

# Discipline

**Dear Facilitator:** For several weeks we have been discussing how successful families communicate, support one another, and organize their lives.

This week we are going to focus on discipline. What exactly is discipline and how is it used in the Bible? It seems as a child, I had Ephesians 6:2 memorized: “Honor your father and mother.” Today, I still think it is a good verse, but as an adult, I also need to read Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD.” Amazing! I always thought it was the responsibility of the child to do what was right, but God also warns parents about provoking children to anger. How do we balance the two?

Previously we discussed the role of parents, and it was determined that being an authoritative parent is the best way to parent. Today we are going to get even more practical by finding out strategies to help us carry out discipline. It might be helpful for you to know what we hope to accomplish through this lesson. Participants will:

1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

During the past lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week’s commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.

We pray that God will give you direction and clarity as you prepare the lesson and activities. We hope that the families in your group will grow together in God’s love and become a source of friendship and support for one another.

*Blessings*

## Welcome *5 minutes*

 **Say:** Welcome back! I hope it's been a good week for all of you as you have been working diligently on many things that are positively influencing your family.

Last week we spent time learning about the roles of parents and children within the family.

 **Ask:** Did anyone try something this past week that made a positive difference in your family that you would be willing to share?

## Introduction *5 minutes*

This week we are going to focus on discipline. It seems as a child, I had Ephesians 6:2 memorized: "Honor your father and mother." Today, I still think it is a good verse, but as an adult, I also need to read Ephesians 6:4: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD." Amazing! I always thought it was the responsibility of the child to do what was right, but God also warns parents about provoking children to anger.

How do we balance the two?

Previously we discussed the role of parents, and it was determined that being an authoritative parent is the best way to parent. Today we are going to get even more practical by finding out strategies to help us carry out discipline.

Today's teaching objectives are to:

1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

During the past lessons, we have made commitment statements. This week's commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.

# Family & Table Talk 20 minutes



**Say:** As you enjoy your dinner, discuss the following questions at your tables:

1. Why is discipline important?
2. What are some discipline strategies used by your family?

*After the meal, children are dismissed to their group.*



## *Scripture* SUPPORT

### **Hebrews 12:11**

*No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

### **Deuteronomy 8:5**

*Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.*

### **Proverbs 6:23**

*For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.*

### **Proverbs 13:24**

*Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.*

### **Proverbs 19:18**

*Discipline your children, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to their death.*

### **Ephesians 6:4**

*Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the LORD.*



Read some of your favorite Bible verses on discipline. Feel free to share some of those mentioned on page three. Share how you were disciplined as a child. How has discipline changed today?

In a group, define some key words—discipline, rod of discipline, and exasperate.

Have the groups share the definitions.

Learning how to do something for the first time is never easy.

Facilitator share a time when you had to work really hard at something. Was it successful?

Why or why not?

Do you remember the old movie *The Karate Kid*? In the movie, Daniel wants to learn karate. Mr. Miyagia finally agrees to teach Daniel karate as long as Daniel follows instructions without question. (Review YouTube video prior to session if able.)

So, what does self-discipline mean? We can look at several sources:

1. *New Webster's Dictionary*: Self-imposed regulation or ordering of one's own thoughts or actions, often with a view toward improvement (p. 457).
2. *Dictionary of Bible Themes*: The dedicated training, through the study of Scripture, prayer and self-control, which enables Christians to be more effective witnesses to the gospel, to lead lives more pleasing to God, and to win the crown that awaits those who are victorious over sin.

What does the rod mean? According to FaithTrust Institute.org, Sue Hille, writes the following:

There are people who use Psalm 23:4 as a mandate for corporal punishment of their children. Is that what the Bible really teaches?

One of the most popular portions of the Bible is Psalm 23. Verse four of that Psalm states: "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (KJV).

The assurance of comfort is not easily reconciled with corporal punishment. The Hebrew word for rod used in both the Psalms and Proverbs passages is "shabbat." A shabbat is specifically the rod used by a shepherd in caring for sheep. The shabbat has five common practical uses: 1) it is the symbol of the shepherd's guardianship of the sheep; 2) it can be thrown with great accuracy just beyond the wandering sheep to send the animal scurrying back to the flock; 3) the shabbat can be used to ward off an intruder and protect the sheep from any animals which may attack; 4) the sheep are counted as they pass under the rod; 5) it is used to part the wool in order to examine the sheep for disease, wounds, or defects which may be treated. There is no evidence that the rod is ever used to physically strike the sheep.

So how can you help your children through discipline?

## READ OUT LOUD

After each section, pause to discuss.

### **Discipline. Reinforce good behavior.**

- Most of the time, reinforcing good behavior is more effective than punishing bad behavior.
- Look for times when your child behaves well. When you notice a good behavior, reinforce your child for it.
- Praising your child is one of the best reinforcements. Praise can be saying something like, "I really appreciate how patiently you are waiting." "I noticed how you put your dishes away

without me having to ask.” You could also give a high five. Especially if your child is young or has been struggling with bad behavior, there’s no such thing as giving praise for good behavior too often.

- Reinforcement can also include rewards such as a small treat, a fun activity, or being allowed to stay up late. However, be careful not to give these types of rewards every time your child behaves well. If you do, your child may come to expect a reward or may want to behave well only when they will be rewarded for it.

## DISCUSS

### **Use appropriate punishments for bad behavior.**

- When many people hear the word “punishment,” they think of spanking, pinching, or some other kind of physical punishment. However, physical punishment usually is not the best way to punish children for bad behavior.
- Time out can be an effective type of punishment. To use time-out for bad behavior, have your child go to a room or sit on a chair. There should not be things to play with or other people to talk to while your child is in time-out. Keep your child in time-out for about one minute for every year of age (a three-year-old stays in time-out for three minutes). If your child tries to come out of time-out before the time is up, start the time over. Your child may put up a fight for a while, but once they figure out that you are not going to change the rules, they will learn to cooperate. Eventually, many children will go to time-out without a fuss because they know that putting up a fight will only make time-out last longer.
- Taking away something that your child enjoys can also be an effective type of punishment. If your child behaves badly, you could take away TV time for an evening, bedtime snack, or another toy or activity that your child likes.
- Making your child do something that they do not like to do is another effective type of punishment.

You could make your child do an extra chore if they misbehave. Sometimes, you can even have your child do something that “fixes” what they did wrong. For example, if your child makes a mess, you could make them clean up the mess they made and clean up something else as well. Or, if your child breaks a sibling’s toy, you could make them do chores to earn money to buy a new one.

## DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

### **Give consequences for good and bad behavior right away.**

- Both reinforcement for good behavior and punishment for bad behavior are most effective when they happen immediately after the behavior. If the consequence happens a long time after your child’s behavior, your child will have a harder time making the connection between the behavior and the consequence.
- Giving consequences right away is especially important with young children or other children with learning disabilities or other conditions that may make it more difficult for them to connect the behavior to the consequence.

## DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

### **Always follow through.**

- You probably have seen a parent who is trying to leave a store and whose child is not coming. The parent might tell their child, “Okay, then, we’re going to leave without you.” If the child still doesn’t come, the parent can’t follow through on the consequence they have stated. Instead, the parent might end up carrying the child. In

this type of situation, the child learns that the parent does not always mean what they say—the consequences the parent says will happen might not. This makes the child less motivated to do what the parent tells them to do.

- To teach your child that you do mean what you say, always follow through on the consequences you say will happen. To do this, you do not give empty threats you cannot keep, such as telling your child that you will leave without them. Think ahead about some rewards and punishments that you can follow through on. Be sure to say only what you will actually do. Then, follow through on what you say.
- If you haven't been consistent at following through, your child may test you when you start sticking to your word. Be prepared for them to fight until they realize that fighting won't change your mind. Then, when they will know that you are serious, they will start acting in ways to avoid punishment and earn rewards.

## DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

### **Give your child choices.**

- It can be helpful to give your child choices, as long as both choices are okay with you and you will follow through on them. By giving two choices that are okay with you, you keep control over the situation. By giving your child a choice, you give them the opportunity to make choices and learn that their choices have consequences.
- Imagine that your child is not eating his dinner. You could tell your child, "You can choose whether to finish your dinner in the next five minutes and have a bedtime snack tonight, or you can choose to take longer to finish your dinner and not have a bedtime snack tonight." Either way, your child has to finish his dinner. If he finishes his dinner within five minutes, you can follow through by rewarding

good behavior with a bedtime snack. If he takes longer, you can follow through by punishing bad behavior and take away his bedtime snack.

## DISCUSS

What do you agree with? Disagree with? Find hard to do? Can you provide personal examples?

We would like to walk away after today's session with a strategy to help in our disciplining.

- **First, Identify difficult areas to discipline.** Share examples.
- **Create a solution:** As a group develop a solution.
- **Practice:** If time allows, have two to three people role play the problem and solution
- **Review:** Is the solution addressing the need?

## SUMMARY

We covered a lot of material in the lesson.

Our objectives were to:

1. Define discipline.
2. Develop a discipline strategy.

This week's commitment statement is: Parents love and discipline their children. Children obey their parents.

To end our lesson, please answer the following:

1. Who has an insight tonight about something you've learned or want to try?
2. What will you change or improve in your role as parent this week?

*Notes*

Ages 4-16

40 minutes

# Student Training

*Family Time*

**DISCIPLINE**

## Objectives

- Help children be aware of what discipline means.
- Help children be aware of the importance of discipline.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says to parents about discipline.
- Help children be aware of what the Bible says to children about discipline.

When God created you and placed you in your mother's womb, He was sending you to the earth for a very specific purpose. He placed special gifts inside of you that you would need to accomplish the assignment He has planned for you.

He was careful to make sure you were born into just the right family and given the parents that He wanted you to have. God gave you to your parents as a gift and a reward! Psalm 127:3 says, "Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him." God gave your parents the responsibility to provide for you, protect you, and love and nurture you. And, believe it or not, God says one of the most important ways parents show their love to their children is by disciplining them (Hebrews 12:8).

God is partnering with your parents so that you will grow up to be the man or woman He created you to be.

The meaning of the word discipline is to instill knowledge and skill. Discipline teaches children how to behave in a socially acceptable manner and how to make the right decisions and choices. Discipline isn't just about punishing children or grounding them. Instead, it keeps children on the right path in life. Discipline is to make sure children master the necessary life lessons that will cause them to lead a prosperous, peaceful, and productive life.

God is the perfect Father, and He says that He corrects us because He loves us. In Hebrews 12:6, it says, "The LORD disciplines

the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Then, in His Word, He tells parents to follow His example. In Proverbs 13:24, God says to parents, “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.”

Although God gave you to your parents as a gift, you still ultimately belong to Him. God loves you, and in the Bible, He has given your parents instructions on how He wants you to be raised.

God has a significant plan for your life, and He wants you to live a life filled with love, abundance, happiness, and success. He knows that for you to attain these things, discipline is necessary.

God says we were all created for His pleasure. Revelations 4:11 says, “You are worthy, our LORD and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” It honors God and gives Him immense pleasure when we obey Him and choose to do the things He tells us to do in the Bible. And, it brings Him great joy when our obedience to our parents causes us to grow up and complete the tasks He sent us to earth to accomplish for Him.

In God’s Ten Commandments, found in Exodus Chapter 20, He made it clear that if we are to fulfill our purpose on earth and enjoy a blessed and rewarding life, there are some things He doesn’t want us to do. He also gave us instructions in the Bible on what it is He does want us to do. That is why God gave your parents the awesome responsibility to teach you the standards that God wants you to live by. In the Bible, parents are given a command about how God wants His children to be taught. Proverbs 22:6 says, “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 29:17 goes on to tell parents, “Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.”



## *Scripture* SUPPORT

### **Psalm 127:3**

*Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.*

### **Hebrews 12:6**

*The LORD disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.*

### **Hebrews 12:8**

*If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.*

### **Proverbs 13:24**

*Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them.*

### **Revelations 4:11**

*You are worthy, our LORD and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*

### **Exodus Chapter 20**

*The Ten Commandments*

It makes sense then that another meaning of the word discipline is “instruction given to a disciple.” God wants parents to train, discipline, and raise their children to be disciples of Christ Jesus. Then in Ephesians 6:1-3, God says, “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

Not only that, but you will achieve everything God has planned for your life. In Jeremiah 29:11 God says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” God has given you parents that will teach you and model for you the way that God wants you to live. When you honor them by being obedient, you also honor God, and He will cause you to live a blessed and long life.

## DISCUSS

- Why is discipline important?
- What does the Bible tell us about God disciplining us, His children?
- What does the Bible tell parents about disciplining their children?
- When children obey their parents, what does God promise them?



# Activities

## ALL CHILDREN

### Materials

White board or easel, erasable markers  
Pencils, crayons, markers

### Video ages 6-11

<https://youtu.be/YtGcEtcijIM>

### Video ages 12-16

<https://youtu.be/xyoyzmEU7CY>

- Before you read the Bible verse, write these two questions on the board. Then ask children to listen carefully for the answer to these questions:

1. What can I do to make my life better?
2. What could I do to make my life worse?

- Then carefully read the key Bible verse:  
Ephesians 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’—which is the first commandment with a promise—so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”
- After you finish reading, ask the children if they can answer the two questions.

 **Say:** This is what we have been talking about today. Obedience is one of the ways you honor your parents.

Let’s look carefully at some parts of this verse.

- Honor your father and mother (meaning?). It’s more than just obeying but treating them like important people with love and respect.
- Commandment with a promise (meaning?). It’s the first of the Ten Commandments that comes with a specific promise from God—there is a reward if you do this right.



## Scripture SUPPORT

### Proverbs 22:6

*Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.*

### Proverbs 29:17

*Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring you the delights you desire.*

### Ephesians 6:1-3

*Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”*

### Jeremiah 29:11

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

## *Notes*

- It may go well with you (meaning?). God will help your life work out better, not perfect, but much better than it would be if you did not obey.
- Enjoy long life on the earth (meaning?). When God first said this, He was talking about the Promised Land, but how does it apply to us today?

Ask the children if they can answer the two questions now. Have them complete the “I Will Honor My Parents” worksheet. Have students share their plans if they would like to.



————— **CHALLENGE QUESTION** —————

DO I HONOR MY PARENTS IN EVERY WAY?

**CHALLENGE COMMITMENT**

WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO DO  
TO DO TO WORK ON THE CHALLENGE  
QUESTION THIS WEEK?

	<b>AFFIRMATION</b> <i>Have children repeat:</i>
	<i>As I obey my parents, I am obeying the LORD.</i>

I WILL HONOR MY PARENTS

*"Children obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right."  
Ephesians 6:1*



HERE ARE THE THINGS I WILL  
DO TO HONOR MY FATHER

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HERE ARE THE THINGS I WILL  
DO TO HONOR MY MOTHER

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# Resources & Materials

- You tube: Karate Kid, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fULNURvEc>
- Summary from Dr. Laura Luchies "*Discipline*" *Behavior Modification: Principles and Procedures* (6th ed). Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing; 6 edition (January 1, 2015)  
Language: English ISBN-10: 1305109392 ISBN-13: 978-1305109391
- *Behavior Modification: What It Is and How To Do It* (9th Edition) by Martin, Garry L., Pear, Joseph (2010) Paperback - 1600 by Garry L., Pear, Joseph Martin (Author) Publisher: Pearson, 2010; 9 edition (1600) ASIN: B00ZT25UNG