

# Class Discipline

in the Sunday School



Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.

So be earnest, and Repent!

(Revelations 3:19).

1940's

1. Talking
2. Chewing Gum
3. Making Noise
4. Running in the Halls
5. Getting out of line
6. Improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in the wastebasket

2010's

1. Drugs
2. Alcohol
3. Pregnancy
4. Suicide
5. Rape
6. Robbery
7. Assault
8. Murder

**TEACH THE TRUTH, NOT THE LIE**

# Children's Ministry Intro- "Discipline in the Classroom"

## I. Introduction-Discipline can be a confusing matter.

1. Is the discipline relative to the situation?
2. Concern over doing it wrong can lead to... Should I do it at all?

## II. Defining Discipline

1. Corrective - A child misbehaves. - The corrective actions associated is only a small part of discipline.
2. Disciplining! Training! It doesn't just happen that, "A child is simply born good." Not true! Misbehavior in the classroom shows improper training in the home. But does that apply to a three year old? No!

## III. Why does our Heavenly Father discipline His children?

Read: (Hebrews 12:5-13 and Proverbs 3:11-12)

1. Because He loves us. The Lord chastens those that He loves, (vs. 6). Just like a father to a son whom he delights in. (Pr 3:12)
  - a. And because He disciplines us in love, so ought we discipline in love. None of us wants the Father to discipline us in His wrath... (Ps 6:1). That might hurt.
2. He wants us to be like Him. We become partakers of His holiness. (v10)
3. He wants us to experience joy. Afterwards discipline yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (v11)

## IV. Borders - USC Study- Playground/Family testimony/Street signs at 80 MPH-the Eyes have it!

1. What's perfect freedom? Total absence of borders? No! Borders are for our safety.
2. Functioning inside of borders makes us free.

"Sin isn't bad because it's forbidden, Sin is forbidden because it's bad." -Jon Courson

## V. Why Do Children Misbehave?

1. Proverbs 22:15 - "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. . ."
2. Ignorance of the rules. -They don't know what's expected of them. Different class, different church-  
= Different Standards.
3. Frustration - Asking them to do something they're incapable of doing. i.e. Forcing them to read, etc.
4. Boredom - Are you prepared? Do you have the right audience? Too old? Too young?
5. Home related problems. - Their world extends beyond your classroom. They've got some baggage. **KNOW YOUR KIDS- BE AN EXPERT!** Car wrecks, death in the family, They may be suffering abuse... These cases may be very severe! Also, these are very sensitive topics. **LOVE THEM THROUGH THIS!**
6. Don't provoke them by breaking promises, speaking harshly, teasing or ignoring them!

# The Importance and Administration of Discipline

Discipline is important for two reasons; First, it is important for the smooth operation of any program in which children are involved. You cannot permit one child to disrupt the whole group. Second, children struggle as it may seem, like discipline. They translate discipline (when administered correctly) as a sign of security, and it also gives them boundaries, which provide order. Several rules must be followed if your administration of discipline is to be a success. They are as follows:

- 1) **BE CONSISTENT:** This is perhaps the most important thing to remember when disciplining. The Teacher sets classroom rules, make sure that you are consistent in enforcing those rules.
- 2) **SET CLEAR, REASONABLE RULES:** The greatest downfall teachers can have is that the children don't know the SET rules of behavior. Be sure that the children know the set classroom rules and the consequences if those rules are broken.
- 3) **ALWAYS DISCIPLINE THE ACTION AND NOT THE CHILD!:** Discipline is best applied and remembered when the child knows that you are on his side, helping him improve his behavior. To accomplish this, you must let the child know that it is the BEHAVIOR that is wrong and that you love HIM!
- 4) **DISCIPLINE PRIVATELY;** compliment publicly. Don't let the discipline ever publicly embarrass the child. Always Deal with the child privately. Don't make an example of him.
- 5) **THERE MUST BE A BALANCE BETWEEN LOVE AND DISCIPLINE:** The child must know that you love him, and the reason you discipline is for his benefit. If there is any doubt that you love him, discipline attempts will do nothing but alienate him further. If you have to discipline a child, make a concerted effort to show love in some way to him later on. Remember to have a balance.
- 6) **CONSIDER THE CHILD'S NEEDS!** Are they being met? Can he see and hear well? Is he physically all right? Has he eaten? Is he well rested? Is he being pestered by someone? Take all this into account before you act.
- 7) **DO NOT TAKE HIS MISBEHAVIOR PERSONALLY!** So often we think that a child is challenging our authority (truthfully, HE IS!). But it's not a personal challenge. This type of a child will challenge any "Teacher". To him you are a figure of authority of which he will check his limits on. So, with this in mind, calm yourself and deal with this problem positively!



# STEPS TO DISCIPLINE

This sequence of steps may be helpful to some of our new teachers. This is only a guideline to help you remember and know a plan of action to follow should you have any occurrences which require discipline. We do caution you to use your personal judgement and GRACE.



## First offense: WARNING

A verbal warning with a reminder of the rules or rule broken.  
And warn them they may have to do a time out next time.

## Second offense: TIME OUT- (5 MIN.)

Follow through. They have been made aware of the classroom rules. If they continue to disobey they know it and need to see that the rules ARE enforced. Normally Head down at their desk.

## Third offense: REMOVAL FROM DISTRACTIONS

This Time-out is to get the teacher a much needed break from the source of distraction. Send child to the back of the Class. Take as long as you need to tell your story, or re-capture the classes attention.

## Fourth offense: REMOVAL FROM CLASS

Direct the offender to a chair outside of your class, for the remainder of the service, or the remainder of the teaching time. (At your discretion.) If this is a preschooler, send for his Parent! He/She needs a baby-sitter.

## Fifth offense: CONFERENCE WITH PARENTS/PARENT

Give all information to your Coordinator or Children's Ministry Director for further action.

## Special Note: OPEN DEFIANCE

Open defiance by a child toward the teacher or helper in a class must not be tolerated. A child that shows continual disregard for the authority of the teacher or helper must be expelled from the ministry with their parents knowledge and consent.

Parents should always be notified of any misbehavior resulting in even the first Time-out, (Second offense). They need and should desire this information. Some will understand your need for order in your classroom and support and even appreciate this information, others however will not. But it is our responsibility to inform the parents of their children's misbehavior.

# PREVENTION

## (IT'S THE BEST MEDICINE!)

No matter how well prepared we are, OR what fabulous equipment we have, OR what wonderful Spiritual truths the Holy Spirit has given us to teach the children, If we don't have a disciplined class, chaos will rule instead of the ministering power of the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, children who have no discipline are often HARD to teach. If we make teaching HARD on ourselves, we loose our JOY and creativity and suffer from "BURN OUT!" In fact, our students become as "BURNED OUT" with us as we do with trying to teach them.



Truly, the best discipline is prevention: The following are some preventive measures to aid you in the control of your class:

**TRAFFIC CONTROL - NO GOING OUT OR IN:** Seldom allow bathroom visits! All it takes is one child to start a "Potty train!" This will probably be your most difficult "traffic control" situation. Just a reminder, most children above the age of 5 can hold themselves through an entire feature length movie. Yes, there will be that exception where a child really does have to go. With time you should learn which children are your regular requesters for bathroom visits, and it is with these children you need to be firm and tell them. "After class." "Not now, please sit down." Bathroom requests will die down as the children come to know you are firm on this issue. Try to "put them off" and see if they don't forget. Simply tell them "later". If its REAL, they'll come back "later!" **REMEMBER, BE FLEXIBLE FOR EMERGENCIES! - ESPECIALLY FOR THE YOUNG ONES!**

**NO MOVING ABOUT DURING TEACHING:** Be sure the children, especially the younger ages, remain in their seat or spot on the floor during story or teaching time. No getting up for any reason! (Need a tissue, ask a question, tattle on someone.) When a child attempts to do any of these they are instructed to return to their seat and wait till teaching is done. Do not acknowledge their explanation or attempt to listen to their request. In a kind and firm manner tell them to stay or return to their seat.

**NO INTERRUPTIONS DURING TEACHING:** For the most part, we recommend you have the children hold the questions till after the story or lesson is given. Then have your question and answer period. If you allow questions and comments during the story or lesson, it will draw out the length of time you spend delivering the body of your teaching, You will lose the interest of the majority of your children because you have drug out this portion of your class time.

## Prevention continued

**KNOW YOUR MATERIAL:** That means **BE PREPARED!** Plan your lesson format in advance. As a matter of fact, **OVER PLAN!** Have **TOO** many things planned for your class. If you run through your lesson and activity quickly you have the confidence of knowing you have something else to do. You won't be stuck trying to come up with some time filler that bores the children and has no bearing on the lesson you've just given. Also, knowing your material **WELL** enables you to have the confidence in delivering the material in a dynamic and interesting way.



**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** There is a great difference between **NOT ALLOWING** questions during your teaching (avoiding the raised hands etc.) and **YOU ASKING QUESTIONS** during your teaching or story. Have your students repeat certain key words or phrases. The younger ages, (preschool to 1st and 2nd grade) love to repeat funny or odd words. They love to make sound effects that will, if placed appropriately, add to your story. Simple yes or no questions for the upper grades, keeps those kids on their toes and awake!

"Whatever you do, don't bore people with the Word of God."  
Howard Hendricks

**BOREDOM:** Some times we have trouble in our classes simply because the children are bored. We need to be constantly examining ourselves and our classes. Are we just talking the kids to death. Sure you can keep a kid nailed to his seat, with his mouth zipped shut and when parents come to the door, your class is in rock solid order! But have you made those kids your prisoners for an hour and a half, or are they your guests? Do you present the word of God in an exciting new way? Do you yourself get excited about what you are teaching? Do a self critique of your class each week and be prepared to make some changes!



**HAVE ROAMING EYES:** God does! Are they interested? Who's nodding -off? Passing notes? Visiting with a neighbor? See who needs to be challenged with a question. Pull those wayward ones back into the story.

**SET DOWN RULES AND STICK TO THEM!:** Keep them simple and be sure they are known and understood by all.

**REMEMBER:** Your No. 1 goal is to minister to children. You are not a baby sitting service! Our children are important to the Lord and He wants them ministered to as much as their parents.

## DISCIPLINE: QUICK SOLUTIONS TO COMMON PROBLEMS

### SQUABBLING:

- \* DON'T become entangled in REASONING with the children involved!  
The younger (nursery to preschool) children are still self-oriented and UNABLE to "reason."
- \* Remove the cause of disagreement (toy, book, etc.)
- \* Give simple explanations to reinforce your instructions:  
"This is a time to use indoor voices."  
"What do you think Jesus would want us to do?"

### HITTING:

- \* Make it clear NO hitting is ever tolerated FOR ANY REASON!
- \* The children involved should apologize to each other. Should one refuse he should do a time-out, or you may HELP him apologize by saying the words for him and getting him to agree. If this child is particularly not correctable, or openly defiant, send for his/her parent.

### A PROBLEM / AGGRESSIVE CHILD:

- \* With a consistently difficult child, the only solution is MAJOR PRAYER, and consistency. Consistently reinforce the classroom rules. React to the first infringement. While some minor problems can be overlooked (making faces, unwillingness to share) and allowed to pass, DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR or clearly breaking a classroom rule, cannot be overlooked!
- \* Don't engage in long explanations.
- \* Don't exhibit anger and frustration when dealing with this child.
- \* Point out the negative behavior and do time out.
- \* If this child continues to repeat the same offenses, a word to the parent is suggested.
- \* Do establish a relationship with this child. Only with time and consistency. can they conform to good behavior, let alone into Christ's image.
- \* Do pray for patience and extra love for this child and you will see, God is faithful to perform abundantly in this area of your ministry, as greatly as in any other!





## Discipline: Quick solutions continued

### CRUELTY TO ANOTHER CHILD:

Children can be cruel to each other. Rejection by one child or a group of children can hurt deeply. If you become aware of such a situation, a particular child being excluded or having difficulty fitting in:



\*Don't berate or lecture the other children for their unkindness.

\*Don't force the other children to play with the child.

\*Don't fawn over the child, making him dependent on you.

\*DO step in and give the child some attention.

\*DO encourage the child with praise for some good action on his part.

\*Make him a "helper" now and then.



### CRYING CHILD:

\*Don't embarrass the child by telling him he shouldn't be crying!

\*DO let him know you love him and care about his situation.

REMEMBER.....

\*BE DISCERNING, too much coddling can encourage some to continue endlessly or even increase the volume and emotion!

\*DO attempt to interest the child in some activity and divert his attention from his present trouble!

\*CRYING DUE TO ILLNESS: If the child doesn't feel well and is weepy, comfort him and direct the child to an out-of-the-way spot to lie down. If the illness is serious, (i.e. stomach flu) contact the hallway usher to get the parent.



NOISY CLASSROOM: \*Silent treatment, arms folded, tapping foot etc.

\* CREATE A QUIET SIGN. Some teachers have as a classroom rule some known sign the teachers give which means the class is too loud and to cease all talking immediately or punishment begins.... This sign could be finger on lips, finger in air etc.

\*Add on class time! **USE THE BOX!**

## Discipline: Quick solutions continued

### FRIENDS TALKING:

- \* Separate.
- \* Isolation (child sits out in hall silently for 10 minutes)
- \* Continued problems should be brought to the attentions of the parents.  
If this is your intention and you inform the child, follow through!

### CLASS CLOWN:

If you have determined that you have a "Class Clown" you must understand that attention and laughter of his classmates is his sole motivation for his behavior in class. In order to achieve gratification (Laughter and disruption) he must be visible. First try time-outs, off by himself. If this does deter your clown, try a session or two in the hall way with a helper. If you do not have a class helper, one will be made available to assist you in getting this child under control. In extreme cases, as a last resort, a brief expulsion may be necessary, but only after discussing with your Coordinator or Children's Ministry Director and the parents.



THE BOSSY CHILD: The signs of a bossy child; Usually a regular attendee or new. Is familiar with classroom rules but continues to talk out of turn, usually offering suggestions as to what to do. Tattles. Gets out of seat. Helps with out being called upon. This child wants to be in charge of your classroom. Don't allow it! Consistent enforcement of the policies is required. Give this child an inch and they'll keep on going.



## INAPPROPRIATE ACTIONS BY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY STAFF:

#1 AT NO TIME IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO EVER SPANK A CHILD-  
Not even your own, during class time! If YOUR OWN children are in  
your class, you must discipline them in private.



### #2 DON'T USE SCRIPTURE AS A WHIP.

Scripture IS to correct, reprove, and train, (II Tim 3:16) BUT  
It should be used to bring healing, not sadness. Your attitude in  
using scripture and delivery of it is the determining factor.



### #3 NEVER yell at a child.



#### Reminder:

When a child shows open defiance toward  
the teacher or helper, the only course of  
action is expulsion from the class with the  
parents knowledge. Reinstatement to  
your classroom can only be attained by  
pastoral counsel.

## A WORD ON PARENTS AND DISCIPLINE

A word or two of advice concerning your relationship with the parents of a child that needs continual disciplinary action in your class. This child is in your class regularly, and regularly requires some form of discipline two or three times each week. You will need to have a working relationship with the parents/parent of this child. Many times these children are in single parent homes and are going through a difficult adjustment period themselves in addition to their parents. Other times it is simply a matter of little or no discipline in the home. Regardless of the cause for this situation you need to develop a real relationship with the parent/parents. If they are new believers or new members to the church,  
YOU may be their only spiritual connection at this time... So pray for wisdom and sensitivity!

LOVE: Remember you are a tool that God desires to use, keep the love of Christ foremost in your thoughts and attitudes.

ACCEPT: This perhaps is the key to all else; the accepting of the PARENT AS THEY ARE, AND THE ACCEPTING OF THE SITUATION. As for the PURELY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR, offer prayer and support instead of criticism.

RESPECT: When parents tell of their innermost thoughts and feelings, they are showing a trust and confidence in you the teacher that suggests great watchfulness that their confidence never be betrayed.

ADVICE: People don't actually want to be advised, they want SUPPORT! Only offer advice if solicited from parent.

HONESTY: Parents appreciate a teacher who can be depended upon to tell things as they are, the pleasant and the unpleasant; a teacher whose word is reliable. Speak the truth in love.

DON'T BE AUTHORITATIVE: Remember that parents can do their own thinking and deciding about what is best for their child. There is never just one right way of doing or solving problems!

DO NOT CONDEMN OR BLAME: This is a mark of real maturity when you can accept parents without judging them. This is key to Communicating with the parents without resentment.

SHOCK: Try not to let the parents know that you are shocked at anything said. Respond to surprise with the Biblical perspectives.

LISTEN: Listening can be active, dynamic and vital! It speaks more loudly than words. Remember "God gave us TWO ears, and ONE mouth!"