



Operation: Fun & Games Pre-VBS Carnival

You don't want your community to miss out on this awesome VBS, so get the word out by hosting your very own promo event called Operation: Fun and Games. This is a carnival-type event held two to three weeks before VBS so you can preregister children, build excitement, and spread the word throughout the community.

Operation: Fun and Games will be a great time for families to get excited about VBS while enjoying all sorts of games, crafts, activities, and snacks. Admission is free. Invite the community by setting up an event page on Facebook and by mailing or handing out [carnival invitations](#) to family, church attendees, friends, sports teams, and clubs.

For a list and description of suggested carnival activities to offer, check the following pages. Many of these suggestions can also be incorporated into VBS week or the closing program if not used prior to VBS.

Setup

- Decide if your event will be indoors (in a multipurpose room) or outdoors (in a grassy area or safe part of the church parking lot).
- Each activity should have its own space, a sign with its name, prize tickets, and a marker or stamp (1240930) to use on each child's master ticket.
- Use folding tables or large cardboard boxes for activities requiring a base. Drape each table with a colorful, thematic tablecloth, fabric, or sheet. Attach boards, PVC pipe, or long cardboard tubes to each side of the table. Stretch a colorful sign made from roll paper between the two boards and add some colorful balloons.

- A simpler option is to use rope, cones, or sidewalk chalk to mark individual activity spaces.
- Choose a few of the suggestions found in the Decorating Decisions section. Keep it fun, colorful, and simple.
- Play VBS music.

Staffing

- Enlist at least one volunteer for each activity area. Church families may want to sign up to decorate, organize, and staff one activity each. This divides the workload into small, manageable parts.
- Volunteers should dress in VBS T-shirts or spy-themed clothing.
- Friendly, costumed greeters can welcome the arriving families.

Registration

- Set up the registration area near the entrance to your event.
- Warmly greet each arriving family as you check everyone in.
- Copy extra [Carnival Master Tickets](#) on brightly colored cardstock. Cut apart. Give one to each child. This ticket enables children to participate in each activity once and will be marked or stamped at each location when it is completed.
- Sign up any unregistered children for VBS. Print [Registration Forms](#) or register them online at [myAnswers.com](#).

Activities and Games

Some of the games need a start line, finish line, or throwing line. These can be made from painter's tape, masking tape, rope, cones, or chalk.

Invisible Intel

SUPPLIES

- » White copy paper, cut in halves
- » Cotton swabs
- » Equal parts mixture of baking soda and water
- » Grape juice or grape juice concentrate

DIRECTIONS

- » Children dip a cotton swab in the baking soda mixture and use it to write an invisible message on their paper.
- » Have someone else paint over the message with grape juice and read the invisible intel.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity.



Rogue Racers

SUPPLIES

- » Several small racing cars
- » Two boards, tracks (e.g., Hot Wheels) or gutters propped up at an angle

DIRECTIONS

- » Two children race their cars against each other. They should hold the cars at the top of the track.
- » On the signal, they release their cars and watch them race.
- » Give two prize tickets to the person whose car went the farthest or the fastest. Give one ticket to the other person.



Special Agent Face Painting

SUPPLIES

- » [Face Painting Reference Chart](#)
- » Face paints
- » Wet wipes

DIRECTIONS

- » Paint the children's faces, using images on the **FACE PAINTING REFERENCE CHART**.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity.



Pin the Sunglasses on the Secret Agent

SUPPLIES

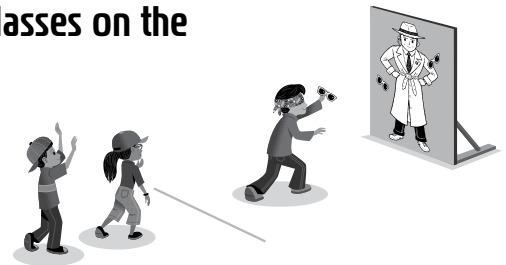
- » [Pin the Sunglasses on the Secret](#)

[Agent Backdrop](#)

- » [Laminated Sunglasses](#)
- » Tape or sticky tack
- » Blindfold

DIRECTIONS

- » Ahead of time, put up the backdrop and put loops of tape or sticky tack on the sunglasses.
- » Have at least two players play each round.
- » One at a time, players are blindfolded, spun around (gently), and sent off in the direction of the backdrop with sunglasses in hand. While blindfolded, they attempt to place the sunglasses on the secret agent's face.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity. Give a bonus ticket for placing the sunglasses closest to the correct spot.



In Disguise Photo Spot

SUPPLIES

- » Photo Spot Backdrop
- » Dress up props such as sunglasses, international-style hats (sombreros or berets), feather boa, trench coat, mustaches on sticks or purchase the Photo Op Pieces (1241190)
- » Camera/phone camera

DIRECTIONS

- » Enlarge the **PHOTO SPOT BACKDROP** from the Resource Download or purchase the Photo Op Scene Setters (1241270) from AnswersVBS.com.
- » Children dress up in disguises of their choice. Photograph them. Print the picture (either at the carnival or later) to give to them.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity.



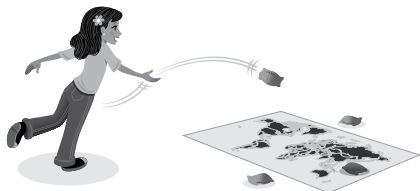
Around the World

SUPPLIES

- » World map to lay on the ground
- » Beanbags

DIRECTIONS

- » Each child names one of the continents then tries to toss a beanbag onto that continent on the map. (If working with younger kids, a leader can help them name the continent and point it out.)
- » Give three prize tickets if the beanbag lands on the named continent and one ticket for getting it anywhere on the map.



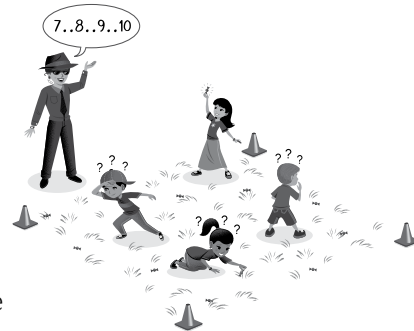
Sweep for Bugs

SUPPLIES

- » Individually wrapped candies OR plastic bugs

DIRECTIONS

- » Hide the candy (or bugs) around the playing area.
- » Players have 15 seconds to search for the items while the leader counts out loud.
- » Give a prize ticket and a candy or plastic bug when completed.



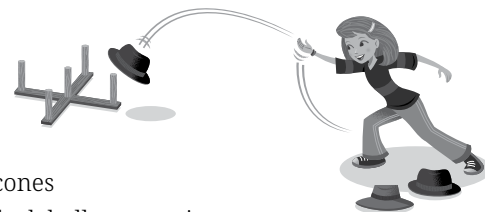
Top That

SUPPLIES

- » Carnival ring toss stands or cones
- » Fedoras, black ball caps, or international hats

DIRECTIONS

- » Players get three tries to toss the hats onto the ring stand.
- » Give one ticket for each hat that stays on the stand.



Mystery Bag

SUPPLIES

- » Opaque pillowcase or bag
- » Variety of distinctly-shaped objects (e.g., a glue stick, crayon, cup, rubber snake, pine cone)
- » Child-sized thick glove

DIRECTIONS

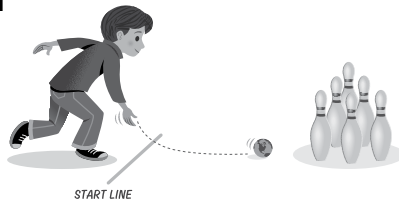
- » Put several objects in the mystery bag.
- » Each child must put on the glove, then try to guess what each object is just by feeling it in the bag.
- » Optional: For younger children, provide easier objects to guess or allow them to play without putting on the glove.
- » Give one prize ticket for each correct guess.



Tenpin Takedown

SUPPLIES

- » Plastic or real bowling pins
- » Mini globe stress ball or mini inflatable globe



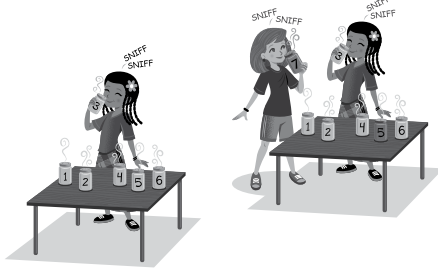
DIRECTIONS

- » Kids have three tries to knock over the bowling pins with the mini globe.
- » Give one prize ticket for participating and an additional one for knocking over all pins.

Smell Decoder

SUPPLIES

- » Aluminum foil
- » Rubber bands
- » 6–8 different strongly smelling items placed in opaque containers (coffee, banana, peppermint, lemon, cinnamon, chocolate, flowers, etc.)
- » Optional: Cotton balls and wet scents like vinegar



DIRECTIONS

- » Place each of the items in a separate container and cover with aluminum foil that has a few holes poked in it. Use a rubber band to secure the lid. You can also put the scent on a cotton ball and place it in a container if you're working with wet scents, like vinegar.
- » Children take turns smelling each scent and guessing what it is.
- » Give one prize ticket for completing this activity and an extra ticket for each smell that's correctly "decoded."

Create-a-Cadet Coloring Contest

SUPPLIES

- » Copies of the [Create-a-Cadet Coloring Contest Page](#)
- » Crayons or markers

DIRECTIONS

- » Children follow the directions to create a picture of a unique cadet.
- » Make sure they write their names on the page then collect the pictures and hang them somewhere during VBS week.
- » Announce winners during VBS week. If you have a lot of entries, you can have winners of various age categories. Return pictures to the children the last day of VBS.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity.

Globe Golf

SUPPLIES

- » Plastic or real golf clubs
- » Croquet wicket or bucket
- » Mini globe stress ball or mini inflatable globe



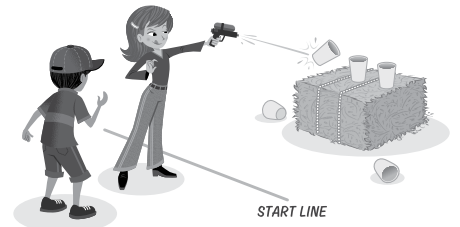
DIRECTIONS

- » Ahead of time, place the wicket in the ground or place a bucket on its side if playing indoors.
- » Using a club, kids try to make a goal by getting the globe through the wicket or into the bucket in three strokes or less.
- » Give one ticket for participating and an additional ticket for successfully making a goal.

Target Practice

SUPPLIES

- » Lightweight plastic cups
- » Hay bale or other base that is waterproof
- » Squirt guns
- » Buckets of water to refill guns



DIRECTIONS

- » Line up or stack up 10 plastic cups.
- » Players see how many cups they can knock down with the squirt gun in a designated period of time.
- » Optional: Give more time for younger children and less for older.
- » Give one ticket for every cup that is knocked down.

Sink the Sub

SUPPLIES

- » Baby pool with water (monitor carefully)
- » Styrofoam hoagie containers OR small styrofoam plates
- » Splash balls/sponges



DIRECTIONS

- » If using hoagie boxes, cut the lid off. Use the lid and the base as two separate submarines. Place in the baby pool.
- » Players try to sink the sub by throwing wet splash balls or sponges on it to load it down.
- » Give one ticket for participating and three tickets if they sink the sub.

Dead Drop

SUPPLIES

- » 9 sturdy cups or mason jars
- » Ping-pong ball

DIRECTIONS

- » Set up cups or jars in a 3 x 3 grid on the ground with their rims touching.
- » Players stand directly overhead and have three tries to drop the ping-pong ball into the center cup.
- » Give one ticket for participating and two extra tickets for getting the ball in the center cup.



I Spy Contest

SUPPLIES

- » A large plastic jar with lid
- » Uncooked rice
- » Paper and pens
- » Basket to put the guesses in
- » Numerous small objects to put inside the jar (such as assorted candy, small erasers, a paper clip, a bead, a small cross, a coin, etc.)



DIRECTIONS

- » Before the event, make the jar. Tape a list inside the lid with all the items that are hidden in the jar.
- » Have each child look at the jar. If he is young, ask him to tell you five objects he spies in the jar.
- » For older children, have them make a list on a piece of paper of all the objects they find. Make sure they write their name on their paper.
- » At the end of the carnival or on the first day of VBS, reveal how many items were in the jar. The winner is the person who guessed the most correct items.
- » Give one prize ticket after completing this activity.

Mission Possible Prizes



- » Set up an area called Mission Possible Prizes with various souvenirs worth different numbers of tickets.
- » Children turn in their tickets to receive prizes.
- » Check Oriental Trading Company or Rhode Island Novelty for inexpensive prize possibilities.
- » 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
- » Another option is to give prizes at each location. If this option is chosen, children will need bags of some kind to keep their prizes in as they move through the activities.

Disappearing Snacks Stand

Set up the Disappearing Snacks Stand and choose one or more fun snacks from the suggestions listed below. Make signs with the name of each snack. Place food in overturned fedoras or baskets lined with napkins decorated with world flags.

Additional great ideas are in the *Top Secret Snacks Guide* and the Training Workshop section of this guide. You may want to make some of the snacks you will be serving during VBS week.



SECRET AGENT SNACK TRAY

- » Load up a tray with any assortment of veggies, fruits, crackers, cheeses, or other snacks.

MAGNIFYING GLASS GOODIES

- » Make assorted goodies into the shape of a magnifying glass. For example, use a cheese stick or a pretzel rod as a handle and either a large round cracker or sandwich cut in a circle for the top part of the magnifying glass. Or make a round cake with a “handle” of cake to simulate the shape of a magnifying glass. Or make sugar cookies with a peppermint stick handle. Or try an apple sliced horizontally to make a circle which is then put on a craft stick.

MYSTERY MUFFINS

- » Make muffins with a surprise inside! Place half the muffin batter into the muffin cups. Put a tablespoon of strawberry or grape jam on top of the batter. Spoon the rest of the batter into each muffin cup and bake.

INTERNATIONAL FOODS

- » Serve various kid-friendly foods from different countries, such as chips and salsa (Mexico), pastries (France), and pizza (Italy). Put mini flags of the countries near the appropriate foods.

GET THE SCOOP SUNDAES

- » Serve ice cream sundaes.

DRINKS

- » Soda: Serve assorted soft drinks and call them “Spy Soda.”
- » Water: Wrap water bottles with [labels](#) that say “Truth Serum.”

Additional Ideas

- » Play international music in various languages or play the VBS music in the background (find streaming platforms at AnswersVBS.com/streaming).
- » Make balloon animals such as pigs, birds, seals, and octopuses.
- » Enlist church members to dress in thematic costumes to greet families as they arrive.