



# Diligence Lesson Plan

## STEP ONE - Understand the definition of diligence

### What is Diligence?

Sometimes as adults, it can be hard to place a definition on a word. We plead with our children to be "diligent" but when they ask, "What does diligence mean?" we end up a stuttering mess.

Be prepared.

I have referred to the dictionary's definition of diligence often:

*constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken*

But that has some big words for little minds. You can simplify the words in several ways. For instance:

1. Finishing what you start to the best of your ability.
2. Determined to pay attention to details so the job is completed well.

## STEP TWO - Choose a reality-based situation

Children learn best by experience.

When I was teaching my children the meaning of diligence, I gave them a meal of uncooked spaghetti noodles with frozen meatballs.

What situation can you use to teach your child? Think about chores your child sees you do and only give a half-hearted effort. For instance:

- Place clothes in the washer but not in the dryer. Give the child a wet shirt to wear.
- Only drive the child part of the way to school and ask him to walk the remainder of the distance.
- Sweep a pile of debris but leave it in front of her bedroom door.
- Give the child cereal to eat with water and explain that you did not want to go to the store.

Remember, when your children notice the change in your behavior to use the same excuses you often hear from the kids:

- I don't want to.
- I was tired.
- Do I have to?
- I did most of it.
- Etc.

## **STEP THREE - Talk to your child**

Start a conversation with your child using these questions/answers as a guide:

### **Do you know what diligence is?**

*Diligence means doing a job all the way until it is finished and to the best of your ability.*

[Introduce the Meaning of Diligence page.]

### **Was I diligent in doing my job?**

*No, because I only \_\_\_\_\_.*

## **Do you know what the Bible says about diligence?**

*Colossians 3:23 - And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.*

*You can break the verse down like this:*

- *And whatever you do - that means EVERYTHING*
- *Do it heartily - with all your effort; your absolute best; your whole heart*
- *As to the Lord and not to men - not because Mom says so; for God who wants me to do all things well*

*[Introduce the Diligence Scripture page.]*

## **How different would your life be if I only did my chores halfway?**

*You wouldn't have clean clothes to wear or cooked food to eat. I would only drive you halfway to school and then you would have to walk. Etc.*

## **How different do you think your life would be if you were more diligent?**

*Your room would be more organized. You could find your toys easily. You would have more free time to do the things you like. Etc.*

## **What are some ways that you can be more diligent?**

*Cleaning your room all the way. Not hiding toys under you bed. Rinsing the dishes before placing them in the dishwasher. Etc.*

## More Ideas for Teaching Diligence

### No rewards

If you have a reward system or offer an allowance for chores, never give rewards for an incomplete job. This one can sting if the incentive was a trip you personally wanted to take. So never use a reward you are not willing to forfeit. Following through is extremely important.

### Toy jail

Have a rule that any toys left in the living area after bedtime will be placed in "toy jail" for one week. Our toys went into a laundry basket on top of the refrigerator. Unfortunately, I found that "out of sight was out of mind." Toy jail was more meaningful when the children could see what they had lost.

### Offer incentives

Encourage diligence by rewarding it.

This might sound like a bribe but let's be honest. Kids are more apt to try to apply new habits and thought processes when they have a goal to achieve.

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## **Lead by example**

If you are telling your children to clean their rooms but your room is a disaster, they will assume a walking path is enough. If you ask for help doing the dishes but all your children see you do is unload the dishwasher, they will only complete half the job. You must be discipline to pursue diligence yourself if you want your children to follow.

## **Additional Resources**

- [Teaching Diligence with the Ant and the Grasshopper](#) by Meaningful Mama
- [When Our Kids Fight](#) by Meet Penny
- [A Lesson in Diligence for Preschoolers](#) by Bible Lessons for Preschoolers
- [Challenges in Diligence](#) by Steadfast Family
- [The No-Cry Discipline Solution by Elizabeth Pantley](#) Review by Meet Penny
- [Summer Chore Charts](#) by Meet Penny
- [A Chore Chart for Young Children](#) by Meet Penny