

10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Child



GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Israel Galindo

10 Best Parenting Ways to Ruin Your Child: Group Study Guide
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Permission is granted to reproduce parts of this work for use in study groups using the book *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Israel Galindo.

Books can be ordered at igalindo@aol.com

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
How To Be A Good Group Member	5
Sessions	
1. Put your child’s happiness first as the guiding value in your home . . .	6
2. Make your child the focus of your marital relationship	8
3. Do things for your child that she can do for herself.	10
4. Map out your child’s life based on your own dreams	12
5. Get involved in fights between siblings	14
6. Argue with your child	17
7. Call on your spouse to be the disciplinarian	19

Introduction

This group study guide is designed to be used with the book *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Israel Galindo (available through Amazon.com or Educational Consultants, www.galindoconsultants.com). For the most part this study assumes that the groups will mostly be self-directed with a minimum of guidance from the class facilitator. You can format the study in any way that suits your group. Use the group discussion questions and activities depending on the location (a Sunday morning class, a weekday evening class, a retreat, a weekly study course, a one-day extended workshop experience) and on the schedule you have chosen.

Here are suggestions for an effective group learning experience:

- Provide books for all participants. The ability to discuss the issues will be enhanced to the extent that participants read the book chapters ahead of time. The chapters are short, so most people will be able to read one chapter a week if you want to use a weekly meeting format.
- The class or group leader should act as facilitator, allowing the group process to carry the learning. No lecturing needed! Group members will learn through conversation, through sharing their experiences, struggling with answers to questions, and by being a resource to one another. Monitor the groups to help them in case they get stuck, have a question, or need a resource. Strive to start and end your sessions on time.
- You do not have to use all of the sessions in this study guide, or cover all of the chapters in the book. Choose the issues that are of most concern to the parents in your group—you can combine two sessions if it suits your format and schedule. Be sure to check the Appendices in the book for additional material.
- If you have a large class, form discussion groups of no less than 4 persons, but no more than 8 persons. The ideal group size for discussion is 4 or 5 individuals.
- Allow sufficient time for group discussion (at *least* 45 minutes for a group of 5 to 8 persons) and additional time for the learning activities if you choose to use them. For optimum learning, build in at least 15 minutes of “debriefing” time at the end of each session.
- The “Going Deeper” section can help translate the learning and insights acquired in the small groups into application in the home. Encourage the use of this dynamic. Encourage parents to report back when they have used this feature.
- At the beginning of your study, review the “How To Be A Good Group Member” guidelines and encourage your class members to commit to them so as to provide a good learning experience for all. You can distribute that page as a handout, or enlarge it up to make a poster-sized focal piece for your meeting room.

How To Be A Good Group Member

Good group learning experiences do not happen naturally, they are a result of intentional and responsible behaviors by group members. For an optimal learning experience, practice these good learner behaviors:

- Participate and share—others need to learn from you
- Determine to be honest and transparent with your group
- Take time to think
- Listen to one another
- Give reasons for your answers
- Stay on task or on the topic under discussion
- Negotiate the level of confidentiality you are comfortable with
- Ask thought-provoking questions
- Allow yourself to be challenged—you'll learn more
- Ask for others' opinions
- Ask yourself, "How does this apply to me?"
- Ask yourself, "What am I learning?"



Session 1

*Put your child's happiness first
as the guiding value in your home*



Directions:

Read the Introduction and Chapter 1 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Israel Galindo in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Happiness is a transitory, conditional, feeling based on circumstances, it is not a value, therefore, we should not strive to build a parental relationship based on it.
- Children need parents who are centered and mature enough to make decisions based on what is *best* for the child, not on what will make the child *happy*.

Discussion Questions:

1. Imagine for a moment a family that has made “feeling happy” the primary value in the home. What do you think the consequences of that posture will be? How do you think the members of that family will come to believe and behave toward each other?
2. Reflect back on your own family of origin when you were 10 years old. Recall the ways your family acted toward each other and communicated. Can you ascertain what the guiding value(s) in your family were?
3. Is the guiding value in your current family the same or different as in your own family? How so? Can you identify what the guiding value is in your home about your parental relationship with your children?

Learning Activity:

On a chalkboard or flipchart, write the following:

Question: As a guiding value in the home, the opposite of “happiness” is:

- Answers:
- (A) Responsibility
 - (B) Joy
 - (C) Sadness
 - (D) Trust
 - (E) Love.

Tell the group members that this is a “forced choice” activity—they must answer the question using only one of the answers. Have each member of the group choose which answer they think is the “best” and to tell why they think so. (In a larger group setting assign this to small groups of four or five members and have them arrive at a consensus response). Allow the group to wrestle with their thinking about the issues that the question raises. Remind the group that at the heart of the discussion is the issue of determining what kind of relationship parents need to have with their children.

Going Deeper:

The following questions can serve as additional group discussion questions or they can serve as personal reflection questions for after the session.

1. Recall a time when your parents made a decision that went against what would have made you happy. Tell that story.
2. Recall a time when you had to make a decision for your child that did not make him or her happy. Share on what basis you made that decision for your child. Did you have a conversation with your child about your decision? What did that sound like?
3. Recall a time when you made a decision for your child on the basis his or her happiness against your better judgment about what was best for your child. Tell about that experience. How do you feel about how you functioned as a parent? What do you think about now about that experience?

Session 2

Make your child the focus of your marital relationship.



Directions:

Read Chapter 2 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Galindo in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- The primary relationship in the home is the adult marital relationship
- A child-focused family relationship put anxiety on the child and takes attention away from the primary relationship in the home
- Your job of parenting is over by the time your child is seven years old.

Discussion Questions:

1. The great educator, St. Ignatius of Loyola said, “Give me a child until he is seven years old, and I will give you the man.” Take turns in your group and, (1) interpret what you think that statement means and implies, and (2) state whether you agree with it or not, and why.
2. The authors state that the job of “parenting” is over by the time a child is seven years old. For the sake of argument, let’s assume that that statement is true. Therefore, what do you think that you, as a parent, need to give critical attention to during those formative years?
3. A relationship triangle consists of three persons or two persons and an issue. Can you identify the triangles in your family? Describe them.

Learning Activity:

Distribute large drawing paper and colored pencils or markers to each person or couple. First, have each person or couple diagram the “triangles” in their family. These triangles can include persons outside of the home, or issues that the family is dealing with (school, schedules, acting out, jobs, time, money, etc.). Direct the group members to refer to Appendix B: Laws of Emotional Triangles in the book *10 Best Ways to Ruin Your Child*. Next, instruct the participants to diagram the way they see the dynamics of the triangles using colored pencils or markers. Encourage them to be creative by using symbols, arrows, and colors to depict how they see their family relationships are work in the triangles that exist in the family (all families have them!).

Allow a sufficient amount of time for the group members to share their family triangle diagrams. Ask them to share what insights they have gained about what is happening in their family by seeing things through their diagram of family triangles.

Going Deeper:

The following can serve as an additional group enrichment activity or as “homework” for the participants.

1. If your children are ten years of age and older share with them what you have learned about family triangles. Ask them to share the ways they perceive and experience the triangles in your family (hint: one typical triangled relationship has to do with sibling rivalry). [If your children are younger than ten years of age, they will not likely be able to grasp the concept of triangles, although they are *experiencing* the dynamics of the triangles in the family.]
2. Make time with your spouse or partner to discuss the relationship patterns that have developed in your family. First, can you identify the triangles in your family of origin? Share about how you experienced those triangled relationships. Second, talk about the triangles that you have identified in your current family situation. What things do you want to address? What patterns do you need to change? Has your family become a child-focused family? If so, how is that affecting your marital relationship and the family?

Session 3

Do things for your child that she can do for herself.



Directions:

Read Chapter 3 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Galindo in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- The test of successful parenting is how well we have prepared our children to be independent, self-sufficient adults.
- The more you do for your children, which they can do for themselves, the more dependent and incompetent you make them.
- The only way to nurture responsible, independent children is to give them responsibility and then hold them accountable.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did you have chores to do in your household when you were a child? If so, what were they? How early in your life did your parents assign chores for you?
2. Do you have chores that you assign to your children? What are they? Contrast the chores your children have today, at their ages, with the chores you had as a child the same age. Are they comparable? Do you consider it a good thing or a poor thing that they are or are not?
3. With your group members, brainstorm a list of things that parents tend to do for their children that children can do for themselves. List these on a flipchart or on a chalkboard. Next, have each group member identify those which they are prone to do (confession is the first step to change, so be humble and bold in your confession!). Finally, direct the group members to identify which of those overfunctioning behaviors they would like to change, and solicit help from the group members about how they may be able to do so. This is a good time to share about “what works” in your family in this regard.

Learning Activity:

OPTION 1: Solicit members from the group to form two groups to role play two skits. One group will improvise and role play a skit titled “The Good Ole’ Days” in which an old-fashioned family made up of mom, dad and the children go about a routine conversation involving the chores that children were expected to perform. The second group will improvise and perform a skit called “Modern Times” in which a couple of harried parents cannot seem to be able to get their act together as parents or get their kids to do anything around the house. You may want to give the rest of the group a small break to allow time for the groups to think through and plan their skit.

OPTION 2: Often parents seem not able to determine when their children are ready and able to accomplish chores or to take responsibility for certain things around the household. It can be helpful to understand when a child is ready to do certain things to help them become responsible and competent.

On a chalkboard or flipchart have the group members brainstorm and share what they perceive a child can do for him or herself at certain ages of development. (If you are the group leader, you may want to do some research about readiness so that you can share insight, guidelines, and suggestions, or to provide correctives for misunderstandings parents may have about when a child is ready to do things). You can duplicate the two-column chart below for this exercise.

At this age... ...a child can do these things for him or herself.

2-3

4-5

6-7

8-9

10-11

12-13

Going Deeper:

Overfunctioning behaviors on the part of the parents tends to set up a pattern of reciprocal underfunctioning on the part of the children in the home. Overfunctioning happens when we take responsibility for that which belongs to another: doing things for other that they should and can do for themselves, worrying for others, thinking for others, taking on or relieving consequences that rightfully belong to another.

Observe the patterns of relationship you have with your children. Can you discern overfunctioning behaviors on your part? If so, what do you imagine will be the consequences to you and your child if this pattern continues?

Determine if you want to change the overfunctioning-underfunctioning reciprocal relationship with your children. How will you need to change? How do you think your child will respond if you do?

Session 4

Map out your child's life based on your own dreams and aspirations.



Directions:

Read Chapter 4 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child*, by Galindo in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- A parent that invests self-worth, deferred dreams, esteem, personal reputation, and personal hopes in their children rob them of their own destiny.
- Mapping out your child's life based on your own dreams and aspirations robs your child of the ability to discover his or her own destiny in life and of the opportunity to shape his or her own aspirations. Parents must learn to respect the personal boundaries of each family member.
- Your job as a parent is to rear a child who will have the capacity to be his or her own person.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share with your group your thoughts about why you think parents get so anxious and “bent out of shape” about their children's behaviors (especially in public)?
2. Reflect on your relationship with your parents, and their communication with you. What did your parents expect of and from you? Did you live out your parents' expectations? In what ways and to what extent?
3. Reflect on your relationship and communication with your children. What would you say they are clear about in terms of what you expect of them? (If you have more than one child, can you articulate whether or not you have different expectations of each?).
4. Time for a deeper theological discussion: Consider, and articulate, as a group, how expectations on the part of parents for their children to be ‘perfect’ or to live out a particular way of life is a lack of practicing Christian grace, and/or, a lack of faith.

Learning Activity:

If you have a large class, form smaller groups of 4 or 5. It's often helpful to create different small groups than those in the discussion circles. Distribute paper and pencil, or provide a flip chart or butcher paper and markers. Write the word "EXPECTATIONS" at the top of the sheet of paper.

Have the groups identify and list expectations that parents often have of their children. Once you have a good list, have the group decide on which are "appropriate" and which are "not necessarily appropriate." Put a plus sign on the appropriate ones, a negative sign on the ones that are inappropriate, and a question mark on those the group is not sure about.

Going Deeper:

Share with your children a story about your own parents' expectations of you as a child. Share a story of a time when you "failed" at something that your parents expected of you.

Next, ask your children about what they want to be when they grow up. Your job will be to *listen*, to ask more questions about what *they* want to do in life and what they like to do now—do not ask questions of practicality or give advice. Your gift to your children is to show them that you love and care enough about them that you are willing to listen to their dreams and aspirations.

Session 5

Get involved in fights between siblings.



Directions:

Read Chapter 5 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child* by Galindo preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Parents who interfere in the developing sibling relationship of their children run the risk of alienating them from one another and keeping their relationship from developing.
- Parents need to raise their tolerance level for appropriate sibling conflict and stay out of the emerging relationships between their children.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does “sibling rivalry” look and sound like in your home? (If you do not have siblings in your current family, did you experience it in your family growing up? What did that look and sound like?)
2. Share the ways that you and/or your spouse intervene when there is an episode of sibling rivalry in your home. Describe your behaviors and your feelings.
3. Describe how you can anticipate those times and circumstances when your children will find themselves in a situation where they are likely to let themselves get out of control when they are together. What can you do to help avoid those moments without interfering with their relationship?

Learning Activity:

While it is true that our children need to work out their own relationship, it may become necessary to intervene when there is an incident. With your group, brainstorm (1) the appropriate “rules” about how you want your family members to treat each other, (2) the occasions when it is

appropriate for parents to intervene in a sibling relationship, and, (3) the appropriate interventions and behaviors that you as the parent(s) can use to intervene (interventions where there is no blaming, no labeling, no choosing sides, no assignment of blame to one and not the other, etc.).

Going Deeper:

Take time to meet with your spouse or partner and come up with a list of “The Ten Worst Ways Our Kids Can Get In Trouble Together And What We’ll Do About It.” Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. On the left hand of the sheet identify the ten worst ways your children are likely to get in trouble *together*. On the right side of the paper brainstorm corresponding appropriate responses to those behaviors. Be creative and imaginative in your options and responses to those infractions (this should be the fun part!).

Put the list in an envelope and place it in a drawer for future reference. If there comes a time when your children actually do one of those ten things, pull out the list and choose one of the pre-determined responses. This will help you avoid overreacting or having to think up a response on the spot during a time of great anxiety.

Session 5 Worksheet

“The Ten Worst Ways Our Kids Can
Get In Trouble Together And What We’ll Do About It.”

The Infraction

Our Parental Response



Session 6

Argue with your child.



Directions:

Read Chapter 6 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child* by Israel Galindo in preparation for this session. You can read and discuss Chapter 9 in conjunction with this session's focus.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay "on task" and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- When you argue with your child you abdicate your parental role.
- When you argue with your child you teach him that he has the right to question your judgment and decisions every time.
- You are the parent; you have more rights than your child and responsibilities for your child's well-being.

Discussion Questions:

1. Based on your observation and/or experience, what are some of the most common things that children argue with their parents about?
2. Why do you think parents so often get into the pattern of arguing with their children? What is the cause of that behavior, in your best estimation?
3. When do you think it is appropriate for a parent to argue with a child? Never? Sometimes, depending on the circumstance?
4. The author suggests that parents have more rights than their children. If that is true, can you identify specific rights that parents have in the family (and society) that children do not? Likewise, what are specific universal parental obligations that parents holds concerning their children?

Learning Activity:

Distribute paper and pencil, or provide a flip chart or butcher paper and markers. When children argue with their parents it sets up a reciprocal pattern of relationship in which both parties lose something important. Understanding what it is that both parties lose in this way of functioning

can help us get clear about the need to change it. Ask the group members to find a partner and pair up for this activity. Give each pair ONE of the following assignments (if you are able try to have an equal number of pairs working on each question): Question A: “When a family gets into the pattern of allowing a child to argue with the parent, what do you think the PARENT loses in the relationship?” Question B: “When a family gets into the patterns of allowing a child to argue with the parent, what do you think a CHILD loses in the relationship?”

Allow the groups time to come up with a list of responses then ask them to share their thoughts with the entire group.

Conclude this activity by asking the group as a whole to brainstorm and compile a list of what they think can be the CONSEQUENCES for the family and its members, of allowing a family pattern in which a child is allowed to argue with the parents.

Going Deeper:

If it has become a pattern in your family that a child argues with you, consider what it is you need to change about yourself, as the parent, that will help correct this situation. Identify the times and circumstances during which your child tends to argue with you. What is it that you argue about? Identify how your parental responses and behaviors facilitate your child’s arguing posture. Is the pattern in your family one where the children argue with one parent but not the other? How did that family pattern come about?

If you determine that you want to change your child’s behavior, confess that you’ll likely need to change YOUR behavior first. Why do you think you allow your child to behave in a way that he or she feels that arguing with you, the parent, is appropriate? What beliefs or assumptions do you think you hold that allow for that to happen?

Determine how you will go about being intentional about engaging your children in a way that allows for healthy communication that will not tolerate your child arguing with you. Be specific about what you are going to do and when you are going to do them.

Session 7

Call on your spouse to be the disciplinarian.



Directions:

Read Chapter 8 of *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child* by Galindo in preparation for this session.

Before you begin, choose a timekeeper-prompter for your group. This person will help your group stay “on task” and will keep things moving along by monitoring the time and by asking prompting follow-up questions. You do not have to answer all of the discussion questions listed; choose those that are of most interest to your group members. For optimum discussion time, form a group of 4 or 5 persons.

Parenting Insights For This Session:

- Calling on your spouse to be the family disciplinarian teaches the children that you, the parent, have no authority or power over the child.
- Calling on your spouse to be the disciplinarian keeps your family in a perpetual anxiety triangle.
- Children need to know that their parents are in charge of the family. When children know that their parents are in charge it provides a sense of security and a moral center for their world.
- Whichever parent is present at the time of misbehavior or infraction is the parent who must administer the discipline.

Discussion Questions:

1. Share a story of one of the WORST things you did as a young child (up to age 12). What was it that you did and how did your parents handle the situation?
2. Did your parents have preferred ways of disciplining the children at home? What were they? Do you think they were appropriate and helpful to you as a child?
3. Who is the primary disciplinarian in your current home, you or your spouse? How did that arrangement come to be? Was it intentional?
4. Can you articulate the underlying principles of your approach to discipline in the home? (Not the “rules”, rather, the principles or values that inform the rules).

Learning Activity:

Distribute paper and pencils to participants (or provide flipcharts or butcher paper and markers). Form groups of three for this exercise. Spouses are to be in separate groups for this activity. Read Appendix B: “Laws of Emotional Triangles” in *10 Best Parenting Ways To Ruin Your Child* (p. 60). Have each participant take turns diagramming the relationship “triangles” they are in focused on the child(ren) in the home related to discipline issues. A triangle can be three persons, or, two persons and an issue. Use the following questions to help identify the dynamics at play:

- How and when does this triangle get formed?
- Who is on the “outside” of the triangle?
- Which side of the triangle is most conflicted or anxious?
- Who is taking responsibility for the relationship between two others?
- Describe the “functioning” of the persons in this triangle?
- Are there interlocking triangles connected with this one?
- Can you discern similar triangles from your own family of origin?
- Can you identify ways you can avoid getting in this triangle?
- Can you identify ways of staying in this triangle, but functioning better?

Going Deeper:

If you and your spouse participate in the triangles learning activity, compare your insights about the relationship triangles in the family related to disciplining the children in the home. Do you both see them the same way? Work at arriving at a consensus opinion as to the triangles in the family relationships and how they are formed. Talk about how you can function better in handling the triangles that form in your family related to your children and discipline issues.

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