

Introduction

And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them.

But when Jesus saw this, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me and do not hinder them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."

And He took them in His arms and began blessing them, laying His hands upon them.
Mark 10:13-16

"Special need" students estimated by some at 20 percent, are students who have school learning difficulties and differences for which there is no apparent explanation. These difficulties and differences cannot be attributed to a low IQ, or to a physical, emotional or neuro-motor problem. Yet, they find difficulty in learning with the curriculum expectations in school on a daily basis.

Within all school systems, private and public, every classroom has "special need" students. Whether the difficulty is short-term or long term, this difficulty exists for the student. In Matthew 11:28, Jesus says, "Come onto Me, all who are weak, weary and heavy-laden, gentle and I, humble in heart, and you shall find rest for your soul". Our challenge as Christian Administrators, Teachers and Parents, is to help the "special need" student grow in their relationship with Jesus as we build upon their area(s) of weakness. It is vital that we encourage them in their identity of the "Truth and Promises" God has given to them as being their Creator, Master-maker and God.

This manual is a "tool and weapon" for the "battles" you are facing today. It is my prayer, that as you read and re-read this manual alongside to listening to the audiotape, that you will become empowered and inspired in the areas you seek and the areas has God is placed before you.

The Ten Commandments of Teaching Students With Special Needs

Commandment I.

Thou shall know that this student is placed in your classroom because of God's divine plan.

**"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
Jeremiah 29:11**

Placement into your classroom is not an administrative decision, or one by referral or intellect. Placement is because it is God's design. This student is in your life for your refinement just as you are in their lives for their refinement. God is providing opportunities for growth. Are you willing ?

Commandment II.

You shall have no other resource or strategy before Me.

**"...not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."
Zachariah 4:6**

Gaining in awareness of your student's "special needs" is a necessary and powerful tool. Wanting quick answers to solve concerns seems enticing and wonderful, yet, when "speed" comes versus accuracy, our actions can lead to expenses, consumption of precious time, and be emotionally draining. It is not by might, knowledge, credentials, or experience, but by His Spirit that we can not only teach this student, but actually reach them in life influencing ways.

Commandment III.

Thou shall not diagnose a student without the use of a multi-disciplinary team.

"A wise man will hear and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel. Proverbs 1:5

It is necessary to get the confidential opinion of the school administrators and other professionals who know this student. Working together as a "Team" allows an avenue where strengths and weaknesses can be confirmed. The "Team effort" lessens the possibility of a mis-diagnosis for many special needs fall under an "umbrella" of related symptoms and characteristics, and having the professionals insight is vital and necessary.

Commandment IV.

Thou shall not discourage any "excitement" within your student's heart.

**"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of my Father who is in heaven."
Matthew 18:10**

Jesus values our excitement like a father as he watches his child ride a bike, pick a flower or laugh with joy. Will our students feel the love of Jesus by the way we listen to them? Do we "despise" others when we are not patient, willing, or flexible? Do we value their excitement in life only when it is convenient for us?

Commandment V.

Thou shall give thyself grace.

**"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness' most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses that the power of Christ may dwell in me."
2 Corinthians 12:9**

Teaching student's with "special needs" challenges the extremes of our emotions. It seems to bring out the best in us as well as our difficulties. It will bring out the best in us, as well as our difficulties. At times this emotional "roller-coaster" can be discouraging and allow doubt and insecurities to surface. This is when you must give yourself grace. There are very few private, Christian schools with "special need" programs. But, because you seek to teach your students and allow them to feel the love of Jesus through your lessons, your words and smiles, God creates a "special need" program within you. Because you care, this student can stay in an environment where God is God. How can you not give yourself grace.

Commandment VI.

Honor your Administration and those placed in position above you.

**"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority..."
1 Peter 2:13**

God will place those in authority over you. It is biblical to honor them. Your submission to their will is a mighty example to your students. God desires unity versus disunity. Trust your authorities, and have faith that God is in control. Ask God how you can best support your Administration or authorities, and pray for their leading. And become aware of the enemies tactics to weaken both you and your Administrators from God's work within you. Place the "full armor" of God upon you daily.

Commandment VII.

Thou shall know the difference between "challenging" your special needs student versus asking them for something outside of their abilities.

"..and that they will truly know Christ. Not only is He the key to God's mystery, but all wisdom and knowledge are hidden away in Him." Colossians 2:2-3

God allows us to experience only that which He knows we can handle. We trust that in all situations and circumstances, no matter how difficult, God has given us His promise that we will survive. Can our student's have this kind of faith in us? Can they trust our discernment of challenges, so that they will persevere versus give up? Signs of eagerness to learn, versus withdrawal in participation, are target boundaries in which we can discern whether a challenge is appropriate or not.

Commandment VIII.

Thou shall recognize how a student learns best, and teach through this way.

"I will give thanks to Thee for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well." Psalm 139:14

Jesus was a multi-sensory, multi-repertoire God. He went through every channel to teach and reach, to minister and touch. Not only did He use styles of learning, or multiple intelligence, He met others where they were most comfortable and most familiar. Teach using a student's ability, hobbies, interests, work pace, attention span, temperament, find out their joys and fears, their likes and dislikes, and use them in your lessons. Attention, understanding, esteem and memory will be heightened as you seek to personalize their lessons. We not only want to teach, but to reach our students.

Commandment IX.

Thou shall teach what is necessary, not just what is convenient.

"Teach me knowledge and good judgement, for I believe your commands." Psalm 119:66

Is what you are teaching necessary? Are there things that can be omitted, changed, re-done or applied? The world our children live in is technical and interactive. Time management, organization, study skills, speaking abilities, communication

abilities, reading comprehension, social skills, sensitivity, prayer and applying God's Word in one's life all are vital and necessary. Knowledge of the tools of technology such as the computer, calculator, organizational pilot, digital phone, key-board skills, etc. all are empowering. Build upon these skills, and discern why you teach what you do.

Commandment X.

Thou shall teach your students about Me, so no other God's will be before Me.

**"...You shall love your Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself."
Luke 10:27**

God has given you the opportunity to give the greatest lesson of their lives, which is teaching your students about God and build their knowledge of who He is to them, and who they are to Him. In knowing God, they will have God's perspective about themselves and their personal lives. They will become empowered because of their rooted identity in Jesus Christ. What would Jesus desire from your lessons?