



CIVIL AIR PATROL United States Air Force Auxiliary

CADET ENCAMPMENT PROGRAM

L11 Discipline: Your Key to Success

Briefing for Cadet Instructor

This Lesson in Context: Low ranking cadets are likely to possess a lot of misconceptions about “discipline.” Perhaps it has something to do with punishment, as in “You’ll be disciplined for your bad conduct.” Perhaps it means being able to withstand an onslaught of screaming from a military D.I. Both of those ideas are red herrings. Many cadets will not conceive of discipline as a building block toward the accomplishment of their goals, and fewer still will be knowledgeable about practical methods they can use to develop self-discipline. This lesson is a precursor to lessons about leadership and teamwork. The great educator Anne Sullivan, “Miracle Worker” tutor to Helen Keller, observed that discipline is the pre-requisite for all learning. “Obedience is the gateway through which knowledge, yes, and love, too, enter the mind of a child.”

Overall Goal: Two outcomes are envisioned for this activity. First, cadets will gain an understanding of discipline – what it means and why it is important. Second, cadets will learn several practical techniques they can use to improve their self-discipline and focus as they pursue goals at encampment and in life.

Objectives: This suggested lesson plan pursues five objectives. By the end of the class, cadets will:

- (1) Provide the CAP definition of “discipline” and explain its meaning in their own words.
- (2) Describe the “marshmallow test” and explain the relationship between delayed gratification and success.
- (3) Explain why an ability to withstand someone yelling in your face does not necessarily develop self-discipline.
- (4) Describe 2 or 3 practical techniques for developing self-discipline in each of the following environments:
 - a. Starting out in pursuit of a goal
 - b. Working toward a goal
 - c. Staying on track through positive reinforcement
 - d. Bouncing back from stumbles
 - e. Coping with stress

Suggested Duration: 45 min

Suggested Instructor: Cadet squadron commander or cadet first sergeant, perhaps in a tag-team approach.

Suggested Format: Cadets relate best to specific examples, not abstract concepts. Speak anecdotally. Use your life experiences to convey a personal perspective about self-discipline. Have some questions prepared to direct to the audience and/or allow time for the cadets to pose questions to you. A back-and-forth discussion is better than a lecture. As cadre, you’re an encampment veteran, so try to impart your practical wisdom upon the first-year students who are likely to know that discipline is important but lack practical skills for developing it.

Suggested Venue: This activity works well in either a classroom / auditorium setting, or in a casual setting where cadets perhaps sit on the ground in a shady spot as the instructor stands and moves about the group.

Audio Visual Support. Your CAP point of contact will tell you what A/V support is available. Slides and script-like notes are available, but instructors are not required to use those resources.

Content Outline

- I. Openers
 - A. Mini Exercise #1. Have all students stand and hold the position of attention for 5-10 minutes.
 - B. Mini Exercise #2. Provide a single Hershey's Kiss to everyone.
 - C. Discussion of mini exercise #1.

- II. The Marshmallow Test: Delayed Gratification
 - A. What is delayed gratification?
 - B. Why is the ability to delay gratification an apparent pre-requisite to success in life?

- III. What is Self-Discipline?
 - A. Students' own ideas
 - B. Book definition
 - C. Illustration
 - D. Misconception: The military D.I.

- IV. How Can You Increase Your Self-Discipline?
 - A. Starting Out
 1. Visualize success
 2. Specific plan
 3. Mini goals
 4. Role model
 - B. Working Toward a Goal
 1. Margin of error
 2. Excellence v. perfection
 - C. Staying on Track
 1. Wingman
 2. Habits
 3. Celebrate
 - D. Bouncing Back
 1. Avoid temptation
 2. Forgive yourself
 3. Tell your boss
 4. Personal best
 - E. Coping with Stress
 1. Mental vacation
 2. Mindfulness
 3. Exercise

- V. Final Thought: It's the tough guys who lead the survivors.