

2.9 How can we maintain discipline in the classroom?

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Introduction—Pretend you have two bottles of medicine. One is quinine (bitter). This represents the cure—distasteful measures we have to invoke when behavior is out of hand.

The other is a candy that looks like pills. This represents the prevention—the sweet measures that help prevent behavior problems in the first place.

Two critical issues involved in discipline are PREVENTION and CURE.

PREVENTION

Cure

We have written PREVENTION in very large letters, CURE in much smaller letters. Why do you think we did this?

.....
 ...

We want you to see that Prevention is much more important than Cure.

Let's name some things that are concerned with discipline and decide whether they are PREVENTION or CURE. Circle what you think is the right answer—prevention or cure.

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|---|----------------------------|------|
| 1. Being well organized. | Is it prevention? or cure? | Why? |
| 2. Counseling troublemakers | Is it prevention? or cure? | why? |
| 3. Activities to regain control | Is it prevention? or cure? | why? |
| 4. Making a short list of well-understood rules | Is it prevention? or cure? | why? |
| 5. Beating | Is it prevention? or cure? | why? |

What did you think? We believe 1 and 4 are preventative measures. They are geared to keeping problems from occurring. On the other hand, 2,3,and 5 are cures. They are ways to deal with problems once their occur.

Let's consider some basic ideas before discussing specific preventions & cures.

- What level of control/quiet/order is needed? Why?
- What are your worst-case scenarios regarding discipline?
- Try to list all the scenarios you have encountered or encounter regularly that are totally unacceptable.
- In these scenarios, try to think through and determine—What happens exactly? Who seems to instigate it? How does it spread?
- What discipline methods have you been using? How effective or ineffective have they been?



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- What other discipline methods have you observed others using? Which might you consider using and why?

A pot full of discipline ideas

- Direct look into the eyes of the offender(s)
- Group activities to regain control: singing, clapping, raising a hand, standing up in a certain position, quiet sign, Repetitive mottoes like let my ears hear, etc.
- Talking and praying privately with the offender.
- Giving the offender(s) special attention in positive ways, special responsibilities, etc.
- Clearly define consequences ahead of time, but don't threaten children with them.
 - Consequences must be do-able and true.
 - Consequences must be agreeable to church, parents, teacher.
 - Consequences must be perceived of as being fair by the majority of the class.
 - Consequences must be applied consistently and lovingly.
 - Consequences must be proportionate to the severity of the offense and the number/regularity of offenses.
- If one or a very small, specific group of individuals is continually disruptive and does not respond to other attempts at control, try talking to your church leadership and the parents about the problem.
- Of course, submit it to much prayer.

Make prayer for effective classroom control a regular subject of prayer.

Ask a partner to pray at the time of your class in another place for you. Keep your partner updated on specific prayer needs.

These suggestions all deal with _____(PRAYER)

Be prepared with pre-session activities for early comers.

Arrive and be prepared before the first student arrives.

Start on time.

Plan 2 or 3 interesting pre-session activities related to the lesson.

Keep your teaching materials well organized and have them laid out in order of usage.

Make sure helpers know they are to arrive on time, too.

Pace class activities so that active, noisy activities and songs gradually give way to quieter, slower activities before "listening" times such as the Bible story time.

These suggestions all deal with _____(TIME)

Have enough helpers for the size, age, and background of the group.

Work toward having a reasonable class size and age grouping.

Work toward finding/providing facilities that facilitate good behavior. (Place, seating, temperature, air movement, etc.)



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These suggestions all deal with _____(LOGISTICS)

Present the most interesting class possible.

Make sure you always give important, useful teaching.

Make sure you know the lesson, verse, or whatever you are to teach well enough to teach it easily without reading from the book.

These suggestions all deal with _____(YOUR TEACHING)

Show personal interest in students as much as possible.

Reward/reinforce good behavior.

Make role models or heroes of children who show good behavior.

These suggestions all deal with _____(POSITIVE DISCIPLINE)

Decide ahead of time what level of discipline is needed and desirable. (May vary with location, circumstances, other groups around you, etc.)

Have a list of rules that are:

Few in number (a short list of essentials)

Fair, reasonable

Known and understood by all

Agreed on by most

Known, understood, and agreed on by parents and church leadership

Consistently applied

Lovingly applied

These suggestions all deal with _____(THE RULES)

Analyze discipline problems you encounter. Are they group control problems, problems with a small group of students, or problems with individual students? Seek solutions appropriate to groups or to individuals.

Analyze what seems to instigate your most frequent and your worst case discipline problems.

Think about what can be done to change the instigating circumstances.

Analyze what discipline method(s) you have been using. To what degree are you satisfied with their effectiveness?

Think about other discipline methods you have seen others use. To what degree do you feel they may be useful?

These suggestions all deal with _____(ANALYZING THE SITUATION)

LET’S REVIEW

Explain why an active, interesting lesson that keeps moving is the best thing to can do to improve discipline in your class.

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LET’S PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

What elements of your teaching might be inviting discipline problems? What will you do to change those elements?

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What is the worse discipline problem you have faced or seen? What could have been done to prevent it or minimize it?

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How might you have handled it once it occurred?
.....

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