

How To Do Vacation Bible School On A Tiny Budget

<http://ministry-to-children.com/vbs-budget/>

Tony Kummer - Published May 11, 2008

Some churches budget thousands of dollars for their annual Vacation Bible School program. But many smaller churches struggle to find the resources to support VBS. Here are some ideas for doing your Vacation Bible School without a lot of money. You should also check out our free curriculum for VBS.

Partner With Another Church's VBS

- Sometimes the best use of VBS money is to partner with another church (or churches) in your town to do a "Community Vacation Bible School." There are some downsides to this in terms of safety and specific evangelistic outreach, but good planning can overcome those issues. The added challenges in planning will require a good director who can work with a team to pull it off.

Reuse Curriculum From Another Church's VBS

- Why not ask a church if you can use their materials after Bible school is over? This can work very well if you plan your VBS in July, while their's is in June. If you have time, go and volunteer at their Bible school to see hands on how the program works. Our church makes plans to pass on our materials every year. It's become a tradition to count how many churches get to use our props and curriculum.

Plan Easy Crafts

- Aside from curriculum, craft supplies can be a major expense. If you keep the crafts minimal there is a potential to save. Don't be too cheap, but skip the expensive craft kits that some of the publishers sell.

Ask For Simple Snack Donations

- In most cases, you shouldn't have to budget for snacks. Ask volunteers or church members to donate paper goods, cookies and other durable snacks. Even drink mixed can be donated by VBS supporters or local businesses. Kids love snacks, and usually are just happy with simple and inexpensive options.

Find A Donor To Underwrite VBS

- If the church budget can't cover the expenses, look for individual donors or business to sponsor your vacation Bible school. A few hundred dollars can make a huge difference to make your Bible school a success. Make sure you thank them publicly (if they don't mind) and send a thank you card signed by the kids.
- Another option would be to have the church take a special offering for Vacation Bible school. This may be effective in smaller churches that don't have an annual budget. Pastoral support is essential to make this happen, so be sure your minister understands how important proper funding is for running Bible school.

Only Buy The Minimum VBS Elements

- Most VBS programs allow you to buy a starter kit and then optional components separately. Often you can get by without all the fancy extras. This is something to look for when you choose a curriculum. Some require materials for every learner, while others let you make do with only the teacher's guides. I still struggle to spend money on buying the themed t-shirts. Fortunately, our craft people have the children make custom shirts. These are about 1/3 the price and have more keepsake value for the families.

Ask For More Budget Next Year

- It may be too late for this year, but why not ask for a budget increase next year? Even in small churches, the people will recognize VBS as the flagship program for children's outreach. As soon as Bible school is over, draft a budget for the next year and take it to the pastor and finance people. The timing is important because VBS is often just a memory by the Fall when the budget committee crunches their numbers. If you can get them to agree in theory that more money would help, then it should make budget process easier when the time actually comes.