

VBS 2018 BACKYARD KIDS CLUB BASE CONFERENCE PLAN (2 HOURS)

Purpose Statement

This two-hour plan is designed to train and equip church leaders on how to effectively use LifeWay's Game On!™ Backyard Kids Club curriculum to reach families in their communities or on a mission trip.

Needed Resources

- *VBS 2018 Backyard Kids Club Kit*
- *VBS 2018 Backyard Kids Club Directors Guide*
- *VBS 2018 Crafts Rotation Leader Guide*
- *VBS 2018 Craft Packs*
- *VBS 2018 Music for Kids CD*
- Day 3 Children's Bible Study Lesson Plan (inside BKC Kit) — Photocopy page 4 of the Day 3 session, "Baseball Cap Cards," onto cardstock and cut apart.
- 4 index cards — Write *Who? Did What? Who Benefits? and What's The Reward?* on separate cards. Place the cards in a hat or bucket.
- Item 1: "Handout" — Print and copy 1 per conferee.
- Large, solid-colored flat sheet (king or queen size)
- Hard-top cooler or camping chair
- Stopwatch or timer
- *VBS 2018 Megaphones* (used in Teaching Step 3) — Write 1 of the 5 team roles on each megaphone: *Host/Team Leader, Music/Worship Leader, Bible Study Leaders, Recreation Leader, and Craft Leader*. Arrange the megaphones on the focal table.
- *VBS 2018 Pom-poms* (used in Teaching Step 3) — Photocopy page 10 of the Directors Guide. Cut apart each job description and attach each to the handle of a *VBS 2018 Pom-pom* that matches the color of the corresponding megaphone with team leader title. Scatter the pom-poms around the room.
- OPTIONAL: Artificial trees or plants
- OPTIONAL: *VBS 2018 Tablecloth* and any other VBS 2018 decorations available
- OPTIONAL: *VBS 2018 Visual Pack* — Mount posters to foam board or large cardboard to demonstrate how they can easily be displayed outside at a Backyard Kids Club.
- CD player

Room Setup

Spread a large flat sheet on the floor at the front of the teaching area (for children to sit on during Bible study) and a hardtop cooler or camping chair nearby (for the Bible study leader to sit on). Arrange chairs in a semi-circle or in rows depending on the number of participants expected. OPTIONAL: Position artificial trees or plants to either side of the focal area to simulate being outdoors. Cover a table with a *VBS 2018 Tablecloth* and display the curriculum alongside other sports-related decorations. If using the *VBS 2018 Visual Pack* posters, lean the mounted posters against the table and nearby walls.

Teaching Steps

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Play the Music for Kids CD quietly in the background and greet conferees as they arrive.
- Call for a volunteer and lead the group in an opening game.

- Invite a volunteer to hold a “Baseball Cap Card” to his forehead with one finger. Ensure that he does not see the contents of the card.
- Explain that the card contains a picture of something one might see at a sporting event.
- Set a stopwatch for 30 seconds.
- Explain that when time begins, the volunteer will ask the rest of the group “yes or no” questions about the item. (Such as: “Is it something to eat? Does it make a noise? Do you wear it on your head?”) The group will answer the questions in unison. If time expires before the volunteer correctly guesses the item, show him the card, then select a new volunteer, provide a new card, and play again.
- Play several rounds. Then comment: “Players in this game couldn’t see what was on their heads, but believed the group’s answers. On Day 3 of Backyard Kids Club, kids will learn that the disciple Thomas had trouble believing what he couldn’t see. This game is the opening activity during the children’s Bible Study for that day. But it also applies to us as we prepare for BKC. We can’t see all the details ahead of us for this summer, but we can believe that Jesus will give us the answers we need and walk alongside us.”
- Pray, asking God to give each BKC leader a vision of how He wants him/her to use Backyard Kids Clubs to grow His Kingdom this summer.

2. Preparing for BKC (25 minutes)

- Discuss how BKC is like a mini-VBS. All the parts of VBS are represented in BKC except the mission rotation. Each BKC site is its own mini-VBS.
- Explain that the main difference between a VBS and a BKC is the location. In most scenarios, churches conducting BKC are going to where the children are instead of asking children to come to them.
 - Ask attendees to call out different possible locations for BKC: neighborhood, park, open lot, apartment complex common area, schoolyard, outside on the church lawn, and mission trip locations. Point out that BKC is excellent for church plants or small churches looking to attract young families.
- Explain that the theme for Backyard Kids Club matches LifeWay’s 2018 VBS theme, *Game On!* This allows BKC teams to use any VBS materials, such as crafts, decorations, promotional materials, and follow-up materials to add to their BKC experience.
- Show the *VBS 2018 Backyard Kids Club Director’s Guide*, which includes an enhanced CD. Explain that each church needs one copy of the director’s guide for the staff member or volunteer heading up BKC, no matter how many BKC sites a church is planning. This is the same role as a VBS Director. Explain that you will reference the guide throughout the conference to show how helpful it will be.
- Show the *VBS 2018 Backyard Kids Club Kit*. Explain that churches will want to order one kit for each BKC site. The kit is intended for up to 20 children. If churches know in advance that a site will have more than 20 children, they should consider purchasing two kits for that site. This will make sense when going through the schedule below.
 - Open the *VBS 2018 Backyard Kids Club Kit* and show each item included. Explain that you will go into further detail in a few minutes.
 - Show the two new additions for this year: a set of *VBS 2018 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards* are included in addition to snack ideas listed in the Host Folder. This gives teams more options. One *VBS 2018 Playbook: 3s–K* is included this year to be used with preschoolers. (In previous years, only the learner piece for Grades 1-6 was included.)
- Explain that teams and training will vary depending on how many sites a church conducts.

- Show that pages 9–17 of the directors guide provide job descriptions and a list of necessary BKC Kit items for each team member.
- Explain that if for 1–3 sites, teams can meet individually with the BKC Director to go through the kit, divide out the roles and supplies, plan the schedule and location, and so forth. The BKC director or other qualified leader can train the team on best practices, security issues, and answer questions that arise.
- Explain that for churches conducting more than 4 sites, Directors may wish to do specialized training. Invite all the hosts to training to review registration, snacks, publicity, etc. Invite all Bible Study leaders to training on how to teach the curriculum and how to present the gospel. Invite all craft leaders to training to preview the crafts pre-selected by the church. Continue with training specific to each group of leaders. This allows leaders in the same roles to share ideas and encourage one other before and after BKC.
- Mention that pages 25–28 of the directors guide give great information on characteristics of children for different ages, as well as working with children with special needs. This information is valuable to all teams.
- Recommend lifeway.com/vbs and ministrygrid.com as sources for additional ideas and helps for training.
- Challenge leaders to conduct (or update) a background check on all adult volunteers before BKC begins.
- Remind leaders to spend lots of time in prayer! Point out that pages 30–31 in the directors guide includes wonderful prayer suggestions and a prayer calendar. Suggest leaders consider sharing this with their entire congregation, not just their BKC leaders.

3. BKC Daily Schedule and Team Roles (60 minutes)

- Lead conferees to stand and recite the VBS 2018 motto: “Gear Up! Get Ready! Game On!” (TIP: Create fun motions for each part of the motto. Standing and moving for a moment should re-engage attendees for this next section.)
 - Say: “Now that we’ve reviewed our gear, let’s get ready by going into further detail on each role of the BKC team and going through a daily BKC schedule.”
- Point out the recommended schedule options on pages 7–8 of the directors guide. Mention that most BKCs last 2 hours. Churches can choose if they will do 3 days, 4 days, or all 5 days.
- Discuss the roles and responsibilities for each team leader at BKC. Hold the appropriate megaphone as you discuss each team leader role. Invite volunteers to find the same colored pom-pom around the room as the megaphone. Discuss the responsibilities listed on each pom-pom and place them next to the megaphone on the table.
 - **Host/Team Leader:** Determines early-arrival activities 15–20 minutes before starting BKC. (Show the Host folder.) The host also provides the snacks (10 minutes). (Show the *VBS 2018 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards*.)
 - ~ Explain that the Host/Team Leader is the on-site director. Ideally, the host does not have any teaching responsibilities so she is available for any needs that arise.
 - ~ Show the top of the first page in the folder and review the difference between a host and a team leader. Explain that the host can also be the team leader, or the team leader can be another person on the BKC team.
 - ~ Mention that the host must have the gift of hospitality—making people feel welcome and loved. Someone who cares more about her flowerbeds

- than kids is not a good host choice. If possible, recruit hosts that might be open to a 2–3 year commitment. It takes time to develop relationships. In some cases, it may take families 2–3 years of participating in a BKC before making their visit to the main church.
- ~ Main duties: Publicity, registration, snacks, security, follow up, communicating details back to the church staff. (NOTE: Publicity and Follow up will be addressed in further detail at the end of the training.)
 - ~ Hosts work with the team to set the date, schedule, and any kickoff or celebration dates.
- o **Snacks (Host):** Snacks are usually the responsibility of the host. Plan for snacks to last 10 minutes. (Show the *VBS 2018 Snack Rotation Recipe Cards*.)
 - ~ Keep in mind that many children have food allergies. Plan for allergen-free snacks (or alternatives).
 - ~ Consider only serving water, since BKC is usually outside. Watch for warning signs that children are overheated or dehydrated.
 - ~ Be sure to think through trash pickup. Tie a large trash bag to a tree or bring a large trashcan outside.
 - ~ Involve the church at large by asking other church members to provide snacks for the teams. Adults who may not be able to participate the week of BKC might love to shop, prepare, or deliver snacks to hosts ahead of time.
 - ~ Remember to take every opportunity to teach. Snack time is a great time to review the Bible stories and/or applications from Bible study.
 - o **Music/Worship Leader:** Leads Opening Rally for 15 minutes and leads Closing Rally for 15 minutes
 - ~ Show the Music Folder, CDs, and Choreography DVD.
 - ~ Explain that the Music folder gives an outline for daily opening and closing rallies. A two-character drama skit is also provided. This helps tie the theme into each day and sets the tone for the lesson. Consider asking older children or middle school/high school students to rehearse and do the skits.
 - ~ Choose leaders with high levels of enthusiasm and energy. The music/worship leader should be familiar enough with the songs and movements to teach them to the children each day.
 - ~ If technology is available at a BKC site, the music/worship leader may choose to show the performance videos on the DVD while leading songs.
 - ~ During Closing Rally, review the music from opening rally, the lesson for the day, the motto, and the memory verse. This can have a huge impact. Often parents arrive a little early. By reviewing everything at the end, parents can listen in on what their children learned. Parents who are already believers can continue the conversation with their child as they go home. Parents who are not believers will hopefully ask their children to explain what they learned!
 - o **Bible Study Leaders:** Leads Bible Study for 30 minutes. Recruit Bible Study leaders for both preschool and children's Bible studies. (Show the Preschool and Children's Bible Study folders.)
 - ~ Explain that the daily Bible stories and applications are the same for BKC as the main VBS curriculum. Activities and games have been

- adapted to fit a broadly graded group of children and are easily portable and done outside.
- ~ Pull out the Day 1 teaching plans for both children and preschool. Show that they are the same Bible story, but use different activities based on comprehension levels and capabilities.
 - ~ Point out that the preschool teaching plan includes an abbreviated Bible verse (paraphrase) and coloring sheet option on the back. There is also a separate preschool music CD that is incorporated into the session.
 - ~ Mention that the children's teaching plans have an "Explore Deeper" activity (usually a game or craft option) to extend the time if needed. Lead the group through the Day 3 "Explore Deeper" activity (modified instructions below).
 - Ask conferees to guess a Bible reference that people often write on posters and bring with them to stadiums (John 3:16). Say: "Let's investigate why sports fans choose that particular verse to share with the rest of the world."
 - Guide attendees to find John 3:16 in their Bibles or on their phones. (Option: let them compare different translations.) Help them recognize that the verse summarizes the gospel—the good news about Jesus.
 - Lead attendees to form a circle. Play "Game On!" (Music for Kids CD, track 1) while they pass the hat or bucket around the circle. Pause the music at any time. The person holding the hat (or bucket) must draw out a card and answer the question based on the text of John 3:16. Continue until all four cards are drawn, then invite the group to sit back down.
 - ~ Show the kit items (teaching pictures) and playbooks (learner piece) for both preschool and children.
 - ~ Share the following tips for Bible Study:
 - Think through sun versus shade. You do not want kids staring into the sun as they look at the leader.
 - Provide clear physical boundaries. A flat sheet or blanket not only gives kids something to sit on but also provides a visual boundary.
 - Provide a cooler for the leader to sit on. Store supplies inside to prevent them from blowing away. (Other options include a large box, basket, or gym bag nearby.)
 - Ask all other team members (Music, Rec, Craft, etc.) to sit with the children during Bible Study to help them stay focused and to assist the Bible Study leader.
 - Be spiritually and mentally prepared for distractions. Do not be surprised if a neighbor decides to mow the lawn or a hot air balloon goes overhead during Bible study.
 - **Recreation Leader:** Leads recreation for 25 minutes.
 - ~ Show the preschool and children's *VBS 2018 Recreation Rotation Leader Cards*. Explain that the recreation cards for BKC are identical to the cards for VBS.
 - ~ Instruct recreation leaders to be very familiar with the playing area. Watch for tree roots, little ditches or other items that might be hazardous or cause any safety concerns.

- ~ Give clear boundaries on how far kids may go during games. Consider stationing extra adults or student leaders at those boundaries.
- ~ Determine in advance with the BKC team if recreation can include water or messy games.
- ~ Select 3–4 games per day. It is better to have more prepared to fill extra time.
- ~ Share the following tips for BKC recreation:
 - End a game before kids lose interest. You can always bring it back as an opening or closing game during drop off/pick up the next day.
 - Evenly disperse younger and older children on each team when forming teams with broadly graded ages. For relay games, place the youngest children at the front of the line and older children at the back. This will help to ensure that kids compete against others their own age.
 - Give teams sports-related names instead of calling them Team 1 and Team 2.
- **Craft Leader:** Leads crafts for 25 minutes.
 - ~ Show the Craft folder, sample craft packs, and the *VBS 2018 Crafts Rotation Leader Guide*.
 - ~ Explain that BKC crafts are chosen for their suitability for outdoor use. Additional craft ideas are available in the *VBS 2018 Crafts Rotation Leader Guide*.
 - ~ Mention that LifeWay craft packs are great options because they come in kits that are easy to distribute.
 - ~ Share the following tips for BKC Crafts:
 - Lead kids to stand around tables instead of sitting in chairs. (12 kids can stand around a table where only 6 chairs would fit.)
 - Plan ahead for wind! Place small items/crayons/markers in heavier bowls or cups to keep them from blowing away or rolling off the table.
 - Provide a bucket of soapy water and a towel nearby if doing messy crafts. This will give children a place to clean their hands without needing to go inside to find a sink.
 - Keep extra copies of the preschool Bible story coloring pages on hand for children who finish early. Or ask the Recreation Leader to stand-by ready to play a favorite game again as kids finish their craft.
 - Lead kids to place their finished crafts near the pick-up area so they do not forget them when they leave.
- **Adjusted Schedules:**
 - For groups larger than 20 children, utilize a rotation model based on ages rather than keeping all ages together the entire time. For example, after Bible study older children could go to crafts while younger children go to rec. Bring both groups back together for snacks, then flip flop rotations. Bring both groups back together again for Closing Rally.
 - For groups larger than 40 children, consider recruiting two separate teams for everything but music and snack. Children begin and end the day together with the Opening and Closing Rallies, but all other activities would be separated and on their own schedule. Example: Elementary age would stay in the front yard for Bible study, rec, and crafts. Preschool age would stay in the backyard for Bible study, rec, and crafts.

- Student Helpers: Work with the church's student ministry to recruit as many middle school and high school students as possible. Use this as an opportunity to train and guide students in leadership and prepare them for future mission trips.

4. BKC Publicity and Follow Up (25 minutes)

- Direct conferees to pages 32–35 of the directors guide and page 5 in the Host folder for great ideas on spreading the word about BKC.
- Ask attendees to share with the group some creative and successful ways they have handled publicity for their VBS or BKC. If not mentioned, be sure to share:
 - Yard signs with date/time/ages.
 - Fliers in neighborhoods. If going door-to-door, adults should bring their child or a child from the church with them. It is less intimidating for people to answer the door when they see a child.
 - Social media that includes direct links to registration pages on the church website.
 - ~ Consider using the *VBS 2018 Promotional Banner* at the church to direct people to the BKC page on the website.
 - Fliers/posters in common areas of neighborhoods/apartments. Be sure to get prior approval if necessary.
 - Mail *VBS 2018 postcards* to previous church guests listing the closest BKC to them.
 - Distribute info cards to the children who attend your church and challenge them invite their friends to come with them to BKC.
- Direct conferees to pages 37–44 of the directors guide and pages 8–10 in the Host folder for great ideas on registration and follow up.
- Emphasize that follow up begins with good record keeping during the registration process. Depending on the setting, it can be easy to miss a parent at registration or fail to get complete information. The Host may know the family and think they will capture the information later, but if complete information is not gathered, the church will have a difficult time reaching out to the family after BKC.
 - Remind host/team leaders of the importance of turning in registration information in a timely manner. Following up with families needs to happen quickly after BKC.
- Ask attendees to share their own creative and successful follow-up strategies from VBS or BKC with the group. If not mentioned, be sure to share:
 - Phone call from a BKC team member that worked with the child
 - Postcard from a BKC team member that worked with the child
 - Front porch visit from a team member with additional information about the church or delivering a photo from BKC as a keepsake for the child
 - Letter from the church
 - E-mail from the church
 - Phone call from a children's leader at the church representing the age of the child that attended (Children's Minister, Children's Sunday School teachers, etc.)
 - Invitation to an end-of-summer BKC celebration at the church
 - Invitation to a school or fall kickoff party at the church
- Ask BKC Hosts and teams to prayerfully consider doing at least one follow-up event during the year in the same location as their BKC. Families are more likely to continue the relationship with the BKC team than they are to visit a church full of strangers. Ideas include:
 - End of summer cookout
 - Back to school party
 - Fall/Halloween festival
 - Thanksgiving Pot Luck

- Decorating Christmas cookies
- Caroling around the neighborhood
- Making Valentines
- Easter egg hunts/parties
- Summer kickoff to promote the next BKC
- Other ideas provided by conferees

5. Closing (5 minutes)

- Thank attendees for coming. Acknowledge it was a lot of information to cover in 2 hours.
- Remind them each BKC is just like a mini-VBS. What they learn from VBS can help in BKC, and what they learn in BKC can help in VBS!
- Address one final difference between BKC and VBS—parent involvement. Since most BKCs happen outside, it is easier for parents to linger or want to stay and help. This provides wonderful opportunities to connect and build relationships with parents. Consider recruiting volunteers who have the sole task of connecting with parents.
- Draw attention to the VBS Scripture (on the verse poster in the BKC kit or the Visual Pack poster if displayed). Lead the group to read it aloud together.
- Say: “BKC can seem a little scary if you’ve never done it before—or even if you have done it before—because so much seems out of our control! But God’s Word promises us in this verse that God will give us everything we require to live a life for Him. If God is calling your church to step out and host a Backyard Kids Club, be obedient and watch Him work!”
- Pray for the leaders present, for the churches they represent, and for the children/families who will be reached this summer through VBS and BKC.

Possible Locations for BKC



Team Responsibilities and Tips

1. Host/Team Leader

2. Music/Worship

3. Bible Study

4. Recreation

5. Crafts

BKC Suggested Schedule

15–20 minutes: Early-arrival
games before BKC starts

15 minutes: Opening Rally

30 minutes: Bible Study

25 minutes: Recreation

10 minutes: Snacks

25 minutes: Craft

15 minutes: Closing Rally

Publicity and Promotion Ideas

Follow-up Ideas