



Cool Contests

It never fails—announce a contest, and watch kids light up! Daily contests run in one of three ways. Decide which option best suits your situation and plan accordingly.

Individual Effort

Each child earns points daily for the following:

- Being here (attendance counts!) 1,000 pts
- Bringing a friend 1,000 pts
- Learning the daily memory verse 2,000 pts
- Learning the bonus memory verses 2,000 pts
- Completing Student Guide Go & Do section (1,000 points for each part completed) up to 4,000 pts
- Participating in the daily Cool Contests 1,000 pts

These points are tallied, and the child receives a prize if he or she reaches a certain point total.

Team Effort

Teams earn points as above, but all the points are tallied and scored for the whole team instead of the individual. When the team reaches a certain point total, they receive a special prize.

Another option for team effort is to tally the team points and award prizes to the top one or two teams daily.

Team leaders can keep track of points on their [Team Roster](#).

Whole-Group Effort

All the children in VBS work together to reach a certain number of points. If they reach the goal, they receive a prize. This could be something for them or for someone else, such as a special gift given to a mission organization.

Other Contest Info

- Send the Student Guide home daily and encourage the kids to do the Go and Do sections. They will receive 1,000 points for each Go and Do they complete. They do not have to bring these back. Just take their word for it.
- Our test churches include the Pre-Primaries in the contests, but they don't keep score for that age group because they don't really understand or care about the points. They just enjoy the fun.
- Another option that can be done in tandem with the contests (or as a stand-alone) is the God Is a Treasure Hunt. It is strongly encouraged to do this. See the next page for details.

- Kids can receive points for being at VBS, learning their memory verses and bonus memory verses, finding the treasure hunt cards, and participating in the daily contests. The daily contests are as follows:

Day 1—Mystery M&M's

Gather a small plastic jar with a lid and a large transparent plastic jar with a lid. Place the small jar inside the big jar and put some kind of candy other than M&M's in the small jar. Next, fill the large jar with M&M's, making sure the small jar is not visible. Count how many M&M's are in the jar and write the total on the inside of the lid. Put the lid on the jar. Place the jar, slips of paper for the cadets to write one guess on, pens, and a small basket or container near your assembly area. At any point in the day, when they are passing by, cadets will guess how many M&M's are in the large jar, knowing there is something mysterious in the middle, but not knowing what it is or how much space it is taking up. Each cadet will write down their guess, with their name, and put it in the basket or container. Have an adult determine whose guess is the closest and award the mystery jar to that person during the closing assembly or at the next day's opening assembly.

Day 2—Secret Signals

Each group comes up with a team cheer, song, sign, or secret handshake. Or they can each wear something depicting their group's name. For example, if a group's name is Truth Team France, each person wears a beret.

Day 3—Devise a Disguise

Everyone wears international or spy attire—anything that will help them blend in and look like someone else. Think of hats, sunglasses, wigs, jackets, and other accessories that will help complete the perfect disguise! Note: Remind everyone not to include weapons in their disguises.

Day 4—Code Cracking Bible Challenge

Kids hunt through the Bible to discover amazing attributes of God and use the clues to decipher a mystery sentence on the [Code Cracking Bible Challenge Sheet](#) that will be sent home on Day 3 and returned on Day 4. Once completed, kids receive a mini Krackel chocolate bar if they cracked the code successfully.

Day 5—Mission Money Mania

Kids will bring in their final mission money today. Double points for anyone who brings in any amount.

Suggested Prizes

If you are interested in giving out prizes for any of the contests or for anything else, here is a list of prizes available from AnswersVBS.com.

- Tubular bandanas (1241520; 1241530; 1241540; 1241550; 1241560)
- Wristbands (1240830)
- Stickers (1240880)
- Puzzles (1240940)
- Water bottles (1240810)
- Pencils (1240850)
- Keychain (1240820)
- Pens (1240860)
- Puffy stickers (1241430)
- Child backpacks (1241440)
- Notepads (1241460)
- Scratch art (1241470)
- Foam figure (1241490)

- Finger flashlights (1240640)
- Foldable binoculars (1240630)
- Spy glasses (1240670)

You can also check online retailers, such as Oriental Trading Company (OrientalTrading.com) and Rhode Island Novelties (RINovelty.com), for inexpensive bulk prizes. The following are some possible suggestions: invisible ink markers, international candy (Cadbury chocolate, Haribo gummy bears, Kinder chocolate, Mamba fruit chews, etc.), black sunglasses, mini magnifying glasses, fake mustaches, mini flashlights, neon fedoras, globe stress balls, globe key chains, international flags bouncy balls, octopus squeeze toys, octopus squishies, slap bracelets, spy sticker sheets, mini passport stampers, mini international bubble bottles, around-the-world spiral notepads, Chinese finger traps, international flags, folding fans, international foam glider airplanes, around-the-world TOOB toys

God Is the Treasure Hunt

The God Is the Treasure Hunt is an important element of this year's VBS and should be done either on its own or in conjunction with the contests you are already doing. It is strongly encouraged.

How does it work? There are 12 big questions about God, who is the treasure of the world, that are formatted into a fun daily treasure hunt for kids to participate in as they move through rotations. Check the [Resource Download](#) for the [God Is the Treasure Cards](#), and print on colored cardstock. Before VBS begins each day, hide two of the cards around the building. It doesn't matter which two. If you have lots of kids, hide multiples of each card. Don't make them too hard to find—the cadets will have to find them fast. The idea is to see which groups can find the two cards quickly, and then quietly read them before arriving at another rotation.

If you are tying this in to the contests, groups can get points for each one they find, as long as they stop, listen quietly while the leader reads it, put it back where they found it, and make it to their next rotation at a good time. Leaders should read the cards to make it go faster. You may not have time to read all the verses—it depends on your situation.

There are 12 cards altogether. For a 5-day VBS, you will use 10 (two per day), leaving two cards for the closing program.

Announce this from the stage during opening the first day and explain how it works. Then make a quick announcement during each day's opening as a reminder. The kids at the test churches loved these contests!