

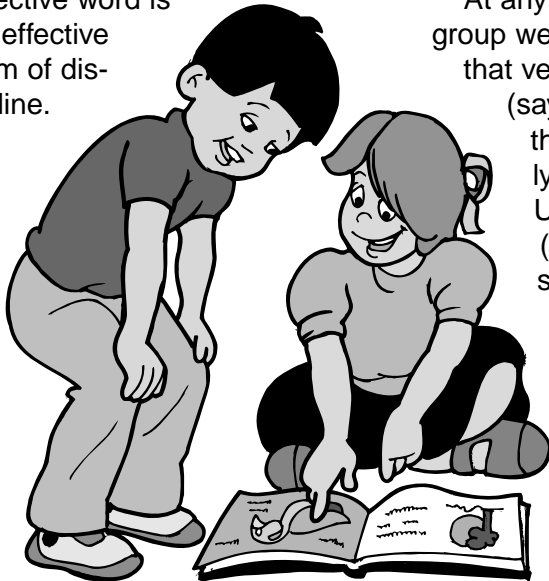


Effective Discipline, part 1 of 2—

Leading—A Process or an Event?

by Sandy Friesen, Managing Editor, Christian School Services

Leading is a **process** as opposed to an **event**. An **event** is an opportunity to make a decision, and a **process** is an opportunity to live out those decisions. This principle holds true when it comes to effective discipline. Occasionally, people feel that a time-out, lecture, stern word, or directive word is an effective form of discipline. In



truth, these are usually **events**, not **processes**.

As teachers, we usually desire classroom order in hopes that it will allow everyone the chance to concentrate on the lesson. Thus, learning will be accomplished and the students will be able to use the truths to help guide their lives. Thus begins the process of living Christ-like.

Ironically, since children are like adults, most need to experi-

ence a truth about a bazillion times before they choose to embrace it. Therefore, we spend a lot of time reiterating concepts. However, there are those who happen to catch a concept the first or second time and spend the rest of their time being re-taught something they've already learned.

At any rate, as leaders of a group we often feel confident that verbalization of concepts (saying words out loud) is the best way to effectively teach a concept. Unfortunately, research (and experience) has shown that "just hearing" is the least effective way to learn any concept (for about 85% of us).

So, what does all of this have to do with classroom discipline? Everything! Boredom is one of the biggest reasons for discipline problems. If we think of disciplining (discipling) as a process and not just an event, we begin to see the entire class time as a discipling opportunity.

Let's take an honest look at the behavioral problems you might be having, why they might be occurring, and how to fix them. I've noticed that when I am sewing, I refer to the machine's operating manual

when something goes wrong. I love the trouble-shooting pages. I can find a description of the problem and try the suggested solutions. If all else fails, I can send the machine back to the manufacturer. In the 22 years I've been sewing, I've never had to return a machine.

I've chosen this model to help describe some of the situations you may be facing. Granted, children are much more complicated than machines and need a great deal of creativity when dealt with.

Behavioral Problem #1

A student is talking when the teacher is talking.

Possible Causes

- A. She has something to say.
- B. She has a verbal/auditory learning style (she learns best through talking).
- C. She is bored.

Possible Solutions

A. Talk to the students before class. Find out what they are excited or concerned about. Have a "sharing time" before lesson time.

B. Ask the student to listen carefully because you know what a good listener he is and because you'll be asking her to re-tell the story to the class (or answer questions, etc.). NOTE: This is not a threat—"You *have* to tell the story," but a privilege—"You *get* to tell the story."

C. Stop class (in the spirit of love, not frustration), ask the student why she is talking (the question is to gain information, not to condemn her), and listen to what she says. If she says that she

already knows this, ask her to share with the class what she knows. In the process, the students will be teaching one another (which we know is more effective anyway).

(More behavioral problems and possible solutions can be found in part two.)

Questions For Further Study—

1. Why is “leading” better defined as a “process” rather than an “event”?

2. What one main factor helps children, as well as adults, embrace a truth?

3. Evaluate your own method of teaching.
 - a) What method(s) do you use?

 - b) Do you capture and keep the children’s attention?

 - c) How could you improve your teaching style?