



## Managing Behaviour

Managing behaviours at Kids Church is one of the trickiest things to navigate while serving on team. The reason for this is that many of the children are there because the parents are attending church. This means it's not truly a choice of free will and so the ultimate parameter of banning a child is not really an option (rare & extreme circumstances this could happen). Alongside this factor we are trying to make this a place children want to be, that they associate a good sentiment with going to church and so enforcing behaviour boundaries needs to be done gently and in grace, to mirror and demonstrate that same kindness God has shown us.

This being said we must challenge bad behaviour as and when we see it, particularly when a child is acting in a way that is at a detriment to others attending. When we do challenge behaviour it must be done in a loving but firm manner as it is for both their good and the other around them.

### ----- DO's of Managing Behaviour -----

Most behaviour can be dealt with by just a gentle ask to be quiet or to stop doing something, but in the case of persistent bad behaviour or any disruptive bad behaviour try to follow the following responses:

- DO speak directly to the child and address and identify the bad behaviour.
- DO explain the impact this behaviour is having on the other children.
- DO ask them whether they understand what they have done wrong.
- DO ask them if they think this behaviour is acceptable and verbalise to them that it is not.
- DO let them know that if their behaviour doesn't improve that we will have to have a conversation with their parents.
- DO communicate with the Kids Church Leader for that week the incident and what you did.

### ----- Addressing the Individual -----

Addressing bad behaviour is the responsibility of **all the team**, both leaders and helpers. We should be working together to ensure the best possible environment for the children.

While teaching you can use the social setting to your advantage. Stopping the session to address one child will often alert them to how serious their bad behaviour has been.

If the behaviour persists, then ask them to physically move to a different location. This not only changes the dynamic (often sitting next to their friends) in the movement from one place to another, but also will help them to understand that this behaviour was not acceptable.

----- DO NOT's of Managing Behaviour -----

- DO NOT use and derogatory/belittling language or embarrassment to manipulate a child into good behaviour, no matter how bad the behaviour.
- DO NOT threaten to take things away, albeit biscuit or games.
- DO NOT tell them that they can be banned.
- DO NOT ever touch a child to punish them, it is only permissible to physically intervene if you believe they are a danger to themselves or others. (But only do so if you are confident and comfortable with the action you'll need to take to safely intervene).
- DO NOT send the child out of the room. The building is a public space (unlike a school) and therefore we must have the children in controlled environments at all times.

----- Extreme or Persistent Bad Behaviour -----

In the case of extreme bad behaviour or in the instance that a child is persistently behaving in a way that is ruining the session for a child you will need to speak with the Kids Church Leader for that session. It then may be agreed that a team member would need to fetch the parent of the child.

This is a rare circumstance but in doing so you'd need to head to auditorium; if the parent is known to you and you can see them then directly go and ask them to come with you. If you cannot locate them or do not know their name, ask at the sound desk at the auditorium and put a request for a notice to go onto the screen. If still no response, then check the café or the tot's room.

----- Reporting Bad Behaviour -----

Any persistent bad behaviour needs to be reported to the kid's church leader who will then forward this information on. This is simply so that we can intervene if there is a particularly badly behaved child that is causing difficulties across all groups.

----- Respecting the Children -----

Often the most difficult children are the ones that need and require our love and good boundaries the most. We do not know what circumstance or situation they find themselves in outside of the church walls, so respecting and loving the children means using this time even when dealing with bad behaviour to encourage them and help them in their faith development.

----- Proactively Improve Behaviour -----

What can you do to proactively improve behaviour at Kids Church...

- *Take time to get to know the children* – build positive connections through play, conversation or simply welcoming them when they come in the room.
- *Get involved* – think about where you can sit in the room to positively impact the environment. Place yourself somewhere you can encourage involvement for children who find it harder to engage.
- *Learn the kids church rules* - Use language that will be familiar for the children. We are safe, respectful, good listeners and try our best.