

Lesson Plan Two

Effective Parenting Begins With Character

Purpose/Objective

Parents will explore the great responsibility of parenting and how negative influences affect children's character. They will also learn the importance of acknowledging parenting mistakes in order to find solutions.

Materials

- *The Peaceful Solution Character Education Program Parenting Manual*
- Pencils/pens

Procedure

1. Briefly review **Lesson One, So You're Going To Be A Parent** by asking the following questions:
 - a. Why is it so important for a pregnant woman to receive prenatal care? (*To monitor her health and the health of the baby, etc.*)
 - b. What are some of the physical needs of newborns? (*Food, clothing, shelter, love, etc.*)
 - c. Why is it so important for a newborn's physical needs to be met properly? (*To help the baby grow properly and to develop a healthy mind, etc.*)
 - d. How can a mother's behavior affect the character development of her unborn child? (*Babies can hear and learn in the womb so a mother must guard her words, actions, and environment.*)
2. Explain to class that in today's lesson they will continue learning what effective parenting consists of. We will analyze the deceptions and traps that society has fallen into, and we'll learn how to recognize and avoid them. We will look at the traits of effective parents, as well as common mistakes in parenting and their solutions.
3. Ask the question on **page 11**: "What do you think is the most important job on our planet?" Give students time to ponder and write down their answer(s) on the lines provided. Allow volunteers to give their answers. Have students turn to **page 11** and read the first paragraph. Emphasize the definition of parenting.

4. Tell students that in our modern world there are many factors that can affect our abilities to parent effectively. **Activity #1:** Allot 10 minutes. Have students form groups to brainstorm roadblocks to effective parenting. Have groups report to the class.
5. Lead a class discussion about the negative influences we are faced with. Emphasize that television is a big contributor to the condition of society today, and is a prime source of negative influences to both adults and children. Ask students how these influences have affected them personally. Help them to understand that it is within their power to guard and protect their children from these influences and their effects. Choose volunteers to read the remainder of **page 11**.
6. Ask students, what do all positive effective parents have in common? Paraphrase the first paragraph on **page 12**; emphasize and expound on the three common traits. Explain that positive parenting does not stop there. These traits are only the foundation. They will learn about many other traits, skills, and knowledge essential to positive parenting.
7. Read the first paragraph under the heading “Training Never Hurt Anyone” on **page 12**. Emphasize that effective parenting begins with being responsible and being trained. Allow students to write down some things they have been trained to do. (For example: driving a car, their job, cooking, etc. all require some form of training).
8. Allow volunteers to read the next two paragraphs on **pages 12-13**. Parenting requires training. Stress that just because people have the ability to have children does not mean they are ready to be parents. Discuss some basic things that a new parent would need to know. Ask: What are some things you had to learn as a parent that you did not know before?
9. Explain that when parents lack training in positive moral character they can become abusive to their children. Read the first two paragraphs under “Acknowledging Mistakes, Finding Solutions,” on **page 13**. Briefly discuss the various forms of abuse and a few examples of each.
10. **Activity #2:** Divide students into groups. Instruct each group to brainstorm the short and long-term effects of abuse on children. Let them use some facts to create a TV ad entitled “No To Child Abuse.” Allow each group to share with the class. Choose a volunteer to read the third paragraph

on **page 14**. Emphasize that verbal, physical, and sexual abuse are not mistakes, they are willful acts of violence. Stress how damaging this is to a child when this is done. Emphasize that anyone engaging in these acts should seek counseling immediately.

11. Have volunteers read the last three paragraphs on **page 14**. Discuss and emphasize that many parents make the same mistakes in parenting as their parents made. We must focus on improving our character so that we can make better choices. Explain that in order to know what areas we need to improve on, we have to analyze ourselves. This can be a humbling, but beneficial process. Allow 5-7 minutes for students to complete the “Parenting Self-Analysis” on **page 15**. Instruct them to be very honest with themselves. Ask for volunteers to share answers to questions 1, 3 and 4.

12. Conclude by encouraging class to review what they have learned today. Summarize the quote on **page 12** and remind them that their goal is to become better parents.

Lesson Two

Effective Parenting Begins With Character

Parenting Is A Job... And The Prerequisite Is A Positive Character

What do you think is the most important job on our planet? _____

Parents are responsible for raising another person from a state of total helplessness and dependency to a mature adult with positive character who is respectful, responsible, and compassionate toward others.

Parenting: caring or nurturing a child or children by providing for their physical and emotional needs.

Negative influences can destroy a person’s way of thinking and being. Our children are not exempt. They, too, can fall prey to negative influences. So, it is no exaggeration when we say, “Parenting is a tough job”.

There are many factors that can adversely affect how a child is trained and what kind of person he or she becomes. Our knowledge, values, character, and experiences all play a role in how we train and how we affect our children. We also live in a society where we are literally bombarded with negative influences; violence, aggression, sexual promiscuity, vulgar language and jokes are practically everywhere, and come into our homes through all forms of media—television, radio, magazines, and the Internet.

Before the invention of television, immorality was not as prevalent. **Immorality** can be defined as *a lack of morality; an immoral act or practice; not discerning between right and wrong; teaching a conception of negative behavior; doing or saying something that brings harm to self, others, and the environment.* On the other hand, moral behavior can be defined as having respect for life, yours and others, property and the environment. Hollywood and its negative influences has become society’s role model.

Without the teaching of moral character education, it would be impossible to raise positive, moral children in today's world.

Although modern day parenting is filled with new challenges that our ancestors did not have, the elements of positive, effective parenting have remained basically the same since the beginning of time. Regardless of the times in which we live and the challenges that face us, effective parents have three common traits:

- They have positive, moral character.
- They understand the tremendous responsibility they have towards their children.
- They prepare their minds and hearts to nurture, protect, teach, and guide their children always from a moral perspective.

The all-important task of parenting is really about you developing a positive moral character and then teaching your child or children how to do the same.

Training Never Hurt Anyone

To be a great parent you must be responsible, and just as with any other responsibility, being well trained is an important part of being successful. Why should parenting be any different? Think about how many things you have been trained to do and write some of them below.

Many of us have become parents and are unprepared for the responsibilities that face us. The fact of the matter is, since parenting has become increasingly difficult in our immoral society, we need all the training we can get.

By learning how to become positive parents, we can acquire the skills to raise children who are moral, respectful, and caring toward themselves and others. Whether your child is in the womb, or you already have a household

of children ranging in ages from newborn to teenager, it is not too late to begin developing positive character traits and teaching your children to do the same.

Acknowledging Mistakes, Finding Solutions

An important step in your training to become a better, more effective parent is to acknowledge that there are areas you need to improve in, because even the very best parents can make mistakes. The many stresses of modern day living, coupled with a lack of experience in parenting, can lead you to say or do things you may regret for years to come.

The “mistakes” in parenting that we are referring to do not include verbal, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, nor do they include being negligent towards the needs of a child. These types of abuses are not “mistakes”. They are willful and heinous violations of the innocence and trust of a child. If you or anyone else in your family have committed any of these abuses then seek counsel immediately and determine in your mind never to repeat any of these abusive behaviors again. Note the following examples of these abuses and the effects they produce:

Verbal Abuse

Yelling, scolding, demeaning, insulting, ridiculing or otherwise attacking a child with words are forms of verbal abuse. Research has found that children who are verbally abused have many of the same problems as victims of physical abuse. Verbally abused children suffered from anger management issues, violent behaviors, depression and other disorders common in physically abused children.⁸

Physical Abuse

Childhood physical abuse involves the physical injury or maltreatment of a child which includes hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, shaking, burning and other ways of inflicting pain, not giving a child food to eat, denying a child medical attention, and giving a child drugs and alcohol.

Physical abuse can have short and long-term psychological, emotional and physical effects. Short-term effects include physical injury and brain damage. Children may become withdrawn, sad, experience difficulties sleeping and eating, become irritable and aggressive towards their peers or younger siblings, have lack of confidence and self-esteem and start using alcohol and/or illicit substances. The long-term effects include difficulties forming and maintaining healthy relationships and a propensity [tendency] to be victimized or abused in future relationships.⁹

Children deserve love and respect, not abuse!

~ *The Peaceful Solution Character Education Program*

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse of a child can include: ignoring, rejecting, isolating, exploiting or corrupting, verbally assaulting, terrorizing or neglecting the child. Children who are constantly ignored, shamed, terrorized or humiliated suffer at least as much, if not more, than if they are physically assaulted. Although the visible signs of emotional abuse in children can be difficult to detect, the hidden scars of this type of abuse manifest in numerous behavioral ways, including insecurity, poor self-esteem, destructive behavior, angry acts (such as fire setting and animal cruelty), withdrawal, poor development of basic skills, alcohol or drug abuse, suicide, difficulty forming relationships and unstable job histories.¹⁰

Sexual abuse

The sexual activities may include all forms of oral-genital, genital, or anal contact by or to the child or abuse that does not involve contact, such as exhibitionism, voyeurism, or using the child in the production of pornography. Sexual abuse includes a spectrum of activities ranging from rape to physically less intrusive sexual abuse.¹¹

The effects of abuse result from the abuse itself, from the family's response to the situation, and from the stigmatization that accompanies abuse. The symptoms can include post-traumatic symptoms, precocious sexualization, depression, anxiety, guilt, fear, sexual dysfunction, dissociative symptoms, eating disorders, substance abuse, prostitution, regressive behaviors such as a return to thumb-sucking or bed-wetting, runaway behavior, and academic and behavior problems.¹²

The mistakes in parenting that we are referring to are those times when you might respond impatiently when dealing with a child by using a harsh tone of voice instead of a kind, gentle tone. Examples of other mistakes are: not setting proper limits or rules for your child, such as not having a bedtime or allowing the child to do whatever he wants just to get him "out of your hair"; not correcting disrespectful behaviors, such as back-talk or having tantrums; and not setting a proper example. Children need guidance and structure in their lives in order to help them grow into productive well-adjusted people. Remember, they learn from our examples.

For many, parenting is trial and error. Many first time parents are unsure of how to "train" their children in proper conduct or moral character. They often raise their children the same way they were raised, making the same mistakes their parents made. The problem with this type of parenting is that it seldom improves and the ones who suffer from our errors, sometimes their entire lives, are our children.

Correcting the mistakes we make in our lives, whether in parenting or any other role, takes determination. It also takes setting your mind in advance to find the solution and overcome the problem. Give yourself room to improve and grow as a parent through self-analysis, listening, and learning.

Parenting Self-Analysis

In your journey to become a positive, more effective parent it is important to honestly evaluate your needs and strengths as a parent. Complete the following exercise by filling in the blanks.



1. I want to become a better parent because _____

2. What areas do I need to improve in to become an effective parent? (For example: being more compassionate, organized, etc.) List at least 3 ways you would like to improve as a parent.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

3. Everyone has strengths, things they do well, that can be used to help them improve. (For example: budgeting, buying wholesome food, etc.) Realizing that you are responsible in one area can motivate you to be responsible in others. List at least three strengths you have as a parent.

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

4. How do you think improving your character and skills as a parent will improve your family? _____

Keep in mind why you want to become a better parent, as well as the things you need to improve in and your strengths. Knowing what you need to work on as an individual and as a parent is the first step in finding a solution, rather than focusing only on the problem. Channel your energies where you need help the most.