



Power of Parents



“Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

- Do you face any discipline challenges that are hard to keep firm about?
- How is being consistent in your discipline a form of “the work of the Lord”?

▼ Training Session

When wrangling over misbehavior, you might be tempted to end the struggle once and for all by going straight to the parents. *They* can deal with it!

Before you grab that phone, consider these points. As a teacher, your role is to support faith growth at home. You need a strong *alliance* with parents. Bringing discipline problems to a parent too early might make parents discouraged—or even turn them against you.

You want to bring parents into your classroom in positive and fun ways—not just as the strong arm.

There’s another damaging effect of involving parents too early in discipline. You’ll undermine every other form of discipline you use! Over time, the children in your classroom will *only* respond to you when you involve a parent.

So when *do* you get the parent involved?

When you’ve exhausted every other appropriate form of discipline.

That last sentence is a safeguard for you. So don’t push the parent button if you’re just frustrated. Push it when a parent’s intervention is absolutely necessary.

Your children’s ministry

probably has a discipline policy that outlines the steps of appropriate correction. (If not, talk to your leader about getting one in place.)

A good policy starts with giving the child a polite oral warning (“Please...”), followed by the request being made more firmly (“Austin, I asked you to...”); it then progresses to a more serious consequence.

Only after exhausting all these steps—and realizing that enforcing consequences won’t help—do you involve a parent.

In a moment of frustration, it’s easy to misuse these steps as a “countdown” to ejecting the child from the classroom. That’s not the goal. Coaching a child in behavior is the goal. Be aware of your emotions and motives as you discipline.

But there are times when you *need* to immediately involve a parent. If a child becomes a safety risk, go to the parents. Or if a child causes *significant* property damage (breaking a pencil in anger is minor; punching holes in drywall is not), go to the parents.

Build positive connections with parents. When kids see that you communicate with their parents, that knowledge might be enough to make them less likely to misbehave.





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- How do you tend to view parents? People who dump off their children? Or potential partners? Why?
- How can you find opportunities to encourage the parents with positive behavior reports? How about spiritual growth reports? Or support?
- What steps can you take to strengthen your discipline skills so you don't feel the need to be overly reliant on parents?

▼ Journal

God, please help me honor my students' parents by...

I want to grow in my ability to discipline in these ways...

Perhaps teachers who bring parents in too soon don't trust their own discipline skills. But remember this: You have more resources for positive discipline than you might realize. You have the power to grow in your ability to discipline. And one of your greatest resources is the love you show your students. That's what makes them *want to please you!*

▼ Application

It's time to review the discipline policy of your children's ministry. What are the progressive steps to take when correcting a child?

If your church doesn't have one, this is a chance for your ministry to mature. Contact your ministry leader and let that person know that you'd like guidance in how to discipline children—including when to involve parents.

If you approach your leader with the right spirit, you'll prompt him or her to take action.