

Making the Most of Interruptions

If you can't stand the sheep, get out of the pasture-ate.



Think It Over



Our character is more quickly revealed in our response to circumstances than by the programs we prepare. How prepared are you for the unplanned?



Thinly disguised as teachable moments are those interruptions that can knock the slats out from under us. These moments are thinly disguised because they are not what we obviously planned for; we planned for our *lesson*! They are teachable moments because they are the moments our students are most alert to what we have to say next!

A group of irate parents decides to give you a piece of their mind that they cannot afford to lose...in front of you and your kids. A child interrupts a puppet show by running up and hugging the puppet. Spills, fights, whispering, bolting for the door, even the call of nature can seem like interruptions to your well-planned lesson. But how can you turn these inevitable flow-stoppers into showstoppers?

Remember, often our first response is our worst response! If you pause, take a deep breath, get a grip on your emotions, even smile and look wide-eyed as you plumb your mind for a what-to-do-next strategy, you'll buy some valuable time! That time will help you come up with an appropriate response.

The best response redirects and refocuses the classroom toward your goal for that morning. The appropriate response varies according to the incident. For spills, for instance, a good strategy to redirect might be to use humor: "Oh, no, Mr. Apple Juice! What are you doing out of your cup? Let's get Mr. Brawny and clean you up!" This response would be better than blaming the child for carelessly spilling and focuses on a solution to the problem rather than its cause.

Finally, fight to maintain self-control. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Unfortunately, it's not an inherited trait. God will give you the ability to be calm and in control even in the worst circumstances. Let your children observe the power of God to calm the storm of classroom interruptions by observing your self-controlled behavior. And when you do make a mistake, admit it! Apologize and move on.

My son's preschool teacher had a great phrase that my son learned one day when the teacher's classroom obviously got the best of her. Christopher came home and said, "Mrs. Murphy told us that she was 'zasperated' today!" Chris, who was only three at the time, knew how his teacher felt because she was honest and expressive about her frustration! "Tomorrow I'm not going to 'zasperate' her anymore!" was this little guy's response to what became a wonderful teachable moment. ■



TIC... TIC... TIC... It's time for a **CHANGE**

Lord, help me show myself prepared for whatever you send by...

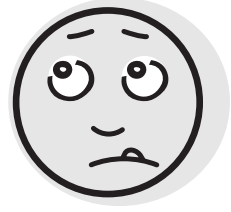


Planning for the unexpected is not something that we normally think of, but we should. Each day this week, take the following emergency test to see if you are prepared for the unexpected:

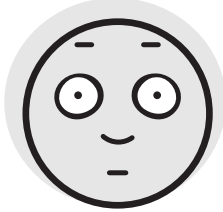
■ **Monday:** You're driving in the snow, and your car begins to fishtail. If you live in an ice-free climate, you are driving, and your car's brakes suddenly fail. What do you do first?



■ **Tuesday:** Your phone goes out at home, along with your electricity. What do you want to do first?



■ **Wednesday:** Who is the beneficiary in your life insurance policy? Who is the second beneficiary should the first pass away before you do?



■ **Thursday:** Do you have enough money or frequent flier miles saved to make an emergency airplane flight for a family funeral? Do you know whom to call if you do?



■ **Friday:** You are in another country when you lose your passport and all your cash. Who would you call, or where would you go first?

■ **Saturday:** You just cut some limbs off your largest tree when you accidentally cut a vein in your arm. You are all alone. What do you do first?

A Little Too Prepared

According to the church records at Hartselle First Baptist Church, a visiting evangelist in about 1910 put a pistol on the pulpit and said, "I'm not finished with what I said and if any of you have anything to say about it, I'm ready." Everyone listened to what he had to say.



"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

—Matthew 6:34

- How should we prepare for tomorrow if we should not worry about it?
- What are you worrying about right now?



"We cannot make it rain, but we can see to it that the rain falls on prepared soil."

—Henri J.M. Nouwen