Plan for follow-up letters to go out and visits to be made within one week of prospects being enrolled in Sunday School.

Lay the Foundation During VBS

These steps, when taken during VBS, can increase the potential impact of the Plan:

- Let students know that while VBS is for a limited time, they can continue their Bible-study experience in Sunday School each week.
- Obtain complete information on every VBS attendee. In some cases, workers may need to meet parents on the parking lot, send notes home with kids, or make phone calls or visits to complete the necessary information.
- Begin on the first day of VBS to identify prospects for Sunday School and to complete prospect cards on all parents and other unenrolled family members. Make assignments to the appropriate Sunday School class or department.

- Schedule a joint meeting of VBS and Sunday School workers for the purpose of making visitation assignments. Request visitors to make home visits within a certain time period after VBS. Some churches use Family Night to talk with parents and to seek to transfer students and enroll family members in Sunday School.
- When permission is granted, those making home visits may write the word transfer on the VBS enrollment card and turn it in to the Sunday School secretary who completed the enrollment process. If permission is not given, the home visitors may write the word prospect on the card. Then the information is entered on a prospect card and assigned to the appropriate Sunday School class or department for follow-up.
- Keep church members aware of progress through announcements, notices in the bulletin or newsletter, and mailings.
- Prepare and mail follow-up letters to new Sunday School members and express appreciation for them becoming a part of the Sunday School.

Go, Visit, and Witness After VBS

After VBS, visitation should focus on new members and prospects who already have been cultivated through VBS. Visitation should continue until all VBS students not attending a Sunday School have an opportunity to enroll in your Sunday School or to decline to enroll.

- Each person enrolling in Sunday School should receive a letter from the pastor expressing appreciation for becoming a part of the Sunday School. The appropriate Sunday School department director or class teacher should visit to get acquainted with the person enrolling and the family members.
- Churches that use the FAITH evangelism strategy will find strong support in following up on all VBS attendees not enrolled in Sunday School, and those who have not accepted Christ. VBS prospects should be included for FAITH team visits. Results of visits should be reported to appropriate age-group Sunday School leaders if the leaders are not on the FAITH team.

Look for Opportunities to Involve Prospects in the Life of the Church

- Invite family members to be your guests for the Wednesday night supper.
- Invite adult prospects to your home for a meal or informal fellowship time.
- Invite student prospects on student trips, camps, retreats, and other events.
- Invite parents of preschool prospects to participate in Mother's Day Out or parent enrichment activities and seminars.

The key to reaching new people for your Sunday School through VBS is to enroll as many unsaved and unchurched children, students, and adults as possible. Then conduct the follow-up actions necessary to cultivate and assimilate them into the life and ministry of your church.

Permission is granted to duplicate this handout.