

Circus Crier

The Circus Crier is used throughout the VBS to introduce the Ringmaster and various key performers as they enter the big top. The Crier plays a key role in all five day's skits and Bible lessons. During the Big Top Finale, the Circus Crier is meddling in the background, taking video on his cell phone. On Day 5, Circus Crier is confronted about his sarcastic behavior towards Junior.

The Circus Crier should wear a costume similar to a court jester and carry a megaphone. The actor should be someone with high energy, a hint of sarcasm, and who does not mind a lot of rehearsing, since she (or he) is in all the skits and Bible lessons. For the Crier's introductions, lines do not necessarily need to be memorized and can be read.

Ringmaster

The Ringmaster is your lead teacher (and could be the VBS director). In the Big Top Opener, the Ringmaster always greets the children, leads prayer, reads the Ringmaster's Code, and then introduces the day's Golden Ticket and Memory Verse Melody. You may or may not want the Ringmaster to lead worship in Jesus Jams.

On Day 1, the Ringmaster announces that at the end of the week, he will be retiring and handing the circus over to Junior, his trainee. After Jesus Jams, the Ringmaster hands the show over to Junior to practice being the leader of the circus. After the skit dissolves into chaos, the Ringmaster reenters the fray to address the issue. He then releases the children to the small-group rotation stations.

The Ringmaster is not part of the Grandstand Bible Spotlight, but he is involved in the Big Top Finale. In the Finale, he helps the circus performers understand the lesson. It is optional to have the Ringmaster lead the Apostolic Prayer and Altar session.

Ringmaster costumes are available online. He should look polished and professional. Think top hat, red coat, vest, white collar shirt, black or red-and-white-striped clothing, knee-high black boots or shiny black shoes, and a staff or cane. He should always be clutching a Bible.

Prayer Leader

If you do not want the Ringmaster to lead prayer during the Opener and at the altar call, have a person prepared to pray into the microphone during these times. This person should have experience leading children into the presence of God.

Jesus Jams Coordinator

If you do not want the Ringmaster to lead worship, prepare a worship leader to lead Jesus Jams. This person should have a team of worshipers ready to sing and lead motions to the songs. Worship happens halfway through the Big Top Opener, at the conclusion of the Grandstand Bible Spotlight, and during the Apostolic Prayer and Altar call. This coordinator should also be responsible for getting music to the Crew Leaders to learn the music.

Junior

During the skits, Junior is your comic relief. The Ringmaster has been training him for years to take over the circus, and this week he is being tested to see if he is ready.

Junior is in all Big Top Opener and Big Top Finale skits. Junior is not part of the Grandstand Bible Spotlight.





In age, Junior should be a few decades younger than the Ringmaster. As a costume, Junior should be dressed in a second-hand version of the Ringmaster's costume (make his coat too big or small). Consider giving him a pair of fun eyeglasses for comic effect. Like the Ringmaster, he too should always be clutching a Bible.

Grampy (or Granny) Gums

Assign this role to your best storyteller. He (or she) will teach each day's Bible lesson during the Grandstand Bible Spotlight. Grampy Gums is not part of the Big Top Opener or Finale. However, he could be used to lead the Apostolic Prayer and Altar.

Grampy Gums does not need to be an elder, but if a younger person plays the part, powder his hair white and have him act elderly. The costume should be a humorous mix of circus flair with elderly sensibility. Perhaps have him dress like an old person, but with a regal cape, a top hat, fun eyeglasses, and a fancy cane.

Acrobat Amy (or Andy)

Ideally, this performer should be spry and able to do some gymnastics. Acrobat Amy plays a lead role in the skits for Days 1, 2, 3, and 5. She does not appear on Day 4.

Amy's acrobatic costume should allow mobility but also be modest. Amy is also a fashionista, so accessorize her costume with feather boas, fun eyewear, fancy belts, and other creative accessories.

On Day 1, Amy twists her ankles, so she will be on crutches on Days 2 and 3.

Trampoline Timmy (or Tammy)

Like Acrobat Amy, this performer should be spry and nimble on a trampoline, though his trampoline skills may or may not be put on display. Timmy plays a key role alongside Amy in the skits for Days 1, 2, 3, and 5. He does not appear on Day 4.

Timmy's costume should also allow mobility and be modest. On Day 1, Timmy wrenches his back, so he will be hobbled on Days 2 and 3.

Juggler Julie (or Jeff)

Ideally, this performer should be able to juggle at least three balls. Julie appears in the skits for Days 2, 3, and 5. She does not appear in Days 1 and 4.

Julie's costume should be modest but have a fun circus flair.

Strongman Stephano

This male actor should speak with a comedic foreign accent. Stephano appears in the skits for Days 3, 4, and 5. He does not appear in Days 1 and 2.

Funny strongman costumes are available online, but they usually show a lot of chest and shoulder. With modesty in mind, add full body circus pajamas under the strongman's onesie. Consider giving Stephano a handlebar moustache.

Titus the Tiger

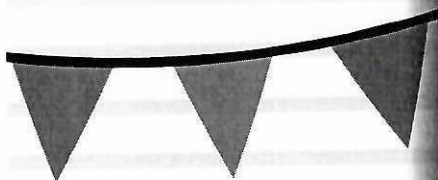
Give this actor a cat-ear headband, whiskers, and a modest tiger-skin outfit. This actor will only talk in a series of meows. Titus appears in the skits for Days 3 and 5. He does not appear in Days 1, 2, and 4.

Sam's Silly Sideshow

Two actors are needed to perform the object lessons at Big Top Treats.

- The main character is energetic and upbeat Sam, who fumbles and stumbles through unsuccessful illusions.
- The sidekick assistant is named Max, who consistently rescues Sam from his blunders.

These scripts are in the Big Top Treats & Sam's Silly Sideshow guidebook.



THE SUPPORTING CAST

Rotation Supervisors

Each of the three rotation stations should have a lead coordinator prepared to supervise everything that happens in that area.

Crew Leaders

Assign a Crew Leader to each crew of 5–8 children. If possible, assign an additional helper per crew for safety and accountability. Meet with your Crew Leaders and go over your expectations of them before VBS starts. Give them guidelines to help them understand their role.

Crews may sit on the ground or in chairs, depending on your setup. Crew Leaders should be ready to receive kids at least fifteen minutes before the VBS starts, sitting and interacting with their crew from the moment the kids enter the building. The Crew Leader will lead their crew through each day's events and connect with the kids throughout the week. Crew Leaders should be familiar with the songs and motions, leading their kids in worship and praise. Crew Leaders will show their kids how to stay connected during every activity, encouraging participation, playing games, building crafts, chatting during snacks, and being their friend.

Each day, Crew Leaders will need a copy of the daily crew-rotation schedule (pages 43–45 and DR) provided on a clipboard. Crew Leaders should be aware of where their group will start during the rotation schedule.

If necessary, this board can also communicate pertinent information about special needs, behaviors, or necessary medications parents may have shared regarding the specific children on that crew. In addition, prepare a bag for each Crew Leader containing materials relevant to the day's events.

During the VBS, they are the true ministers, working one-on-one and connecting with kids during both fun and learning times. Crew Leaders should memorize their crew members' names and engage in conversation around the activities. When the children go to the altar, their Crew Leader should naturally be able to pray with them without any awkwardness or hesitation. This can create a bond that the children (and Crew Leader) will carry with them even after VBS is over.

Registration Team

In the foyer or entrance to your big top (sanctuary or main area), set up a registration area. Use the Decor Guide to find ideas to make this area look like the entrance to a circus.

As children arrive, every kid should receive a Name Badge DR to wear (preferably with a lanyard) that clearly shows the child's name and crew number. The registration team should collect these badges at the close of each day and redistribute them as children arrive the next day.

In addition, the registration team should be responsible for delivering VBS swag, such as VBS T-shirts or water bottles.

Photo Booth

Next to registration, create an area where kids can have their photos taken as they arrive. Have a photographer ready, perhaps with a few circus performers, to take pictures at the Our Great Big God photo booth. These pictures can be used for the Family Forever picture frames in the Day 5 Craft. Be sure parents have given permission on the Registration Form DR for their children to be photographed. Parents can also take their kids' pictures on their phones.

Don't be intimidated by photography. Your photographer can be anyone who enjoys photography and takes great candid shots. Ask around, and you will find someone in your church who will enjoy helping.



Decor Coordinator

To bring your VBS to life, find a person who will enjoy transforming your foyer, sanctuary, fellowship hall, and classrooms into a circus adventure. Assemble a creative team who is skilled with building and decorating to assist in this endeavor. The Decor Guide offers ideas to help you construct the following areas.

- **Registration:** The foyer should be decorated to greet kids with a fun circus atmosphere.
- **The Big Top:** Transform the sanctuary or fellowship hall into a big top circus designed to seat all children to watch the main attraction. Each crew will need a designated place to sit. In this large-group setting, kids will enjoy each day's circus skits and Bible lesson. This area must include a stage, as well as entrance and exit points.
- **Big Top Treats:** If you are doing snack or lunch as a rotation station, you will need to transform your dining area into a concession stand. This area will also have a stage where Max & Sam will perform their silly sideshow (object lesson).
- **Midway Marvels:** If you are doing games as a rotation station, consider adding balloons and circus decor to the gaming area.
- **Souvenir Shoppe Spectacular:** If you are doing crafts as a rotation station, you will transform a classroom into a circus souvenir shop.

BIG TOP OPENER (LARGE-GROUP SETTING)

Each day kicks off with the Big Top Opener, whose material can be found in the *Under the Big Top Skits and Bible Lessons* leader guide.

During the "5:00 Circus Countdown" [vimeo](#), Crew Leaders bond with their crew as the anticipation builds. When the countdown reaches zero, dim the lights and let the worship team and motion leaders storm the stage for the theme song, "Our Great Big God (Full Version)" [DR vimeo](#). As the song ends, the spotlight moves to the Circus Crier, who introduces the Ringmaster. The Ringmaster takes the stage to greet the kids, lead prayer, read the Ringmaster's Code, and to introduce the day's Golden Ticket and Memory Verse Melody.

Next comes Jesus Jams—two songs to move to and praise the Lord. The first recommended song is always "C'Mon Everybody" [DR vimeo](#), a zydeco jam to get the kids moving and shouting for Jesus. The second recommended song goes along with the day's lesson and will be revisited at the end of the Bible lesson. Depending on your time schedule, you may choose to add other high-energy songs to your worship time.

After Jesus Jams, it's Showtime—a ten-minute skit where Junior and the circus performers get themselves into a pickle. As the crisis reaches a cliffhanger, the skit pauses for Crew Leaders take their crews to the rotation stations.

ROTATION CYCLE (SMALL-GROUP SETTING)

After the cliffhanger, Crew Leaders should lead their group to the designated station. Every twenty-five minutes (or whatever time you set) the kids rotate to the next station based on the daily crew-rotation schedule. Allow five minutes for travel between stations.

- At the Souvenir Shoppe Spectacular, kids will create amazing crafts to reinforce each day's lesson. See the *Souvenir Shoppe Spectacular* guide for more information.
- At Big Top Treats, kids will visit the concession stand to assemble and eat their snacks or lunch. During this time, kids will enjoy Sam's Silly Sideshow, where Sam and Max perform an object lesson to go with the day's lesson. See the *Big Top Treats* guide for more information.
- At Midway Marvels, children will go to the gym or outdoor carnival to enjoy high-energy games and activities. Each day includes three game options: large group, medium group, and small group. See the *Midway Marvels* guide for more information.