

VBS Crew Mentor

Role Description & Expectations

Purpose of the Crew Mentor Role

The Crew Mentor serves as a supportive adult presence for several VBS crews throughout the week. Each Crew Mentor will follow the same 3–4 crews as they rotate through the various VBS stations and activities.

The primary purpose of this role is not to lead the children directly, but to mentor, encourage, and support the youth volunteers serving as Crew Leaders. Many of our Crew Leaders are experiencing leadership for the first time. Your guidance, encouragement, and experience can help them grow in confidence while creating a positive and engaging experience for every camper.

Think of yourself as a coach and mentor on the sidelines—observing, encouraging, and stepping in when needed while allowing the youth leaders to remain the primary leaders of their crews.

Crew Structure

Each crew typically consists of:

- 4–6 campers (ages 4 years through 5th grade)
- 2–3 youth Crew Leaders (ages 11–17)

As a Crew Mentor, you will be assigned to follow several crews throughout the week and become a familiar, supportive adult for both the campers and youth leaders.

Primary Responsibilities

Support Youth Crew Leaders

- Build positive relationships with your assigned youth leaders.
- Encourage and affirm their efforts throughout the week.
- Model patience, kindness, flexibility, and Christian leadership.
- Offer suggestions and guidance when youth leaders seem unsure or overwhelmed.
- Help youth leaders learn effective ways to engage campers and maintain focus during activities.
- Celebrate successes and growth, even in small moments.

Observe and Coach

- Observe interactions between youth leaders and campers.
- Look for opportunities to quietly coach youth leaders on:
 - Positive behavior management
 - Keeping campers engaged
 - Including all children in activities
 - Maintaining a positive group atmosphere
 - Handling minor conflicts respectfully

Whenever possible, provide guidance privately and respectfully so youth leaders can continue developing their own leadership skills.

Provide Adult Support When Needed

While youth leaders should remain the primary leaders of their crews, there may be situations where adult intervention is appropriate.

Examples may include:

- Repeated disruptive behavior that youth leaders have been unable to redirect
- Escalating conflicts between campers
- Situations where campers are becoming unsafe or significantly distracting others
- Youth leaders who need immediate assistance or support

Use your best judgment and step in calmly when necessary, then help youth leaders understand what strategies were used and why.

Communicate Concerns

Please notify the VBS Director or Volunteer Coordinator if you observe:

- Significant or ongoing behavior concerns
- Safety concerns
- A youth volunteer who appears overwhelmed or struggling
- A youth leader absence (if the VBS leadership team is not already aware)
- Any situation requiring additional support or attention

What Crew Mentors Are NOT Responsible For

Crew Mentors are not expected to:

- Lead activities or stations
- Directly run games, crafts, lessons, or discussions
- Participate in every activity alongside campers
- Take attendance or conduct head counts during transitions
- Manage routine bathroom breaks
- Serve as substitute Crew Leaders when a youth volunteer is absent
- Coordinate schedules or station transitions

These responsibilities belong to Crew Leaders, station volunteers, and VBS leadership.

Supporting Positive Camper Behavior

Many campers simply need reminders, encouragement, and clear expectations.

Helpful strategies include:

- Praising positive behavior you want repeated
- Redirecting rather than correcting whenever possible
- Giving simple, clear instructions
- Helping youth leaders maintain a calm and positive tone
- Encouraging participation rather than forcing it
- Recognizing when a camper may need extra patience or support

Remember that VBS should be a welcoming and joyful experience where children encounter God's love through fun, friendship, and faith.

Helping Youth Leaders Grow

One of the most important parts of this role is helping young volunteers develop confidence as leaders.

You can support them by:

- Offering encouragement throughout the day
- Noticing and affirming things they do well
- Sharing practical suggestions and tips
- Listening when they have concerns or questions
- Helping them problem-solve challenges
- Modeling servant leadership and Christian discipleship

A brief word of encouragement from a trusted adult can have a lasting impact on a young person's confidence and faith.

Requirements

All Crew Mentors must:

- Attend one required VBS volunteer training session
 - Complete all required VIRTUS Safe Environment requirements
 - Follow all parish safe environment policies and procedures
 - Serve as a positive Christian role model for campers and youth volunteers
-

What Success Looks Like

A successful Crew Mentor:

- ✓ Provides a calm, encouraging adult presence
- ✓ Helps youth leaders grow in confidence and leadership skills
- ✓ Supports positive camper behavior and engagement
- ✓ Communicates concerns appropriately
- ✓ Allows youth leaders to lead while providing guidance when needed
- ✓ Models Christ's love through patience, kindness, and encouragement

Thank you for sharing your time and gifts with our VBS campers and volunteers. Your support helps create an environment where children can discover the wonder of God.