

Offer Teenagers Positive, Age-Appropriate Discipline



Like many aspects of parenting, discipline can get trickier as children turn into teenagers. Although your kids are outgrowing timeouts or the loss of television privileges, they haven't outgrown the need for loving, healthy boundaries—and consequences when they mess up. Discipline methods may change as kids age, but the goal is the same: shaping them into responsible, respectful Christian adults who internalize God-honoring boundaries and good behavior.

Even when teenagers have more say in their rules, parents still have important roles to play. You clearly communicate and enforce the expectations and limits. You stand your ground when teenagers challenge your authority. You discipline (and follow through) in a calm, consistent way. You're present during good and bad times, assuring teenagers that you love them even when they mess up. Finally, you model good behavior, showing how loving obedience yields rewards.

Parenting expert Jim Burns says the goal of discipline is to teach kids responsibility, not to evoke obedience. "Our job is not to always prevent our children from making mistakes but rather to make certain they learn from their mistakes," he says. This needs to be done in a relaxed, respectful way, and it's the parent's job to establish this tone. "Shame-based parenting, when parents attempt to influence their kids' behavior through shaming, nagging, and negativity, simply doesn't work in the long run," Burns says.

Read on for more insights about the power of positive and loving Christian discipline.

The United Methodist Perspective

In parenting, discipline often refers to the consequences used to punish wrongdoing. In the church, discipline can also have negative connotations. Some religious traditions assign consequences of prayers or other acts to earn God's forgiveness. A childhood friend of mine had to read his Bible as punishment for disobeying his parents, leaving him with a negative view of God.

In the United Methodist tradition, discipline means something quite different. John Wesley urged his followers to "attend upon all the ordinances of God"—otherwise known as spiritual disciplines. These means of grace, which enable us to grow in faith, include public worship, communion, prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting. Wesley viewed discipline not as punishment or deterrents but instead as training and positive acts to grow in our faith, or as Bishop Rueben Job calls it, to "stay in love with God" (*Three Simple Rules*).

Disciplining teenagers doesn't need to be viewed as negative. But making this shift starts with parents. Be an example by exercising discipline in your own life. You might be surprised how closely your teenager follows your lead.

—Hank Hilliard, Young People's Ministries, hhilliard@GBOD.org

Pulse

Check out these interesting statistics about teenagers and discipline:



- In an online poll, 273 teenagers responded to the question "What types of discipline do your parents regularly or usually use on you?" The top answers were:
 - Loss of privileges such as cell phone (51%)
 - Being grounded (40%)
 - Physical punishment (22%)
 - None; they either don't believe in discipline or are too wimpy to be confrontational (20%)
 - Assigned extra household chores (19%)
- In the same poll, kids were asked how strict their parents are. Almost half (43%) of kids agreed with the statement "They let most things slide but are strict on the big stuff." But 12% of kids agreed with the statement "They're unpredictable; they go between strict and permissive, depending on their mood, how they feel, or maybe what phase the moon is that day."

(misterpoll.com)

Great Questions to Ask Your Kids

Your teenagers probably have strong opinions about this hot topic. Dig deeper by asking them:

1. What types of discipline and consequences are appropriate and inappropriate for teenagers, and why?
2. Should teenagers have a say in how or when they're punished? If so, explain.
3. When parents are handing out discipline, what should be their motivation and goals?
4. At what age should teenagers be responsible for controlling and monitoring their own behavior, and why?
5. How do people develop self-discipline? How strong has yours been lately?



Focus on Prayer

PRAY THAT:

1. God will guide your decisions about boundaries and consequences.
2. Your teenagers will recognize that your discipline is motivated by love and concern for them.
3. God will give your teenagers an obedient spirit, accompanied by respect for you and all authorities.
4. Your teenagers will develop self-discipline and internalize the guidelines you set for them.

Verse of the month

"God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way." (Hebrews 12:10-11)

God disciplines his children because he loves us and wants us to follow the right path. Although the training is difficult, filled with sinful missteps that require forgiveness, the end result is worth it. By submitting to the discipline of our heavenly Father, we show that we trust him to mold us into faithful Christians who live for him.

What's Up With Kids

At SimplyYouthMinistry.com, youth ministry author Doug Fields shares his insights about the necessity and value of discipline.

Discipline is like a root canal. It isn't fun, but it's good for you. Both are simple but decisive procedures that keep decay from destroying a whole structure, whether it be a tooth or a person. Once done, the weak and painful is restored to a state of strength and usefulness. Biblically speaking, discipline is a necessary good because of evil. Discipline is a positive promoter of spirituality, morality, and relational integrity, which the Bible refers to as "righteousness." So while discipline may keep the peace, its primary purpose is to help teenagers mature spiritually. There's the connection between discipline and discipleship. Often, the act of speaking the truth (with an attitude of grace) can help jump-start a young person's growth process. Here are some helpful discipline tips:

1. **Expect good behavior.** Set a tone of positive expectation. Be genuinely surprised when you don't see it.
2. **Communicate clearly.** Don't waste rules. Teenagers will remember and follow only a few. Also, clearly communicate about consequences. It isn't fair to surprise kids by disciplining them with measures they're unaware of.
3. **Enforce lovingly.** The consequence for not following the rules is worthless if not enforced, and to enforce means you need to follow through.

Use these three steps with grace and truth. Our goal is always a desire to help kids, not to demean them in any way. If you ever feel like you're disciplining in anger, hold off and act at another time.



MUSICSPOTLIGHT



Mainstream Artist

Background: The DMB formed in 1991 and achieved national recognition with their 1994 album *Under the Table and Dreaming*. They support not-for-profit tapings of their live shows, saying it was the passing of these tapes by college students that led to their current fame.

Albums: *Big Whiskey and the GrooGrux King* (2009), *Everyday* (2001), *Crash* (1996)

What Parents Should Know: This band's lyrics can be provocative and dark, and sometimes they're political. Matthews has said his hit song "Crash Into Me" is about the worship of women from a voyeur's perspective.

What Dave Matthews Says: Matthews believes much criticism of President Obama is because of his skin color. "I just see [racism] everywhere. There's a good population of people in this country that are terrified of the president only because he's black, even if they don't say it."

Discussion Questions: Why is race such a big deal to some people? How prevalent is racism in America? When you interact with people, is race a factor? Read aloud Romans 10:12. If people are all equal, why did God create different races? What can we learn from people of other races and cultures?



Christian Artist

Background: Switchfoot, named after a surfing term, released their 1997 debut album, *The Legend of Chin*, to moderate success. They soon achieved mainstream accolades, with two songs on the *A Walk to Remember* soundtrack. Their 2003 album *The Beautiful Letdown* went double platinum.

Albums: *Hello Hurricane* (2009), *Nothing Is Sound* (2005), *Learning to Breathe* (2000)

What Parents Should Know: This solid, talented band has occasionally distanced itself from the "Christian" label. That's apparently an effort to reach fans who might otherwise ignore them as "just a Christian band."

What Switchfoot Says: Singer Jon Foreman says, "For us, it's a faith, not a genre. We've always been very open and honest about where the songs are coming from. For us, these songs are for everyone. Calling us 'Christian rock' tends to be a box that closes some people out and excludes them."

Discussion Questions: Is it wrong for Switchfoot to avoid the label "Christian band"? What are the pros and cons of being known as followers of Christ? Read aloud Acts 17:16-34. What strategies did Paul use to speak to the Greeks? Why did those strategies work—at least with some people?

FILMWATCH

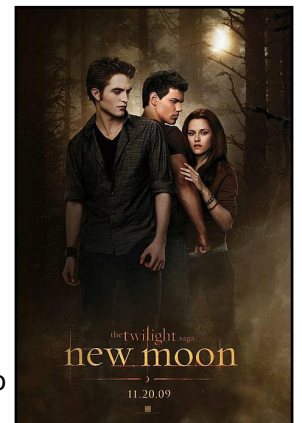
Movie: *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* (releases Nov. 20)

Genre: Drama, Fantasy

Rating: PG-13 (for some violence and action)

Synopsis: In an effort to protect her, Bella's vampire love Edward Cullen has gone abroad. She finds her friendship growing with Jacob Black, but he's a werewolf, ancient enemy to the vampires. Bella's heart and loyalties are tested.

Discussion Questions: What people and things are you most loyal to, and why? What might cause you to switch your allegiance to a new group of friends or to a new belief? Read aloud 1 Kings 8:57-61. What things can steal our loyalty to God? How should we deal with them? In our day-to-day lives, what are some ways we can show our loyalty to God?



November 2009

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			Barefoot Club at First Presbryterian - 6:30—8pm		Youth confirmation Re-treat begins at 4:30	Retreat ends at 2:30
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
		ORBIT OUT-REACH - 3:15 to 5:15	Youth Confirmation Meeting—6:15 pm			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
					All Church Retreat at Beersheba Springs	ACR continues.
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Return from Retreat; NO ORBIT YOUTH		ORBIT OUT-REACH - 3:15 to 5:15	No Wed Night Activities due to the Holiday			
29	30					
No Youth Group activities in the evening.						

WINTER YOUTH RETREAT - January 15 - 17th.

Please put this retreat on the calendar. We really, really want all of the youth, 7th through 12th graders to join us on this unique weekend. The retreat will be an **EXPERIENCE OF PRAYER**. The whole weekend we'll spend time learning about prayer, studying how people pray in scripture and what Jesus teaches about prayer, how Jesus prayed. Most importantly, we'll spend a lot of time in prayer. Of all the thing we need to be about as Christians, prayer is one of the most important - so please make this weekend a priority for your youth. Scholarships are available. Final costs will be determined in early January. Sign up on the youth office door.

LAST MINUTE TOY STORE

Calling all Elves!!! We will be going to the Last Chance Toy Store on Friday, December 18th at 12:15 and returning home around 6:15. We need all of our Spanish speaking folks to show up and serve as interpreters for the Spanish speaking shoppers. This is an amazing ministry that serves over 1000 families each Christmas season. We really need you to RSVP (by Dec. 15) to this event so that we can arrange transportation and tasks for those that are going. This is a great chance to serve and experience the joy of spreading God's love.