

Traveling Vacation Bible School

A guide for congregations and volunteers and their parents

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Overview of Traveling Vacation Bible School

The Traveling Vacation Bible School (TVBS) program is a unique outreach opportunity for CLC congregations. Simply summarized, the program matches volunteers with churches who might otherwise have difficulty preparing and staffing Vacation Bible School.

Why have the TVBS program?

The program began in 1999 with an idea from Pastor Paul Tiefel. With the approval of the Mission Board, a committee was formed and TVBS began. The program has grown over the years and hundreds of volunteers have helped congregations with their VBS efforts. TVBS meets several real needs within our synod.

- Congregations who need help in staffing VBS are able to do so with support from TVBS.
- TVBS provides the opportunity for meaningful personal evangelism work for any young CLC member who is confirmation through college-age.
- TVBS often serves as a springboard for young people to go into the preaching/teaching ministries by providing practical, hands-on experience on how to conduct a Vacation Bible School program.
- The program also provides all involved the opportunity to meet fellow Christians from across the United States.

How is the program funded?

Financial resources for the program are provided through the CLC's General Fund, under the authorization of the CLC Mission Board. The program could not exist without all of our volunteers: students, chaperones, congregational contacts, and the TVBS Committee. Participating congregations are encouraged to think about contributing to the cost of the program in their area, according to their own ability. Other congregations are encouraged to consider adopting a sister congregation and assisting them in running a VBS program.

How do you decide which congregations get TVBS?

A variety of factors go into making this decision. We look at a congregation's ability to put on their own Vacation Bible School program, the congregation's location, the number of willing volunteers, the available funding, among other things. We also make every effort to send TVBS to mission congregations.

The deadline for congregations to apply for TVBS 2006 is **January 15, 2008**. An application has been included in this packet. **Important!** If your congregation wants to apply for TVBS, this application form **must** be completed and returned by the deadline. If you need another application, contact the TVBS committee or go online at www.clctvbs.org.

How can I help? The TVBS program is a worthwhile effort and we encourage you to join in supporting it. There are many ways that the program could use your talents.

- Prayer
- Monetary donations
- Help with craft assembly
- Help with providing lunches and snacks
- Volunteer (as a team member or chaperone or a TVBS committee member)
- Ask the committee for other ways you might help

How do I contact the TVBS Committee?

If you have questions or would like to apply to be part of the TVBS program, contact the TVBS Committee.

E-mail us at ross.roehl@ilc.edu

Or call a committee member:

Ross and Lynette Roehl (715-831-8306)

Jeff and Kristin Bomber (715-830-0865)

Brett and Cheryl Bailey (715-832-9626)

Karen Johannes (715-835-7545)

Frequently asked questions from congregations

What will TVBS do for my congregation?

During the first phase of the program, a team of young people will arrive at your location three to four weeks before your week of VBS to distribute flyers advertising the program. Shortly before the week your VBS is scheduled to start, a different team will arrive to teach VBS. All necessary materials (flyers, crafts, music, workbooks, etc.) will be provided.

What are we as a congregation responsible for?

The congregation is responsible for feeding and housing the flyer and teaching teams. Also, you are responsible for planning and providing some recreational activities for the teams. Please let the TVBS Committee know if your congregation is able to provide additional financial assistance to offset the cost of the program.

Can we just have the teaching team come?

Remember one of the key objectives of TVBS is to reach out to non-members. We believe that flyer delivery is one good way to accomplish that. Often, congregations do not have the resources or time to deliver flyers in a timely manner. Flyer teams deliver between 3000 and 10,000 flyers, depending on the length of time in your area, the size of the flyer delivery team and your location. Because of the mission potential, the TVBS Committee's policy is that flyer delivery is extremely important and teaching teams are ordinarily not supplied without a flyer team.

Why plan recreational activities?

Your TVBS volunteers work hard and some free time for fun pays off. This maximizes the volunteers' experiences, which is reflected in their TVBS work. It also increases the likelihood that they will participate in the program again in the future.

Can you suggest some activities for the teams?

Some of the activities congregations have done in the past include swimming, hiking, touring, museums, amusement parks, historical sites, state park visits, picnics, ball games, paint-balling. Think of things unique to your area that young people would like to do.

Once your congregation has been selected:

There is much planning, many details and many individuals involved in a successful TVBS program—timely communication and prompt responses are essential for success!

Please remember that there are many people involved in this effort! Your prompt responses will help us to make the best decision for everyone involved. However, there are times when a last minute change may need to be made. The TVBS Committee will make every effort to keep you informed of the changes. We appreciate your flexibility. You can also help by providing contact information and regularly checking e-mail and messages.

Selecting a contact person

The TVBS Committee suggests selecting a member of the congregation to work with the pastor to help coordinate the effort. In addition, please provide all necessary contact information (phone numbers, e-mail address, etc.). This information will help ensure that the TVBS Committee is able to contact you easily.

Planning for your congregation's TVBS

Your congregation should:

- Arrange for a place for the volunteers to stay. If you need TVBS volunteers of the same gender for housing purposes, please let the committee know this early in the planning process.
- Select the area for flyer delivery.
- Select the location for your VBS. If your congregation does not have a regular church building, you will need to do some research to find a place where you can hold VBS. Some places to try include local park pavilions, community centers or schools. Please notify the TVBS Committee as soon as you've secured a location.
- Provide the necessary information to the TVBS Committee's media coordinator so the proper information can be included on your flyer.
- Promote the VBS in your area.
- Put up your VBS sign in front of your location.
- Plan activities for the flyer and teaching teams.
- Stay in contact with the TVBS Committee. The TVBS Committee will let your congregation's contact person know approximately when the teams will arrive.

Selecting an area for flyer delivery

The hosting congregation is responsible for selecting the flyer delivery areas. After all, you know the area much better than any of your visiting volunteers.

When you select an area, keep these hints in mind:

- The purpose of the flyer team is to deliver as many flyers as possible while keeping the members of the flyer team safe.
Choose longer streets in safe neighborhoods with houses on both sides of the street. That way, volunteers can walk in pairs, one on each side of the street. If possible, do not choose neighborhoods where the houses are very far apart and the driveways are long. Save these neighborhoods for last or finish these on your own.
- We recommend that you scout out the areas for delivery in advance. Some have found it useful to make maps for the volunteers.
- Minimize the amount of walking that your volunteers have to do. For example, don't have them walk down to the end of a street and then walk back. Drive a vehicle, drop people off at the beginning of a route and be there at the end of the route to pick them up.
- Don't drop the volunteers off for hours at a time. Flyer delivery is hard work. We recommend keeping a cooler with water in the vehicle and staggering the volunteers' drop off and pick up times, so each pair has a small break. At the same time, it's not efficient to be dropping off teams of volunteers for a five-minute stretch of delivery.
- The chaperones have been recruited to drive the TVBS van to your location and that is their primary responsibility. They may choose to help in the delivery of flyers, but please remember that they need to be well rested and alert for their return trip. Don't expect the chaperone to drive the volunteers, nor to select where the flyers should be delivered.
- We love having members from the congregation assist in flyer delivery. This helps encourage everyone involved. The volunteers feel support from the congregation and the congregation appreciates the volunteers' time. However, please do not send along young children and expect the volunteers to watch them and deliver flyers at the same time. The volunteers are there to deliver flyers. Adult member will also be aware of any possible dangers in the area where the team is delivering.

Promoting VBS in your area

It's important to get the word out into your community. One important way is to put up a large sign at your worship location. Some have found that placing flyers in a pocket on the sign works well. Different options include free public service announcements on local TV stations, radio stations and newspapers. Paid ads are also an option. Put up posters in local businesses. If you discover any other successful approaches, please let us know and we'll pass on your successful ideas. If you need help making a sign for you VBS program, let the flyer team know and they can help you out.

How to create a flyer

Flyers have information printed on both sides of a sheet of paper. The front side contains information about your VBS program. The backside includes a Gospel message so that the good news is shared even with those who do not attend VBS! Flyer printing is done in Eau Claire and the flyers will be sent with the teams. Because of our inexpensive printing options and the volunteer labor, this is the most cost-effective option, saving quite a bit of money over commercial printers in your area. You will need to provide the necessary information to committee member Lynette Roehl (715-831-8306 lynette.roehl@ilc.edu) so the proper information can be included on your flyer.

Also, you will need to choose what information will be printed on the back of your flyer. Samples are available. If you choose to provide your own master for the back, keep in mind that less text is better. Do not feel the need to load down the flyer with text to the point where it is not readable. Most people are going to briefly scan the flyer for 1-2 seconds. Lynette will be happy to work with you to design something that is appealing and suitable.

Information for volunteers

Who can volunteer?

TVBS is targeted towards allowing CLC young people (high school and college age) a chance to serve in God's Kingdom. However, people of any age are welcome to help. If you are over the age of 25 and have a driver's license and a good driving record, you might consider serving as a chaperone/driver.

How do I volunteer?

To volunteer, see your pastor or contact the TVBS Committee.

Please take your commitment to volunteer seriously. The TVBS Committee realizes that some things occasionally come up (sickness, death in the family, etc.). However, the congregations are counting on you. It can be difficult to replace a trained volunteer. Without our volunteers, this important mission outreach effort will not get done. Please make every effort to keep your commitment.

What do I need?

Please pack lightly because space is limited. One suitcase or dufflebag per volunteer.

- (An additional small backpack or tote bag is fine.)
- Personal items (toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, soap, etc.)
- Thank you notes for hosts
- Cell phones are allowed
- Extra spending money
- Suitable clothing for the weather, swimming suits/sunscreen
- Comfortable walking shoes, sandals, (socks are encouraged)
- Pillow for the van
- Games for the van
- Personal medications
- Teaching teams: Appropriate teacher attire
- 1 church appropriate outfit
- Bible
- Teaching notes

Guidelines for the flyer team

- Never--under any circumstances--go into someone's house.
- Make sure you can see your partner on the other side of the street.
- Stay at appointed pick-up points.
- Stay on the sidewalk and don't walk over people's lawns.
- If a house has a "no soliciting" sign (no handbills, etc.), do not leave a flyer at the house.
- Do not leave flyers on vehicles or in mailboxes.
- Make sure you secure the flyer so it doesn't blow away. We don't want angry calls from people who have found flyers blowing around their neighborhoods.
- We suggest rolling up the flyer and placing it under the screen door handle. You can also wedge it between the screen door and the front door. The last resort is to place it under the doormat.
- Watch for "Beware of dogs" signs. If you see a large, barking dog and feel uncomfortable with delivering a flyer to the house, that's okay.
- Know the basic information about the church (pastor's name, church times and location) so you can pass along this information if someone asks. Note serious inquiries and give this information to the pastor.
- Keep track of the number of flyers delivered.
- Pray for the safety and success of the VBS program.

(Go to www.clctvbs.org to find teachers' notes and instructional videos)

Guidelines for the teaching team

- Be prepared to teach. Know the lessons and complete the worksheets ahead of time. Check out www.clctvbs.org for teachers' notes and video.
- Familiarize yourself with the craft projects.
- Requests to teach specific grade levels can be made but be ready to adjust to the needs of the congregation.
- Get to know your students and inform the pastor of any non-members in your classes.
- Pray for the safety and success of the VBS program.

Information for parents

How are chaperones selected?

The TVBS Committee works hard at getting responsible men and women to serve as chaperones/drivers. For safety and insurance purposes, drivers must be age 25 or older, with a good driving record.

How do I keep in contact with my child?

You will receive a letter containing your child's arrival and departure times and itinerary. Phone numbers of area congregational contact people are also provided in the letter. We will ensure that each team has a cell phone along.

What kind of training is supplied?

Specialized training for both flyer teams and teaching teams is provided. If a volunteer cannot attend a training session, go online to www.clctvbs.org to view the video.

What if something happens to my child?

We have taken every precaution to make sure the TVBS program is safe. Chaperones supervise the teams on the way to the location and the host congregation is responsible for taking care of them once they arrive at their destination. Flyer volunteers go out in pairs. It is also required that you complete emergency medical treatment forms. These health forms are sent with the chaperone in the event of an emergency. Above all, we entrust the safety of your children and the whole program to the LORD.