

Kids' Ministry Training Video 5: Answering Questions

As Kids' Ministry leaders, we need to be ready to answer kids' questions as they come up. Cheryl Clendinning at GodSpace offers these awesome tips for answering questions:

Types of Questions

Children ask different types of questions for a range of reasons. Sometimes it's to get factual information, or to get your opinion and test theirs. Sometimes a question will spring from a burning issue, or be a cautious exploration. Occasionally, children might ask questions to impress, distract or seek attention.

Tips for Answering Questions

- ❑ **Assess:** Treat all questions seriously, but assess the situation. An "attention seeking/let's have fun" question needs a light-hearted answer.
- ❑ **Reason:** Try and find out the reason for the question. Ask the child if they are wondering for themselves or for someone else.
- ❑ **Question:** Ask the child what they think. It sometimes helps you understand where they're coming from, and gives you time to think.
- ❑ **Brief:** Try to keep your initial answer simple and brief. See if it satisfies the question being asked.
- ❑ **Language:** Make sure you use everyday language. Don't get technical without explaining yourself.
- ❑ **Concrete:** Keep answers as concrete as possible, and veer away from abstract answers.
- ❑ **Truthfulness:** Don't be afraid to say that you don't know, or that you used to wonder about that too.
- ❑ **Accuracy:** Never say something that is wrong, just to satisfy a child. Your answer must be accurate.
- ❑ **Trust:** Convey your own trust in God, despite things that are unknown or unknowable.
- ❑ **Affirm:** Let the child know that it's good to seek out answers. Let them know that you still have plenty of questions, but you're discovering more all the time.

Steps to Answering Questions

- ❑ **Understand the question.** Consider the context – what have you been doing or talking about? Consider the person asking – what might be going on for them?
- ❑ **Get the appropriate answer.** Draw on your own knowledge and experience, and involve others who are present. If it needs further exploration and follow up, make a plan to do so.
- ❑ **Deliver the answer in an appropriate way.** Decide whether the question needs to be answered with all children present, or individually to one or two. How much time is it worth? Is it worth exploring further?

Questions for Your Team

- What types of questions do kids in our group typically ask and why?
- How can we get appropriate answers for the children in our group? Do we need to involve others?
- How do we typically answer questions? Individually or with the whole group? Do we answer them immediately, or do we answer them at a designated time? Is this working?
- Do we affirm children's questions, and encourage them to ask questions and explore?