

NORTH SUBURBAN FREE CHURCH DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

We believe structure and boundaries within a classroom help give the children the safe, secure environment they need to make learning possible. **We believe caring and building relationships with the children is the greatest prevention method there is to avoid discipline problems.** Helping them understand what is expected of them is also key. We want to focus on a few "major" expectations we have across the board in Children's Ministry and not get caught up in the "minors". However, when there is misbehavior it is also important that we follow through and are consistent with the children. The following are guidelines of what is expected from the child in the classroom, implementation ideas and a general procedure for handling misbehavior.

Focus on the "Majors"—Grades 1-5

1. **"Up to Bat"**—This focuses on showing respect and listening to the person who is talking.

Implementation Idea: In a group discussion use the phrase "Joe, is up to bat" let's focus there.

2. **"Be a great fan!"**—This focuses on how we treat each other. Building up rather than putting down.

Implementation Idea: Use the word "foul ball" (encourage the kids to use it as well with each other) to point out "put downs"! When a "foul ball" is caught it needs to be followed up with 3 positive comments. The goal is to encourage "wholesome" words out of our mouths!

3. **"Keep the playfield clean!"**—This focuses on treating the room and our church in general with respect. If a playing field isn't in good shape, it affects how the game.

4. **"Elbow Room"**—This focuses on two areas
 - a. respecting the "off-limit" stuff of teachers
 - b. respecting the space of each other—keeping your hands to yourself, etc.

Consequence Call

"BALL 4" or Foul Ball—In a ball game, after the 4th ball the player walks to first base. You could use this system in your classroom. If someone is misbehaving you could simply say "ball 1", etc. When they get to the 4th ball, they walk—out to the hall to do some heart work.

PROCEDURES FOR ENCOURAGING GOOD BEHAVIOR AND CORRECTING IMPROPER BEHAVIOR

1. The teacher will make sure there are clear limits set. (see previous page) Positive encouragement will be used as much as possible and reminders given throughout the year as the teachers feels necessary.
2. A clear warning should be given when the boundary is crossed—"BALL 1" If the child continues the behavior after "three balls", they "walk" and take time to do some "heart work".

IN THE HALL

A. *Talk to the Child*

Teacher asks child, "What is our rule concerning _____?" to insure that the child understood the expectation.

Teacher asks the child, "What did you do?" to help the child establish personal responsibility for his/her actions.

Teacher talks to the child "when our outward behaviors aren't right that means something is not right in our hearts. Sometimes we just need to take time to look at our hearts and talk to God about it. Give them time.

After some time, teacher asks child how the heart work is going. Ask the child if their heart to talk. If so, talk with them about what they discovered in their hearts. If the child is ready pray with them. Free them by reminding them of God's abundant forgiveness and how much delight He feels when we come to Him honesty. Ask Child "What will your behavior look like now that your heart is in the right place?" "Is there anything you need to do when you go back? (perhaps apologize to someone if it is appropriate)

Teacher follows up with praise and celebration to God and His Spirit for helping us do the hard work of Heart Work!

B. *Be Firm, but loving*

The child needs to know that you love them and aren't mad at them but that their heart is leading to behavior that isn't acceptable. Be sure to give them the attention they need in the class setting in a positive way (they may be acting out for attention).

General Guideline—In our church setting, 5 minutes for a 2 year old up to 15 minutes for a kindergartener and up. In our church setting—it depends on the child.

DON'T LEAVE THE CHILD OUT IN THE HALL ALONE—catch the coordinator to help if you need to get back to the room.

3. If the problem continues the teacher will work with the coordinator and the parent will be contacted (teacher, coordinator and parent will work together to help the child).