

Cityside Baptist Church

Behavioural Management Guidelines

Reviewed December 2016

Behavioural management strategies for under 5s

Support children to engage by sitting alongside them, and by being a 'whispering buzz' in their ear to point out interesting bits and places they can be involved. It's useful for the person leading if the other leaders/adults quietly get alongside children who are having difficulties, so that the momentum can continue for the rest of the group.

Support children during free play time by sitting down alongside them and interacting with a group: talk to them, encourage them to try different activities, keep an eye out for potential conflicts brewing and help children to resolve differences amicably before they escalate.

Catch children being good and give them attention and praise them for it:

"I like the way you..."

"You're listening so well..."

"I loved your prayer, thank you for sharing it with us."

"That was kind to share that toy..."

"I can see how patient you're being, waiting for your turn..."

Be welcoming to parents:

Reassure parents that it's okay if their child needs to have a wander or make some noise during mat time, if that is what is happening - all Cityside children have been-there-done-that in their time. Ask parents how they would like us to support them.

If a child is behaving inappropriately towards other children:

- Be on the lookout for early signs of frustration or conflict brewing, and re-direct or distract the child by encouraging them to do something else with you before anything overt happens.
- Remind the child what is expected: "At Xplorers, we...are kind to each other/use gentle hands/use kind words...etc"
- Help the child to resolve the situation if possible, perhaps by working out how to share a toy or to do something kind to repair the hurt. If they are very upset, don't try to do this until later after they have calmed down. Help them start doing something appropriate instead – like playing with a different toy or sitting in a different place with something new to do or focus on.

If a child's behaviour continues to be unsafe (eg: they keep hurting other children) after being warned and supported, they will need to return to their parent/caregiver in the service until they cool down.

- Go with the child to make sure they get to their parent/caregiver safely, or else get their parent to come out to Xplorers if the child does not come willingly with you; never hold or pull the child.
- Tell the child that we still like them and that they are welcome to come back to Xplorers when they can behave appropriately (eg: '...when you can play without hurting other children...').

- Let the parent/caregiver know why the child has returned, being objective, gentle yet firm and mindful of the embarrassment this can trigger. Let the leadership of Children and Youth know later if you feel the behaviour needs to be monitored over the following weeks, or if you think we need to put strategies in place to support the child in future. We can put support measures (such as an adult buddy) in place for children who have special behavioural needs if we know about them.

Behavioural management strategies for ages 5-13

Let children know in advance what you expect.

Ask or remind the group what kinds of things make it safe for everyone to learn and be in a sacred space, for example: listening well while others are speaking, being inclusive, being respectful of others and their sacred space, giving activities a try...

Outline the baseline guidelines before a discussion or activity: for example, *“We’re going to go around the circle, and when it’s your turn you can light a candle and pray if you want to. You can pray out loud or inside your head. You don’t have to pray – you can just light your candle to show the next person it’s their turn if you’d prefer. While we’re going around the circle, you need to sit very quietly and still to show respect to others while they are praying.”*

Encourage the group to notice and pre-emptively include those who may be left out, especially when you are asking them to get into pairs or small groups to do a task, or when they sit at meal tables.

Comment on behaviours that you want to encourage

“I can tell you’re really listening carefully.”

“Thanks for waiting so patiently for your turn.”

“That was a thoughtful answer.”

“You sat quietly even when you were finished so that others could focus on God.”

“Thank you for sharing your prayer with us – it helped me too.”

“I’ll be looking for awesome people who can walk peacefully around the labyrinth.”

“Remind me before we start how many candles you’re allowed to light in the sand tray, and how to hold them?”

Notice when someone is trying hard, doing something really well or being kind or brave.

Use subtle non-verbals such as a smile or thumbs-up or catch their eye and silently mouth a “thank you!” or “Yay!” from across the room.

“I like the way you...”

“I always appreciate the way you...”

“Thank you for....”

Use things like going first and choosing colours of activity gear to reward good behaviour.

“I’m looking for someone who is sitting on their chair and not calling out...”

“I’m going to choose ... to go first because they’ve been listening so carefully.”

“Would you like to be the person who blows out the candles because I noticed you being so kind when you were ... before.”

If a child is behaving inappropriately:

- Gently but firmly intervene if you hear any put-downs, name-calling, mean teasing, laughing at, shaming or other inappropriate behaviour. Remind them of what they should be doing by saying *“At Cityside we... use kind words/listen carefully/wait until people who are praying finish so we don’t disturb them/only laugh in a kind way/sit on our chair without tipping it back...”* etc.
- Help the child to make reparations if needed. If they are very upset, don’t try to do this until later after they have calmed down. Help them to start doing something appropriate instead, like sitting somewhere different it it’s mat time, or moving to a different response activity.
- Make time to talk through issues when needed, either with individuals or groups. *“I’ve noticed that.... and I’m concerned about this because.... What do you think about this? What do you feel about it? How might we solve this problem together? What would help you in this situation?”*
- During Together Time it’s really helpful for the other adults to support the curator by dealing unobtrusively with any inappropriate behaviour. Helpers can support children who find it hard to sit and listen by sitting next to them and being a ‘whispering buzz’ in their ear to point out interesting bits and places they can be involved, and to give them discreet reminders about appropriate behaviour. If the person leading from the front has to do this, it means the focus and momentum of the whole group is lost.
- At Response Time, the curator is usually floating between several independent activities, and so is able to look out for children finishing an activity or having difficulties, and help them to find and settle to a new station. Helpers can ask the floating curator to take a child to be with them if they are having difficulty with them at their activity.

If a child continues to behave inappropriately despite support and warnings:

You can remind children who choose to make it difficult for you or other children that Quest/Odyssey are not compulsory, and that they can choose to return to their parent/caregiver in the service if they are not willing to be cooperative or to behave appropriately. It’s best to have this conversation quietly rather than while everyone else is also listening.

- If a child hurts another child or continually interrupts and is uncooperative or rude, despite warnings and support, ask the child to accompany you back to their parent/caregiver. If they won’t come with you, you will need to go and get their parent or caregiver instead – never hold or pull the child. Ask another adult to keep an eye on the others for a minute while you’re gone. Please make sure that the child reconnects with their parent/caregiver - don’t just send them back alone.
- If you are leading an event where parents are not on-site, you can ring their parent/caregiver to come and get their child early.
- Tell the child that we still like them and that they are welcome to return to the group when they choose to behave in an appropriate way that doesn’t make it hard for you or other children, or when they can be with the other children without hurting them.
- Let the parent/caregiver know why their child returned early, being mindful of the embarrassment this can trigger even when done gently and objectively. Please tell the leadership of Children and Youth as well if you feel the behaviour needs to be monitored over the following weeks, or if you think we need to put strategies in place to support the child in future. We can put support measures (such as an adult buddy) in place for children who have special behavioural needs if we know about them.

Behavioural management strategies for ages 14+

- Expect and model a high standard of behaviour.
- Agree together as a group what kinds of things make it safe for everyone to learn, grow and be in a sacred space, for example: listening well while others are speaking, being inclusive, keeping confidentiality if people share personal things, 'thinking aloud allowed', understanding that others may see things differently from you and how to disagree with an idea without harming your relationship with that person...
- Remind the group before a discussion or activity of the baseline guidelines: for example, *"We're going to go around the circle, and when it's your turn you can share if you want to. We will all simply listen to you when it's your turn, with empathy and without interrupting. If you don't want to speak, you can say pass and then it's the next person's turn. Remember what people say here is held in this container of care and confidentiality."*
- Encourage the group to notice and pre-emptively include those who may be left out, especially when you are asking them to get into pairs or small groups to do a task, or when they are dividing up into groups to get into cars or sit at meal tables.
- Gently but firmly intervene if you hear any put-downs, name-calling, mean teasing, laughing at, shaming or other inappropriate behaviour. Remind them of appropriate behaviour by saying *"At Cityside we... are respectful of others by listening when they are speaking/don't call each other names /are kind to each other/disagree by challenging the ideas while respecting the person..."*
- Make time to talk through issues when needed, either with individuals or groups. *"I've noticed that.... and I'm concerned about this because.... What are your thoughts and feelings about this? How might we solve this issue together?"*
- If someone continues to make it difficult for you or other youth, you can remind them that it is not compulsory for them to be there. It is best to have this conversation privately rather than in front of their peers. Tell them that although you like them and want them to be part of the group, they cannot be there in future if they are not willing to be respectful of the others in the group, including the leaders, because we need to have a place that is safe and good for everyone.

Tell them that they are welcome to return when they choose to behave in an appropriate way that doesn't make it hard or unsafe for you or others in the group.

Let their parents/caregivers know about what has happened, and please also tell the leadership of Children and Youth so we can put strategies in place to support the youth and you in future. We can put extra support measures in place for youth who have special behavioural needs if we know about them.

If you are not comfortable having this conversation with a youth, please talk with the leadership of Children and Youth to get their support.