



# HOW WE BEHAVE AT ...

## Kids Church

*“Love your neighbour as yourself” Matthew 22:39*

This information sheet provides behavioural guidelines to help make your Kids Church a safe and enjoyable place to learn about God.

### How we behave at Kids Church

At Kids Church we are **SAFE**, we keep hands and feet to ourselves and don't touch other people's things.

At Kids Church we are **RESPECTFUL**, we follow the rules, wait our turn and listen when someone else is speaking.

At Kids Church we are **LOVING**, we value everyone and include everyone.

At Kids Church we are **KIND**, we are kind with our words, encouraging others and making them feel good with our words even when they are not present.

At Kids Church we **CARE** for those who are new, don't know many people, or are being treated badly by others.

At Kids Church we **SAY SORRY** when we do something we shouldn't. We ask for forgiveness, and we are willing to **FORGIVE** others as well.

### Bullying

Sometimes at Kids Church there might be some problem behaviour. One type of problem behaviour is called Bullying.

Bullying is when someone:

- Keeps picking on you again and again and tries to make you feel bad;
- Says or does mean things that upset you;
- Makes fun of you a lot;
- Tries to stop you from joining in or make others not like you;
- Keeps hurting you such as hitting or punching you. <sup>1</sup>

At Kids Church it is never OK to be mean. It is never OK to hurt others or leave them out.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from <https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/Resources/FactSheets/Documents/what-is-bullying-years-3-4.pdf>

So if we see problem behaviour or someone is mean to us, here is what to do:

**STOP** Tell the person to stop what they are doing.

**WALK** If they continue, walk away from the person being mean.

**TELL** an adult at Church AND an adult at home. The adult will be pleased you told them what was happening.

We want you to feel safe and happy at Kids Church so we can all learn about Jesus and put into practice the things that we learn. So if you are worried by anything that happens at Kids Church please let your teacher, leader or another adult know!

## **For Teachers/Leaders: How to manage bullying at your Kids Church**

**Bullying** refers to repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards another person/s. Bullying may include behaviours' such as excluding, poking and pushing, gossiping, taking someone's' belongings, humiliating, but bullying is not a one-off act of meanness.

Bullying has no place at Kids Church. At Kids Church we model and teach Christian attitudes and values of inclusiveness, welcoming, equal worth of all individuals, respect, forgiveness, and love. Bullying is the direct opposite of Christ likeness and therefore must be taken seriously at Kids Church.

Following are some ideas on how to prevent and protect against bullying at Kids Church:

### **1. Be organised**

Bullying is less likely to occur if children are engaged and busy in the lesson and activities. This means the teacher needs to be organised and thoughtful in lesson preparation.

### **2. Provide adequate supervision**

Problem behaviours thrive in the unstructured times of Kids Church and after church. Adequate adult supervision by parents and other adults will limit the opportunity for these behaviours to occur or go unnoticed. Adults need to be involved in what the kids are doing, and not be disengaged onlookers. Talk to parents about why this is important.

### **3. Develop inclusive relationships**

Consider planning activities that draw a group together so that everyone is included and the group can get to know each other. Many children are targeted for bullying because they lack close friends, social skills or confidence. By drawing those children into the group you are helping strengthen them as part of the group.

### **4. Always respond to a child's concerns**

We want to create a culture of openness and transparency at church and that includes amongst kids. Children who come forward should be praised for their bravery. When a child reveals they have been mistreated at Kids Church our response must be immediate, consistent and appropriate. Be careful to not dismiss a child's concern as "kids being kids". It is never OK for a child to feel unsafe at Kids Church. If you are uncertain of how to respond talk to your Kids Church leader or minister.

### **5. Love the bully and the victim**

Sometimes our culture might encourage us to despise the weak or hate the bully. Jesus loved us when we were the worst of sinners, and he loves us in our weakness and vulnerability. Therefore we love, forgive and encourage both the bully and the victim. Remember also that bullying can be a learned behaviour and the bully at church may be the victim elsewhere.

### **6. Reinforce positive behaviours**

When you see a child being kind, including others in their game, or caring for someone make sure you praise and encourage that child's behaviour.

### **7. Address bullying in your lessons**

If bullying has become a problem at your Kids Church or for children who attend your kids church you may consider specific lessons on bullying. Discuss God's response to victims, bullies and bystanders and our social responsibility. Reinforce that God's love and forgiveness is needed by all of us.

### **8. Train teachers and recruit parents**

Consider addressing your church's anti bullying stance at Kids Church training so that all teachers are aware of how to respond to, prevent and notice bullying behaviour. Informing parents will ensure they and their children are aware of expected behaviour at Kids Church and encourage open communication between teachers and parents. Parents are ultimately responsible for teaching their children about being followers of Jesus and Kids Church is supporting them in that role.

PLEASE NOTE: This information does not form part of the policy or process for dealing with or preventing abuse within the church but is provided as general information.

For more information please contact Jon Flood at Conduct Protocol Unit on 02 9690 9324 or [jflood@pcnsw.org.au](mailto:jflood@pcnsw.org.au).