**TIPS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**1. Prepare for children with special needs**

Gather your leadership team and ask the question: “What will we do when we have a child with special needs?” Plan now. The following tips will get you started in your planning, but it is best to find one person who will take responsibility to oversee this ministry. This person needs to communicate well with children’s ministry staff and parents so that procedures could be developed to the local ministry setting. See the form, *“Personal Information for Kids with Special Needs”* as a valuable communication resource.

1. **Kids with physical disabilities**

You may have children in your program that are physically challenged. They may be in a wheel chair or use a walker. Physically challenged kids might be shy and quiet, but that doesn’t mean they are not intelligent and bright. Help them have success by working with a buddy in your small group. If more severely challenged, you might find a teen age or adult helper.

Find out from a parent or caregiver what the child needs help doing and what he likes to do for himself. Then encourage him to participate in the area he enjoys the most. A buddy can help him in the area he needs help, such as cutting with scissors for example.

1. **Kids with learning disabilities**

You may have a child in your group with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder or some other learning disability like dyslexia. These children just learn differently from other children. Again, find out from parents what techniques work to help keep this child engaged or refocused when needed.

Kingdom Quest works well with children that have learning disabilities because many different styles of learning are incorporated in the activities. Children can move and use different senses, and very little reading is done in a lesson. Shepherds can situate themselves closer to these children and address their needs better because groups are small.

For kids with physical disabilities or learning disabilities an additional helper may be assigned to help them one on one.

1. **Kids with severe disabilities**

Every child of God should be valued. Jesus values them. If children’s needs are so severe that they are disruptive or cannot assimilate well into a regular small group, pray for an adult or teen age mentor that can spend time loving and mentoring this child in a separate classroom. Again, be sure to incorporate the “two adult” rule. The mentor can read Bible events, play games, sing songs and talk about how Jesus loves them. This is an invaluable ministry to the parents of these children as well.