

What ever happened to good manners at church?

For younger children: Have the children look at the large picture of the woman on the game board. Ask them: “How do you think she feels? Why do you think she feels this way? What is she saying? Why are good manners important at church?” (Because you should respect God's house.) Etc. Discuss. Have the children look at the other pictures on the board and ask them these questions: “How do you think he/she feels? Why do you think he/she feels this way?” Etc.

“How should you behave at church? What should you not do in church? Can you run in church? Why should we not run in church?” (It does not show respect to God and it is not good manners.) “God doesn't come to your house and run around. You shouldn't run around in his.” Discuss. “If you ran in church, what would other people do? Which picture on the board looks like how the person would feel if they saw you run in church?” Discuss other bad behaviors and manners that kids do in church. Have the students point to the picture on the board of how someone in church would react if they saw them do or say the bad behavior.

For older children: Good manners and how we treat others in every day life has changed over the years. This laid back attitude in life and being casual has affected how we live today and how we behave. Unfortunately, lack of manners is also in our churches and we should not condone this behavior or lower ourselves to it. This kind of behavior is not acceptable and does not belong in church at any time.

Introduction: While "Come as You Are" sounds relaxed and friendly, too relaxed is not necessarily a good thing when it comes to showing respect to God. We certainly would not behave this way in front of the Queen of England or the President of the United States. We behave and have good manners at church because it is God's house.

When you are at Mass, CCD classroom, Fellowship Hall, VBS, etc. or at any church function, good manners need to be used at all times. Manners, whether at Mass or in other situations, reveal the value we place on each other and God. Why do we need to use good manners at church? Good manners show honor and respect towards others. We need to honor and respect God and everyone. So how do we respect the Church and use good manners?

Directions: Put the Game Cards in a small basket and set near the game board. Place your markers on START. Roll the die and move that many spaces. Follow the directions on the space you land on. If the space has a Roll Play activity on it, perform it to the best of your ability. If needed, the teacher will help you understand what to do and coach you how to do it correctly. If the space has a picture of person reacting to bad behavior that they had just seen in church, draw a Game Card and read it out loud (if the student cannot read, the teacher or someone can read it for them). Answer the question to the best of your ability (the teacher can coach the student if necessary).

*As you play the game, take advantage of natural opportunities to highlight behaviors that facilitate or impeded good manners in church and treating others with respect. Discuss with the students why someone would use proper manners and etiquette in church. You could also ask, “What do you think of Kelly’s answer?” or “What else could you say or do?” or “What is the worse thing someone could say or do in this situation?” When appropriate, reinforce a variety of ways to say or do things properly. You can also continue the roll playing activities to include more conversation and action.

Continue game as time permits or until the student’s attention wanes.

NOTE: While playing this game be sure to respect individual differences and preferences for some answers.

For younger students, give the children stickers for trying or doing well.