

NEWS FROM LYNNE PABST

Our Certified Christian Educator and POINT Partner

In Case You Missed...

For those of you who missed the “VBS/Camp What to do midst COVID19 – All is not Lost” workshop and are still trying to figure out what to do this summer. Here are some of the thoughts and resources shared:

Questions to ask when making the decision: No one can tell a church what to do in this situation. The community of faith needs to fully examine its context, its theological beliefs, its ecclesiastical views, and the practice to which those lead.

- **What are we allowed to do? What stage are we in?** Make certain that you understand the government guidelines and CDC suggestions.
- **What can we do in good Christian conscience?** What is our responsibility to keeping neighbor and church member safe? What is our theology of neighbor and freedom? Having freedom to do something does not always mean it is the right thing to do. What are the understandings of the scriptures and responsibility to neighbor?
- **What is the main reason/goal for having VBS/Camp?** Each church has its own reason for offering VBS/Camp: outreach, building usage, always done it, childcare for community, provide food to children, evangelism, to give Mrs. C. something to do, replacing Sunday School and many other reasons. Discuss what the church’s main reason is for providing VBS/Camp. If it is to provide food, then having a handout of bag lunches with a Bible story in it meets the goal and is safe to do. Once you know the main reason for your summer program it can be adapted to meet COVID 19 concerns and still serve its purpose.
- **Who are the volunteers?** If volunteers are those vulnerable seniors, there may be limited staff. If they are high school youth, staff may be available but have limits to what they can do because of age.
- **What resources are available?** Is there technology? Is there strong internet? Do all families have internet and technology? Is there old curriculum to be recycled? Is there a budget to allow for purchase of technology to support new virtual curriculum? Is there a large indoor/outdoor area where social distancing is possible or is the space just too small to be safe?
- **What are other churches in the community doing?** Maybe in the past a big ecumenical communitywide VBS was held. This may not be the time for that. Maybe each church in order to limit contact, needs to restrict registration to only their families. Does the community as a whole want to take the risk of group activities?

What are the options?

- **Totally face-to-face in-person old traditional way with safety precautions.** Here the traditional in-person model is followed with the institution of safety precautions: masks, sanitizer. social distancing, limited sharing of materials, no singing.

- **Totally Virtual but a traditional model.** Here the traditional schedule is followed but it is done over Zoom or some other face-to-face technology platform. There is no in-person meeting.
- **Totally non-touch – providing the home with parent materials and child materials to study at home.** Here the materials are put together at the church and mailed to, dropped off to, or picked up by families. All experiences are completed in the context of the home and family.
- **Creative hybrid mixes of the 3 above**

What one church is doing?

Title: Grove's Traveling Bag Camp

Theme: God's Presence in the Wilderness (written by the Director of Christian Education)

Framework: June -- Advertise and register families. Each family receives letter with details and scriptural background on theme.

July -- Each Sunday afternoon families receive on their porch a bag with materials and activities for the week. Each Thursday have a zoom campfire.

Enrollment: Limit to 20-25 families

Ages: Completed Kindergarten through Grade 8

Fee: No Fee

Type of Help Needed: Assembly of bags

Delivery of bags

Donation of bag items

Host a Virtual CampFire (possibly in-person)

Participation in Zoom Camp

Material for Each Week's Lesson in a Bag:

- Parent background letter
- Food Item (nonperishable)
- Clothing item (t-shirt, cap, visor, neckerchief) included in activities
- Outdoor activities
- Indoor activities
- Family activities
- Mission activity
- Individual activities
- Coloring page
- Story page
- Memory Verse
- Music CD
- Bible

What does the campfire look like?

- Zoom link needs to be sent prior to event
- Evening around 7:00pm (Zooming with children should be limited to half hour segments)

- Say the memory verse
- Share learning
- Sing a song/hear a song
- Pray

Still have the problem of those who do not have internet or technology. Partner or host families if needed.

If considering in-person VBS:

- Think small groups
 - individual church rather than community
 - limit enrollment
 - have several sessions with lower enrollment
- Check Liability – consider participants and volunteers signing disclaimer of responsibility
- Clearly outline your safety and cleaning precautions
- Train volunteers in the safety precautions
- Follow those precautions
- Think of grouping by family or neighborhood rather than age
- Be cautious

If you want to talk more about your particular context, I am available:

- Lynne Pabst
- nurture@grovepres.org
- Church Phone: 570-275-0692
- Cell phone: 570-850-2844

Helpful Resources:

VBS Options -- <https://pres-outlook.org/2020/05/staycation-bible-school-2020-feet-that-follow/>

Virtual VBS Curriculum -BOLT -- <https://www.gocurriculum.com/bolt-vbs>

VBS at Home – All God’s Children: Church Family Gathers --

<https://www.genonministries.org/collections/summer-resources-for-intergenerational-ministry>

Church to go -- <https://buildfaith.org/church-to-go/>

At Home Video Lessons – <https://covidupdates.group.com/group-provides-new-at-home-video-lessons-to-address-kids-fears/> <https://covidupdates.group.com/vacation-bible-school/>

Family Resources -- <https://buildfaith.org/>

Group’s VBS Advice -- <https://www.group.com/category/ministry-resources/childrens-ministry/vbs/vbs-and-covid-19.do>

Guidelines -- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/316368B_FS_COVID19_CommunityFaithBased.pdf

Youth Activity and Camp Guidance midst COVID 19 -- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Special-Announcement--Child-Care-and-Summer-Camps-and-Recreation.html?soid=1112117859299&aid=5MjifGradVWc>



Offering Child Care Guidance midst COVID19 -- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

Synod Website Information -- <https://www.syntrinity.org/how-when-to-return-to-worship-safely/>

What Other's are Doing –

<https://www.genonministries.org/blogs/blog/a-simpler-vbs-during-covid-season>

<https://hope4ce.net/2020/05/05/diy-vacation-bible-school/>