

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask preteens to define appropriate cell phone etiquette in class.Post the agreed-upon guidelines in your class.Remind preteens to turn off their phones at the start of each session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make threats about taking away kids' phones unless you intend to follow through.Embarrass a child whose cell phone rings in class. Kindly ask him or her to turn it off.Make the issue of cell phone use or texting into a power struggle.

GENIUS TACTIC

For fun, occasionally let preteens use their cell phones for class discussions. For instance, preteens can use their cell phones to talk to a partner or send an affirming text message to someone as a lesson application.

CHALLENGING KIDS

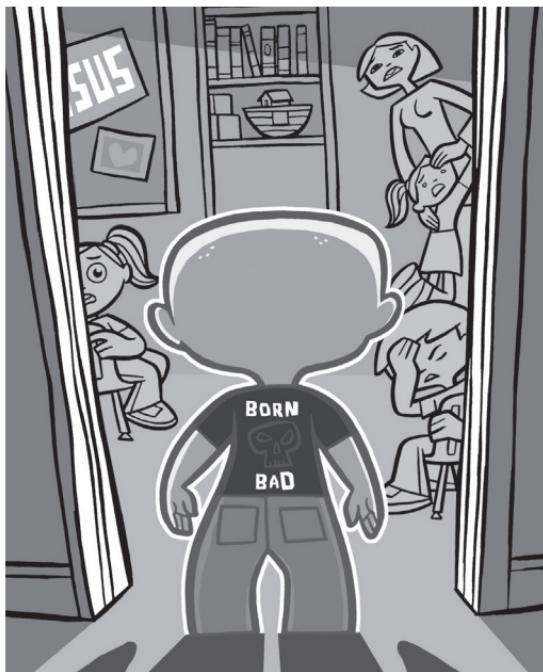
Q: One child in our ministry is particularly challenging—and now he's in my class. How can I handle him?

A: You'll inevitably encounter a child or two who's tough to handle: the strong-willed, uncooperative child who never misses class. Adults talk behind closed doors about what a problem the child is, and everyone knows how the child's behavior impacts a class—except the child.

Strong-willed children tend to search for control over their world. And when adults leave kids out of the discussion about their behavior, it takes away kids' opportunity to help solve the problem, which would allow them more control over the situation.

God calls us to use gentle, loving, direct communication (Ephesians 4:15). This is true even when it comes to a child's disruptive behavior. Explain to the child how his



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specific choices affect you and other children. When you treat children with respect and give them a sense of control over their environment, they'll often cease to push boundaries.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk directly to the child about your behavior expectations.• Give specific examples of the child's unacceptable behavior.• Make a plan in advance with the child for how you'll handle behavior problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commiserate with other adults about the child.• Assume that "bossing" the child into shape will work.• Address behavior problems without including the child in the conversation.

GENIUS TACTIC

Give your challenging child consistent responsibility in the class, such as passing out supplies or checking the room at the end of class to ensure lights are out, chairs pushed in, and trash is off the floor. When you give challenging children roles of responsibility, many embrace these important duties and leave behind their wayward ways.



Q: How can I discipline a challenging child without embarrassing him in front of other children?

A: Talk with the offending child privately and quietly when you must correct him. This can be done off to the side or while another activity's going on. Keep your focus on the choice or action that's the problem—not the child as a person—and redirect the child to positive choices.

Use the 30/30 Rule: 30 seconds of correction followed by 30 seconds of affirmation. Focus on the wrong choice; then focus on the valued child.

If you find yourself yelling or being overly harsh, give yourself a timeout. It's better to wait to correct the child when you're able to do it appropriately, rather than to act immediately and cause damage.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discipline in private; coach and mentor in public.• Ignore small infractions.• Pray about your attitude toward the child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove the child from your room unless he becomes a danger to himself or others.• Use names or words that label a child as problematic.• Ignore or leave out a child in an effort to avoid problems.



GENIUS TACTIC

Use a "secret sign" with challenging children. Meet with the child and another adult leader before class. Explain to the child that when you observe misbehavior, you'll make eye contact and give a signal such as tugging on your ear or tapping your shoulder. Tell him this sign means:

- I see that you need me, but I'm in the middle of something.
- Keep working until I can get to you.
- I love you, and you're important to me.

This secret sign will help you communicate with a child who frequently misbehaves without embarrassing him. Having other classroom leaders clued in will provide consistency for the child and enlist others to meet the child's needs while you finish the lesson.

CLEANUP

Q: How can I get my preschoolers to put away toys quickly so I can get on with the lesson?



A: A good lesson plan includes time for transitions such as cleaning up; if yours doesn't, add it in. Transitions take time.

Preschoolers are at their best when their environment is predictable. Young children love routines and respond well when they know what's expected. Alert kids to upcoming transitions with phrases such as, "We're almost done with playtime." Signal that it's cleanup time by teaching your kids simple, memorable