

Behavioral Principles and Guidelines for Children and Youth

We love children and youth at Glory of Christ Fellowship and we welcome them among us. They are not only the future of this church, but they are the means by which the fame of the Lord's name will be carried to the next generation. We who labor on behalf of children, youth and their parents take our responsibility seriously and want to do all we can to build faith into these children and youth and to encourage their parents. This responsibility underlies these principles and guidelines for behavior at Glory of Christ. Please contact the church office if you would like to discuss this document any further.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Although it is possible to control the outward actions of a child or youth and produce a desired behavior, **the goal of our ministry to young people is to direct their hearts toward God** and cultivate a spirit which is responsive to Him. True obedience and discipline flows from a heart that is responsive to the Lord. It is not merely the conformity to an external set of rules. Therefore, if we are concerned about the behavior of our children and youth, the most important thing that parents and volunteer workers can do is to seek God's help in nurturing hearts of faith out of which acts of righteousness will flow.

2. **We will maintain high standards for behavior at Glory of Christ but** we are also committed to being fair and realistic about our expectations of children and youth. If a young person only had six hours of sleep the night before, we should not be surprised if he has difficulty sitting still in church. If a preschooler is expected to sit quietly for a 2-hour service, we are probably expecting too much. If there are 45 minutes of unstructured time between a social event and a worship service, we should not be surprised if children or youth get into mischief. We will do our best to consider children and youth and their limits and try to accommodate their needs as much as possible.

3. **Parents are ultimately responsible for the behavior of their children.** We will expect parents to keep their children and youth under control during public gatherings and to make sure that they are under adult supervision while they are in the building. When under the supervision of a volunteer worker at Glory of Christ, that worker will be expected to maintain order and appropriate behavior of the children or youth in his care. If a child or youth is not responsive to any of the permissible forms of classroom discipline, he will be taken to his parents.

4. **The raising of children and youth is also a community responsibility.** As a church family, we gladly stand with parents and are eager to do all we can to support and encourage them in their parenting responsibilities. We consider it a serious responsibility to teach the full counsel of God and inspire children and youth in faith, in love and in righteousness. Some children and youth will struggle with behavior problems more than others. Family ministry is eager to pray, strategize and work with parents to find solutions.

EXPECTATIONS OF CHILDREN & YOUTH AT GLORY OF CHRIST

Although the behavioral boundaries vary depending on the age of the child or youth, the activity they are involved in, and where that activity takes place, most rules will fall under one of the four basic teaching goals we have for the children and youth at Glory of Christ.

• **Respect for the house of the Lord**

Children and youth will be expected to treat church or site buildings, furnishings and equipment in a way that honors the Lord and to use those things in the way that they were intended. Space and equipment should be left in the same or better condition than it was found. Children, youth or their

parents may be asked to accept responsibility for accidental or intentional damage to church or site property or equipment. Families are also asked to respect our space as a shared space for everyone's use. This means that children should understand that running through halls may not seem like a big deal to them but it may be terrifying to an elderly person who is shaky on their feet and afraid of a broken hip. Respect for the facilities is also respect for everyone who uses it.

• **Respect for Adults**

We want the children and youth of Glory of Christ to honor the adults in the church with respectful speech and behavior. Sassing or defying the instruction or correction of an adult are examples of what is considered disrespectful. We also will encourage children to use Mr., Mrs., or Miss, when addressing adults.

• **Respect for Others**

We will endeavor to provide a physically, emotionally and spiritually safe environment for every child and youth involved at Glory of Christ. They will be encouraged to think before they speak and find encouraging things to say to others. Therefore mean, crude or hurtful speech or actions toward others is not acceptable.

• **Respect for Themselves**

We will encourage children and youth not to act in ways that will put their bodies or their faith at risk.

WORD ABOUT CORRECTION

We believe that discipline should be primarily positive and so we encourage parents and those who work with children and youth to be quick to encourage and affirm positive behavior. We also encourage immediate and consistent response to negative behavior before it escalates into a serious problem. If the parents are present we will expect them to correct their children or youth when they misbehave. We will also encourage other adults not to ignore a behavior problem when they see it. If someone else speaks to your child or youth, please do not be offended or insulted. If parents are not present, the person in charge may respond by first speaking to the child or youth and issuing a warning. If the child or youth persists in the behavior, he may be denied a privilege or isolated from the group. The last resource available to the worker is to take the child or youth to his parents. Since it is our conviction that parents are the appropriate persons to employ corporal punishment when needed (and this should be carried out privately), any physical form of correction is considered unacceptable in the classroom or any other group setting. Those working with children and youth are permitted to gently restrain a child or youth to keep him from hurting himself or another.

Thank you for taking the time to read this brochure. Please discuss this with your children and youth. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact us.

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Note This article was taken and adapted from *Behavioral Principles and Guidelines for Children and Youth*, created by David Michael, Pastor for Parenting and Family Discipleship at Bethlehem Baptist Church.

You can find an electronic form of this document on the Family Ministries page on the GCF website.