



Discipline Policy for Children's Ministries

by Dick Gruber

1 The use of corporal punishment is expressly forbidden for all children's workers, including parents who serve in a classroom with their own children.

2 Establish the three-person policy—insist on having three or more people present in every worker-child encounter. Disruptive behavior is to be handled in the classroom, not in isolation with worker and child alone. The children's pastor should provide two or more workers in every room.

3 When it is evident that you have an extreme case which cannot be handled by classroom workers, contact your ministry coordinator for assistance.

4 Establish simple rules for your classroom. State these positively. General rules for every class are:

- ♥ Respect those in authority.
- ♥ Speak and walk softly indoors.
- ♥ Put materials away before beginning a new project.
- ♥ Use words to solve problems.

♥ Leave room and equipment better than you found it.

5 Be consistent in enforcing your classroom rules.

6 NEVER threaten a child!

7 Always maintain self-control. Never shout or exhibit angry behavior toward the children. If you feel you are losing control, contact your children's pastor or ministry coordinator for assistance.

8 Never embarrass a child with words or actions.

9 Here are some things to do when a child becomes disruptive:

- ♥ Restate the rules to the entire class.
- ♥ Gain eye contact with the student.
- ♥ Lightly touch the child on the shoulder, letting him know that you care and are aware of his behavior.
- ♥ Redirect the child's actions.
- ♥ Change your activity. Perhaps the child is bored.
- ♥ Move the child to a different location in the classroom.

10 **Preschool:** When a preschooler continues to disrupt class, follow these steps:

- ♥ Move the child to a time-out chair. The time-out chair should be placed where the child can readily observe the rest of the class. This is not a tool of humiliation.
- ♥ Tell the child how long he will be in the chair and briefly remind him why he is being disciplined.
- ♥ A good rule of thumb is one minute per year of the child's age.
- ♥ At the end of the time-out, the worker will approach the child in a spirit of forgiveness and invite him to reenter the classroom activity.

11 **Elementary:** Here are a few ideas to remember when ministering in a positive way to the individual who continues with disruptive behavior:

- ♥ Encounter him on an individual level. Take him to the side or back of the room for discipline.
- ♥ Explain the broken rule. Help the child to under-

stand which simple classroom rule was broken and the importance of following all rules.

- ♥ Encourage repentance. Repent means to turn around.

With God's help, any child can choose repentance and experience a dramatic change in behavior.

- ♥ Engage in prayer. Pray with the child.

- ♥ Expect God to work in the child's life.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Are parents allowed to use corporal punishment on their own children in a classroom?
2. What is the three-person policy? Why is it important?
3. In your church, whom can you contact when you have an extreme case of misbehavior and need assistance?
4. How do you deal with misbehavior in your class? What improvements can be made?