

The Importance of VBS

God-Centered Memories Shape God-Centered Lives

Bring on the face paint, bring on the music, the games, laughter, and fun. Come one come all to the most exciting event of the summer! What is everyone so pumped about? Why the next Vacation Bible School, of course.

VBS is quite possibly the most effective, and challenging ministry event of the year. As we face the reality of limited white space on our calendars, it is helpful to take a moment to reflect on the importance this great undertaking. Here are a few considerations to fuel your excitement and inspire you to give it your all again this summer.



CONNECT

"...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love..." - Colossians 2:2

VBS is a powerful way to nourish connection within your ministry.

We live in an age that encourages us to plug in, log on, FaceTime, Facebook, email, text, book a trip online to Maui, book a trip to Mars—that's a real thing, by the way—upload our thoughts, download our friends... It would seem that a full life is available to us without even walking out the front door. Well... while the digital age does offer many tools to improve efficiency, in the grand scheme these are the TV dinner versions of connection, right? Our goal is still, and always will be, getting our kiddos to worship and experience God's love together.

In the children's ministry at our church, we focus on two primary objectives, Connecting kids to God, and Connecting kids to others. It's about the relationship. Spending time with the kids to teach them God's Word, and creating an environment where they can develop friendships and serve together as the body of Christ.

Kids crave connection. Though it may not always seem like it, the fact is they want guidance. They want to discover the best way to live their lives. They are thirsty for truth. They long for acceptance. Kids are actively seeking these things, and the reality is they will either connect with the ways of God, or with the deceptions the world throws at them every day of their life. Our mission is to feed them God's Word and give them a loving family that encourages their openness to the Holy Spirit.

Kids crave connection. VBS is a grand slam way to connect children to God and each other, in a safe, positive, and fun environment.



AFFECT

"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise." - Psalm 98:4

VBS is a great way to affect the perception of your ministry positively in the minds of the kids. Why is there singing, dancing, and tears of joy?



Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden."

- Matthew 5:14

When we gather and celebrate God's goodness, we are sharing the joy of our faith with each other and with the world. We are building God-centered memories, and God-centered memories shape God-centered lives.

Imagine the child who has never been to church. He's never been exposed to worship or the mentality of service to others. He attends VBS simply because he was invited by a friend. Through the week his adventure might include group activities, team-based service projects, Bible reenactments, a fun story in the form of a stage play or video, competitions, testimonies, etc. But more than that, he experiences unquestioning acceptance from his leaders and peers. He notices the absence of judgment that he faces so often at school. He sees children singing and raising their hands in celebration to the Lord. He hears the purity in the Word of God spoken for his benefit. Folks, these are the sorts of things that open minds, soften hearts, and change lives.

"And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you." - Ezekiel 36:26

Now, with all this in mind let me share a comforting little secret with you. Your ministry doesn't have to be flashy, extravagant, or (dare I say it), "relevant." Your leaders don't even have to have a mustache or wear skinny jeans—unless that is who they are, in which case stache it up! All you need to offer the kids is you. Give them your time and attention and be open about your genuine passion for the Lord. Yes, we give them fun. Yes, we give them excitement and new experiences. But, let us always strive to deliver the pure, unvarnished word of God in a way that is true to who we are as followers of Christ. One of the most amazing things is that God loves and accepts our uniqueness, strike that, he created us to be unique. He uses our differences to bring about His will in surprising, and world-changing ways.

As you plan your next VBS, shoot for Heaven, above the moon and stars, but always remember; kids are smart. What they want is REAL, not RELEVANT.



REFLECT & PROJECT

*"And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."
- Mark 16:15*

What are those crazy people doing over there in kids ministry anyway? Why raising up an army, of course.

We are guiding and opening the minds and hearts of our kiddos to the life-giving Word of God. The teaching, the preaching, the fellowship, the service activities, all display a model of God's family for the kids to observe, join, and share with the world.

VBS is the perfect time to REFLECT on the first half of the year. Talk about your ministries achievements, and share triumphant stories and testimonies. Give them details such as "This year; God has worked through you to feed and clothe x# of families, and to provide x# of Bibles to people who have never owned one..." Reflect on the work God has done through them. Discuss specific teaching points you have covered. "Does everyone remember how we talked about the journey Moses had to make to get the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt? Who can tell me...?"

It is also the time to PROJECT the vision for the rest of the year. Be sure to hype up the teaching series that starts the weekend after your VBS. Keeping kids in the loop and sharing with them what's to come is a great way to get them excited about attending the next service. Remember, every visit is an opportunity to inspire the next visit.

As you head into another action-packed, busy, chaotic, and challenging VBS season, let the certainty that God is working through you replenish your energy. Encourage your team and remind them that each of you is helping to shape the landscape of eternity, one event, one day, and one child at a time.

"For we are God's Fellow workers." - 1 Corinthians 3:9



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