

Section 1

Understanding Family VBS Plus

How it Works

Welcome to Hero Training Camp Family VBS Plus. The experience you provide for families will be a treasure. It's not just entertainment. You are doing family development, facilitating the spiritual interaction between family members in a way that will strengthen the very core of who they are. Most families want to grow together spiritually but find it challenging in one way or another. By leading this program you are helping families in the most significant area of their lives. Here are some things you'll want to keep in mind as you engage in Hero Training Camp Family VBS Plus.

The other components. When using Hero Training Camp as a Family VBS, you'll bring together the resources of the Hero Training Camp VBS and the parent training program Everyday Parents CAN Raise Extraordinary Kids. Part of the time families learn together and part of the time they learn apart.

Use this guide along with the Hero Training Camp children's curriculum, the Hero Training Camp VBS Director's Manual, and the Hero Training Camp Preschool Coordinator's Manual. In addition you'll need the Everyday Parents Video Series and the Everyday Parents CAN Raise Extraordinary Kids Leader's Guide.

Parents are primary spiritual trainers. A biblical understanding of spiritual training of children puts parents as the primary trainers and the church in a support role to assist parents. Hero Training Camp Family VBS puts the parents in the lead while still allowing the church to support. The parents and church are then working together strategically.

Family Units and Family Groups. As family units arrive at Hero Training Camp Family VBS they are grouped into Family Groups containing 7-9 people. Each Family Group will be different. Here are some examples:

- A grandmother and her grandson together with a two parent family with four children, and a single woman.
- Two single moms and their three children, a friend of one of the children, and a traditional family where only one parent and one child can attend.
- A traditional family with two parents and five children.
- A blended family with three kids and a traditional family with two children but only Dad can attend.
- A young couple without children, a single dad with two kids, and a traditional family with two parents and two children

Family Groups provide opportunities for parents and children to find encouragement from each other as they complete the tasks. Parents learn from each other how to lead the children through the discussions and activities. Family Groups also allow families of various kinds to partner together demonstrating the unity of God's family, the church. Some groups may change over the course of the week or weeks in order to accommodate the changes in attendance and to provide some variety for the family units who attend. You may try to keep the same Family Groups for each evening or match Family Units into Family Groups differently for each session.

Together. During the first and last portions of Hero Training Camp Family VBS parents are working directly with their children to introduce the lesson for the day, prepare children for the things they'll learn, lead a family activity, and then to come back and debrief about the lessons learned and pray together. In this way, the parents not only lead and know what their children are doing, but also they have greater opportunity to reinforce the lessons at home.

Separate. For the middle portion of Hero Training Camp Family VBS, children and parents learn separately on their own level. Babies go to a nursery. Preschoolers go to their version of Hero Training Camp and elementary children work through four stations. These children are placed in Squads of 5-7 children of varying ages and go from station to station to learn about the conscience and about being a hero in life now. Some of the parents will be Station Managers and assistants and Squad Leaders with the kids. The remaining parents will attend the parent-training video program that teaches parents about the conscience and how to help their children be internally motivated. Teens are invited to either assist as Squad Leaders, assistants, or to attend the video program with their parents. Parents who volunteer with children are provided with the audio portion of the adult program so they aren't missing out on what the parents are learning.

Plus. The "Plus" in Hero Training Camp Family VBS Plus refers to three more optional Family Night Events that can be used over the next several months to continue to provide opportunities for families to learn and grow together. Many families find themselves fragmented by busy schedules and all kinds of events, so parents are often looking for ways to bring their families together and these Family Night Events give them opportunity to invest in their kids and grow together.

A new vision for family worship. One of the goals of Hero Training Camp Family VBS is to encourage parents to take the lead at home on a regular basis when it comes to spiritual training and family worship. For various reasons parents often don't work with their children in this vital area of spiritual development. One of the reasons parents delegate this essential task to the church is because they themselves feel inadequate or uncomfortable leading their children spiritually. Practicing together as families and learning from the parent training video program will encourage them in significant ways. The work you're doing by coordinating Family VBS is more than just providing a fun place for families. You're engaged in family development on a significant level.

Prayer. Sometimes parents don't feel comfortable praying out loud or praying with their children. Family VBS gets families praying together but starts in a non-threatening way. Family Groups end each session with a prayer time. The first session uses one-word prayers making the prayer time less threatening and even fun, and then graduates to more extensive prayers over the future sessions.

Putting it all together. The children's portion of Hero Training Camp Family VBS is divided into six stations. The first one, Power Time, and the last one, Blast Off, are done in Family Groups. The other four are done in stations while parents are watching and discussing the video training curriculum. As a director, you'll want to use the Hero Training Camp VBS Director's Manual and the Hero Training Camp VBS Preschool Coordinator's Manual for working with children. In addition, you'll want to use the Everyday Parents CAN Raise Extraordinary Kids Video Series and Leader's Guide for training the parents.

The time schedule. Hero Training Camp Family VBS is designed to last between one and three quarter hours and two and a half hours. You may want to provide an easy dinner as well so that families can come without having to take care of eating at home. A suggested short schedule and longer schedule are included as ideas for you to adjust to meet your own time frame. If you do the shorter schedule you may want to simplify the children's stations by eliminating one of the activities in each. More material is provided than you may need and the important thing is to teach the concept, not to complete all of the tasks.

A versatile program. Hero Training Camp Family VBS can be used in a number of ways: a five evening Family VBS, a Family Camp curriculum, or for use as Family Nights over several weeks or months.

This guide. In this Leader's Guide you'll find specific ways to adjust the Power Time and the Blast Off Stations and the overall greeting and organization in order to run Hero Training Camp as a Family VBS.