



## How to Serve with Swerve

### How do I serve with swerve leaders?

Swerve means “students who serve.” But swerve leaders are under 18, so there are some limitations to what they can and can’t do. Find out what you need to know so you can maximize a swerve leader’s potential, encourage them to continue using their gifts, and still keep your room accountable to adhere to LifeKids non-negotiables.

Swerve leaders aren’t waiting to unleash their potential until they’re older—they’re ready to use their gifts, talents, and influence for the Church today! As leaders, we mentor them to become more like Jesus and discover how to invest their time and talents in the real world.

### So what are the dos and don’ts?

**Do** always introduce yourself to swerve leaders in your room, just as you would an adult leader. Get to know them. When you connect with a swerve leader, it has the same impact as when you connect with the kids or other leaders—you build a relationship that encourages them to come back consistently.

**Do** talk to them about what they enjoy the most about serving with kids, what they have experience with, and what they’d like to try out. Give them clear direction on what to do. Let them try something new if they’re interested and you see they have potential for it, such as leading a prop talk, leading a small group on their own, or leading worship in Konnect.

**Do** encourage swerve students to be consistent. Teach them how much it matters for kids to see them every single weekend, how consistency builds relationships with the kids and keeps kids and families coming back.

**Do** give swerve leaders direction if they lose focus or become a distraction with loud playing, talking with friends, tickling, chasing, or letting kids sit on their lap. They’re still learning, and your direction will help them to grow maturity as a leader.

**Don’t** look down on swerve leaders because they are younger. They still have incredible potential to be good, solid leaders in every aspect of your room.

**Don't** leave swerve leaders to handle challenging behavior on their own. Let them lead kids to the right choices, but back them up if kids aren't following their direction.

**Don't** ask swerve leaders to lead check-out time. An adult leader over the age of 18 needs to run check-out for accountability reasons.

**Don't** ask swerve leaders to change diapers or help with bathroom breaks. An adult leader over the age of 18 needs to take care of those things for accountability reasons.

**Don't** count a swerve leader as your second leader in the room. You always need to have two adult leaders over the age of 18 present for accountability.

**Do** talk with your coach if you have consistent challenges with a swerve leader or a group of swerve leaders. Your coach can connect with the swerve coach to assess the situation and see what the best plan of action is.

**Do** remember that students who serve are more likely to stay engaged in church after they graduate because they've learned how to make their parents' faith their own faith. Lead your students to be the Church of today, not tomorrow. They have influence and power. We get the amazing opportunity to help them recognize their gifts and talents—and we get to challenge them to use them to make a difference.

**Talk through these discussion questions with your fellow leaders and LifeKids team.**

1. What other questions do you have about empowering swerve leaders in your room?
2. How have you seen a swerve student grow as a leader?
3. How can you help swerve leaders know their contribution really matters?
4. What advice do you have for other leaders on how to best use swerve students in their room?
5. How do you currently support swerve leaders?