Teach 4 the Heart Podcast Transcript

# Episode 357 – Should I Teach Like I Parent?: Key Differences You Need to Understand

**00:00 Introduction: Bridging Parenting and Teaching**
Linda Kardamis (00:00)
There's a lot of similarities between being a parent and being a teacher, but there's some really important differences as well that if we don't understand, we could make some really big mistakes. So we're gonna dive into those today. Well, welcome back to the Teach4theHeart podcast where we tackle teaching challenges from a biblical perspective. Why are we here? Because we don't believe that our spiritual walk and teaching profession should exist in two separate domains. Rather, the hope we have in Christ should change how we approach everything, not just at home, but at school as well.

So join us as we explore both the spiritual and practical sides of key teaching challenges, integrating them together so we can succeed at teaching, glorify God, and make a lasting difference in our students' hearts and lives. This episode is brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. We also want to thank our sponsor, The Collaborative. The Collaborative unites Christian ed leaders from faith-based schools to strengthen their communities and elevate the educational experience to rival any alternative.

Through a member school community, events, and mastermind, the collaborative aims to establish and implement a collaborative vision for K through 12 Christian education. You can join the member school community for free. As a member, you'll have access to free resources, tools, webinars, and shared services. Together, let's work towards a brighter future for students, teachers, and staff.

Explore all they have to offer at beacollaborator.com and sign up there to be part of a member school community. That's beacollaborator.com. Well, today I'm joined by Sarah, one of our Teach4theHeart team members and Teach4theHeart Plus mentors. Sarah, thanks for being with us today.

Sarah Humes (01:37)
I'm so excited to be here.

**01:40 Understanding the Differences: Numbers Matter**
Linda Kardamis (01:40)
And we're gonna be talking about some of the differences between teaching and parenting. And one of the reasons that we're doing this is because I think there's a mistake that we can inadvertently make, especially for those of you that maybe were a parent first and you're coming to teaching as a second career, but no matter whether you're a parent or not,

We're gonna be talking about some key things that I think will be helpful for you, but particularly if you're in that mistake, in that situation, sometimes we can find ourselves falling into thinking, okay, I kind of got parenting down. Not that any of us ever think we have parenting down, but like I have a lot of skills. Like I know how to work with kids. So I'll be fine in the classroom. I'm good to go. And not realizing, okay, well, this is actually not quite the same and there's maybe some different skills or different techniques.

that I need to understand for a classroom. So there's a lot we can learn from being a parent, right? And vice versa. So those experiences really, really help. But I'm also excited to kind of dive into these, some of these key differences that we need to understand.

So let's dive into them together. Sarah, I was thinking about this and one of the first things that I thought of is, well, what's different? Like there's a lot that's similar that we could talk about, but when we think about the differences, the number one difference just off the bat is sheer numbers. So with kids, right, you have, it depends how many kids you have, one to one, one to two. Maybe if you have a lot of kids, you have six kids to deal with, but none of those can compare to 20 to 30 kids in...

Sarah Humes (03:06)
Yes.

Linda Kardamis (03:19)
one classroom. So just that recognition that I'm not dealing with one kid at a time, you know, two kids at a time. I've got 20 to 30 kids that I'm actively responsible for that are looking to me for what to do at any given moment. That really, really changes the dynamic and it requires you to manage things differently. You more structure, more procedures. You have to have clearer expectations. You have to be ready to deal with issues because ~ if you start letting little things go even,

~ things can go south really, really quickly. parenting, can just step back, reset. You just don't have that luxury when you've got that 20 to 30 in the classroom at the same time.

Sarah Humes (04:02)
Yeah, absolutely. And you know, let's say that even if you are in a Duggar like situation where you have 20 some kids, the thing is you are in a classroom where they are all the same age and you do not have the luxury of having staggered ages. And so you are in a room full of 25 fourth graders. That's a lot of pressure, you know?

you are also in a very, a very suddenly intense situation where you have a very, really tight time schedule too. That's why those plans are so very important in parenting. You don't have a curriculum that you are trying to accomplish in the classroom. You have to accomplish a, B, C, D.

in any given day. That's a big deal. That's a really big deal.

Linda Kardamis (05:03)

Yes, so this just really changes it. We're gonna kind of flesh out some of these differences, you know. So that brings me to number two. With teaching, I really believe you need to be prepared and you need to have a plan. And you need that obviously for your lessons. You need to know what am I teaching today? How am I going to teach it? But you also have to be prepared in your behavior management and like how am I going to manage different behaviors? You know, and I think with...

with parenting, a lot of times we deal with individual issues with individual kids as they come up. And yes, sometimes we pre-think, okay, how am gonna deal with this? But a lot of times it's responding, right? This happened, I need to pray about this, I need to seek wisdom. And we have the luxury in many cases of tailoring our responses to one individual kid, right? And we're gonna talk about this more later. Like we might deal with kids very differently because we're the parent and we know them and there's only a few of them. And we have time to think and come back and talk to them and...

**05:03 Preparation and Planning: Keys to Classroom Success**
Spend an hour long conversation if we need to, like that's all part of it. But in the classroom, we don't have that time. Well, even if we're gonna take time later, like we can't take that time right then in the classroom and just leave the other 20 kids and talk to the one. ~ And we can't, so it's like we don't have that time and space. We really need to have thought things through ahead of time and be prepared.

Sarah Humes (06:11)
Right.

Linda Kardamis (06:18)
Because that other thing that we've talked about is that idea that things can go south really quickly. If we aren't prepared to deal with some issues and we start letting things go, that group can kind of sense that uncertainty and things, they can pounce on that and you can find yourself in a really bad situation really quickly just because of the numbers of all the same peer group. You don't have that relationship yet like you do with your own kids.

~ And so it's just really, really important that you are prepared, that you think things through ahead of time. And if you find yourself in the middle, you know, it's September and you're like, ~ I wasn't as prepared as I thought I needed to be, or I didn't realize I needed to be this prepared. Well, you can step back, be like, okay, I'm gonna put some plans in place so that when things happen in the classroom, I know what I'm gonna do. I'm not trying to figure it out on the spot while I'm also trying to teach and also trying to manage 20 kids.

Sarah Humes (07:09)
Well, yeah, I was just kind of thinking like, you know, what you had said about the consistency and the need to know in when we are parenting, when we have, you know, even up to five or six kids, we do understand as a parent, we have this innate

knowledge about our kids about what each one needs. In our classroom, even as the best teacher, sometimes we don't know what Sam needs compared to Tony, right? And it's just like, that's why being prepared with those general concepts makes us a better teacher. It gives us this idea of letting us

really understand how to be more fair, how to be more effective, I think, where with our kids, it's okay to be more.

individualized.

Linda Kardamis (08:12)
Yeah, absolutely. And this is actually what we put down as number three. There's a need to be a little bit more consistent. And this doesn't mean that we don't individualize things, right? There's certain times in teachings when we know, okay, this student needs something different and I'm going to adjust. I'm gonna do something different specifically for them. But there is this need though to have this baseline of consistency, right? This baseline of like, okay, this is how I deal with this issue. This is how I deal with this problem.

Sarah Humes (08:16)
Mhmm

Linda Kardamis (08:39)
So that, and part of that is, I've thought through ahead of time in a group where I don't know every student super well, what is the best way to deal with this? And I've come up with my best plan. I've talked to people if I needed to, right? And this is how I'm gonna handle this. And having that consistency, so your students start to realize, okay, when we cross this line, she or he, they're gonna do the same thing every single time. That really builds respect. It builds consistency. It builds trust between you and them. And so it's really important to kind of have that.

**09:36 Establishing Consistency: The Baseline for Classroom Management**
And then yes, we do have freedom to make adjustments for certain students and to say, okay, I'm do something different with this student, or I'm gonna, you we wanna differentiate and modify and like all of those things. But having that base level of consistency is just a lot. ~ I guess, I mean, we wanna be consistent as a parent too, but like I said, there's so much more space to handle different kids differently, because you know them so well and you know what they need. But in a classroom, you wanna just start with that.

baseline of consistency and then only adjust from it when you know that's the right thing to do. What do you think about that, Sarah?

Sarah Humes (09:42)
Absolutely.

Yeah, and I think, you know, as we get deeper into the school year, deeper into knowing each student and even connecting with parents, I think that it's okay to, you know, adjust as needed. However, it's, especially at this point in the school year, early in the school year that I love how you said the baseline of consistency.

I think that is the greatest phrase. love it. The baseline of consistency. And, you know, maybe even depending on the age of your students explaining that. Like, I think that that could be a great concept because, you know, this is where we're starting. And I think that you want to be sometimes open and honest, especially depending on the classroom. Because, you know, there are certain classrooms where there are

students who do need a little bit of special care and letting them know we have a baseline of consistency, but there are some students who might need, you know, a little bit more care. And I think maybe presenting it that way, because I've seen that and there's so many teachers who handle it well. But I really like that phrase. Like I'm just sitting here with it and I'm like, that's a really great way of approaching that. So.

I like that.

Linda Kardamis (11:11)
We stumbled on a great phrase, I love it.

Sarah Humes (11:12)
Yeah, yeah, so

hopefully that'll help some teachers. just, I'm sitting here and I'm like that is a really great phrase. So way to go Linda.

Linda Kardamis (11:56)
America turns 250 years old next summer. And as we approach this incredible milestone, the Herzog Foundation is launching the Freedom Tour—a national event series celebrating the history and hope of America. It’s a powerful reminder that our freedoms—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—aren’t government-made, they’re God-given.

The Freedom Tour invites you to experience how faith shaped our founding- and to carry that message into your classrooms, your homes, and your communities.

And that’s not all. Starting this summer, the Herzog Foundation is also releasing a new video series called Faith & Freedom 250. Every Friday, you’ll hear voices from across America—teachers, parents, pastors, and leaders—sharing powerful stories from our nation’s history and reminding us why our founding values still matter today. Learn more and follow along at FreedomTour250.com.

Linda Kardamis (12:24)
So baseline of consistency and then yes, listening to the spirit, listening to your intuition, talking to other people to know when to kind of deviate from that. I love that. So the next thing that we had kind of thought about as we talked about this ahead of time was how with our own children, we can be, we are a lot more familiar, right? We've known them a long time, but how this is a little, yep, right? Yeah.

Sarah Humes (12:26)
Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah, that family word is in there.

Linda Kardamis (12:49)
familiar family, but this is a little bit different. Sarah, you had some thoughts on how this is a little bit different.

**12:56 Familiarity vs. Professionalism: Balancing Authority in the Classroom**
Sarah Humes (12:56)
So yeah, you know, when it comes to being in your home, sometimes even deescalating a situation, you're going to, there are times when you're going to need to bring in levity to, to, and I'm not saying that you can never do that in a classroom. I'm just saying that that is going to be a lot more rare. You're being professional in the classroom, but at home, levity really does work a lot to just deescalate those situations.

quickly and to prevent a whole meltdown of a situation that could have been prevented. ~ if you bring too much, speaking from this, this is my problem. I love being humorous. Like I actually did some stand up many years ago and I love being funny. But bringing that levity into a classroom, especially with older kids,

you're gonna lose that sense of authority if you're not careful. And it's that balance, know, like there can be some, but there shouldn't be too much. And so that casualness that we can bring can really undermine us. and the other thing is when you are in a classroom, it's typically just you. Maybe there might be a pair of...

professional in there. Now, if you are parenting in a two parent household, typically, I don't know, is this the case in your house, Linda? Cause it's the case in mine. There's a good cop and a bad cop, by the way, unfortunately I'm the bad cop in my house and it bums me out, but I'm with my kids more. And so, you don't have that if you are the only one in a classroom.

And so you kind of need to be down the middle. can't, you can't be, you just, you can't switch on these kids. You can't be good cop one day and bad cop the next day. That is going to be so confusing for them. You need to be down the middle or else your, your students are going to be like, what is

happening here? Who is this person? Are they the same person? So like, could you imagine how confusing that'd be?

Linda Kardamis (15:18)
Yes,

yeah, for sure. I mean, yeah, there's so much that you said there. And I think of a couple things that we teach a lot, like in Classroom Management 101 and our free trainings that we do. We talk about being kind and firm, right? And when you were talking about that, was like, yes, that's how you go down the middle. You are kind in how you do something, but you're also firm. So you are good cop and bad cop, rolled into one, not switching back and forth, right? So dealing with issues, not letting things go.

Sarah Humes (15:30)
Yes.

Mhmm

Yeah.

Linda Kardamis (15:45)
But doing it kindly and with compassion, you can absolutely do both. And then the other thing that I was thinking about is, you know, when you're talking about, you know, not being too familiar, it's like, obviously, we want to develop relationships. We want to be able to disciple our students or to, you know, to point them to Christ, depending on your school situation and what you can do. But we want to shine that light. We want to we want to care for them. But another key mindset shift that's really helpful is making sure you see yourself as a mentor, not a friend.

Sarah Humes (15:47)
Yes.

Yes.

Linda Kardamis (16:14)
So sometimes you want to get in that a little bit more like friendly, familiar. And when you feel pulled towards that, be like, no, I want to be their mentor. So like I'm a clear authority figure. I'm a clear relational, but that's a very relational thing to be a mentor. means I'm here for them. I'm helping them, but it's just a little bit of a different nuance. And I think if you strive for that, you're going to hit that right balance of caring, but having that not too familiar.

Sarah Humes (16:29)
Yeah.

Linda Kardamis (16:43)

or you're gonna lose the respect. So I that's key.

Sarah Humes (16:45)
Yeah. And honestly,

I think that's one area where that transfers that transfers to parenting so well. And because I am who I am, I tend to want to be my kid's friend, even though I am the bad cop. And so that's why I'm like, ~ I want to be their friend. But I'm actually like, no, I want them to know Christ. I, and I know that in order for that to happen, I need to mentor them. I need to.

Linda Kardamis (16:51)
Mm-hmm.

Hmm.

Sarah Humes (17:13)
show them the way of Christ and a lot of times that means not being their friend. I'm like no that can't happen. I'm so sorry sweetie but choosing that is a really bad idea and so it's that balance and it transfers so well between parenting and teaching.

**17:32 Final Thoughts: Embracing Your Unique Journey**
Linda Kardamis (17:32)
Yes, which brings us to kind of a final thought and that is if you have been a parent or you are a parent and you're coming into teaching, I hope that this episode didn't discourage you and make you feel like, my goodness, this is, no, there's so many things that you've learned in either role that can transfer and that's so helpful and you're gonna continue to learn and grow. So absolutely pull on all those things you've learned. You've learned so many things that are gonna help. But I think recognizing,

these some of these key differences and where it's like, okay, but I need to I need to do have more structure. I need to have a plan. I need to develop my classroom management skills in addition to my like interpersonal skills that I have in parenting. When you put those together, it could be a really, really powerful combo. And then before we wrap up, we had one other thought. I'm going to let Sarah kind of share this. Sometimes there's this other thought. We want to make sure that no one is getting this, that in order to be a good teacher, you need to have been a parent.

**18:27 The Myth of Parenting Experience in Teaching**
And we absolutely don't agree with that. Sarah, you were just talking to me about this before.

Sarah Humes (18:31)
Yeah,

it just, makes me so sad when I hear people say, well, what do they know about kids or teaching? They've never had children themselves. And I'm like, that is absolutely so far from the truth. Some of

the absolute best teachers I've ever, ever encountered are some of the most invested teachers because they, first of all, they're educated professionals too, right?

they have done the same work that we have done and sometimes even more. And then on top of that, they have more time to invest in that mentorship role than we may have as parents. Like I remember ~ this really great English teacher that I taught with, ~ she had more time to invest in that mentorship role by, you know, going to the kids games and

going to even sometimes their practices or connecting with them and helping them with their papers. And that was because she was not, like, I don't want to use the word tied down, but like she was not running home to cook dinner for her family. You know what I mean? Like she had more margin in her schedule to do the things that I would have loved to do for my students. But I was also called to be

at home with my kids. And so it was like that back and forth. And you know, I don't believe that being a parent will ever make you a better teacher. Sometimes I think it makes you more of a stress teacher, be quite honest. ~ But I will say I am a better parent because I was a teacher. Like there's that balance. You know what I mean? I have learned so much of my parenting.

Linda Kardamis (20:13)
You

Mm.

Sarah Humes (20:26)
style because of my classroom management style, much to my kids dismay. Pocket phrases are awesome for parenting. My kids still remember and will have an attitude of gratitude. My kids never fought me about leaving a playground because I had that pocket phrase and they knew if they fought me about leaving a playground that we would not go to a playground for another week because I had my expectations set. They knew what

what to expect when I said it's time to go and they knew the consequence. So it does work you guys. It works in the classroom and it works in parenting. So.

Linda Kardamis (21:03)
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I love that, yeah, I've learned so much, so much too. And I think maybe that's kind of the bottom line too in this piece of the conversation is recognizing like God has each of us in the situation that we are in for a reason, right? And God is going to use it. Sometimes we get this grass is always greener. I could do this if that, or if I had this, I might be better. And it's like truly like God has placed each of us. He has us on the journey he has for a reason. just being thankful for where God has you.

Sarah Humes (21:29)

Absolutely

Linda Kardamis (21:32)
There's pros and cons to every situation, but recognizing God is in it, God is using you. And we pray that kind of this episode of thinking through some of the differences has been helpful for you as you continue to learn and grow. A couple of the resources we wanted to mention for you guys, if you kind of are like, okay, yes, I need to think more about classroom management. One, we have a free training called How to Reduce Disruptions so You Can Actually Teach. You can get that at teach4theheart.com/free

Sarah Humes (21:44)
Yes, so much.

Linda Kardamis (21:59)
And then of course we have our full classroom management 101 program which helps you really think through every aspect of how am I going to deal with things and put it all together so that you have that plan ready and implemented in your classroom. So you can always get info about that at teachfortheheart.com / CM 101. Well thank you guys so much for being with us. This episode has been brought to you in partnership with the Herzog Foundation. All views and opinions are our own and don't necessarily reflect those of the Herzog Foundation.

We look forward to being with you again soon. the meantime, you remember God is at work in you and through you, and he's using you to make a difference. Keep your eyes on him and teach for the heart.