Enlist a prayer team that will pray for the leaders who will be presenting the gospel, the children who will hear the gospel and the families each child represents. Pray that parents will be receptive to their child’s decision and support them by the family’s involvement in a local church.

The pastor’s presence during VBS is very important. The opportunity to build relationships with the children and their families can lead to opportunities to present the gospel and minister to families after VBS has concluded.

Enlist a team of greeters to welcome parents who may be coming to your church for the first time during VBS. Encourage warm welcomes, conversations and invitations to your church by the team.

Develop plans for discipling those children who make professions of faith. This can take the form of classes at church for new Christians, follow-up conversations by the staff of the home church if the family is involved in a different church, or resources such as “Now That I’m a Christian” by LifeWay that can be completed with parents at home.

The number of children who make decisions for Christ should never be a church goal for VBS. Facilitating children making Spirit-led decisions is always the goal, and care should be taken to ensure all leaders understand this truth.

The honor of sharing in a child’s first steps as a Christian is a joy beyond comparison. Be aware of the Spirit’s work in your VBS so that the opportunity to share the gospel is not missed. Pray for each student who comes into your VBS weeks before it begins. Pray for your role in pointing a child to Christ. Prepare to share from the overflow of God’s grace and forgiveness in your life.

For more information, contact Childhood Ministry at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5645
Leaders and teachers need to understand that children are literal learners; they see what you say. It is important to share the truth of the gospel while avoiding symbolic imagery such as "asking Jesus into your heart" or "washing away your sins." It is appropriate to pray for forgiveness of sin and ask Jesus to be in charge of your life.

Since some children’s exposure to Jesus may be limited to VBS, each session should point to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Clearly communicate to children a willingness to talk with them about becoming a Christian.

Large group invitations to receive Christ should be simple in presentation. Teachers should note who responds and either have a follow-up conversation with the child or submit the child’s contact information to a leader who can make a follow-up call or visit with the child and his or her family.

Large group invitations should offer children a discreet way to respond such as raising a hand or completing a response card. Moving to the front of the room may cause others to come forward because of peer pressure, curiosity or a desire to be part of the group. Follow-up should be a personal conversation rather than a prayer spoken by the large group.

Leaders and teachers should be present at any large group invitation that is given during VBS. A familiar face that can encourage and support a response may be important to the child’s decision to become a Christian.

Teachers and leaders should be ready to share their story of becoming a Christian to an interested child or group of children. The testimony should be no more than two to four minutes in length depending on the age of the listeners. A suggested outline is: My life before I became a Christian, how and why I became a Christian, and my life after becoming a Christian.

Be sure all leaders, including leaders for recreation, crafts and snacks, and youth leaders, are prepared to share the plan of salvation with an interested child. Pre-VBS evangelism training is an important tool that can be used beyond VBS, as leaders are equipped to share the gospel with others.

Never offer prizes or rewards to children to encourage a response. Salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit and should be honored as such.

Materials that may help a leader have a conversation with a child include: "God’s Special Plan for Children" from the North American Mission Board, "The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me" from LifeWay and "Sharing the Plan of Salvation with Children" available at www.ncbaptist.org/sharingtheplan.

If it is anticipated that a large number of children may need follow-up, recruit and train a team to visit with the families of children who have made or are interested in knowing more about becoming a Christian. If the child is new to your church, be sure parents understand what it means to be a Christian and how to disciple their new believer. Issue an invitation to attend your church if the family is not currently attending another church.