

Night or Day Vacation Bible School Schedule?

<http://ministry-to-children.com/night-or-day-vbs-schedule/>

Tony Kummer - Published June 23, 2010

A reader recently emailed me asking for advice about her VBS schedule. I thought it was a good question so I wanted to share a few quick thoughts here on the website. This is not an exhaustive discussion, so please share your ideas in the comment section below. You can also check out a helpful conversation about this on the Kidology forums.

Here is what the reader wrote:

This will be my first year directing VBS and our theme this year would lend itself well to an evening VBS, but I'd like a little input from people who've tried it. Do you have any information on evening versus daytime VBS programs? Or can you direct me to a source of information?

This is definitely a church specific decision because so many factors will relate to your church uniquely. At my church we've tried both and have settled on what works best for us. Of course that may change in a few years, but for now we stick with a morning VBS.

If I was a new VBS director I would ask the church what they have done in the past or what other churches do in the area. Then take an extra step and ask why. Sometimes doing things the same way is really the best idea, sometimes a change is needed. Whatever the situation, this should give you a good starting point.

Pros and Cons of a Night VBS Schedule

In general, finding adult volunteers will be easier for a night VBS. Many parents who work during the day can make time to help with an evening schedule. This might be a downside for retired or senior adult volunteers – ours like to be home before dinner. So check with some key helpers to see what makes the most sense in your church.

Kids will sometimes have baseball or gymnastics practice conflicts in the evenings. Many sports programs run on weeknights so that parents can attend. Children may also be at the swimming pool all afternoon and not make it to VBS on time. At my church, attendance suffered when we did a night Bible school.

In my experience, kids have more energy (or wildness) with an evening schedule. This can make things more fun or out-of-control depending on the child.

From a directing standpoint, an evening VBS gives you all of the next morning and afternoon to prepare the next days activities. This can be helpful if you or your volunteers are not into early mornings.

We did try a more 'family-integrated' VBS with the night schedule, but few parents really bought into it. It ended up being about the same parents sticking around who would have helped in the morning either way.

Pros and Cons of a Day VBS Schedule

Senior adult workers prefer morning VBS schedules, at least that is the case at my church. For me that made the morning much easier to staff. On the downside volunteers (and kids) would sometimes miss for doctor appointments during the day.

Our attendance was stronger in the morning with parents looking to keep kids active during summer downtime. Babysitters were always glad to bring their children to our program too. You might want to be careful of daycares. I have heard stories about preschool overload when too many came without warning.

I always liked having VBS done before lunch and then using the afternoon to prepare for the next day. This was just my preference but it helped me sleep better at night.

Weather was better for us with a morning schedule. We get less thunderstorms in the AM and the outside games are better before the full heat of the afternoon. You could argue this the other way but 9 AM to Noon seems cooler to me than 6-9 PM.