

Coffee Talk

Conversation Starter Sheet for Preschool Bible Study Leaders

Guiding Behavior

Read Proverbs 29:15. “Correct your children and they will be wise.” Comment on this verse. Let’s explore how to deal with behavior issues at church. Discuss each one. Choose 2 or 3 to begin using, add others as needed.

- Whisper so preschoolers will have to lean in to hear what you have to say.
- Stop talking – silence will hopefully get their attention.
- Stare until you make eye contact with the inattentive preschooler.
- Provide presence by moving over next to the preschooler. Continue teaching with your arm around him or her.
- Call preschooler’s name in your conversation naturally, not negatively.
- Role play – allow preschooler to get the attention they need positively.
- Give responsibility to the preschooler by assigning a task to complete.
- Take Three – allow only three times to talk so he does not dominate discussion.
- Use special signals between teacher and preschooler; either for a job well done or a warning signal about behavior.
- Avoid public confrontation; speak to preschooler away from other children. Tell how they were a distraction and what you expect of them next time.
- Goal is self-discipline.
- Use reminders of rules stated in positive words and pictures.
- Ignore some bad behavior. Choose your battles!
- Reinforce good behavior. Give genuine praise often!
- Use sand timer to allow child to “time” himself away from situation or toy.
- Redirection is key.
- Make a home visit to build relationship.
- Keep a sense of humor.
- Forgive and forget!
- Establish boundaries! Ex: all four chair legs on floor, we only play with blocks in this area (mark off with masking tape).
- Have a few simple rules for the classroom. Include: only use hands to do kind things, and treat others the way you want to be treated. Establish 3 or 4 rules for your

classroom so everyone feels safe. Phrase with positive words, not negative. Add pictures for visual learners. Remind preschooler of the class rule when it is broken.

TeaTime Tip - Prevention of unwelcomed behavior is a well-planned session!

Evaluate behavior by asking yourself these questions:

- Is child ill, tired, hungry, or have unmet needs?
- Is something at home affecting behavior? New baby? Divorce? Illness?
- Am I in room when child comes?
- Do I greet each preschooler?
- Am I being consistent?
- Are there any distractions in the classroom?
- Are there appropriate choices offered?
- Are there age-appropriate toys/supplies?

Use this tip: tell, don't ask. For example say, "It's time to clean up! Would you like to clean up the blocks or the dishes?" (Not, "Do you want to clean up now?")

- What are the logical consequences of the action?
 - Take toy away. Punish the toy that is being used inappropriately, not the child. There should be NO TIME OUTS for children, just for the toy.
 - Don't offer the specific toy next Sunday. (Ex: blocks being used as guns)
 - Remove child from situation at times – encourage another activity.
 - Recommend one minute per year old away from situation or toy.
 - Remove privileges or materials.
 - What else?

For more information on this subject refer to *Kids' Discipline 101* on the *Coffee Time* sheet *Resources* (Preschool Handout 3).

Pray together for wisdom to know how best to teach, correct and guide behavior when needed. Pray specifically for any challenging child that is in your class. Ask God to show you how to use any suggestions learned today to help him or her learn self-discipline. Covenant together to praise preschoolers often for good behavior.

Questions for the Pastor: How can you help the preschool teachers in your church learn to guide behavior, know the difference between discipline and punishment, and learn what scripture has to say about these topics? Use these and other verses to help teachers know what the Bible says about guiding behavior: Proverbs 3:12, Psalm 94: 12-13, Proverbs 15:5,32 and Hebrews 12:11. How could this be accomplished and how could we include parents?