



A "Stellar" Summer 2023 Vacation Bible School

by Alex Galbraith, Gwladys Delbois, and Zubby Ezennia

Each summer, Atlantic Baptist Women hires young Christian adults to carry out Vacation Bible School programs for churches needing leadership for a summer VBS.

ABW provides a trained team and the curriculum at no cost to the church. With the help of volunteers in the churches, children learn of God's love, have fun, and participate in a mission component.

VBS

Vacation Bible School connects kids, churches, communities, and God

NOVA SCOTIA
Summer 2023 VBS Leaders:
Gwladys Delbois and Zubby Ezennia

We never envisaged our first summer in Canada to take us from Debert through Shelburne, Billtown, Dartmouth, and Bridgewater, and to finish at Halls Harbour. Our team consisted of Gwladys and Zubby. Zubby is an international student from Nigeria, studying for a Master of Divinity (Pastoral Care and Counselling) at Acadia Divinity College through Acadia University, in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Gwladys is also an international student from Martinique, studying for a Bachelor of Theology in the same institution.

We had the responsibility of leading Vacation Bible School (VBS) in selected Baptist churches across Nova Scotia. The mission of Atlantic Baptist Women, in partnership with these churches, was to reach out to kids using the VBS program, "Stellar: Shine Jesus' Light." At first, we were



Bridgewater Baptist Church, N.S.

trained under the fantastic tutelage of the meticulous Joann Sweet, Atlantic Baptist Women's home missions coordinator, for a month. This entailed learning the VBS materials and volunteering at elementary schools and after-school programs.

Vacation Bible School is a system that allowed churches to give back to their communities, as most of the kids who participated in the programs were not primarily from the host church. We worked with different ages from 4 through 12, with groups ranging from 11 to 25 children per church. The "Stellar" VBS created a community for the older generation to mentor and guide the kids as many began their journey with Jesus and learned multiple ways to "Shine Jesus' Light," a theme they screamed with so much excitement that I'm confident the impact will remain for an extended time. I can attest that it impacted us as it kept ringing in our heads weeks after VBS. We animated many characters and stories from the Bible while inviting different "space characters" from our galaxies into the shining Jesus'



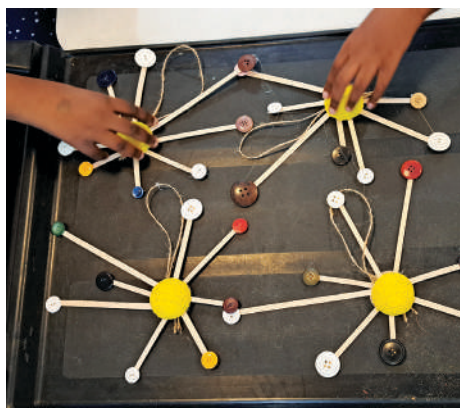
Seal Cove Baptist Church, Grand Manan, N.B.

light conversation. The smiles of satisfaction and warm hugs from the kids at the end of each week was all the reward we could ask for. We also pray for God to continue nurturing the planted seeds in the hearts of these little angels. We also deeply appreciated the host churches and couples who acted as billets for the team. Your love, kindness and unimaginable hospitality are deeply appreciated and remain indelible in our hearts.

NEW BRUNSWICK
Summer 2023 VBS Leader:
Alex Galbraith

This was my first time running Vacation Bible Schools, yet I can confidently say this was truly a great year for VBS across the Maritimes. What made it a great year wasn't the high quality of the "Stellar" VBS material, the overall popularity of this program, or even the great attendance, but rather the reaction that each church gave to hearing of the work and the volunteers needed before and during each VBS, and the quality program that came from it.

With each church I spoke to and worked with, there was a clear desire to share God's Word with their communities, even if that meant change. For some churches, this was something they were used to. For others, putting on a VBS was a new experience or something that hadn't been done in years. Lastly,



Crafting models of our solar system



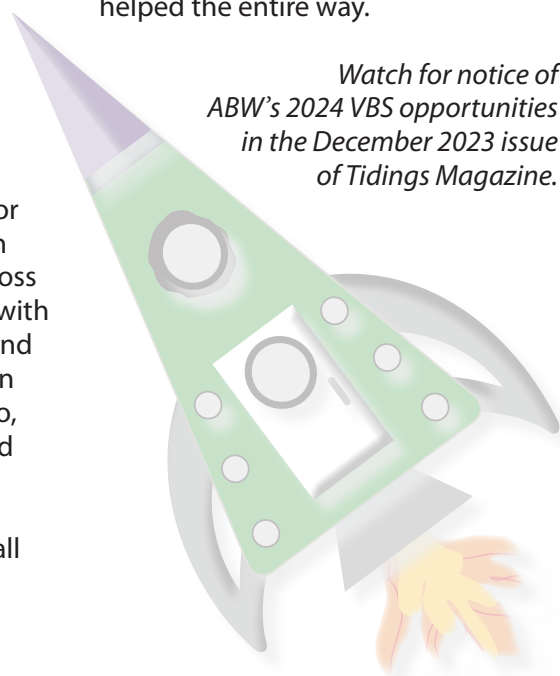
Nature walk at Camp Jordan, Shelburne, N.S.

some churches even had issues or situations occur that would have made it easy to push the VBS off till "next year." Yet they didn't let that stop them, and they went for it anyway. No matter their background or starting point, I was so encouraged by each team's response.

Each leadership team I worked with before arriving and each church volunteer team I worked with throughout the week truly gave their all to make this a major success. It was evident with each VBS, as the close-to-200 kids across the different churches I worked with learned about Jesus, salvation, and what it means to be a Christian in a fun, supportive atmosphere. So, thank you to all the churches and volunteers who hosted "Stellar" this year. This would not have been possible without you and all your work.

And to all the other churches who feel a calling or a desire to put on a program like this but might be worried about how big a project a VBS can seem, reach out to Atlantic Baptist Women about this program. It is so rewarding, and you will be helped the entire way.

Watch for notice of ABW's 2024 VBS opportunities in the December 2023 issue of Tidings Magazine.



Grafton Baptist Church, N.B.



South End Baptist Church, Dartmouth, N.S.



First Baptist Church, Hammonds Plains, N.S.