

CORE TRAINING SERIES



TOOLS FOR USING TRUTH78 CURRICULUM: BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB / VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

MINISTRY ROLE:

Children's Ministry Leaders; BYBC/
VBS Hosts, Teachers, Volunteers

TARGET AGE:

Elementary

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by Jill Nelson



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WHAT IS A BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL?

A Backyard Bible Club is simply a twist on the idea of the traditional Vacation Bible School program. A VBS program usually takes place for a week's duration during the summer at a local church, or another specific location, organized and led by the children's director along with volunteers. Most often, the focus of the VBS is evangelistic: creating an appealing environment to welcome children from non-Christian homes in order to expose them to the Gospel. A Backyard Bible Club shares this focus, but uses a different venue. The church equips and trains its members to lead Backyard Bible Clubs in their back or front yards (or inside a home) for the children of their own neighborhoods.

We believe Backyard Bible Clubs are strategic. Here are just a few reasons:

- An increasing number of people are completely un-churched. Therefore, they may be less willing to send their children to an actual "church" event. On the other hand, most Christians already have some level of positive involvement with parents and children in their own neighborhoods. A Backyard Bible Club takes advantage of these existing relationships and seeks to build upon them. Therefore, a club helps foster a long-term, relational model of evangelism that can provide ongoing interaction with both parents and children. Unbelievers can see the Gospel modeled and lived out in the lives of their Christian neighbors.
- Because a Backyard Bible Club is not centralized in one location, it can be conducive to a local church's larger mission of engaging

the community—reaching un-believers close to where they live. Thus, unbelievers learn to identify "the church" as not mainly "a building" but as a group of people who trust and follow Jesus, not just on Sunday, but every day of the week.

- A traditional VBS program is labor intensive for both church staff and volunteers. By design, a Backyard Bible Club is smaller, more flexible in its structure, can accommodate a greater diversity of schedules, and distributes the work among a greater number of members. Furthermore, a club offers individual families within the church an excellent way to minister together. Every member of the family can participate in a meaningful way.
- Most VBS curricula is not only expensive, but also requires extensive set-up and preparation. Much of the expense and preparation is geared toward "bells and whistles"—exciting visual elements, fun activities, crafts, food, etc. While a Backyard Bible Club does include some of these in limited measure, the focus of the time is given to communicating the life-giving message of God's Word and encouraging thoughtful interaction with the Word.

TRUTH78 BACKYARD BIBLE CLUB CURRICULA

Truth78 has published four evangelistic curricula that are designed for Backyard Bible Clubs and can also be used for traditional Vacation Bible Schools or other outreach programs.

GOD ALWAYS WINS: *An Evangelistic Study for Children on the Greatness of God in Salvation*

THE CALL OF GOD: *An Evangelistic Study for Children on the Work of God in Redemption*

THINGS HIDDEN: *An Evangelistic Study for Children on Kingdom Parables*

WISDOM CALLS ALOUD: *An Evangelistic Study for Children on Wisdom and the Fear of the Lord*

GETTING STARTED

1. How often and when do Backyard Bible Clubs meet?

Most clubs run five sessions. You could schedule the club for morning, afternoon, or early evening hours. Most families hold the sessions over a one-week period (i.e., Monday through Friday), but you could also hold the club once a week for five weeks.

2. What is the duration of each session?

The sessions can be from 1-3 hours in length, depending on how many activities you would like to include.

3. Who should be invited?

Neighborhood children, friends of your children, and children of relatives—especially children with whom you will have continued contact.

4. What age children should be included?

The curriculum is recommended for kindergarten through sixth grade.

5. How many children can be included?

The number of children you invite should take into account the number of helpers you have and the size of your yard and/or home. A recommended ratio would be one adult for every six to eight children. The younger the children, the smaller the adult/child ratio should be.

6. What does a typical session look like?

- An opening activity
- A 30-minute interactive lesson
- Application discussion done in smaller groups, which may be separated by age ranges
- Additional activities (e.g., games, crafts, songs, snacks, etc.)

7. What roles (people) are needed for hosting a Backyard Bible Club?

For each session, you will need people to assume one or more of the following roles:

- A host to provide the location
- A teacher who prepares and presents the Bible lesson
- Adults to facilitate small group discussion
- Volunteers to prepare and help with additional activities

We strongly suggest doing this with the help of a committed team of people. This could be one or more families working together, a small group from church, etc.

8. Is there any outreach to the parents of the children or any other follow up with the children?

A Parent Resource Page is provided for each day, which gives a brief summary of the lesson, the memory verse, and something to think about. Also, we strongly recommend that you and your church consider giving each child a Bible (if they do not already have one) or another Bible resource to take home. Here are some family-friendly resources that would introduce parents and children to some basic truths of the Christian faith:

God's Gospel

God's Wisdom

God's Names

God's Word

God's Promises

9. Is conversion the goal of a Backyard Bible Club?

The goal is to introduce children to spiritual truth and provide an opening for ongoing spiritual discussion with children and their parents. Each of our Backyard Bible Club curricula present essential Gospel truths and encourage children toward a right, genuine response to those truths. However, we do not overly press children toward a profession of trust in Christ. Rather, we emphasize planting seeds of the Gospel, praying that the Holy Spirit would bring about the fruit of faith in the lives of the children, as you pursue an ongoing relationship with the children and their parents.

10. How can the church help facilitate Backyard Bible Clubs?

- Communicate the vision behind the Backyard Bible Club strategy. Ideally, this should be done in advance, preferably late winter or early spring, to give your members time to understand and embrace the vision.
- Equip and train those who want to participate in a Backyard Bible Club.
 - Provide all of the necessary curriculum components.
 - Offer practical training in how to host a club and effectively use the materials.
 - Facilitate and coordinate networking, matching volunteers with their desired roles.
 - If possible, offer financial assistance for any additional costs associated with activities, snacks, crafts, etc.
 - Consider providing a Bible resource for the club hosts to give to the children who will be participating.
 - Commit to praying for each Backyard Bible Club as it occurs. Share the dates of clubs hosted by your congregation in church announcements, and invite everyone to join in praying.

FURTHER TRAINING

Visit [Truth78.org/training](https://truth78.org/training) to read other articles in the Core Training Series and browse conference sessions.

NOTES



Equipping the Next Generations
to Know, Honor, and Treasure God

Truth78 is a vision-oriented ministry for the next generations—that they may know, honor, and treasure God, setting their hope in Christ alone, so that they will live as faithful disciples for the glory of God.

Our mission is to inspire and equip the church and the home for the comprehensive discipleship of the next generation

We are committed to developing resources and training that are God-centered, Bible-saturated, Gospel-focused, Christ-exalting, Spirit-dependent, doctrinally grounded, and discipleship-oriented.

RESOURCES AND TRAINING MATERIALS

Truth78 currently offers the following categories of resources and training materials:

VISION-CASTING AND TRAINING

We offer a wide variety of booklets, video and audio seminars, articles, and other practical training resources that highlight and further expound our vision, mission, and values, as well as our educational philosophy and methodology. Many of these resources are freely distributed through our website. These resources and trainings serve to assist ministry leaders, volunteers, and parents in implementing Truth78's vision and mission in their churches and homes.

CURRICULUM

We publish materials designed for formal Bible instruction. The scope and sequence of these materials reflects our commitment to teach children and youth the whole counsel of God over the course of their education. Materials include curricula for Sunday School, Midweek Bible programs, Backyard Bible Clubs or Vacation Bible School, and Intergenerational studies. Most of these materials can be adapted for use in Christian schools and education in the home.

PARENTING AND FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

We have produced a variety of materials and training resources designed to help parents disciple their children. These include booklets, video presentations, family devotionals, children's books, articles, and other recommended resources.

Furthermore, our curricula include Growing in Faith Together (GIFT) Pages to help parents apply what is taught in the classroom to their child's daily experience in order to nurture faith.

BIBLE MEMORY

Our Fighter Verses Bible memory program is designed to encourage churches, families, and individuals in the lifelong practice and love of Bible memory. The Fighter Verses program utilizes an easy-to-use Bible memory system with carefully chosen verses to help fight the fight of faith. For pre-readers, Foundation Verses features 76 key verses with simple images. Visit FighterVerses.com for weekly devotionals and free memory aids. Download the Fighter Verses App for quizzes, songs, devotionals, review reminders and other helps.

For more information on any of these resources and training materials contact:

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