



**MARANATHA BIBLE CHURCH**

**KIDS EQUIPPED LEADER'S HANDBOOK**

**2024-2025**

## **Introduction: So You Wanna Be A Kids Equipped Leader...**

Whether you're a returning Kids Equipped leader or this is your first time ever working with kids, we're so glad you are interested in being a part of this ministry to the kids of our church and our community! We have the great joy and privilege of sharing the gospel with our students, teaching them about God's Word, praying that the Lord would do a work in their heart, to the end that our students would come to know, love, and serve Him! For many of these kids, this may be their first time in God's word, or perhaps even the first time hearing of Jesus and the gospel! While children's ministry can certainly be challenging at times, the opportunity to share the good news of salvation through Christ make the challenge so worth it!

This handbook is designed to serve as a guide to both new and returning Kids Equipped leaders. It will give you the basics of what you need to know to serve as a successful Kids Equipped leader. And the better you are as a leader, the better you will be at serving these kids and teaching them about God and His Word - the whole reason why we're here! In this handbook, I will try to give you a concise summary of each of the main elements of our children's program, along with some additional info that I hope you will find helpful. I encourage new and old leaders to familiarize themselves with this handbook so that we are all on the same page and most effectively reaching these kids. And if you finish this handbook and any of your questions don't get answered, then I encourage you to ask me or another leader who's been around a little longer and we'll be glad to point you in the right direction.

## **So What Is Kids Equipped Anyway?**

Kids Equipped, coming from 2 Timothy 3:16-17, is Maranatha Bible Church's Wednesday night children's ministry. It is our desire to bring the word of God to our students, knowing that it is God's word that *gives wisdom leading to salvation and equips for every good work*. Because of that, Kids Equipped uses Scripture memorization, Bible lessons, and discipleship relationships to encourage our students to learn more about God and His Word. Our greatest desire is to see all come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to love and serve Him with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

### **Mission of Kids Equipped at Maranatha**

*Our mission is to reach children and their families with the gospel of Jesus Christ so that they might **know, love and serve** God.*

**Know-** We want kids to know who God is and the salvation offered through Jesus Christ, His Son. We seek to accomplish this through Scripture memorization and lessons from God's word.

**Love-** We want kids not just to know about God but to love Him with their whole heart, because this is the greatest and foremost commandment (Matt 22:37-38). We work towards this goal by telling them of God's love, as seen in His word, and demonstrating it through discipleship relationships.

**Serve-** We want kids to serve God, demonstrating the fruit of their salvation. We encourage this by showing them how to practically apply God's Word to their lives, giving them opportunities to serve one another and encouraging them to share the good news of Christ with others.

### **Kids Equipped Ages**

**Explorers (K-2nd):** These students are beginning to explore the depths of God's word. With our explorers, we seek to familiarize them with basic concepts of the gospel, theology, and OT/NT stories of the Bible and what they teach us about God.

**Adventurers (3rd-6th):** These students begin to go on greater adventures through God's word, diving deeper into theology, living for God, and sharing the good news of Christ with others!

### **Our Crowd**

Typically, each night we have between 30-50 kids come to Kids Equipped. We get many kids from our church who are new and growing in their faith and it is exciting to play a part in discipling them. We also have several kids that attend Kids Equipped who do not attend our church or come from Christian homes. For many, their only opportunity to hear the gospel and see the love of Jesus is through the work we do at Kids Equipped every week. That is a tremendous opportunity, but also a tremendous responsibility. We must faithfully demonstrate Christ's love to these kids and always be sharing the good news of the gospel. I also encourage you to pray for the kids regularly and to get to know their parents and be a witness to them.

## **What Do We Do At Kids Equipped?**

In the previous section we talked about the purpose of Kids Equipped. Now we'll get down to the nitty gritty of how we seek to accomplish our purpose to teach kids to know, love and serve God and what the specific things are that we do. Here's a brief overview of the core elements of almost every Kids Equipped night.

### Core Elements of Kids Equipped in a Nutshell

While every night of Kids Equipped will look a little different, each night will usually include these 5 elements:

1. **Opening Ceremony:** A short ceremony to welcome kids to Kids Equipped and talk through the night.
2. **Music:** We will spend time, as a group, singing praises to God.
3. **Teaching:** This is the time where we will share with kids truths from God's Word.
4. **Small Groups/Handbook Time:** Time to build relationships with kids and lead them in studying and memorizing Scripture.
5. **Games:** A time for kids to have fun doing various activities.
6. **Closing Ceremony:** A time to recognize award/team winners and close out the night.

While every night will likely be a little different, here is generally the schedule of events that we try to follow each night at Kids Equipped.

### Kids Equipped Nightly Schedule

	Explorers			Adventurers	
	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	Girls	Boys
7:00-7:10	Opening Ceremony Main Sanctuary				
7:10-7:35	Large Group Time SS1			Large Group Time SS3	
7:35-8:00	Game Time Main Sanctuary			Small Group Time SS3	Small Group Time SS2
8:00-8:25	Small Group Time SS1	Small Group Time SS2	Small Group Time SS3	Game Time Main Sanctuary	
8:25-8:30	Closing Ceremony Main Sanctuary				

In this next section we'll specifically look at how each of these core elements plays out in detail.

### **Opening Ceremony**

This is a time to welcome kids and help get them excited about the night. During this time we will talk about the night, make any announcements, and dedicate our time to God in prayer. How this opening ceremony goes is incredibly important because it sets the tone for the rest of the night. If leaders are disorganized and kids are running wild during this time, chances are that is exactly how things will go for the rest of the night. Therefore, we need to make sure we are doing our best to start off the night right by making sure that the kids are orderly and well-behaved. The responsibilities of leaders during this time include:

- Welcoming kids and letting them know you're glad they're here
- Building relationships with the parents dropping their kids off
- Ensuring that your team is lined up straight and is not talking when the night starts
- Demonstrating the respect that should be given during pledges and prayer

### **Small Group Time**

This time is focused on discussion and Scripture memory. Students will be going over discussion questions and learning important verses from Scripture which correspond to the lesson they heard in Large Group Time. Students must recite their verse(s) to leaders who sign off on that section of their book.

While the bulk of this time will consist of reciting verses for credit, this is also a time to emphasize discipleship. Our small groups are broken up into Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd-6th Grade Boys, 3rd-6th Grade Girls. Your job as a leader is to get to know the kids during this time and disciple them. Every small group should spend time discussing the lesson,

going through the discussion questions in the students handbooks, praying together, and memorizing Scripture. How much time is spent on each of these elements is flexible and determined by the group leader and the perceived needs they see in their group. So don't be afraid to spend extra time on prayer or less time on discussion if needed.

Some thoughts on each of these elements:

**Discussion Time:** This is time that the leader can spend discussing with kids what they learned from the lesson and going through the questions in their handbooks for this week. Be sure to ask what they learned and if they have any questions. This is a great time to help solidify the things they've been learning and see how they apply to everyday life. Here are a couple tips:

- Find some way to control discussion, whether that be passing around a "talking ball," having kids raise their hand, or giving them "incentives" (such as candy) to talk if you have a quiet group.
- Make kids comfortable to ask questions and tell you what they're thinking.
- Remember they've already had a lesson. Your job is primarily to listen to them and guide the discussion, not to give them another lesson.
- If you're not the small group leader, you can support them by making sure kids are paying attention.

**Prayer Time:** This is where the small group can spend some time together in prayer. Again, what the focus of this prayer is and how it is conducted is flexible and up to the discretion of the small group leader. Here are a couple tips:

- At the end of each unit of their handbooks there is a section dedicated to praying for different countries, usually focusing on prayer for the gospel to spread. Feel free to use that if you'd like.
- Be sure to ask kids what they need prayer for and pray for those things.

- Follow up with kids. If they tell you their grandma needs prayer because she's sick, ask them how she's doing the next week. If she's doing better, praise God for that during your prayer time. If not, continue to pray for her.
- Try to at least loosely tie in prayer time to the lesson for that week. For example, if the theme is "creation," spend time in prayer thanking God for the things He's made.
- Give kids the opportunity to pray. Don't force them to pray, but encourage it.
- Stress the importance, purpose, and seriousness of prayer.

**Scripture Memory:** This time will be focused on completing the handbook section for that week. Each student will be in the same section of the handbook every week. Though the requirements for getting a signature is laid out in their book, generally, they must complete the discussion questions, memory verse, and review verse. Starting this year, we will also have a "review/catch up night" after every 2 units.

Here are a few general guidelines when it comes to listening to verses:

- **Generally, only give one "help" to them when saying their verse in order to get credit for it.** I say "generally" because due to the varying mental capacities of the group, there might be some kids who really struggle and may need an extra help. On the other hand, there might be a kid who has the capacity to say the verse without help and you may want to raise the bar.
- **The goal is not just memorization, but understanding.** We want kids to know what the verses they are memorizing mean and what they reveal about God. Ask questions about the verse and what it means to the kids.

**NOTE:** If you have a student that has difficulty memorizing, but can describe/understand what a verse *means* after discussion, feel free to sign off on the verse (this will be done at leader's discretion).



- **Generally, kids must pass their section in order to play games.** I say “generally” because this is not a hard and fast rule. If a kid is trying really hard and just not quite getting it, let them play games. However, if a kid is constantly goofing off and is repeatedly told he must say a verse to play games and doesn’t, then this is something we need to enforce.
- **If kids finish their section for the week early,** encourage them to work on review sections, extra credit for that section, or make up any sections that they’ve missed.

### **Large Group Time**

This is the time when the kids will hear a lesson from God’s Word. This lesson may be focusing on a certain passage or doctrine. Here are a few notes for teachers:

- Teacher packets are available for each lesson (these are located in the Kids Equipped “closet” in the kitchen). Each packet includes a detailed lesson outline and some interactive ideas to communicate God’s truth.
- If teaching in the middle of a unit, take some time to review what has been taught to encourage continuity and help with reinforcing truth.
- Try to make your teaching visual and interactive.

If you are not teaching that week, your responsibility is to **help kids pay attention** during the lesson so they are not a distraction others. Here are a couple ways you can do this:

- **Spread out and sit with the kids.** Many times, your close presence will deter kids from goofing off.
- **Separate kids if needed.** Don’t be afraid to do this before/during the lesson if you know a couple kids who are prone to get in trouble together.
- **Deal with distracting or misbehaving kids.** If a kid is acting up, quietly ask them to pay attention. If they continue to act up after repeated warnings, remove them from the classroom if necessary.
- **Pay attention yourself!** If you’re scrolling through your phone during the lesson, you’re going to have a hard time getting kids to listen when you tell them to pay attention. Be engaged and interested in the lesson and that will set an example for these kids.

## **Game Time**

This is a time for kids to have fun and for you to get to know your students in a more informal setting. As a leader, don't just relax during this time but look for ways you can help!

There are many ways you can do this. You can...

- Help supervise game time and keep kids in line
- Encourage kids sitting on the sidelines to play
- Join in on the fun! The kids love it when leaders play with them. (Just remember before you get too into it, game time is for the kids!)
- Help set up and tear down equipment used for games
- Facilitate time-outs for misbehaving kids
- Encourage good sportsmanship and call out kids who are displaying bad sportsmanship
- Do what you can to prevent injuries

## **Closing Ceremony**

In the closing ceremony, we wrap up the night and send the kids home to their parents. During this time, we like to reward the team that got the most points for the night, give out individual awards for unit completion, make any final announcements, and close our night in prayer. How we end is just as important as how we start and there are many important things you can be doing during this time:

- Make sure your team is lined up straight and quiet during the closing ceremony.
- Model and encourage good sportsmanship whether your team wins or loses.
- Help keep the line for the winners to get candy at the end orderly and free from kids of non-winning teams
- Lastly, this is the best opportunity for you to get to know the parents of the kids you spend time with every week. Make the most of it.

## **How Do I Deal With Misbehaving Children?**

Kids are great. But sometimes they're the worst. As a Kids Equipped Leader, one of the biggest challenges you will face is how to deal with misbehaving kids. Fortunately, we have some procedures in place to help you out with this, which I will go over in a further section. But before we get into those, I'd like to give a few principles when it comes to dealing with misbehaving children:

- **Always demonstrate love when correcting a child.** It can be easy to get angry and frustrated with these kids, but try not to let that come out when you are disciplining them. You should communicate that discipline is an act of love.
- **Don't be afraid to address bad behavior.** It can be easy just to let things slide, but a misbehaving kid can be a distraction from our gospel mission. Your actions to address their behavior not only help them, but the rest of the kids and leaders as well!
- **Try to raise your voice sparingly.** As a leader, if yelling becomes a habit with the kids it will lose its effect and you will have to yell to get them to do anything!
- **Be consistent.** As you set expectations and rules for your group, **STICK TO THEM!** Furthermore, you cannot give special treatment to one kid above another. Rules should be consistently enforced for all kids.
- **Celebrate good behavior twice as often as you correct bad behavior.** Don't just tell kids when they're doing something wrong, encourage them when they do something right!
- **Pray.** Pray for patience, wisdom, and love as you work with these kids. Pray for them, too, knowing that some may come from rough homes or difficult situations that may be contributing to their bad behavior.
- **Know when you're in over your head.** If you cannot seem to get through to a kid, don't be afraid to ask for help from another leader.

## **What Safety Policies Do We Have In Place?**

In order to keep our children AND our leaders safe, we have child protection policies put in place. This not only shows care and love for the kids that come to Kids Equipped, but it also keeps our leaders and our church above reproach or accusation. Here are a couple things we have in place:

- Every Kids Equipped leader must complete a background check. You will be given a form which you must fill out and submit for this.
- Every Kids Equipped leader will be given a lanyard with their name and group listed. This will help parents and students identify who is helping with Kids Equipped.
- You may **NEVER** be alone with a child. Remember, this is not only to protect the child but to protect you from accusation. If you are behind a closed door with kids, there must be at least one other leader present.
- If you suspect a child is being abused, please talk to me about it and if necessary, child protection services will be contacted. I believe this is part of our duty as followers of Christ.

## **Additional Information and Resources**

### **Award Distribution**

#### **Explorers/Adventurers Book Awards:**

- Shirts, passports, and handbooks are given on their first night.
- Stickers are given for both unit completion and for extra credit sections completed within a unit.
- Book awards and Day Camp scholarships are given at End of Year Award Ceremony based on completion of book.

Shares are awarded each week for attendance, bringing their Bible and handbook, wearing their shirt, completing sections of their handbook, completing extra credit, and bringing a friend. See the following table regarding share distribution:

### **Kids Equipped Share Distribution Guide**

<b>Earned for</b>	<b>Distributed by</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Attendance/Bible/book/uniform	Check-in	1
Bring a friend	Check-in	2
Theme night participation	Check-in or Stafford	1
Section completion	Verse Listeners	2
Bonus Bible study completion	Verse Listeners	1
Bonus verse completion	Verse Listeners	1
Craft/activity completion	Verse Listeners	2
1st place games	Stafford	2
2nd place games	Stafford	1
Bonus shares at discretion	Senior Leaders	At discretion

### **Snow Days**

We generally have to cancel one to two nights of Kids Equipped each year because of bad winter weather. Typically, if Comstock Park Schools cancel because of snow on the day of Kids Equipped, we will not have Kids Equipped that evening. If we decide to cancel Kids Equipped because of weather, a church-wide email will be sent, and I will send out an email to all leaders and parents ASAP.

### **If You Can't Make It..**

If you know there are certain weeks you won't be able to make it to Kids Equipped, try to let us know a couple weeks ahead of time. If you are scheduled to teach or lead small groups and cannot make it last minute, try to contact another leader and see if you can find someone to substitute or switch with you. If not, contact me and I will try to work something out.

### **Leader's Meetings**

We will try to have leader's meetings periodically throughout the year (see the schedule). This is designed to be an encouraging and equipping time for leaders. Some meetings will be more informational and structured in nature while others will be more informal and focused on fellowship and prayer. Each meeting will be a little different, but here's a list of some of the things we'll try to do periodically in our meetings:

- **Evaluate how we're doing.** We'll talk about what's going well and what we can do better. Be thinking of ideas of ways we can improve.
- **Ask questions.** Bring any questions and concerns you may have to leader's meeting and we'll discuss them together.
- **Plan.** We may spend time in our meetings planning for future events or changes.

- **Encourage.** We'll share stories of how God is working in these kids and highlight kids/leaders who have gone above and beyond.
- **Fellowship.** In order to function well as a team, we need to have good relationships with one another. We are, first and foremost, members of the body of Christ.
- **Pray:** We'll spend time praying for Kids Equipped as a whole. We'll also share the needs of kids and families in Kids Equipped and pray for them specifically. We can even share personal prayer requests and pray for one another.

### **My Contact Info**

I know this is a ton of information, so if you have any questions feel free to contact me!

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