

Discipline Techniques From a Former Marine

Discipline means to teach someone, not to punish them. Clubbers will misbehave for some very basic reasons: ignorance of your standards, boredom, frustration, attention seeking.

Behavior is controlled by its consequences. Positive reinforcement is the best way to train up a child (something good happens when they behave). Negative reinforcement (nothing bad happens when they behave) will work. Punishment is possible (something bad happens, or a good thing is removed when they misbehave). Sometimes it is difficult to figure out what a clubber thinks is “something good happens” or “something bad happens”.

Pray Without Ceasing!

We are not wrestling with flesh and blood. Satan is trying to disrupt your club and keep you from presenting the Gospel, memorizing Scripture and learning the Word of God. You need the help of the Holy Spirit to help you in this fight!

Establish Discipline Standards, and Enforce Them Consistently

Have the minimum number of rules necessary, and always enforce them. Make sure clubbers and parents know the rules. Expect clubbers to behave appropriately, from the time they walk in the door until they leave for the night. Start the night off right with a structured opening ceremony to set the tone for the evening. Don't make threats you won't carry out.

Prepare Ahead Of Time

Clubbers will want to do something; if you have nothing prepared, they will find something to do on their own. Have appropriate activities prepared for the time before club starts and for each segment of the evening. Prepare early in the week. Know what you are going to do next and do it quickly!

Use Visual Aids & Object Lessons To Capture the Clubber's Attention

Clubbers are curious, and they will want to see what is going on if it is interesting. Prepare the visuals ahead of time, and practice using them. Even when you use good visuals, people have short attention spans.

Tell Relevant Stories To Keep the Clubber's Attention

Use the Bible; have it open in front of you. Build tension; keep them on the edge of their seats. Know the story and message so well that you don't have to look at your notes.

Reward Good Behavior

Praise your clubbers for good behavior. Use the point system to create peer pressure for good behavior. Also, reward individuals with Awana dollars or some other prize. You might reward attempts at good behavior, if you know the child really tried.

Clean Up Your Classroom

Eliminate clutter. Try to arrange chairs so that the door is in the back of the room. Have the teacher as close as possible to the students.

Be Enthusiastic and Excited!

Your attitude should reflect how important you think the night is; use your eyes, voice, gestures, facial expressions, movement. Clubbers should wonder what is going to happen next, and not want to miss anything!

Have The Clubbers Participate In The Activities

Use them to help you. Ask lots of questions. Have them hold the visuals. Reward deserving students with a chance to participate.

Understand Your Clubbers Through Home Visitation

Wear your uniform, be polite, and ask to look at the child's book. When you visit the home, it may help you understand the behavior of the child. We are changing lives in Awana!

Develop A Close Relationship With Each Clubber

Pray for them! Know their names, and use them. Give them some attention. Have contact with them outside of club night; outings, school events, church services, church events.

Learn Ways To Deal With Discipline Challenges When They Occur

Make sure every leader stays with the clubbers during the entire night.

Use silent clues and signals for individuals, like moving closer or making eye contact and shaking your head. Use visual or sound clues for the group. For example, flash the lights or ring a bell when you start the five count. Stay calm & deliberate, don't yell.

Don't let one clubber distract the class; remove him, and be sure that what you are doing in the front of the room is something more exciting than his distraction! Have a leader take him out, and tell him why the behavior is not acceptable. Ask him to cooperate. Don't shame him, or ask him why he did what he did. If he is allowed to return, sit him in the back.

Behavior reinforcers

Marble jar, time-out chair, isolation cubicle, balloon-pop by teacher, flashing lights to get attention, bells, whistles, ball in the air, balloon bust boards, fish pond, Grand Prize Game, stickers, praise, achiever activities