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A Note to the VBS Leader

Welcome to an exciting, rewarding experience in child evangelism. Maybe you are an experienced Vacation Bible School leader. Maybe you are simply looking for fresh material for this year's VBS. Perhaps you are a frightened novice wondering where to begin. Whatever your background, we believe that you will find in our "Space Rescue" Vacation Bible School program a wealth of helpful material to bring Jesus into the hearts of the children in your church and community.

The theme of the Space Rescue program is the Great Controversy. Beginning in heaven, we will trace the story of Lucifer. Then we will travel to earth to witness the creation of our world and learn how it joined in Lucifer's rebellion, with him now being called Satan. We will discover how Jesus came to our planet to rescue us from eternal death. Finally, we will learn about our trip to heaven when Jesus comes back to save us from this planet. The main point is that the way to heaven is through Jesus Christ alone. He gives us the power to obey Him.

Every part of the program, including crafts, food, Bible stories, and games, is designed to reinforce the spiritual lessons of the Space Rescue theme in a way that will be attractive and understandable for unchurched twenty-first century children. It will also hold the attention of children who have heard these Bible stories again and again since babyhood.

The Space Rescue program differs from VBS programs you may have used before in several important ways:

 Distinctly evangelistic—Our role as Seventh-day Adventists is to spread the three angels' messages to the world. We are to prepare people for Jesus' soon coming. The Space Rescue VBS program explains the Great Controversy theme in a way that children can grasp and understand.

- Bible memory—We want our children to hide God's Word in their hearts. Each night of the Vacation Bible School, children will work on memorizing Revelation 22:12–14 and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17).
- The Ten Commandments—Our children need to understand that God's Ten Commandments are not an arbitrary list of do's and don'ts given to make our lives harder. Instead, we present them as God's ten happiness rules, helping children understand the principle of love woven through each commandment.
- Total Member Involvement—Our detailed planning guide gives ideas for soliciting help from your whole congregation as well as ways to minimize cost to your church.

We recommend that you and your staff read and study the book *The Story of Redemption* in preparation for this VBS.

We welcome feedback and suggestions for improvements or corrections in future editions. You may contact us at sales@mybiblefirst.org, or by phone at 1-423-771-9228.

Supplemental Items From My Bible First

- For the theme talks
 - Creation Posters (optional for session 2)
- For Station 2
 - The Ten Commandments Flip-chart (large) (required for every session)
- Inexpensive gifts for children
 - Ten Commandments poster
 - Ten Commandments flip-chart (small)

Overview of Books and Folders

Note the following:

- 1. Digital download: Folders and books are all digital.
- 2. Printed copy: Books are printed. In addition, digital copies of folders and books and templates are included on the thumb drive.

• Folder 1: Master Plan (this book—the leader's planning guide)

- Book 1
 - Six-month leader's advance planning schedule and checklist
 - Detailed description of staff positions
 - Overview of the week
 - Suggested schedule and a modifiable schedule

Folder 2: Theme Talks

- o Book 2
 - Fully scripted theme talks for one presenter
 - Fully scripted theme talks for two presenters
 - Prop suggestions

• Folder 3: Food

- o Book 3
 - Menu ideas with specific recipes
 - Suggested setup/serving ideas
- o Book 3b
 - Allergy-friendly alternatives

• Folder 4: Decorations

- o Book 4
 - Ideas for decorating all rooms
 - Countdown for the decorating coordinator
- JPEG for banner (can order from My Bible First or a local printer)

• Folder 5: Comet Crafts (Station 1)

- o Book 5
 - Full instructions and scripts for the daily crafts
- Templates for crafts (Printed templates are included in the print edition.)

• Folder 6: Cosmic Command Center (Station 2)

- Book 6
 - Fully scripted talks to illustrate the Ten Commandments
 - Suggested props
- JPEG backdrop of Space Command Center (5 X 4 feet)
- Pictures (Printed pictures are included in the print edition.)

Folder 7: Space Quest (Station 3)

- o Book 7
 - Fully scripted science talks
 - Suggested props
- o Pictures (Printed pictures are included in the print edition.)

• Folder 8: "Geo"Robic Games

- o Book 8
 - Suggested games for each day
 - List of needed materials
- o Pictures (Printed pictures are included in the print edition.)

Folder 9: Music

- o Book 9: Sheet music
- MP3 recordings of all suggested songs
- PowerPoint with words for all songs

• Folder 10: Sabbath Celebration

- Book 10
 - Worship service outline
 - Fully scripted sermon
- Certificate of graduation
- o Powerpoint (with script included) for the Sabbath sermon
- o MP3 recordings of suggested appeal song (Sheet music is included in Book 9.)

Folder 11: Registration

- Book 11: Tips and ideas for registration
- Medical Release form (word document)
- Media Release form (word document)
- Name tag elements
- Name tag templates
- Forms (Printed forms are included in the print edition.)

• Folder 12: Promotional Materials

- Graphics for advertisement fliers
 - 5" X 5"
 - 5.5" X 8.5"
- Graphics for outdoor advertisements
 - 6' x 4' yard banner
 - 24" x 16" yard sign
- Space Rescue bulletin summary
- Social media
 - Day 1–5 Instagram Stories
 - Day 1–5 Square Stories
 - Facebook cover photo 820 X 320 px
 - Facebook story templates
 - Instagram announcement 1080 X 1920 px
 - Square template
- T-shirt
 - Mock-up design
 - Logo in .ai, .jpg, and .png

Folder 13: Supplemental Pack

Pictures and templates for various VBS components

Leader's Advance Planning Schedule

Do by	(4–6 months before)
	Check church, school, and community calendars and decide on possible dates for your VBS. Place your VBS dates on the church calendar. Make sure the Sabbath celebration is included on the calendar.
	Create a budget.
	Get the approval of your ministry leader, pastor, and/or church board.
	Recruit leaders for each activity station. (See "Staff Ministry Descriptions" in this booklet.)
	Hold a prayer and planning meeting and set dates for future monthly meetings.
	Discuss with the pastor as to who should be the Sabbath Celebration speaker. (Could be the pastor, VBC MC, or VBS leader.)
	Discuss with potluck coordinator about having a special potluck after the Sabbath Celebration for VBS participants and their parents.
Do by	(3 months before)
	Finalize the dates and staff.
	Confirm that the VBS date is on the church calendar.
	Set up online registration
	Start advertising for VBS
	☐ In the church bulletin, the church newsletter, and on the church website as often as possible.
	☐ On free community moms' group websites.
	☐ On free community church VBS lists.
	•
	☐ On free radio community church events.

		Create a list of items that could be borrowed from other church members. Distribute this list widely by including it as a bulletin insert, posting it on Facebook, or featuring it in the church newsletter or email.
		Hold a prayer and planning meeting.
Do	by	(2 months before)
		Tally the response from the needs list and put it in the bulletin again if necessary.
		Arrange for pre-registration on the church website if possible.
		If teens are leading in any stations, meet with them to practice.
		Order any supplies needed (visualized songs, crafts, etc.)
		Schedule a church cleaning bee if needed.
		Hold a prayer and planning meeting.
		Discuss the program for the Sabbath Celebration with the pastor and find out who will be the platform chair that day.
Do	by	(6 weeks before)
		Pre-register children who attend your church.
		Personally invite as many church children as possible. (Visit Sabbath school rooms; give out flyers; offer incentives to bring friends, etc.)
		Start making weekly verbal announcements every Sabbath if possible.
		Put VBS posters in public locations.
		Check with all the staff to make sure that they will be ready and that they have all necessary supplies.
		Start learning the theme songs; recruit a group of children and teens to learn them so they can enthusiastically lead the singing.
		Hold a prayer and planning meeting.
		Plan for and advertise the date to go door-to-door inviting children in the church's neighborhood.
		Mail invitations to all the children who attended VBS last year.

Do	by	(1 month before)
		Discuss the Sabbath Celebration program run sheet with the platform chair and make sure all adjustments have been made.
		Make sure the potluck coordinator remembers to plan a special potluck for the Sabbath Celebration.
		Meet with the greeters and discuss the best way to make new families and children feel welcomed on the Sabbath Celebration.
Do	by	(2 weeks before)
		Take a team of children, teens, and families and go door-to-door in the neighborhood to invite children to VBS. Then pray for those who have been invited.
		Collect and distribute items church members have donated or loaned; put names on all the items that will need to be returned.
		Make sure the AV coordinator will be ready and able to play the pre-session mp3 and the PowerPoint slides.
		Check with all VBS staff to make sure all needs are filled.
		Make copies of the registration card. (A customizable document is included.)
		If your daily schedule will vary from the suggested times, make your own detailed schedule.
		Pre-register children who attend your church.
		Discuss with the AV team any additional needs that you will have for the Sabbath Celebration.
		Print fliers to give to parents inviting them to the Sabbath Celebration (included in VBS packet, under "flyers").
Do	by	(1 week before)
		Hold a prayer session.
		Complete all unfinished tasks from above.

	Check the website for pre-registrations. Make sure you have enough materials for all children pre-registered as well as those who are likely to come and register when it starts.
	Make copies of the attendance record if not using online registration forms.
	Finalize the Sabbath Celebration program with the pastor, platform chair, and AV team.
	Make sure the AV team has MP3s for songs, PowerPoint for all songs.
	Make sure church AV team has MP3s for songs, powerpoints, etc. for the Sabbath Celebration.
	Remind greeters about the upcoming Sabbath Celebration, make sure they are prepared.
Do by	(1 day before)
	Set up all stations.
	Assemble supplies.
	Do a dry run of the program with all presenters and group leaders.
	Pray, pray, pray.
Do by	(during VBS)
	Debrief with the group after every VBS meeting. Discuss what went well and what didn't go well. Troubleshoot prior to the next session.
	Identify children who will participate in the Sabbath Celebration.
	Hand out Sabbath Celebration invitations.
	Remind children and their parents about the Sabbath celebration.
	Remind children and leaders/participants to wear their VBS T-shirts to church.
	(Last evening of VBS) Get a picture slide show to the AV team for Sabbath Celebration.
	(On Sabbath morning) Review the Sabbath celebration program run sheet with all participants, platform chair, and the AV team.

Do by	(after VBS is finished)
	Clean up, tally, and list left-over supplies that can be used another year.
	Store items in a tub or VBS closet in the church.
	Make a list of children to invite to VBS next year. Give a copy to the church's interest coordinator.
	Follow up with parents and families who have attended.
	Give a report to your conference's VBS ministry department.
	Continue praying for the children who attended and their families.

Staff Positions

The following list of staff positions and ministry descriptions is intended to be a guide, not a mandate. In larger churches, the list may need to be expanded beyond what is given here. In smaller churches, staff members will hold more than one position, and some positions may go unfilled. A small VBS, even with some positions unfilled, is better than none at all. But think big and pray much, and you may be surprised what God will do.

- Director
- Assistant director
- Prayer team coordinator
- Music leader
- Presenters: (1) Theme & (2) Character Segment
- Question activity coordinator
- Game coordinator
- Food coordinator
- Craft coordinator
- Registration coordinator
- Advertising and communication coordinator
- Audiovisual technician
- Decorations coordinator
- Photographer/videographer
- Daily clean-up coordinator
- Age-group "shepherds" and assistants

Staff Position Descriptions

Director

The director should have a passion for evangelism and see the potential in VBS for fruit for the kingdom of God. He/she should inspire others to envision a harvest from this long-term seed sowing effort.

The director needs to be a team builder, leader, and organizer. The director recruits all the other team members and assistants and maintains close communication with the position leaders. He/she will hold planning sessions to pray with staff, inspire others, make assignments, and practice as needed. He/she will hold work days to prepare props and supplies and to prepare the facility for the week of VBS.

The director will work with the church board regarding scheduling, staffing, location, and funding. He/she will involve the local church pastor and leaders in active participation. If possible, the pastor should be a presenter or leader so that the children and families will identify him as being integrally involved in connecting them to Jesus.

The director is responsible for implementing mandatory child safety policies and educating all VBS staff about child safety issues. This includes making sure all volunteers have filled out a Volunteer Service Form (required by the General Conference Risk Management). Your pastor or conference children's ministry coordinator should be able to provide you with the form used in your church or conference.

The director will be responsible for planning the Sabbath Celebration program.

Assistant Director

The assistant director shares the leader's passion for leading children to Jesus through VBS. Assist the leader as much as possible. May also be one of the coordinators or presenters.

Prayer Team Coordinator

The prayer team coordinator will recruit people willing to pray for the outpour of God's Spirit on the VBS and all participants. The eternal success of your VBS depends on this ministry of prayer. This person needs to pray daily, during the weeks and months preceding VBS, for all the VBS staff as they prepare and for the children and their families who will be attending. During the week of VBS, this person will be responsible for finding church members to pray during the actual time that VBS is occurring. The director should communicate with the prayer team coordinator about any specific needs or blessings. The prayer team will then make sure that these are brought to our Heavenly Father.

Music Leader

The music leader has a passion for honoring God through sacred music and can enthusiastically lead children in praise and worship. The Music leader will choose music that is upbeat, kid friendly, and easily remembered. He/she will learn the theme, scripture, and other program songs in advance. The music leader coordinates accompanists and makes sure all musicians have the music ahead of time so they can master it. If appropriate, the music leader can involve the church's teen group and possibly even some VBS children in leading the music.

Presenters

The presenters need to love children and Jesus passionately. They should understand the importance of children experiencing conversion. They will not read or even just memorize the theme talks, but will internalize the material sufficiently to be able to speak from the heart with joy and sparkle. They will be responsible for any additional props that might be needed.

Memory Challenge Coordinator

This person will have the fun job of coordinating the question based activities that will reinforce the theme talk, memory verse, and character talk each evening. This person needs to be enthusiastic, spontaneous, and lots of fun. This person will be responsible for finding prizes and other materials to go with this section.

Game Coordinator

The game coordinator arranges and directs all the games. This person is responsible for finding items needed for the games and making sure everything is ready to go each night. He/she can lead the games or appoint someone to lead the game. This person should also be responsible for finding appropriate assistants (usually teens).

Food Coordinator

The food coordinator is in charge of all that involves food: purchasing food and utensils, food prep, food set-up, and clean-up. This person can delegate to others on a team, but ultimately will be responsible for the success of the meal.

Craft Coordinator

The craft coordinator is involved with the purchase and set-up of all craft materials and coordinating helpers. In addition he/she will be responsible for helping teach how to do the craft or appointing someone to do this.

Registration Coordinator

The registration coordinator works with the advertising and communication coordinator to make sure there is a way to pre-register online. He/she coordinates onsite registration including designing registration forms. Keeps record of all children who come to VBS each night. Comes up with an appropriate check-out system when parents come to pick up children.

The registration coordinator finds helpers and comes up with a system to prevent children being lost or alone without an adult. Needs to make sure all unused entrances to the facility are locked and monitored.

If the registration coordinator makes their own form, it will need to include allergies, emergency phone numbers, and special needs of any child attending. If a child has a food allergy, the food coordinator must be notified (recommend a special armband for that child or name badge with food allergy label). Write each child's name on a name tag and secure it on the child (peel-and stick, clip on, pin on, or lanyard tags).

If applicable, the registration coordinator should also notify Adventurer and Pathfinder Club Directors regarding potential new club members so they can invite children and families to information/enrollment meetings. He/she can also give the families of VBS attendees appropriate information about the local Seventh-Day Adventist school. If possible, introduce them to the teacher(s) and/or principal.

The registration coordinator should also make sure each child/family receives an invitation to Sabbath school and worship services in your local congregation.

Advertising and Communication Coordinator

This person is responsible for coordinating advertising both to church and local community. He/she should check with local newspapers and radio stations for free advertising and look for other creative ways to advertise VBS in the community. This person should begin several months in advance to publicize the dates for VBS on the church calendar. This person also communicates in advance with the church family via creative verbal announcements, bulletin notes, and flyers/inserts.

Other responsibilities include the following: Work very closely with VBS leader to send out the suggested needs lest and make sure people are bringing needed items; arrange for online registration through the church website (work with registration coordinator); make signs to advertise VBS as well as direct people toward the correct place to enter facility; and coordinate transportation (if needed) of children in the local community.

At the conclusion of VBS, this person works with VBS leader, audiovisual technician, and photographer/videographer to report on the event to the church and community.

Audiovisual Technician (AV technician)

The AV technician operates the church's sound/video systems. He/she meets with all presenters and musicians every single night prior to the program starting and runs through the program with them. He/she coordinates powerpoint slides for the main presentation and musicians OR has video ready to show (if using that in leu of onsite presentation). He/she makes sure all mics, slides, sound tracks, and any other AV device are working before the program. Double check with musicians to make sure the powerpoint for songs is in the correct order with the correct words.

Decorations Coordinator

The decorations coordinator is responsible for decorating the facility to fit with the Daniel theme. He/she is responsible for clean-up of the facility once the VBS program is completed. This person will also need to make sure all decorations are stored in a way that they can be reused if needed.

Photographer/Videographer

The photographer/videographer takes pictures/videos of children and activities throughout the week. He/she tries to include every child and staff member and activity if at all possible, especially if there is a small group of children attending. If the numbers are overwhelming for individual shots, he/she will focus more on group photos and action shots. He/she will prepare a slide show/video, with VBS music in the background if possible, to show on Sabbath as a report to the church (work with communication coordinator on this project). The slide show/video may also be shown as a part of the final program on Friday if desired. He/she makes photographs available to the communication coordinator for in print and electronic reports with conference.

Daily Clean-Up Coordinator

The Daily clean-up coordinator is responsible for making sure all rooms are cleaned (trash picked up, chairs put back in order, anything out of place put back, floors vacuumed if needed). This person makes sure all bathrooms are cleaned and stocked with toilet paper and paper towels. Make sure all trash has been emptied. Make sure the kitchen area is cleaned (Food coordinator is responsible for cleaning up the kitchen and eating area).

Age Group Shepherds and Assistants

We suggest that you group children into the following age groups: Juniors (10–12 years), Primary (7–9 years) and kindergarten (4–6 years). The age group shepherds are in charge of their assigned groups of children throughout the daily VBS program, making sure they get from one location to the next without losing anyone. Use the attendance record (from the registration coordinator after the opening assembly) to verify that all the children are present at each station. If there is a large number of children in each age group, assign smaller sub-group assistants. Count the number of children assigned to you at the beginning, then re-count regularly. You may consider rotating children through stations via age groups (see suggested schedule).

Overview of All Five Sessions

	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5		
Food	Pita sandwiches	Haystacks	Crepes and Potatoes	Waffles	Asian Noodles and Spring Rolls		
Theme Song		Space Rescue					
Other songs	"Wide, Wide as the Ocean"; "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy"	"I'm in the Lord's Army"; "The B-I-B-L-E"	"I'll Be a Sunbeam"; "All of Me"	"Wide, Wide as the Ocean"; "I'm in the Lord's Army"	"All of Me"; "Into My Heart"		
Memory Verse Song	Revelation 22:12–14						
Theme Talk	Galactic Rebellion	A New Planet	Choosing to Rebel	The Promised One	The Final Battle		
Station 1: Comet Crafts	War in Heaven Booklet	Creation Circles	Salvation Hearts	Crosses	Jesus' Coming With Angels		
Station 2: Cosmic Command Center	Command- ments 1, 2	Command- ments 3, 4	Command- ments 5, 6	Command- ments 7, 8	Command- ments 9, 10		
Station 3: Space Quest	Space and Black Holes	Suns	Planets	Moons	Earth		
Station 4: Geo-Robics	Four Corners Space Race; Rocket Launch	Quick Lineup and Shapes; Rope Square	Critter Footrace; Zero-gravity Web; Can Cooperation	Do You Love Your Neighbor?; Head, Shoulder, Cup; Bucket Stack	Obstacle Course Race; Group Tug-of-war; Sharp Rock and Crater		

Suggested Schedule (2.5 hours / 155 minutes)

Allotted Time	Activity	Groups			
30 minutes	Supper	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
	Song Service*		All to	gether	
5 minutes	Welcome				
15 minutes	Theme talk				
25 minutes**	Rotation 1	Games	Character Trait	Memory Challenge	Craft
25 minutes	Rotation 2	Craft	Games	Character Trait	Memory Challenge
25 minutes	Rotation 3	Memory Challenge	Craft	Games	Character Trait
25 minutes	Rotation 4	Character Trait	Memory Challenge	Craft	Games
5 minutes	Closing Prayer and Dismissal	All together			

^{*}Some children eat quickly or not at all. Starting song service 15 minutes prior to supper ending helps corral those children who finish early. If possible, have song service in the same room where food is served to allow children to finish eating but still listen to the music.

^{**}Each station lasts 20 minutes. Take 5 minutes to switch stations.

Personalizable Schedule: Type It In

Allotted Time	Activity	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4

Personalizable Schedule: Write It In

Allotted Time	Activity	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4