Neighborhood VBS Things to know before you start.

Neighborhood VBS (Vacation Bible School) is a Bible teaching and evangelistic program geared towards children in a specific neighborhood. Christians who have a heart for reaching kids in their neighborhood organize this program and teach a series of Bible lessons for the length of the program. The location is usually in their backyard, but the front yard, as well as moble home parks, city parks and open areas in apartment complexes (only with permission) are also used.

Neighborhood VBS is structured to incorporate a daily Bible lesson, games and a mission activity. Four lessons are included in this program because it is set-up for four days. The lessons are geared for children K-6th grade. Do not worry about the age difference, the 5 and 6 year old’s will understand the lessons that the 12 year old’s will be learning. Don’t underestimate the younger kids ability to understand Biblical truth.

Prayer: Before each Bible lesson you will want to start with prayer. Prayer sets the mood and brings the kids into a spiritual frame of mind. But more important, prayer brings in God to open children’s heart’s to understand His truth. Ask the prayer warriors in your church to pray for your neighborhood VBS. This is also a great opportunity to teach kids how to pray. You will generally pray for the evenings activities, but you should also incorporate praise, and thanksgiving in your prayers.

Parents are encouraged to stay if they want to. Parents need to hear the gospel message as well as their kids.

Games: Look over the game choices to make sure you have the equipment needed. Plan to mix high energy games with low energy games on the same night. Some of the games for the 3rd – 6th grade children will also work with the K- 2nd graders. There are games available to play before VBS starts and after VBS ends for those who come early or parents who come to pick up their kids late.

Structure: This neighborhood VBS is set to be 1 ½ hours long for 4 days or evenings 6:00 is a common time to start; it allows families to eat their dinner before coming. There are circle games to play before your starting time for those coming early.

6:00 – 6:10 – First night, introduce yourself, the adult and teen helpers. Also have kids introduce themselves and what grade they are going in. Every night during this time have the kids tell something about themselves, example – what is your favorite animal or where are you going on vacation.

6:10 – 6:30 – Bible Lesson

6:30 – 7:00 – Games. There are eight games to choose from. Use the games with this program or choose your own.

7:00 – 7:30 – Ministry Activity

Ministry Activity: A ministry activity is any project that reaches out and touches someone’s life. Examples are:

1. Thank-you card for your pastor and children’s director from a copy paper folded once.
2. A thinking of you card for one or more shut-ins from your church.
3. A praying for you card for one or more missionaries.
4. Take a sheet of copy paper and write a Bible verse with a theme of nature and then draw a picture with that theme.

Isaiah 40:31 – Eagle. Psalms 42:1 - Deer

Genesis 1:24 – Animals Isaiah 44:4 - Meadow

Genesis 1:11 – Plants Proverbs 24:3 - House

Psalms 90:2 – Mountains

Psalms 148:7 – Fish

Take these drawings and ask a nursing home if you could hang them on the walls for the residents to see.

Promotion: If you decide to host a neighborhood VBS program, you have to let people in your neighborhood know about it. A promotional sheet is included to put on peoples’ front doors. Post a sign in your front yard with the dates and time.

Bible Lessons: Take some time to study and know the material. When a question is asked, be patient for someone to respond. Let the kids think about and process the questions and answers.

What is needed: All adult leaders and teen helpers need a name tag. This tells parents that are dropping off their children, they are leaving them with someone who is running the program. Blankets for sitting on the grass. You will need fold up tables. If you don’t own any, ask your church, or rent one or more. Markers and copy paper for the ministry activities. Water for drinking.

Safety and Security: Volunteers should have a background check. Most churches have already done this with all their volunteers who work with children. Check with their church to confirm that if these people can work with children. It is best to have at least two adults over the age of 18 who are not related by marriage to be the leaders. Married couples can work together, but there should be a third unrelated adult on site. Have a plan for securely dropping off and picking up children. Having each child wear a name tag with a number written beside the name and the parent given that number on a card should be enough. Match up the number on the card and name tag and you are good to go.

Plan for adequate bathroom needs. If your program is in your home; what bathroom is easily available? If you’re meeting at a park or open area of a mobile home park or an apartment complex, are there bathrooms on site?

 A registration form for each child is included. This will have the name of the child, parent, a child number and who will be picking up the child. Also the cell phone number and mailing address of the parent.

Have a plan in mind if it rains. A garage or even inside your house if space permits. The pre VBS circle games could be played inside if needed.

Have a first aid kit available.

After your VBS is complete, use the mailing address and mail each parent a thank-you letter and invite the family to church. If your church has a children’s program, inform the parents.

Name of child

Parents

Parents address

Parents cell phone number

Name of people who can pick up child

Child pick up number

Name of child

Parents

Parents address

Parents cell phone number

Name of people who can pick up child

Child pick up number