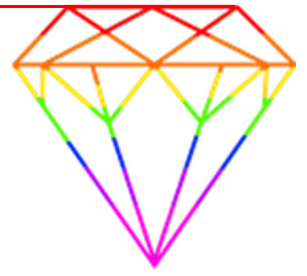


Resource Gems



Ideas & Resources
Connecting Congregations

Welcome To Resource Gems

Have you ever been sitting at home wondering where to find a good Sunday School lesson or unique worship resources? How about something fun, creative, and Biblically based for Easter or Christmas programs? Well, you aren't alone. Resource Gems newsletter is your chance to read and/or share about some great Christian leadership resources for ministry.

In this 2nd issue, we are excited to share a resource from County Line Church of the Brethren. (Thank you Liz Gordon-Hancock for putting this together.)

In future newsletters we hope that you all will also share. Here are some ideas:

- Sunday School Lessons for Adult and Kids
- Advertising/Web/Newsletter Resources
- Worship Leader Resources
- Book Reviews
- Financial Resources
- Evangelism Resources
- The list can go on and on.



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Church of the Brethren

Northern Ohio District



Join the Resource Gems Facebook page to share additional ideas, thoughts, and prayers.

County Line's Children's Ministry is changing what VBS looks like.

After two summers off of doing a week-long Vacation Bible School (VBS), we decided to change things up. We created Winter Bible School, which ran from Jan-February, once a week on Wednesday evenings. We chose to do this for multiple reasons:

- Having two years off gave us the perfect platform to introduce a change.
- Our Summer VBS was good, but it wasn't ministering to many non-church people. We saw the same families come every year (grandkids or friends of churchgoers) but no membership growth from it. Very few, if any, of these participants were non-Christian, so it became hard to classify our VBS program as outreach.



- Winter is comparatively less busy than the rest of the calendar year, often with families looking for activities to do with their kids.
- The change in format - moving from one fun-filled week to only once a week - put a lot less pressure on our volunteers.

The VBS team (who organized the program overall) consisted of three people - our Children's Ministry Director (paid position), and two others. We chose a VBS curriculum which had a great theme, good music, bible teaching, and decorating tips which we could use.

We broke the participating kids into four groups:

- 3rd to 5th graders
- 1st and 2nd graders
- 5-year-olds and Kindergarteners
- 3-4 year olds



(We purposefully chose to incorporate a 3-4 year old group because we know not many churches offer VBS for 3-4 year olds, and we've pulled in new families because we offer something for this age group, but it is not for the faint of heart!)

On Wednesday nights, we only have from 6-8 p.m. Our evening is broken up into stations: Music, Crafts, Bible Story and Class Time. As you can see from the schedule below, everyone starts in Opening Assembly, and comes back together at Closing, but the rest of the time, each age group goes to a different station:

Knights of North Castle WBS Rotation Schedule 2022					
5:00-5:45 Family Feast in the Fellowship Hall					
	3yr-4yr	5yr-kinder	1st-2nd	3rd-4th-5th	6th-7th-8th
6:00-6:20	Opening Assembly				
6:25-6:40	Class-Nursery	Bible Story	Music	Craft	
6:45-7:00	Craft	Class-VeggieTales	Bible Story	Music	
7:05-7:20	Music	Craft	Class-Lion Rm	Bible Story	
7:25-7:40	Bible Story	Music	Craft	Class-Middle	
7:45-8:00	Closing Assembly and Missions				
Station Locations					
Opening and closing	Sanctuary				
Music	Sanctuary				
Craft					
Bible Story	Big KAM				
Recreation	Tent				

We dedicated 15 minutes to each station, with 5 minutes for travel in between.

These gave us huge advantages:

- It allowed us to be age specific: by separating kids by age and ability, we could do age-relevant activities, e.g. more elaborate craft projects for the older groups or use more visual aids for the younger age groups, and teach the bible lesson specifically to their level.

- This also enabled us to do the program with less volunteers: we only needed one bible teacher, who taught all 4 age groups, one session at a time. We only needed one craft leader to lead crafts. Of course, many assistants are needed, but with far less pressure on them to do multiple jobs, and so forth.
 - Additionally, this allowed our volunteers to really focus on their particular gifting: the volunteer with the gift of teaching kids didn't also need to chase toddlers or corral pre-teens. They could focus on their gifting. Similarly, the volunteer who just loves mothering children can play mother (chase toddlers and corral pre-teens) without having to teach the kids as well. We found we had more willing volunteers with this set-up.
 - For previous VBS', we had to find a teacher for each age group, and they had to teach the bible lesson, help out with music, crafts, recreation and snacks, all while keeping tabs on all their kids and ferrying them from one activity to the next. It also meant that those volunteers gifted with teaching had to choose which age group to teach, and they didn't get to interact with any other age group during VBS. So, this new format simplified some things.
- We were able to incorporate Class Time directly after the Bible lesson, which set aside time for the kids to reflect on the Bible story they just learned. So often, we teach the story from the Bible but don't always get time to apply it to our own lives - this Class Time allowed us to address that, and give kids time and space to reflect, as part of the program.
- Doing only one night a week (instead of five days in a row) also helped our volunteers save energy and dedicate more time to each day's lesson or theme.

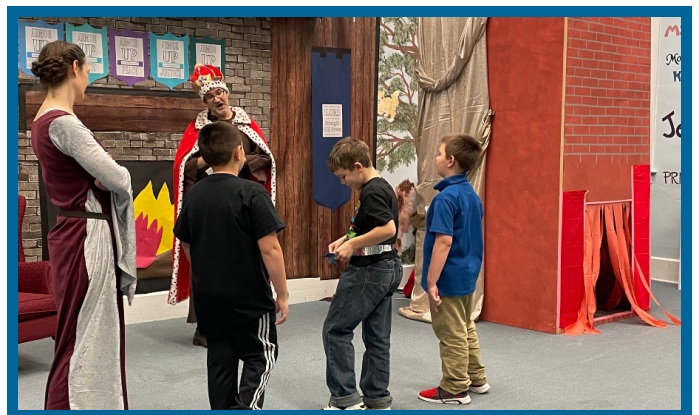
To pull these stations off, you must have enough physical space to have 3-4 separate rooms for crafts, Bible lessons, music and class-time respectively.

You must also have strategic volunteers - one Bible teacher, one Craft leader, one Music leader - who are willing to lead the same session 4 times in one night, to 4 different age groups. We strongly recommend you identify these strategic volunteers by their God-given gifting.

Program:

The program we chose studied the Armor of God from Ephesians, with our key bible verse being Ephesians 6:10 "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power." Our overall theme for decorating was castles and knights. Each night, we studied one piece of the armor (e.g. Belt of Truth, Breastplate of Justice, Shoes of Peace, Shield of Faith, and Helmet of Salvation).

Our crafts were geared towards making or decorating their own piece of armor, tailored to the ability of each age group (which meant lots of stickers for the youngest groups).



The Great Commission

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28:16-20

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Results:

- Almost 50% of our kids attending WBS were non-regulars or kids we had never seen before!
- Happy volunteers with no mention of "burn out."
- Feedback from volunteers noted both girls and boys were equally engaged in the armor theme and lessons.
- Despite the wintry weather and it being cold season, our attendance remained fairly consistent, week-by-week.

The kids loved every minute of it, and we had so much fun with this program! We're declaring it a successful experiment!



Brethren Press—Vacation Bible School 2022

Welcome to Passport to Peace, an interactive Vacation Bible School curriculum that explores five Bible stories that encourage children to listen to and learn from people who are different, notice the needs of others and seek to help, creatively work to keep everyone safe, and refuse to respond to conflict with violence. Children will learn 20 peacemaking strategies, giving them tools they need to follow Jesus' way of peace. Passport to Peace invites children to see every person as part of God's family, and every interaction as an opportunity to make peace.



www.brethrenpress.com or call 800-441-3712



Join our
Facebook group

Facebook is a good resource to connect with others. We have started a new group called "Resource Gems" and invite you to stay connected with other church leaders by joining this group. The opportunity to share researches, joys, concerns, events, and other information.