

Taking VBS on Mission

By Cindy Thomas

1. Pray

- a. Prepare yourself spiritually
- b. Pray for the translators
- c. Pray for the local church members
- d. Pray for the students you will reach

2. Plan

- a. Decide on what VBS lessons you will use. I love *Backyard Kids Club* material from LifeWay. You may be able to use one lesson and take it to each Bible Study site. If you are ministering in the same location every day, then you will need to prepare a different lesson for each day.
- b. Plan for 20-25 minute rotations of Bible Study, Crafts, Recreation and Snack. If you are running short on time combine rec and snack times.
- c. Choose a main leader for each rotation and let team members choose where they want to help. Remember you will have church members and an interpreter that will help with each group.
- d. Give each rotation leader the material so they can start preparation – copying, cutting, gathering supplies, etc.

3. Prepare

- a. Have **Bible study leaders** know the story well. Decide if team members will take turns each day telling the story. Caution: they will need to speak in short phrases to allow the translator time.
- b. They will need to gather the appropriate picture and Bible verse that goes along with the Bible story plus and additional kit items.
- c. They will need to translate the memory verse into Spanish and write it on a $\frac{1}{4}$ or $\frac{1}{2}$ sheet of poster board (whatever will fit into the bottom of your suitcase). Write English on one side (for your leader) and the Spanish on the other side.
- d. If you are using Review statements or an application activity use Google translate to use Spanish so the items you hand out to children

will be in their language. The leader keeps the set in the kits so they can follow along. Here is where I use the church members to review the story or do the application.

- e. For **Crafts** be sure to use something about Jesus and/or the Bible and not something about the theme. The children really like making bracelets with leather cording and pony beads. I always use black, red, white, green and gold beads to do the plan of salvation. Whatever craft you choose must be items you are able to pack and take with you. Most craft items are not available there. All the adult helpers and church members like to make a craft also. Mothers with small children will want one for their children. Be sure to translate any written words on the craft into their language.
- f. For **Recreation** there are several games in the Recreation Card pack that don't need additional supplies. Always pack balloons and beach balls for recreation because they pack light and flat.
- g. For **Snacks** you will need to be prepared to purchase the snacks there. The Mission Team house has coolers and the translators will load and unload your snacks. If coloring pages are part of the curriculum use them during snack time. Make sure to pack extra crayons. Also, if you have the Spanish material this is the perfect time to read the appropriate book in Spanish. The church members love to help with this rotation. They will read the book in Spanish and do review conversation also.

4. General Information:

- a. Be flexible; the venues for VBS will change each day and you need to find a safe area for the recreation where the kids can run and move. Find the quietest area with the least distractions for Bible story and an opposite corner or sidewalk for crafts.
- b. Start your VBS with music and games. Take 10-15 minutes to sing (the chaperones and church members here are a huge help) and play games with the children.
- c. Group your children into 3 groups so you can start rotations. You can try by age, however many of the older children may be watching younger siblings and are reluctant to separate from them. This has not been a problem because they are used to helping the little ones.

- d. Ask the translators to help group all children and get several church members to go with each group.
- e. Have the VBS Director give a signal when it is time to rotate (about every 20-25 minutes). They can blow a whistle or just signal each group with how many minutes they have left before the next rotation.
- f. Group all children back together at the closing for a final song and prayer.
- g. Make all copies and posters before you depart. There are limited supplies where you will be serving. Distribute supplies among group members so you can share the weight in your luggage.
- h. If possible, be prepared to leave extra items there. The local church can usually use anything you leave. I leave the items with a church leader (pastor or whoever works with their kids).