

ESSENTIAL TRAINING AREAS FOR CHILDREN—PART 2

Christian schools are most effective when they partner with parents in discipling their children. In *Christian School Comment* 48.8, Dr. Larry Taylor, head of Prestonwood Christian Academy (Plano, Texas), shared the first part of his model for deliberately training children. I encourage you to read it if you haven't, and to enjoy this second part. —Dan

I have found a five-part **TRAINing**© model very helpful as we “do life” with our children:

- Transcendent Purpose
- Reverence for God
- Aiming Arrows by a “3-D” Discipline Strategy
- Internal Strength, Balance, and Resolve
- Necessary Life Practices

Aiming Arrows by a “3-D” Discipline Strategy

Psalm 127 compares our children to arrows. When I think of an arrow I think of sharpness, balance, and direction—and all three characteristics are important for an arrow to be purposeful. The same is true for our children. They must be sharp in their discernment and decision making, balanced both emotionally and spiritually, and purposeful in the direction of their lives. We must discipline our children; the question is whether we will do it in a biblical manner.

Aiming our arrows, or children, requires a biblical model of disciplining that I call a “3-D” approach: Biblical Discipline = Discipline + Discernment + Direction. We must implement all three D's in disciplining a child. True biblical discipline teaches the child to discern between right and wrong and to travel in the right direction by making good choices.

In Scripture, we see the importance of developing discernment: “But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14, NASB). The point is that we need discernment to decide between good and evil, right and wrong, good and bad. I view the word “practice” as an opportunity to coach our children through their many good and bad choices in life. We see in Ephesians 6:4 another scriptural rationale for disciplining our children: “but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” The Greek word for “bring them up” is *ektropho*, which means to *rear up to maturity*. Once again, we are encouraged to raise our children to maturity proactively and purposefully.

Internal Strength, Balance, and Resolve

We want to allow God to use trials and tribulations to mold, mature, and grow our children. We cannot see what God sees, and we must trust that His purpose and plan for our children requires God-ordained difficult seasons in life. God's Word is very clear that challenges and difficulties are God's method of training, teaching, and growing us to maturity in Him. I encourage you to meditate on James 1:2–3 and 1 Peter 1:6–7 as you pray through the development of your child's inner character and resolve.

We emphasize this **TRAINing** component by:

- Trusting that trials will enhance our children's spiritual foundation
- Allowing our children to go through “healthy” anxiety and not stealing an opportunity for God to work in their lives

Necessary Life Practices

We want to model, and train our children in, the basic spiritual disciplines and fundamental biblical principles of adulthood. These disciplines and adulthood principles perpetuate lifelong habits that nurture one's spiritual journey as well as one's future family and role within a local church.

The *spiritual disciplines* include personal prayer; Bible reading, study, and memorization; active participation in a vibrant church; personal accountability and mentoring partnerships; and a missions and service commitment. The *biblical principles of adulthood* include family, work, church, stewardship (finances, tithing, giving), and a vision for manhood or womanhood.

Children internalize these disciplines and principles through years of encouragement, motivation, parental modeling, coaching, and participation. Of course, the goal is that your child become genuinely engaged with these disciplines and principles and not just compliant to your expectations.

I hope this **TRAINing** device helps you see the balanced approach to raising your child. Consistency is the key. Then your child will grow and mature in “wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

—Larry