



KIDS MINISTRY BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our goal is to create a respectful, fun environment where parents, volunteers, and staff partner to provide an exciting, spiritual experience where children grow to know Jesus! These strategies are intended to provide the structure and expectations needed to create an environment where all children can safely enjoy Meredith Drive Reformed Church's Kids Ministry programming. Behavioral strategies are put in place out of love for the child and their peers.

Children need to know limits and boundaries of behavior for their own security. The class needs to be able to function as a group. The class needs to be a safe place for every individual. When the classroom environment is guided by healthy and reasonable limits and boundaries, excitement for learning can flourish.

Placing your child into any of our Church's Kids Ministry programs signifies your acceptance of this policy. Please know that our goal is to love and serve your child well. We will work very hard to maintain your child's dignity, and honor them as a child of God entrusted into our care.

- Appropriate behavior is defined as a cooperative spirit on the part of the child.
- Inappropriate behavior is defined as defiant, disruptive or harmful behavior to oneself or others.
- Severe misconduct (resulting in parents being paged during worship) is defined as behavior that puts the child or another person in immediate danger, or behavior that causes disruption to the point where the class/program cannot continue.

INTERVENTION AND STRATEGIES

1st Offense = Verbal Warning #1 by Lead Volunteer

1. The leader will clearly define, without degrading or embarrassing the child, how the behavior is inappropriate and how to alter the behavior so that it is acceptable. This can be done in front of the group if needed. *"Bob, I'm noticing that you are not focusing on me and that it seems to actually be distracting Dan when you are tapping your fingers under the table like that. I am going to ask you to stop tapping your fingers under the table so that you can focus on me and not distract your buddy."*
2. Leader should refer to the Friendship Rules posted in the classroom. Specifically refer to the rule that best applies to the current situation. *"Remember our Friendship Rule # ____. That will be helpful for all of us to remember and practice together."*
3. The leader should ask the child to affirm their commitment to changing the behavior. *"Bob, are you willing to follow rule # ____? Yes. Awesome."*
4. Leader should follow up with an encouraging statement to encourage follow-through of positive behavior. *"I really love it when you are able to focus because learning about Moses parting the Red Sea is so crazy mind blowing! I really love seeing your face when a lightbulb goes off! If you follow rule # ____ there will be a ton of lightbulbs for you today. I just know it."*

2nd Offense = Verbal Warning #2 by Lead Volunteer

1. The leader will separate the child from the class if need be.
2. With kindness and direct authority, the leader will remind the child of the inappropriate behavior he or she displayed and follow the same verbal conversation model as outlined in the 1st offense.
3. State that this is the 2nd warning and why the inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated a 3rd time. The child will be told that he or she will have one more chance to correct their inappropriate behavior. Refer to the Friendship Rules posted in each room and explain specific expectations for the child to correct the inappropriate behavior.
4. Remind the child in a non-threatening but direct way (to give the child information as to hopefully inform their behavior choices for the remainder of the class) that if another offense occurs, the leader will call in the MDRC Kids Ministry Coordinator or Pastor to remove them from the classroom. Ask the child to reiterate what you have clearly stated will happen if a third offense takes place.
5. Speak an encouraging truth to the child, so that they know they are cared for. *"I really care about you. I think you are incredibly quick-witted and funny, but I need you to save some of those awesome jokes for a more appropriate time when it won't be so distracting to the rest of your friends. How about this... if you can hang in with me till the end of the class today, I'll make sure you can tell as least one good joke with the class before we dismiss for the day."*

3rd offense = MDRC Ministry Coordinator or Family Ministry Pastor will remove child from classroom.

1. If the child displays inappropriate behavior a third time, and the lead volunteer merits it to be so severe that the class can't run properly, the leader can send a helper to recruit authoritative help from a ministry coordinator or the children's pastor. The ministry coordinator will speak with the child directly. The ministry coordinator can give the child a "breather" (similar to a time out) outside of the classroom and away from the other children if they feel it would be helpful.
2. It will be a joint effort between the classroom lead volunteer and ministry coordinator/pastor to decide if the child should be permitted back into the classroom or if the child's offense warrants removal for the rest of the morning. If removing the child is warranted, the child's parent will be notified and the child will be entrusted back to the parent's care for the remainder of the morning.
3. The ministry coordinator will page the parent or personally contact them in the worship service to release the child back into the parent's care.
4. The ministry coordinator will reiterate to the child and the parent the three offenses that led up to the decision to remove them from the classroom.
5. The ministry coordinator or the children's pastor will follow up with the parent via email, phone call, or face to face conversation if warranted. Our goal is to talk to the parents in a private location to maintain the dignity of all involved, if possible.

*If steps 1-3 are a common occurrence, the ministry coordinator and the family ministry pastor may ask the parent to attend Kids Connection with their child for a determined period of time, or pursue another alternative plan out of love for the child's well-being.