

MINISTRY TIPS

HOW TO DISCIPLINE A STUDENT APPROPRIATELY

Reinforce: Sincerely and consistently reinforce good behavior. Compliment students for helping the group move forward and for actively participating.

Observe: What is the situation? Who is involved? What triggered the conflict? Why is the student reacting in this manner?

Listen: Give an opportunity for the student to share their story. How are they feeling? What provoked them to react in this way?

Affirm: See the beauty of the student. State the character traits that are true & given by God. Tell the student what you love about them and what you see in them.

Respond: Always respond out of love and only when you are calm. Help a student see they didn't make the best choice, (ie: when you choose to run around during Grace Group time, it made me feel like you weren't choosing to be part of the group; or, when you chose to talk while the rest of us were trying to listen, it makes us feel like you don't respect us or those who are talking). Ask if they can see where you are coming from and how that statement makes them feel. Ask the student if there was a better way for them to have handled the situation. Use mild incentives when necessary, (i.e.: if you make it the whole time tonight sitting down then you get to pick the game we play afterwards).

Remember...

You are a living, breathing permission slip – students will do whatever you do (good or bad). Every student is different; therefore, all cases will be different. Use “no” and “don't” sparingly. Treat discipline situations as teachable moments. Whenever you need help, or when the situation is becoming unsafe, please notify staff immediately. Students are never forced to participate, but should not be allowed to do alternative activities. You have the authority to speak truth into a student's life. Always use your best judgment, a student will respect you more and respect themselves more when someone cares enough to call them to live the best kind of life.

Ways to Build Relationships with Your Students Outside of Regularly Scheduled Meetings:

- Find out what your student's interests are and do the things they want to do. Put them before yourself.
- Go places together. If you are planning any kind of activity invite one of the group members to go along.
- Show up at their events!

- Be available...invite them to contact you!
- Contact them weekly. Let them know you are thinking about them.
- Eat together. Going out to eat is a great time to talk.
- Get social media for another way to connect with students. (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Plan activities with your student/group in conjunction with the events of Grace Students (don't compete).
- Invite another Grace Group to join your Grace Group on an activity. Introduce your students to other students to build even more community.

Pray with Students

Ephesians 6:18

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints."

- **Model It** – Be a person of prayer yourself. When you do pray out loud in the group, keep your prayers honest, authentic, and from your heart.
- **Remember Prayer-** Include prayer each time you meet. Don't use all your time taking prayer requests; save plenty of time for prayer.
- **Tips for Group Prayer-** Pray through a Psalm out loud together. Vary prayer time between the beginning, middle and closing of Grace Groups. Choose a portion of Scripture to pray for one another during the week. Praise God instead of prayer requests. Give everyone a 3x5 card to write requests and exchange it with another member of the group. Finish the sentence prayer. Draw a prayer. Write prayers. Popcorn prayer. Pray back to God the things He has revealed in Grace Group.

Building Relationships with your Student's Parents

Listed for you below are some creative ways that you can, with little time, get to know the parents of your students a bit better. If you have your own ideas, great! Do that! But in case some of you are stumped, here are a few ideas for you!

- Know your students' parent's names.

- Take a minute to talk to the parent on the phone before asking for their child.
- Have a dessert night at one of your homes, inviting the parents of your students over. Tell them about your life and ask them to share about theirs.
- Ask your parents for their email address. Give them updates on your group and attach pictures on occasion, even send them ways that they can be praying for you.
- Give the parents a phone call, and ask them for 1 way that you can be praying for them as they parent their child. Send them a follow-up note, or a call to let them know that you really did it!

10 Ways to Remember Names

1. Use their name frequently in the conversation.
2. Ask a question using their name.
3. Say their name in your conversation departure.
4. Relate their name to someone you knew previously
5. Look closely and attentively at them as they speak and try to find distinct features about them.
6. Do something fun with them. You always remember someone you've made a memory with.
7. Study the student's face while you're being introduced.
8. Ask God to help you remember and care. We remember what's important to us.
9. Write their name down. The act of writing will help you retain it.
10. Ask the student to test you on it.

Questions

We ask that you use these questions consistently with your students. It may take a bit for you to get used to asking and for students to get used to responding, but if you keep with it...you will begin to hear how your students are really doing.

- How are you doing, really?
- Is there anything really hard going on in your life?
- If you could change one thing about your life...
- Do you feel like God is pretty close to you lately, or pretty far away?
- What questions do you have about God?
- How connected do you feel with God these days?
- What's life like at home these days?
- We've talked about _____ lately...how's that going for you?

Top 10 Ideas for Grace Students Adult Leaders:

10. Building Relationships is Effective Student Ministry

Quality youth ministry is built on the foundation of meaningful relationships. Messages are important, but relationships impact students more than speeches do. Students need strong relationships with adults. Though few admit it, they desire significant relationships with older people. When students feel the love you have for them, they will understand your spoken messages about God's love much better.

9. Hello, Pastor!

Shepherds oversee and attend to the needs of their people. You may not ever teach a Grace Group, lead mixers, or design a promotional flyer, but I encourage you to shepherd at least one student. That one student will attend Grace Students events knowing someone loves him/her. If a student is sick, visit them. If a student has an important test, take time to pray for them. Care for him/her as if they were the only student in your group. You can become the hands and feet of Jesus, too.

8. Recruit new volunteers

Finding quality volunteers for youth ministry is one of the toughest tasks I know. Your connections within your church may be fresh contacts for us. Some of the best recruiters I've known have been other volunteers. Some of your friends who aren't involved within the youth ministry may wonder, "How can you have so much fun with students?" Let them in on the secret. Invite them to observe the action.

7. Show off your marriage

Our world desperately needs quality Christian marriages. It's a fact that many marriages aren't making it, and students are looking for hopeful examples. If you are married, remember that students are watching how you treat your spouse. Yours may be the only good marriage they ever observe. It's vital for them to see spouses loving one another. If you have a good marriage, show it off. If your marriage is hurting, maybe it's time to take a break from youth ministry and renew your relationship so you won't become part of the negative statistics.

6. It's OK if you aren't liked by everyone

The fact is that if you're a leader and you're making or enforcing decisions that affect others, you won't always be liked. Some of your decisions are going to rub people the wrong way. This is true with any leadership position. Instead of trying to run from responsibility, work toward fairness. You'll feel a lot better when you realize that everyone isn't going to agree with you. The Scriptures are clear-Jesus wasn't liked by everyone either.

5. Be careful with affection

A good rule of thumb is: female volunteers spend the majority of their time caring for girls, and male volunteers spend their time with guys. This simple guideline helps control potentially dangerous sexual situations. The sexual attraction between adults and students is an issue we must continually address and deal with in our ministries.

4. Take initiative

A volunteer who takes initiative is greatly appreciated. Being motivated even in the little things is a great help, from cleaning up after an event, to making phone calls to visitors. It can be difficult working with volunteers who don't act on anything until they receive "orders." Make yourself more helpful. Before you're asked, go ahead and do something you know needs to be done.

3. Soul Check

Did you know that your inner life communicates as much as your actions? Take a minute to think about your inner health. How is *your* love for God? How is *your* thought life? How is *your* integrity? How is *your* devotional life? Take time to reflect on the messages your inner life sends. If you don't feel comfortable with those messages, take appropriate action. Make changes. Students are looking for something to emulate. Your life message can be just that.

2. Make Memories

Providing memories for students is vital. So many of them feel lost, and don't have a positive view of themselves. They have little attachment with their past. Students are constantly questioning their identity and their existence. Some of the best gifts we can give them during these turbulent years are positive memories. Such memories provide comfort and build a foundation for their future. It is great to be able to look back on positive memories. We can't protect students from all negative experiences or bad memories. But when they experience pain, we must trust God to do the impossible in their lives while we work on the possible. Part of doing the possible is planning experiences that will ensure strong memories. You are a memory maker!

1. Become a problem solver

For every area within your ministry worthy of praise there's probably another area needing help and deserving criticism. Some volunteers seem to ignore the praiseworthy and focus on problem areas. It's easy to complain. It's also easy to contribute to the problem. But it's tough to be part of the solution. I tell my volunteers they are free to complain as long as they offer ideas or solutions for the problems. I don't need more complainers, I need volunteers to help with solutions. Become an improver and leave the disapproving to someone else.