

DISCIPLINE

Maintaining order is the means to an end, not an end in itself. The word 'discipline' and 'disciple' come from the same root. What's the lesson behind that?

Preventing Discipline Problems

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." What are some ways we prevent problems?

- Have a lesson, at the beginning of the year, on the importance of having the Spirit in class and review as needed. Let the students know your expectations and general standards of behavior.
- Easier to start with a firm grip and later relax, then to start relaxed and then try to tighten your grip
- "They won't care how much you know, till they know how much you care." They got to know you love them. To love your students, you don't only know their names, but you get to know them. This is not the same as trying to get them to love you! Why?
- "If you don't give them something to eat, they'll eat you!" Kids that are engaged are not usually behavior problems. Great lessons are the best preventers of behavior problems. Boredom is perhaps the greatest source of behavior problems.
- Be prepared for class. If you are trying to figure out what you are doing, you can expect to lose their attention for a while.
- Compliment and reinforce positive behavior.

Handling Discipline Problems

Preventive measures will do much to lessen behavior problems, but virtually every seminary teacher will still have some. The following suggestions have proven helpful. They are loosely in order of gentlest, to most severe.

- Incentives (Praise, rewards, compliments, postcard thanking them...)
- Use some kind of seating chart.
- Stand near those who are chatting (Proximity).
- Pause (wait for it to quiet down). Use the power of silence. A sudden silence—even stopping mid-sentence—brings a painful awareness to the violator that his actions are not going unnoticed (D&C 88:122). *Do not try to talk over others!*
- Similar to the last suggestion, try talking softer. Go even to a whisper.
- Direct questions to students who have been distracted. Involve the uninvolved.
- Finger to lips or a soft "Shhhh". The more discreet and less attention given, the better. Directly communicate your wishes ("David, can you help us out here and...", "I'll wait till you are ready").
- Get other kids to help you take care of the trouble makers. *"I have this great video but we can't watch it till it quiet's down."* After a class, ask a helpful student to assist getting others back on track.
- Explain the principle of the need to have the Spirit in class. (D&C 50:14-23)
- Pow Wow with the class on how to fix a particular discipline problem.
- Tell the offending student, during class, that you need to talk to them after class.
- Ask a trouble maker to move to another seat.
- One on one, talk with the student. Assume the best.

- One on one talks explaining consequences like a call home.
- Call home (sometimes a call to the priesthood leader can do it).
- Behavior contract
- Suspension (one week...Month... Year)

Plan Ahead for a Discipline Strategy

- A student comes in with a box of donuts for the whole class?
- You ask a student to move to another seat and they say “No!”
- “Sister Smith was more fun than you. She was nicer too. She let us...”
- Too much chitchat in class while you are speaking.
- Joe won’t stop texting.
- Sara and Julie are coming in 15 minutes late most days.

Other Tips

- Handle the problem as early as possible. Behavior problems, like fires, are most easily stopped quickly, before they are out of control.
- Don’t get physical. For instance, don’t try to take a phone away or remove a student from class.
- Assume the best “David, this isn’t like you to... You’re better than this.”
- When you need to correct a student, try to make it one on one whenever possible. This helps them save face and makes them less resistant to change. This one on one communication can be done before class starts, at church, during a movie, on the phone, or by asking a student to stay after class. Correction in front of the class can

cause hard feelings and make a student stubborn.

- Make sure they understand that having the Spirit in class is the reason for getting after certain behaviors. Not your personal preference.
- Respond to people and against behavior. When certain behaviors are exhibited, be careful not to react against the person exhibiting the behavior. Explicitly point out that it is the behavior, not the person, that is unacceptable.
- Don’t endure behavior that drives the Spirit away for fear that you might drive that particular student away from seminary. “It is better that one man should perish than that a nation [or class] should dwindle and perish in unbelief.” -1st Nephi 4:13. Better short term pain and long term enjoyment than a long term pain to avoid a short term struggle.
- Don’t threaten something you are not willing to carry out. Plan out what you might do in certain situations. Act, don’t react.
- Likewise, don’t overreact. Don’t use a sledge hammer to kill a fly. Don’t threaten your “nuclear” option every time.
- They must know that you are not interested in being their friend as much as pleasing the Lord in the way you teach the class.
- Pick your fights carefully.
- Remember that the Lord is deeply concerned with your success. He can inspire you and guide you as you seek to establish a climate of discipleship in a classroom.
- Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-44. Note particularly the advice beginning with the words “when moved upon” and the words “then showing forth afterwards.”

SEMINARY BEHAVIOR CONTRACT

Student's name: _____

Seminary is an incredible way to be nourished in the scriptures and learn skills that will bless students for the rest of their lives as they serve God and their fellow man. Having the Spirit in class is essential to this learning process.

Each student has great power to make seminary better or worse by his or her behavior. When a student is acting out, it can ruin the experience for the entire class. If a student will not change inappropriate behavior, it is better that he or she loses their privilege of taking Seminary, than the entire classes waste its time and suffer.

This contract is in response to unacceptable behavior that he or she has been warned about repeatedly. Those unacceptable behaviors are:

- _____
- _____
- _____

If those behaviors above do not change, the following will happen:

1. The teacher discusses the inappropriate behavior with the student and the consequences.
2. The teacher reads through the contract with the student realizing that if things don't change they will lose their seminary privilege.
3. Teacher talks to the parent or guardian about the unacceptable behavior.
4. After the next offense, the student may not return to seminary until the contract is signed by themselves, parents/guardian, and the bishop and parents are called again.
5. After the contract is signed, further offenses will result in the following consequences at the teacher's discretion.
 - Parents are notified and the student is not allowed to attend seminary for one week with makeup work required for credit.
 - Parents are notified and student loses privilege to attend for a month or rest of the semester with makeup work required for credit.

Required Signatures

Parent(s) or Guardian:	Student:
Bishop:	Teacher:

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to call the CES Coordinator (John Bushman) at (360) 509-6155.