

## VBS 2019: THE BIG PICTURE—HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH KIDS CONFERENCE PLAN (1 HOUR)

### Purpose Statement

This 50-minute plan is designed to train and equip VBS leaders to share the gospel with kids.

### Needed Resources

- *VBS 2019 Kids Gospel Guide*
- *VBS 2019 Devotional Bible for Kids*
- *VBS 2019 ABC Wristbands*
- *VBS 2019 Parent Guide*
- *VBS 2019 Music for Kids CD*
- *The Gospel: God's Plan for Me*
- *Leading a Child to Christ Training Pack (with DVD)*
- *Devotions in the Wild: 100 Devotions to Zoom In on Jesus*
- *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry book*
- Item 1: "Handout" — Copy 1 per conferee.
- Item 2: "Church Word Cubes" — Print on cardstock (1 cube per every 5 conferees). Cut out, fold in the tabs and secure with tape. Fill cubes with shredded paper then tape closed.
- 4 pieces of poster board — Write each "Photography Blunder" (from step 7 on handout) on a separate piece of poster board. Hang these "Selfie Station" posters on the walls around the room.
- CD player

### Room Setup

Cover a table with a *VBS 2019 Tablecloth* and display the witnessing resources. Add tabletop decorations such as the *VBS 2019 Kids Starter Kit* or *Preschool Starter Kit* boxes, which resemble giant cameras. Cut out some of the Polaroid<sup>®</sup> pictures of animals from the VBS catalog and place them in inexpensive frames to display on the table. Drape *VBS 2019 String Flags* from the ceiling and across the doorway. Arrange chairs in several semi-circles. Hang Selfie Station posters around room.

### Teaching Steps

#### 1. A Selfie Start! (5 minutes)

- Welcome conferees and introduce yourself. Then direct their attention to the four "Selfie Station" posters around the room. Instruct conferees to use the cameras on their phones to take some selfies. Explain that while we usually try to take good pictures, today they should try to take some bad individual or group photos as directed on each poster.
- Play the Day 3 song, "What You're Made For" (track 4) from the *Music for Kids CD* in background as conferees take selfies. Ask conferees to return to their seats by the time the song ends.

#### 2. The Big Picture (5 minutes)

- Ask: "What is the purpose of VBS?" Listen to answers.
- Discuss how VBS is the biggest evangelistic outreach opportunity of the year for most churches. Frequently, kids come to VBS who never attend any other church activities throughout the year.
- Ask: "How much time does it take to prepare for VBS each year?" Listen to answers.

- Talk about the fact that we typically spend a lot of time making decorations, preparing crafts, studying the Bible stories, learning the choreography, and doing many other things to prepare for VBS. How much time do we spend preparing to share the gospel with kids?
- Remind conferees that it's OK for kids to have fun with the theme and to learn all kinds of things, but the primary objective of VBS is helping kids to come to an understanding of their need for a Savior. Challenge leaders to prepare themselves for this exciting opportunity!

### 3. Focus on the Main Thing (25 minutes)

- Explain that the motto for In the Wild is "Zoom In. Focus on Jesus!" Invite conferees to zoom in and focus on Jesus that they don't miss the big picture of VBS.
- Walk through each of the points from handout. Ask conferees to fill in the blanks as you discuss. (Tip: Repeat the underlined words as you read them to allow time for conferees to fill in the blanks.)
  1. **Focus on the Main Thing** – Every element of VBS should relate back to the gospel.
  2. **Zoom In on What Matters** – Be intentional. Make a plan. Who, What, When, Where?
    - Discuss the resources on the display table and how they can be used as tools when sharing the gospel.
  3. **Make Sure Camera is Ready, Batteries Charged** – PRAY! Before, during, and after counseling a child.
  4. **Turn on the Flash** – God's Word is a light and a lamp (Psalm 119:105). Refer to Scripture when presenting the gospel.
  5. **Look Through the Viewfinder** – Kids are literal-minded. Avoid symbolism and cutesy "tricks" when presenting the gospel.
  6. **Take a Selfie** – Include your personal testimony.
  7. **Avoid These Photography Blunders:**
    - *Ugh! My finger was in the picture!* Sometimes, we, the leaders, get in the way. Our job is to share the gospel and "take the picture." The Holy Spirit will "develop the picture" in God's perfect timing.
      - Let the child and the Holy Spirit guide the conversation.
      - Sometimes kids will not respond immediately, but seeds are being planted for a future harvest. Do not push.
    - *Oh no! My picture is out of focus!* Kids can focus on the wrong things. Clarify the difference between baptism and becoming a Christian.
      - Remind leaders that kids will learn more as they grow in their faith, but there are some basic concepts that kids need to understand, such as understanding that you are saved before getting baptized and that baptism is a picture of what Jesus did for us.
    - *Hey! You photo bombed my pic!* Sometimes kids get in a picture where they don't belong. All children who hear the gospel presented are not spiritually ready to make a decision, even if they express an interest.
      - Avoid large group appeals.
        - Asking kids to respond to the gospel in a public way can lead to kids prematurely expressing interest.
      - Avoid pressuring or scaring kids into making a decision.

- Kids shouldn't respond to the gospel out of peer pressure or fear.
  - Most kids like to please adults and will falsely respond to a gospel presentation to appease the adult.
  - Use response cards to assess.
    - Response cards are available in the curriculum. These allow kids to indicate interest without pressure. This creates an opportunity for adults to ask children one-on-one about their responses.
  - Counsel children individually.
    - Private conversations reduce anxiety and produce authentic answers.
  - Ask open-ended questions, not yes/no questions.
    - Ask kids to explain what they have heard.
    - Ask why did Jesus die on the cross?
    - Ask what is sin? Do you sin? If so, in what ways?
    - Open-ended questions help an adult understand what a child believes and understands.
  - Don't jump to conclusions.
    - Asking questions doesn't necessarily mean that child is ready to follow Christ; just like a baby kicking in mommy's tummy isn't necessarily ready to be born.
    - Answer only what is asked. Let the child ask for deeper answers.
  - Sigh ... I missed the shot! Kids can miss the message if you use "church" words.
    - Remind conferees that "church" words may be familiar to those who've grown up in church, but they may or may not be truly understood. Use words that kids understand (clear, concrete terminology).
    - Leaders must choose their words carefully.
8. **Don't Forget to Smile** – Regardless of whether or not a child is ready to make a decision to follow Christ, celebrate & encourage the child.
- A child's interest in the gospel indicates he/she is on a journey to respond to God's call. Celebrate that response!
  - A child should never be made to feel foolish for asking questions about a relationship with Christ. Instead, he/she should be encouraged to do so.
9. **Make It a Family Portrait** – Whenever possible, include parents in the counseling. If unavailable, keep parents informed.
- The Bible teaches us that parents are the primary disciplers of their child. They have more influence and spend more time with the child than you do.
  - If non-believing parents are involved in the counseling process, they will hear the gospel.
10. **Don't Forget to Order Prints Later** – Be intentional with follow up after VBS.
- Many seeds are planted during VBS. Follow up and connect with families.
  - New believers need discipling. Make a plan, such as a New Believer's class, and follow through with it.

**4. “Church” Word Cubes (10 minutes)**

- (NOTE: This step can also be done earlier during the discussion about “church words.”)
- Instruct conferees to form small groups of 4-5. Give each group a paper cube.
- Lead the groups to take turns rolling their cubes and discussing the abstract or “church” word that lands face-up. Encourage them to come up with alternative words to use instead of the “church” word.

**5. Get Camera Ready and Charge Your Batteries (5 minutes)**

- Close by reminding conferees that their job is to be faithful in presenting the truth about salvation through Jesus Christ. Preparing to share the gospel is more important than decorating or preparing crafts or anything else!
- Remind conferees that they need to keep their “cameras ready and batteries charged” by praying. If time permits, ask conferees to quickly jot down prayer requests related to VBS and sharing the gospel with kids on their handouts.
- Close in prayer using the following suggestions, then dismiss.
  - Thank God for the opportunity to serve Him through VBS.
  - Pray for VBSs across the nation and around the world. Pray that they would bring glory to God and further His Kingdom.
  - Pray for VBS leaders to be confident in sharing the gospel.
  - Pray for a plentiful harvest.

# The Big Picture – How to Share the Gospel with Kids



1. **Focus on the Main Thing** – Every element of VBS should \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **Zoom In on What Matters** – Be \_\_\_\_\_.  
Make a plan. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_?
3. **Make Sure Camera is Ready, Batteries Charged** – \_\_\_\_\_!  
Before, during, & after counseling a child!
4. **Turn on the Flash** – God’s Word is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Ps. 119:105) Refer to \_\_\_\_\_ when presenting the gospel.
5. **Look Through the Viewfinder** – Kids are \_\_\_\_\_.  
Avoid symbolism and cutesy “tricks” when presenting the gospel.
6. **Take a Selfie** – Include your \_\_\_\_\_.
7. **Avoid These Photography Blunders:**
  - *Ugh! My finger was in the picture!*  
Sometimes, we, the leaders, \_\_\_\_\_. Our job is to share the gospel and “take the picture.” The \_\_\_\_\_ will “develop the picture” in God’s perfect timing.
  - *Oh no! My picture is out of focus!*  
Kids can focus on the wrong things. Clarify the difference between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

- *Hey! You photo bombed my pic!*

Sometimes kids get in a picture where they don't belong. All children who hear the gospel presented are not spiritually ready to make a decision, even if they express an interest.

- Avoid \_\_\_\_\_.
- Avoid \_\_\_\_\_ or scaring kids into making a decision.
- Use \_\_\_\_\_ to assess.
- Counsel children \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask \_\_\_\_\_ questions, not \_\_\_\_\_ questions.
- \_\_\_\_\_ jump to conclusions.

- *Sigh ... I missed the shot!*

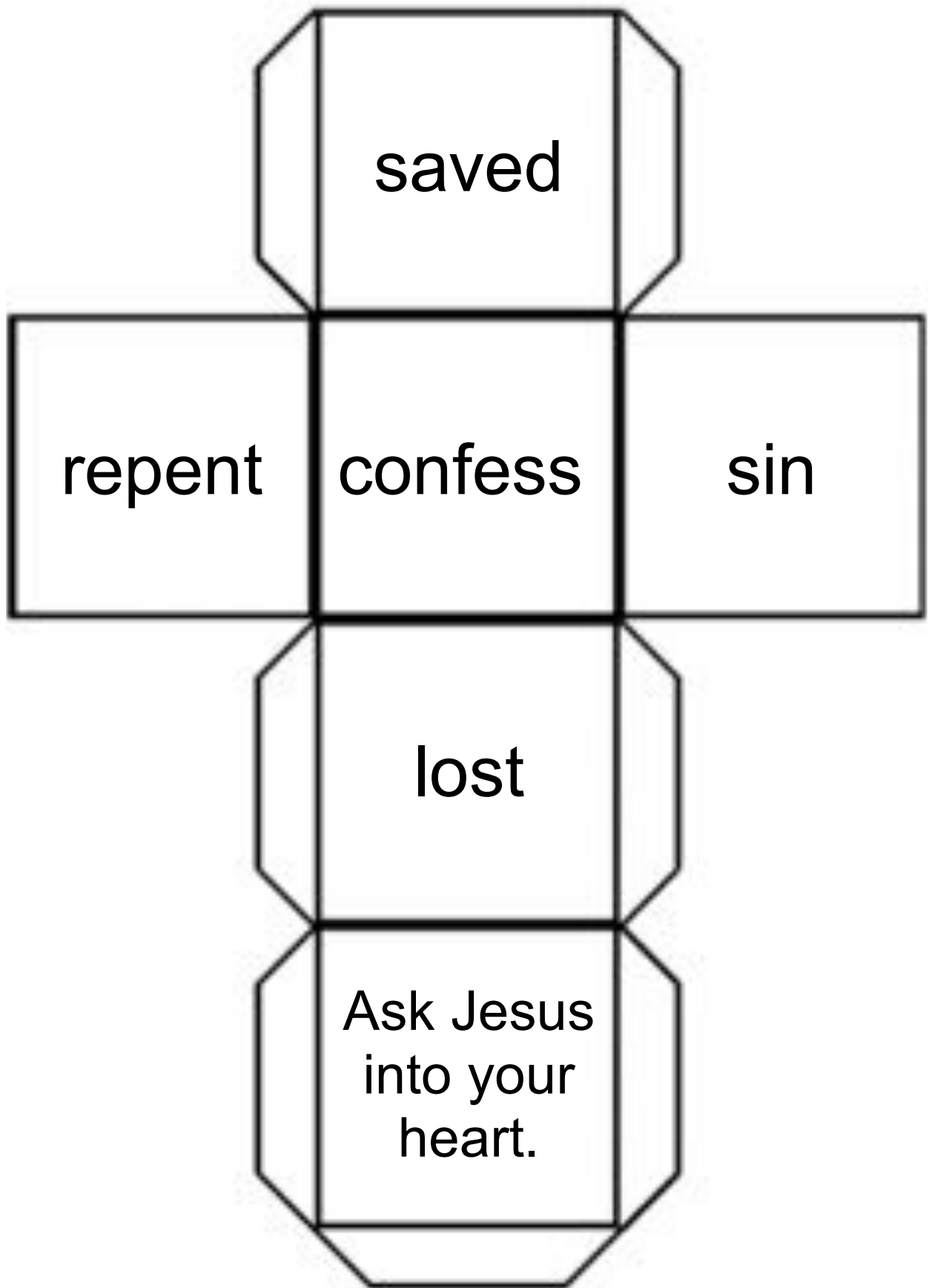
Kids can \_\_\_\_\_ if you use "church" words.

8. **Don't Forget to Smile!** – Regardless of whether or not a child is ready to make a decision to follow Christ, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the child.

9. **Make It a Family Portrait** - When possible, include \_\_\_\_\_ in gospel counseling. If unavailable, keep them informed.

10. **Don't Forget to Order Prints Later** – Be intentional with \_\_\_\_\_ after VBS.





Item 2. "Church Word" Cubes