

The VBS To Go Program

Clearwater Forest
Camp and Retreat Center

What is VBS To Go?

VBS to go is a weeklong unique blend of outdoor ministry and congregational ministry. It is a joint effort between the camp and the congregation. VBS to go is designed for young people who have completed grades K-5*. Clearwater Forest (CF) will provide programming (staff, art supplies, game equipment, curriculum resources, and miscellaneous stories and activities) and the congregation will provide support services, promotion of the program, and involvement in the program as arranged between the VBS Coordinator and the congregation's coordinator. The curriculum is Christ-centered and activity based, which encourages hands-on learning.

Purpose

The purpose of VBS to go is to assist congregations in providing a quality Christian outdoor ministry experience at their site. During this time we hope to get young people enthused about camping, and would be delighted if they chose to come to summer camp at Clearwater Forest. But with this program, our bigger concern is to get them enthused about congregational ministry and a life with Christ. We are here to support what you do year-round in your ministry! Our hope is that your VBS session will be a program of outreach to the community for your church. This is why congregational involvement is vitally important.

Strength

The strength of VBS is people. Kids love the staff! CF's VBS teams are comprised of young adults who are selected for their Christian commitment and love of children. They are trained to lead Bible studies, worship, songs, crafts and wild and zany recreation. It is relational ministry and our emphasis is to offer quality Christian role models for young people. The camp staff works alongside people from your congregation and community to offer a well-supported program. The uniqueness of the VBS to go program is flexibility.

Communication

We have listened to churches who have hosted VBS to go in the past, and we are here to work with your ministry. Communication is important and will begin between the church VBS to go coordinator and the Clearwater Forest year-round staff. We will work with your church to design a program specific to your needs. This manual will help your church consider and plan for a VBS to go experience this summer. Please feel free to contact the camp office at any time!

**Our experience has shown that preschool children need special programming. If you would like a program for that age group, please talk with the staff at Clearwater Forest, during the planning stages, to discuss the options!*

What does a week of VBS to go look like?

Sunday Afternoon/Evening	Staff will arrive and meet with the coordinator and volunteers from the congregation at the church. This critical meeting should include introductions, facility tour, daily schedule review, volunteer orientation, and any other last minute details/questions.
Monday – Friday	The camp times will vary according to your church plans. Examples may include 9:00am-3:00pm or an afternoon/evening schedule. You choose! Campers will be engaged in activities lead by trained staff. Some churches choose an earlier dismissal time of 1:30 PM. We recommend closing Friday at an earlier time to allow travel time for staff returning to camp.
Wed./Thurs. Evening	<u>Optional</u> Family Night Program: This evening is designed for children to share with their families what they have been doing throughout the week. It can include crafts, skits and singing. How about a campfire with s'mores, a potluck dinner or ice cream social? These are great ways to build community in your congregation as well as have the parents meet the camp staff! There is the possibility of a sleep over for campers. Indicate in the planning conversations what your congregation would prefer.
Another Evening	Staff are available to lead an evening event for Junior and/or Senior High youth. Please discuss this option with the camp staff during the planning stages.

What does a typical day of VBS to go look like?

8:15	Staff/volunteer arrival– camp staff and volunteers prepare for the day; meet to pray.
9:00	Arrival of children and check-in – there will be “floating” activities to engage the children as they arrive.
9:20	Morning Worship: A time at the beginning of each day to praise God and introduce the theme through the use of scripture, prayer, songs, and drama.
9:45	Small Group Bible Studies: The theme will be developed through age-appropriate discussion, activities and Bible-reading. This is led by camp staff, assisted by volunteers.
10:30	Snack/ restroom break
10:45	Rotation: Crafts (age-appropriate) based on curriculum or games by age groups. Camp style fun, wild, wacky, zany games as well as group building activities. It is necessary to have access to an outdoor play area.

- 12:15 Lunch (provided by the church or children bring their own and church may opt to provide drinks only.)
- 1:00 Story time and quiet time for younger children; large group game appropriate for school-age children. Option for off-site activity to begin at this time.
(Church may elect to work with camp staff to plan off-site adventures. Adventures may include bowling, a lake trip or city pool, library, or hike. Some of these activities may require additional staff or admission money. Another suggestion is a mission experience, such as visiting a nursing home, etc.)
- 1:45 Camper's Choice: Reflecting the options that campers receive at Clearwater Forest, this gives the children the option to choose more time for crafts, games, nature activities, etc. provided by the camp staff.
- 2:40 Closing Worship: A time at the end of the day used for closure and wrap-up of the day's theme. The time contains celebration and praise through songs, prayer, scripture, drama and stories.
- 3:00 Parents pick up children.
Staff review the day, clean up and make preparations for the next day.

This is a *general outline* of what the daily schedule might look like. The program may be shortened or extended in length. We want this experience to be the best possible for your congregation and will work with you to blend the resources within your congregation and community with our VBS to Go staff.

Roles and Responsibilities

What is Needed	Clearwater Forest Staff	Church Staff/Volunteers
FACILITY		The best possible arrangement for the VBS to go program is to have both a building AND a park, playground, or open field. It is also important that the facility be adjacent to the park or field so that recreation and games can be enjoyed throughout the day. This building is important in case of inclement weather. Immediate access to telephone, rest rooms, and running water are also necessary.
STAFF	Provide a VBS to go leader and counselors who are	The planning committee will provide volunteers to work

	caring, committed, and prepared to provide you with an amazing VBS to go experience.	with the camp staff and the children in order to meet the necessary ratios of children to adults. Depending on camper ratios, volunteers may need to lead activities and small group studies and directly work with the youth.
SUPPLIES	Equipment, supplies, music, and crafts related to the program will be provided.	Provide basic craft supplies such as scissors, glue, tape. Provide more supplies if desired; we do appreciate this!
PLANNING/TRAINING	A staff member from CF will contact your congregational coordinator and planning committee to create a week of meaningful activities.	A point person from the church will serve as the team leader for the planning committee, communicate with Clearwater Forest and be on site during the entire VBS to go session. The planning committee will provide leadership and communicate the needs and desires of the congregation.
HOUSING/FOOD		CF staff may be housed together at the church or in private homes. It works best if staff can be housed together or at least two or more per private home. The congregation is responsible to provide ALL meals for the CF staff during the VBS to go program. Congregations are free to arrange these in any number of ways. Lunches should be provided at the VBS to go site. *Reminder about lunches. Lunches can either be sent by the host families with whom staff are staying or other volunteers can bring the lunch to the site. (Please remember that staff are young college age adults participating in a very active schedule.) If a staff member has special dietary needs this will be

		communicated to the congregational coordinator. Evening meals can be arranged through the host families or other families during the week.
TRANSPORTATION	Provide transportation (reimbursed) for the camp staff to your church on Sunday and for return to camp on Friday. Camp staff is responsible for their own transportation to and from the main VBS to go site each day.	The church is responsible for transportation of children for any off-site adventure.
INSURANCE	Camp staff is insured through the CF's Worker's Compensation Policy.	CF VBS to go programs should be insured under your church's liability policy.

Job Descriptions

It is assumed that all CF staff and church volunteers shall be dedicated to their ministry with people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Clearwater Forest Camp Staff Shall:

- ❖ Ensure that safety is of primary importance and be familiar with emergency procedures. (This is extremely important and takes priority). Most CF staff have training in First Aid & CPR.
- ❖ Assume final planning and decision-making responsibility for the Camp-in-a-Van program. (Camp-in-a-Van Leader is designated to be in charge.)
- ❖ Be present at all planning and Camp-in-a-Van events and stay for their entirety.
- ❖ Be open to all ideas and suggestions to change the program to best serve the local church.

Church VBS to go Local Coordinator Shall:

- ❖ Serve as the church session approved liaison between the camp and congregation.
- ❖ Chair the meetings of the planning committee and provide guidance on an action plan to insure progress of the committee's work.
- ❖ Oversee preparation details before the actual VBS to go begins. (See Your Timeline...)
- ❖ Work with staff in establishing emergency procedures and make arrangements with local health care facilities.
- ❖ Be present during the entire VBS to go program.
- ❖ Coordinate the evaluation of the VBS to go program.

Church VBS to go Planning Committee Shall:

- ❖ Compose a list of goals and expectations.
- ❖ Offer suggestions and ideas for the program so that it best fits the needs and resources of the congregation.

- ❖ Select and secure the VBS to go sites. (If it is necessary reserve park and recreation areas.)
- ❖ Determine a congregational coordinator and volunteer staff. (Volunteer staff includes people to set up snack each day for the children).
- ❖ Secure housing and meal arrangements for the Clearwater Staff.
- ❖ Promote VBS to go to youth in your church and larger community.
- ❖ Provide food for snack and lunch time (or have campers bring bag lunches).
- ❖ Plan for and arrange a congregational/family/community event for a program, typically held on Thursday evening, if desired.

Volunteers Shall:

- ❖ Attend a volunteer orientation lead by camp staff and the congregational coordinator on Sunday evening, prior to the first day of the VBS to go program.
- ❖ Arrive at the designated time each day to assist with set-up and participate in prayer/daily devotions.
- ❖ Assist as needed with crafts, snacks, restroom breaks and general supervision of children.
- ❖ Share specific skills by leading any group activities that they choose i.e. crafts, music, games, playing guitar, etc.
- ❖ Give feedback to CF staff leader throughout the week.
- ❖ Know the safety and emergency procedures of the congregation.
- ❖ NOTE: Volunteer ages may vary. It is possible to encourage junior helpers to make this program possible! We love to see leadership development!

Your VBS to go Timeline

Mid-September	The camp will send information regarding VBS to go to congregations. Congregations will decide if this a program they want to participate in. If so Clearwater will send a contract and deposit information to the church
Fall	The congregation reviews the material, completes the contract and returns it with the deposit to Clearwater Forest. A confirmation notice will be sent to the congregation by CF upon receipt of the contract and deposit. The congregation selects a local planning committee and coordinator. (Note: This coordinator will serve as the point person throughout the planning process and should be on site during your entire CIAV session.)
January	Congregation begins planning for publicizing the event, housing for CF camp staff, special events, off-site activities and contacting the necessary volunteers.
Feb.-March	The congregation coordinator and camp staff review the program, make adaptations to fit the goals of the congregation, and set the schedule for

the week, including any special events.

March-May	Planning committee secures the volunteers; some or all may come from the planning committee.
April-July	Continued communication between the congregation coordinator and CF staff member regarding schedules, number of children, and other details.
Sunday evening	CF staff arrives to meet with the congregational coordinator and volunteers. Enjoy what we pray will be an inspiring week for the youth of your congregation.

August/September Final payment is due upon receipt of bill. Starting thinking about your dates for next year's VBS to go. Registration will open November 1.

Please fill out the online survey following your VBS to go program. (You will receive an email with the link.) Your feedback is important for continued improvement and making sure that the congregation's objectives and goals are being met. We have listened to what you've said and made improvements!

Camp-in-a-Van Fees And Registration Procedures

<i>Staff</i>	Cost/Counselor	Number of Counselors Needed	Total	Notes		
Staff Lead	\$450.00		\$0.00		<i>Camper Age</i>	<i>Day-Only Campers</i>
Other Staff	\$400.00		\$0.00	Ratios based on ACA standards	6-8 years	8
					9-14 years	10
	Cost/Item	Number of Items Needed (1/day)				
<i>Supplies</i>						
Arts & Crafts	\$20.00		\$0.00	Dependant upon # of Days		
Recreational Equipment	\$20.00		\$0.00	Dependant upon # of Days		
Curriculum			\$100.00			
<i>Travel</i>	Cost/Mile	Number of Miles Round Trip				
Mileage	\$0.65					
Lodging			\$0.00	Hopefully donated by host families		
Food			\$0.00	Hopefully donated by host families		
		TOTAL	\$100.00			

Registration Procedure

1. A non-refundable deposit of \$250.00 must accompany the **signed**, Camp-in-a-Van contract form. The dates that you request will be secured upon receipt of the contract and deposit. The balance of your fee will be **due at the end of the Camp-In-A-van program. You will receive a bill in August.**
2. The congregation is responsible to pay for the number of staff reserved and specified in their contract. The number of staff cannot be reduced or increased by either the camp or congregation after May 15 without mutual consent from both the camp and the congregation. In some instances Clearwater may request that additional staff be allowed at no extra cost to the church. This request would be made if additional staff is available and it would be in the best interest of a successful program for the congregation. The only additional requirements would be that the staff being provided at no charge be given the necessary accommodations of housing and food.

3. Cancellations of Camp-in-a-Van before May 15th will result in the forfeiture of the \$250.00 deposit. After May 15, the congregation is responsible for 75% of the total fee including the deposit.

It is the intention of Clearwater Forest that this program be available to all interested congregations. If you feel like the fees may be prohibitive, you are encouraged to contact the camp office (218) 678 - 2325.

CLEARWATER FOREST CAMP-IN-A-VAN CHURCH REGISTRATION FORM

Church: _____

Complete Mailing Address: _____

Website: _____

Phone: _____ Fax / E-mail _____

Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____

STEP ONE:

Look at the price list in your Camp-in-a-Van information booklet. Once you have figured out how many staff your church desires, fill out the appropriate lines.

Number of staff desired _____ Cost _____

You need to send a **\$250.00 deposit to Clearwater Forest.**

This will be deducted from your final bill.

STEP TWO:

Mark the start and end times your church desires.

Start Date _____ End Date _____

Start Time each day _____ Daily end time _____

Any special details regarding times and dates:

STEP THREE:

List approximate numbers per age range.

K _____ 1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____ 4th _____ 5th _____

We plan to have a preschool age children present each day. Yes _____ No _____ Count? _____

We would like an optional family program one evening. Yes _____ No _____

We would like the camp staff to lead a program for our junior high and/or senior high youth one evening. Yes _____ No _____

NOTE: The following information will be used for the spring planning phone call.

STEP FOUR:

Write in the location we will base out of, in working with your youth. Include description of outdoor space available, large meeting areas, classrooms, snack rooms, worship space, audio/visual equipment, etc.

STEP FIVE:

Comments:

Write additional comments, questions or requirements on this sheet.

STEP SIX:

Mail form and deposit to:

Clearwater Forest, 16595 Crooked Lake Rd., Deerwood MN, 56444