

# BEHAVIOR STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

It is important to let the middle school youth know what the expectations and behavior standards are for them at Edge. When we set expectations high, youth often exceed them; but if we do not give clear give expectations and standards, then we have nothing to hold them accountable to. It is important to be clear from the very beginning as to what acceptable behavior is at Edge in general, in their small groups, and that there are consequences for misbehaving.

At every Edge Night it is important for the youth, and the Core Members to be attentive, focused, and respectful. Disruptive behavior, or conduct that distracts from or interrupts any part of the Edge Night, cannot be tolerated. Here are some basic guidelines for some positive expectations to set up for the youth:

1. Respect Others
  - a. Listen while others are speaking or giving directions.
  - b. Do what the youth minister and Core Members ask of you.
  - c. Use positive words and speaking tone when talking to others.
  - d. Treat others like you want to be treated.
2. Stay On Task
  - a. Go where you are asked to go in a timely manner.
  - b. Participate fully in all the activities and discussions.
  - c. Do not sit by anyone who will distract you during teachings or small groups.
3. Know Your Boundaries
  - a. Respect personal boundaries of others.
  - b. Keep your hands and feet to yourself.
  - c. During small group activities take turns, share, and be courteous to your group members.

It is important when teaching and promoting good behavior among the youth that there are not only clear expectations, but also clear consequences to bad behavior. It is always easier to have this set in place from the beginning so that you can remind the youth that they were told of the consequences and that they would be held to them.

Here are some basic consequence examples you may want to consider implementing in your own program.

## Verbal Warnings:

In general verbal warnings should be enough for a middle school youth to be reminded of the behavior that is expected of them. A Core Member, as a first step in discipline can give this warning; it is useful at all stages of the Edge Night and especially during small groups.

## Separation:

If bad behavior continues and a verbal warning is not enough, the Core Member can proceed to separate the youth. This can be done in a few ways, during large group activities, the Proclaim, or small group time a Core Member can either sit between or next to youth who are misbehaving and separate them from each other or ask one of them to move. If this still is not enough, separate the youth from the large group and have him or her go and talk with the youth minister or another adult designated to deal with behavior issues.

## Parents Contacted:

If the inappropriate behavior continues and all of the above strategies have been utilized, the next step can be to contact the youth's parents. This can be done after the Edge Night, or if the behavior continues. What the Teens Need from Youth Ministry

Changing the youth world happens one teen at a time. Teens do not connect to programs; they connect to people. The most effective way to influence teens is through relationships. Our goal is to develop leaders who will walk the journey to Christ with teens.

