



# Discipline and Discipleship



“And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone” (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

• According to this verse, what are some possible sources of misbehavior in a classroom?

• Why is patience a necessary response for any form of misbehavior?

## ▼ Training Session

*Discipline* and *discipleship*—two closely related words. Both come from the same Greek word for “to learn.” So why do we see discipline as negative and discipleship as positive?

Maybe it’s because, in our culture, *discipline* has more to do with control than with learning.

As a teacher, you deal with misbehavior. And you have an important choice when misbehavior arises: to control your classroom or to use the misbehavior as an opportunity for learning. Two very different goals. Control equals a quiet classroom (and frustrated students). Learning leads to discipleship.

So if the goal’s discipleship, it’s not enough to control a child.

Instead, equip.

God’s placed you here to help your children grow—emotionally *and* spiritually. It’s your important job to give kids the tools they need to learn. Here’s how:

- **Check your emotions first.** When a child misbehaves, it’s natural to react emotionally. After all, the child *is* acting against you. But don’t use your emotions to react—that just makes things worse. Respond. Use your own emotions as a clue to understand the child’s emotions. A child who makes you angry probably wants control. A child who hurts you may have felt hurt *by* you or another adult.
- **Check their emotions.** Ask direct questions. “How are you feeling right now?” “What made you feel that way?” Ask for honesty.
- **Be honest yourself.** Tell the child how you feel—and how his or her behavior is affecting the class. Be direct, but be warm.
- **Help the child find a better behavior.** Talk about behavior that would have been more productive. Lay out some options, and let the child choose. Help kids see that one of the options isn’t the behavior you’re correcting.
- **Reinforce changes.** When you see children improve their behavior, point it out. They’ll be glad you noticed.





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- What does discipline mean to you?
- What's been the goal behind your classroom management up until now: control or maturity? Is it time to upgrade your goal?
- What are some potential challenges you'll face as you use misbehaviors as an opportunity to foster maturity?

▼ Journal

*God, I struggle with this type of discipline challenge. . .*

*God, please give me patience when. . .*

**May God bless you and give you eternal patience. Thank you for coaching your children to maturity!**

## ▼ Application

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Write down the last few discipline challenges you've faced in the classroom. Write down who was involved and what you felt as it was unfolding. Next, write down why you think the child or children misbehaved. What emotions seemed to motivate the misbehaving?

How can you begin to teach these children how to pursue these goals in a positive manner?