

Discipline Guidelines For Children's Programming

Our goal as leaders is to teach the children/youth in our care. As a church, teaching Bible stories, and Biblical teachings is part of our mandate. In addition to this, we are also given opportunities to build relationships and to teach them about choices and behavior as well. Our approach to discipline must not come from a desire to show power or dominance, but to come alongside them and guide them through their choices. ***We want to connect before we direct.***

Benefits of Boundaries:

- **Limits help children feel safe.** A child/youth is more secure when they know what's expected of them. You may want to remind them of what is expected in your class each time you meet together.
- **Helps them develop independence.** As we help them navigate a poor decision, we are helping them learn to grow from their mistakes and apply that to other areas of their life.
- **Helps them build life skills.** Working with others will teach them patience, self-control, and responsibility

We all can lose our focus and need to be reminded of what type of behavior is appropriate. This is true for children and youth as well! It is important to not escalate a situation by overreacting, causing confusion in the child/youth, and affecting the safety of the space. Here are tips on how we can support them in re-directing poor behavior while maintaining relationships.

How to Help Redirect:

- **1-Sit with Them:** Have a leader quietly move to the area where the behavior is deteriorating. A simple presence can be a reminder and help them re-direct.
- **2- Reiterate Expectations:** Remind them quietly of what they are needing to do in the situation (be quiet, sit still, return to the group, etc.).
- **3- Move Them:** Have them moved to a spot further away from what is distracting them, or from whom they are distracting. If they are not responding well, a conversation away from in front of their peers can prove helpful.
- **4- Involve Head Leadership:** If they have not responded, they will need to talk to the main leader, and you can return to your group.
- If a situation is unable to be resolved, Head Leadership will make contact with the parents to discuss the next steps.

We want to avoid shaming kids and come from an approach of building them up and teaching them better responses to their situation. Working together in this way helps the programs be more enjoyable for everyone.