

How To Choose The Right Vacation Bible School Curriculum



Photo by [Freeparking](#)

Vacation Bible School curriculum options are getting better every year. With the host of excellent VBS themes comes a problem – which one is right for your church? Here are the top elements I look at when choosing a Vacation Bible School curriculum.

Theology

Vacation Bible School publishers typically downplay doctrinal distinctives. This makes sense, because they are trying to reach the largest cross section of churches. But you can't assume that every [Vacation Bible School Curriculum](#) is theologically neutral. How can you evaluate the theological bias of a VBS program?

- Check to see if the publisher has a statement of faith.
- Dig a little deeper and see what types of churches typically use their curriculum.
- Read the sample lessons carefully and with discernment.
- If you are trying a new publisher, always

check with your pastor or church board.

Quality Of The Lesson Plans

Not all Bible lessons are created equal. When I think about quality I like to see lessons with clear learning objectives. Good curriculum will balance between challenging church kids and connecting with the unchurched. This is not an easy task! I also check to see if the Bible references clearly support the lesson aim. Too often verses are jammed into lessons just fit with the daily theme. Look carefully at the Bible teaching; it's the heart of every great Vacation Bible School Curricula.

Support

Many curriculum publishers have online forums where you can share ideas with other Vacation Bible School directors. This is a great way to get support and make new friends. Some publishers even offer regional training meetings. This is strength of using a major publisher's Vacation Bible School Curriculum.

Ministry Setting

Think carefully about your ministry setting. Not all themes will fit well in every community. For example, some [Vacation Bible School curricula](#) might not connect with city kids the same way they connect with rural children. If you reach unchurched children, find a VBS program that leans toward evangelism. If most of your VBS learners are from other churches, select a curriculum that leans toward discipleship.

Music And Video Demonstrations

What music styles are influencing the culture in your town? I give a lot of weight to the music when choosing a Vacation Bible School curriculum. If possible, let some kids in your life sample the music off the

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publisher's website. I have been surprised to find that music I thought was "cool" sounds like "pre-school music" to our kids. It's also important to find a publisher that offers DVD music demonstrations.

Marketing

Vacation Bible School as a concept has less cultural draw than in previous generations. Most publishers offer a good selection of publicity material to help boost attendance. Be careful, the cost of these can add up quickly. I usually make flyers with the approved advertising logos that are included in the curriculum. We also place a large sign on the road by our church. This works well because of our location, but you may need to get more creative.

Easy To Use

"Easy" has become a buzzword for children's ministry curriculum. While there is a danger in lowering expectations for your volunteers, but we all have to negotiate time in our busy lives. I try to make things easy on the preparation side, but expect a lot of energy and compassion from our workers on the scene. Finding a VBS program that makes things easy is always a plus.

Price

Many of the larger [Vacation Bible School](#) curricula have similar price points. Watch out for hidden costs such as workbooks, craft kits and extra teacher manuals. If budget is a concern, get creative with snack donations, and craft supplies. I know of several churches that work together to save costs by sharing their materials. You can also shop around online and find steep discounts on Vacation Bible school curriculum.

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What do you think?

Which elements do you look at when choosing a [Vacation Bible School curriculum](#)? Leave a comment below and join the conversation.

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