

# Kids Program Philosophy

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Brown Line Vineyard's Kids Program is to help children have foundational experiences and form foundational understandings of God and faith and community, that will set them up for lifetimes of connection with God and spiritual fulfillment.

## CURRICULUM

The first aspect of Brown Line Vineyard's Kids Program is offering a curriculum that is Jesus-centered, as it thoughtfully exposes children to the Bible and practices of faith.

We define a Jesus-centered curriculum as one that prioritizes above all helping children form an image of God that looks like the character of Jesus (e.g. loving not shaming, growth-oriented not compliance-oriented, reliable and trustworthy not arbitrary). All exposure to the Bible or to practices of faith would be to serve that purpose. Our effort toward such a curriculum will be an ongoing process, involving edits and revisions and requiring patience. We feel a great starting point is the material *Telling God's Story* by Peter Enns. Please feel free to ask us for excerpts from this material.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT

However, what we say in our Kids Program will actually not be nearly as formative on our children's relationships to God and to faith and to community as what we *do* in our Kids Program.

So the second aspect is working into our program from the start an informed and appropriate understanding of child development and a philosophy of behavior management that is NOT punitive, but instead based on logical consequences.

We are committed to connecting our care and instruction for children's spiritual well-being to an informed and appropriate understanding of how children develop cognitively, socially, emotionally, and linguistically. For example, we want to be appropriate about what we as childcare workers expect from children in our care, based on their stages of development. Or, as another example, we want to be thoughtful about when and how we expose children to stories in the Bible that involve mature subject matters (murder, genocide, rape). We will pursue this through regular workshops for our childcare employees and volunteers discussing the connection between spiritual direction of children and child development, delivered by trained teaching/childcare professionals.

## LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

One of the most significant distinctions we want to press for our Kids Program is the difference between punitive behavior management and behavior management that is based on "logical consequences". Teaching Professionals like Paula Denton (*The Power of Our*

*Words*) have explored this idea of “logical consequences”. Essentially, the idea is supporting and equipping childcare workers so that they are seeking to help children understand and grow from the consequences of their choices, rather than exerting power to maintain compliant behaviors (which does not build lifelong skills in children, and has negative lasting impacts).

This distinction feels especially key for us because children’s experience of authority figures (especially authority figures in church) will form what they expect to experience from God. We will pursue this by striving to provide our childcare employees and volunteers with understandable and accessible cheat sheets and tips for behavior management that tie the choices we make as childcare providers to our Kids Program’s big-picture purpose.