



GUIDELIGHT

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

10 VBS TIPS

As you consider VBS this summer, take steps to better welcome, include, and enfold those experiencing disability. Here are 10 helpful tips:

#1 Ask God to Help

Welcoming those who experience disability will provide unique challenges, so be prayerful, asking God to give you insight and grace to best welcome and support.

#2 Start Small

There will be a temptation to be overwhelmed and stifled by the needs. So start small and consider how you can enfold one child or family who experience disability.

#3 Enlist a Disability Advocate Volunteer

VBS Directors are already overwhelmed. Identify and enlist someone to think through the necessary adaptations and accommodations needed.

#4 Create registration form that allows parents to communicate needs

Anticipate a family's needs; create a registration form that asks the necessary questions so a family can clearly communicate their unique needs.

#5 Recruit Buddies

Children who experience disability will ideally have a 1 to 1 buddy during the VBS. Prayerfully select the right volunteer for each child.

#6 Fill a Buddy Bag

Fill a backpack or bag with helpful tools for those who struggle with sensory issues, such as visual timers, fidgets, noise-reducing headphones, first/then cards, PECS, etc.

#7 Plan for a Sensory Space

Establish a space for those who need a break. It could be a quiet room with some sensory toys, a hallway to walk in, or simply a special corner in a classroom.

#8 Provide Disability Training

Give your volunteers good theology and good tools in their toolbelt for how best to welcome, support, and enfold those experiencing disability into the VBS program.

#9 Build Trust and Communicate Care

Parents may be reluctant to drop off their child with special needs. Invite them to stay and participate. Ask questions ahead of time to communicate care.

#10 Review policies and safety procedures

What is the plan if a child tries to elope or run away? What is the bathrooming policy for kids who need assistance? What are the protocols if a child has a seizure?