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**DIOCESE OF JAMAICA THE CAYMAN ISLANDS**



**Theme 2018**

WORSHIP

**1 Chronicles 16:23-24**

WITNESS

**Acts 1:8**

WORK

**Colossians 3:23-24**

**Hebrews 13: 1-2**

WELCOME

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**TO: *All Priests, Church Workers Sunday School Superintendents and Teachers – Diocese of Jamaica & the Cayman Islands* FROM: *Rev. Douglas Barnes – Director, Christian Education* DATE: *June 5, 2018* SUBJECT: *Vacation Bible School 2018***

*It’s Vacation Bible School time again!!! Let it be a time of learning, growing, challenge and fun!!*

I know you are gearing up for the next leg of the Sunday school journey. This summer we will spend time with our children in Vacation Bible School as we focus on Intentional Discipleship. Each of us as disciples ought to seek:

* ***Ways to Worship God***
* ***Ways to Witness for God***
* ***Ways to Work for God***
* ***Ways to Welcome others***

Here are a few survival basics that might help if you choose to attempt going off the beaten path:

1. ***Plan***: it’s never too soon to begin think about what you want to achieve and the quality VBS program you desire.

2. ***Focus on a theme:*** a theme helps you to set and focus on achieving specific goals. Also participants and volunteers alike feed off each other’s enthusiasm. The more personally excited you are about a topic, the more fun you’ll have planning events.

3. ***Over-staff volunteers***: The toughest part to plan and implement is sometimes the adult helpers. Always make space for “floaters” who can come in for an hour or share the lunch or do transportation etc.

 ***4. Think Big***: Think about the impact you will make on the life of at least one child. You are serving God through serving a child. Always think more about and decide which ideas are most practical. In doing so you will be able to use locally available materials to complete activities and not rob the children of a wonderful experience.

5. ***Identify needs:*** Along with your list of ideas, write down a list of resources/materials (food, craft products, etc.) that you think you will require for the program. Ask the congregation for donations to make it possible. Post a wish list of items and arrange a convenient spot to place them, if a fundraiser or monetary drive is not possible.

6. ***Draft and try to stay with a schedule:*** Once you have a daily plan, which includes (at least) a Bible verse, Bible story, games, crafts, snack, songs, and whatever other activities interest your group, the only other things left to do

***7. Maintain your mission:*** Remember your purpose and vision. The program exists for children to experience God’s love and have fun. This will only happen if you have fun and handle all things with prayer.

Attached is the proposed Vacation Bible School (VBS) activity package divided according to age groups with suggested activities. Adapt it to your needs and context.

I wish for you an exciting experience with VBS this year as we continue in partnership to nurture, teach and care for the most impressionable among us. Please send feedback suggestions comments and questions to the Division of Christian Education as this will help us as we move forward in faith.

**GENERAL OPERATING GUIDELINES**

1. Devotions, Bible Reading and Bible Study are important. Remember it is Vacation ***Bible*** School.
2. You may divide the total number of children in groups and give them names (on the first day, regardless of the numbers). This will give children an identity and somewhat a goal to aim towards. The name might also help with discipline as you help them to emulate the character they’re named after.
3. At the end of each day, meet with your VBS facilitating team to look at pros and cons of the day, celebrate simple joys and prepare for the next day.
4. Make copies of required resources overnight so your VBS can flow smoothly throughout the day. While this may give you more opportunity to deal with issues or hick-ups as they arise, being prepared allows you to accomplish more.
5. Try to get at least two (2) facilitators to a group of 10 children
6. Where resources are available, take pictures of the children at work or play and have them displayed in a PowerPoint presentation. This gives them something to look forward to and also builds their self-esteem. You may also choose to use it as a wall of fame for the best performing team the day before etc. etc.
7. The final day of VBS should be used to reinforce the importance of children and strengthen their self-esteem and value in the kingdom of God. You may invite children to do an environmental project to highlight their unique role in taking care of creation as well as you may have children focus on how their uniqueness can be otherwise used to worship God.
* *Also the Friday activities may be a good way to invite and involve parents and guardians. This could also serve as an introduction or re-introduction to church.*
1. Closing activity each day could be a team activity where each team competes for prizes or points, which when accumulated will give the “winning” team a prize on the last day. Good way to reinforce taught principles.
2. This year we have expanded the Vacation Bible School offering. The expansion is the suggestion of a shorter VBS encounter of 2-3 hours each day. This time may be considered a ***Family Faith Focus***. Invite parents and guardians to spend a little time with their children learning and engaging the scriptures, art and conversation. This may depend on a minimal budget or limited human and physical resources.

**NOTES**

**Welcome and Registration**

 *Ensure the children are welcomed and or received into the VBS learning space. This should honour them and invite them into something that is good. Ensure you have a record of all the children in your care. If there is an emergency or need to make contact with adult guardians you will be able to do so with little or no challenge.*

**Devotions**

*During the devotional period, ensure you read the scriptures. Use story format (such as what is suggested) or us e suitable props. The goal is ensure students engage with the scripture as you help to make it alive and relevant to their lives. That is why this is called Engaging the Scriptures (ETS). Have discussion about the scripture reading and as far as possible give children the opportunity to apply at least one principle to their life.*

**Theme Song** *Use the theme song to reinforce or as a complement to the theme. Then prayer concludes the devotional time together. You may pray for or with or invite children to say one-liners as this helps to build their confidence in praying and breaks the barrier that some may have in communicating with God.*

**Break**

*Taking breaks is important. Timing is also very important and as such, you will have to ensure that in maintaining break and resumption times help to convey the importance and value of work and play.*

**Drama:**

*You may dramatize or have children do their interpretation of some aspects of the Bible story read and discussed earlier.*

**Sing-A-Long:**

*Some songs are suggested but don’t be tied to these. Use your own to boost the activity. Children should leave VBS learning at least one song by the end of the week. Encourage them to sing. It is about praising God.*

**Art And Craft**

*During this time you may have children colour pages, draw or use their imagination to do something creative as you help them interpret the theme and use their God-given skills.*

**Extended Activity**

*This activity is designed to further reinforce the theme for the day. It gives them additional activity to engage but it also helps them to look beyond themselves and to think broader about life, the application of scripture to other individual, communities and or societies.*

**Dance And Movement**

You may have a choreographed activity or you could play music and have children dance or sing. This is a way of helping them to highlight and appreciate the arts and their own abilities that might not otherwise be seen as ways of worshipping God.

**Bucket of Gold, Closing Devotion, Prayer Circle and Dismissal**

*Invite the children together to a gathering in the afternoon. Use the Bucket of God concept as a way to review the past day and set the tone for the next day. If there is anything you wish the children to do in preparation for the next day, this is the time to tell them. Invite them to join hands and each child says a one liner prayer of thanksgiving. Send them off with the reminder that God is with them.*

**Resources:**

*Ensure you prepare for the next day. You may invite responsible children to assist you, but to have a successful VBS as facilitator you should look ahead and ensure you have enough or close enough to the type and quality of the materials you will need to do a good enough job of engaging the children in the activities for the next day.*

**Evening Vacation Bible School programme**

**Topic: Heroes from the Bible: How can YOU be a hero?**

**Duration: 2 – 3 hours**

**Program:**

4:00 p.m. Welcome, sing-a-long, theme song, memory verse and message for the day

4:30 p.m. Age-appropriate activities *(inclusive of craft, science experiments, hymn-sing, games)*

5:30 p.m. Dinner and send-off

**Note:** *Suited for children between**ages 3 – 10 or any age group depending on your locale or available human and financial resources.*

 *This is best suited for afternoons but it may be adapted to mornings.*

 *A kid-friendly meal may be provided.*

**Age Group 4-6 years**

**Age Group 7-11 years**

**Age Group 12-15 years**

**Age Group 16-18 years**

**INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP THEME SONG**

**I Pledge to Follow You**

Lord, your ways are good

And your will is sure

Your words are life and peace I pledge to follow you I’ll follow where you lead

And where you live, I’ll live

***Where you send, I'll go***

***As you serve, I’ll serve***

***I pledge to follow you (Rept)***

The ones you love, I’ll love As you gave I’ll give I live for you alone I pledge to follow you You light the path to truth From you I’ll stray no more

Christ, Teacher, Living Word I yield to you my Lord In you there’s life un-end

I pledge to follow you No matter what the price Even the sacrifice

We’ll fight the fight of faith

Preaching to lost and ailed

Freedom and peace in soul

The cares of life are small when on your name we call

And pledge to follow you

Bearing your light, O Christ

We shed the night-time fears;

Our hearts are open now

Feed us Your Holy Word.

Plant truth within us deep;

Shape us to follow you

*Words & Tune: Rev. Douglas Barnes (2018)*

 **VBS THEME SONG – 2018 Train Up the Child**

Train up the child God’s love to own

Show them the way His hand to hold

God’s perfect will, must be their goal

Help them to give to God their all

*CHORUS:*

*Train up the child to know God’s grace*

*And in His kingdom take their place*

*Train up the child to seek His face*

The Word commands – “Train up the child”

Their promised place is God’s right hand

*Teach them to know and live the truth*

*And in their hearts let peace take root*

Train up the child - the task of love

Teach them that grace is freely giv’n

Rightly divide the word of truth

Teach them to serve God in their youth

Train up the child for eternity

*Teach them to honour Christ the King*

Train up a child God’s will to heed

Teach them his face to always seek

Praise to our God; the holiest three

O, Holy, Blessed Trinity

In grateful chorus now we raise

From your own altar hymns of praise

*Tune: My Hope is built – CPWI #456 )*

*Words: Rev. Douglas Barnes (2018)*

**Song: I have decided to follow Jesus**

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

I have decided to follow Jesus;

No turning back, no turning back.

2 Though none go with me, I still will follow;

Though none go with me, I still will follow;

Though none go with me, I still will follow;

No turning back, no turning back.

3 My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;

My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;

My cross I'll carry, till I see Jesus;

No turning back, no turning back.

4 The world behind me, the cross before me;

The world behind me, the cross before me;

The world behind me, the cross before me;

No turning back, no turning back.

**Song: “This Little Light of Mine”**

This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine Let it shine let it shine let it shine

**Programme for Day 5**

**EARLY MORNING SESSION:**

1. Invite the Priest or a special guest (such as a Child Development Agency (CDA) representative, Police Officer, Nurse etc.) to share in devotions.  *Where possible ask the guest to speak of how important it is to remain a (Christian) disciple even though you are on-the-job. This will encourage children to be disciples everywhere they go 0 home school, the supermarket, KFC etc.*
2. Invite parents and guardians etc. to participate in the day’s activities
3. Set up for display overnight where possible for an Open Day to show the things the children made Monday to Thursday
4. Have one or two children from each class (age group) stay at that group’s display area to explain some of the things on display

**MID-MORNING SESSION (Sports Day)**

1. Divide children in Teams (Houses) from Monday and ensure you use the Bucket of Gold (recap and reinforcement) activity at the end of each day for each team (House) to score points leading up to the sports day.
2. Organize a Sports day with various miniature events, for example:
* *Lime and Spoon race*
* *Sack race*
* *Potato race*
* *100 m dash*
* *Maths race*
* *Sword in hand (Bible race)*
1. The points scored on Sports Day goes towards what they accumulated across the week and helps to determine who the champion witnesses are for the Week.
2. **LUNCH**

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

1. Host a concert (invite a special guest if possible.)
2. Have an M. C.
3. Use the opportunity to reinforce the theme. Reinforce the importance of being a disciple through our Worship, Witness, Work and Welcome.
4. Have children perform one or two items from the number of items they created or learned across the week (*dance, psalm, poem, prayer, dram piece, etc)[[1]](#footnote-1)*
5. Hand out prizes and Certificates of participation to all children

 **NAME TAG IDEAS**

**INTENTIONAL DISCIPLE**

*Name*



**Sources**

<https://www.google.com.jm>

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Sermon4kids.com

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1. *Children are to be encouraged to take home the artwork etc. that they created as a way of discipling others as they share what they learned and engaged at VBS 2018.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)