

Discipline

So you need to think about discipline.

Discipline has so many negative aspects to it, but creating some rules and boundaries within your children's ministry actually allows you to function with the most freedom and enjoyment. However, discipline and boundaries take some time, patience and teamwork to work properly.

So here's a few things to keep in mind.

The first thing is to be consistent.

You need to make sure you have the same rules for the same children. Although this probably won't happen in your children's ministry, if the rule is that you are not allowed to throw chairs without having time out for 10mins, then stick to that for everyone. Don't do 10 minutes for one child and no punishment for another.

The second thing is to communicate clearly.

When you're explaining the rules, boundaries and consequences to children, make sure you use language that they understand so there is no doubt how you expect them to behave. Better still, come up with the rules and consequences together as a group to create ownership. If the children have ownership of the rules and consequences, they are much more likely to keep them and you also feel more justified in enforcing them.

The third thing is to be courteous.

If you need to speak to a child individually, be polite in how you speak. You will gain more respect and understanding from the child and they are much more likely to listen and learn from the situation.

The fourth thing to do is to concentrate.

When speaking to a child and upholding the rules, it's important to concentrate on what you're doing. Give the child your full attention and show that this is important to you as well. Try not to get distracted by other things that are going on around you in the room.

The last thing to do is to stay calm.

When you are enforcing the rules and speaking to a child, it is so important to keep your cool and to stay calm. Even when they know how to push all your buttons and follow through on that, try not to see red and stay even toned and calm throughout. However, be

aware of trying to enforce rules that are not appropriate or are unrealistic for the kids that you have in your group.

Discipline is not something we often like to think about in terms of children's ministry in our congregations. However, if we want to create a place where children feel secure, boundaries and rules are really important to help to do that. They also create an atmosphere of value and fairness within the ministry that we do. So as a team of leaders and volunteers, it's really important you take a little bit of time to think through the discipline of your group and how to create that secure place for children to be.