

Just for Parents

Some do's and don'ts while your child is in Service Adventure

Do communicate.

Service Adventure participants appreciate texts, calls and mail. It is also good for participants to share their stories with you and others. Some may choose to do this through blogging, whether through their own outlets or on the Mission Network website.

Don't communicate too often.

The relationships developed with each other and with others in the community are central to the Service Adventure experience. It is important for participants to be present where they are, and excessive communication from home can hinder building relationships, contributes to time away from their housemates and can increase homesickness.

Do visit.

Service Adventure participants are developing their own identity away from family and friends back home. While this can be a tumultuous time for both parents and child, this is a normal and important part of growing up.

Service Adventure provides a Christian setting for this to happen. Visiting can help parents appreciate the changes and show respect for new experiences that belong uniquely to their child.

You are encouraged to visit between October and April, giving the group time together at the beginning and end of their term.

Limit your stay in the unit house to three nights. If you plan to stay in the area longer, make reservations in a local hotel. Extra people in the Service Adventure household for longer than three nights can put a strain on unit life.

Do let go.

Just as being dependent is a part of being a baby, becoming independent is part of becoming a responsible adult. Service Adventure participants need to learn to do things for themselves, such as calling Mission Network with questions before

leaving home, completing applications, managing money and developing a deeper relationship with Jesus. Let them learn, even if they stumble and make mistakes.

Do send care packages.

Sending cookies, candy, photographs and other reminders of home is a wonderful way to show support. These items can enhance the Service Adventure experience by fostering conversations about each participant's upbringing. Keep these packages simple and shareable to support the community-building and modest lifestyle Service Adventure promotes.

Do read the [Service Adventure Handbook](#).

Although it is beneficial to give your child independence, becoming well-informed about the program is equally important.

Understanding the objectives and framework of Service Adventure will equip you to support your child. Reading the Handbook models an interest and commitment to understanding your child's experience in Service Adventure.

Do pray.

Pray for new growth and maturity for Service Adventure participants, especially in their relationships with Jesus. Pray for God's guidance and care for the Service Adventure leaders, who have a demanding job. Pray that service assignments will be challenging and rewarding for those serving, and that those being served may experience God's healing in their lives. Pray for the Service Adventure program, including the work that staff do to support units, recruit and screen applicants, and develop new locations.

Don't send money.

By accepting a Service Adventure assignment, participants commit to a simple lifestyle. Living within limits teaches respect for material and financial resources and helps increase young people's awareness of and appreciation for the limitations that come with lower incomes. Monetary gifts from parents and other family members can become points of conflict in units and undermine the commitment to live simply. Birthdays and holidays are a special time, and we encourage you to send a care package or gift that can be enjoyed by the whole unit.

Don't call on your child's behalf.

Some of the challenges of becoming an adult are learning to operate in the context of institutions, policies, etc. Though contact and questions from parents are welcomed, please encourage your child to ask questions or share concerns directly, thus taking responsibility for and ownership of the commitment they have made. While it is understandable that one might be intimidated by the prospect of calling to speak with a relative stranger, this also presents an opportunity to develop a valuable social skill.

Having a child enter Service Adventure can be exciting and a bit daunting. We hope this information helps to alleviate some of the concerns you might have.

