



Effective Discipline, part 2 of 2—

Addressing Behavioral Problems

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Behavioral Problem #2

A student won't sit still.

Possible Causes

- A. She has to go to the bathroom.
- B. She is uncomfortable.
- C. She is a kinesthetic or tactual learner. (kinesthetic=needs to move when learning; tactual=needs to touch when learning)
- D. She has been sitting all day and needs to move.

Possible Solutions

- A. Have a bathroom break.
- B. Before the lesson, ask everyone to get comfortable. The classroom arrangement may need to be re-thought. Children are usually more comfortable in an informal setting (sitting on pillows or on the floor) rather than at a desk or table.
- C. Know the learning styles so that you can determine the needs of your students. Then provide for those needs. For example, let a kinesthetic student balance on a balancing board while she is listening. Alternatively, let her hand out papers, write on the board, or choose a kinesthetic teaching technique (drama). The tactual student will listen more serenely if she has something to hold, touch, or do while she listens (color, draw, molding clay, etc.).
- D. Start with action games, exercises, field trips, activities, etc., to run off some of her energy.

Behavioral Problem #3

A student is rude or disrespectful in words or behavior.

Possible Causes

- A. She comes from a culture that models this behavior.
- B. She is feeling ill.
- C. She is acting out through aggressive language and or behavior.



Possible Solutions

- A. Talk to the students about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Talk to "rude" students privately and find out what is being modeled. Begin the process of modeling appropriate respectfulness. When a student says something "rude," stop and ask him if he can think of a polite way to say it. If he says he cannot, give him an example. Doing this with a gentle spirit will give him some other options.
- B. This will usually be a student who is not otherwise snappy or rude. Ask the student what is

wrong. LISTEN to what she says. Sometimes a blanket and pillow, or going back to Mom, is the solution.

C. Again, ASK, then LISTEN. Unless you build a relationship with the student, all the sharp retorts, intimidating looks, or time-outs will not move the student into a process of becoming Christlike. If the child is under a great deal of stress (parents divorcing, experiencing abuse, humiliation, has absent parents, has moved recently or frequently, etc.) disciplining them becomes a process, not an event. The student will learn to trust you, confide in you, and respect your opinion. Be consistent, educate yourself on that child's problems, and ask the Holy Spirit to give you wisdom and strategies to effectively help the student.

Behavioral Problem #4

The students are not participating.

Possible Causes

- A. They are scared.
- B. They are tired.
- C. They are bored.

Possible Solutions

A. Take a long, honest look at your style. Ask someone to observe you and be honest about what they see. If you are doing "things" (speaking aggressively, too loudly, rudely, in anger, without respect, etc.) or if you have a harsh personality (the need to be right, the need to have control,

the need to be an expert, etc.), ask the Holy Spirit to help your spirit relax and trust Him. Begin the process of becoming a caregiver rather than a controller.

B. Change the activity. It may be necessary to let the groups stay calm, rest on the floor, and talk casually about the lesson. On the other hand, it helps to speed up the activity. Get the children moving around, or ask them to help with the teaching.

C. Re-think your preparation time. Is it adequate? Who do you

have in mind when you are preparing (your personal convenience or your students' active interests)? Take new risks, and try new strategies.

Conclusion

Some hints that might help you enjoy the class time more.

▼Dress comfortably. Be able to move easily and change positions. Tight or restrictive clothing will send the wrong message.

▼Speak to the students the way you speak to someone you

respect and admire.

▼Look for solutions. There will always be problems, but focus on the "why." Don't assume stereotypical reasons for a problem to avoid finding a solution.

▼Remember that classroom disciplining (discipling) is a process and not just an event. Students will receive direction over a process of time. Be that mentor, guide, and role model that will show them the way to true discipleship.

Questions For Further Study—

1. How would you evaluate your ministry team's effectiveness in addressing discipline issues?
2. Have your children's workers share with you a particular child (or children) with behavioral problems and brainstorm ways of addressing the problem.
3. List some positive ways in which you will handle future discipline problems.