

TGIFNight™
Vespers Planning Guide



Format & Activities

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It is our hope that this guide will benefit leaders in providing good vespers programs to their groups.

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We recommend purchasing the board games mentioned in this guide.

TGIFNight™

Youth Vespers Program

The Idea for this program came to me a few years back after observing that many of the young people I worked with quite often had nothing to do on Friday nights. As Seventh Day Adventists, this is the beginning of our Sabbath and calls for something special. I observed all too often that instead of something special, the young people were finding things to do that they would do on any given night. I thought it would be good to provide a casual way of helping them prepare for the Sabbath. This program was a great solution. The old “Thank God Its Friday” thing has been around for a while. The idea is to put a new twist on it. Instead of doing everyday things on Friday night, why not gather with your youth group in a casual setting, enjoying fellowship with the group and The Lord. Friday night is the beginning of a welcome break from a daily routine that can be very tough sometimes. School, work, and other things keep us busy, so it is nice to be able to slow down and give thanks to God for all He has done. I believe this special time is a gift and we should teach our young people to appreciate it. Sometimes it’s hard to get young people to go to church or vespers. I believe that by providing casual programs like this, we can spark the interest in our young people for other programs as well. I have seen it work time and time again. This program has been quite successful with groups in the past. My advice is to keep it simple, casual, and sociable. I have seen some real bonding take place at these programs. It is a great catalyst for building relationships! It is also a great opportunity to involve the parents. I like to ask the parents of the young people in the group, to take turns hosting the program. This provides a casual time to get to know the parents, which can be very helpful and rewarding. Give it a try!

God Bless you and your group.

Randy Raynes

TGIFNight™

Format

Welcome/Sharing Time: 15 Minutes

Have one of the leaders welcome everyone, and then ask about how their week was. Anything special happen? What are you thankful for? Did you have a high point or low point? Ask each group member to share. If they don't feel comfortable sharing, then move on to the next person. Don't put too much pressure on them. Once they see the others sharing, they will open up in time. The idea is to provide a forum where you all can have casual conversation about what is going on in your lives and this provides an opportunity for leaders to encourage the young people and help them deal with whatever is happening in their lives. Leaders should share how their week was also. At the end of this segment, ask if there are any prayer requests, and then have a prayer for the group.

Devotional: 10 Minutes

This segment is an opportunity for one of the leaders to share a worship thought. Ideally, this would be something that causes the young people to really think about God and where they stand with Him. There are many things you can do, but just remember to keep it simple, and don't go too long. You may choose to do some sort of activity with the group. This is fine so long as you stick to the criteria. Make them think, keep it simple, keep it short, oh yes, and don't wreck the place!! This is the shortest segment of the program, but it is very important so make it count!!

Snack/Hang Time: 20 Minutes

This time is intended to provide a chance for the group to mingle and get to know each other better, that bonding thing I spoke of earlier. I suggest having some sort of snacks available, and just let the group eat and enjoy the company of each other. Leaders can take advantage of this time by getting to know the group as well, and it is also a great time to observe the young people in your group. The more we understand our young people, the more we can help them. This can be a valuable time of relationship building!

Activity/Game Time: 40 Minutes

This segment is set aside to provide some type of appropriate game or activity that everyone can be involved in and enjoy together. It is up to your discretion as to what is appropriate. Things such as *Bible* Pictionary™, *Bible* Scattergories®, *Bible* Jeopardy!®, and *Bible* Charades have proven to be quite successful in the past. It is up to you to decide what best suits your group.

Closing: 5 Minutes

At the end of the program, wrap up your game or activity and then just take a few moments to thank everyone for coming, and have a closing prayer. You may want to ask if there are any volunteers to help with prayer. Have one person pray, or many from the group, or the whole group. Whatever works best for you.

This outline is based on one and a half hours. 7pm – 8:30pm worked well for us, but you can vary the times to suit your group's needs. Just remember, simple, casual, and meaningful!

Randy Raynes

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TGIFNight[™] **Planning Form**

Date: _____ Time: _____

Hosts: _____

Location: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

Activity: _____ Leader: _____ Time: _____

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Games - Activities

Bible Pictionary™

You can use actual *Bible Pictionary™* cards from the game, or you can make up your own words and phrases from the Bible. I have the game, so we use the cards and split the group into two teams. Each team gets a pad of paper to draw on. The team members take turns drawing. If you don't have the game and are not familiar with it, here's how it works. A moderator will choose a word from the card or list and show it to the person who is drawing. When the time starts, they draw pictures to depict the word. The rest of the team try's to guess what the word is. They have one minute to draw. You can do it just for fun, or you can keep score by giving a point for each correct guess. You may choose to have each team do a different word. This makes it impossible for one team to guess from the opposite teams drawing, and it makes it more interesting. You can make adjustments according to what works best for your group. Happy Drawing!!

Bible JEOPARDY!®

This is a great activity that is always a big hit with the youth. Simply develop some questions and answers from the Bible and post them on a board or wall by categories, so everyone can see them. Divide the group into two teams, individuals if it is a small group, and have them choose a category and answer the question. You can develop your own point system and make other changes to the game however you like, but this is the idea, and it is very popular. It is a good learning tool also. Go to our web site for sample quiz sheets.

QUESTION⇒ **Bible JEOPARDY!®** - **ANSWER**⇒ **"WHAT IS LOTS OF FUN!"**

Bible CHARADES

This is an oldie but a goody! You can do this in teams or individually. A person or team will simply act out (silently) a story, person, place, etc.. from the Bible and the rest of the group try's to guess what it is. The person or team that guesses correct is the next to present a charade. You can randomly chose the next one if it works better for your group. Happy Acting!!

Bible SCATTERGORIES®

This one is always fun and really makes you think! If you do not have the *Bible SCATTERGORIES®* game, you will need to come up with some random way of choosing a letter for each round. Develop lists of things from the Bible. Each list should have the same number of items, say, lists of 12. Make as many lists as you can. The more the better. For each round you will choose a letter, then start the timer and each group or person has to think of a word that starts with the chosen letter for each item on the list, and then write it down. They have 4 minutes. You can vary the time if you like. **(Example: List word is Person-Letter is N-Answer could be Noah)**

Bible SCATTERGORIES[®] List 1

1. Mans Name _____
2. City or Town _____
3. River/Body of Water _____
4. Occupations _____
5. Animals _____
6. Types of Drink _____
7. Kings/Rulers _____
8. Modes of Transportation _____
9. Mountains _____
10. Tools _____
11. Books of The Bible _____
12. Song Tittles _____

Bible SCATTERGORIES® List 2

1. Bible Authors _____
2. Disciples of Jesus _____
3. Women's Name _____
4. Characteristics of Jesus _____
5. Terms of Measurement _____
6. Colors _____
7. Ten Commandments _____
8. Names Used in the Bible _____
9. Famous Duos and Trios _____
10. Types of Punishment _____
11. Names of Jesus _____
12. Significant Story Characters _____