

Children with Special Needs

In the past, children who couldn't sit still, concentrate or respond in what was termed an "acceptable manner" were labeled as problems. With better diagnostic tools, we now know that their brain synapses often fire differently and that they are not deliberately acting out.

These children need an extra measure of our love, patience and understanding. Rather than berating or lecturing them about their behavior, we should step back and think before speaking. If there is an issue, please talk to Pastor Matt for help, support and reassurance. It takes all of us to support these children and each other during a busy session and often very warm weather.



A few of the special needs issues might be:

- Autism Spectrum
- Dietary/Medical Restrictions
- Dyslexia
- Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Sensory Integration Disorder
- Attachment Disorder
- Executive Function Deficit
- Sexual Orientation issues
- Gender Identity Issues
- Avoidance Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

Strangers

Some children are taught to not talk to people they do not know even when with their parents. Others are taught to be congenial with everyone! Somewhere there is a happy medium...

BUT...

no matter how our students have been instructed, some have never met us! They may be conflicted since we are being so kind and supportive but so is the perpetrator they have been warned to avoid.

Suggestions to help new kids adjust —

- Wear a First Baptist Church t-shirt so you can be spotted from across a room and wear a name tag on a lanyard so your name can be easily read.



- When talking with a student you do not know, say your name and state that you are part of the VBS team.
- Be careful not to ask personal/prying questions but listen. We are not therapists so issues should be referred to the Pastor.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



Diversity
and
How We Respond

ROCKPORT BAPTIST
ROCKPORT, MA

Purpose

Rockport Baptist Vacation Bible School has been a microcosm of our world today. Those involved have been from multiple generations, diverse cultures and backgrounds, various physical abilities and special needs.

The purpose of this brochure is to celebrate our commonality as well as to remind us that we might need to rethink some of our established actions and way of speaking.

The purpose of inclusion is to recognize that we are community and that each participant is valued.

Our prayer is that the time spent at Vacation Bible School will positively introduce the triune God to those who may be unaware of knowing God on a personal level and to reinforce God's intention in the lives of those who have experienced His love.

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Sensitivity

Because of our desire to be examples of God's love, we need to think about what we do and say and how our words may resonate with others. The term "sensitivity" is defined as "having or displaying a quick and delicate appreciation of others' feelings."

Each one of us is part of the whole experience that these young lives will have this special week in July.



Whether you are involved with registration, worship, drama, teaching, crafts, snacks, recreation or have come to be supportive, observe or to be ready to help with a last minute task, you are the visible hands and feet of God in this endeavor.

What we say or do will be perceived by others in either a positive or a negative manner. We need to be vigilant in respecting the personal space and varied sensory needs (touch, hearing, sight, smell, taste) of each person with whom we come in contact.

Choosing our Words

The old dictionary definition of the term "family" is no longer applicable in the lives of some of the children attending VBS. When we exhort the students to bring others to the closing exercises, or in explaining a lesson, we often say "Tell your parents to..." or "What did your Mother tell you?" or "You have an earthly father and God is your Heavenly Father." These words may not resonate with those who do not have the historical nuclear family. Their family may be comprised of

- A Single Parent
- Guardian such as grandparent
- Parents who are divorced so they may have homes in two places.

- Step Mother and Father or vice versa
- Mother/Mother or Father/Father
- Foster Family — long or short term
- Transgendered Parent
- On-going abusive parent or household member

We need to be thoughtful and inclusive in our choice of words.

