

Teaching and Expecting Appropriate Behavior

1: Love the Children	2
2: Understand the Children and Their Needs.....	6
3: Prepare the Learning Environment	17
4: Help Children Take Responsibility.....	21
5: Responding to Disruptions.....	24
6: Unite with Others to Reinforce Appropriate Behavior	32

1: Love the Children

"As we show love for those we teach, they become more receptive to the Spirit. They become more enthusiastic about learning and more open to us. . . . Often, they awaken to a renewed sense of their eternal worth and a greater desire for righteousness."

—*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 31



Loving Angie



Hi, I'm Sister Pond. When I was called to serve as a Primary teacher in my ward, I accepted my call with love for the Savior and a whole-hearted determination to serve Him.

The children were energetic, but a delight to be with; bright and eager. But one little girl was—oh, what a handful! Angie pushed and kicked her neighbors. She broke crayons and tore papers. She raised her hand, but only gave silly answers. When I strategically placed her chair away from those she disturbed, she would babble or sing loudly, making it next to impossible for me to teach. I managed to get through the stories and activities, but I recognized that we didn't have the Spirit with us in class. I didn't have the Spirit with me. How could I help Angie feel the Savior's love and act more like a disciple of Christ?

I increased the earnestness of my prayers and preparation, I plead with the Lord to help me reach Angie—and not neglect the others in the process. Gradually my understanding of my calling expanded to include what I was called to be as well as what I was called to do. I realized I had been called to represent the Savior in that little classroom, not to just teach lessons. Somehow through me, these children

could come to know of His love. Outwardly, we still had stories, played games, and colored, but inwardly I focused on representing the Savior. When Angie acted up I would ask myself, "How would He look at Angie? What would He say? "What would He do?"

One day at the end of Sharing Time, with Angie on my lap straining against my arms, a new thought entered my mind. Guided by a spiritual prompting, I whispered, "You don't like it when our Primary ends, do you?" She snuggled into my arms and shook her head in a wordless no. I assured her we would be together every week. I promised her we would learn more about Jesus. After that, Angie still needed extra encouragement and attention, but what joy I felt as I watched her confidence and self-control steadily start to grow. And what joy I felt in the Savior as I realized that he had given me an opportunity, through my calling, to know Him more fully!

Based on "The Unexpected Lesson," Marian Pond, *Ensign*, September 2004, 56.



The Savior Help Us Love Children

How did Angie's teacher increase her love for Angie? The teacher drew closer to the Savior

- through prayer
- through scripture study
- and by listening to the spirit

Angie's teacher realized the need to increase spiritual preparation by drawing closer to the Savior. When she did, the teacher was prompted by the spirit how to respond appropriately to Angie and her needs with increased love. Angie responded to this love with increased confidence and self-control.

We all face distractions that can distance us from the Savior:

- Stresses of life
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Feelings of unworthiness

Yet, such difficulties are the very things the Savior will heal as we turn to Him. When we prepare spiritually, He will help us become more like Him so that we can teach Heavenly Father's children more effectively.

Make a Plan

Make a plan to further your spiritual preparation so you can increase your love for your Primary children. Here are some questions to ponder.

1. What have you done in the past that has brought you close to Jesus Christ?
2. How might you now further your preparation to teach His gospel?
3. What might you need to sacrifice as you make these preparations?

Conclusion

"Wherefore, cleave unto charity . . . [for it] is the pure love of Christ . . . and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him."

—Moroni 7:46–47

2: Understand the Children and Their Needs

"You need to do more than simply understand your lesson material; you need to understand the people you teach—as children of God, as members of their age-group, and as individuals."

—*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 34



Understanding Brother Long's Class



Hello, I'm Brother Long. I teach the CTR 8 class of 7 year olds.

I felt really confident when I was called, since, as a past bishop, I'd interviewed many children as part of their preparation for baptism. I knew I could teach these children.

You can imagine my surprise when I attempted to teach my first lesson. I was

prepared to teach about baptism, but I wasn't prepared for this!



What do you do when you've prepared well and the children won't listen?

Lesson Overview

Each child is unique. As you come to know and understand children, you will know how to prepare lessons that will capture their attention and speak to each heart.

How can you come to know and understand them? By doing the following:

- Recognize age characteristics
- Listen and learn about each child

Let's begin by discussing how to recognize age characteristics.

Recognizing Age Characteristics

One way to understand children and their needs is to learn common characteristics of their age- group. A list of these can be found in the "Help for the Teacher" section of the Primary manuals and in *Teaching, No Greater Call*. Consider the characteristics of these two age-groups.

Children Ages 3–7

- Very active and full of energy
- Short attention span
- Developing language and reading skills
- Learning to share and play cooperatively
- Affectionate, desire praise, and developing self-confidence
- Beginning to understand gospel principles

Children Ages 8–11

- Good physical coordination
- Enjoy games that require skill
- Longer attention span
- Enjoy mental tasks
- Social and enjoy being in groups
- Becoming more independent
- Sensitive to criticism
- Strong sense of right and wrong

Using Different Methods of Teaching

Once you understand age characteristics, you can choose teaching methods that will meet your children's needs. Consider these teaching methods.

(More teaching methods can be found in *Teaching, No Greater Call*.)



Puzzles

Puzzles made from Church resources keep younger children involved. Mental puzzles such as word scrambles work well for older children.



Games

Simple games that teach the gospel will help channel younger children's energy. Older children enjoy being in groups and do well at games where they work together to accomplish a goal.



Drawing Activities

Gospel-oriented drawing or coloring activities work well for children. Older children can also do more complicated projects.



Stories

Choose a teaching method appropriate for the age-group to share scripture stories and personal experiences combined with testimony.



Activity Verse

Poems or songs with simple actions are often referred to as activity verses. Younger children enjoy activity verses.



Puppets

Use puppets with younger children to dramatize scripture stories they are unable to read. Older children will also enjoy dramatization as well as helping the character choose the right.



Music

Plan simple actions to provide movement and a change of pace for younger children. Music also reinforces gospel principles and provides an opportunity to bear testimony.



Dramatizations

Children can gain a greater understanding of gospel principles by dramatizing accounts from the scriptures or other Church-approved resources. (Note: The Savior should not be portrayed by children in a dramatization except in a Nativity scene.)

Practice: Preparing Lessons for Different Age-Groups

Now it's your turn to practice planning a lesson. Remember to consider age characteristics and to include age-appropriate teaching methods.

Choose one of the following three practice options.

Practice 1: Planning For Younger Children

You are teaching a CTR class about faith. Plan to use teaching methods that would meet the needs of younger children.

1. Which scripture story could you tell about someone who had faith?

2. Which teaching method could you use to tell a scripture story? (Remember that children at this age are very active and have short attention spans.)

3. What activity that teaches about faith could you have the children participate in? (Remember that these children are just beginning to develop language and reading skills, and they are full of energy.)

4. Which song might you sing with the children that would reinforce the importance of having faith?

5. What actions or movements might you add to the song to help the children move appropriately and remember the message of the song?

Practice 2: Planning For Older Children

You are teaching an older class about prayer. Plan to use teaching methods that would meet the needs of these older children.

1. What personal experience could you share from your life or from a recent conference address that would illustrate the importance of prayer?

2. Which class members would enjoy reading this account to the other children?

3. What other teaching method could you use to present this experience for those who do not read well?

4. What activity could you have the children do that teaches about prayer?
(Remember that children at this age have longer attention spans and enjoy mental tasks.)

Practice 3: Adapting Sharing Time For Older and Younger Children

You are preparing a sharing time about the Word of Wisdom. Plan how you could adapt the same sharing time to effectively teach both age-groups.

1. You have planned to tell the story of Daniel and the king's food and then invite the children to answer questions from their scriptures (Daniel 1:8–16). What teaching methods could you use to share this same story with younger children?
2. You have pictures of good and bad things for your body that the younger children will take from a container and categorize. How can you use these same pictures for older children? (Remember that older children are capable of more challenging mental games than younger children.)
3. You have planned on the older children working in small groups and writing a list of good thing for their bodies. What activity could you have the younger children do that uses paper and pencils?

Listen and Learn

“As a teacher, you can do much good by listening. When you listen, you focus your teaching on the needs and interests of individuals. . . . You show that you care about them individually. . . . As you listen carefully and respond appropriately to those you teach, you can help meet their needs for gospel learning” (*Teaching No Greater Call*, 66–67).

In the Classroom

Listen carefully to responses given in class.



Watch and discover their interests and talents.



Build a relationship of love and trust with each child.



Outside of Class

Recognize the children as you see them before and after church, . . .



. . . in the neighborhood, . . .



. . . and in other informal settings.



With Parents

Become acquainted with the family.



Share positive class experiences with the parents.



When necessary, ask parents for ways to help their child be successful.



Understanding Children with Special Needs

With love and sensitivity, you can help children with special needs participate in Primary. Use the following resources to help you understand the children, their needs, and ways to help them succeed.



[Children with Special Needs on LDS.org](#)

[Teaching Those with Disabilities](#)
Teaching, No Greater Call, 38–39

[Raising a Child with a Disability](#)
Marleen S. Williams, *Ensign*, Oct. 2004,
12–16

[Handling Members' Special Needs](#)
Kathleen Pederson Whitworth, *Ensign*,
Jan. 1995, 66

[“Lead Me, Guide Me”: Dealing with Children with Behavior Disorders](#)
Jan Underwood Pinborough, *Ensign*, Mar.
1994, 46–51

The Hidden Handicap

Laurie Wilson Thornton, *Ensign*, Apr. 1990, 44–48

Six Myths about the Handicapped

Carmen B. Pingree, *Ensign*, June 1988, 19–22

Helping and Being Helped by the Intellectually Impaired

Elizabeth VanDenBerghe, *Ensign*, Oct. 1993, 26–32

The Mathematics of Multiple Disabilities

Laurie Wilson Thornton, *Ensign*, Oct. 1991, 64–69

A Language beyond Sound: Making the Gospel Available to the Hearing-Impaired

Jan Underwood Pinborough, *Ensign*, Sept. 1991, 22–28

Being Kind to Others

K. Richard Young, *Friend*, Oct. 1988, 43

Seeing Blindness Clearly

Laurie Wilson Thornton, *Ensign*, Dec. 1988, 42–47

Understanding Robby

Leona Haag, *Ensign*, Jan. 1986, 30–31

Understanding Brother Long's Class (Part 2)

Hi, remember me? As I became acquainted with the children in my class, I realized I had to learn to teach children, not just lessons. To teach each child, I had to reach out and involve each one.

I took a closer look at the manual, *Teaching No Greater Call*, and prayerfully adapted an Enrichment Activity about “steps” leading to baptism.



Another time the children worked together on a puzzle I found in a back issue of the *Friend*.

When I taught children, not just lessons, they responded in positive ways.



Plan to Increase Your Understanding of a Child

1. Think about one child in your class (perhaps a child who challenges you). Type his or her name here.
2. List what you know about this child.
3. What specific actions can you take to understand this child better?

Conclusion

"Part of your work as a gospel teacher is to help learners understand and feel Heavenly Father's love for them. This cannot be done with words alone. It requires reaching out to individuals. . . . The Lord has exhorted us to remember that 'the worth of souls is great in the sight of God.' (D&C 18:10)."

—*Teaching No Greater Call*, 35

3: Prepare the Learning Environment

"As the teacher, you are responsible for the physical surroundings of the area in which you teach. Carefully planned physical arrangements can reduce distractions and help the children behave appropriately."

—*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 76



Preparing for Jacob



Hi, my name is Sister Coles. Several years ago, my husband and I were the nursery leaders in our ward. Jacob is now a happy seven-year-old, but let me tell you about him and his first class room experience in church.

Every week, Jacob was reluctant to come to nursery. He cried and wanted to stay with his Mom and Dad. We wanted to help Jacob, but we didn't know what to do.

Later, I spoke with Jacob's mother, and she mentioned that he loved Primary songs. That gave me an idea on how we could prepare the room to feel more inviting and loving for Jacob. Here's what we did. We spread out a blanket on the floor and put several pictures from the Gospel Art Kit on it.



When Jacob and the other children came in, I was sitting on the blanket. My husband invited them to come in and sing Primary songs. Jacob joined in that day and was never reluctant to go to nursery again.



A few weeks later, when another child reluctantly approached the nursery, Jacob comforted him by saying, "Don't cry. You'll feel better. We're singing songs."

Preparing the Learning Environment

Primary leaders and teachers can increase appropriate behavior as they prepare and control the learning environment.

Question

If you are a member of a presidency, classroom teacher, nursery leader, music leader, or activity days leader, what preparations can you make to create an inviting learning environment before the children arrive?

Here are some suggested preparations:

- Make sure the room is clean, cheerful, and inviting where every child has a place.
- Ensure the temperature in the room is comfortable.
- Make sure the room has sufficient lighting.
- Arrange seating so that learners can see and hear you and each other.
- Be sure you have all the lesson materials you need, such as chalk, an eraser, or crayons.
- Plan to minimize disruptions by printing any announcements and including them with the class roll.
- Include all teachers and leaders in agreeing on consistent ways to handle getting drinks and bathroom breaks.

Make a Plan

Make a plan to prepare the learning environment for those you teach. A properly prepared learning environment will help you teach and expect appropriate behavior. Here are some questions to ponder.

1. What specific challenge do I face in creating an inviting learning environment?
2. What can I do?
3. When can I do it?
4. Who can help?

Conclusion

"A comfortable and inviting environment for learning can contribute to learners' self-discipline, willingness to concentrate on lessons, and receptiveness to the Spirit."

—*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 76

4: Help Children Take Responsibility

"Children need and appreciate rules and limits. Work with the children you teach to establish a few simple, clear rules. . . . This will help them govern themselves. Explain that following the rules helps everyone enjoy learning together."

—*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 80–81



Setting Their Own Rules



Hi, my name is Sister Stevens. I'm a counselor in the Primary Presidency. When I started teaching children in sharing time, I was a little surprised at some of their behavior

As Presidency, we counseled together and planned a Sharing Time that would give the children a chance to set their own rules. Watch one way we helped the children take responsibility for their own actions.

I began by telling the children, "In our Primary we want to help each other learn to live the gospel. Children what are some things each of you can do so that our Primary is a place where everyone can learn and live the gospel?"

Several children responded:

"Raise our hand when we want to talk."

"Don't run in the church"

"Keep our hands to ourselves"

"Sing when it's time to sing"

"Don't push."

Establishing a few, clear rules in Primary worked well for us. We made a chart listing the rules for the older children, and for the younger children, we used drawings to show how they should act.

We also agreed on a silent signal like this:



or like this, that would remind the children when we needed to observe one of the rules.



Practice: Simple Clear Rules

It's a good idea to combine the children's suggestions into three or four "simple, clear rules" (Teaching, No Greater Call, 80). Below are the children's responses from the story on the previous page. How could you combine them into three or four simple, clear rules?

Children's Responses

- Raise our hand when we want to talk.
- Don't run in the church.
- Keep our hands to ourselves.
- Sing when it is time to sing.
- Don't push.

Your Ideas for the Rules

Suggestions for Simple, Clear Rules

- I will show respect in Heavenly Father's house.
- I will treat others as I would like to be treated.
- I will not interrupt the learning of others or myself.

Conclusion

“I teach them correct principles, and they govern themselves.”

—Joseph Smith
(quoted by John Taylor,
Millennial Star, Nov. 15,
1851, 339)

5: Responding to Disruptions

"In your efforts to help those who become disruptive, remember that you should not simply try to correct inappropriate behavior or make sure everyone is quiet; you should help learners become better disciples of the Savior."

—Teaching, No Greater Call, 84



Lesson Overview

A variety of methods can be effective as you respond to disruptions. In this lesson you will discover:

1. How to respond positively to negative behavior.
2. Examples of positive responses versus scolding responses.
3. Progressive steps for responding to disruptions.
4. How to teach and encourage as you speak privately with a child.

Sister Andrews Responds Positively

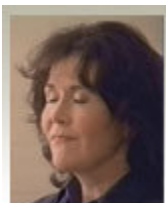
Your lessons may at times be disrupted by the behavior of those you teach. Learning to respond positively to a negative behavior is an important skill. Sister Andrews was faced with a disruptive class that was talking and throwing paper airplanes. This is how she responded:



Ignored the disruption and removed the cause.



Focused the children's attention on the lesson.



Took time to say a silent prayer and collect herself.



Engaged the children with music and scriptures.



Expressed love to the children.

Staying Positive

Remember “the worth of souls is great in the sight of God” (D&C 18:10). Criticizing, threatening, or scolding are not effective methods for teaching appropriate behavior and do not exemplify the Savior's love. Positive comments help children understand that we expect the best from them.

Follow these guidelines for staying positive:

- Address the children in a calm and kind way.
- Teach the expected behavior.
- Tell the children why we want them to behave a certain way.

Scolding	Understanding
You always cause a disturbance in the class. I'm tired of it.	I know it's sometimes hard to sit still, but you'll have to do your very best for a little longer. Would it help if you sat here by me?
Why can't you keep your hands off the other children?	It is tempting to tease other people, but we don't tease. It keeps all of us from learning.
How can you be so thoughtless of others?	Sometimes you may feel like saying unkind things to others, but in our class we try very hard to be kind and thoughtful. Let's try to help others feel the way we like to feel.
You're not paying a bit of attention to me. Turn around immediately!	It's hard for me to teach when I can't see your eyes, so I need you to help me by paying close attention.
Stop this rowdiness! I won't put up with it another minute!	Everyone seems tired and restless. Let's stand up for a minute and stretch.

Practice Staying Positive

You are teaching your CTR 8 class about baptism. One of the boys, Eric, has interrupted five times to tell you something unrelated to the lesson.

The next time he interrupts, what will you say? Remember to stay positive.



Here are some suggested responses:

- "Eric, I need you to help. Can you come hold this picture?"
- "I know sometimes it is hard to focus. Here are some important things you'll want to know . . ."
- "In just a minute Eric you'll have a chance to share something about your baptism day."
- "Eric, I would love to hear about that after class. Now in this story, listen for . . ."

Progressive Steps

Two girls are talking to each other nonstop, and you are in the middle of teaching. What can you do? Notice the progressive steps this teacher takes to respond to the disruption.



1. Stop and wait.



4. Separate them.



2. Move closer.



5. Speak privately to them.



3. Invite participation.

Speaking Privately with a Child

Occasionally you may need to remove a child from Primary and speak privately about what is expected in Primary. You may have a conversation similar to this, where Brother Jordan is speaking to Kayla about a disruption in sharing time. Notice the steps Brother Jordan follows.



Brother Jordan:
Kayla, I hope you understand why you are here. I needed to take you out of Sharing Time because you hit Tim.

Kayla:
He called me a mean name.

Brother Jordan:
Sister Morris is talking with Tim about calling you a mean name. But you responded by hitting, and we cannot have hitting in Primary.

Kayla:
Good, because he made me mad.

Brother Jordan:
I can understand why you were upset and sometimes it's really hard to do the right thing. What could you do instead of hitting?

Kayla:
I don't know.

Brother Jordan:
Think about what the Savior would want you to do. You could scoot your chair away and that would be a better choice than hitting someone.

Kayla:
That will be hard, but I'll try not to do something mean next time.

Brother Jordan:
You're right. It probably will be hard. I'll be looking for you to be successful next time. I'm also going to ask your Sister Morris to move you away from Tim for awhile. But I know you can choose a better way.

Here are the steps Brother Jordan followed:

- Tell the child why they were removed.
- Help them find a better way to respond the next time.
- Follow up with praise when they are successful the next time.
- Give positive feedback.

Conclusion

"There is no discipline in all the world like the discipline of love. It has a magic all its own."

—Gordon B. Hinckley,
"The Environment of Our Homes,"
Ensign, June 1985, 6

". . . A soft answer turneth away wrath. . . ."

—Proverbs 15:1

6: Unite with Others to Reinforce Appropriate Behavior

"Be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things."

—2 Nephi 1:21



Helping Brock



Hi, my name is Sister Hatch. I'm the Primary president and we're counseling together to address a concern in our Primary.

His name is Brock.



He is eager and bright but his disruptive behavior is persistent and ongoing.

We have tried everything we can think of. What other resources are available? Who can help us?

Available Resources

There are many resources in the ward to help Sister Hatch.



Teacher

In our leadership meeting, the presidency helped us understand the importance of everyone being consistent in teaching and expecting appropriate behavior. Now we all agree on how to handle interruptions, the use of food in Primary, and the need to sit with our class in sharing time and help them

focus on what is being taught. Brock responds better in class when all the leaders in Primary are consistent and he knows what to expect.



Parents

We wanted to be included in planning a way to help Brock behave appropriately in Primary. As we visited with the

Primary Presidency we were able to help them understand Brock and how he responds. As we work together in helping Brock be accountable for the way he acts, we are always excited to be notified of Brock's good behavior.



Activity Day Leader

I am Brock's den leader. I am included with the parents, Primary Pres and others in the plan to help Brock. Children respond well when everyone agrees on appropriate behavior and is consistent in expecting it. I have learned ways to use Brock's talents and energy in helping him feel successful.



Home Teacher

When I visit Brock and his family, I take time to find out how Brock is doing on his soccer team and in cub scouts. Because his father teaches in Young Mens, I have occasionally been called upon to come to Primary and sit with Brock when he is having a hard time. Because we're friends, he responds well to me.



Bishopric

One of us tries to get to Primary every week to see how things are going and so the children will know of our love for them. I was involved in putting a plan in place for Brock. I followed the example Elder Ballard told about in one of his talks and for a while, Brock came to my office every week after Primary to report how things went that day. It not only gave Brock an opportunity to be accountable, but we became good friends. We have found that when children learn appropriate behavior in Primary, it helps them as they grow into teens and young adults. (Learn more: "Great Shall Be the Peace of Thy Children," M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, April 1994, 60-61.)



Written Resources

Many written resources are available to help guide you as you teach and expect appropriate behavior from the children. Study, read, and pray for guidance as you teach the children how to govern themselves.

Helping Brock (Part 2)



We are so thankful that we involved all the resources in our ward. We were able to unite together and help Brock.

It took some time, and some effort, but Brock has really started to respond.

He has learned appropriate behavior; and that will help him as he grows into a teen and young adult.



Plan to Involve Others

1. Think of a child who consistently disrupts. Write his or her name here.
2. List by name the resources in your ward who can help this child learn appropriate behavior.
3. Meet with your Primary and Priesthood leaders to discuss ways to involve these people.

Conclusion

"We are all working as one in a great cause. We are all members of the Church of Jesus Christ."

—Gordon B. Hinckley,
Ensign, November 2003, 82

". . . be determined in one mind and in one heart, united in all things. . . ."

—2 Nephi 1:21