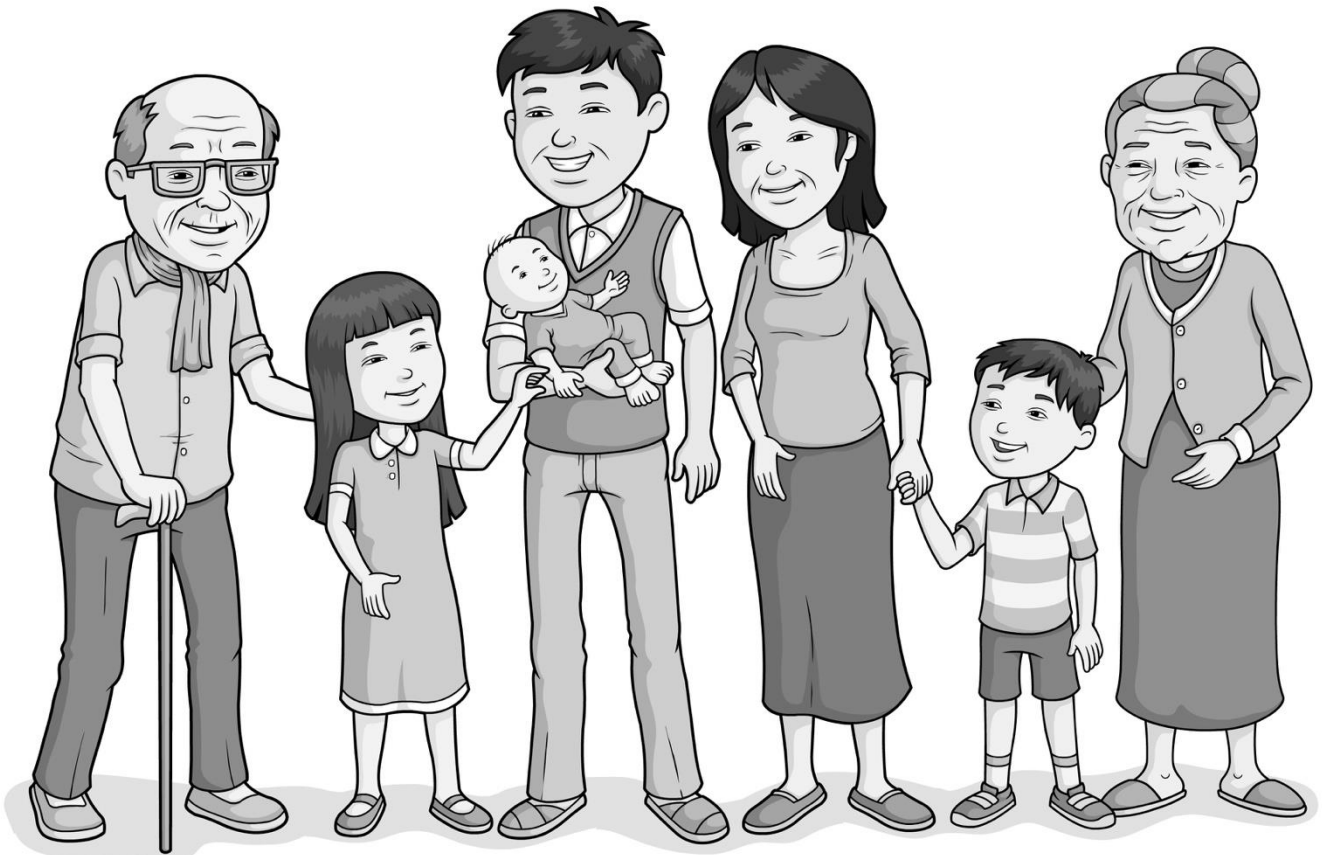


TRUTH CENTERED TRANSFORMATION

MODULE



MARRIAGE & FAMILY STUDENT GUIDE

Lesson 1: Roles of Husbands and Wives

Role of the Husband

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and Philippians 2:1-8. Answer the following questions:

- 1 How do each of these verses describe God's love?
 - 1 Corinthians: 13:4-8
 - Philippians 2:1-8
- 2 How can a husband show love for his wife in these ways? In your groups come up with 10 practical things that a husband could do to demonstrate this kind of love for his wife.
- 3 If a husband treated his wife the way the Bible teaches, what effect do you think it would have on a marriage?

Role of the Wife

- 1 What are some ways to be a 'helper' and show godly submission and respect to husbands? In groups try to think of 10 examples.
- 2 How would it affect a marriage if a wife did these sorts of things?

Lesson 2: Recognise Our Differences

1. For each topic mark on the line with an "X" what **you** like.
2. For each topic mark on the line with an "O" what you think **your spouse** or friend would like.

Sort it out immediately	Disagreements	Keep the peace
Spend	Money	Save
Spend time with others	People	Spend time alone
Make plans and stick to them	Planning	Be spontaneous
Arrive early	Punctuality	Arrive just in time or late
Go out	Relaxation	Stay home
Go to bed late	Sleeping	Go to bed early
Enthusiast	Sport	Uninterested
Formal	Clothes	Casual
Very tidy	Tidiness	Messy
Keep it on	T.V.	Throw it out

3. Show each other what you have put on your paper and discuss:
 - a. Did you have a correct understanding of the other person's preferences? Were you surprised by anything?
 - b. Did you and your spouse/close family member always have the same answers for each of these topics?
 - c. In which areas are you the most similar and you find it easy to agree?
 - d. In which areas are you the most different?
 - e. Which topics create disagreements in your marriage or relationship?
 - f. Talk about how you could handle these areas of your differences.
 - g. How can you use each person's strengths to build your marriage or relationship?

If you have not been married very long, then it is likely that you are different on many of them. Instead of trying to change the other person, you need to look for their strengths and help them in the areas that they are weak.

4. Make a plan for how you are going to resolve the areas where you are very different. Choose 2 areas of difference and write down your plan for how you will resolve them.

Example 1 – Money

If your spouse likes to spend and you like to save, then make a plan for how you will spend some money and save some money. Maybe you agree to save a specific amount, while your spouse can have an allowance each week/month to spend on the needs of the family based on what you have agreed together.

Example 2 – Relaxing

If your way of relaxing is to be at home and your partner likes to go out, then agree on a way you can both be happy. You can agree to go out together one night a week and stay home and relax together one night a week. Or you can agree that for one or two nights a week your spouse will go out and you will stay home.

Our Plan:

1.

2.

Lesson 2: Resolving Disagreements

Read each principle and the verse:

1. Make sure you recognise your faults first—do not be quick to point out the faults of others. (Matthew 7:3-5)
2. Discuss the issues in private, not in front of others, especially children. (Matthew 18:15)
3. Discuss disagreements calmly. Choose a time when you both are calm. If you are angry, postpone the discussion. (Proverbs 15:1)
4. State your points kindly without attacking each other. (Colossians 4:6)
5. Listen to each other. Try to see the other's point of view. Perhaps he is right, and you are wrong. (Philippians 2:3)
6. After stating your perspective, leave it. Do not argue or try to change the other person's thoughts. Sometimes you must respectfully agree to differ. If this is done lovingly you can keep the peace. (Ephesians 4:26)

Discuss:

1. Which of these principles is easiest for you to do during a disagreement?
2. Which of these principles is hardest for you to do during a disagreement?

Create A Role Play:

Choose a common disagreement in marriages and show how to resolve the disagreement using all these principles.

Lesson 3: Identifying Hurts

'Therefore, if you are offering a gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.' Matthew 5:23-24

Personal Reflection

Ask God to show you if there are any ways that you have hurt your spouse, or if you are not married, think about a close friend or family member instead. Think about the following areas and write down your thoughts:

- Is there anything that you have failed to do that you should be doing?
- Is there anything that you have done (or are doing) that you should not do?
- Have you failed to do something you know your spouse wants you to do?
- Have you said anything that has been hurtful?
- Have you failed to show love and encouragement?

'If your brother or sister sins against you, go and show them their fault, just between the two of you.' Matthew 18:15

Personal Reflection

Are there ways that you have been hurt by your spouse? It may or may not be something that your partner realizes is hurting you.

Application

Pray and commit to start discussing these things with your spouse this week.

Lesson 3: Steps for Apologising

Steps for Apologising to restore relationships when I have caused hurt:

1. **Confess to God** – When we hurt our partner, we also disobey God. We need to go to God and ask for His forgiveness for what we have done wrong. Accepting God's forgiveness will give us a humble heart to confess and apologise to the other person.
2. **Confess to the other person without giving excuses** – Often when we confess, we want to explain why we did what we did. However, this can make it hard for the other person to forgive us.

Example 1

Blaming: I know I criticised you in front of your friends yesterday, but I would not have if you had not made us one hour late.

Proper: I hurt you by criticising you in front of your friends yesterday; it was unkind of me.

Example 2

Blaming: I know I was grumpy and rude towards you last night, but you should have remembered that your mother had been criticising me a lot lately and I am tired from all the work.

Proper: It was selfish and insensitive of me to be rude and grumpy towards you last night. I am sorry I hurt you.

Compare each of the examples above. Which way would you be more likely to forgive?

3. **Apologise** – Make sure that you are specific about what you are sorry for, and express your sorrow sincerely. Say something like, 'I am extremely sorry for what I did,' or 'I feel really bad about the way that I treated you.'
4. **Ask for forgiveness** – We need to realise that we need forgiveness. It may be that our partner is not ready to forgive us immediately, so we may need to be patient. Pray that God would help your partner to forgive you. You should not force them to say they forgive you against their will.
5. **Change your behaviour** – It is not enough to confess and apologise if we do not plan on changing and if we intend to keep making the same mistake. Part of restoring the relationship is making sure that you are willing and intent on changing your behaviour. To the best of your ability you should try not to do it again.
6. **Accept the consequences** – The person may need time to forgive you. You need to be patient and ask God to help them to forgive you. Some hurts might destroy trust in a relationship. You need to realise that your spouse may not trust you as easily as they did before. This is a consequence of your action. Apologising does not automatically make everything new. Sometimes you have to live with the consequences of what you have done. It takes time for the hurt that you have caused to heal.

Lesson 3: Steps to Forgiveness

If the hurt you experienced was small, then it might be easier to move through these steps. If the hurt was more significant, then this process may take more time.

1. Acknowledge that what was done to you was unjust.
2. Admit any anger and desire to hurt the person.
3. Ask God to help you forgive the other person.
4. Choose to take no revenge.
5. Let go of the desire to hurt the person.
6. Give the responsibility for judgment to God.
7. Ask God to remove any bitterness and resentment.
8. Ask God to heal your pain and all the consequences of the injustice in your life.

Small Group Discussion

- Which steps to forgiveness are the most difficult for you?
- What could help you in making these steps easier?

Practicing the Steps of Forgiveness

What is one thing you need to forgive your spouse for?

If you cannot think of anything with your spouse, then think of anyone else that may have treated you unjustly. If you still cannot think of anything, then just pray quietly for those who are going through the process.

Close your eyes and listen and think about forgiving your spouse as each step is read.

Lesson 4: Five Love Languages

Five Different Languages

In Gary Chapman's book called *The Five Love Languages*, he explains 5 common ways that people feel loved. People are different and have different ways that they receive love. If we show love in a way that is different from how our spouse most feels loved, then it is like we are speaking a different language to them and they may not feel loved. We might be speaking, but they do not understand. If we want to speak to our spouse, then we need to speak their language. It is the same with love, we need to learn the other person's love language so that we can express love to them in a way that they can best understand.

There are 5 different love languages. Read each one and think of 2-4 specific ways you can do this in your own marriage.

1. **Serving Each Other** – Some people feel loved when we do things for them. These may be simple things like tidying the house, washing the dishes, or pulling the weeds.
2. **Words of Affirmation** – Some people feel loved when we say positive things to them. They may be compliments like, 'You cook so well' or 'You have beautiful hair' or 'You are a great mother.' They may be words of gratitude or appreciation: 'Thank you for cooking dinner' or 'Thank you for working so hard to provide for the family.'
3. **Gifts** – Some people feel loved when we give things to them. Gifts do not need to be expensive or even cost money. It may be as simple as a flower that you picked on the way home or a poem that you wrote.
4. **Physical Touch** – Some people feel loved through physical touch. This includes everything from holding hands, hugs, or stroking the other person's hair.
5. **Spending Focused Time Together** – Some people feel loved when we spend special time with them. This does not mean that we are in the same room but doing different things. It means that we give each other focused attention. In our busy homes, it may mean that we take a walk together and share about our days.

You might find that your spouse responds more favourably to one love language than others. Each person has their own preference. Try to discover which way of showing love means the most to your spouse and do more of that kind.

Lesson 5: The Culture and Ways in the Time of Jesus

We are going to look at the way women were viewed during Jesus' time and the way Jesus treated women. Read this in your small groups and discuss the questions on the second page.

The Culture in the Time of Jesus:

The Jewish and Roman laws and traditions gave little value to women. Women were seen as inferior to men.

- **Women were treated like possessions.** They were not independent. They either belonged to their father's house or to their husband's house. Jewish men were even forbidden to speak with all women on the street. Their presence was not recorded or recognised in important events.
- **Women were restricted in their worship of God.** Religious leaders had added new laws that meant that women were only allowed to go to the 'women's court' in the temple. (The women's court was never in the original design of the temple). They could not read the Word of God or participate in worship inside the temple.
- **Women were generally excluded from being educated.** Since education was given in the synagogue schools, girls were discouraged from participating.
- **Women had no legal rights.** They could not own land, receive an inheritance unless there were no men left in the family line, or divorce their husbands. Women were not allowed to testify in a court of law unless a man could confirm her story.

In general, in the culture of Jesus' time, women were seen as less trustworthy, less intelligent and less spiritual.

Jesus' Ways:

Jesus' attitude toward women was radical in the culture of that time. He treated men and women with equal respect and dignity. Women at that time had never known a man like Jesus.



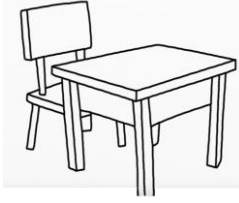

- **Jesus treated women with incredible respect and dignity.** He talked to women publicly. Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman who was both a foreigner and 'sinful' (John 4:7). He spoke with grace, truth and kindness to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11).
- **Jesus ministered to women and treated each one as a person.** Jesus reached out to women as persons who were equally worthy as men to be both healed and saved. He ignored the laws given to Moses that said you cannot touch a woman who is bleeding (Mark 5:25-34). He healed a woman crippled for eighteen years by a demonic spirit and called her 'daughter of Abraham' (Luke 13:10-17). He helped a Canaanite woman (Matthew 15:22-28).
- **He taught women.** He took their questions and arguments seriously. Jesus entrusted important spiritual truths to both women and men. Jesus taught Mary, the sister of Martha (Luke 10: 38-42). Women were the first to see the risen Lord and were told to take the great news to the disciples (John 20:1-18). Many women travelled with Jesus and supported His ministry (Luke 8:1-3) as He taught His disciples and the crowds.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you describe the way women were treated during the time that Jesus lived on earth?
2. Are there any similarities between how your culture treats women and how the culture in Jesus' time treated women?
3. What are some differences between how Jesus treated women and how the culture at that time treated women?
4. How do you think women felt when Jesus treated them this way?
5. Are our churches acting more like our culture or like Jesus? What are some examples?

Lesson 5: Our Community

Talk together about each area and fill in this chart. Consider the problems you see in your community with how women and girls are treated and think of 1-2 ideas for each area of what you can do to treat women and girls with dignity, respect, and value.

Area	Mistreatment & Inequalities	What we Can Do (1-2 ideas for each area)
 <p>Family</p>		
 <p>Church</p>		
 <p>School</p>		
 <p>Community</p>		

- What are two things you could do differently in your home to honour your wife and daughters?
- What are two things you could do differently in your community to honour women and girls?

Share with each other what you are committing to do. Pray for each other and ask God to help you to do these things.

Lesson 6: Helping Children Grow

'Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.'

Proverbs 22:6

Growing Spiritually

'These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children.

Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.' Deuteronomy 6:6-7

1. **Family devotions or Bible reading** – Try to take time every day to read the Bible or to tell Bible stories to your children. Help them to understand the stories. Once you have finished the passage or story, ask them questions such as: What can we learn about God from this story? What can we learn about how we should behave?
2. **Praying with our children** – We need to put aside time to pray with our children. Choose a time when you are usually free. Make sure that you spend that time with your child listening to their concerns and praying with them. When they are very small, they may tell you what to pray for and you can say a short prayer. As they grow, they can start to pray as well. Help them to see when God answers their prayers.
3. **Spending time with our children** – Talk about God all the time when you are together. Teach them about God. When you go outside and see a tree, you can make a comment about how God loves us so much that He provided trees to give us shelter, wood, and food, and to make our land beautiful. Talk about how the earth belongs to God and we have been given the responsibility to look after it. Always look for ways to help your children see God.

Growing Mentally

'Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.' Proverbs 1:8

1. **Teach very young children at home** – Try to explain things to them when they are young and curious. Teach them their ABCs, numbers, names of colours, and shapes (triangle, square, circle, etc.). With young children allow them to choose between two options when the decision doesn't matter. For example, 'Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue shirt today?' Take time to answer their questions!
2. **Send school-age children to school** – Sometimes we need to make sacrifices to send our children to school, but this is also an important part of being a parent. Through education we can give our children opportunities in the future. We do not know the plans that God has for our children, but we need to make sure they have the opportunity to explore their options. God may choose your child to bring great change to your area. Often, they need education and training to do so. Your sacrifices now may allow your child to even be able to go to university and help your family in the future.

Growing Socially

‘Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.’ Philippians 2:3.

1. **Teach children how God wants them to relate to others** – Read each verse. What do we learn from these verses that are important to teach to our children?

- Philippians 2:3
- Colossians 3:13, 15
- Matthew 5:44
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-5
- Matthew 7:12

The Bible helps us understand the importance of living in peace with others, loving everyone, being patient, kind, and forgiving, and treating others as we want to be treated. It is necessary to talk about this when your children are young and also as they grow and their relationships change.

2. **Be an example** – Children learn social skills by watching others, particularly their parents. The way you relate to others is a daily example to your children. Consider how you relate to others and how God would want you to relate to them according to what we learn in the Bible.

- In what ways are you a good example to your children?
- In what area would you like to be a better example with God’s help?

3. **Help your children deal with challenges in their relationships when they come up.**

Many times, children won’t tell you about the problems they are having with other people, but they may start acting differently. You may notice increased anger, physical violence, or being unusually quiet and withdrawn. These are signs that they may have some problems with other people. Children need support and encouragement to talk about these issues and to learn to treat others well even when they are hurt, angry, or being treated poorly by others. Let them share what has happened, how they feel, and how they have dealt with it. This kind of conversation is an example to the child of a loving, accepting, kind relationship. This is especially important at a young age so they will trust you to help them in these situations.

What are some other ways you can help your child learn to think well of others and treat them with love and kindness?

Our relationships with others are very important. Being selfish is a normal human behaviour, but it is not pleasing to God. We want to teach our children to think well of others and treat them better than they want to be treated. We also must teach them to deal with conflicts. This principle needs to be both taught and modelled for our children.

Growing Physically

- What are some ways that we can help our children to grow physically?
- What are some common health practices that you teach your children?
- How important are they to protecting the health of children?
- Which of these healthy practices are you doing or not doing? What more could you do to care for the health of the children that God has given you?

All of these things help our children to be physically healthy.

Personal Reflection

- What things are you already doing well to help your children grow?
- What areas do you want to focus on more?
- What new ideas do you have from this teaching about what you can do to help your children grow?

Lesson 7: Ways of Responding to Children

There are a variety of ways that we typically respond when children behave badly. We often do one of the following:

Denial: 'It can't be that bad.' 'You can't possibly mean that.'

Rational response: 'There is nothing you can do about it—stop complaining.' 'Don't be silly! You know you have to go to school.' 'If you want a good job you have to go to school.'

Advice: 'You will need to work hard to keep your friends or you will be very lonely.' 'You have to learn to fight back.'

Judgment: 'What a terrible thing to say!' 'You must have done something to him.'

Questions: 'What did you do?' 'Why do you say such horrible things?'

Defense of the other person: 'She's a nice girl.' 'I'm sure he didn't mean it.'

Does the child usually calm down or change their behaviour when we do these things?

Often when we are sad or angry, we can do things we regret. This is a result of not knowing how to handle intense feelings. It is even harder for children.

Children often have big emotions but do not know how to manage them. Many times children are unable to tell us exactly how they feel—they don't understand it well themselves so they cannot communicate it to others. As a result, in their frustration, they often misbehave or say things inappropriately. If we want to help children behave well, we need to help them express their feelings.

Personal Reflection:

What do you think your response would be to a child with each of these examples?

Do you think you would have the same response as any of those we discussed?

Lesson 7: Principles of Listening

'Father's do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.'
Ephesians 6:4

Listening Carefully

'Andrew, I can see that you are really upset. Tell me what happened.'

Listening carefully to a child helps them to deal with their feelings in a good way instead of behaving badly. It helps them to learn how to solve problems and gives them the skills that they need to be a mature adult. It helps them to feel better about themselves and learn how to behave well. It is one of the most important skills for bringing up children.

When we try to encourage a child to push a bad feeling away, the child usually gets more upset. Children can cope with many feelings and find their own solutions when we carefully listen to them and practice these principles:

Principles of Listening to Children's Feelings

Listen with your full attention:

- It is easier for the child if you do something to show that you are giving your full attention. Examples: putting your paper down and looking at the child; turning to face the child; coming out of the kitchen and sitting down.
- It is difficult for children to deal with strong feelings on their own. If no one helps them then the feelings get stronger and are often expressed in bad behaviour.

Recognise their feelings:

- Use a phrase or word like: 'Oh' or 'Mmm' or 'Wow' or 'Yes' or 'I understand.'
- Use some non-verbal signs like: head nodding, eye contact, facial expression.
- Do not make them feel bad for having that feeling. With children, we need to accept their feelings and help them to deal with their feelings without behaving badly.

Help them know what they are feeling:

- Help them by using feeling words to express what their behaviour shows you. For example, 'That must have been embarrassing.'
- Children are often unable to tell you how they are feeling. If you do this for them, they feel that you understand and accept them. They usually feel comforted and become calmer. Do not worry if you get it wrong. Your child will tell you if you have misunderstood.

What are some common examples of feelings that children have?

Lesson 7: The Power of Our Words

Key Bible Verses

- Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4
The Bible tells us we should not cause our children to be exasperated, bitter, or discouraged.
- Proverbs 12:18
This verse reminds us we need to be careful that we choose words that are healing and not hurtful.

Hurtful Words

Hurtful words are things that we say that hurt someone. Often, we do not plan to hurt the person. In fact, usually these things are said to encourage the child to change but the result is that it hurts the child. Instead of changing, the child believes what they hear, gets discouraged, and stops trying to be better.

Most hurtful words fit into one of these categories:

- **Words spoken in anger and frustration**
 - Often, we do not mean what we have said. For example: 'I wish you would have never been born!'
- **Labels we give children**
 - When children do something we do not like, we often say something about the child instead of the behaviour. For example: 'You are a failure.' or 'You are stupid.'
- **Comparisons**
 - It is very easy to compare a child with his brothers and sisters. For example: 'I wish you were more like your brother' or 'He's not as clever as his sister.'
- **Predictions**
 - We sometimes tell them what will happen in the future. For example: 'You will never get a job' or 'You are just like your lazy uncle.'
- **Talking negatively to others**
 - Sometimes we talk negatively about our children to others when they can hear us. For example: 'My son failed his exam again. He doesn't try hard enough.' Or 'This is my daughter. She is so naughty!'

Usually hurtful words achieve the opposite of what we want in our children. For example, we want to see our children work harder, but hearing these words makes them believe that they cannot do anything well, so they stop trying. Hurtful words can stop children from becoming all that God designed them to be.

Principles for Positive Communication

'A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.'

Proverbs 15:1

1. **Explain to the child what is true as soon as possible if you said something that was not true,** even if what you said was unintentional. This avoids long-term misunderstanding.
2. **Apologise and communicate positively after using very hurtful words in anger.**
This gives your child a model of apologising that he can copy. It also gives him an opportunity to apologize if appropriate for doing what made you angry. Children will respect you more if you apologise when you are wrong, and they will be motivated to please you.
3. **Describe the behaviour that disappoints or angers you instead of labelling the child.**
Saying, 'That was a very stupid thing to do!' is more effective and less hurtful than saying, 'You are stupid!'
4. **Never compare you children with each other.**
Comparisons make children feel bad about themselves and cause resentment. It makes it difficult for your children to get along well.
5. **Only say positive things about your child when it is possible for him to hear you.**
6. **Never introduce your child using negative characteristics.**

Giving Encouraging Words

Instead of using hurtful words, we need to find opportunities to encourage our children. Think of 5 things that you could say to encourage each of your children. The more specific you can be the better:

Example: 'I appreciate the way that you usually help me in the kitchen when you come home from school. It is nice to spend time with you, and you make my job much easier.' (This is more specific and better than just saying, 'You are a good girl.')

Lesson 8: Disciplining Children

Tips for Effective Discipline:

1. Ensure that children know we love them even when we discipline them.

- You should never punish your child when you feel angry. This just teaches a child to hit or shout when angry. If you feel angry then try to calm down first and have your child sit in the corner until you are ready.
- After disciplining a child, it is important to express your unconditional love for them. You can also speak encouraging words to the child, like, 'I believe you can make the right choice in the future' or 'I believe you can learn to be kind to your brother.' Love is a better motivator than fear. This also helps a child feel secure knowing that they are still loved.

2. Be consistent in your discipline.

- If we allow children to do something one time and then punish them the next time, then the children will be confused about what they can and can't do. They will be afraid that they will accidentally do something wrong. If we are consistent then children will learn what is right and wrong.
- Threatening to punish a child for bad behaviour but not enforcing the consequence is confusing and not effective.

3. Make sure the child understands what they did wrong.

- Ask the child if they know what they did wrong. If they don't know, calmly explain.
- NEVER discipline or spank a child without talking to them about what they did wrong.

4. Explain the expectations of the good behaviour you want.

- Sometimes children don't know what is expected. Give children clear boundaries.
- Make sure the child understands what you want them to do in the future.

5. The type of discipline or punishment should be different depending on the age of the child.

- Young children (2-10) can often be corrected by a stern look, by spanking, or by sitting them in the corner for the length of time that is equal to their age (e.g., 10 minutes for a 10-year-old child).
- Older children (11-18) respond to having privileges taken away and being required to take responsibility for their behaviour and choices.

6. The severity of discipline should equal the seriousness of the wrong that was done.

- If the misbehaviour is serious, then the discipline should be serious. If the misbehaviour is minor, then the discipline should be lighter.
- It isn't appropriate to take away a privilege for one month if a child made a mistake only once. It would be more appropriate to take away the privilege for a day and if the behaviour continues, then increase the time.

7. When possible, use a form of discipline that is directly related to the misbehaviour.

- The goal of this way of disciplining is to help a child to take responsibility to fix their misbehaviour.
- For example, if Sarah likes to help her mother prepare meals, but she yelled at her brother who also wanted to help, Sarah's mother would tell her that she cannot help her cook until she is willing to let her brother also help. Or, if Peter hits the table and the water spills, his mother would ask him to help her clean it up.

Small Group Discussion

- Which of these tips have you used already with your children?
- Which of these tips have you never thought about or heard of?
- Read Seth's story again from the introduction. Go through each step and talk about what Seth's dad could do differently to apply the tips to this situation.

Seth had six older brothers and sisters. One day his sisters were teasing him, and he had enough. He was so angry that he threw a big water jug at them. The jug hit two of his sisters and they began to cry. His aunt saw what he had done and called for his father. His father came quickly and began to yell at Seth. Everyone was scared, even the neighbours who watched. He hit Seth 4 or 5 times with a belt and told him that he better never do that again or he would not be able to walk the next day. Seth was so angry at his sisters. The next day one of his sisters started to tease him. Everyone laughed. Seth slapped his sister. This time his father just laughed with everyone.

Lesson 8: Alternative Forms of Discipline

Occasionally it is appropriate to spank a young child (ages 2-10). Spanking is different than hitting a child. When you spank a child, wait until you feel calm, take them into a separate place, explain why you are spanking them, and then spank them. Don't spank a child in front of others. This can be embarrassing and cause bitterness. After spanking, you should give them a hug and assure them of your love. Spanking is done to discipline and is **motivated by love** to change future behaviour. It should not cause physical harm or be motivated by anger. If used wisely, it can be an effective way to prevent negative behaviour and promote obedience and feelings of security. If you spank a child often, their heart may become hard and rebellious.

Disciplining your child does NOT mean just hitting them. Physical punishment is NOT the only way to discipline children. Here are some good alternatives to physical punishment that can be even more effective:

- ❑ Give the child a **helpful task** instead of the unacceptable behaviour.
Especially for young children, you can change irritating or inappropriate behaviour by distracting the child with a positive alternative activity like helping a parent or sibling or doing something you know they like to do. It is still appropriate to let the child know that you do not like their behaviour.
- ❑ Express **strong disapproval** (without attacking the child's character).
For example, for young children a stern look or clear statement of disapproval of their behaviour can be effective because the child wants to be loved and accepted. Focus on the behaviour and do not use harsh or negative words about the child. Say something like, 'I do not like it when you, (describe the behaviour).'
- ❑ **Take away privileges.**
For example, you can take a toy from a child for a period of time or not allow them to watch TV for a period of time. Remember, the length of time should match the seriousness of the behaviour that needs to be changed and should be appropriate for their age.
- ❑ Show the child *how he can take responsibility for what he did*.
For example, if something is broken or a mess is made (even if it may not be on purpose) the child is asked to fix or clean up the mess. This teaches the child to solve problems that they are responsible for creating. Example: Adam knocks down his younger brother in the field. His father tells him to help his brother get up, check to see if he is hurt, and tell his brother he is sorry.
- ❑ **Separate the child from others** – 'time out.'
For example, you can put the child in a chair, room, or area alone where he can consider what he did and why it was wrong. This allows the child to calm down and gain self-control. Then take a few minutes to talk with the child to make sure he understands what he did, why it was wrong, and other choices he could make in the future. Remember, this should be done only the same number of minutes as the child's age. For example, a 6-year-old child would have to sit in the corner for 6 minutes.
- ❑ **Give a choice** – acceptable behaviour or a consequence/restriction.

The point is to give the child a choice between what is right and the consequence for a wrong choice. It is important that the consequence be specific, realistic, and not harmful, but something that the child would miss or not want to happen. For example, if your child will not brush his teeth you can give him a choice of brushing his teeth now or not getting to eat sweets for the whole day. This works at all ages.

- Allow the child to ***suffer the natural consequences*** of their behaviour. For example, if a child does not take care of his belongings, the natural result is they will not last long. Or, if a child does not pick up a favourite toy, it may naturally be lost. Natural consequences can teach children responsibility. This is most effective with older children.

Roleplays

1. Think of situations with your children at home when they are often disobedient or behave badly.
2. Choose one situation and think of good alternatives to physical punishment. Prepare one role play using the new technique in that situation.
3. Do the role play for the rest of the group.