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Keine Stimmen

Discipline!



Disciplined behaviour is extremely important in a Jungschar. Only in this way is it possible to run programs in such a way that they are fun for (almost) everyone. And only this way it is possible to do activities with a little higher risk with the children. In these situations we have to be able to rely on them.

The Nature & Purpose of Discipline

The German word "Disziplin" comes from the Latin "disciplina", which means "teaching", "discipline" or "school". Discipline, therefore, is by definition something that must be learned. None of us came into the world disciplined. We all had to learn discipline. So, too, must your young people.

The purpose behind a disciplined life has several facets. First, it takes discipline for us to learn things. Imagine a school classroom where everyone is just doing what they want to do. Learning is very difficult here. But discipline is also necessary to achieve goals in life. This does not only start in school when learning for an exam and does not stop in professional life. Discipline helps us not to give in to every emotion and every apparent need in order to be able to do what is actually relevant

In the Jungschar, we need disciplined behavior. Because it is important for the success of an event that the children do what we tell them - not only in dangerous situations. For our young people discipline is therefore first of all: obedience towards the leaders (and of course towards the parents).

Setting rules, explaining ... and justify!

At the beginning of discipline is for children first the establishment of rules that should regulate the behavior something. What is often quite natural for us adults, it is often not for children. For example, that you should let someone else finish, that you should not converse with your neighbour during worship, and that you should not play football on a busy street. Children have to learn these things. Which means we have to teach them.

However, if we want to raise independent thinkers and judgemental individuals, simply setting rules is not enough. We also need to justify them. If you want to teach a dog disciplined behaviour, you have to tell it what to do and when to do it. With a human, the reasoning is just as important as the rule itself. After all, we don't just want the children to follow our rules, we want them to be able to understand them and therefore learn to appreciate them themselves

Example: "From 10 p.m. onwards it is night-time on the campsite and in the tents. So there is no more talking at all. It is important to keep to this, because if you don't get enough sleep at the beginning of the camp, you will be so tired during the day that you won't be able to enjoy the activities properly

Setting up and enforcing consequences

In most cases, it makes no sense to directly threaten consequences when setting up a rule - although in most cases, breaking a rule should result in consequences. After all, the focus should not be on following the rules because of the threat of consequences, but simply because they make sense (see above)

With the exception of rule violations that make sense or are done out of ignorance, which are understandable, rule violations should have consequences. What these consequences should be depends on the specific situation. This can range from simply moving a child who has attracted attention by talking to the neighbour several times during devotions, to sending a child home from a camp.

Drawing consequences should be based on the specific situation

Drawing consequences (that is, handing out punishments ;-) is, however, an art in itself. Consequences should be given as soon as possible. Only in this way can the child make a direct connection between his action and the punishment - and hopefully draw consequences for future behaviour. However, an immediate reaction requires that I, as the leader, can quickly determine a meaningful punishment. Young leaders, in particular, are often quick to impose punishments that are too harsh or otherwise counterproductive.

The technique of mirroring

In order to make children aware of the direct consequences of their actions, "mirroring" is a suitable method. This method is particularly suitable where rule misunderstandings accumulate in an area

The application is in principle quite simple. You, as the leader, think about what the logical consequence of certain rule violations is and communicate it. If the children are constantly attending the devotion, then the devotion will logically take longer and the football game that may have been planned afterwards will be shorter because there is not enough time available. If the children don't get on the ladder, then the exciting things like setting up and using a rope bridge won't be possible, because it is essential in such dangerous activities that the children do what you tell them to do.

Clearly point out these logical consequences to your children and in many cases they will be much more inclined to follow the rules. The advantage of this method is that by showing your children the logical consequences, you are showing them that it is in their best interest to follow the rules. The alternative, threatening with arbitrary punishments, does not have this educational effect. Here there is obedience only by threat, not by the much deeper and better working understanding.

Why it pays to be consistent from the beginning - An anecdote

I was once in a weekend camp, in which I helped out because of a lack of leaders and the children and the usual dealings with them therefore did not know exactly. To start with, there was a not too long hike which was combined with a post run in the tent groups. In my group was also a mini-leader.

When we arrived at a post, I read out the task and explained the rules. I pointed out one rule in particular, as I was counting on the creativity of the children. One of the children, however, felt that he did not have to follow this rule. I immediately intervened and took the child out of the game.

Following this, the mini-leader approached me and indicated that he thought my immediate intervention was pretty crass (although it was pretty harmless: I had simply disqualified the child from this game). During the rest of the camp I had a great time with my group and hardly had to admonish

a kid for anything. Since I made it clear from the beginning that everyone had to follow the (very few) rules, this issue was settled from the start and we could enjoy the camp together.

To be consistent from the beginning pays off. Because then you don't have to prove over and over again that you are consistent.

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