

Leading children and youth: Requirements and expectations



This document outlines the requirements and expectations for those at Sheffield Vineyard who lead teams of children and youth.

The role of a children's team member

We have a responsibility to teach the next generation that they ought not live without Jesus. The role of the children's ministry is to teach our children and youth how to live life with God in a fun and relevant way.

General expectations

You are expected to embrace the "5 ways to belong" ethos (see sheffieldvineyard.org/belong), which we have in lieu of a membership system, and in addition to serving, do the following:

- Regularly attend Sheffield Vineyard on Sundays, not just when serving on the children's team.
- Regularly attend a Sheffield Vineyard Lifegroup.
- Give a proportion of your finances to Sheffield Vineyard.
- Actively seek to invite others into a relationship with Jesus and the church family.

Specific requirements

For the children's ministry at Sheffield Vineyard to be well organised and God-focused, it is important that you also engage in the following:

- Have a heart for young people and a desire to see them grow in their own faith and become active members of the church.
- Plan lessons/activities as appropriate.
- Arrive early at Heeley Hall at 9.00 am on the Sunday and be part of the setup.
- Attend team prayer at 9.45 in Heeley Hall.
- Support the team leader by following his/her lead during the activities.
- Be part of the set-down process after the service.
- Honour the dates you are down to serve on the rota and arrange necessary swaps within the team as soon as possible.
- Commit to constantly improving how you lead on the team, by asking for feedback, personal research and by attending training events as appropriate.
- Attend team and training meetings.

There will, no doubt, be occasions when you are unable to undertake all the above; no one is taking a register, but we ask that you approach each task with the intention of doing your best. We also appreciate that many students spend the academic holidays at their parents' homes; we ask that you undertake the above when you are in Sheffield.

The importance of maintaining a healthy and effective relationship with God

Investing in our young people is one of our highest priorities, and as such, we want to ensure that those who lead our people in worship are actively pursuing God in their own lives and are embedded in the church family. The key to maintaining a healthy and effective personal relationship with God is spending daily time in prayer and reflecting on biblical truth. Spiritually mature people know that if they make the effort to care for their insides (their heart, their emotions, their guilt, their faith), then their outward actions will be right too (Matthew 23:25-26).

A great follower of God is someone who regularly seeks God:

- Independently (without prompting from others)
- Corporately (as part of a church family)
- Regularly (at least daily)
- Only (God gets jealous when our allegiances are divided)

It is important to remember that any gifting or calling we have should always stand behind our primary roles: to glorify God and to love others. Our identity is not in how well we get along with the children/youth, how often we lift our hands in worship, how often we go to Lifegroup or the platform from which we lead - it's that we are children in God's family - adopted into a relationship with him.

Our highest priority is to worship God. As his children, the Father wants a deep relationship with us. That is why we so desperately need to spend time alone in worship, in the secret place, before we can publicly lead others on a Sunday.

The importance of accountability

No one is perfect all the time – if we were, then we would not need Jesus. It's therefore important that we admit our wrongs to God and others as appropriate, seek forgiveness, and, when appropriate, seek assistance. If at any stage you feel that your ongoing behaviour doesn't echo your beliefs or your practices don't echo your principles, we would wish for you to talk to those in oversight.

You are primarily accountable to your team leader, who is in turn accountable to the Senior Pastors. However, it is also encouraged that all staff and volunteers working with children or adults who require care and support be part of an accountability partnership/group.

Ignite team members (kids group)

You must always:

- Read and abide by the Sheffield Vineyard safeguarding policy and follow the safeguarding guidelines. You will be asked to read and sign that you have read and understood the safeguarding policy each year.
- Listen to, respect and value the children and young people at all times.
- Treat all children and young people fairly, without prejudice or favouritism.
- Challenge any unacceptable child behaviour in an appropriate way.
- Use language that is appropriate and not offensive or discriminatory.
- Behave appropriately and avoid developing inappropriate relationships with any children or young people.

Helpers

Your role is to help the group leader. Unless you are asked to do something else, please stay with your group and leader. As you serve the children, you will develop your own skills and gifts.

Please ensure you undertake the following:

- Ensure that you know each child by name.
- Look out for children on the edge of the group.
- Children learn in different ways; they understand their learning styles.
- Ensure the children know they can ask questions.
- Remember that everything you say is listened to.
- For some children, it may be helpful to understand that you might be the only adult listening to them.
- Be aware of the group's ground rules and work closely with the leader. (Be safe, be kind, be respectful).
- Positively reinforce children's behaviour when they do something well.
- Your group area may become messy. Please tidy up every so often!
- When doing craft activities, by all means help, but let the children do the craft!

- Think about the words you are using – do they understand?
- Keep your language simple – particularly with younger children.
- Speak to children at their level - both physically and verbally.
- Silence is good; children may be considering answers to questions.
- Where possible, avoid being alone with a child.
- Do not take a child to the toilet; only parents or guardians should do so.
- If a child discloses anything to you or you have concerns, refer to the 'Responding to a disclosure or allegation of abuse' section of the Safeguarding Policy.

And remember:

- You are part of a team and are valued & needed.
- You are a role model; if the leader asks the children to sit quietly, please do so first, and the children will follow your example.
- Have fun. Serving children is a privilege, and you will learn a great deal about the children and how to be a leader.

Team leaders

In addition to the guidelines for helpers (see above), it is your responsibility to ensure that:

- The session is well planned with appropriate activities, teaching, worship, and prayer ministry.
- The children understand more about following Jesus.
- Guests are welcomed in the foyer before church, and parents/guardians feel confident in leaving their children in your care.
- Child protection, health & safety and other incidents are recorded and kept confidential.
- Attendance records are kept each week and reported to the office.

Routine

During Worship:

- Children are the responsibility of parents and guardians.
- An activity area is provided for Ignite under parental supervision.

During the Sermon:

- Children are encouraged to use the toilet before signing in.
- Children are registered (and youth, where possible). Parents who wish to help children settle in are also noted on the register along with the child.
- Children are provided with age-appropriate toys.
- The children's activities usually adhere to the following structure:
 - Warm-up game,
 - story/discussion/drama,
 - craft,
 - response activity, e.g. prayer.

Activities that require children to concentrate/listen take place on the mat so they can understand the different expectations for them (compared to game expectations, e.g., noise level).

We are grateful that you have offered to serve the children. It really is fantastic when people give their time and energy like this. Thank you.