

# VBS Swipe Copy that saves time and decreases stress

Bonus: Creating a VBS follow-up campaign



# How to make the most of SMS for VBS

[Download the complete editable swipe copies here.](#)

Many of you are hard at work on the fast-approaching VBS season. Whether a fully paid, subsidized or free series of events, VBS is a very big deal.

In her [article](#) on the website, Facts and Trends, Sara Shelton informed: “churches that used LifeWay VBS material reported more than 2.5 million people enrolled in VBS”. Add to that Churches using other material and you get a lot of people! Statistics show that hundreds of thousands of these people were previously unchurched and that VBS results in tens of thousands of new professions of faith.

So, churches understand the huge opportunity here—the chance to create an experience that combines children, parents, God, your church, fun, and interaction.

- For the unchurched, it could be their first ever encounter.
- First-time guests have the opportunity to get to know your church since many parents hang out after dropping their kids off.
- And what about your church members who haven't been around for a while? Many who have gotten lost have found their way back through children's programs.

And the positive knock-on effect is that people often stick around for a few weekends after VBS has finished.

**Rolling out and implementing a VBS program is a serious undertaking.** Fortunately, there are lots of great VBS packages available with all the lesson plans, crafts, and activities you need. That's not us.

*We're more into the logistics side of things, the organization and communication if you will.*

Besides inspired content, successful VBS programs need people: people to attend and people to make it happen. We can help with that big time.

**What if you could use text messaging to get in touch and keep in touch in a human, non-spammy way before, during and after your VBS event?**

*Platforms such as PastorsLine give you these options.*

Let's see how this might work at some of the points in your VBS campaign cycle...



# Before

**Attendees:** Most likely, you've got a list of attendees from last time. Start by uploading them into your text messaging platform.

Then, turn your 'cold' list into a 'hot' one by group sending the previous attendees a *personalized*, text message. Something like, "Hi [First Name], This is Jason, one of the directors of the Oak Street Church VBS. Hope all is well with you and yours. It was our pleasure last year to have your family attend our program. Just wanted to ask about your thoughts for this year. Are you interested in attending?"

Note that we haven't included any registration information. We recommend keeping your first, 'reaching out' text non-promotional.

Once they reply, most messaging platforms allow for templates. You will reply with this template, linking to your VBS registration page.

Since almost all text messages are read (97%), your response rate will be high. With PastorsLine, you can go one step further and TAG the responses, segmenting your list into yeses, nos, maybes, etc.



If you are pressed for time, instead of asking the question, "Are you interested in attending?", you might say, "If you are interested in attending VBS this year, you can check out the following link FMI – [your link]". Just be aware this is "cheating" communication and is less effective than the first option. A message to a cold list that includes a link feels like spam. It's a psychological turn-off. However, the written copy and targeted message (to a list of previous attendees) can help mitigate this.

**Volunteers:** Same goes for your last year's volunteer list. Perhaps an SMS such as, "Hi [First Name], This is Jason, one of the directors of the Oak Street Church VBS. We wanted to remind you of our exciting VBS results from last year: X# attended and Y# became church members. A significant reason for that success was all your help. Can we count on you again this year?"

Additionally, if you have a church list, you may get permission to send out a message to the larger list as well. Getting people to help can significantly reduce your workload. But don't just ask for volunteers. Give them a reason why they should serve and the impact (real local stats) it has for the church and Christ's kingdom.

Using text messaging to manage your people communications is the most effective method... and saves time, too. Here are swipe copies and message starters you can use this summer to get the ball rolling, keep things organized, and stay in touch.

\* Using the PastorsLine tagging feature can allow you to tag all the yeses, nos or maybes and just send one follow up text. OR use the template option to quickly insert the reply and then click on send.

	BEFORE		
	Attendees	Volunteers	Church
<b>2 or more weeks before VBS</b>	Hi [First Name], This is Jason, one of the directors of the Oak Street Church VBS. Hope all is well with you and yours. It was our pleasure last year to have your family attend our program. Just wanted to ask about your thoughts for this year. Are you interested in attending?	Hi [First Name], This is Jason, one of the directors of the Oak Street Church VBS. We wanted to remind you of our exciting VBS results from last year: [X#] attended and [Y#] became church members. A significant reason for that success was all your help. Can we count on you again this year?	Hi [First Name], This is Jason, one of the directors of the Oak Street Church VBS. Hope all is well with you and yours. It's VBS time again and we'd love your help. Can you donate some time? We are also looking for donations of [donation item(s)]. Remember: every bit helps! Thanks in advance!
<b>IF they reply, YES then send this*</b>	Sounds great. Here's the link to our registration page (link).	Ok, great. I'll be in touch with more information soon. In the meantime, can you complete this short [form/registration]. We would like to know in which areas you would be most interested in serving. (link)	Thanks so much! Can you check out the ways you can help here? (link). There is a short form on which you can pick your preferences and submit back to us.
<b>IF no</b>	No problem...maybe next time. Feel free to share with your friends. Is there anything our church can do to help you this week?	No problem...maybe next year. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let us know. Praying for you.	No problem...Can you help us spread the word? We know so many parents who may not attend church regularly but will show up for VBS. Here are some possible ways you can get the word out, if you are interested. (link)
<b>If maybe</b>	We hope you decide to join us. Here's a link to more info that might help you decide.	I understand. We put together this list of ways you can help. Check it out and prayerfully consider what might work best for you. (link)	I understand. To help you make a prayerful decision, we have put together a few ways you can help. Check it out and let us know if you have any questions. (link)
<b>One week before</b>	So excited! One week away. Do you have any questions for me?	Wow! It's all coming together. Only one week to go. Don't forget the meeting on [day, date, time]. Check our [Dropbox/Google] doc for the latest info and keep a lookout for emails, too.	Send promo: Check out our FB VBS page. Tag your friends. Let's make it happen big!
<b>One day before</b>	Big day tomorrow! Any last minute changes or new must have info. Link with parking info, etc. 	Big day tomorrow! Any last minute changes or new must have info. Can link to PDF with schedule/job postings. 	Our VBS event begins tomorrow. If you're driving by, we hope you'll see some action and lots of old and new faces. Please pray for our church to have a blessed VBS.

# During

Part of your registration process (online e.g. VBS Pro or the VBS program's registration option or paper) likely captured all the parents' mobile phone numbers. If you have time, offer them a way to opt-out of texting. Make it clear that you would only send VBS-specific texts and at most, once per day during the VBS week. You can let parents know interesting highlights about what happened that day; what's on the plan for tomorrow; and any last minute changes. For emergencies with their child, you can reach them by text instantly.

If you never got explicit permission, if you are using a local number (long code), you can send them at least one text and remind them they can opt out. For 5-6 digit numbers (shortcodes), you would need to get explicit permission—one reason why we **recommend companies** that offer local, unique, non-spammy numbers.

Read this article on the rules of engagement.  
<https://pastorsline.com/guest-follow-up-dialogue/>

SMSs for volunteers are invaluable because they keep meetings to a minimum and reduce the frequency of long emails. Any time needed, you can just send out a short text with details such as last-minute changes; tomorrow's schedule; and words of encouragement.

Solutions like PastorsLine can send up to 10 texts each day (a bit much for most cases unless you discussed this with your volunteers). Sending a 3-4 part text might be ok. Communicate the same with your volunteers and send the fewest number of texts as possible based on your agreement with your team.

Sample:

“Hi Volunteers or [First Name],

We are ready to start our VBS program tomorrow. Thank you for your time in helping decorate and prep for the classes. Here's the theme for tomorrow. THEME. We start at 6:30 but all volunteers are asked to be there at 5:45 pm.

- Prayer
- Prep
- General Assembly
- Rotation with snack schedule
- Close
- Cleanup

Remember, this is also included in our Dropbox folder [your link]











**Pro tip:** Also email the same. The email might include more information, but sending via at least two different media helps to ensure your message is received. Communicate that you will be doing this and at what times. People are generally ok with communication if they are expecting it.

There are other tools you can use during VBS to give out presents to parents who attend. PastorsLine offers a contest feature that can be fun. These are not the top things you might want to do but you can.

We also offer text surveys where you can do a check-in on Monday night to get a sense of how things are going.

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### DURING

	Attendees	Volunteers	Church
Day 1	Poll - how are things going? 	Changes; last minute info; words of encouragement. 	
Day 2	Daily recap; any changes or new must have info. 	Changes; last minute info; words of encouragement. 	Hi [First name], Jason. Just wanted to let you know that our VBS program is off to a great start with [X] kids attending so far. Praise God and Thank you for your support. Please keep this VBS week in your prayers.
Day 3	Poll - how are things going? 	Changes; last minute info; words of encouragement. 	
Day 4	Daily recap; any changes or new must have info. 	Changes; last minute info; words of encouragement. 	
Day 5	Poll - so how did we do? 	Changes; last minute info; words of encouragement. 	Hi [First name], Jason again. Our VBS program has ended successfully. I will get back to you with some stats soon.

\* Using the PastorsLine tagging feature can allow you to tag all the yeses, nos or maybes and just send one follow up text. OR use the template option to quickly insert the reply and then click on send.





# After

Platforms such as PastorsLine offer automated messages.

**Attendees:** Basically, you set up a series of personalized, automated texts for parents whose children attended VBS this year—both church members and first-time guests. This can be huge for a VBS follow-up campaign where you can thank the parents one day, then wait 1 week, invite them to your children’s church or related kids ministry activities, wait another week, and then invite them to church. All automatically.

You can tag all the parents in your database for next year. One of the tags can be first-time guests vs. church members. This tag will be very useful for streaming them in future communications.

Here’s more info on guest follow-up.  
[www.digitalConnectTexts.com](http://www.digitalConnectTexts.com)

**Volunteers:** The series for volunteers would begin with a huge ‘thanks’. Again, you could segment your database into church members vs. first-time helpers. You could include some data about the VBS results—attendees, new members, perhaps baptisms if there were any, etc. Include surveys. Emails can work, but whether you are using a polling feature like what PastorsLine offers or sending them to Survey Monkey or Google forms, texting is way more likely to be seen and acted on.

Now, you have a base for next year. You don’t have to start from square one. Next time VBS is on the horizon, you can use the contacts you have to create a natural, viral, marketing hype—with just a little help from your marketing budget if needed.

And even if it won’t be you spearheading your church’s VBS next time, you’ve been a good resource steward, passing on a great base from which to begin.

**Pro Tip:** We didn’t mention about sending out a text to your church database to ask them to RSVP on your FB event page, tag their friends or forward a text to their contacts. Our focus was more on communication and administration, but this is something you should consider as well. Send a text before the event and send a text after the VBS to thank the church for all their help and share the wins. Sharing wins are huge as next year, you are likely to get more volunteers, donations, and support.

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### AFTER

	Attendees	Volunteers	Church
<b>First Monday</b>	Hi [First Name], this is Jason, VBS coordinator at the Oak Street Church. Thanks for bringing your kiddos to our VBS program this past week. Hope they had fun. Have a great day & know we are praying for you!	Thank you. Your help was such a blessing to the [X] kids who attended our VBS program this year and many of their parents who stuck around. We couldn't have done it without you!	Thank you so much for giving your time, money and other resources. Our VSB was a huge success this year. We could not have done it without you. We had [X] kids in attendance and their parents - some of who stuck around. Thank you so much for being part of this campaign. Hopefully, many more people will come to know Christ.
<b>First Friday</b>	Hey [First Name]. You attended our VBS event. Just wanted to let you know that we've got an ongoing, active kids program each week with dedicated teachers. Would you be interested in that? We'd love to welcome you and your children.		
<b>Second Friday</b>	Wow [First Name]. It's been 2 weeks since we had such an awesome time at VBS. I don't know if you have a home church or not, so just wanted to let you know that if you are ever looking for a church, we've got a warm, welcoming place reserved for you and your family. And speaking of family, just a reminder that we've got a wonderful, weekly kids pgm, including fellowship with like-minded parents. We'd love you to join us at [location] on [day] at [time].		
<b>3 weeks later</b>	Last email I promise, [First Name]. Already excitedly looking forward to seeing you and your family at VBS next year God willing. In the meantime, if there is anything our church family can do for yours, please don't think twice about reaching out. We will be praying for you. Have a blessed week!	Hi [First Name], Just wanted to follow up with some real data so you could see how much your volunteering contributed to our VBS success. [X] kids came and quite a few of their parents stuck around. Of those, we have [X] adults who didn't used to go to church attending our church regularly now. Praise the Lord and thanks again for your part in these wins. As we look forward to next year, is there anything we can improve upon or do differently?	Hey awesome church members, Here are some quick stats about our VBS campaign. [X] kids attended. [X] adults stuck around and participated in the program. [X] of those people are now attending our church. Praise the Lord! Thanks again for your part in these wins via all your donations of time, money and other resources as we empower God's kingdom.

### NEXT YEAR

Repeat



# Overall...

Texting platforms for your potential members help with your ability to communicate in a more natural way. This increases your chances of starting conversations and keeping them going. You likely don't want to tie your communication with guests to your personal cell phone or your volunteers may not want to use their cell phones to talk to "strangers". Using a text messaging platform gives you control and tools, so you or your entire team can engage.

It's also a HUGE set of tools for volunteer engagement and communication. You can use other apps, but your volunteers can disable notifications or delete the app. With texting, they can opt out, but they are likely not to (Esp. if you communicate how and when you plan to text and be concise when communicating).

**[Download the complete editable swipe copies here.](#)**

# So, are you planning to use text this year for VBS?

If you don't have a solution already, use the invite code **VBS2018** to get a **free 30-day trial with 500 additional credits.**

Our standard free trial comes with 500 credits, so you will have 1000 credits to use. No CC required.

**SIGN UP HERE**

[pastorsline.com/register](http://pastorsline.com/register)



**Zeke Vas**  
Pastor

The text message Bible study invites are working great. We saw a huge increase from 5-6 to 10-12 and the numbers stayed consistent.



**Wyatt Allen**  
Evangelist, End Time Hope

When we finished our evangelistic event in Houston, 70% of those who were baptized, communicated with me through PastorsLine... it had a big influence.



**Julie**  
Children's Ministry Leader

Text messaging is the preferred communication channel for [our] club... It takes a lot less time and everyone gets the message.