VBS for Explorers with Special Needs

Director Tips and Checklist

All Explorers are welcome! Regardless of limitations, Explorers need to experience the love of Jesus through caring adults. God created each of us with a variety of abilities that leaders need to take into consideration when planning VBS.

Besides more obvious physical and communication challenges, you may have Explorers who need extra structure, require adaptations in their physical environment, or just have a difficult time relating to others. A few simple steps and modifications can make all the difference in helping Explorers with special needs to feel included, experience God's love, and grow in their discipleship.

A Checklist for Directors

- **Inform families that you welcome Explorers with special needs and disabilities.** Families often feel that churches are not comfortable with or prepared for their child's challenges.

- **Meet with each Explorer's parents or caregivers.** They can provide valuable insights and suggestions concerning the specific needs for their child. Ask about:
  – the family's experiences in church
  – the child's interests and favorite activities
  – the child's daily routine, allergies, medications, and any physical accommodations or special equipment requirements
  – how the child best relates to others
  – preferred coping/discipline strategies

- **Contact a special education teacher to help you understand** a particular disability and for additional suggestions.

- **Communicate expectations on supporting Explorers with Special Needs to Station Leaders.**

- **Arrange for a Safe Sanctuaries-appropriate "buddy" to help** with the activities or to provide gentle reminders on behavior. Be sure to equip him/her with a copy of the Buddy Guide in advance, available at cokesburyvbs.com!

- **Be alert for Explorers whose parents have not informed you about their child's disability.** Have a volunteer ready to step in and help the child or teacher as needed.

- **Provide a copy of the handout on page 71 for each of your team members** to prepare them for inclusion of Explorers with Special Needs!