

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

A GUIDE TO RELATIONAL CONNECTION IN FLATIRONS KIDS

OUR VISION: IT'S PERSONAL

This model is for our Flatirons Kids teams to use when kids need to be redirected. Our goal is not just to provide a structure; it is to create irresistible environments where kids develop relational connections with leaders and others. We believe the quality of your relationships is linked to the quality of your structure.

THE SHIFT: CONNECTION OVER COMPLIANCE

Behavior is Communication:

- We view "misbehavior" as a signal that a child is overwhelmed or lacks the tools to succeed. This is not behavior modification; it is helping kids understand the "why" behind their actions.

Connection Before Correction:

- We prioritize the "one" over the "task." Structure is the foundation that builds trust and allows for long-lasting faith conversations.

Co-Regulation Over Control:

- Instead of "Sit down and be quiet," we lead with, "Let's focus on this together". We move from shaming kids to leading them toward a standard of respect as part of their discipleship.

Personal Presence:

- When we see kids the way Jesus does, we realize that "owning the room" is actually about owning the atmosphere of safety and belonging for every child.

THE THREE PILLARS OF RESPECT: LET'S GET PRACTICAL

In Flatirons Kids, we lead kids to respect leaders, others, and property.

Honor Our Leaders (The Gift of Attention)

- **The Heart:** We give our attention to leaders because we value what they have to share.
- **The Practice:** When a Small Group Leader or Host is talking, we prompt kids to listen and stay focused on that person.
- **The "Personal" Touch:** "Hey [Name], I don't want you to miss what [Host Name] is saying because it's a big part of our story today."

Honor Our Friends (The Gift of Belonging)

- **The Heart:** We protect each other's experience so that no one misses out on what God is doing.
- **The Practice:** We don't interrupt during small group sharing. In Large Group, we keep our hands and feet to ourselves and avoid distracting those around us.
- **The "Personal" Touch:** "Let's make sure [Friend's Name] has enough space and quiet to share their thoughts. Their voice is important to our group."

Honor Our Space (The Gift of Stewardship)

- **The Heart:** We care for our environment because it is a gift that belongs to everyone.
- **The Practice:** We treat supplies with care—no ripping or destroying—and we work together to clean up our space when we're finished.
- **The "Personal" Touch:** "Let's keep these supplies nice so the kids who come after us feel just as welcomed as we did. Can you help me organize these markers?"

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THE “PERSONAL” SCRIPT: CONNECTION-BASED VERBIAGE

High Energy: "I see your body has a lot of energy! Let's find a way to move that doesn't distract our friends. Do you want to be my special helper?"

Talking Over Others: "I can tell you have something important to share! Let's save that for our group circle so I can give you my full attention".

Disrespecting Property: "We want to keep our things nice for everyone. Can you help me take care of this so the next group can enjoy it too?".

Needing a Reset: "It looks like this room is feeling a bit 'big' for you right now. Let's have our Coach walk with you to find a quieter spot to reset".

PRACTICAL STEPS TO WIN

Proximity is Key: SGLs must sit among their kids during Large Group, not behind or in front. If you sit away from them, you cannot lead them.

Engagement is Contagious: If kids see you engaged in worship, they are more likely to engage. We don't force worship, but we model respect during it.

Redirect Kindly: If a child is distracting others, give them a quiet warning or even a small task to help them refocus.

THE RESPONSE PATH

Quiet Warning: A private, non-shaming prompt from the SGL.

The Pivot: Provide a task or move the child right beside you for co-regulation.

Coach Support: If a situation escalates, involve your Coach or Staff.

Family Partnership: Coach or Staff will handle the conversation with parents.

A NOTE FOR YOUR HEART

In the middle of a loud room or a challenging small group moment, it is easy to focus on the behavior and lose sight of the child. But remember: every child is a unique story, and your presence is the bridge to their belonging. By choosing connection over control, you are modeling the same radical grace that Jesus shows us. When we lead with boundless hope, we create a space where every kid knows they are seen, known, and valued

Your few are not problems to be solved or fixed. They are children to be loved.