

Summertime in our community

Dan Nelson – pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

One of the earmarks of Christianity in America and throughout the world over the past century is a summer tradition called Vacation Bible School, colloquially referred to by the acronym VBS. While the word “school” in the title may be a bit annoying for a kid who has just spent the last nine months trying to do everything to get out of academic regimen, the experience at VBS is usually everything that a child seeking summer adventure hopes for.

It really seems to be almost criminal when one presents the Bible in a way that is uninteresting and even boring. The Scriptures themselves are jam-packed with death defying adventure, battles between good and evil, heroics, treasure hunts, astounding forces of nature, and mind-blowing supernatural acts of God. Whether one is interested in saving the planet or saving lives, understanding the animal kingdom or the human condition, it’s all in there. Philosophers will find their answers there, archaeologists and historians will search for clues there, students of literature and poetry will discover gold there, and for those seeking ultimate answers for life’s biggest questions, it’s all there. Truth is no longer elusive, and dilemmas of world hunger, the existence of evil and matters of the human heart are all approached with forthright clarity. And it is fascinating how many families who have never attended a VBS are shocked by the fun of it all.

This summer, there are various Vacation Bible schools and similar outreaches that are going on at sponsoring churches here in the valley. I am encouraging families to attend all of them if they can. The churches are in partnership with each other and the attending families benefit for the planning and participation of many generous volunteers who help put these community outreaches together. At Calvary Chapel, we just finished a weeklong adventure as we journeyed in the Bible with the theme, “Hosanna Jones and the Quest for the 10 Commandments.” I made a lot of friends this week as they caught us doing our filming for our daily presentation, in full costume on various local trails. I am sure we gave them a reason for a good laugh. But the kids loved it. They even ate before they left. Whoever said there is no such thing as “a free lunch”?

These days, it seems that more people are looking for real answers than ever before. Parents and local leaders are searching for ways to instill the right values in their children before they get into the teenage years. Annual participation in a VBS is one way to do this. It is also a means by which your family can make a connection with a local church, even if it is only once per year. That way, should a life event occur where you recognize a need for more, the relationship and history are already in place so that church ministry can be a support to you if

you need it.

My intention here is to provide a spotlight for the different VBS's and local outreaches that are occurring this summer and to encourage you to consider getting involved. If your kids are grown, you might be able to volunteer in some way or make a donation to support the effort. I believe you will be glad you did.

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Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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Sunday Worship:

9:00 & 10:45am
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

Mid-Week Study:

7:00pm Thursday
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View