Kids’ Ministry Training Video 13:

Setting Culture

**Building a culture that’s conducive to supernatural conversations**

What negative experience of your past, can you make into a positive?

A safe and welcoming environment is not only necessary for good community; it’s also essential for God conversations.

Here are 4 keys to think about when setting a welcoming culture in your outreach:

**1. Attitude**

1. Try to be Non-judgmental, which requires:

* Not assuming but rather, ask questions
* Try not to use these words in conversation, ‘you should’… ‘you must’…. ‘you need’ …. Listen to yourself chatting; try not to tell people what to do, make suggestions instead.
* Asking questions is great, but don’t make them too probing. eg. If a person has just the one child, be respectful, they may be trying to fall pregnant.

**B. Your Team**

* Personally ask the hospitable people from your church to be on your team
* Find the mission minded mothers with young children and ask them to join your team. Remember the time at playgroup is just a place to meet community mothers; friendship is cultivated only through meeting outside playtime hours.
* Who’s in your church? What gifts can you share with your community? If anyone has an area of expertise, they may want to share their knowledge with your community; either as a workshop to train others, or actually doing their skill to enhance your community area. For example the gardener can either run a workshop on “Indoor plants and how not to kill them” or they could be the gardener in your playgroup area, turning an unused corner into a vegie patch!

**Jesus said ‘when two or three are gathered there I will be among you’- when we are being a functional team God has the potential to be made known more than an individual is noticed.**

**C. The Community**

1. Gracious

Redirecting a child’s behaviour could be as simple as: “at our playtime we are gentle with our hands, we are kind to our friends, we sit on our bottoms, etc”

**Gossip** can be corrosive in a community; the damage is done way before we see the effects. Toxic talk needs to be shut down with gentle respect. We can stop this right from the get go with just a few choice words, if someone is being negative about a person, I would always try to say something positive about them back.

If they persist, you may like to say your rule of thumb, ‘talk about people like they are listening.’

The world is a harsh place, lets build a sanctuary and be a shelter for the storms of life.

If someone is complaining to me about a volunteer leader, I generally will err on the side of the volunteer. Unless the comment is the same theme from different people, I probably wouldn’t even address it. That said if it’s based on an incident I generally deal with it like this:

Pray about it

Don’t make a big deal out of it by setting up a coffee appointment with the volunteer and talking about the incident.

I’d chat with them in a general conversation, just touching base with all your team. Ask how things are going, got any pressing concerns? They will usually bring up the incident, and then you can talk to them about it.

**D. Your Space**

Welcome them into your home, like it’s their home too!

Your space looks tired? Have a working bee, paint some walls, buy some rugs from Kmart, do a fundraiser and buy an air conditioner. Include the playgroup families too! If you do this in community they are all building and owning this together.

Make sure your space is safe. Hot coffee? Just buy some thermos mugs with lids.

Does your outdoor playground have some mystery? It’s amazing what plants can do to a plain lawn. Wooden toys and climbing equipment add a natural effect rather than plastic toys. But hey, whatever works for you!

**Questions for Your Team**

Is there anything you can change within your community?

Is the space okay? Need work?

What is the prevailing attitude of the team?

How are your community people feeling? Included?

Maybe you could run a survey to your community asking for feedback? This is really easy to set up with survey monkey.

**Further Reading**

‘How to help a Friend’ by Selwyn Hughes