

Session 1

Teaching Kids to Listen and Follow Instructions

Summary of the Video

A heart of cooperation is important in any family, but many children resist the simplest requests. In this lesson you will learn five steps to a good Instruction Routine. Five parts for the parent and five parts for the child provide families with direction in this essential area of family life. Learn how your work teaching cooperation and responsibility will produce excellent employees for the future and how to help your children learn to listen to God as well.

Read Along in the Book, "Parenting is Heart Work"

The Introduction to *Parenting is Heart Work* provides motivation to look past behavior to the heart. It's easy focus only on behavior because that's what's visible. But the heart is more complicated. Teaching children to follow instructions has some definite heart implications. Chapter 4 shows how working on behavior the right way can actually contribute to heart change. Behavior is a symptom. In fact, sometimes working on behavior becomes a way to get to the heart. The two are linked closely together. In order to gain the most from an Instruction Routine it's necessary to keep an eye on the heart. Character qualities like cooperation and responsibility grow out of a good Instruction Routine.

Suggested Introduction

Take a moment and write down five things that frustrate you about working with your kids. I'm sure there are a lot of good things happening in your family but if you could just change a few of the dynamics, what would they be? (Give parents a few minutes to write.) How many of you on that list put something like "My kids don't listen." "I have to tell them over and over again." "My kids don't follow instructions." Well,

you're in for a treat, because in this session you're going to learn some practical things that will help you and your kids in this area.

Suggested Transition

I'm sure you have some thoughts about things you liked or questions that you have in response to this session. As you form into small groups for a discussion time be prepared to share your thoughts and listen to others as you work through the questions provided. Try to identify one new thing that you will try with your kids in the next day or two. Be careful that you don't spend too much time on what your kids do wrong because we haven't yet learned about a good correction routine. That's yet to come. Be sure to save some time to pray for one another too.

Goal of the Discussion

Focus on the importance of teaching cooperation and responsibility to children. Guide the dialogue into practical ways to help children adjust the way they receive instructions. No doubt people will want to know "What do I do if my children don't respond?" The answer to that question is the topic of future weeks, so encourage people by telling them that the correction routine will be addressed in future sessions.

Suggested Conclusion

Name one part of the Instruction Routine that you would like to try this week. What's one thing that you particularly found helpful in this session? (Allow several people to share with the group.) I encourage you to try something new, and then come back next week prepared to share some of your experiences. Remember that established routines are hard to break. You're trying to start some new ones. You may find that your children welcome the changes. Others may resist. Hang in there with your kids. They need you.



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Step 1 • For the Parent	Step 1 • For the Child
Get close to the child	Learn to come when called

Principle: Close proximity increases the felt value level of instructions

Step 2 • For the Parent	Step 2 • For the Child
Consider the timing	Always be ready to receive an instruction

Principle: Cooperation is fostered when instructions are given in the context of relationship

Step 3 • For the Parent	Step 3 • For the Child
Give the instruction	The child answers

Principle: Word cues help clarify instructions for children

Step 4 • For the Parent	Step 4 • For the Child
Wait expectantly	Do the job as if on a mission

Principle: Responsibility is the uncomfortable feeling of unfinished business

Step 5 • For the Child	Step 5 • For the Parent
Report back	Inspect and Release

Principle: Children learn what you expect by what you inspect

Principle: A release gives children freedom in their hearts

One thing I'm going to work on is...

