

Petition 20129 below was adopted by a vote of 879-25 at the United Methodist Church General Conference in 2012 as official church policy.

### **Prohibit Corporal Punishment in Schools and Child-Care Facilities**

Some schools and child-care facilities around the world permit striking another person for the purpose of causing physical pain. Corporal punishment is humiliating and degrading to children causing emotional and sometimes physical injury.

It is difficult to imagine Jesus Christ condoning any action intended to hurt children physically or psychologically. Jesus' teachings on loving our neighbor and living in peace with one another are foundational for opposition to corporal punishment in institutions in ministry with and to children. Corporal punishment sends a message that hitting smaller and weaker people is acceptable.

As people of faith who value children and are committed to non-violent conflict resolution, we are called to identify effective alternatives to corporal punishment that teach children to be self-disciplined rather than to submit out of fear. Schools and child-care centers should inspire children to enjoy learning, and school and child-care personnel should be able to encourage positive behavior without hitting children.

Therefore, be it resolved that The United Methodist Church calls upon all governments and educational institutions to enact laws prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and day and residential child-care facilities.

[The UM Church also adopted a resolution calling for this prohibition at its 2004 General Conference.]

The resolution below was adopted at the 2004 UM General Conference and was reaffirmed verbatim at the 2012 General Conference by a vote of 879-25.

### **Resolution 3088. Discipline Children Without Corporal Punishment**

Whereas, corporal punishment models aggressive behavior as a solution to conflict,

Whereas, some research has associated corporal punishment with increased aggression in children and adults, increased substance abuse, increased risk of crime and violence, low self-esteem, and chronic depression,

Whereas, it is difficult to imagine Jesus of Nazareth condoning any action that is intended to hurt children physically or psychologically,

Whereas, time-outs and deprivation of privileges are as effective as corporal punishment in stopping undesirable behavior,

Whereas, the effectiveness of corporal punishment decreases with subsequent use and therefore leads caretakers to hit children more severely,

Whereas, children must eventually develop their own conscience and self-discipline, which are fostered by a home environment of love, respect, and trust,

Therefore, be it resolved, that The United Methodist Church encourages its members to adopt discipline methods that do not include corporal punishment of their children.

And be it further resolved, that The United Methodist Church encourages congregations to offer opportunities for dialogue and education on effective discipline of children.