

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>WELCOME .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Overview of the Theme .....	4
Mission Project .....	5
Staff Apparel .....	5
Station Rotations and Suggested Schedule .....	5
Jezreel Valley—Opening & Closing Program .....	5
Station Rotations and Suggested Schedule .....	5
Crews .....	6
Music .....	6
Bible Story .....	6
Skits .....	6
<b>CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Information Regarding Specific Disabilities .....	8
<b>NOTES .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>DIRECTOR'S TIPS .....</b>	<b>11</b>
Planning for Success .....	11
<b>JOB DESCRIPTIONS .....</b>	<b>14</b>
Director and Assistant Director .....	14
Crew Leaders .....	14
Opening & Closing Station Leader .....	14
Song Leaders—Cave Singers .....	14
Station Leaders .....	14
Treasurer/Business Manager .....	15
Publicity Director .....	15
Prayer Leader .....	15
Resource Manager .....	15
Decorating Team .....	15
Media Specialist .....	15
Photographer .....	16
Registrar and Registration Helpers .....	16
Nurse and First Aid Provider .....	16
Follow-up Leader .....	16

<b>COUNTDOWN TO SUCCESS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
3-6 Months Before Your VBS .....	17
2-3 Months Before .....	17
8 Weeks Before .....	17
4 Weeks Before .....	18
2 Weeks Before .....	18
1 Week Before .....	18
1 Day Before .....	18
Opening Day .....	18
1 Week After Program Ends .....	18
<b>PARENT INVITATION LETTER .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PASTOR INVITATION LETTER .....</b>	<b>20</b>

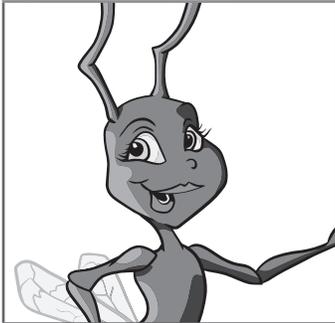


# SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

ANIMAL PAL

JEZREEL VALLEY  
OPENING AND CLOSING

PROPHET'S PEAK  
BIBLE STORY



**POWER POINT:**  
My God is real. That's rock solid!

**BIBLE STORY**  
Facing Challenges  
with God

**KEY VERSE:**  
"I am with you, so do not be afraid"



**POWER POINT:**  
My God provides. That's rock solid!

**BIBLE STORY**  
Experiencing God's  
Providing in Zarephath

**KEY VERSE:**  
"I am with you, so do not be afraid.  
I am your God, so do not be upset."



**POWER POINT:**  
My God is powerful. That's rock solid!

**BIBLE STORY**  
Battles of the Gods

**KEY VERSE:**  
"I am with you, so do not be afraid. I am your God,  
so do not be upset. I will make you strong..."



**POWER POINT:**  
My God knows me. That's rock solid!

**BIBLE STORY**  
Elijah Runs Away  
from Everyone

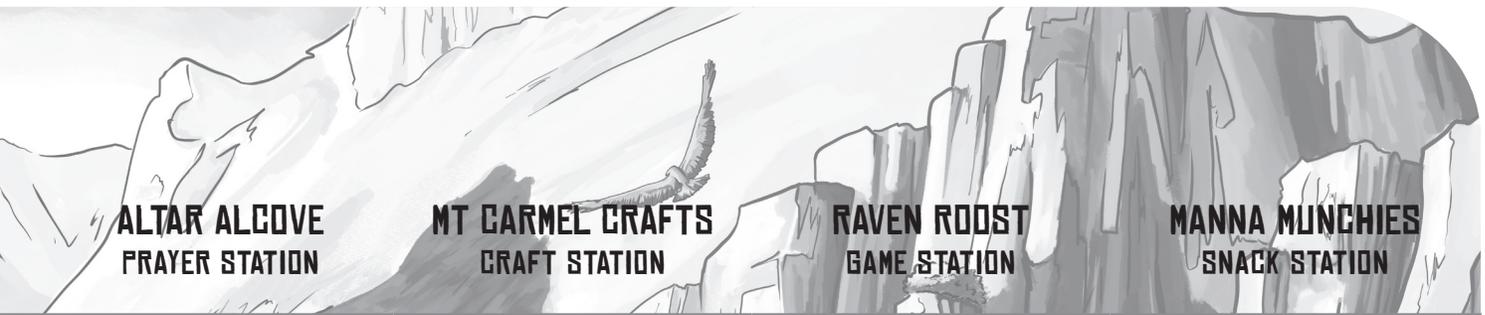
**KEY VERSE:**  
"I am with you, so do not be afraid.  
I am your God, so do not be upset.  
I will make you strong and I will help you."



**POWER POINT:**  
My God is preparing a place for me. That's rock solid!

**BIBLE STORY**  
Elijah and Elisha  
cross the Jordan  
River Together

**POWER POINT:**  
"I am with you, so do not be afraid. I am your God,  
so do not be upset. I will make you strong and I will  
help you. My powerful right hand will keep you safe."  
Isaiah 41:30 (EasyEnglish Bible)



**ALTAR ALCOVE**  
PRAYER STATION

**MT CARMEL CRAFTS**  
CRAFT STATION

**RAVEN ROOST**  
GAME STATION

**MANNA MUNCHIES**  
SNACK STATION

**AWE**  
TRAILBLAZING ACTIVITY  
Wow, God!

**ORIENTEERING ACTIVITY**  
I am thankful, God

**MAIN CRAFT**  
Hiking Lantern

**GRAB + GO**  
Stained Glass  
Window Craft Kit

**PRE-GAME**  
Stop & Listen

**MAIN GAME**  
Over Under Mountain  
Hike

**DEBRIEF**



**LISTENING**  
TRAILBLAZING ACTIVITY  
I hear you, God!

**ORIENTEERING ACTIVITY**  
I can listen &  
talk to God

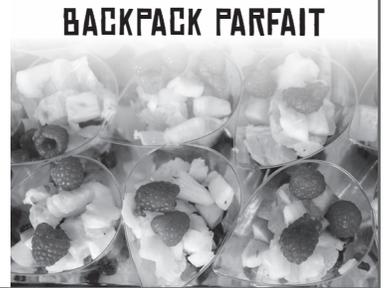
**MAIN CRAFT**  
Butterfly  
Suncatcher

**GRAB + GO**  
Scratch Butterfly  
Ornaments

**PRE-GAME**  
Mountain Express

**MAIN GAME**  
Rippling Water Relay

**DEBRIEF**



**TRUSTING**  
TRAILBLAZING ACTIVITY  
You've got this, God!

**ORIENTEERING ACTIVITY**  
I can trust God to  
handle my burdens

**MAIN CRAFT**  
Mountain  
Spinner

**PRE-GAME**  
Gather Up

**MAIN GAME**  
Jezreet Tree Relay

**DEBRIEF**



**AFFIRMING**  
TRAILBLAZING ACTIVITY  
You know me, God!

**ORIENTEERING ACTIVITY**  
I am unique

**MAIN CRAFT**  
Clothespin  
Paper Puppets

**PRE-GAME**  
Whistle Freeze

**MAIN GAME**  
Beach Ball  
Relay Race

**DEBRIEF**



**REMEMBRANCE**  
TRAILBLAZING ACTIVITY  
We remember God!

**ORIENTEERING ACTIVITY**  
I will remember  
how much God  
cares for me

**MAIN CRAFT**  
Pompom  
Celebration Popper

**GRAB + GO**  
Picture Frame  
Magnets

**PRE-GAME**  
Whistle Scramble

**MAIN GAME**  
Mountain Top  
Obstacle Course

**DEBRIEF**





Welcome to Mountain of Miracles VBS, a place where the children will learn that God's love is rock solid! Our VBS is set in Jerzeel Valley, a fertile plain that is great for farming, picnicking, hiking, and so much more. It is fertile because of the nearby natural springs that irrigate the valley. This VBS offers a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn that God knows us and that His love is rock solid.

Throughout this adventure, the kids will be immersed in music, stories, prayer activities, crafts, snacks, and games that have been carefully designed to reinforce the Power Point and the Key Verse, which will connect them to the Bible stories. We have provided decorating and costume ideas, but feel free to use your imagination and creativity to make this adventure an extraordinary experience that the children will cherish forever!

The Director's Guide is a comprehensive resource that will assist you in planning a fun and successful program, suitable for any size church. We have included an overview of the program, along with information on each station to help keep things running smoothly. Additionally, you will find ideas on recruiting and training volunteers, publicizing your program, and staying connected with families once VBS is over. This program is also a wonderful evangelistic tool to reach families in your local community.

Above all, we want to provide support and encouragement as you embark on this sacred journey of leading children into a meaningful relationship with God and helping them understand how His love can impact their lives. It is our prayer that God's peace and grace will fill your heart and encourage you. May God bless you and guide you and your team as you work together to share God's love with the children and their families.

## OVERVIEW OF THE THEME

The opening and closing program take place in Jezreel Valley, a lush fertile plain surrounded by mountains and natural springs. The valley is a picturesque landscape where children will embark on hiking adventures and will discover wonderful attributes about God's love for us. The host, a local tour guide, native to the area, offers a wealth of knowledge about the serene landscape, majestic mountains, and God's love. The tour guide will

lead the opening and closing programs each day. Rainy the Raven, this year's VBS mascot, makes an appearance to help the tour guide introduce the Bible Pal, Power Point, and Key Verse segment of the day. At Prophet's Peak, the Bible Story station, the kids learn about Elijah and the difficult task God assigned him. As the children journey through this program, they will learn that God's love is rock solid!

## POWER POINT

The Power Point, our interactive call-and-response, summarizes what the kids learn each day. This learning tool allows the kids to engage in the message of the day, which makes it more likely for them to remember long after VBS ends. The kids will learn the Power Point, along with the motions, in the opening program, and they will be reinforced at each station. The Power Points for this year are:

- Day 1—My God is real. That's rock solid!
- Day 2—My God provides. That's rock solid!
- Day 3—My God is powerful. That's rock solid!
- Day 4—My God knows me. That's rock solid!
- Day 5—My God is preparing a place for me. That's rock solid!



## KEY VERSE

This year we have a great Key Verse that is broken down into segments that the kids learn each day. We will start with the first part, then build on it each day so that by the end of the week, the kids will know the entire verse by memory. We have added a set of Key Verse posters that volunteers can use each day to help teach the Key Verse to the kits. Motions are included to further imprint the verse on the hearts of the kids.

## MISSION PROJECT

This year the kids will collect money for ADRA to help kids know that God's love is rock solid! Each day during the closing program the kids will watch a video where they will hear a little more about the mission project and will be invited to bring their money to help other kids. Your VBS kit includes an envelope for collecting donations and instructions for how to direct funds to ADRA.

## STAFF APPAREL

Encourage all of your staff members to adopt an outfit for your VBS programs. You can purchase Mountain of Miracles staff t-shirts or have them wear comfortable hiking outfits. Mountain of Miracles t-shirts are available from AdventSource.org or by calling 402.486.8800.

## STATION ROTATIONS AND SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

This year the Mountain of Miracle stations are:

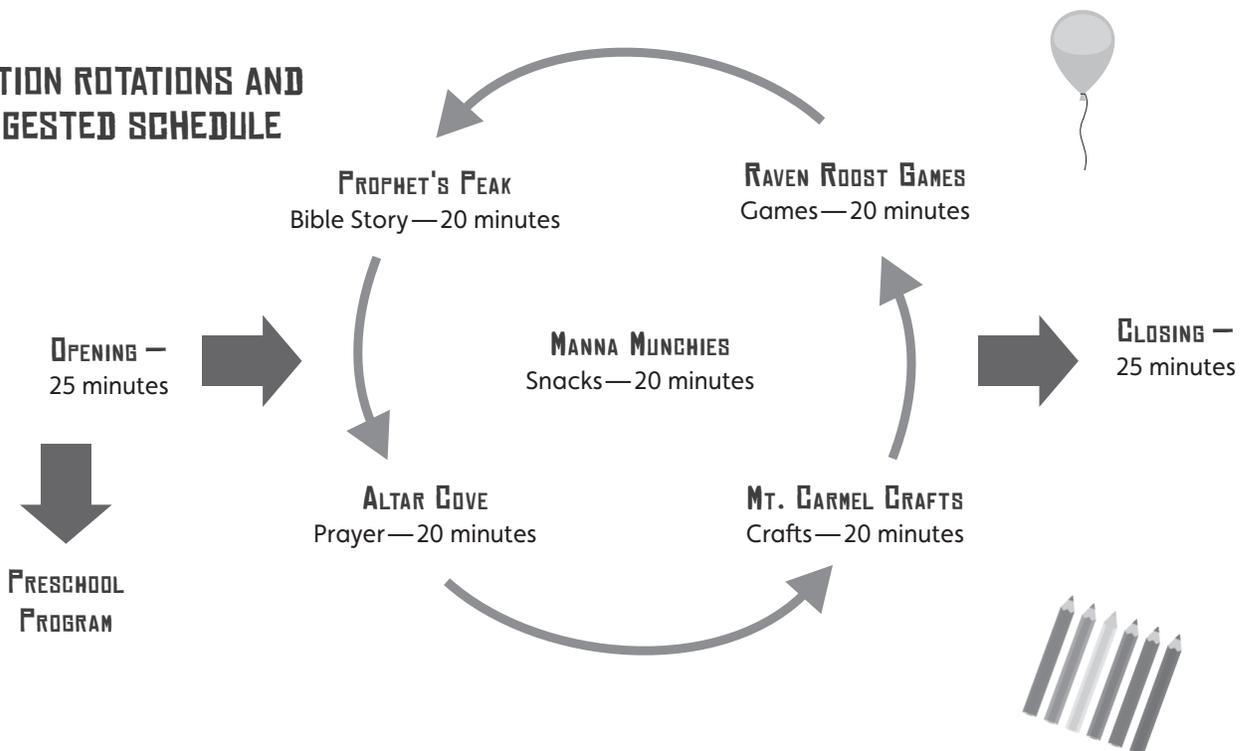
- Jezreel Valley—Opening & Closing Program
- Prophet's Peak—Bible Story Station
- Altar Alcove—Prayer Station
- Mt. Carmel Crafts—Craft Station
- Manna Munchies—Snack Station
- Raven Roost Games—Game Station



## JEZREEL VALLEY— OPENING + CLOSING PROGRAM

Each day starts with the kids gathering at Jezreel Valley, a fertile plain surrounded by mountains and natural springs. The Jezreel Valley leader is an experienced tour guide who will direct the opening and closing program activities. The tour guide is a native of Mountain of Miracles: Where God's Love is Rock Solid. He/She has been around for a long time and remembers when crops wouldn't grow because of prolonged periods of drought. The tour guide will welcome the kids to VBS each day. Rainy, our mascot for this year's VBS, will make daily appearances to help the tour guide introduce the Bible Pal, Power Point, and Key Verse.

## STATION ROTATIONS AND SUGGESTED SCHEDULE



## CREWS

As the kids arrive at the VBS program, they are assigned to a crew. The kids will sit on Middle Eastern or hiking blankets. The crew leader will greet the kids as they join the crew, and the group will travel through VBS together.

The names of the crews come from the story of Elijah. They are:

- Whirlwinds
- Firestorms
- Flood Waters
- Earthquakes
- Lightning Bolts

During the closing program we have included Crew Time, a question-and-answer session where the crew leaders help the kids internalize the daily Power Point.

## MUSIC

At Mountain of Miracles VBS, we have some wonderful new songs that your kids are going to love. We have a mix of songs that will get the kids excited and some that are more reflective and encourage commitment. Here are the song titles for this year's VBS:

- Solid Rock (Theme Song)
- Safe
- In Him I will Trust
- It's God
- Preparing a Place

In the opening and closing program we have listed the songs we suggest you sing each day. But you can mix, match, and add songs however works for your VBS.

This year the music videos, puppet videos, opening a closing videos and handouts will be available as downloadable resources. This will allow you to conveniently access and save materials for offline use, ensuring you have everything you need at the start of your program.

### HOW TO DOWNLOAD DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR THIS VBS

To download all of the digital files for this VBS program simply:

- Visit [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org)
- Create or log into your account
- From the Account page, click on "Digital Files"
- Enter your Digital Code, then select and download the files you need. The code for English files is HVBR1QTA and the code for Spanish files is DM8F31MO

## BIBLE STORY

Each day the kids will be introduced to a Bible story that will connect them with the Power Point. The Bible stories for this year are:

- Day 1: Facing Challenges with God
- Day 2: Bread and water in Zarepath
- Day 3: Battles of the Gods
- Day 4: Elijah Runs Away from Everyone
- Day 5: Elijah and Elisha cross the Jordan River together

## SKITS

During the opening and closing programs, the kids will watch a skit where the main character climbs all the way to the Summit of Serenity Mountain to show how God is always with us. Show the skit video or use the script for a live performance.

Following the opening program, the children are sent out to explore by visiting each of the stations at Mountain of Miracles.

# CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

This portion of the Vacation Bible School Director's Guide will provide you with ideas on how to create a program that welcomes children with varied needs and abilities. The following key points can help you and your team meet the needs of those with special needs while creating a safe and successful VBS program for all kids.

Mountain of Miracles VBS is a place where kids will learn that no matter what God is faithful. We want all children to have the opportunity to experience the Resting Point, regardless of their abilities or their challenges. Kids with disabilities may struggle to see that God loves them no matter what, as they often struggle to see how they fit in with other kids. During Mountain of Miracles, each child will learn that God is faithful to be with them no matter what is happening in their lives. By creating an inclusive VBS program, every child can discover how much God treasures them.

As you begin the planning process for an inclusive VBS program, ask God to help you see all of His kids through His eyes. Remember that kids with special needs are more alike than different from all children. Helping a child with special needs discover that God has a plan and a purpose for them within His family can open their hearts to the unconditional love of God. When they discover their place in God's family, they will discover a place of belonging and connection that they may have never experienced before. Creating a program that is inclusive to everyone can change not only the life of the child with special needs, but the lives of all the kids involved and help them to discover the amazing individuality that exists within the family of God.

As you meet with your VBS team and begin the planning process, be prayerful and proactive as you discuss and plan how Mountain of Miracles can be accessible to all kids. Take some time to develop a plan to anticipate meeting the needs of a child with a disability. Whether or not you know of specific kids with special needs within your community, they are there. By being prepared and openly receptive to all kids, you will

## ASL

One suggestion from our field test is to connect with a local ASL interpreter so your VBS program can reach all kids and families in your community.

be creating a place for all to experience what it means to be a part of God's family.

Here are some points to consider as you welcome kids of all abilities to participate in Mountain of Miracles:

1. As you meet with your team and design your program, take time to consider the activities through the perspective of a child with a disability in order to anticipate where and what adaptations might need to be made. Analyze the environment of your VBS program looking for obstacles that might impede the participation of a child with a physical disability. Be sure to seek input from the parents/caregivers as well as the kids themselves.
2. Get to know each child's abilities. Find ways to build on their strengths while coming alongside them in their challenges. To help you get to know as much as possible about a child with special needs, it is vital to include the child and the parent/caregiver in that process. Parents and caregivers are excellent resources for giving input on what will make VBS a positive experience. Be sure to review the special needs portion filled out by the parent/caregiver on the registration form and ask questions when further information is needed.
3. A child may benefit from a volunteer who is willing to be their buddy during VBS. This buddy will be able to provide additional support for a child. This does not require a highly trained individual, but does require someone who has a passion for getting to know children's unique God-given gifts and abilities, is patient, and is willing to assist in the areas where a child may have particular struggles.



4. Some kids may have difficulty communicating but can understand everything you say. Be sure to talk to the child and not over them. Likewise, a child may have good verbal skills but require more time or visual aids to process what someone says to them.
5. Behavior is a form of communication. Look for an underlying cause and the message the child is trying to communicate. Redirect behavior in a positive way rather than reacting with a negative response.
6. Use visual aids such as pictures or icons to communicate directions, schedules, expectations, or concepts to a child who has a communication disability or language processing delay.
7. State your expectations clearly and in positive terms, making sure to tell the child what to do rather than not to do. Verbal directions should be clear and concise.
8. Alert the child well before transitioning to a new activity or station to reduce the anxiety associated with unexpected changes. Giving them a concrete end to an activity by saying, "One more time," or "When the big hand on the clock is at..." can also be helpful. Using a visual schedule may assist in transitions as well.
9. Support and encourage the child to participate in each activity, including those that are new or unfamiliar, while being careful not to push them to the point of frustration. Give them time to attempt the activity before offering your help. If you see a child struggling with a task, always ask if he or she wants help before stepping in to assist.
10. Pay attention to nonverbal language that may indicate the child needs a sensory break. Sometimes a child may verbally communicate this, but often they won't. A child who demonstrates decreased self-control, increased

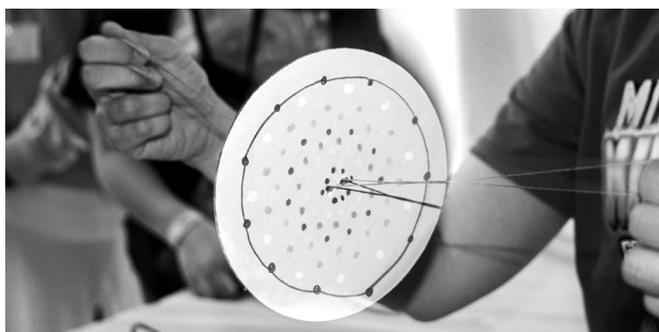
difficulty following directions, escalating frustration, shutting things out by placing hands over their eyes or ears, or moving away from others may be experiencing an overwhelmed sensory system. You can find a solution by simply creating more space around the child or by giving them a specific task. Giving them time in a quieter area with a "sensory break box" or taking them on a walk can also help. This is where a buddy can be particularly useful.

11. Be aware that some kids may require more time to complete an activity or to transition to the next activity. This may be obvious if a child has a physical disability, but it may also be true for kids with other disabilities, such as ADHD, autism, or cognitive delays. Plan how to accommodate for this ahead of time to minimize the amount of time a child may feel left behind or left out.
12. When communicating with parents and caregivers, focus on the positives. Discuss areas of need from the perspective of how to help a child be successful, rather than focusing on the difficulties they are having or seem to cause. Every parent wants to hear how well their kids are doing. Provide them with specific, positive details about the child's time at VBS. Your words may provide much needed encouragement to a family that is raising a unique, and sometimes challenging, child. It can make all the difference in a difficult situation to know that someone besides themselves recognizes the value of their child within the family of God.

While this list will help you to be better able to create an inclusive VBS program for all children, it is not an exhaustive list. You can find additional information about specific diagnoses as well as ideas for specific accommodations or adaptations. You can also find information about creating a sensory break box online and from sites such as Pinterest.

## INFORMATION REGARDING SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

While the range of difficulties varies along a huge spectrum in kids with special needs, so does the range of incredible gifts and abilities. It is vital to build on these strengths while also recognizing a child's areas of difficulty to anticipate stressful situations that may require additional support or specific adaptations/accommodations for them to successfully participate in VBS. Being proactive rather than reactive will create a more positive overall experience. Below are details on specific areas of disability. This information can be helpful during the



preparation phase of VBS. Remember that all kids are uniquely designed and that you should avoid stereotypes and preconceived ideas.

### **SENSORY PROCESSING DISORDERS**

Information comes into the nervous system through many avenues, including touch, vision, proprioception, smell, sound, and taste. In many kids with special needs, the information coming from their environment can be overwhelming. Due to an atypically developing nervous system, the information from their senses may lead to a different response than expected. Sensory processing disorders (also known as sensory integration dysfunction) are a common symptom of many diagnoses, including autism spectrum disorder (ASD), AD/HD, dyslexia, Down syndrome, and fetal alcohol syndrome. It is important to approach the needs of children with disabilities with particular care for their individual sensory needs.

### **AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER [ASD]**

Kids with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) demonstrate a varying degree of differences in language skills, social skills, repetitive themes and behaviors, flexibility, perspective-taking ability, and sensory responses. There will be some children who are non-verbal, avoid social contact with other children, and are fully consumed by repetitive activities. On the other end of the spectrum, there may be a child with more subtle differences in these areas; he or she may be highly verbal but confused by words with multiple meanings, seek social connections but make social errors or blunders, or be independent within structured settings but become anxious or frustrated with unexpected changes in routines. Understanding the unique set of differences that a child with ASD has can be critical in developing a successful plan to best meet their needs and realize their individual abilities and gifts. Parents/caregivers, as well as the child themselves, are your best resources for recognizing and anticipating any adaptations and accommodations needed.

### **ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER [AD/HD]**

A child with AD/HD may have a variety of symptoms, including failure to attend to details, difficulty maintaining focus or paying attention to a task, a seeming inability to listen to directions, poor organizational skills, a tendency to fidget or squirm, difficulty staying seated, a tendency to be frequently on the go or constantly in motion, difficulty waiting their turn, and a tendency to interrupt others. These kids may be able to actively listen and engage in the program more successfully if given a fidget toy (Tangle®, Thinking Putty®, stress balls, porcupine balls, Brain Noodle®, etc.). A child with AD/HD will frequently respond well to visual aids for instructions, learning concepts, and routines. It is important to remember that a child with AD/HD may learn differently



than expected. Even if they are wiggly or don't appear to be listening during an activity, they may be absorbing all the information. Explaining the behavior you expect from them beforehand along with giving them gentle reminders will help a child with AD/HD to be successful in your VBS program. These kids also do well when given a meaningful task where they can direct their attention and energy.

### **GROSS AND FINE MOTOR DELAYS**

There are many reasons why a child may acquire gross or fine motor skills at a different rate than their peers. Gross motor skills include activities that require larger muscle movements and coordination; these would include walking, running, jumping, climbing, and kicking. Fine motor skills are activities that utilize smaller muscle movement and coordination, such as writing, tying, cutting, or buttoning activities. These kids may have difficulty participating in games or crafts and will require adaptations of the activity or assistance to participate. These children may appear to be clumsy or have difficulty standing in one place. Some kids with motor delays may be hesitant to participate in certain activities due to fear of failure or feelings of incompetence. Positive encouragement and patience is an important part of their success in a VBS program. Having a buddy available to assist when needed or asked will also be a valuable part of this experience for a child with motor delays.

### **PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**

These kids may utilize an assistive device such as a walker or wheelchair or will have noticeable difficulty with mobility and coordination of their arms and hands. These kids may have a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, stroke, spinal cord injury, or traumatic brain injury. They may need extra time to transition between stations. If a child uses a wheelchair, create space to allow them to sit with their group. This might include removing a chair in a row or at a table. Anticipate potential barriers or obstacles in your VBS environment that may limit access to the different activity stations. These kids may also require additional support to participate in activities at the game or craft stations. If they are unable to participate in a game, a positive alternative would be to give them a special job such as scorekeeper or team captain.



# DIRECTOR'S TIPS

We are excited that you will oversee planning this year's VBS! It may seem like a monumental task, but effective recruitment of volunteers and distribution of duties will make your job much easier and more enjoyable. If you are at a large church, you may want to consider recruiting an assistant director. Start planning early and distribute duties early enough to give your volunteers adequate time to get the creative energy flowing. Build the excitement by keeping the members of your congregation informed and inviting them to pray for this outreach event.

## PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

### PRAY

The best step to success is to dedicate your efforts, your volunteers, and the kids attending to the Lord and pray for His presence at your event. Be specific in your own prayers. Pray for:

- The presence of the Holy Spirit
- Volunteers who love kids
- Patience for all who work with the kids
- Kids to grow in their faith
- The parents of the kids
- God to use your VBS to draw kids and their leaders closer to Him

### PLAN AHEAD

- Adapt the proposed timeline included in this guide to your situation
- Assign your team members early
- Include them in the planning
- Determine your budget
- Shop early to find the best prices
- Involve Your Pastor

It is important for parents and kids to get to know the pastor. Also, this will help your pastor see the importance of an active children's ministry program in your church. Assign your pastor a job in his or her comfort zone.

### BEGIN VOLUNTEER SCREENING

It used to be that our only worry with children's programs was finding enough people to volunteer. Unfortunately, that is not our only worry anymore. We must think in terms of protecting all kids from physical harm and abuse while they participate in VBS programs. Likewise,

all adult staff members must be aware of their moral responsibility to report suspected situations where a child may be an abuse victim. They also need to be trained in how to appropriately supervise children and interact with them.

All churches should have a child protection and volunteer screening/training program in place before the start of the VBS program. Check with your local conference office for their guidelines on screening volunteers and establishing a child safety program.

### KEEP LEADERS INFORMED

Make a written request to the church board for your budget and include the dates and times you want to hold your VBS. Make requests to Sabbath School division leaders and any others whose room or supplies you wish to use to ensure that everyone is informed of your plans.

### STICK TO THE BUDGET

- Work with your team to build your budget or find out what has already been allocated for your VBS budget.
- Be sure the church board approves your budget.
- Look for diverse ways to save and cut expenses. Shop early and compare prices online. Often, there are donors in the congregation and your community who are happy to help support children's events like VBS.
- If you underestimate your budget, discuss it with the board early on. It may require your team to do some extra work to get more money or cut expenses.

### REMEMBER THAT VBS IS AN OUTREACH

VBS is an outreach program for kids. Some churches may use the opportunity to include an adult program at the same time, and that's great! There are just a few things to remember as you work with the kids in your community.



- Many kids may not be connected with the church or have any religious background at all and will come to your VBS with absolutely no knowledge of anything religious or biblical. For this reason, we really need to get down to basics with our language and what we teach. Don't assume they know anything about the Bible.
- Prepare kids that come from your church to accept and join in with those who are visiting. Help them to know how to relate to the kids of the community and encourage them to make new friends and to witness with their words, behavior, and their own relationship with Jesus.
- When you interact with kids, use their names. We encourage you to use nametags. Learning a child's name builds a relationship with them and will make them feel special.
- Plan for kids with special needs, including kids who may need special assistance because of a disability. Integrate them into a crew and assign a one-on-one volunteer. It is important that the volunteers you choose receive basic training beforehand. They will also need information from the child's parent/guardian. Be sure to communicate your plan to the child's parent/guardian as well. For more information, see page 7.

### PLAN A SABBATH CLOSING PROGRAM

This important program allows the children in your VBS to share what they have learned and gives you the opportunity to invite their parents into your church. It also gives you an opportunity to express your thanks to those who helped out during the week.

- If possible, have your closing program on Sabbath morning following the last day of VBS.
- Plan a whole church potluck and invite the kids and parents to join you.
- Communicate this information to the parents with a copy of the letter on page 19. This letter goes out before VBS and invites the kids to the

program as well as the parents to the "Family Event" closing program.

### BUDGET YOUR TIME

- Plan on your one-week program taking at least three weeks of your time.
- You will need:
  - The week before for concentrated preparation.
  - The week of VBS to ensure that things run smoothly. Typically, the director is the first to arrive and the last to leave at the end of the day.
  - The week after to tie up all the little details—returning borrowed props, tearing down and cleaning up, organizing your reports, and sending thank you cards.

### GIVE DAILY UPDATES

- Before or after each day's program, bring as much of your team together as you can.
- Debrief what happened throughout the day (both good and what needs correcting) with them.
- Allow time for your staff to share something they experienced.
- Have prayer for the kids.

### APPRECIATE YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Appreciation is an easy way to affirm others and show that you notice them and recognize their efforts. This will go a long way in encouraging your helpers and others to volunteer in the future. Some ideas on how to appreciate your volunteers may include:

- Taking the time to recognize individuals publicly
- Saying thank you to them privately
- Sending them thank you cards and possibly including gift cards
- Organizing an appreciation party for them after VBS is over

### MAKE FINAL REPORTS

It's important to share what happened at VBS with your congregation.

- Ask for a time to share some of your team's experiences.
- Recognize those who were part of the team and thank them.
- Have two or three kids share what they especially enjoyed.
- Write an article for your church newsletter or conference/union publication.
- Prepare a final report for the church board.
- Tell the board of any future plans you have for follow-up. This will serve three purposes:



- It will underscore the value of supporting a program that has a continued and sustained impact in the church and community.
- It will ensure they are on board for any future events.
- It will help in your efforts to seek funding for future programs.

### **FOLLOW UP**

Sometimes we forget that VBS is an outreach program. Your VBS program should be the beginning of an outreach effort by your church to the families of your community that continues throughout the year. Follow-up may include:

- Sending a card inviting them to visit the church again.
- Creating a yearly plan to bring the kids together periodically, such as a fall festival, Christmas party, Easter event, or church family social.
- Inviting them to be involved in the children's programs at your church such as Sabbath School, Adventurers, Pathfinders, children's choir, and/or sports ministries.
- Don't miss this great opportunity to build a deeper relationship between the kids, their families, and your church.

### **IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR THE VBS LEADER**

Check out the *Quick Start Guide for Vacation Bible School* and the *Quick Start Guide for Child Evangelism* booklets available from AdventSource at [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) or 402.486.8800. These booklets have invaluable information for the VBS leader.

### **RECRUITING AND STAFF TRAINING**

Here are some great ways to recruit volunteers:

- Sending people personal invitations. This is the best recruiting method. It's an opportunity to share your vision about how God can use volunteers and this program to reach the children.
- Praying for God to send you the individuals you need.
- Placing announcements in the bulletins and sharing your vision from the pulpit.
- Inviting people over the phone and/or email.
- Encouraging your volunteers to recruit more volunteers.
- Inviting the teens in your church to participate as Crew Leaders. Some teenagers need community service hours for school. VBS qualifies as a community service event.
- Keeping in mind that retired people may be more available for volunteering than those who work.

Once you have your volunteers, here are some ways to equip them:

- Providing ministry descriptions that describe their responsibilities.
- Making sure they have the essential equipment they need to do their job.
- Providing the appropriate resources, including human, financial, and paper.
- Offering training through mentoring and planning sessions.
- Supporting them and affirming them profusely.

(Adapted from *Pastor's and Elder's Handbook for Children's Ministries* [Children's Ministries Department and Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists], pp. 24-28.)



## DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

The director plans for the overall needs of the staff and organizes the time (such as scheduling) and the space (such as assigning rooms) details of the program. The director is a behind-the-scenes organizer. Some of the responsibilities of the director include:

- Leading out in staff meetings.
- Recruiting and training staff.
- Attending VBS training sessions provided by your local conference or online.
- Planning for registration and record-keeping.
- Planning the schedule.
- Planning the budget with the treasurer/business manager.
- Conducting daily devotions for the team.
- Observing the stations and providing for any unexpected or emergency needs.
- Working with the children's ministries coordinator on follow-up.

Remember to delegate! Don't try to run the show all by yourself. If you see volunteers standing around, double check that you aren't doing something they could do. If you are, pass the torch to them so you can tend to other matters.

The director should be free of any individual station responsibilities. The assistant director works hand in hand with the director to decide which responsibilities the he or she will take and which the director will take. The rest of the staff is your team. Treat them as team members who have a vested interest in what happens during your VBS and its outcome.

## CREW LEADERS

Each child will be assigned a crew, or group, during registration. Every crew needs a leader, and this is a great job for the teens in your church! Younger kids really respond to them. Regardless of whether you choose teens or tweens to be crew leaders, it is important to have someone responsible for training them. All crew leaders should meet before VBS to go through their responsibilities and get an overview of the Mountain of Miracles program. Have a short debrief time after each daily program to answer any questions and go over

the next day's programs. Check the Director's Resource downloads for the crew leader's guide and daily program helps that will assist them in working with the kids.

The crew leaders should be given a bag or drawstring backpack each day with the items they will need for each member of their crew. You can use a simple paper bag with a handle from a discount store or use the Mountain of Miracles drawstring bags available from AdventSource at [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) at 402.486.8800.

## OPENING + CLOSING STATION LEADER

Jezeel Valley is the first station the kids will attend each day. During this time the host, also known as the Tour Guide, will welcome the kids to the VBS. The Guide will also introduce the Cave Singers, who will lead the kids in fun and exciting songs. Rainy the Raven, this year's mascot, will help the Guide introduce the Bible Pal, Power Point, and Key Verse of the day.

## SONG LEADERS — CAVE SINGERS

The Cave Singers are responsible for leading out in the music if you choose to do it live. Otherwise, you can use the provided music files, which are available as downloads. We recommend choosing song leaders from those among your staff who you know are good singers. They should be enthusiastic and make sure to learn the songs and the motions that go with them ahead of time. Involving teens as song leaders is a great idea.

## STATION LEADERS

Station leaders play a key role in the success of your VBS. Choose station leaders who are organized, motivated, and not afraid to take on responsibilities. Their responsibilities include finding additional volunteers needed to run the station, buying the necessary supplies, staying



within their budget, and decorating their station. Make sure you give your station leaders their station manual as early as possible to allow them ample time to prepare. Each station manual gives a daily overview of its activities so the leaders can understand how their stations fit with the Power Point. Meet with your station leaders often to answer any questions they may have, help solve any challenges they may be facing, and ensure that they are running each station in the way that works best for your church. Remember that stations are designed to be experiential and not classroom-based where kids simply sit and listen. Station leaders play a key role in the success of VBS, so be sure to affirm them for the wonderful work they are doing!

## TREASURER/BUSINESS MANAGER

If you are fortunate enough to have a business manager, they will be responsible for collecting receipts and handling reimbursements for the team. He or she should also keep the director aware of the state of the budget. If you have a business manager, they can be in charge of any fundraising needed. If you don't have one, this can be a position you choose to delegate to your assistant director. Otherwise, this role falls on you.

## PUBLICITY DIRECTOR

This person promotes VBS through signage outside your church, announcements during church services, posters in the church and community, announcements on the church website, reminders in the church bulletin and email newsletters, social media, or announcements in the local newspaper, placards in stores, invitations passed out in the neighborhood, and postcards to former attendees. They should always include the date, time, and location of the program as well as the name of your church. A good way to get the whole church involved is by asking members to invite kids and families from their neighborhood. He or she can also remind the members that this is not simply a children's ministry event, but evangelism to the whole community.

## PRAYER LEADER

The prayer leader may never attend your program at all, but their job is of the utmost importance. The prayer leader organizes the church into an active prayer circle, specifically praying for both the leaders and the children who will attend. This is a wonderful responsibility for a shut-in person and will give them a link to your church family. They can continue to pray for each kid and family who comes even after VBS is over. What a great way for church members to get involved!



## RESOURCE MANAGER

This is someone who takes care of getting all the resources needed for VBS. They are responsible for borrowing whatever is needed and seeing that it is returned after VBS. In most cases the individual station leaders will prefer to do this for themselves. However, having a resource manager is helpful as many of the supplies can be purchased in larger quantities and distributed to the different stations as needed. A resource manager can play a key role in helping the various station leaders as they plan for their needs.

## DECORATING TEAM

Another way to help your station leaders is to have a decorating team. It is such a blessing to have one special group in charge of decorations! If this isn't possible, your station leaders can decorate the rooms they are in charge of themselves. If you are able to have a decorating team, their job will be to provide the necessary decorations for each station, including the opening and closing station and the registration table. It is their job to change around the props as needed each day or during the program. They are also responsible for all props after VBS is over, including returning any items that were borrowed.

## MEDIA SPECIALIST

The media specialist is the person who runs your audio, video, PowerPoint, and lighting for the week. In addition, they need to make a list of any media needed during VBS, the name of the station leader needing it, and where it is needed. It is the media specialist's job to have the equipment in place and ready to use as needed. Once VBS is over, he or she makes sure that all equipment is returned to its proper place.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

The photographer takes pictures throughout the week and prepares them to show on a projector at the closing program. They are responsible for creating the Photo Time slide presentation, where kids get to see themselves in various rotations. We recommend showing a final presentation on Sabbath to show the congregation what happened during the week. Ask your pastor for a time during the worship service to highlight VBS. Be sure you have permission to use photos of the kids—this must be included on the registration form.

## REGISTRAR AND REGISTRATION HELPERS

The registrar is the first person your attendees will see. We highly recommend that you choose adult volunteers. This position requires an outgoing and organized personality. No matter the attendance, this is at least a two-person job. Registrars ask the parents/guardians to fill out an information card, write nametags for the children, and answer any questions parents/guardians may have.

The registrar should organize the cards and enter the information into a database where it will be accessible to division leaders or people sending invitations for VBS next year.

## NURSE AND FIRST AID PROVIDER

Every VBS needs someone skilled and ready to administer first aid. They should keep in mind, however, that we are not permitted to provide any medications to children. He or she should follow the list below to make sure your VBS is the safest possible:

- Keep a first aid box well supplied with Band-Aids.
- Have a record of any children who have special medical problems or diets.
- Keep the snack station directors informed of any food allergies.
- Be a comfort to any child who begins to feel ill.
- Be prepared to make a call to a child's parent/caregiver, if it is needed.
- If there is a severe illness or injury, call 911 and the child's caregiver.

## FOLLOW-UP LEADER

This person should be included in everything your team plans for VBS. He or she needs to form their own team of workers to plan and execute events and activities during the year between VBS programs. Refer this person to the *Quick Start Guide for Child Evangelism*, available from AdventSource at [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) or 402.486.8800. The follow-up leader can work with the children's ministries coordinator or Sabbath School leaders to invite the children to church each Sabbath for a "mini VBS" program. This is an excellent follow-up program for your church. Take advantage of it!



# COUNTDOWN TO SUCCESS

## 3-6 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR VBS

- Pray for your VBS program. Ask God to help you to plan an outreach event that will honor and glorify Him. Ask God to work in the hearts of your congregation, volunteers, and leaders.
- Select the format for your VBS.
  - Will you have a morning, afternoon, or evening VBS?
  - Will you have a weekend, weeklong, or even a two-week program?
  - Will you include a program for parents/families?
  - Will your program take place at your church or at another location?
- Select and reserve facilities for each of your stations that best suit the activities that will take place there.
- Begin selection of your team. Go over the job descriptions on pages 14-16 and determine your needs.
- Ask your congregation to start praying for this year's VBS.
- Plan your VBS budget.
- Think about fundraising ideas.
  - Speak with your pastor about assigning evangelism funds to the VBS program.
  - Find out if your local conference has evangelism funds that your church can request for VBS.
  - Collect an offering to help with expenses.
  - Invite your congregation to help sponsor expenses for a specific station.
  - Ask your congregation to donate decoration items so you don't have to purchase them.

## 2-3 MONTHS BEFORE

- Recruit station leaders.
  - Schedule a time to meet with all station leaders. Give them training and distribute the station manuals and materials. It is important to hold these meetings to ensure that everyone is well equipped and informed prior to the start of VBS.
- Start the marketing and publicity for your VBS.

- Announce the dates for VBS in your church bulletin.
- Consider creating a VBS page on your church's website.
- Post flyers and posters in strategic locations around your church (check [AdventistVBS.org](http://AdventistVBS.org) for promotional materials).
- Ask permission to post flyers and posters in your local church school, public schools, and businesses as well.
- Encourage parents to preregister their kids. Early registration helps you calculate food and supplies.
- Start advertising your VBS program on social media.
- Order whatever supplies you need for VBS. You can order some of your supplies from [AdventSource](http://AdventSource.org) at [AdventSource.org](http://AdventSource.org) or 402.486.8800. For craft materials, visit craft stores or buy from vendors online.

## 8 WEEKS BEFORE

- Recruit and train additional crew leaders and volunteers if needed.
- Continue your marketing and publicity efforts.
- Continue gathering supplies and decoration materials.
- Meet with your decorating team to create a detailed decorating master plan.
- Work on your VBS rotation schedule.
- Be sure that the church board has approved your budget.
- Be sure you have ordered all your supplies.



## 4 WEEKS BEFORE

- Hold a final meeting with all staff and volunteers to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of their responsibilities and a chance to address any questions or concerns they may have. Also, make sure to inform them about backup and emergency plans.
- Touch base with each station leader and review the supplies they will need. Be sure they have all the supplies and volunteers they need for their station.
- Get your congregation excited about the ADRA mission project.
- Continue marketing in your church and the community. One good way to do this is to find the VBS promotional video available on your Director's Resource USB and show it during church service.
- Continue to encourage preregistration.

## 2 WEEKS BEFORE

- Check your registration count.
- Get reports from station leaders to be sure everything is on schedule.
- Ask the pastor to plan a dedication church service for all staff members.
- Teach the VBS songs to your staff, including the crew leaders.
- Get a report from the decorating committee.
- Inventory supplies to be sure everyone has what they need.

## 1 WEEK BEFORE

- Complete all decorations.
- Check with station leaders to make sure they have all their supplies.
- Make a list of any last-minute supplies needed.
- Decide when and where all station leaders and crew leaders will meet each day.

## 1 DAY BEFORE

- Finish up any last-minute decorating or organizing of supplies for each station.
- Have a prayer walkthrough. Invite your team to join you in each room the children will be in. Pray for the kids who will be attending.

## OPENING DAY

- Arrive early and make sure your staff arrives early as well to address any last-minute details.
- Be ready at the door with a smile and welcoming words for each child that enters. Direct them

to the registration table. Ask their name and introduce them to those who are registering. You will need several helpers to assist you.

## 1 WEEK AFTER PROGRAM ENDS

- Inventory supplies, including craft items, printed materials, and nonperishable snack supplies.
- Conduct a meeting with your team to debrief about the week.
- Complete all records.
- Complete the North American Division report at ChildMin.org and report to your conference office.
- Arrange with the pastor for follow-up with the families.
- Write thank you notes or create appreciation certificates for your staff. Consider hosting a staff ice cream party to thank everyone for their help.



*(This letter is available to download at [AdventistVBS.org](http://AdventistVBS.org))*

Dear Parents:

We want to invite your kids to join us for an exciting program. Please mark these dates on your calendar so your children won't miss our Mountain of Miracles VBS.

Where:

Address:

Date:

Time:

Contact Information:

At this VBS your kids will learn that Jesus is always with them.

This will be an exciting week of singing, playing games, and learning about how God is faithful in good times and bad. Be sure you register to attend and encourage your children to invite and bring a friend!

Also, while you're marking your calendar, plan to attend our closing program on \_\_\_\_\_. Your children will have a part in the program, so we know you will want to be there.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

VBS Director:



# PASTOR INVITATION LETTER

*(Download this letter at [AdventistVBS.org](http://AdventistVBS.org))*



Dear Pastor,

We recognize how important it is for our kids to recognize the needs of others. To this end we are including the ADRA mission project in this year's VBS program. This project raises money for food and education for kids around the world.

Please join us in our ADRA mission project by encouraging the congregation to participate. Your support and prayers can make a big difference in the lives of families around the world.

Your VBS director has instructions for collecting the funds and an offering code that has been designated for this project. Thank you for investing in the growth and training of our children and making a difference in the lives of kids and families around the world.

Sherri Uhrig, Director  
Children's Ministries  
North American Division