



# SESSION 1

## HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

MISSION:  
**DEEP SEA**

**BY KIMBERLY DORPENYO**

### *HOW TO HACK THIS SESSION FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS*

In kids ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but kids with special needs tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your kids with special needs more engaged.

#### **GENERAL TIPS FOR ALL SESSIONS**

**Worship time.** Use simple, repetitive actions for kids with special needs. If they cannot do the actions, have them jump up and down. Movement always helps memory and senses. Have noise-cancelling headphones available for kids sensitive to loud sounds. For kids using wheelchairs, have someone "dance" them during fast songs and hold up their hands during slow ones.

**Bible story time.** Many friends are visual learners. Provide a print out of pictures for them to follow, or provide a coloring page for them to color while you tell the story. If they need to move, provide their own action figures in the back of the room by the visual pictures so they can re-enact the story themselves.

#### **ACTIVITY | S.E.A. Agent Badge**

Have the badge pre-printed on a larger label so there is more space to create on. Many friends write bigger letters than other students. Have an older student or one-on-one partner put the child's hand on top of his hand and spell the name out loud while they write it together.

Additionally, some friends may need to give a high five or fist bump to connect with the other kids that they are meeting. Give them a chance to say each name alone. When they are done, have the crew celebrate.

**ACTIVITY | Sticky Toes**

Have baggies filled with blue hair gel and sea creatures. Make sure they are duct-taped shut, allowing the kids to play with these during this activity. Have them point out different creatures and squish them through the ocean gel.

**ACTIVITY | Crossing the Sea**

Have kids buddy up with a peer and walk through together. Wheelchair friends can be wheeled through while other kids hand them seashells. You can also modify this activity by placing the shells on blankets that volunteers are holding up instead of putting them on the ground, so that kids can reach them easily.

**THE BIG IDEA | People can help my faith grow.**

Provide hand motions to help them remember the Big Idea. Example: People (point to different people in the room around you) can help (raise your hands) my faith (hands to heart) grow (move a hand from the ground up in levels to demonstrate something growing taller).

**OBJECT LESSON | Parting of the Red Sea**

Provide a buddy with whom they can create this craft. You may also want provide a gatorade bottle instead of a water bottle so the lid is wider and easier for them to pour things into. Have a few bottles pre-made in case they are unable to make them so they can still play and take one home.

**REFLECTION | Tentacles of Faith**

Have an adult or peer help write and attach the strips of paper together. Supply stickers or pre-cut pictures of people they can choose from, like an image of a woman that has the word “mom” under it (also dad, grandma, grandpa, teacher, pastor, aunt, etc.). Also consider providing a squishy, [koosh ball](#) for them to squeeze during this activity. They will match the octopus, have tentacles, and provide movement and stress relief!

**ACTIVITY | Red Sea Sprint**

Allow friends to go back and forth in between different lines to the side if a race is too difficult for them. Wheelchairs can be wheeled in this game. If you are concerned about balloons being popped and getting wet causing stress, provide foam balls instead.

**MEMORY VERSE | Ephesians 3:18**

Have friends wave the “seaweed” while saying the verse to them. Shorten the verse if needed.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

# KIMBERLY DORPENYO



wentzvillecc.org



facebook.com/kimberly.dorpenyo



instagram.com/kjewell33



Kim serves as the Children's Minister at Wentzville Christian Church, where she has been creating a VIP program for friends with special abilities. They now have one-on-ones for kids, a sensory room, and she is looking at adding sensory-friendly services at least once a month.

She has been in ministry in some capacity for almost 20 years, and her experience involves community development, city-wide networking, empowering women to lead safe groups for teenage girls, and pioneering multiple facets of ministry throughout Africa.

Her daughter, Makaela, is 9 years old and the light of her life. Together they thrive on knowing God and making God known. They are constantly serving in their church and community, believing the church has no walls but lives in the heart of God's people. Their newest adventure, is become a foster family for a family of 3 siblings!

She loves to sing, travel, and drink coffee...lots of coffee.

**ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Elle Campbell, Brooklyn Lindsey, Amber Stephens, Linda Moon.

**TEACHING VIDEOS:** Sunday Cool, After School Program.

**TEACHING SKITS:** Natasha McGill.

**PRETEEN HACKS:** Mikey Sheley.

**SPECIAL NEEDS HACKS:** Kimberly Dorpenyo.

**PRESCHOOL HACKS:** Tiffany Thenor.

**MEMORY VERSE SIGN LANGUAGE:** Sunny Brown.

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Josh Gosney, Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**LAYOUT DESIGN:** Jules Gray, Elle Campbell.

**ILLUSTRATION:** James Huang.

**ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:** Kenny Campbell, Tash McGill, Stephen Switzer, Ali Anne, Eddie Irvin, Ari Raines, Kellee Gentry, Tim Synan, Josh McLemore, Amber Gaddis, Megan Romer, Kathie Phillips, Sunny Brown, Dena Kitchens.