

# Kids work - Useful Information

## Introduction

Our role is to look after, lead and encourage the children in your group as they grow and develop in knowing Jesus. We want the children to have faith in God and love God for themselves. It's an amazing freedom and opportunity we have, but with it comes a few responsibilities and things to remember.

This document is designed to help when leading/helping with children.

## Health and Safety

We want to make sure that our venue is safe for all the people in it, including you. Here are some guidelines on ways we work to keep our children safe. If you are at all concerned please speak to Mark, Pastor Tim or Helen Leslie.

1. In case of a fire please evacuate to the Mowbray Medical Staff car park taking the register with you / laptop.
2. Do not use your mobile phone or camera unless permitted to do so.
3. First Aiders are on site. Any accidents or illnesses should be recorded and reported to them
4. At the end of session children should stay with the leaders unless permission by the parents/guardians has been given.

## Child Protection Policy

See MCC Policy document for full details. For your own protection, avoid being alone with a child.

Adult/children ratios are –

0-1 years 1:3 (adult:children)

2 years 1:4

3 - 8 years 1:8

For children over 8 MCC has a good practice target of 1:8 for the first 8 children, and then 1 adult per additional 12 children (there never being less than 2 adults per group).

If a child needs to go to a toilet wait outside until the child is ready to return to the group.

# Dealing with difficult behaviour

What is discipline?

*Discipline is the education of a person's character. It includes nurturing, training, instruction, verbal rebuke, teaching and encouragement. It brings security, produces character, prepares for life, is evidence of love and is God's heart. Hebrews 12:5-12 and Proverbs 22:6.*

Why should we discipline children?

In producing and abiding by these guidelines, we aim to provide a happy and safe environment where children can learn about the message, meaning and morals of Christianity in a fun, relevant and enjoyable way.

## Strategy for encouraging good behaviour

- ✓ Expect good behaviour and obedience. If you ask a child to do something, expect them to do it. You leave them with little option but to do it.
- ✓ Reward children with praise for behaving well (e.g. trying hard, listening well, playing fair, respecting others etc.).
- ✓ Make a point of 'catching the child being good' rather than perceiving a child as naughty all of the time.
- ✓ Be a good role model, setting a good example. You can't expect children to obey ground rules if you break them yourself. (e.g. sit in the zone, listen to the person talking at the front, join in with games etc.)
- ✓ Take care to give quieter and well-behaved children attention and don't allow difficult children to take all of your time and energy.

## Dealing with difficult behaviour

- ✓ Be pro-active and do not wait to be told to deal with a situation.
- ✓ Ask God for wisdom, discernment and understanding as you deal with the situation.
- ✓ Overtly reward children around the difficult child for being good.
- ✓ Emphasise the child's positives, do not compare them with another child.
- ✓ Be consistent in what you say and follow through with any consequences that you may give a child for continued difficult behaviour.
- ✓ NEVER smack or hit a child and don't shout at them – change your voice tone if necessary.
- ✓ Discipline out of love and NEVER anger. Call upon the support of another team member if you feel that you might deal with a situation unwisely due to anger.
- ✓ Each child is special, unique and individual, so try to determine why the child is behaving this way.
- ✓ Separate children who have a tendency to be disruptive when together. Give them a chance, warn them and only separate them as a last resort if they are being disruptive.
- ✓ Have the child sit next to you or another leader.

If the time is appropriate, take the child aside and talk with them, challenge them to change, whilst encouraging them with their strengths

# Telling a Story

## WHAT

Stories can seem daunting. After all, sowing the seeds of God's word into children's hearts is precisely the reason we bother! Stories therefore require probably the most preparation out of any activity. All this is true, but in many ways the story is also a very easy job! See below.

**“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” - Hebrews 4:12**

The job of the storyteller is to present the Word of God in a way that the kids can process and understand. A storyteller should never worry about the content of the Story. God has sorted that out! It has a powerful impact, even on the little children! Even if you view the story as boring or irrelevant, never underestimate the power it may have on a child's life when they recall it in later life!

## HOW

Make sure you know the story. If you don't really know the story very well, get your Bible out and give it a read for yourself. If you have been tasked with telling a relatively well known story, then you need to go and read it again especially! Our memories are selective in many ways, and we miss things. Preparing for a story can often mean you yourself encounter the story in a different way than you have done ever before! Don't leave it until Saturday to plan.

If you are the kind of person who needs a lot of preparation, then prepare! If you are more conformable with 'winging it', or 'improvising', then use this gift too! Just make sure that you aren't just making excuses that you didn't bother to prepare! Treat telling a story as a challenge but also a privileged. God has entrusted us with teaching his words to these little ones! Our laziness should not be a barrier to this. Your own conscience will tell you about whether you have put in the effort or not!

**‘When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”’ - Mark 10:14**

## STORY HINTS AND TIPS

Think about the story. What particular elements of the story are you going to emphasise? Make sure what you emphasise links to the **Theme** of the particular session. Check this out beforehand!

If you're going to use **other helpers**, great! Make sure they know what their role is before the day if it requires some learning. If not, find someone on the day who is suitable! **Use kids** as actors and actresses at your peril. It is often an engaging technique for kids to see their peers up there, so can be a good idea! Choose your children wisely. If children misbehave while up the front, it can mean the whole room loses focus on the story. If this happens, simply swap the child!

**Technology** can be a brilliant aid to a story. The whole story can be based on a video, such as doing it in the style of a news report, with the BBC News video etc.!

**Costumes and disguises** can set the scene for a story very well. They are all located in the Upper Store near the landing of the rear staircase. Everything in there you may use, as long as it is returned there at the end of the session. There's a fairly big range of stuff in there, but it's best to scout out what's in there the week before so you know what we do and don't have! We have both ancient looking outfits and more modern stuff. Don't be afraid to bring in a modern touch, such as having modern soldier uniforms on Roman soldiers. This can make it more familiar to the kids.

**Use the room!** Consider all the space there is!

Your **voice and face** are probably some of the most simple tools, you can ever whisper and be heard by everyone in the room. Does your character have a particular expression on their face? Do they even have an accent!? For example, does Pilate, the Roman governor, have an Italian accent? This could highlight how he was different to everyone else and was a foreigner. If they are rich, talk posh! If they are poor, talk with a Scouse accent!

Last of all, keep an eye on **time**. One commonly touted rule is that a child has an attention span of around 1 minute for every year of their life. By this standard, a five year old will have a attention span of around five minutes. Set that as your goal! However, if you don't think you can do justice to the story in only five minutes... then take longer!

# Doing a Quiz

## WHAT

In a Quiz, you have around ten minutes to reinforce the children's knowledge of the story. The Quiz will always come immediately after the story. This is deliberate! By getting them to recall and think about what they have just heard, they are far more likely to commit the story to long term memory.

It is often also a good idea to test children's knowledge and memory on Stories that have already been.

## HOW

The heart of a Quiz is factual recall. But you can dress this up in whatever way you like! Treat it as if you were doing a story almost, think about technology, the room, and costumes and props!

Quizmasters usually into two teams straight down the middle, although it doesn't have to be done this way! You don't even have to split them into teams.

You could split kids into Boys vs Girls, into three of four teams, or even Leaders vs Kids. If you do the latter, make sure to make the leaders questions unbelievably hard and the kids' very easy!

Make sure you draw up some fair questions. Use language the kids can understand. Perhaps even throw in the odd silly question! For example, ask the kids what colour hair one of the characters wore.

The best Quizzes are those which contain, to a greater or a lesser extent, an element of luck! A simple 'can you get more questions right than the other team' idea is unlikely to create a lot of tension and fun for the kids. Some good examples of this are Quizzes that use the child who has answered correctly to come up and attempt to complete a task which dictates how many points their team earns!

Finally, make sure you are relaxed and ready to have fun! Try to be as accommodating as possible to let the kids get excited without letting them run riot! Here's a few Quiz ideas:

**Make-a-string Quiz:** kids who answer questions correctly earn the right to go and pick a piece of string from a box, where only the end shows. It may be long, or it may be short. Their team then owns that string. As they gain pieces of string, a leader ties them together! At the end of the quiz, the team with the longest piece of string overall wins!

**Lucky Dip Quiz:** kids who answer correctly may dip their hand in a box full of things, and draw out a prize with a certain number of points on it. Points are then added and team with most wins!

**Pick-a-thing Quiz:** same as lucky dip quiz, but using a screen to numbers instead. Most points win

**Throw-something Quiz:** kids get to throw something into buckets to earn points. Most points wins

**Penalty shoot-out Quiz:** correct answers mean you can take a shot at goal! Most goals wins.

# Doing a Craft

## WHAT

Like games, crafts are used as a way of letting the kids have fun! To me, crafts don't seem like a lot of fun, but then again I am rubbish at doing them! Some kids who don't get much out of games will really enjoy crafts, and vice versa. We have a responsibility to ensure that all kids enjoy themselves.

Crafts can often be used to reinforce the message of the story or the theme of the particular day. Or they can be completely unrelated to it, instead reinforcing another message. The important thing is to ensure that the crafts are used to communicate deep spiritual truths about God. If the theme or story is a little complex for your age group, then use the craft as a chance to communicate a simpler truth.!

## HOW

For a craft make sure any preparation you need to do for your craft is done beforehand. If things are not all set up, this will cost valuable activity time!

The first port of call for preparing your craft is to think about the story and theme for that week. Is there anything in the story that is memorable? Anything colourful or can capture the essence of the story in a snapshot? For example, if the story was the Angels visiting the shepherds, why not pick out the shepherds? What about sheep, a shepherd's rod and their clothes?

If the weeks story and theme was difficult to make something from, then use something else. One thing you could do is think about one thing that the story or theme teaches us. Once you have ideas about this, use Google to find some bible verses that relate to that idea. Then focus on the verse, and draw ideas from it. If we were doing the Christmas story, and our memory verse was "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift.", then you could get Kids to colour or make present boxes, with the memory verse on! These are two ways you can try and get some inspiration! This is the hardest thing when it comes to doing a craft. If all else fails, there is always Google!

Once you have your inspiration, you need to get your ideas into a craft model. If you were going to make a 'present box', or anything else for that matter, make sure to do the craft yourself first. When you're doing it, think! Would the kids of the age in your age group be able to complete this task?

Will it take too long? What kind of equipment will they need? If you think it is too short, make a little extension activity. Is there anything else they could add if they had too much time?

Have a look in the Craft Cupboard at MCC, which is next to the Metal Cabinet near the Side Exit Door. Check what materials are in there for you to use? If it isn't in there, you have two choices. Either buy the materials you need to make the craft, or modify the craft so that you don't need anything that isn't in the craft cupboard.

# Doing a Memory Verse

## WHAT

While we don't do memory verses every week, they are an absolutely essential part of our programme. From my days as a kid doing memory verses, I can say I remember only a few of them to this day! But they did get me interested in what the Bible said! Memory verses will have a variety of different effects on different children, and are done in many different ways. But each time, the core aim is the same. We want to introduce the children to God's word in the most direct manner we really can at their age. Small chunks at a time!

*"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." - Proverbs 22:6*

## HOW

While there is no set way to do a memory verse, all of them focus on one thing. Learning via repetition. You can't really do a memory verse by only saying it once, although if you think you can, then go for it! In the time you have I would consider repetition the most effective technique to get kids to accurately recall a single sentence. But I am willing to be proved wrong!

If you are gonna use repetition as a base for teaching the memory verse, consider how you get the children to repeat it. While simply repeating the memory verse over and over again for ten minutes is likely to get the children to remember it very well for a short while after, they'll have forgotten it in two weeks time! To make kids commit something to their long-term memory, it has to be memorable!

Here is a selection of ideas

**Balloon Popping Memory Verse...** Words on the balloons are popped one at a time to make it harder and harder to remember each time.

**Bottles on a Wall Memory Verse...** Words are written on bottles or cones which are then balanced on the stage. Kids can throw beanbags at them to hit them and knock them down and make it harder!

**International Memory Verse...** teach the memory verse in a different language! Best to do this at the end of a term when kids know the memory verse fairly well already!

**Symbols Memory Verse...** Use symbols and pictures instead of words to go through the memory verse, one at a time! Then take them away slowly to make it harder.

**Backwards Memory Verse...** Tell the memory verse backwards! Take words away to make it harder as you go.

# Running a Game

## WHAT

Games are so popular because they are very easy to plan and run, as well as being a fun activity for the kids. As well as this, it tends to burn off some of their excess energy, making them easier to manage later on.

Decide what you want to do, and set aside or find any equipment required for it. Work out how many leaders you need, and if you need someone to keep score for you! You have to explain the game to the kids.

## HOW

Always think about what room you have been given to do your game in. Is it suitable for the activity you are planning? For example, dodgeball in the main hall is a bad idea!

Consider your voice and how you explain the game. If you need to raise your voice to get the kids attention, then do so. Once you have your attention you should not need to raise your voice again. If you do have to, remind all the children that it is their time they are time wasting.

Make sure you state the rules clearly! Kids will try and find every means under the sun to cheat and get around the rules. If something is not clear, they will exploit it! If a child is not obeying the rules persistently and this is affecting the game for other children, they too need a warning.

Games can create a classic environment for behavioural issues to arise. The highly competitive nature of them can make children behave in different ways. Keep your eyes peeled for any sort of aggressive or violent behaviour.

You must make sure you are also watching for accidents. Games are a place where kids often have falls or trips. If this happens, have another leader fill out an accident form, assess them and then send them back to the game if necessary!

Some game ideas, if you need!

Musical Islands/Musical Chairs/Musical Bus/Musical Bumps/Musical Statues/Hockey/Ladders/ Tray and Sword Game/Crab Football/Crash Mat Dash/Balloon Volleyball/Skittle Game/Obstacle Course Relay/Dodgeball/Benchball/Handball/Volleyball/Argos Game/Chocolate Game/ Parachute Game/Duck Duck Goose/On the River and On the Bank/Stuck in the Mud/Keeper's Keys/Bulldogs/Flour Cake Game