

LOVE THE LITTLE CHILDREN

BY: ALI HOLT, JORDAN HOLT, AND STEPHANIE FREEMAN



HELPING ALL THE CHILDREN IN THE CHURCH

- WHAT IS OUR MISSION AS A CHILDREN'S MINISTRY?
 - TO TEACH THE CHILDREN ABOUT JESUS
 - TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS
 - LET THE PARENTS LEARN ABOUT JESUS AND REJOICE IN FELLOWSHIP
 - TEACH WITH LOVE AND KINDNESS

GREATER PURPOSE

- OUR JOB IS MUCH BIGGER THAN BABYSITTING IT IS TO TEACH THE LOVE OF GOD



A TEACHER'S MISSION

- WHAT IS OUR MISSION?
 - TO LOVE AND TO SERVE
 - **MARK 12:28-31** ²⁸ONE OF THE TEACHERS OF THE LAW CAME AND HEARD THEM DEBATING. NOTICING THAT JESUS HAD GIVEN THEM A GOOD ANSWER, HE ASKED HIM, "OF ALL THE COMMANDMENTS, WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT?" ²⁹"THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE," ANSWERED JESUS, "IS THIS: 'HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE. ³⁰LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' ³¹THE SECOND IS THIS: 'LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' THERE IS NO COMMANDMENT GREATER THAN THESE."
 - EVEN B.F. SKINNER, THE FOUNDER OF ABA, WHO WAS AN ATHEIST WAS QUOTED ***"WHAT IS LOVE EXCEPT ANOTHER NAME FOR THE USE OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT?"***



IN ORDER TO
SHOW LOVE WE
HAVE TO KNOW
HOW THE
CHILDREN RECEIVE
LOVE

WHAT ARE THE 5 LOVE LANGUAGES

- 5 LOVE LANGUAGES
 - WORDS OF AFFIRMATION
 - QUALITY TIME
 - RECEIVING GIFTS
 - ACTS OF SERVICE
 - PHYSICAL TOUCH

WORDS OF AFFIRMATION



- WORDS OF AFFIRMATION = SOCIAL PRAISE
 - WE WANT TO COMPLIMENT AND PROVIDE POSITIVE ATTENTION FOR THE THINGS OUR CHILDREN ARE DOING CORRECTLY. WE WANT TO BE PROACTIVE RATHER THAN REACTIVE.
 - PROACTIVE = PROVIDING PRAISE/ATTENTION FOR POSITIVE THINGS ON A CONSISTENT BASIS THAT WE WANT TO SEE MORE OF
 - REACTIVE = PROVIDING ATTENTION FOR NEGATIVE THINGS OR BEHAVIORS AFTER THE FACT
 - IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT WE USE AT LEAST A 5:1 PROACTIVE VS REACTIVE STRATEGY WITH INTERACTING WITH OUR CLIENTS.



- PEOPLE TEND TO REMEMBER THE ONE NEGATIVE COMMENT SAID ABOUT THEM EVEN IF THERE HAVE BEEN HUNDREDS OF POSITIVE
 - YOU DO NOT WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR THE NEGATIVE COMMENTS YOU MADE

QUALITY TIME



- QUALITY TIME = ATTENTION/ CONVERSATION/ PLAYING
 - IN COMBINATION WITH WORDS OF AFFIRMATION, OUR KIDS NEED POSITIVE ATTENTION.
 - SOME OF OUR KID'S MAIN REINFORCER IS QUALITY TIME WITH AN INDIVIDUAL.
 - WE TEACH TEACHERS/PARENTS TO PROVIDE MINIMAL ATTENTION WHEN A CHILD IS EXHIBITING ATTENTION SEEKING BEHAVIORS AS A CONSEQUENCE FOR EXHIBITING NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS
 - BEING PROACTIVE WITH OUR ATTENTION WILL PREVENT A LOT OF OUR CHILDREN FROM FEELING THE NEED TO "ACT OUT"
 - EX. FILLING UP GAS TANK

HOW TO GIVE QUALITY TIME IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

- SOME WAYS TO GIVE QUALITY TIME:
 - GIVE EACH CHILD 1:1 ATTENTION WHEN THEY WALK IN
 - REMEMBER THEIR NAME
 - PRIOR TO STARTING THE GROUP, SPEND TIME PLAYING.

RECEIVING GIFTS



- RECEIVING GIFTS = ACCESS TO TANGIBLES
 - EXAMPLES INCLUDE: CANDY, STICKERS, TOYS, ETC
 - THESE DON'T HAVE TO BE THINGS THEY TAKE HOME THEY CAN BE KEPT AT CHURCH AND THEY LEAVE BEHIND
 - BEST WAY TO DETERMINE THIS IS BY CONDUCTING A PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT.
 - REMEMBER, IT IS ONLY A REINFORCER IF OUR KID WILL ACTUALLY WORK TO OBTAIN IT
 - WE ALL LIKE MONEY, BUT WOULD YOU DO 100 PUSH UPS FOR \$1 – DOUBTFUL BUT WHAT ABOUT 100 PUSHUPS FOR \$1MILLION DOLLARS? NOW WE ARE TALKING!
 - OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER ARE MOTIVATION! EVERYTHING WE DO IS BASED ON MOTIVATION.

ACTS OF SERVICE



- ACTS OF SERVICE = ESCAPE/AVOIDANCE
 - ACTS OF SERVICE MUST BE FREELY GIVEN IN ORDER FOR THE RECIPIENT TO RECEIVE ITS FULL REINFORCING EFFECTS
 - THIS WILL TAKE TIME TO KNOW OUR KIDS AND THEIR WEAKNESSES AND REALLY FOCUS ON HOW TO SERVE THEM IN THEIR TIME OF NEED.
 - ACTS OF SERVICE WHICH ARE NOT FREE, BUT UNDER COERCIVE CONTROL EMIT ESCAPE BEHAVIOR FROM OUR CLIENTS
 - “LOVE IS ALWAYS FREELY GIVEN. LOVE CANNOT BE DEMANDED.” – DR. CHAPMAN

HOW CAN WE SERVE

- THIS ISN'T BIBLE TIMES AND WE DON'T NEED TO BE WASHING OUR CHILDREN'S FEET BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO SERVE WITHIN YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS
- GIVE BREAKS WHEN WE SEE THE WARNING SIGNS
- TAKE OUR STUDENTS FOR A WALK WHEN THEY APPEAR OVERWHELMED

PHYSICAL TOUCH



- PHYSICAL TOUCH = SENSORY/ATTENTION
 - PHYSICAL TOUCH IS A WAY OF SHOWING EMOTIONAL LOVE
 - ALL HUMANS NEED PHYSICAL CONTACT... SOME NEED IT MORE THAN OTHERS
 - WE GIVE HIGH FIVES WHEN WE ARE EXCITED, WE HUG SOMEONE WHEN WE HAVEN'T SEEN THEM IN A WHILE, WE RUB SOMEONE'S BACK WHEN THEY ARE SAD, ETC
 - SOMETIMES THERE ARE NO WORDS FOR THE SITUATION BUT ONLY OUR PRESENCE
 - WHAT A BETTER WAY TO SHOW A PHYSICAL REPRESENTATION OF GOD ALWAYS BEING PRESENT IN OUR LIVES THAN US MODELING THAT TO OUR KIDS AT A YOUNG AGE
 - SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH GIVING PHYSICAL TOUCH WHICH MEANS YOU HAVE TO FIND WHAT WORKS FOR BOTH OF YOU

WAYS TO FIND THE RIGHT PHYSICAL TOUCH



HOW DO WE DETERMINE THEIR LOVE LANGUAGE

- THE EASIEST THING TO DO WOULD BE TO SEND THIS LINK HOME TO THE PARENTS AND HAVE THEM FILL IT OUT AS PART OF AN INITIATIVE TO MEET EACH CHILD'S LOVE LANGUAGE
 - [HTTPS://WWW.5LOVELANGUAGES.COM/QUIZZES/LOVE-LANGUAGE](https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language)
- IF THEY DON'T DO IT, YOU CAN ALSO FILL OUT THE QUIZ TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITIES.
- WATCH HOW THEY RESPOND WHEN YOU USE THE DIFFERENT LOVE LANGUAGES TO GAUGE WHICH MAY BE MOST EFFECTIVE

WHY ARE LOVE LANGUAGES AND REINFORCEMENT SO IMPORTANT?

- IF YOUR KIDS LOVE YOU, THEY WILL WANT TO COME TO CHURCH
- IF YOUR KIDS FEEL LOVED, THEY WILL PAY CLOSER ATTENTION AND BEHAVE MORE APPROPRIATELY BECAUSE THAT PORTION OF THEIR LIFE IS FULFILLED.
- RULING WITH LOVE IS ALWAYS MORE EFFICIENT THAN RULING WITH FEAR



THE FLIP SIDE

- IF YOU RULE WITH COERCION AND FEAR THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT DOWNSIDE.
- THE NEXT SLIDES ARE WHAT YOU NEED TO AVOID TO ENSURE SUCCESS WITH YOUR KIDS.
- CONSISTENCY IS KEY IN GAINING TRUST AND RESPECT SO MAKE SURE YOUR KIDS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOU



THINGS TO AVOID

- QUESTIONING: ASKING QUESTIONS THAT DON'T HAVE A GOOD ANSWER
- ARGUING
- SARCASM/TEASING
- EMPTY THREATS
- CRITICISM
- DESPAIR
- LOGIC
- VERBAL FORCE
- TAKING AWAY



BE KIND TO EVERYONE
YOU MEET. YOU NEVER
KNOW WHO *LOST AN*
ARGUMENT WITH
A 3-YEAR-OLD TODAY.

WAYS TO USE REINFORCEMENT IN YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

- PIVOT PRAISE
- PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT
- CATCH THEM BEING GOOD



PIVOT PRAISE

- USE OTHER STUDENTS WHO ARE MODELLING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR.
 - “I LOVE HOW AMY IS SITTING QUIETLY!”
 - “WOW LUCY, GREAT JOB USING NICE MANNERS!”
 - “HEATHER, I AM SO PROUD OF YOU FOR USING YOUR WORDS, YOU MAY GO TAKE A BREAK.”
- BE SPECIFIC IN YOUR PRAISE.
- ALWAYS PIVOT BACK TO THE ORIGINAL STUDENT WHEN THEY BEGIN TO COMPLY

PROMOTING ENGAGEMENT



- BOREDOM LEADS TO PROBLEM BEHAVIOR
- KEEP THEM ENGAGED IN APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR
- STRUCTURE THE DAY TO REDUCE BOREDOM
- MATCH ACTIVITY LENGTH TO ATTENTION SPANS
- SHOW INTEREST TO SPARK INTEREST
- BE ENTHUSIASTIC

CATCH THEM BEING GOOD

- DELIVER FREQUENT AND IMMEDIATE REINFORCEMENT
- IF YOU KNOW A CHILD STRUGGLES WITH A PARTICULAR ACTIVITY, MAKE A POINT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR.
 - TRY FOR AT LEAST 3 POSITIVES FOR EVERY REDIRECTION.
- USE POSITIVE LANGUAGE
 - MAKE A POINT OF THE THINGS THAT YOU WANT THE CHILD TO BE DOING, NOT THE THINGS YOU WANT THEM TO STOP DOING.
 - “KEEP YOUR HANDS TO YOURSELF” INSTEAD OF “STOP HITTING.”



THE MORAL OF THE STORY

- THE BEST PART OF LIFE IS THAT WE GET TO CHOOSE NOT JUST EVERY DAY BUT EVERY MOMENT THE KIND OF PERSON WE WANT TO BE AND THE KIND OF IMPACT WE HAVE ON THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WHO COME HERE
- WE HIGHLY SUGGEST IF YOU WANT A SUCCESSFUL SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSROOM YOU REMEMBER THE PRIORITIES
- AND DON'T FORGET TO ASK FOR HELP WE ARE ALWAYS HERE TO SUPPORT YOU



SOME BASIC INFO ABOUT SPECIAL NEEDS

READ ON AT WILL

- ASK QUESTIONS
- CHILDREN WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME HAVE SOME HEALTH PROBLEMS, HAVE FINE MOTOR DIFFICULTIES, AND ARE TYPICALLY VERY STRONG WILLED. DO NOT GO BLINDLY INTO WORKING WITH THESE CHILDREN. EDUCATE YOURSELF AND DO SOME RESEARCH.
- AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER IS A SOCIAL DISORDER AND INCLUDES SPEECH DELAY AND RESTRICTIVE REPETITIVE BEHAVIOR. LEARN WHAT YOU CAN ABOUT THE DISORDER AND THE BEST WAY TO WORK WITH THESE STUDENTS.

STRATEGIES TO HELP OUR CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

- SUPPORT THEM WHEN THEY MAKE SMALL GAINS
- ADD IN STRUCTURE AND ROUTINE
- TRY TO MAKE YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS AS BLACK AND WHITE AS POSSIBLE THEY DON'T LIVE IN A GRAY WORLD
- MAKE YOUR CLASS THE EXACT SAME EVERY SUNDAY SO THE KIDS KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT
- HAVE A SENSORY ROOM TO TAKE THE KIDS TO WHEN THEY ARE AGITATED OR OVER STIMULATED



POSSIBLE SCHEDULE

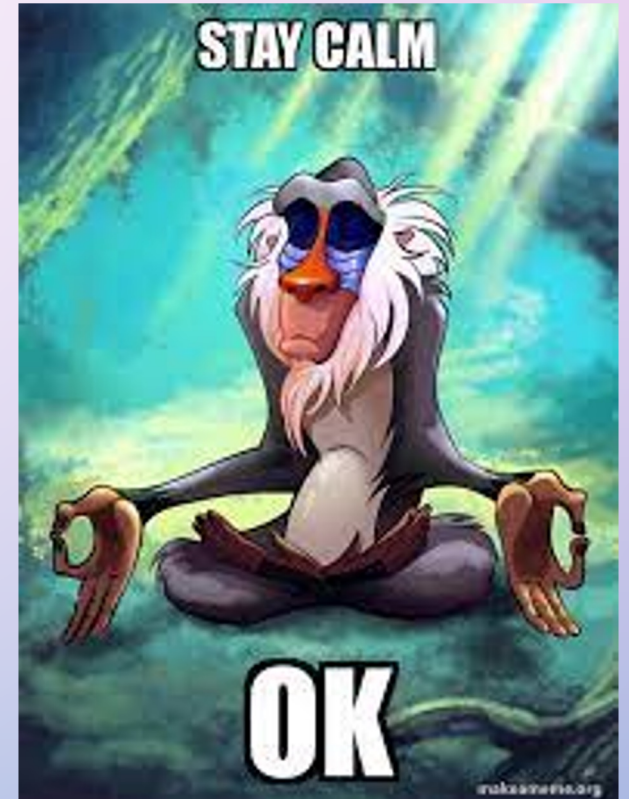
- COME IN AND SPEND TIME TOGETHER/ FREE PLAY BUILD RAPPORT
- SING AND DANCE TO A GROUP OF THE SAME SONGS (THIS WILL LET YOU KNOW IF ANY ARE TRIGGERS OR PREFERRED)
- READ A SHORT BIBLE STORY
- PLAY A GAME
- DO A SMALL CRAFT
- WATCH A BRIEF VIDEO
- FREE PLAY

WAYS TO RESPOND TO BEHAVIORS

- PLAN AHEAD (how can we set them up for success)
 - IF THE CHILD RUNS AWAY, TEACH THEM TO PLAY TAG WITH YOU OR PUT UP A BABY GATE
 - IF THE CHILD PULLS HAIR, WEAR YOUR HAIR UP OR A BASEBALL CAP
 - IF THE CHILD PINCHES WEAR A LONG SLEEVED SWEATSHIRT
 - IF THE CHILD IS AGGRESSIVE PRACTICE BLOCKING IT WITH AN OPEN HAND
- CALL FOR HELP
 - FIND SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE CHILD BEST AND HAVE A PLAN FOR TAKING THEM TO THE SENSORY ROOM

De-Escalation Strategies

1. Use empathy
2. Don't be condescending but be understanding
3. Offer a hug
4. Offer to go on a walk
5. Use distraction
6. Use choice making to further identify calming
7. If their voice raises, you use a quieter voice
8. Stay calm and they will imitate you
9. Remind them what to do rather than just saying no all the time



General helpful hints

- Put things in to do terms
- Set expectations
- Have consistent expectations across children
- Keep the kids engaged as much as possible
- When redirecting the kids, whisper to them or tell them privately try not to embarrass them
- Talk to them like any other child or your peer. They will appreciate the respect shown
- Try to keep an even tone when redirecting and an excited tone when you are praising the child
- Use first/then when possible

