

Create a Safe Physical Environment

- Seat the student so that you can see him.
- Keep him an arm's length away from other students.
- Keep the classroom as clutter-free as possible. Keep objects and materials out of sight and reach until they are needed.
- Have a place for the student to calm down. (A beanbag chair or tent.)

Create a Safe Emotional Environment

- Develop a positive relationship.
- Discover the child's hobbies or special interests and surprise him by referring to them in class.
- Be kind in correcting. Do not humiliate. Avoid negative comments. Do not assume that the child understands what you want. Explain the expected behavior clearly so that the child can comply.
- Give the child a turn. Because of his impulsivity, fear of forgetting and/or being forgotten, he will speak and act out of turn. Some interruptions may be allowed, and some may be ignored. Handle with a look or a touch on the shoulder. Help him by calling on him to participate.
- As the child matures and improves in judgment, give him more leeway. Never degrade the child—help him to maintain his self-esteem at all cost.

CCDM seeks to enhance the lives of persons with disabilities through Christ-centered services such as:

- Providing a full range of services for persons with developmental disabilities including residential alternatives, job placement, opportunities for social interaction, and opportunities for spiritual growth.
- Enabling others through training, resources, and encouragement to effectively minister with persons with disabilities.
- Seeking partnership with individuals, churches, and other organizations to meet the physical and spiritual needs of persons with disabilities.



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Behavior Management in the Church

Create a successful church experience for students with behavioral problems.

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Information about how to manage young people who have behavioral problems has become a real need in the church. In 1999, the surgeon general reported the incidence of severe behavior disorders in children aged nine to 17 to be at 10.3 percent of the population. Add to that the high and rising rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, learning disabilities, and ADHD, and you are bound to have some young people in your care who are suffering, and who need help in controlling their actions.

In the name of Christ, church leaders must be prepared to help these troubled young people.

The first thing you need to know is that these are diagnosable emotional disabilities—not the result of poor parenting, nor of consciously defiant behavior on the part of the child.

It does no good to blame either the parent or the child for these behaviors. They are not in control, and they already feel bad about the situation. Don't make things worse for them. Instead, meet with the parents and find out how they deal with the behavior. Ask how the child's schoolteachers deal with him. Find out what medications he is taking, and how they affect him. Create a plan to help the child meet his goals.

It is also helpful to know that young people with these disorders will externalize or internalize their feelings. In both cases, the teacher *must* intervene on behalf of the child.

The child who externalizes will

- argue and be noncompliant
- be aggressive
- have temper tantrums
- lie and/or steal
- be unable to control himself
- force others to submit to him
- not develop friendships with peers

The child who internalizes will

- feel worthless, sad, and depressed
- dwell on the same thought or event
- cry frequently
- hear and see things that aren't there
- feel anxious and complain of illness
- talk of taking his life
- show no interest in activities
- not develop friendships
- be teased, abused, or ignored by peers

Teaching Tips

- Believe in the child.
- Believe that what you are doing will make a difference.
- Be a model of togetherness and self-control.
- Give and receive affection.
- Be firm, but fair.
- Radiate hope, joy, and assurance.
- Be a good listener.
- Be willing to alter teaching methods and approaches. Use a lot of drama, music, art, and other avenues for self-expression.
- Recognize and admit when it is time to have respite from the student.

Effective Discipline

- Be full of praise. Use every opportunity to reward the child for good behavior. Use stickers, toys, and candy to get the child's attention. As he matures, replace these things with social and personal rewards. (Do this with all your students.)
- Use another adult or class member to attend to the person's outburst.
- Do not lose your temper. Make sure that what you expect is clear. Establish classroom rules and consequences and post them. Be consistent in applying the rules to all students.
- Admit if you are wrong. Apologize. (This will help the child develop a skill he needs.)
- Ignore a behavior if it is bothering you more than the class.
- Do not be intimidated by the student or his family. Many times children are allowed to get away with bad behavior because ignoring it is easier than dealing with it. This is a mistake for all parties.
- Don't pity or show sympathy for the student. This suggests superiority. Let him know that you have high expectations for him.