

TAKE HOME SHEET

Five Strategies Parents Can Use to Help Their Child Be More Patient

Today in Sunday School we learned the importance and need for patience. Help your child reinforce patience this week and every week with the following tips.

Below, we will take a look at five strategies that you can use when teaching your child about the concepts of patience and waiting. As you take this journey with your child, remember that it won't happen overnight. The key to being patient is practice and consistency.

1. Start Small

Asking your child to wait 5 minutes before they can watch their favorite show will seem like a lifetime to them – and could end in disaster and tears. Instead, the best way to teach a child patience is by starting off small.

Begin by asking your child to stay calm for one minute while you prepare them a snack. Once they are able to do this comfortably, increase the waiting period by an extra 30 seconds and so on. As they get older, begin testing their ability to stay patient for longer periods of time before meeting their needs and desires.

Tip: Use tangible examples and visual tools to teach your child how to show patience. For example, the next time your child goes to interrupt you while you're on a call, ask them to imagine a thought bubble filling up with all the words they want to say. Or, set a timer so that they can visually see how long they have to wait for their turn.

2. Avoid Instant Gratification

This step may be a difficult one but it will help your child build character in the long run. In the beginning, it may seem easier to give in to instant gratification to keep the peace but try to avoid it at all costs.

When a child requests that you get them a snack, tell them that you would love to but there's a job that you need to finish first and they have to wait for 'X' amount of minutes. Making them wait a little longer before fulfilling their request will teach them how to practice self-control and patience. Once the time has passed, give them what they asked you for and praise them for waiting. This will show them that their request will be carried out as long as they stay calm.

Avoid Doing This: If your child begins to act out, do not fulfill their request until they calm down. When we do this, it only teaches them that they will get what they want by being naughty.

3. Acknowledge It Can Be Difficult

Even adults can find it difficult to wait so go easy on your child if they are struggling at the beginning. Next time that your child starts to get frustrated or upset, get down on your child's level and give them a hug.

Let them know that you acknowledge how difficult it can be to wait and that you're proud of how well they are trying to learn this new life skill.

4. Practice Patience Through Games

If your toddler is still struggling with delayed gratification, using games is a great strategy that parents can use for teaching kids patience. Games that focus on taking turns are best for this purpose. Family-friendly board games such as Candy Land or Connect 4 are perfect to teach your child how to wait.

When playing, make sure to say things like: "It's my turn right now so you have to wait but you'll get to go after me" or "See how Alex is taking his turn now. Once he and your sister have moved their pieces, it is your turn."

Your children will learn self-control and patience during a fun activity without even realizing that they are learning. Win-win for everyone.

5. Turn it Into a Positive Experience

Lastly, asking your child to wait should never be seen as a punishment or a negative experience. It is only natural that young children will ask frequently whether the timeframe you set is up. This is because they don't have the ability to conceptualize time yet. Staying calm and positive while you are reinforcing the importance of being patient will teach them that it is an experience that will result in happy and positive emotions.