

Leading from the front

So, you're leading from the front.

Leading from the front may seem relatively simple. But even for those who are more experienced, we need to be thinking about planning, preparation and training to improve our skills.

So here are a few things to keep in mind.

Be confident and enthusiastic

Even if inside you are terrified at the thought of leading, never let them know it! In order to be confident, you need to know what you are going to do and say beforehand. You don't have to have a script – just be well prepared and have a plan of what is going to happen over the next period of time. And keep eye contact with the children – it will help to make **you** stay focussed and keep **their** attention.

Speak clearly, naturally and enthusiastically. And think about what you look like. Don't have your hands in your pockets or your arms crossed and definitely do not fiddle with anything, like clicking a pen, that will cause distraction.

Keep things moving

Any time you leave the front of the group or pause for too long, you will lose the kids. If you leave a space they will fill it and normally with noise! Make sure that you have all you need at hand – it's important to keep things moving so that you can keep things slick. Making sure that everyone can see and hear you will help with this. Use humour if it is appropriate as you move through the programme but always keep the age of the audience in mind. Don't crack jokes for the leaders; focus on the children in front of you!

Tell children how you expect them to behave

Children are not going to know what you expect in terms of behaviour unless you tell them. How can they? Be simple and be clear as you explain the rules. Encourage them to participate when you want them to but also help them to understand when they need to be quiet and listen.

Teamwork

This is essential to the success of any children's ministry programme. You need to work as a team of leaders, even when there is only one of you leading from the front. One of the best ways to ensure the attention of the children is to have the rest leaders sitting in among the

big group, helping to keep the focus on the front, and not have them sitting around the outside. This means you do not need to be focussing on one child making noise when you are at the front. Trust and encourage your other leaders to do that!

As the person leading up front, you're the one who holds the programme together. Its lots of fun and you get loads of interaction with the children in front of you. Make sure you keep everything flowing, reinforce the learning for the children and most of all just enjoy it.