Basic Philosophy in Ministering to Preschoolers

**Personality Development**

- We treat the preschooler as a personality and give opportunity for creative expression.
- We encourage the preschooler to think for himself.
- We encourage the preschooler to have some freedom of choice and self-expression.
- We try to give the preschooler a reason why we do certain things.
- We remember that the preschooler likes to help and to take some responsibility for caring for his room.
- We listen when the preschooler tells us something and learn to talk with the preschooler instead of at him.

**Spirituality Development**

- We help the preschooler in his understanding of what God has made.
- We help the preschooler grow in his appreciation of God and to say “thank you” to God.
- We encourage him to learn that Jesus is God’s Son, that Jesus loves him and is his best friend.
- We help each preschooler grow in his understanding and knowledge of God, Jesus, the Bible, the church, his family, himself, others, and the natural world.
- We provide as many firsthand and vicarious experiences as possible to help a preschooler grow spiritually.

**Guidance to Help a Child Grow**

- We try to be consistent in our discipline.
- We try to have a positive approach, using friendly firmness.
- We make suggestions more often than commands.
- We follow through when we have asked for a response to a request.
- We let the preschooler know when we expect certain responses.
- We sit together in group time and give the leader our attention, at the same time being alert to needs for an occasional light touch on the shoulder or knee to remind the preschooler to give the leader his attention.
- We let the aggressive or uncooperative preschooler know that we disapprove of his actions. This is done in a firm but loving manner. We disapprove of the behavior but never the preschooler. We forgive and forget his offense.
- We allow preschoolers to work out their differences. But we must step in if a preschooler is going to hurt himself, someone else, or damage property.
Teacher-Preschooler Relationship

- We consider every preschooler in our group as an important person and refrain from having favorites or from allowing some to share special privileges.

- We do not touch up a preschooler’s art work, etc. When this happens, a preschooler feels his work is just not good enough and becomes discouraged.

- We are alert to the needs of each preschooler in our classroom. These must be met every moment we are in the preschooler’s department/room.

- We use soft voices when speaking to the preschoolers.

- We discourage conversation between teachers during the teaching time.

- We remember that we do not have to be talking to preschoolers for them to learn.

- We learn to anticipate trouble and avoid unpleasant situations.

- We participate in all group activities as we expect the preschoolers to do. We encourage the preschoolers to participate, but we do not force them.

Teaching Tips

- We try not to do for a preschooler what he can do for himself.

- We try to know at all times what every preschooler in our group is doing.

- We encourage each preschooler to finish what he has started, such as puzzles, projects, etc.

- We sit in group time with the preschooler, not behind them.

- When we pray aloud, we use language preschoolers can understand.

- We do not use symbolism because it is not within the understanding of the preschooler.

- We refrain from teaching memorized or repeating prayers after us. We encourage a preschooler to pray in his own words. We do not force a preschooler to pray, but call on the preschooler who volunteers.

- We do not use patterns or give preschoolers pictures to color. Allow them to create their own pictures.

- We discourage using actions with songs intended to inspire worship.

- We do not give a preschooler a choice when he does not have a choice. If we offer a preschooler a choice, we have to accept his decision.

Christine C. McCauley,
Preschool Specialist
Jacksonville, Florida

For more information contact
Diane Smith, Children’s Ministry Strategist, Emerging Leaders Team, 800.ALL.BGA V, ext. 2256, diane.smith@vbmb.org
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