
Guiding Royal Ambassadors

One question that RA leaders often ask is, *How do you control a group of boys and get them to respect your leadership?* The following suggestions will help you gain respect in working with boys:

- When you are the leader, be the leader that God wants you to be. Lead with confidence and make plans for each meeting. Have a back-up plan in case something goes wrong. Boys can tell when you are prepared. If you do not have a plan in place, they will quickly make their own plans.
- Boys want to be part of a boys' club. Use this knowledge to help guide them. At one of the first meetings, guide the boys to develop a set of rules that they will agree upon for the year. As they develop their list, ask them to use positive rather than negative wording, such as "Always Walk" rather than "Don't Run." Write every suggestion on a dry-erase board. Point out that God gave us the Ten Commandments, and Jesus summed up all of the law in two rules: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself"* (Matthew 22:37-39). Have the boys review their list of suggestions and narrow it down to a few short rules that they agree upon. Have all of the members vote to live by these rules for the year. Then, post them next to the RA Pledge Poster. As a member of Royal Ambassadors, each boy agrees to live out the RA Pledge and follow the rules. Remind them any time their behavior is not in line with the rules. Enforce the rules consistently with all members.
- Arrive early and set up the room before the boys arrive to help ensure a smooth transition from one activity to another. Identify any distractions and remove them from the area. Another helpful hint is to gather the supplies that you will need for each activity and place them in a module or container prior to the meeting to eliminate any surprises.
- Give direct guidance to boys through various methods: making eye contact and raising your eyebrow, saying their names to get their attention, walking over and standing close to them, separating them from their distractions, and directing them toward appropriate actions. Boys accept guidance when they know you care about them and when they are receiving verbal praise from you as well. Strive to provide at least three positive comments for every verbal correction you give. An appropriate touch—a pat on the back of the shoulder, bump knuckles, or high five—can be an effective way to acknowledge a boy's actions, especially a boy without a male role model at home.
- Spoken guidance or correction is best done in private. At least one other adult leader should be present when you are talking with the boy to determine the situation and discuss what corrections can be made. Allow the boy to tell you what the problem is and ask him to suggest what he believes the best correction should be. Involve him in the solution and gain his respect.

Positive Reinforcement

Boys who are obstinate, disruptive, and slow to finish may be brought into a spirit of cooperation with proper attention and positive expressions.

Tips to Remember When Using Verbal Praise

- Whatever you choose to say, be sure you feel comfortable saying it.
- Praise both the boy and his positive behavior.
- Be sincere. Believe in what you say to the boy.

30 Expressions of Encouragement

Awesome!	Fantastic!	Great play!
Atta Boy!	Nice job!	Wow!
Outstanding!	Tremendous!	I'm proud of you.
Terrific!	Good going!	Thanks for helping.
Way to go!	Sensational!	Keep up the good work.
Good!	Good thinking!	You did that well.
Great job!	Perfect!	You're doing great.
Marvelous!	That's it!	You're working hard.
Super job!	Really good!	You're a hard worker.
Superb!	That is good.	I like the way you work.

Keep Your Eye on the Ball

A small ball (or other soft object like a hacky sack or beanbag) can be used as an effective way to maintain control of a discussion with a group of boys. Tell the boys they need to listen to whoever is holding the ball. The leader asks a question and tosses the ball to a boy. Everyone listens as the boy answers the question. The boy either tosses the ball back to the leader or selects another boy to catch the ball and answer the next question.

Boys like being the center of attention. This simple method shifts the focus to individuals and allows them to express their thoughts and be the leader for a period of time.

Select objects that are unique or have ample boy appeal. "Jeremiah, the Bull Frog" has been used for years in working with boys at Texas Baptist Men Leadership Training Camp in Aquilla, Texas. The boys are told that Jeremiah likes being the center of attention, and only the person holding Jeremiah can speak. Jeremiah serves as an encourager about



being a FROG (Fully Rely On God). When boys hold Jeremiah, they are challenged to share their thoughts concerning activities they have participated in using the FROG acronym:

F = Feedback

R = Reflections

O = Observations

G = Goals