



VBS for Explorers with Special Needs

Tips and Helps for Volunteers

All Explorers are welcome at our VBS and need to experience the love of Jesus through caring leaders and adults. Help us provide that by following these pro tips with our friends who with Special Needs:

Notes for All Leaders

- 🕒 Remember that Explorers with disabilities have God-given gifts to share with us all!
- 🕒 Generate an atmosphere of love and respect, and present a positive attitude toward all Explorers.
- 🕒 Use multiple teaching methods provided in each session to engage all of the Explorers' senses.
- 🕒 Overlook harmless behaviors. Stay calm when you face a behavior you don't understand, and consult your Director if you need help.
- 🕒 Keep directions simple by giving one at a time.
- 🕒 Announce a five-minute warning before the end of all activities to facilitate smooth transitions.

Craft Leaders

- 🕒 Allow extra time for Explorers with Special Needs to complete their projects. Have an extra project on hand for Explorers who finish quickly (easy options available in our Reproducible Fun Pages!).
- 🕒 Provide additional assistance with cutting, and other tasks as needed for each craft.
- 🕒 Foster independence by allowing Explorers to complete as many tasks as possible on their own.
- 🕒 Prepare a volunteer to provide one-on-one guidance when needed.
- 🕒 For Explorers with visual impairments, have craft materials with a variety of textures available.

Recreation Leaders

- 🕒 Review your games to determine if adaptations need to be made.
- 🕒 Ask questions to make sure your Explorers understand how to play each game.
- 🕒 Pair Explorers up, and encourage them to interact and work together as they play.

Music Leaders

- 🕒 Provide copies of the *Take-Home CD* to Explorers to help them learn the songs at home.
- 🕒 Teach each song's sign language and motions as you go to keep everyone engaged.
- 🕒 Use PowerPoint® slides from the Complete Music CD during all music times. When needed, provide words of the song in large print or braille.

Science Leaders

- 🕒 Display a visual, step-by-step guide illustrating the procedure for each experiment.
- 🕒 Allow Explorers to work at their own pace.
- 🕒 Encourage other Explorers to help as needed.
- 🕒 Announce a five-minute warning before the end of an activity to facilitate smooth transitions.

Snack Leaders

- 🕒 Keep extra snack supplies on hand in case of spills or other accidents.
- 🕒 Ask your Director if any Explorers have food allergies, sensitivities, or other dietary restrictions.
- 🕒 Have snack alternatives on hand.
- 🕒 Be sure to read lists of ingredients carefully; food substances that cause reactions can be present in common foods.
- 🕒 Explorers with food allergies often feel left out or treated as an "inconvenience" during snack times. Being attentive to Explorers' dietary needs shows them that they are valued. To Explorers with a gluten intolerance, a cookie they can eat is not just a fun snack, but tangible evidence that they are known, loved, and welcomed!