

## Vacation Bible School Ministry Playbook

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### **Description of the Ministry:**

#### **Purpose:**

Vacation Bible School is a one-week event held every summer for the children of St. James's. Organized around a theme, it provides time for participants to learn scripture in ways that are appropriate for 2 year olds through rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. It is also a ministry that encourages continued fellowship and community for the adults that volunteer to help during the week.

The goal of this ministry is to provide the children of St. James's with a fun and safe environment in which to learn about God and Jesus.

#### **Activities/Events:**

Vacation Bible School is held for one week in the summer, from 9:00 a.m. – noon each day. Each morning children come together to sing, pray and learn about the scripture for the day. Then they travel to different workshops (examples are: art, mission, games, music, Bible lesson) for 20 minutes each to experience the scripture through different mediums. There is a closing at the end of the morning where we talk about what was learned, sing and say goodbye.

On Friday, the final day of VBS is typically held off-site for a party. This is usually the highlight of the week and families are invited to join us.

#### **Impact Observations:**

Very often we hear that Vacation Bible School was a child's favorite camp in a summer and that they can't wait to come back next year. We have also seen families that were introduced to St. James's through Vacation Bible school join the church the following year because of the positive experience their child had and the positive experience they had as a volunteer.

It is a labor of love undertaken by everyone involved. The rewards we get are numerous – from getting to know the children of St. James's better, laughing and singing with them on a daily basis, and also making new adult friends. It is a ministry that has a strong afterglow.

### **Roles in the Ministry:**

#### **Chairperson(s):**

Currently, the Director of Children's Ministries is the Director of Vacation Bible School (Kent Duffey, [kentduffy@doers.org](mailto:kentduffy@doers.org), 355-1779 x 314). However, this role could be taken on by one or two parishioners as Director/Assistant Director.

The Director of VBS ideally works with members of a committee to choose the theme for VBS in January or February. Once that is done, various members of the committee take on the roles of

planning the separate activities for the children (art, games, mission, music, Friday off-site event, etc.)

The Director(s) should feel comfortable contacting parishioners, by phone and e-mail, to help them with Vacation Bible School. Director(s) should be organized, patient and encouraging to those they work with.

**Staff involvement:**

The Staff liaison for this ministry is Kent Duffey, Director of Children's Ministries. Other members of the staff also assist with VBS including Gina Young, Parish Administrative Assistant, and various other staff members through different workshops during the week.

**Committee members/Opportunities for Involvement:**

The ideal number of committee members would be five or six. Each committee member should be in charge of planning and executing one specific activity that the children participate in during Vacation Bible School week. It is ideal if one or two committee members focus on recruiting volunteers so as to have enough volunteers to manage each activity during the week.

This Ministry is ideal for those parishioners who love children, have a "teaching" mentality, and want to create fun ways for the children of the parish to experience community and God.

**Time Commitment by Chair(s) and Committee Members:**

Chairs and Committee members should begin to work on Vacation Bible School in January or February. Registration for VBS begins in March, volunteer recruitment occurs in April, and the planning and organizing for the various activities up takes place sporadically until the beginning of the event (usually held in late June/early July). The time commitment for each member of the committee would vary based on their role and could be spread out over several months. Volunteer recruitment can take several hours a week for the month of April, most of it done via email contacts.

During the week of Vacation Bible School, committee members and Director/Assistant Director should expect to be there each morning and for at least 30 minutes after VBS ends to make sure their activity is ready for the following day.

**Involvement by Other St. James's Groups:**

This ministry has benefitted from the involvement of the youth of St. James's in volunteering during Vacation Bible School, and we would like to see the number of youth involved grow.

**Resources Required:**

**Financial:**

A portion of the Children's Ministries budget goes to support Vacation Bible School. The budgeted amount for 2010 was approximately \$1,200.00. Each family is asked to pay \$30 per child upon registration. This additional money also supports the supplies and activities.

### **Space:**

Vacation Bible School is held in the Michaux House at St. James's. We use Valentine Hall, the basement and various rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor as appropriate for our needs. We also use the playground space for games that are appropriate for outdoors.

For our Friday event, we have called on a parish family for the use of their property, and they are always very generous in allowing us to use this space.

### **Staff:**

The Parish Administrative Assistant (Gina Young) helps with Vacation Bible School registration and the organization and dissemination of all information relating to children and volunteers attending each day.

We also require help from the facilities manager and sextons in terms of setting up rooms and cleaning up after each day. Sextons also need to be available to help volunteers as needed during the morning sessions.

### **Advertising/Publicity:**

Vacation Bible School is advertised in the Monthly Chimes, the eChimes and the Sunday Chimes. We also send registration forms to children who are of the age to attend VBS. While we do not advertise to the community, we often enroll non-St. James's children by word of mouth through friends in the parish.

### **Manpower:**

All families who register their children for VBS are asked to volunteer in some way. For our families whose parents who work outside the home, we ask that they provide supplies for the activities. We ask other parents to be there as many mornings as they can to help the children in their activities. We do provide a nursery on-site for our volunteers who need it. Last year we had over 90 volunteers involved in the planning and execution of the Vacation Bible School ministry. Most volunteers indicate on their child's registration form what they would be able to do, and committee members follow-up with an email or a phone call to confirm their availability during the week.

### **Community Impact/Partners:**

Each year the Vacation Bible School ministry has a mission component. We partner with a community organization and the children and families who attend VBS bring donations. We often ask different age groups to bring different types of supplies and have a friendly competition. Below are the different organizations we have partnered with over the past four years:

2007: water bottle donation for CARITAS

2008: school supplies for Fairfield Court Elementary School

2009: summer food backpack supplies for the Central Virginia Foodbank

2010: craft supplies for Richmond Hill summer camps