

Ready for ROL Kids

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one : welcome

At River of Life, we place a high priority on children and raising the next generation. We are passionate, therefore, about introducing children from an early age to Jesus and establishing a foundation in their lives of who created them, who they are and why they are here.

Research shows that we learn more in our first 3 years than the rest of our lives!!¹ If this is true, we want to be sure that our youngest children develop an awareness of the God who created them; uniquely, perfectly and in His image, as well as begin a relationship with Jesus that we can then grow and nurture in the years ahead.

We have the privilege in The Rock and Rockets of helping children deepen in their understanding and love of Jesus, knowing that He is relevant to their lives, that He can be known by them and that they can hear Him. We want to see our children becoming true disciples of Jesus, moving in the power of His Holy Spirit to build the Kingdom of God. And we want to have lots of FUN and make really great friendships in the process!

We are equally passionate about you! That you grow more in love with Jesus as you serve Him in the ROL Kids ministry and that you will know the rewards of your labour. That you will know that you are not missing out by being in the Kids Ministry, but that you would allow the Holy Spirit to teach you as you prepare your lessons, that you would allow the Holy Spirit to minister through you to the children and that you would be changed as you pursue God in an effort to serve Him and the children He gives you.

Thank you for being part of the team!



Children's Pastor

¹ Centre for Educational Neuroscience, University College of London

two: vision and values

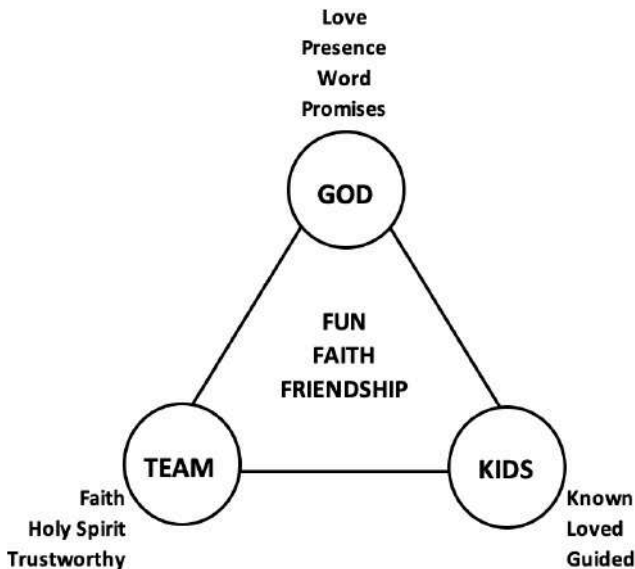
The vision for the children's work at River of Life is that our church will be a place that children want to come to because:

- They are known, loved and guided by trustworthy leaders
- They meet with God and experience His presence in their life
- They develop a love for the Word of God and learn its promises and truths are unshakeable
- They have lots of friends
- They have loads of fun

Our strapline is FUN, FAITH and FRIENDSHIP

We therefore value a team made up of people who are:

- Passionate about Christ
- Passionate about sharing Him with children
- Passionate about the Word
- Committed to prayer
- Committed to their team
- Committed to modelling Christ-like behavior both in and out of the classroom



three: the child

What does the Bible teach us about children? Let's take time to hear God's heart:

Teach children His commands

'These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road.' Deuteronomy 6:6

Train children in the Word

'Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.' Proverbs 22:6

Encourage children to worship

'But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants you, Lord, have called forth your praise?" Matthew 21: 14-16

Jesus raises a child from the dead

'He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.' Mark 5:41-42

Jesus uses a child's gift to perform a miracle

"Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).' John 6:9-10

His Spirit is for children

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams." Acts 2:17

Jesus casts a demon out of a child

'Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy and he was healed at that moment.' Matthew 17:18

Jesus confirms that the Kingdom of God belongs to children

'People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.' Mark 10: 13-16

As a church and particularly as the children's ministry, we have a role to play in helping our children to make the incredibly important decision to follow Jesus as their Lord and Saviour; and in discipling them to live lives that honour, serve and worship Him.

David was a young man, estimated to be between 12 & 17 years old, who knew and loved his God. He had developed a relationship with God from spending many hours in the field reading the Torah and writing songs/psalms to the God he loved and worshipped. As Phil Moore says, 'David won his fight against Goliath, long before he ever stepped onto the battlefield.'² He was a young man after God's own heart. We need to help the children in our church and in our families grow in friendship with Christ. Help them develop a tender, lion heart through worship and prayer.

David's young life is a great example, but you can also be a BIG part of that example – do you have a heart after God, do our kids see your faith in Him no matter what is happening or what giant you are facing? Do you see who they are in Christ and nurture the David's in our homes and our church?

Another young man we can learn from, thought to be between 14-15 years old when he was taken from his home and family and brought to King Nebuchadnezzar's palace, is Daniel. He lived in the palace for 3 years and is described as good looking, showing wisdom and intelligence and as a child of the covenant – a descendant of David. He had it all – good looks, physique, intelligence but what he is commended for, is his love and devotion to God. As a teenager, Daniel could have enjoyed all that the palace offered. But the Scriptures tell us '*Daniel purposed in His heart that he would not defile himself.*'³ And he walked in obedience to his God.

The challenge for us is to live lives that are obedient to God and His ways, lives of integrity and righteousness in a nation that doesn't always honour God and His ways; because our kids are watching!! We need to raise up a generation of children who will honour God, who will do the right thing (at home, at school, on the sports field, out socialising) when they think no one is watching, who make the right choice from a heart that knows and loves the Lord.

The Bible is very clear on the preciousness of children in Luke 17:2 '*it would be better to ... be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.*' So it is exciting to know that we have a hugely significant role to play in raising up these young disciples, with their unique giftings and characters, to release them into the plans and purposes God has created for them for the extension of His Kingdom.

² The Kind of Leader God is Looking For, New Ground Training Academy

³ Daniel 1:8

four: the teacher

Prayer is Foundational

- Pray for the children you will be teaching
- Pray for God to prepare your heart
- Pray for God to use you and speak through you to the children
- Commit yourself, your lesson and the children to God

Gifting

God has placed you in this ministry to use the gifts that he has equipped you with.⁴ Don't be shy! Bless the children and the team with your gift.

You are Able

'Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.'
2 Corinthians 3:5-6

You have the mind of Christ

'... no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.' 1 Corinthians 2:11

Laying a Spiritual Foundation

Kids are hungry for the **real thing**. They want real relationship with you and through this you can lead them into a real relationship with God. If we can lay a foundation where our children **know God**, where they can feel **His presence**, **hear His voice**, and **experience His power** we will have laid a spiritual foundation that can be built on for the rest of their lives.

And so we need to make sure that God is tangibly present in every meeting we have with the children. We do this by setting apart times of genuine worship where we consciously make them aware of God's presence, taking them into His very throne room. It comes as we make time to sit quietly in our lessons listening for His voice and sharing what we hear and see with each other. It happens when we provide times for our kids to take time to seek His face. As we lead by personal example, they will follow. Let's not make the grave mistake of thinking that children cannot learn the ways of God, Scripture makes it clear they can.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 12

five: practicalities

Preparation

- Spend time getting to the heart of the lesson you are preparing. Write one sentence which captures the key truth that you want the children to remember when they leave your classroom.
- Arrive 30 minutes early to meet, pray and plan with your team, check/tidy your classroom.
- Bring whatever props you need
- Diarise when you are on duty. Plan ahead. Don't let your team down.

Housekeeping

- Please dress appropriately to work with children. Remember you may be sitting on the floor, playing games. Please set an example in what you wear and how you speak
- Please speak to your team leader if you have any concerns, problems with children in your class

In Class

- Connect with the kids – know their names. Work with us to get parents to complete forms.
- Plan an ice-breaker/game to help those who are new or visiting to relax
- Get on their level. Sit on the floor, maintain eye contact, sit in a circle so you have better control.
- Discipline is training not punishment. Maintain discipline in your classroom so that everyone can enjoy the lesson. A child knows they are loved when you set guidelines for them to follow. See page 9 for some discipline tips.
- Encourage friendships in as many ways as you can within the class.
- Gain their confidence and trust
- Remember every child is different; different family background, different social background, different learning styles. Be creative in presenting your lessons. Be sensitive.

Making your lesson memorable

- Remember children have different learning styles (p 12, 13)
- Engage all the senses
- Engage their emotions – help them feel something
- Make it applicable to their life
- Use age appropriate terms
- Use language they can understand and relate to
- Switch focus every 5 mins: honour their attention span
- Use lots of repetition
- Let them talk
- Learn their names
- Become a master story teller
- Let them play!

Eight Classroom Management Tricks That Work

- 1. Be over-prepared:** The more ready you are, the more in control you will be. Know your lesson inside out so that your face is not behind a book. Have all your supplies. When you are prepared for your lesson, you will have more brain space to help keep kids on track.
- 2. Move around while you teach and vary your tone of voice:** You will lose kids attention quickly if you sit in a chair and talk to them in a monotone voice. Move around and talk like you are excited about what you are saying.
- 3. Make lessons interactive:** Get kids moving. If you expect kids to sit in a chair for an hour, you are setting your expectations too high. Design your lessons so that kids get to move, talk, laugh, and play while they learn. Kids will find a way to have fun.
- 4. Be a name dropper:** When I am teaching and Sammy interrupts, I will gently insert Sammy's name into what I'm saying. I will generally not stop and distract everyone, but might say, "And then, Sammy, you know what happened next?"
- 5. Move close to kids who are causing distractions:** Again, without interrupting the flow of your lesson, move closer to kids who are having a hard time paying attention. Put a hand on their shoulder. Usually your proximity will help regain their attention.
- 6. Keep the lesson moving:** The pace of your lesson is important too. Keep activities moving. It is better to end an activity before everyone is bored with it than to wait until kids find new ways to entertain themselves. Make transitions between activity quick and smooth. Downtime can be your greatest enemy in managing behaviour.
- 7. Avoid power struggles:** Remember that you are the grown up. Arguing with an 8 year old is just silly. But sometimes we get so aggravated by the disrespect or the misbehaviour that we choose to prove our point and prove our authority. And usually it ends in a standoff that is pointless. Choose your battles and resolve conflict quickly. Remember, you are the grown up.
- 8. Choose which behaviours to ignore and behaviours to stop:** Sometimes we disrupt the class more by jumping on behaviours that really don't matter. Some kids want the attention, even if it is negative. Ignore behaviours that you can, but don't hesitate to stop the behaviours that are keeping others from learning.

Five Simple Attention-Getters

1. **Sing a Song:** Whether you've got a good voice or not, don't be afraid to break out in song. Kids love it! It can be a silly one like "On Top of Spaghetti", a children's Bible song like "This Little Light of Mine", or an action song like "Father Abraham."
2. **Quiet Your Voice:** If we try to speak over our students, we end up straining our voice and sounding like we're yelling. However, when we quiet our voice to a whisper, students stop talking to listen. Everyone leans in and you have regained control.
3. **A Consistent Signal:** Children crave consistency, so these types of signals usually work well within a classroom. You can turn the lights off, use a whistle, clap a rhythm and have students repeat it, or play a statement and response game. For example, the teacher says, "Macaroni and cheese" and the students say, "Freeze." The teacher says, "God is good" and the students say, "All the time."
4. **Be Silly:** Stand on a chair, host a funny face challenge, wear a crazy prop (hat, glasses, tie, etc.), perform a strange talent, tell a joke. Really, the sillier the better!
5. **Get Them Moving:** A brief moment of exercise always seems to help get students back on track again. You can do jumping jacks, stretches, arm circles, jog in place, play a game, sing a song full of action movements such as "head, shoulders, knees, and toes" or take a "train ride" with younger students.

Three Step Discipline

1. **Rule Reminder:** When a child breaks a rule, remind him or of the classroom rules.
2. **Personal Visit:** If the rule is broken a second time, walk to the child and speak to him privately. Bend at the knees if possible, to make eye contact with the child in a non-threatening manner. Tell him he has broken the rule and warn him about breaking the rule again. Explain to him what the next course of action will be.
3. **Immediate Consequence:** At the third infraction, there should be an immediate consequence like a visit to time-out, or removal from a game. Threatening to talk to Mom or Dad after class is not an immediate consequence. You have the discretion to repeat the process if you like or escort the disruptive child to his parents.

A Few More Tips

Put Them to Work: Before class begins, designate children to specific tasks. Busy work may help the strong-willed, undisciplined child to participate in class. There is nothing wrong with teaching a child how to get “good” attention as opposed to “bad” attention.

Let children talk: When you talk too much, kids tune you out.

Never take it personally: Kids with poor discipline are not targeting you, they need you. Do not take angry words to heart and do not hold a grudge.

Laugh a lot: Lighten up the room by laughing with your kids, even the naughty ones.

Apologise when you are wrong: In a perfect world, grownups never make mistakes, but we know this is not a perfect world. Teach your kids the meaning of humility by admitting when you are wrong. If you reprimand a child that did not deserve it, do not brush it off. The child will not. Admit you are wrong and ask for forgiveness. Be proactive and take the appropriate measures to get control of your class. Good, even-tempered discipline will give your child a true picture of God’s love.

A Word About Worship

We all know that we need to prepare for our lessons. That even when we teach children Biblical truths that we are familiar with, we still need to explain them in a way that they will understand and learn from. However, we often forget when it comes to worship, that in this area we also need to teach and instruct children. So when you have the opportunity to lead worship with the children, make sure you explain and encourage them to enter into worship, explain why we close our eyes - it helps us focus on God, it helps us to not get distracted. When we raise our hands, it’s part of our declaration that we are giving Jesus our hearts and our minds and bodies, that we are surrendered to Him that we want to offer up not just our words but ourselves as well. Remember children are learning from you all the time not just when you are ‘teaching’ so please model a heart of worship.

six: how children learn

Word Smart

This child is a verbal learner. These children love to read. They enjoy discussion, stories, poetry, word games and speeches. They like the use of words – reading, writing and listening.

Logic Smart

This child likes to solve problems. They like working with abstract things like puzzles and games. This child loves science experiments, solving problems, playing strategic games.

Picture Smart

This child is a visual learner and learns well through videos, movies, posters, charts, maps, paintings, object lessons, watching drama, art activities. This child thinks in pictures, enjoys playing with shapes, enjoys building things.

Nature Smart

This child will relate well to creative stories. This child also likes to explore the natural world and will learn by being out in God's creation, sorting, classifying, observing items from nature.

People Smart

This child is relational. They are highly social, make friends easily and are good talkers. They recognise how others feel and are drawn to activities that involve other people. They learn best in small groups with personal sharing, discussion, dialogue, role play etc.

Self Smart

This child is reflective. They understand who they are and how they feel. They may prefer to work alone and they seek ways of self-expression. They are comfortable with solitude. This child likes discussion, open-ended sentences, creative writing, listening to music.

Body Smart

This child is physical. They will learn through being active; sport, drama, art. The best way to teach physical learners is by engaging them in art activities, arranging the room in different ways, and providing a variety of activities: games, singing with motions, dancing, role play and skits.

Music Smart

This child is often a good listener. They are more sensitive to rhythm and pitch. These children like to write songs and music. They enjoy having music playing in the background and will learn by comparing song lyrics to Scripture etc. They could write the bible story to a rap.

WORD SMART KIDS

LOVE to read



Enjoy word games

Write stories or poetry




Like to tell stories




Illustrations of word blocks: w, o, r, s, d.

LOGIC SMART KIDS


LOVE playing with numbers




Like science experiments



Enjoy solving problems



Like to play strategy games



PICTURE SMART KIDS

LOVE art



Think in pictures



Play with shapes



Like to build things



NATURE SMART KIDS

LOVE being outdoors



Take care of the Earth



Like plants and animals



Collect bugs and rocks



PEOPLE SMART KIDS

LOVE people

Care about others

Like to work with others

Make friends easily



SELF SMART KIDS

LOVE time to themselves

Think about their feelings

Set goals for themselves

Feel good about themselves



BODY SMART KIDS

LOVE movement

Like outdoor activities

Are good at sports

Enjoy acting and dancing



MUSIC SMART KIDS

LOVE music

Play an instrument

Clap and tap to music

Sing and make up songs



seven: in case you didn't know

ROL Kids at River of Life is split into two age groups. We meet every Sunday at both GP and Eastlea sites.



In Rockets we introduce our toddlers to God's greatness and plan for their lives. This is for children between 1 and 5 years. The programme runs in a fun environment during the sermon slot on a Sunday morning at both the GP and Eastlea sites.

The Rock is for children between the ages of 6 and 12 years. Here we have great fun teaching our children foundational and life applicable truth in their various age groups. We have 3 teams in the Rock: Emerald, Diamond and Ruby, who serve once every 3 weeks. Each team is led by a voluntary Team Leader.



'...they will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.' Isaiah 61:3b

Fun, Faith and Friendship

