

Our expectations

Near the start of each session remind children of the following: **We listen & We are kind.**
Pop up the poster so you can refer back to it if you need to later in the session.

In **Adventurers** & **Explorers**



Things to consider to create a positive atmosphere and limit the opportunity for challenging behaviour

- **Have resources ready to go**
 - Have things ready so children don't have to sit and wait
 - If you need to get something ready, plan for it – could you get the children to discuss a question with a partner or another leader could lead the memory verse/song in that time.
- **Pace**
 - Consider which parts of the session you want to spend more time on and where you may want to slow down
- **We set the 'weather of the room'**
 - If we are positive and excited, the children tend to be the same
 - Look to give positive praise whenever you can, to all children.
- **Be aware of how long they've been sitting in the service & remember their age**
 - They've just be sitting in the service, they may need to get up and move/dance/play a game before sitting and concentrating again.
 - Remember their age – consider the language you use (simple language, bible terms – explain clearly, have an action/image to explain it).
 - Remember not all children will be able to read yet/confidently.
 - Remember that after Easter you will have younger children in your group and may have to adjust accordingly.
- **Use of your voice**
 - Consider how you use your voice to engage children – louder/quieter, faster/slower, higher/deeper.
 - Consider how you use your voice to help with their behaviour – if you start louder and then get quieter they will quieten down to hear you
- **Non-verbal cues**
 - If children are distracted, consider walking over to them (while still continuing to teach), tap/give them their bible, ask them a question

What to do if children are being particularly challenging

Some general strategies to try first:

- **Pick up on the positive behaviour** you see around them. E.g. *“Sophie thank you for looking this way.”* Sometimes that is enough to remind the child not focusing to re-focus.
- **Remind chn of the rules** – could do this by pointing at the poster. Or simply saying, *“X remember in Adv/Exp we listen to our leaders and each other”* or *“No thank you, we don’t do that in Adv/Exps.”*
- **Sometimes moving a child to a different seat** can help. Maybe next to another leader or a child who they are unlikely to be silly with. Be careful not to sit them opposite someone they might distract.
- **Using ‘thank you’ not ‘please**
If a child is not sitting down for example, consider saying, *“Sit on your chair, thank you.”* Rather than, *“Sit on your chair please.”* Using thank you suggests that you are expecting them to do it, rather than giving them a choice.

Main consequences for challenging behaviour:

1. Speak to parents at the end of the session

- If there are children who are choosing to be a challenge, give them a reminder and possible consequence: *“Remember we need to be listening/not calling out etc. If you don’t stop, I’ll need to speak to Mum/Dad at the end.”*
- If the behaviour continues, tell them that you will speak to their parent at the end. Make sure you follow through.
- Keep the **conversation with parents loving, short, explain what happened, express you want to work together with them, check in with them** (there may be a pastoral issue going on which has contributed to their child struggling that day). Possibly along the lines of:
 - **Start with a positive** – *tell them that you loving having X in your group / that they did something really well today. Then follow with something like: “X struggled a little in Adventures today. I gently reminded them about our rules. I said that if they didn’t stop I’d have to speak to you. They continued hence why I’m mentioning it to you now. If you could have a chat with them that would be helpful.”*
You could ask if there’s anything you could do to support them as they support X? Check in with how the parent is doing too.

2. Send the children back to their parents in the service

- This is a last resort and hopefully won’t be needed very often.
- This is for when challenging behaviour has continued and continued. Telling them you will speak to their parents has had no impact.
- You may need one leader to pop to the foyer, bring back someone from the welcome team to your room. Then either the welcome team go and find the parent, or they stay with the group (for ratios) and you head in and find the parent.
- The conversation with the parent would be similar to the one above.

Important things to note:

- In all of this, we want to be **loving and Christ-like** in our interactions with our children and parents. Discipline is mentioned many times in the Bible, especially in reference to parents raising children – it's an important part of teaching children how to live. Let's be praying we'd have wisdom in how we best help these young lives.
- If a child who has **additional needs** is presenting challenging behaviour, the above may not be appropriate.
If the child is a regular with us, hopefully the Children's Inclusion Team (CIT) will already be involved and there may well be a plan in place to support them. There is generally someone from the CIT team on call each Sunday to come in and support if necessary. Message/call Katie if you need someone.